New Exploratory Phase in Research on East European Cultures of Dissent: Joint Review Report

Maciej Maryl, Piotr Wciślik, Muriel Blaive, James Kapaló, Zsófia Lóránd, Jan Mervart, Katalin Cseh-Varga, Rolf Werenskjold, Ferenc Laczó, Tamás Scheibner, et al.

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NEW EXPLORATORY PHASE IN RESEARCH
ON EAST EUROPEAN CULTURES OF DISSENT

New Exploratory Phase in Research on East European Cultures of Dissent: Joint Review Report

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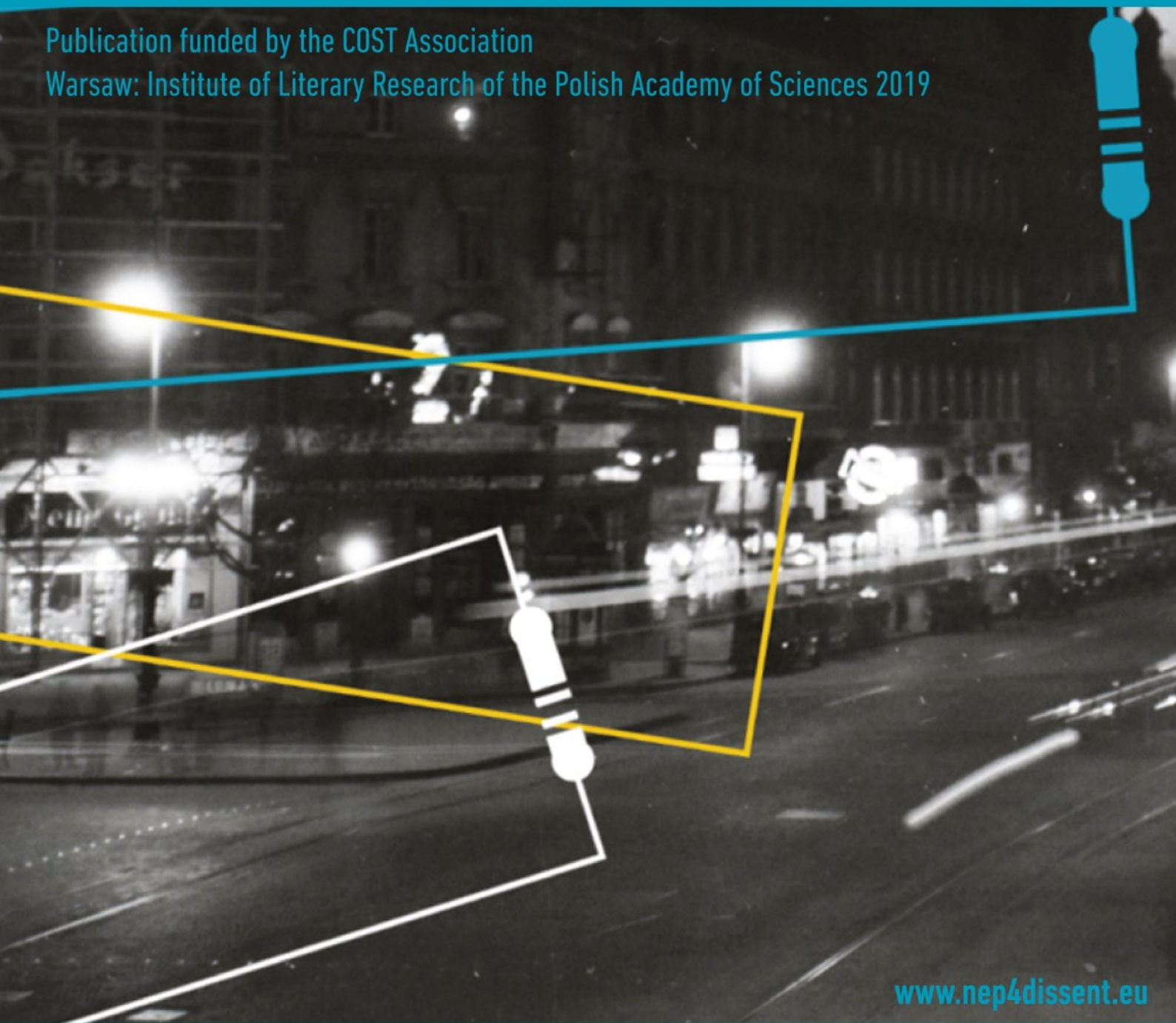

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Edited by **Maciej Maryl** (Action Chair) // **Piotr Wciślik** (Grant Holder Scientific Representative) // **Muriel Blaive** (WG1 Chair) // **James Kapaló** (WG1 Co-Chair) // **Zsófia Lóránd** (WG2 Chair) // **Jan Mervart** (WG2 Co-Chair & Action Vice Chair) // **Katalin Cseh-Varga** (WG3 Chair) // **Rolf Werenskjold** (WG3 Co-Chair) // **Ferenc Laczó** (WG4 Chair) // **Tamás Scheibner** (WG4 Co-Chair) // **Jennifer Edmond** (WG5 Chair) // **Lars Wieneke** (WG5 Co-Chair) // **David Crowley** (WG6 Chair) // **Ieva Astahovska** (WG6 Chair) // **Jessie Labov** (Science Communication Manager) // **Selma Rizvić** (STSM Coordinator) // **Estelle Bunout** (ITC Conference Grant Coordinator).

Authored by **Ieva Astahovska** // **Flóra Barkóczi** // **Muriel Blaive** // **Nadzeya Charapan** // **Noga Collins-Kreiner** // **David Crowley** // **Antonija Čuvalo** // **Costis Dallas** // **Ondřej Daniel** // **Michelle Doran** // **Milena Dragičević-Šešić** // **Jennifer Edmond** // **Endre Eidså Larsen** // **Maria Engström** // **José Maria Faraldo** // **Julija Fomina** // **Konstantinos Giakoumis** // **Jens Gieseke** // **Sean Homer** // **Vlatko Ilić** // **Dorota Jarecka** // **James Kapaló** // **Ingrida Kelpsiene** // **Geert Kessels** // **Júlia Klaniczay** // **Emese Kürti** // **Jessie Labov** // **Ferenc Laczó** // **Douglas Lambert** // **Mari Lanaamets** // **Zsuzsa László** // **Petra Loučová** // **Zsófia Lóránd** // **Maciej Maryl** // **Jan Mervart** // **Astrid Muls** // **Kristóf Nagy** // **Gabriela Nicolescu** // **Libora Oates-Indruchova** // **Jan Olaszek** // **Burcu Peksevgen** // **Stella Pelše** // **Zrinjka Peruško** // **Igor Pietraszewski** // **Martin Pogacar** // **Alexandra Preda** // **Suzanne Psailas** // **Aigi Rahi-Tamm** // **Irena Ristić** // **Selma Rizvić** // **Tamás Scheibner** // **Gabriella Schuller** // **Bjorn Sorenssen** // **Paweł Sowiński** // **Margaret Tali** // **Barbara Törnquist-Plewa** // **Maya Mazor Tregerman** // **Pim van Bree** // **Dina Vozab** // **Piotr Wciślik** // **Lars Wieneke** // **Marko Zubak** // **Odeta Žukauskienė**

With contributions from **Senka Anastasova** // **Simone Bellezza** // **Katalin Cseh-Varga** // **Tomáš Glanc** // **Joseph Grim Feinberg** // **Agnes Hesz** // **Adela Hincu** // **Nina Kancewicz-Hoffman** // **Daniela Koleva** // **Michal Kopeček** // **Thomas Lewe** // **Pavlína Morganová**, **Agnieszka Mrozik** // **Eleonora Narvselius** // **Yulia Oreshina** // **Ihor Poshyvailo** // **Kinga Povedak** // **Magda Raduta** // **Nelson Ribeiro** // **Tea Sindbæk Andersen** // **Tomas Sniegon** // **Kacper Szulecki**

The report was informed by written responses to NEP4DISSENT State of the Art Survey submitted by Fatmir Alispahic // Senka Anastasova // Ieva Astahovska // Muriel Blaive // Bent Boel // Madalina Brasoveanu // Peter Bugge // Estelle Bunout // Nadzeya Charapan // Noga Collins-Kreiner // Nelson Costa Ribeiro // David Crowley // Katalin Cseh-Varga // Antonija Cuvalo // Ondřej Daniel // Michelle Doran // Milena Dragicevic Sesic // Žilvinė Gaižutytė-Filipavičienė // Konstantinos Giakoumis // Jens Gieseke // Joe Grim Feinberg // Sean Homer // Adam Hudek // Vlatko Ilic // Petra James // Dorota Jarecka // Toms Ķencis // Iveta Kestere // Emese Kürti // Mari Laanemets // Thomas Lewe // Ana Ljubojević // Petra Loučová // Zsófia Lóránd // José Maria Faraldo // Bojan Marinkovic // Maciej Maryl // Jan Matonoha // Agnieszka Mrozik // Kristóf Nagy // Eleonora Narvselius // Gabriela Nicolescu // Basia Nikiforova // Libora Oates-Indruchova // Vensada Okanovic // Jan Olaszek // Yulia Oreshina // Burcu Peksevgen // Martin Pogacar // Ihor Poshyvailo // Alexandra Preda // Magda Radu // Magda Raduta // Aigi Rahi-Tamm // Irena Ristic // Selma Rizvić // Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović // Gabriella Schuller // Tea Sindbæk Andersen // Tomas Sniegon // Paweł Sowiński // Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz // Kacper Szulecki // Vykintas Vaitkevicius // Dina Vozab // Rolf Werenskjold // Marko Zubak // Odeta Žukauskienė

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All project outputs are openly available in NEP4DISSENT Collection in HAL repository: https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/NEP4DISSENT/

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Introduction

Authored and edited by Piotr Wciślik and Maciej Maryl.
With contributions from Ieva Astahovska, Pim van Bree, Muriel Blaive, David Crowley, Katalin Cseh-Varga, Jennifer Edmond, Nina Kancewicz-Hoffman, James Kapaló, Geert Kessels, Jessie Labov, Ferenc Laczo, Zsófia Lóránd, Jan Mervart, Selma Rizvić, Rolf Werenskjold, and Lars Wieneke.

The present document, the Joint Review Report (JRR), concludes the first stage of COST Action 16213, *New Exploratory Phase in Research on East European Cultures of Dissent* (NEP4DISSENT), which is aimed at leveraging the power of an international, multidisciplinary, and technology-conscious research network to survey the state of the art and chart new directions in scholarship. The JRR builds on and deepens the shared framework for the understanding of the methodological and conceptual challenges to the state of the art in this domain of research (described in Section 1), which has brought together a large and diverse group of scholars, curators, and digital humanities practitioners (see further in Section 2). This group grew into a robust and integrated research network through the process of the State of the Art Review (SotAR), whose outcome the JRR now presents to a wider audience. The SotAR process (described in Section 3) was designed to pool together research agendas and to identify specific focus areas into which this Action will intervene in order to trigger a new exploratory phase in research on Eastern European cultures of dissent. The chapters of this report, each prepared by a different NEP4DISSENT Working Group (WG), represent the outcomes of the SotAR process.

1. NEP4DISSENT Shared Framework of Understanding[1]

Resistance and dissent in former socialist Europe, 1945–89, constitutes a remarkable chapter in Europe's recent past which informs the identities of post-socialist societies in distinct and highly significant ways, and as such, has reshaped Europe as a whole. Although the most spectacular forms of dissent in these former socialist countries are well known, we believe that after the

[1] This section was adapted from the Action's Memorandum of Understanding.

period of growth and consolidation in the decades after 1989, this field of study and the related domains of cultural heritage have failed to achieve its full significance. This state of affairs results from, (1) the persistence of Cold War-era conceptual distinctions which are biased towards direct political and contentious activities, and so overshadow the indirect cultural challenges to state socialism; (2) the confinement of research within national and disciplinary silos; and (3) the difficulties in coping with the heterogeneity, ephemerality, and linguistic diversity of the cultural legacy of this period.

The New Exploratory Phase in Research on East European Cultures of Dissent (NEP4DISSENT) is a COST Action aimed at triggering a new discovery phase in this remarkable European legacy by providing a platform for incubating networked, transnational, multidisciplinary, and technology-conscious research on cultures of dissent under socialism, as well as developing innovative dissemination methods.

The Action employs a new, reflexive approach which spotlights diverse, under-researched manifestations of cultural subversion; and fosters an understanding of the many diverse ways in which the concept of 'dissent' (and related categories such as opposition and resistance) has been constructed, perceived, used, and acted upon by a broad variety of actors.

'Dissent' is not taken here simply as a given category. On the contrary, the very notion is problematized by such questions as: (1) when or why was someone or something designated as being 'dissident', and how has this subsequently influenced archival and, more broadly, documentary practices; (2) what resistance phenomena have been captured through the lenses of the different collections of documents, artefacts, and testimonies, or been embodied by symbolic spaces; (3) what manifestations have been rendered invisible by the prevailing definitions of cultural dissent; and (4) how has the legacy of dissent been shaped by the broader memory culture in its multiple, state and non-state, local and transnational contexts?

The legacy of opposition and resistance under state socialism in Eastern Europe is as diverse as were the countries forming the Eastern bloc and Yugoslavia: politically, socio-culturally, and in terms of their autonomy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. The **political manifestations of that legacy** have crystallized around a fixed canon of documents and artefacts, figures, movements and practices, and places and events; infused and diffused by both works of scholarship and the workings of cultural memory, all of which has reified certain groups and activities as being emblematic. **Cultural dissent, however, represents a much more complex and ambiguous phenomenon**, reflecting, to a greater extent the diversity mentioned above. Understanding this legacy in terms of **'cultures of dissent'** redeems the indirect manifestations of opposition within the realm of culture. In an anthropological sense, it also illuminates the different social worlds populated by historical actors with their specific and

localized repertoires of practices, discourses, and platforms of expression. **Thus, besides scrutinizing the very processes of canonization and reification, we propose to broaden the knowledge about the cultural multiplicity of styles of oppositional practices and their vehicles; to explore the variety of state and transnational institutions and networks engaged in defining the contours of that historical reality; and to trace transcultural and transnational processes that shaped its cultural memory** (Erll 2011).

The Action aims to break new ground by expanding the field of inquiry to encompass a broad spectrum of subversion across three major problem areas (corresponding to the Working Groups): the effect which the regimes' surveillance of culture had on ideas, currents, movements, and groups in terms of exclusion, marginalization, and infiltration; the expert networks and dilemmas of the negotiated autonomy within the official realm; and the alternative cultural phenomena that were considered marginal both by the dissidents and the powers they opposed. Thus, **Working Group 1: Culture Under Surveillance** (chaired by Muriel Blaive, and co-chaired by James Kapaló) analyses dissent as it was influenced in a direct and top-down manner by institutions who wielded the power of surveillance within the realm of culture, i.e., documenting, classifying, analysing, reporting, and intervening in what was deemed to be subversive. It examines the effects of the exposure of culture to political surveillance, i.e., the impact of censors, the security apparatus, and professional organizations in former socialist countries, on the life trajectories of cultural creators, and cultural events and objects. At the same time, and within the same scope, the Working Group's participants are interested in the counter-surveillance strategies adopted by Western state institutions and transnational centres of cultural transmission such as Radio Free Europe; in particular, how such transnational rivalry opened up spaces for cultural alternatives.

Understanding resistance as an act of negotiated autonomy and as an exploration of the ambiguous realm between the official culture of former socialist countries on the one hand, and openly dissenting cultural activities on the other, defines the research scope of **Working Group 2: Culture in the Grey Zone** (chaired by Zsófia Lóránd, and co-chaired by Jan Mervart). It examines the dilemmas confronting the members of academic and artistic communities who, without engaging in open dissent, cultivated ties to both organized opposition and transnational scientific and artistic networks; while frequently playing a mediating role in introducing subversive, often Western ideas, trends, and theories into the arts, humanities, and social sciences as well as to everyday cultural practices. This research will enable a better understanding of the dual roles played by these individuals and groups, namely, that of simultaneously legitimizing and subverting official culture, and engaging in East-West dialogue. WG2 also takes into consideration the circumstances affecting the life choices of the grey zone

artists and scholars: the existence of organized cultural opposition outside of the official realm, the degree to which such professions are dependent on state patronage, and the extent of cultural isolation from the West and the relationships with Western institutions promoting cultural freedom, among others. In the process of exploring how the grey zones, and the actors within these grey zones operated, WG2 is also interested in the changing and highly context-dependent concept of the *grey zone* itself.

The role of alternative groups and forums in the creation and dissemination of cultural 'autonomy' in former socialist countries constitutes the main interest of **Working Group 3: Alternative Cultures** (chaired by Katalin Cseh-Varga, and co-chaired by Rolf Werenskjold). Alternative cultures consisted of cultural practices, media, and ideas of non-obedience, which were not always without presuppositions, nor completely independent of state infrastructure and politics; and thus this WG seeks to address the genealogy of alternative culture as a point of departure. It also examines how the ephemerality of these alternative media products testifies to the precarious conditions of their creation, and how this is reflected in an uneven archival record consisting of different forms of alternative cultural practices. The Working Group also aims to identify three of the gatekeepers of alternative culture who have coined the historiography of dissent in order to generate a novel understanding of its origins, conditions, and effects. In doing so, WG3 applies comparative and transnational approaches, including both the self-perception of alternative culture and external perspectives from beyond the Iron Curtain. The Working Group's three major areas of investigation include: the social practices of gathering, gathering locations, and modes of exchange (media). The broad topics of the research ranges from club culture, avant-garde art, fan communities, and resourceful venues; to media, such as fanzines, do-it-yourself fashion, foreign news reporting, experimental film, and mail art.

The Action will explore these problem areas from a broad temporal perspective, post-war to post-socialism, and encompass both lived and remembered realities. This broad conceptualization will enable research on dissent and resistance in those countries which, until now, have only been weakly represented because their oppositional heritage has often been considered meagre (e.g. East Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Baltic republics). The Action both resonates with, and provides a historical perspective on, issues which are either the subject of debate inside Europe, or contribute to an understanding of Europe's neighbouring societies. Thus, the fourth research theme underlying the Action's Working Groups considers remembrance and the legacy of dissident cultures in contemporary Europe. The activities of **Working Group 4: Cultural Memory of Dissent** (chaired by Ferenc Laczó, and co-chaired by

Tamás Scheibner)[2] focuses on exploring the cultures of remembrance of pre-1989 East European dissent across Europe. It aims to examine the construction of the oppositional legacy through both official and alternative narratives, the attempts at integrating this legacy into the broader European culture of remembrance, and the contemporary uses of the dissident past within the EU and among its neighbours. It pays special attention to the guiding principles behind the preservation and digitization of dissident heritage, the varied public functions of remembering dissent, and the role of transnational actors and networks within these activities.

In addition, two interface Working Groups strengthen the impact and innovation capacity of the Action's research participants through engagement with two groups of stakeholders: IT professionals with expertise in the humanities and social sciences (WG5), and practitioners in the area of art and cultural heritage curation (WG6). Opening the field to new research methods and professional dissemination practices serves as an impulse for other Working Groups, and so yields innovative insights.

The European Research Area is advancing in its building of digital research infrastructures for the humanities and social sciences: Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure (CLARIN), Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities (DARIAH), and Europeana Research for example. **However, digital tools and techniques have rarely been applied in this particular domain of scholarship. The Action enables such knowledge and technology transfer by creating an interface between the participating researchers, and the communities of digital research environment experts and digital humanities practitioners.** This is the operational field of **Working Group 5: Mediating Research Through Technology** (chaired by Jennifer Edmond, and co-chaired by Lars Wieneke). This Working Group facilitates the knowledge transfer of advances made in digital research environments for the specific needs of the Action's participants. It includes both researchers with experience in applying digital humanities methodologies and tools, and IT professionals. Together they map the technologies which are applicable to the various stages of a research project (data capture, processing, exploration, and presentation) against the specificity of the digital tools, sources, and collection policies; including issues of ethics and privacy, which are pertinent to other Action participants. Based on the needs and ambitions identified by other WGs in this report, WG5 will provide hands-on experience for working with the selected digital initiatives most appropriate to their research and topic.

Significant attention is given to creative strategies for research dissemination, which are instrumental in ensuring the transfer of knowledge to the wider public. The Action's participants increase their capacities in this regard through engaging in productive

[2] Idesbald Goddeeris served as WG4 co-chair between October 2017 and December 2018.

dialogue with art and cultural heritage curators in order to reflect upon the best practices of cooperation with these two milieus and the challenges involved in transferring research results to the wider public. **Working Group 6: Art and Cultural Heritage Curation** (chaired by David Crowley, and co-chaired by Ieva Astahovska) includes researchers, art and cultural heritage curators, and digital humanities professionals; and will disseminate the Action participants' research by working with art and cultural heritage curators. Its aim is to share its experience and to better understand the legal, institutional, and social challenges of providing public access to documents and artefacts in exhibitions and digital humanities. Furthermore, it explores the role of the investigator as a contributor to curatorial events and initiatives at the various stages of these events' lifecycles, while probing the generative role of exhibitions in fostering research. It also explores the tools and best practices used in online curation.

NEP4DISSENT has cooperated closely with other related EU-funded projects such as 'Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries' (COURAGE), which is represented in the Action by Tamás Scheibner. NEP4DISSENT promotes the outcomes of COURAGE and utilizes them in its work. For instance, a Zotero bibliography containing relevant literature collected by COURAGE was shared with NEP4DISSENT and is currently curated as a separate resource. 'Creative Agency and Religious Minorities: "Hidden Galleries" in the Secret Police Archives in 20th Century Central and Eastern Europe' (HIDDEN GALLERIES), an ERC-funded project, is represented by James Kapalo, who links research on surveillance with online curatorial practice. The Action collaborates closely with DARIAH-ERIC's Digital Methods and Practices Observatory Working Group (DiMPO), represented by its chair Costis Dallas, co-chair Maciej Maryl, and numerous other active members: Jennifer Edmond, Michelle Doran, Jessie Labov, Ingrida Kelpšienė, and Klaudia Grabowska. DiMPO members were very active in conducting interviews with the Action's participants who were focused on the uptake of digital methods by historians of dissent.

Beyond the State of the Art[3]

Research on oppositional activities in the socialist countries of Eastern, Central, and South-eastern Europe is not uncharted terrain for scholarship or heritage (Falk 2011). In most former socialist countries there are numerous official, and non-governmental and private research institutes, centres, archives, and museums which deal with the history of anti-communist opposition. In most cases these explorations focus on the political activities and ideological currents of the opposition in different countries under different historical conditions (Ash 1983, Eyal 2003, Falk 2002); but important studies on cultural activities, groups, works, and artefacts,

[3] This section was adapted from the Action's Memorandum of Understanding.

as well as their local and international significance, have also been undertaken (Bren 2010, Kenney 2002). In addition, the most renowned writings of opposition cultures are available in translation; other types of material outputs have been presented, often in individual or group exhibitions; and movies on dissent are screened in cinemas all over the world. In a few important cases the connections between seemingly isolated cultural practices behind the Iron Curtain and the contemporaneous cultural practices in the West have been explored (Piotrowski 2009). Some of the richest archival collections have already been made accessible. **With all this effort aimed at identifying, documenting, and duly commemorating the most spectacular cases of cultural resistance within each of the national settings, a good deal has been achieved. Yet we are convinced that the above described 'consolidation phase' has reached its limits and now it is necessary to explore further.**

It has been proposed that NEP4DISSENT can overcome the following limitations of the consolidation phase:

a. **Using Cold War-era distinctions and categories, and thus failing to recognize certain practices as oppositional.** The consolidation phase relied on polarized concepts and categories which have proliferated since the early years of the Cold War and survived even when the state socialism in several countries had been somewhat reformed (Gleason 1995, Ekiert 1996). In particular, the sharp distinctions between official culture (which typically categorized its adversaries as 'decadent', 'imperialist', or 'bourgeois') and oppositional culture, at home and abroad (which identified itself rather as 'free', 'independent', or 'national'), has often been taken for granted. This dualistic perspective obscures what should be seen rather as the interplay between imposed cultural exclusion, instances of negotiation, and conscious dissent. Taken together, this interplay shaped the space in which alternatives to official cultural values could emerge. That shortcoming has been especially notable in such countries as East Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Baltic republics; where the scarcity of emblematic manifestations of opposition led political analysts to discard them as submissive cultures (Flam 1998). This calls for a rethink and recalibration of the established methodologies and categories employed in the study of the former Eastern bloc and Yugoslavia.
b. **Relying on nationally-focused approaches, and being inattentive to the transnational aspects of oppositional movements.** Even though the transnational dimension was considered an essential feature of dissent in its own time, the consolidation phase unfolded mostly within the confines of national states and so

tended to stress the uniqueness of each country's historical experience. In the field of art history and art curation, considerable effort has been made to create new national frameworks to allow unofficial art practices to be incorporated into national narratives. Since 1989/91 much collecting activity has been focused on this task. What remains relatively underdeveloped are the comparative studies of practices across the region. Still less attention has been paid to international actors and processes that had contributed to forging a common European culture prior to 1989: such as the regional networks of dissident solidarity, scholarly and professional international exchange, mutual cultural transfers, and international organizations who promoted cultural freedom across the Iron Curtain (Kind-Kovács & Labov 2013, Behrends & Lindenberger 2014). Those rare efforts at internationalizing the legacy of dissent in former socialist countries have routinely employed the problematic notion of totalitarianism to emphasize the differences in the post-war history of East and West, thus building barriers within the European culture of memory (see e.g. Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism 2008).

c. **Neglecting the problem of access to original archival sources, due to both the heterogeneity of the data and the uneven investment by European countries in digital research environments and cultural heritage infrastructures.** Access to existing collections and their reuse in research, educational, or artistic environments has been limited due to their heterogeneity, linguistic diversity, and the ephemeral nature of the documents and artefacts which form this unique legacy. This limitation is strengthened by the uneven quality of the metadata, resulting from the uneven investment in this particular realm of cultural heritage in general. When it comes to opening-up data to critical examination by employing digital methods and tools and to pooling resources for carrying out joint research agendas, the consolidation phase lags behind the progress which has been made in Europe in the development of digital cultural heritage infrastructures and digital research environments for knowledge discovery and popularization.

NEP4DISSENT seeks to develop an approach which, in general terms, overcomes the above shortcomings in the following ways.

Cold War distinctions and categories. Going beyond the existing conceptual frameworks requires a critical examination of the consolidation phase (the discourses and processes which orient research agendas and collection policies), as well as mapping the spectrum of subversive cultural forms and manifestations in a more nuanced way; including: the effects of official surveillance of the culture and counteractive efforts of international institutions

engaging in cultural promotion and sponsorship; efforts at creating negotiated openings within official culture; and alternative cultural phenomena that are not easily classified as either dissident or officially acceptable.

Nationally-oriented approaches. Serving as an international platform for sharing research results and cross-fertilizing national research agendas, NEP4DISSENT incubates comparative research. In particular it promotes a transnational perspective, be it in reference to Cold War competition between Eastern surveillance and Western counter-surveillance organizations, the role of mobility within professional networks of scholars and artists, or the transnational culture of underground print. It also employs a comparative perspective on dissident experiences in countries outside the region, notably those with dictatorial legacies.

Availability and accessibility of data. Involving IT experts with experience in creating research environments, as well as digital humanities practitioners, NEP4DISSENT examines existing types of data and assesses their state of digital readiness against those digital methods and tools that could be employed to explore them.

Curatorial innovation. Much of the material legacy of dissent is ephemeral or even immaterial – unlike the well-resourced official zones of culture prior to 1989–91. Art and cultural heritage curators, including librarians, work with researchers and archivists to design new ways of making such objects accessible in order to stimulate public understanding and discussion.

In this way, NEP4DISSENT posits a new, multidisciplinary and reflexive approach to the concept of dissent, taking into consideration the diversity of its manifestations in different cultural and artistic media, in different countries of the region, and across different historical periods. In doing so, NEP4DISSENT aims to elucidate the cultures of dissent which fall outside the canon of the emblematic representations of opposition and resistance in the diverse domains of arts and culture, such as literature and publishing, visual and performing arts, architecture, alternative music, amateur photography and film, humanities, and social science scholarship. This new approach **broadens the understanding of the surveillance of culture under socialism and its role in both conceptualizing subversion as a category with which to describe cultural actions, and in generating it.** This approach will extend the prevailing focus on censorship to include other aspects of cultural policy, such as the institutional management of culture through professional associations (such as writers and journalists' unions), the monitoring of Western media, and control over transnational mobility.

This **broadens the concept of 'dissent' to encompass the diverse manifestations of cultural marginality**, i.e., ideas, actors, and phenomena, which fall outside the main field of

contention for cultural legitimacy, and which were not necessarily considered subversive either by its official wielders or its opponents. This includes non-canonical forms of cultural resistance, often in the grey zone between official and unofficial activity, especially in countries which did not experience mass organized movements of opposition during the period of communist rule, such as East Germany and Bulgaria. But these were also niche communities, established without specific subversive intent, from confessional, ethnic, and sexual minorities to punk music groups, science-fiction fan clubs, and video game developers. Through the **investigation of the various alternative means and platforms of expression** (ranging from illegal broadcasts and music recordings, through amateur photography and film, to exhibitions and performances in private or otherwise marginal spaces), and alongside the landmark underground publishing culture, it will put emphasis on the social, practical, and material aspects of cultural autonomy as it was fostered under socialism. Focusing on the **cultural transfers between dissident milieus of the different socialist countries, as well as across the Iron Curtain**, and enacted by networks of mobile individuals, centres of exile, and Western institutions promoting cultural freedom, it examines how attempts to overcome the divisions in European culture were a common enterprise for European citizens, both East and West, which started well before 1989. Furthermore, NEP4DISSENT investigates the **contested ways in which the oppositional legacy has informed memory cultures** in post-socialist countries and Europe as a whole. The divergence between a consolidated historical record which can be written about and understood from accessible sources through tried and true methods on the one hand, and the picture that could emerge from a more comprehensive record which is explorable through new digital tools, on the other; remains the 'grand challenge' of modern historical scholarship in the digital era.

2. Network Description

This project was prepared by a network of 55 proposers from 21 European countries under the direction of the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Many of the proposers already had a considerable record in mutual cooperation. The Action was approved by COST in June 2017 and officially began in October 2017.

The current scope of the NEP4DISSENT network can be measured in several different ways. Formally, each participation in, and financing of, a COST Action is dependent upon the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by COST member countries and other affiliated entities, including COST Near Neighbour Countries (NCC). During the first 18 months of

the project, the NEP4DISSENT MoU was signed by 36 COST Member Countries[4] and 4 COST NCCs.[5]

It is worth noting that there is a large representation of COST Inclusiveness-Target Countries (ITCs) both within the network and the Action's management (see Table 1).

Action: Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITCs)				
	Participating countries % ITC	MC Members % ITC	Leadership roles % ITC	Relative representation of ITCs in leadership roles
Action CA16213	54	57	55	96
All Actions	49	47	23	49

Table 1. Figures show percentage of participants from ICT in the Action, and its MC and leadership.Source: First Progress Report of the Action CA16213 Submitted on 30 October 2018.

Furthermore, the network includes a good **balance between the number of experienced researchers, and Early Career Investigators (ECIs) with significant achievements in the field**. The participation of ECIs is encouraged both in the Action's activities and in leadership roles (see Table 2).

Action: Early Career Investigators (ECIs)			
	MC Members % ECI	Leadership roles % ECI	Relative representation of ECIs in leadership roles
Action CA16213	30	36	120

Table 2. Figures show percentage of ECIs within the Action's MC and leadership. Source: First Progress Report of the Action CA16213 Submitted on 30 October 2018.

NEP4DISSENT is committed to the principle and practice of **gender equality,** and is represented by a good gender balance among management committee members and in leadership roles (see Table 3).

[4] Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom. Details available here: https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA16213/#tabs|Name:parties

[5] Georgia, Kosovo, Russia, and Ukraine.

Action: Gender Balance			
	MC Members % Female	Leadership roles % Female	Relative representation of females in leadership roles
Action CA16213	50	55	110
All Actions	39	41	105

Table 3. Figures show percentage of female participants within the Action's MC and leadership. Source: First Progress Report of the Action CA16213 Submitted on 30 October 2018.

The network features **expertise in dissident movements covering the majority of former socialist countries belonging to the Eastern bloc and Yugoslavia. Representatives from every historical region of Europe relevant to the NEP4DISSENT research challenge (i.e. East, Central, and South-eastern Europe as well as the Baltics) are involved, and the geographical scope of their expertise is complemented by participants from Western Europe. The majority of relevant research centres in Europe are represented** to ensure that the Action will be able to achieve its objectives in research coordination, knowledge exchange and transfer, and capacity building.

Map 1. Location is based on the geometric centre of the country. Node size is dependent on the number of people who represent the country. Map created in Nodegoat.

During the first eighteen months of the Action's lifecycle, the total number of people who registered to participate in the Action's activities was 241, which were in various capacities: the COST management committee and WG Members, Conference and the STSM grant recipients, and local hosts and registered participants of the Action's outreach programs. The number of unregistered attendees at our events would have been still higher.

When broken down by country, the numbers reveal a strong correlation with the locations of NEP4DISSENT summits, thus pointing out its importance in the Action's outreach activities: Serbia (38), Hungary (27), and Poland (21). In addition, sizable cohorts of participants come from Czechia (13) and Romania (11). Countries which have five to ten participants are Latvia, Germany, Lithuania, Norway, Croatia, the UK, Ireland, Belgium, and Sweden (Country representation in NEP4DISSENT is illustrated in Map 1).

Map 2. Trips to NEP4DISSENT events. Node size is dependent on the sum of trips to and from a location. Map created in Nodegoat.

Of NEP4DISSENT's members, 124 are most active, and regularly attend network activities, respond to surveys and other calls for contributions, and who have a profile on NEP4DISSENT's webpage. In this group, Czechia, Latvia, and Poland have ten members each; Serbia has nine; Romania has eight; Hungary has seven; Croatia, Ireland, Norway, and Sweden have five; Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Germany, and Lithuania have four; Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Israel and the Netherlands have three; Austria, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Macedonia, and Malta have two; and Georgia, Greece, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK have one.

The NEP4DISSENT Summits attract large audiences and are the largest of the Action's annual events; they combine Management Committee Meetings and collocated Work Group Meetings with outreach programmes. The Warsaw Summit in December 2017 saw the participation of 70 people, while 85 gathered in Belgrade in October 2018, and 79 attended the Action's assembly in Budapest in February 2019.

Working Group meetings, held independently of the summits, in February and March 2018 in Berlin, Cork, Dublin, Leuven, Prague, and Vienna, attracted between twelve and eighteen participants.

The Action has disbursed, so far, seven ITC Conference Grants and 23 STSM grants (the NEP4DISSENT travel network is illustrated on Map 2).

Participants' Expertise

The network represents different disciplines within the humanities and social sciences relevant for achieving the Action's objectives: anthropology, art history, archival studies, digital humanities, history, literary and cultural studies, philosophy, political science, and sociology, which corresponds to the **interdisciplinary design of the Action**. Several of the participants specialize not only in the study of the opposition under communist regimes but also its afterlife during the post-1989 period. Some have also studied the authoritarian regimes of Western Europe and so will contribute a comparative perspective. **Participation of key stakeholders** – experienced IT professionals with digital humanities and social sciences expertise, as well as art and cultural heritage curators – increase the impact of the Action.

Figure 1. A wordcloud representing subject tags which describe participants' interests. Font size depends on how many times the term was chosen by NEP4DISSENT participants. Created in Tableau Public, based on the database of participants' profiles, powered by Nodegoat.

In addition to expertise, it is the interlocking research interests which make the NEP4DISSENT network well integrated and interconnected. In the course of creating participant profiles on the NEP4DISSENT website (available at https://nep4dissent.eu/profiles/), colleagues came up with 65 subject tags that best describe their research interests. As illustrated by the word cloud in Figure 1 above, the most popular of these subject tags are as follows: 'remembrance' (27),[6] 'cultural heritage' (25), 'dissidents' (24), 'data curation' (20), and 'underground culture' (19); all of which correspond to the Action's grand themes. Also popular are subject tags such as 'cultural diplomacy' (19) and 'cultural transfer' (17), which highlight the Action's focus on the transnational dimension of the dissident legacy.

A different image emerges if we look at the NEP4DISSENT subjects from the perspective of their interconnectedness. Figure 2 shows how the multiple choice of subject tags creates topical clusters. Apart from the tags mentioned above, 'media', 'curatorial practices', and 'emigration/exile' are topics where research interests most frequently meet (i.e. are most frequently chosen with other topics). It is equally telling that some of the well established topical areas in current research such as 'survivors of persecutions under authoritarian/totalitarian regimes' and 'religious activism' are not often combined with other topics.

[6] Number of times a subject tag was chosen by a participant.

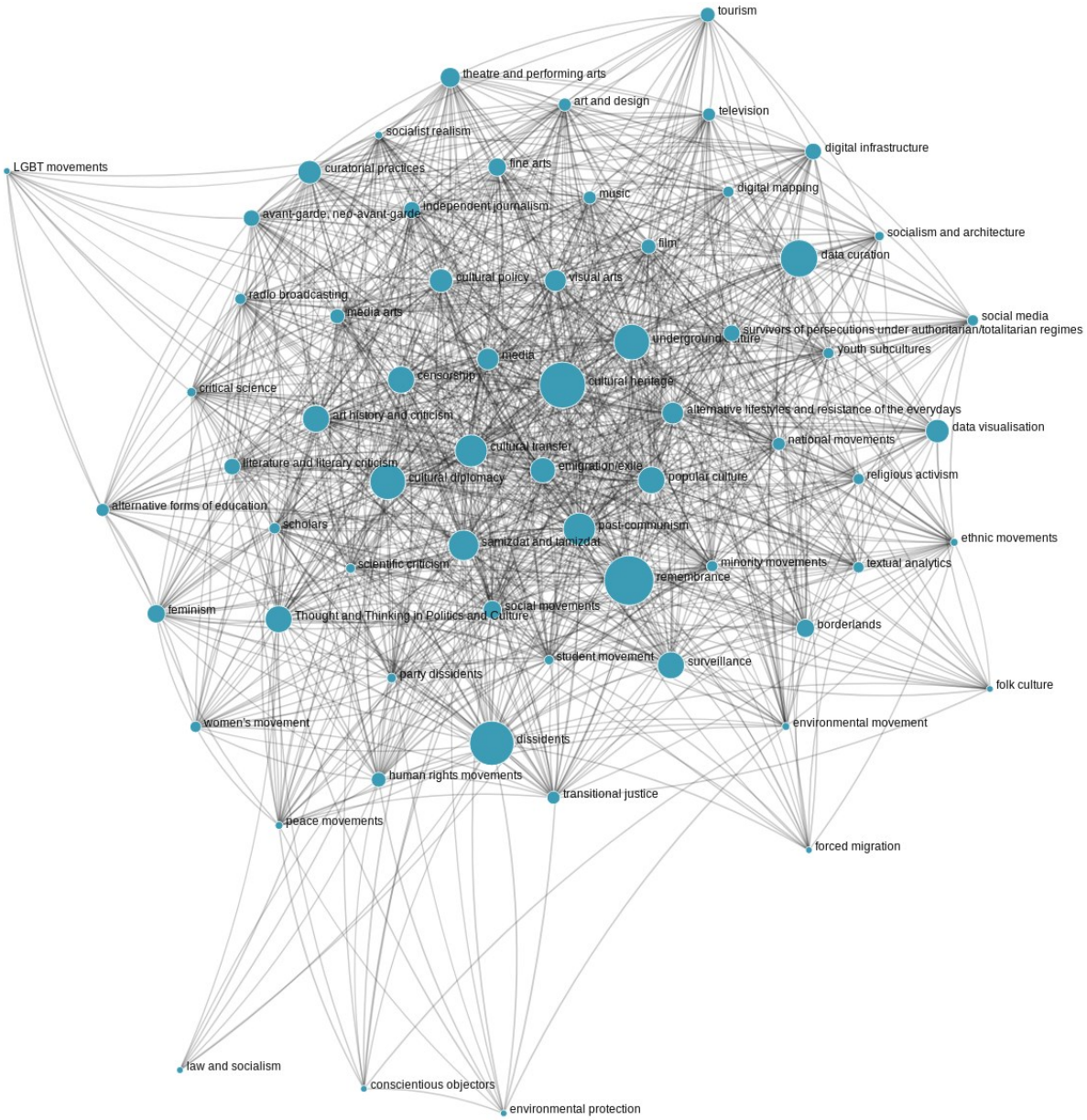

Figure 2. Network of the Action participants' research topics.Created in Nodegoat.

The participants work within Work Groups, the size of which varies depending on the WG's scope. WG1 (Culture under Surveillance), WG5 (Mediating Research Through Technology), and WG6 (Art and Cultural Heritage Curation) correspond to more specialized areas of expertise and represent smaller teams; whereas the scope of WG2 (Culture in the Grey Zone), WG3 (Alternative Cultures), and WG4 (Cultural Memory of Dissent) welcomes a more diversified and larger range of contributions. However, as **Figure 3** demonstrates, many of the participants are involved in the activities of two or more WGs, thus sustaining the communication between WGs and the complementarity of their activities.

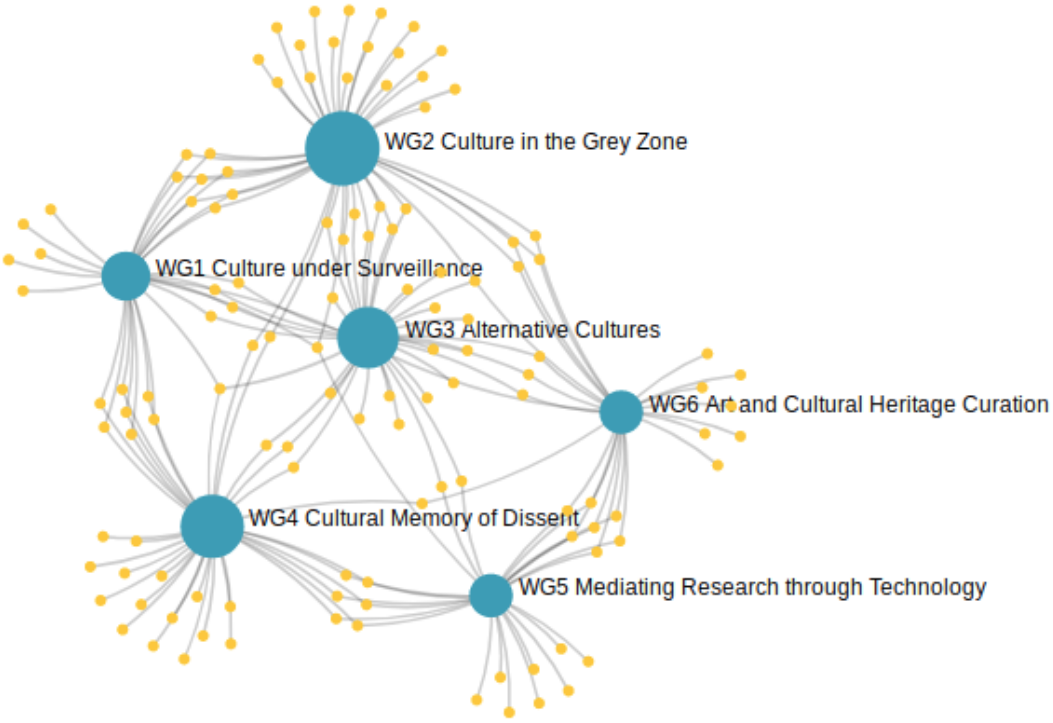

Figure 3. Action participants' (yellow) affiliations with working groups (blue). Node size is dependent on number of links. Graph created in Nodegoat.

3. Report: Aims and Preparation

The Joint Review Report (JRR) concludes the process of the State of The Art Review (SoTAR) conducted within the Action's WGs, and is described in detail below. The main aims of the JRR are as follows:

- to scope out the possibilities for leveraging and creating synergies between existing research initiatives, digital research tools, and dissemination best practices, in order to achieve progress beyond the state of the art in research on East European Cultures of Dissent;
- to capture emerging trends in scholarship within this domain, against the background of the state of the art;
- to provide an informed justification for the choice of the Action WGs' focus areas, and to guide the implementation phase of the Action, defining the priorities for the activities undertaken by the WGs;
- to create a broad overview of the emerging trends in this research field, which will serve as a reference for interested stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, art and

cultural heritage institutions, digital research infrastructures experts and creators, as well as funding agencies.

Description of the Process

The process of the State of the Art Review, which culminates with the delivery of this Joint Review Report, consists of several stages, as depicted in Figure 4. Before the NEP4DISSENT Kick-Off meeting in December 2017 in Warsaw, a **survey of participants** was circulated which enabled the Action members to communicate their relevant research expertise and scholarly plans. The survey responses were then expanded to form **position papers** which the Action's members submitted to the WG Review Meetings. During these meetings, WG participants pooled together research agendas, approaches, and data in order to define **focus areas** for future collaborations. The WG focus areas defined the scope of the **SoTAR Survey**, which was designed to map the state of the art in the broader research fields which corresponded to each of the WGs' focus areas, and to provide an informed justification as to why working in these focus areas would contribute to achieving progress beyond the state of the art, thus triggering a new exploratory phase in research on East European cultures of dissent. In the case of some WGs, the participant survey, position papers, and SoTAR survey, were further complemented by interviews and literature reviews; while Action members used COST networking tools to prepare drafts of the WGs' contributions which now form the chapters of the JRR. The early drafts of the reports were presented during the NEP4DISSENT Summit in Belgrade in October 2019, and advanced drafts of the chapters were discussed during the NEP4DISSENT Summit in Budapest in February 2019. The report was finalized during the NEP4DISSENT Core Group meeting in Luxembourg in March 2019.

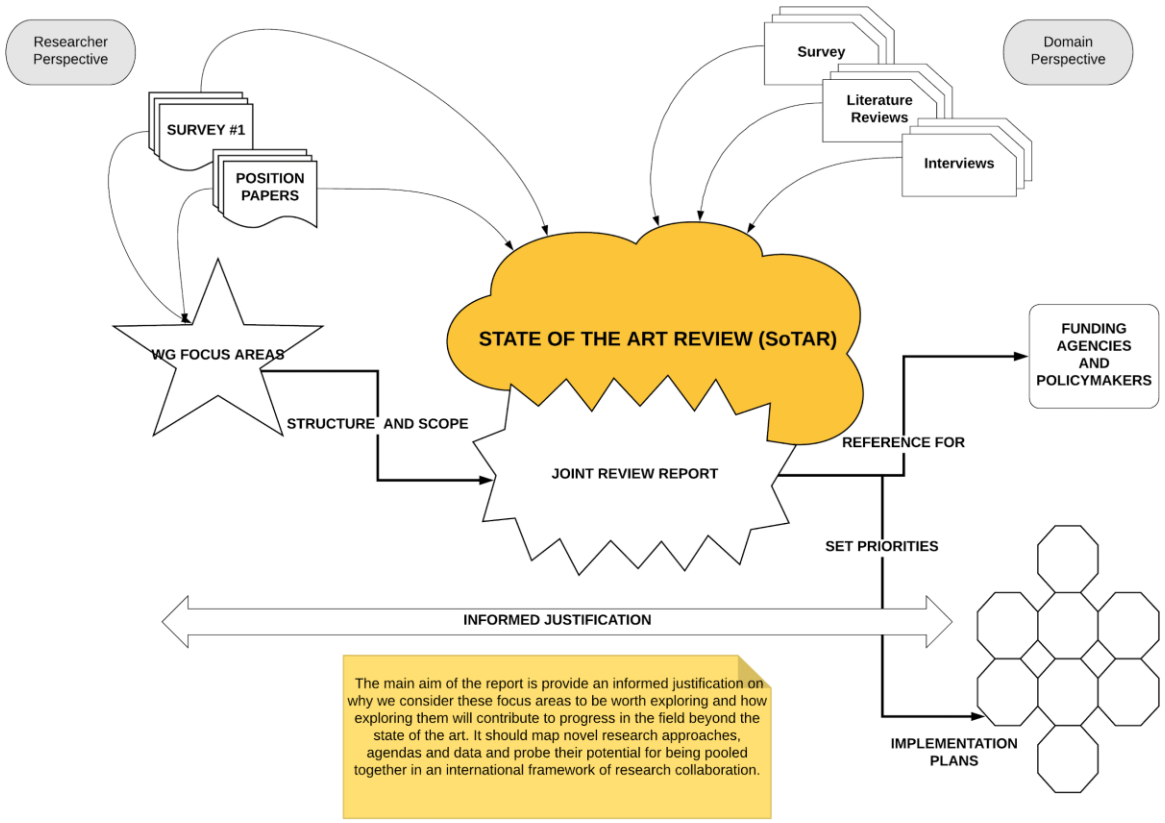

Figure 4. The process of the State of the Art Review.

4. Summary of Chapters and Recommendations

The chapters of this report were created by the NEP4DISSENT WGs in a bottom-up process. While the necessary harmonization of the report's structure has been achieved during the editorial stage, the WGs enjoyed far-reaching autonomy when it came to collecting information and writing strategies, reflecting each WGs' distinctive composition, dynamics, and aims, as they are described below.

The bottom-up, autonomous process with which this report was generated also translates into how this report can be read. First, the chapters can be read as stand-alone documents. The editors have decided to retain possible repetitions and redundancies, in terms of the topics discussed and references, as these reflect the overlapping interests of the WGs, while allowing them to receive a different treatment from each of the WG's perspectives. For example, Nicolescu and Charapan worked on the practices in museums as a way of manipulating culture and history under and after communism, a topic that connects with the subject matter of WG4 and 6, but from a perspective that fits into WG1's research agenda. The SotAR survey response

by Dorota Jarecka was insightful enough to inspire discussion in both WG2 and WG6. WG3 describes the embeddedness of alternative culture in the licensed cultural realm of foreign Yugoslavia, which, given the exceptional character of that socialist state, resonates well with the focus of WG2.

Second, in neither case was the ambition to provide a comprehensive treatment of the respective subject matters. Rather, in tune with the JRR's overall aim, each chapter is the product of leveraging and creating synergies between the existing research initiatives of the WG members. The emerging trends in the scholarship of East European cultures of dissent which the chapters capture against the background of the state of the art, are correspondingly charted on a map configured by the WGs' focus areas, which pool together the research agendas of the WG members.

Writing Strategies

Chapter 1 was created by WG1. It was composed by a relatively small group of scholars with clearly defined but complementary expertise. In accordance with the group's composition, each section of the chapter, all of which correspond to the WG's focus areas, is an essay authored by a WG member. The essays share a formal structure, addressing the state of the art in the author's field of research and identifying any significant lacunae, as well as proposing how to bridge these gaps in international historiography.

Chapter 2 is an account based on a much broader range of consultations conducted by WG2, the outcomes of which have been pooled together into topical sections to reflect the diversity of research contexts in which the concept of the *grey zone* have recently been deployed. This is preceded by a discussion which aims to sharpen the analytical precision which can be expected from this multifaceted category. However, the chapter does list several individual contributions from experts in this particular domain (Sommer, Oates-Indruchova).

Chapter 3 is perhaps most illustrative of the SotAR process, as it consists of extracts and summaries of the SotAR survey responses. These are clustered into topical groups and preceded by a general introduction which lays out the overall methodological and theoretical framework which oriented the activities of WG3, along with overviews of the sections that guide the reading.

Chapter 4 applies a reverse procedure in which the overall structure of the contribution was designed and agreed upon in advance by a core group of WG4 members, thus creating a framework for incorporating, revising, and enriching the responses to the NEP4DISSENT survey, resulting in eight internally-coherent topical sections.

The multi-layered approach of Chapter 5 reflects WG5's mission to facilitate the transfer of the skills and methods of digital history to research on Eastern European cultures of dissent, thereby matching the needs of the researchers with state-of-the-art digital research

infrastructure and tools. In addition to the NEP4DISSENT survey, the chapter draws on the experiences of the representatives of various European digital projects, in particular the COURAGE registry and the DiMPO group, as well as on group interviews conducted with the Action's members.

Chapter 6, the work of WG6, provides a platform for creative dialog between researchers and curators, and, besides the SotAR survey, relied on the contributions of experts who were involved in major exhibitions which have put dissent on display. The chapter, as a whole, was authored collectively, and organizes the discussion of the conceptual and curatorial dimensions of exhibits central to displaying dissent (both historical and retrospective) around several key concepts: dissent, nonconformism, avant-gardism, and the underground.

Summary of Content, and Recommendations

This subsection gives a brief overview of the state of the art as surveyed by Working Groups in their respective fields, as well as recommendations for further research which could contribute to a new phase in the study of dissent.

Chapter 1: Culture under Surveillance

Research on surveillance has recently received a boost due to the current preoccupation with the massive state and corporate misuse of personal data in the digital age, all of which happens with the direct involvement of masses of people who, more or less knowingly and willingly, leave their personal data at the institutions and corporations' disposal, and for whom surveillance is at once omnipresent and invisible. In this context, new research stands out against the background of the state of the art for its bottom up approach. Rather than investigating how surveillance was imposed top-down, it focuses more on the participatory aspects of this phenomenon. 'Culture under surveillance', as WG1 Chair, Muriel Blaive, explains, was at the same time a 'culture of surveillance' which was inscribed deeply into the fabric of everyday practices and interactions, or in other words, 'a way of life' under constant observation. WG1's approach suggests a counter-balance to the widespread tendency in contemporary historical scholarship to use the archives of the secret police to document the criminal character of the regime by emphasizing the violent, coercive, and terroristic aspects of surveillance, and to act as history's judge by insisting on clear-cut distinctions between victims, dissident heroes, and party perpetrators, with little sensitivity to the historical evolution of the regime. WG1's advocates see surveillance, instead, as an evolving complex of practices, sentiments, and 'imaginaries' with their agency distributed more broadly, if still unevenly, than we tend to assume among state, dissident, and

social actors. This is a relationship which the secret police archives illuminate in a fragmentary and opaque way; it thus needs to be complemented by visual materials and oral testimonies. Within such a framework, the reality of surveillance has a more nuanced past, especially since it reflects the process of erosion of the late-socialist regimes. It also becomes a past which we can relate to in a more meaningful way from the perspective of our contemporary predicament.

WG1's contributions concentrate on six main issues: periodization, social control, dissent, surveillance in everyday life, source criticism, and the representation of secrecy (understood as the tension between visibility and invisibility in social, cultural, and police activities). These avenues also form the direction of WG1's recommendations concerning future scholarship in the area of surveillance of culture:

- **Create a relational, reflexive approach to surveillance.** Transgress the binary state–dissidence relation and the focus on the secret police. It is crucial to study surveillance as a complex relationship between the state and society. This also entails an affective aspect of surveillance, as well as studying the forms of socialization between agent and informer.
- **Engage with the visual dimension of surveillance practices.** As the material and cultural world represented in the archives is an effect of the 'curatorial' practices of the secret police, the critical tools of museography and museology allow us to engage in the dichotomy between knowledge production and manipulation. Together with the surveilled communities themselves, the visual materials which were produced by the police can be explored, allowing these practices and the material gathered to be questioned. This issue is also raised by WG6.
- **Probe new focus areas**. While not addressing the issue of surveillance directly, the materials gathered in the archives allow for new avenues of research which have been pointed out by WG members. These include addressing the relationship between repression and the establishment of an underground church; state practices and social-cultural norms introduced to exercise social control; tension between national and ethnocentric projects, such as open-air museums, which do not challenge communism directly; and the archives of the secret police as an instance which defines what the dissent and dissidence is.
- **Learn from the experience**. Finally, one cannot overlook the timeliness of this work for our contemporary media culture, the participants of which renounce their privacy – voluntarily or not – to social media, portable devices, search engines, apps, voice-recording services, and many other phenomena of the contemporary digital milieu; all of

which bears a resemblance to the state surveillance being researched by the Working Group.

Chapter 2: Culture in the Grey Zone

The second chapter joins in aiming for a recalibration of our cognitive tools to better reflect the historically changing dynamics of socialist societies and cultures. In this respect, the concept of the *grey zone* is indicative, and serves as a common denominator for the larger trend emerging in current scholarship, which is to dismantle the sharp dichotomies and oppositions inherited from the Cold War paradigm between the oppressive state and dissident heroes. WG2 concludes that the concept of the *grey zone*, when endowed with analytical precision, becomes a handy epistemic device for undoing these dichotomies. This work involves refocusing research agendas towards the exploration of particular 'empirical realities': social and professional groups with critical capacity, exercising autonomous, albeit limited agency from within the official structures of the state. It also sheds new light on specific 'imagined realities', where the grey zone stands for an intellectual, moral, or ideological position of non-alignment with respect to the dominant political cleavages of the day, which had been adopted by individuals and groups on the margins of both the official and the alternative culture. In particular the grey zone of the alternative culture has been hitherto underexplored, or collapsed with the latter. Gender-sensitive research can fruitfully exploit both perspectives. Women belong to social categories which socialism prided itself on having emancipated, and this entailed some real and tangible gains in autonomy (compared to both the pre-communist and post-communist societies), while at the same time critical positions with respect to patriarchal orientation of both the official and underground cultures, were well articulated. The concept of the grey zone might further enable us to revisit the existing scholarship on the symbolical geography of formerly socialist Europe as a space of in-betweenness. Finally, it can serve to complicate our understanding of the relationship between the production of culture and knowledge, and governance under late socialism; in particular from the perspective of the transnational networks of professional, academic and cultural mobility, and the exchange of ideas, which persisted and thrived independently of changing geopolitical circumstances.

Authors argue for the analytical power of the concept of the *grey zone* to render new insights into the study of dissidence. In a similar way to WG1, researchers suggest that a greater attention should be given to the social embeddedness of cultural opposition. They argue for the consideration of the phenomena of dissent in a 'triangular space', in which the social milieu (or milieus) functions as a collective actor and a resonance chamber for the work of two other

actors: cultural dissidents, and the agents of state surveillance. The proposed approach responds to the ambivalent nature of social behaviour and allows for an analysis of the temporal transformation from late to post-communism.

Applying the notion of the grey zone as an analytical tool to those already well covered topics of everyday life under state socialism, censorship, scholarly publishing, gender, and women, may generate new insights. Similarly, such an approach, in which the grey zone is either a tool for analysis or its subject, opens new fields of inquiry such as:

- **Eastern Europe as a grey zone** – challenging the orientalizing perspectives of the region and exploring the strategies for dealing with state socialism by particular groups.
- **Nationalism and nationalist dissent as a grey zone**, given the suspicion of liberal dissidents toward nationalistic approaches.
- **Churches and religious groups** in their split between pro- and anti-communism.
- **Environmentalist movements** deserve broader research on both the national and transnational level

Chapter 3: Alternative Cultures

Some of the above themes reappear in Chapter 3, 'Alternative Cultures'. It is the shared view of the authors of this chapter, that the state-of-the-art representations of the alternative culture are characterized by an excess of heroic myth-making and elitism. Beyond most canonical and emblematic manifestations, which have already been thoroughly researched, there exists an uncharted terrain of cultural expressions yet to be discovered, whether (to take just two examples) that is the subversive effects of the disco club culture, which have been overlooked by the scholars of pop culture who identify cultural rebellion mostly with rock music; or the existence of queer and alternative sexual expression in the art scene, being on the margin of research on alternative culture which dealt mostly with cultural manifestations of civic, human-rights, and patriotic protest. To go beyond the state of the art, the authors suggest, requires a 'methodological and theoretical framework that allows for a multifaceted research' which is more sensitive to the ephemeral micro- and macro-histories, more critical and reflexive with respect to the established mythologies (modes of representation created both by historical actors and the writers of their histories), and which fully understands the embeddedness of alternative culture both within the cultural fabric of society (including the sphere of licensed culture), and in the transnational flow of cultural practices and ideas. Such a research program should start with an intellectual inquiry into the genealogy of concepts used to describe the

marginal and/or contentious cultural phenomena in former socialist countries (such as the 'underground' or 'counter-culture', in addition to alternative culture) and proceed by capturing the diversity of material and virtual 'spaces', the 'communities' formed around these spaces, and the 'networks' which connected them; as well as the cultural 'transfer and exchange' these networks enabled, both behind and beyond the European divide of the post-war period. Spaces, communities and networks, and their relationships, drive the focus of WG3.

As for the trajectories for future research, WG3 focused on how identities were mediated in the external representation of the region, and also how transnationalism, multi-linguicism, encounters, and translations may be used to gain new insights. It also examines the possibility of exploring alternative culture using the methods used by Digital Humanities, which might be able to 'measure' data which most traditional scholarship is incapable of doing.

Working Group 3 has identified the following fields for the productive exploration of their approach:

- **Popular culture, everyday culture, and subculture**. Disco culture, youth subculture, modes of self-(re)presentation, and popular culture media carry a message that shows a deviation from the state's expectations of a socialist behaviour and ways of living, but in doing so they are not challenging the state apparatus with the same aims and for the same reasons as dissident movements.
- **Aesthetic practices**. Exploration of the media of dissent in their ability to overcome any sort of aesthetic regulation.
- **Dissent as cultural transfer**. Information transfer as a constitutive element of Eastern, Central, and South-eastern European alternative cultures. Samizdat publications and their distribution, intellectual influences from outside socialist countries, intellectual exchange in self-thought collectives, the back-and-forth of artistic works and correspondences, and radio broadcasts.
- **'In-betweens' or grey zones**. Intersecting with WG2's research interests, WG3 explores the complex relationship between artistic dissent and state infrastructure.
- **Eastern European dissent as seen from the 'outside'**. In order to achieve a broad and historically adequate understanding of alternative cultures, one needs to consider the perception of dissent in foreign news reporting, or scholarly publications from the time. This also helps to challenge dichotomies and forced categorizations in the historiography of socialist Europe during the Cold War.

Chapter 4: Cultural Memory of Dissent

Chapter 4, the 'Cultural Memory of Dissent', discusses how dissent has been memorialized in the three decades since 1989, and explores the processes (national, regional, and global) of the canonization and contestation of the post-dissident narratives of remembrance. The discussion is organized around three major focus areas: (1) *concepts, actors, institutions*; (2) *the making of narratives and their impact*; and (3) *dimensions and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion*. These flow into eight topical sections dedicated to key concepts: crucial actors, the main institutions, mainstream narratives, the canonization of post-dissidents and its consequences; political-ideological perspectives, gender, ethnicity, class, religious dimensions, and the role of (i.e. the transformation of) the media in the processes of remembrance. For each section, the authors have identified notable gaps in existing scholarship and recommend the most promising directions for further explorations.

Working Group 4 recommends the study of the following three questions in particular:

- **How has dissent and its alternatives been conceptualized across Eastern Europe over time**, and how have the various actors, institutions, and narratives shaped this process?
- How have **political ideologies, gender, ethnicity, class, religion, and the various media** impacted on what has been included in, and excluded from, the memory of dissent?
- **How have the biographies of post-dissidents evolved after 1989**, and how have their biographical trajectories interacted with the contest over the canonization of their pasts before 1989?

Chapter 5: Mediating Research through Technology

Chapter 5, 'Mediating Research through Technology', probes the current and potential future role of technology in supporting and promoting research on Eastern European cultures of dissent, however, its implications have a broader relevance for practitioners of digital history. The chapter starts by offering a broad panorama of the legacy of dissent and the state of its digital readiness for advanced research use with the example of the *COURAGE* registry. Next, it explains the intricacies and challenges of digitizing that legacy by focusing on the case of unlicensed print culture (a.k.a. samizdat). Further, drawing on the results of the DIMPO survey, it explores the emerging trends in the propagation of digital humanities tools and methods in the European research area and in particular in Eastern Europe. All this provides a background against which

the needs of the NEP4DISSENT network members are ascertained and assessed, based on four group interviews conducted by members of WG5. The chapter concludes by offering a number of recommendations concerning digital research design (data modelling); the legal and ethical issues involved in collecting, curating, preserving, and providing access to digital data; as well as highlighting trends in digital humanities – technological enhancements for oral history and digital storytelling – which might be of particular interest to the NEP4DISSENT community.

Through scoping the needs of the network, WG5 has identified certain intersections of digital technology and scholarly practices. In doing so, WG5 advocates a solution which will enhance the research of the NEP4DISSENT community by situating digital technology alongside the analogue in a manner that is both feasible and appropriate. WG5 plans to enable and facilitate the uptake of research methods by historians of dissent, through addressing the following issues:

- **Entities and mapping**. Identifying and mapping entities is an essential part of doing research digitally, and we recommend that decisions relating to data models are made with a clear understanding of their consequences. WG5 identifies mapping frameworks and contexts, as well as the questions which need to be addressed by researchers.
- **Digital storytelling for dissemination**. Digital storytelling presents a number of challenges which need to be appropriately addressed for a successful and accurate outcome. That is, if we have enough evidence, or adequate data, then digital storytelling is as successful as our digital tool can be.
- **Oral history for experiential sources**. Rooted in storytelling, oral history can supplement, enhance, and provide alternate perspectives for the historical record.
- **Dealing with issues in digital data**. The acquisition, use, re-use, and application of data not only poses technical challenges for the workings of specific tools, but also raises issues in other domains which need to be tackled. These concerns are shaped by legal, ethical, and methodological issues, but also through questions of access, curation, and management, as well as preservation.

Chapter 6: Dissent on Display

Chapter 6 is built around a review of both historical and retrospective exhibitions which have been central to putting 'dissent on display'. The review serves to integrate within one research framework, discussion on the conceptual, curatorial, and material dimensions of exhibiting, working from the assumption that exhibitions play a generative role for both dissemination and innovation in the research on Eastern European cultures of dissent; and that investigating critical

curatorial practices before and after 1989 provides a significant learning base for cooperation between researchers and curators today. To this end, the chapter offers a discussion of various curatorial approaches, organized around the key concepts of *dissent*, *nonconformism*, *avant-gardism*, and *the underground*. The chapter offers reflections on the relationship between conceptual work (e.g. in curatorial statements) and its displayed manifestation in museum and gallery settings, as well as on the intellectual assumptions underlying collecting practices. The chapter features observations on some of the leitmotifs in this domain, such as the self-documenting and self-historicizing activities of the artists, or the post-1989 restaging of pre-1989 historical exhibitions which were controversial in their day.

WG6 has identified a number of challenges and opportunities for art and cultural historians, and contemporary curators:

- **The role of private collectors before 1989–91 as an underexplored subject**. We need studies which address the impact of their activities on both the 'narratives' which explain the forms of cultural dissent, and on today's museum collections.
- **Curators who worked in state institutions before 1989–91**. This subject also pertains to the interests of WG2 and WG3 in exploring the difficulties of drawing clear lines between official and unofficial cultural activities.
- **Exhibiting immaterial and censored dissent**. As many 'dissenting' practices – even those by visual artists – were not necessarily recorded, the question of how to display the effaced, the censored, or the ephemeral, remains a curatorial challenge.
- **Ethical considerations**. Interfacing with WG1, WG6 raises a question concerning the ethical implications of researching and displaying materials created by the authorities in Eastern Europe as part of their attempts to control and suppress opposition, such as photographs taken during surveillance operations.

Chapter 1: Culture under Surveillance

Authored by Muriel Blaive, Nadzeya Charapan, José Maria Faraldo, Konstantinos Giakoumis, Jens Gieseke, James Kapaló, Gabriela Nicolescu and Aigi Rahi-Tamm
With contributions from Agnes Hesz, Kinga Povedak, Nelson Ribeiro and Tomas Sniegon

Edited by Muriel Blaive and James Kapaló (WG1 Chairs)

When not referenced otherwise, quotations come from the responses to the NEP4DISSENT State-of-the-Art survey (see Introduction to this report).

Source: fortepan.hu

1. Introduction: Culture under Surveillance, Culture of Surveillance

Muriel Blaive

Surveillance as a Way of Life

In the past decade, the theme of surveillance has become a source of concern for a wider audience than just post-communist academic circles. The advent of the internet and of social media has given unequalled publicity to a succession of infamous revelations such as the Wikileaks scandal (i.e. the publication online of sensitive documents by Julian Assange in 2006); or the revelation of the massive extent to which state and corporate surveillance was imposed upon citizens, which was disclosed in 2013 by Edward Snowden, a former employee of the National Security Agency. These affairs have revived the issue of individual freedom versus those all-powerful bodies.[7] The notion of 'secret' has become as tenuous as that of the line between privacy and surveillance (MacAskill and Hern 2018). According to David Lyon, one might now even speak of a new 'surveillance culture' in our contemporary society; a surveillance culture which has become a 'whole way of life' (Lyon 2017, 824). Moreover, notes the author with a measure of trepidation, 'it is something which everyday citizens comply with – willingly and wittingly or not – negotiate, resist, engage with, and, in novel ways, even initiate and desire' (ibid.).

This astute observation of the voluntary, or semi-voluntary, character of the people's apparent compliance might come as a shocking revelation to the Western public today. David Lyon is justifiably worried by the fact that this mode of social discipline or control is now 'internalized and forms part of everyday reflections on how things are and of the repertoire of everyday practices' (ibid.). But such a 'way of life', with all its intricacies, was familiar to the tens of millions of people who lived behind the Iron Curtain before 1989. As Václav Havel already remarked in the 1970s, the societies living under communism have been at the forefront of this particular aspect of modernity for half a century or more, and they have useful experiences to share. In this sense, Eastern Europe was at least as postmodern (or 'post-totalitarian' as Havel put it) as Western Europe, despite increasingly looking backward from an economic point of view. The main culprit was not a 'technologically enhanced mode of social discipline or control' – David Lyon's characterization of today's evil – but humankind itself and its guilty pleasure concerning social control under police supervision: spying, surveilling, and denouncing.

How did this state of surveillance come about? It originated from the fact that the communist regime lied constantly, about everything: it falsified the past, the present, and the

[7] This analogy was also noted by Svenonius and Björklund (2018, 123).

future; it falsified statistics and pretended not to possess an 'omnipotent and unprincipled police apparatus'. It pretended to respect human rights and to persecute no one, it pretended to fear nothing, and it pretended to pretend nothing, deconstructs Havel in his iconic 1978 essay, *The Power of the Powerless* (Václav Havel 1985, 31) Given that everyone was aware of this constant lie, Havel posits that the populations living under communist regimes had to make a choice: they could either accept living within this lie or they could refuse to endorse this 'mystification' (ibid.). Most people did endorse it, which in turn provided justification for 'the system': 'For by this very fact, individuals confirm the system, fulfil the system, make the system, *are* the system.' (ibid.) In other words, by conforming to what was expected of them people unwittingly perpetuated their own domination. They created a new norm which brought pressure on their fellow citizens, and they learned to live within it. (Václav Havel 1985, 36–37). Eventually, '[b]y pulling everyone into its power structure, the post-totalitarian system makes everyone an instrument of a mutual totality, the auto-totality of society.' (Václav Havel 1985, 37).

If the people were not only objects, but also subjects of their own domination, if they were both the victims of the system and its instruments (Václav Havel 1985, 36), then the issues at stake – and our task in the present report – are considerably more complex than designating the heroes and victims of communist surveillance; we must escape what Jens Gieseke calls in his response to the NEP4DISSENT survey 'a certain binary perception of "the party-state" against the dissident "heroes"'. It becomes crucial to study this surveillance within the context of the relationship between the state and the society, between the rulers and the ruled.

It is all the more complicated to do so given that we rely so heavily on regime sources. The visual and material, cultural world which we have inherited was in many ways shaped, or 'curated', by the secret police themselves through its archives. Because memory politics in Eastern Central Europe is almost exclusively focused on moralizing schemes, it tends to share an uncritical faith in the secret police's archival documents,[8] while failing to notice the paradox raised by Adam Michnik that 'our biographies will be written by our mortal enemies'. (ibid., 473). They unwittingly perpetuate the communist will to maintain control over history writing by determining the access to archival material.(Combe 1994, 24) This is why Gabriela Nicolescu and Nadzeya Charapan remind us that museography and museology can provide us with the tools to critically engage with what Nicolescu coins, the dichotomy between knowledge production and manipulation.

[8] Marci Shore cites Martin Šimečka, who published the weekly Respekt that carried an infamous denunciation of Milan Kundera in 2007. Šimečka, famous dissident Milan Šimečka's son, "unapologetically stood by not only his decision to publish the article, but also his conviction that Milan Kundera was guilty. After all, there was a document. And the files in the Czechian archives, he insisted, were 99% trustworthy (Shore 2012, 479)."

Let us try to circumscribe the scope of this collective effort. How do we even define 'culture', 'surveillance', and 'dictatorship'?

Culture under Surveillance, Culture of Surveillance

According to the Oxford Dictionary, culture is 'The arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. Or: The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.'(Stevenson and Waite 2011) Surveillance, on the other hand, is defined in the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and Thesaurus* as 'The careful watching of a person or place, especially by the police or army, because of a crime that has happened or is expected.' (2005) There was indeed an idiosyncrasy to be found in communism: the consideration on the part of the rulers that any behaviour which did not strictly fulfil the regulations of the prescribed ideology was potentially, or effectively, criminal and had to be dealt with by the repressive (secret) police.

We now know, thanks to Havel and later on a number of anthropologists and historians; that this surveillance was not imposed only by the rulers over the ruled but also by the ruled over each other.[9] The archives allow us to dismiss the notion that there were two clear poles of behaviour and show, on the contrary, that dissent was tinged or tainted with collaboration, and vice versa (James Kapaló). Moreover, Jens Gieseke reminds us that the cultural opposition was sometimes rooted in the milieus of the critical Marxist, reformist communist intellectuals who sympathized with the communist party. Barbara Falk goes so far as to claim that there was no clear-cut line between resistance and dissent, but that it was more of a continuum or full spectrum (Falk 2011, 321–22). Another useful distinction she establishes is one in which attitudes, such as deliberately low productivity, or a retreat into the private sphere of family activity, were potential forms of resistance, even if not of dissent (ibid.).

Our plot thickens: are we studying culture as a 'cultural production', or as a 'way of life'? If we are studying the former, can the arts develop when, instead of freedom, they are submitted to close observation? Does close observation qualify as outright repression? If we are studying the latter, can we describe everyday life under communism as a way of life under close observation? Is it even possible to monitor someone's entire life? How does it affect the people under consideration? How does one escape this monitoring? How do we account for this everyday experience *ex post facto*? As José Faraldo crucially asks in his survey response, how do we account for the current nostalgia? How do we *understand* communism rather than only

[9] See for instance Scott 1990; Lüdtke 1995; Lindenberger 2009, 1999; Kott 2014; Fulbrook 2013; Dale 2005; Fitzpatrick 2015; Goldman 2011; Kotkin 1995; Blaive 2019.

bring its crimes to evidence? And how do we deal with the obligatory comparison with the crimes of Nazism?

Finally, according to Google, dictatorship can be defined as either 'absolute' rule, or as 'undemocratic' rule. This linguistic difference is very significant, yet this ambiguity is present in our collective report. Almost all of us struggle with the category of dissent. Some of us are concerned mainly with surveillance as a demonstration of criminal activity on the part of the regime, especially within the Soviet realm (Nadzeya Charapan, Aigi Rahi-Tamm, and Konstantinos Giakoumis); others are more concerned with the phenomenon of collaboration and denunciation, that is, with the population's own contribution to the dictatorship (James Kapaló) and with cultural dissent (Jens Gieseke); and, lastly, with the representation of these dilemmas by today's academically critical minds (José Maria Faraldo, Gabriela Nicolescu, and Nadzeya Charapan). José Faraldo additionally underlines the difficulty in accounting for the complexity of communist rule within post-communist, public spheres. The activism of the conservative Right has progressively imposed a memory of communism as strictly negative and pregnant with massive violence: a moral imperative which is difficult to reconcile with the academic critical mind.

However, all of us have questions about the kind of society and way of life which constant surveillance generates. In fact, within the frame of this report we have collectively moved from the question of culture *under* surveillance to that of a culture *of* surveillance: the key feature of this culture is that the people 'actively participate in an attempt to regulate their own surveillance and the surveillance of others' (Lyon 2017, 824). There is growing evidence of 'patterns of perspectives, outlooks, or *mentalités* on surveillance, along with some closely related modes of initiating, negotiating, or resisting surveillance', which can be referred to as 'surveillance imaginaries and surveillance practices, respectively' (ibid.). Chillingly, these words were not written to describe communist society, but our own contemporary, Western one; and they raise in both the past communist and the present democratic instances, a crucial issue: that of the participation of the people.

Dissidents Versus Ordinary People in the Face of Surveillance

The definition of the term 'dissident' is taken up by several of our contributors, notably James Kapaló, Jens Gieseke, Konstantinos Giakoumis, and Gabriela Nicolescu. The distorting effect of surveillance had already been underlined under communism by the dissidents themselves: Milan Šimečka noted in his famous volume, *The Restoration of Order* (1984), that the constant attention of the secret police provided an extra layer of prestige to the dissident's activity, which might not have been entirely warranted. His own definition of surveillance ('a grotesque activity involving a

large number of secret policemen') underlines the disproportionate material and human cost of this visible surveillance 'whose intention is to intimidate the person followed' (Šimečka 1984, 94). With the money spent by the regime on the needless apparatus which surrounded him, Šimečka calculated that he and his family could have lived well for years. He and Zdena Tomin have both emphasized that this infamous fame bestowed upon dissidents was unhealthy (ibid., 95). The latter were demeaned but also elevated by this constant attention.

But at least they knew they were being surveilled. They could, and did, take countermeasures to maintain secrecy: not talking aloud when the flat was bugged, not speaking on a phone they knew was being tapped, not sending mail which would be read, and so on. On the other hand, and crucially, surveillance also affected people who were not aware they were being followed, listened to, or spied upon; and they did not benefit from the performative exposure of dissent. Because they were caught unprepared and were not part of any network, they were also those who suffered most from the repressive dimension of surveillance. The members of religious minorities described by James Kapaló and Konstantinos Giakoumis are a case in point.

In fact, the notion of surveillance invites us to reflect on the dialectic between the visible and the invisible (James Kapaló). The identity of the secret agents was not necessarily secret; rather, they managed a performance of secrecy which inspired both fascination and fear (Vatulescu cited by Kapaló). Katherine Verdery even argues that this enabled the state security apparatus to become a 'preventive institution', by which she corroborates the findings of Duane Huguenin concerning Czechoslovakia, and Thomas Lindenberger concerning East Germany (Huguenin 2011; Lindenberger 2003). Gabriela Nicolescu goes one step further and establishes a relation not only between control and sociality, but between control and care.

In this context, says Petrescu (cited by James Kapaló), those who faced the harshest moral choices were not the dissidents but those who chose to inform whilst doing their best to withhold harmful or damaging information. On the other hand, Gabriela Nicolescu reminds us that those who, today, feel the most guilt concerning past repression are those who now believe they could have done more to oppose the regime: they are the individuals who often came from the grey zone between opponents and the ordinary people and who resigned themselves to conformity in the face of repression. They were acutely portrayed in the character of Staněk in Václav Havel's 1978 play, *Protest* (Vaclav Havel and Blackwell 1990).

Where the current research is truly innovative is in its methodological reflection on this hidden surveillance in order to make it reappear – to render it visible today. José Faraldo stresses that only an oral history and a history of everyday life can offer the necessary microhistorical dimension necessary to capture human behaviour. Following Katherine Verdery,

James Kapaló suggests there are at least two avenues to achieve this. The first one consists in restituting emotion via feelings and experience, a 'reflexive process of making sense of emotions whilst also standing back and analysing the effects of surveillance on the individual and her or his social relations'. The second one, which is even more audacious and counter-intuitive considering the repressive dimension of communism, consists of studying the forms of socialization between the secret agent and his or her informer, which sometimes even evolved into something resembling friendship.[10][28] There again, a parallel with the contemporary world could be the paternal feelings entertained by one of the Shin Bet agents for his teenage Palestinian informant in the film, *Bethlehem* (Yuval Adler, 2013) – until the kid, caught up in contradictory social solidarities, murders him. In any case, the notions of negotiation, favours, relationship, or even deals, are better suited to describing the agent–informant encounter than simple repression.

On this count, Cold War stereotypes are challenged here in a meaningful way. James Kapaló reminds us of at least four ways which have led to a new inflection in the study of surveillance: to take the personal and not only the systemic into account; the progressive fading of violence over the years in interactions with the secret police; the way the secret police were embedded in society (which contrasts sharply with its established image as an instrument of terror and coercion, an image 'fiercely defended by anti-communist intellectuals'); and the necessity for re-establishing the continuities between communism and post-communism, including in the public perception of, and attitude towards, secret surveillance, trust, and security (See Svenonius and Björklund 2018).

Our Research Proposals for Filling in the Gaps in the State of the Art

Our contributions are loosely structured around six issues, categories, or keywords; which we have collectively identified as being crucial to our methodology for researching surveillance practices over culture, and/or as a culture in their own right:

- Periodization: the regimes under study evolved from mass repression to mass surveillance during the eroded, late period of socialism. Situating research in a particular phase is thus crucial.
- Social control: the regimes undertook to exercise control over society by more varied means than simple police repression.

[10] This question of the relationship between handler and informant finds an echo in the Czech Republic with the case of Miroslav Jirec, ex-dissident and secret police informant, who also pondered about the (forced) friendship, or 'pseudo-friendship', that united him to one of his handlers. See Jirec and Placák 2001.

- Dissent: what social behaviour did the regime considered constituted an infringement of its self-defined acceptable norm?
- Surveillance in everyday life: this includes the social categorization of people, curatorial practices, emotion, and any other non-traditional methods which are adept at refining our image of the past and understanding social behaviour.
- Source criticism: and most specifically, the methodological question of how to deal with a secret police file: as a historian, or human scientist?
- Finally, the performance and representation of secrecy in vernacular culture and the dialectic between visibility and invisibility in social, cultural, and police behaviour.

The essays in this chapter are formally articulated around three sections: the state of the art in the author's field of research; the identification of what is still missing in this state of the art; a suggestion for an upcoming research proposal to fill this gap in the international historiography. The countries covered here comprise the former GDR, Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Romania, Albania, Estonia, Lithuania, India, and China (Hong Kong), but also, for comparative purposes, the US and Western Europe.

For James Kapaló, the surveillance aesthetics, the visual and cultural world produced by the secret police, and the question of the visual and material 'curation' of their materials by the secret police and the way it influences our perception, are three elements which are still relatively underdeveloped in the existing literature. Therefore, his project endeavours to explore the visual world produced through the police lens together with the surveilled religious communities which he identifies in the archives. James Kapaló also proposes to contrast this visual representation with Western Cold War representations of the religious underground, and to compare the latter with the secret police archives.

For Konstantinos Giakoumis, the international literature has not sufficiently addressed the fear of communist repression which led to the establishment of an underground church. It also has not sufficiently analysed the narrative coherence; nor the role, after communism, of the biographies of persecuted religious personalities which were produced despite fragmentary sources. His project is to fill this gap in the literature.

Aigi Rahi-Tamm has identified that there was insufficient concern in the Estonian and Baltic literature regarding the way in which the authorities endeavoured to extract conformity from citizens. The combination of practices and social-cultural norms deserves more scrutiny, as does a comparison with other Soviet republics. Moreover, the studies lack focus on whether, and to what extent, the experience acquired by Moscow's leaders during the Sovietization of the Baltic states were taken into consideration during similar processes in Eastern Europe. Her

project is therefore to study the mechanisms of social control in Estonian society. Her team intends to focus on the different sanctions (in the sociological sense) which ensure social control, be they formal or informal, positive or negative. She intends to account for the tactics of the authorities and to shed light on individual strategies and reactions concerning surveillance issues.

Jens Gieseke notes that international literature has so far failed to sufficiently challenge the established patterns of binary state–dissidence relations and the overemphasis on the secret police. As a weak point in the state of the art, he notes the lack of studies on the impact of the West (détente, political and cultural recognition, economic dependence) on the activities of the secret police in the East. The role of covert activities and of the Western secret services also appear to have been under-researched due to restrictions in accessing the archives; and finally, so have the public representations of the secret police forces, including the images and narratives presented in various contemporary cultural forms such as TV series, detective stories, etc. His own project deals with the latter aspect and will attempt to address the public images of the Stasi within the population, particularly its 'image policy' and its interaction with the personal experience of surveillance, half-secret rumours, jokes, etc.

José Maria Faraldo makes the assessment that historians should begin to focus more on the post-socialist era and not leave this field only to sociologists and political scientists. Thirty years after the fall of communism, it is now time for the tools of the historiographical trade to be applied to this period. Many of the problems of the new non-democracies and illiberal democracies, indeed date from state socialism and the way in which it was transformed after 1989. His historiographical contribution endeavours to study the cultural transformation of the post-socialist era and the legacy of the communist secret police.

Nadzeya Charapan intends to study the ethnographic open-air museums put together by the communist regimes in a comparative perspective conducted throughout the Baltic states. She analyses them, both as a repository of material vernacular culture, and as a terrain for implementing a 'double standard' in curatorial practices, i.e., as a manoeuvre to foster a national ethnocentric ideology without actually challenging communist rule. By conducting interviews with museum curators and guides, and while also working on the official reports and documentation in the archives for the years 1950–90, her research aims to fill in the gaps concerning the poetics and politics of ethnographic representation and to contribute to the knowledge on ideological surveillance of culture in the Baltic states.

Last but not least, Gabriela Nicolescu, in her report on the state of the art, identifies a gap in interdisciplinary research in which archival research should be combined with ethnographic study. There is, indeed, always a gap between the witnesses' account and the reports of

journalists, politicians, and writers. If we analyse exhibition-making as a form of discourse, museums and exhibition-making are important tools in the dissemination of knowledge, but they can also manipulate the way history is narrated. The tools for critically engaging with these forms of knowledge shaping however, are quite new, and more scholarly attention needs to be dedicated to contemporary critical museography and museology. By presenting the conflicting ways on how the past should be exhibited and presented in Central and Eastern Europe, Gabriela Nicolescu problematizes the very term, 'dissent'. Who defines what dissent is, according to what context, and during what specific period of time? These questions still deserve to be addressed. Her contribution consists of participating in the curation of four exhibitions on the material and visual presence of religious minorities in the secret service archives. She will aim to point out the multiple truths within the paper archives. Most importantly, she will strive to reveal paradoxes and nuances in the way we understand both repression and dissent.

Conclusion: What Communism can Teach Us

Some of the characteristics which observers like to attribute to communist countries do not characterize only this type of rule. As Gabriela Nicolescu has shown in the previous section, surveillance and propaganda have been endorsed by various types of regime (e.g. those of Hong Kong and India), or even by current Western democracies such as the United States, as we demonstrated at the beginning of this introduction. It would be a mistake to assume that the difference between the US and the former communist regimes lies only in the rule of law. As Milan Šimečka observes, under communism search warrants bore an official round stamp. The police tried not to break anything during house searches. They did not steal. But their legalism served an absurd world of meaning. They searched for writings, as if confiscating these could make thoughts disappear (Šimečka 1984, 97). They operated according to the same stupid and brutal mentality described by John Irving in *The World According to Garp* (1978), published in the same year as Havel's *The Power of the Powerless* (1978): when two villains rape an eleven-year old girl, Ellen James, they cut her tongue out in a futile attempt to prevent her from telling on them – as if she could not restitute their names or describe what happened to her in any other way than talking. The dumb villains got caught – and communism fell.

The second reason why today's Western democracies remind us – more than we would like to think – of past communist dictatorships in regard to surveillance, is in the conformity which they manage to extract from their populations. A government defines the rules of conduct within a country; from that point on, as Milan Šimečka has brilliantly demonstrated,

> As soon as people begin to accept those rules and act in accordance with them, their behaviour not only strengthens the regime, it even begins to reproduce it. They may consider the regime bad, imbecilic and dictatorial, they may not believe in it, and they certainly do not recognize it as their own. Nevertheless, by their behaviour they prolong its existence and contribute to its development(Mlynář 1984, 7).

This discussion of submissive behaviour meets the one evoked by Havel in the behaviour of his greengrocer character in *The Power of the Powerless*, and raises a fundamental question which has still not been fully developed in the present report: that of legitimacy and legitimation, as well as those of trust, privacy, and security. Why did people not rebel against the surveillance which they knew, or suspected, was used against them; why did they pretend to go on with their lives? Why did they gratify the regime with an implicit support by failing to communicate their negative feelings? Svenomius and Björkhund have suggested the notion of 'existential concern', that is, 'ontological insecurity' as a key factor in understanding this acceptance, be it under communism or beyond it (Svenonius and Björklund 2018, 124). Redefining the sense, not only of legitimacy, but of normality in our current, 'post-truth' infused world, turns out to be a very relevant question still. Echoing Havel, Edward Snowden remarked that today, people are still 'powerless' to stop government and corporate sector surveillance, but they are at least becoming aware of its existence (MacAskill and Hern 2018).

It is intriguing, and perhaps frightening, that our societies are nevertheless willing to embrace technologies such as the 'smart speaker' (for instance Amazon's *Echo*), which essentially functions as an open microphone in their home: '"The newly-found privacy conundrum presented by installing a device which can literally listen to everything you're saying represents a chilling new development in the age of internet-connected things," wrote *Gizmodo*'s Adam Clark Estes last year.'(ibid.) We might also remark that with the current proliferation of cameras in public space, surveillance has become 'a way of seeing, a way of being' (Lyon 2017, 824), that is, a new surveillance culture which the Western public seems to be condoning without a blink.

The next stage which we should be wary of has already been described by Zdena Tomin: when we know we are surveilled, we go from censorship to self-censorship (Tomin and Nulty 1983, 121). This is a lesson to ponder for our global future.

2. Surveillance, Collaboration, and the Secret Police Archives in Romania

James A. Kapaló

State of the Art

There have been a number of quite high-profile contributions to scholarship on surveillance, collaboration, informers, and the secret police in Romania over the past ten years. Both Katherine Verdery (*Secrets and Truths*, 2014; and *My Life as a Spy*, 2018) and Cristina Vatulescu (*Police Aesthetics* 2010) in particular, have taken this scholarship in new directions. A number of other scholars, such as Cristina Petrescu, Gabriel Andreescu, and Lavinia Stan, have also explored the distinctive characteristics of collaboration, surveillance, and dissent in the Romanian context, and its implications for contemporary society and culture.

The levels of dissent and anti-communism manifestations in Romania have been deemed amongst the lowest in the former Soviet Bloc. According to some, this can be credited to the power and extent of the secret police, the *Securitate* (Petrescu 2017, 225). A great deal of attention has been focused on informers, and unofficial collaborators. They were considered to be the people who supplied information to the secret police as part of the system of surveillance (Petrescu 2017, 226), an understanding which transitional justice legislation has enshrined in law (Turcescu and Stan 2017, 44). The perceived extent and penetration of the informer network helped to produce a profound sense amongst the population: that their lives were being written somewhere in an account which could prove detrimental or beneficial to an individual's social fate (Vatulescu 2010, ix).

However, assumptions about the nature of collaboration and the identity of collaborators were soon challenged by the evidence which began to emerge from the secret police archives in the early 2000s. As in other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, Romanians were confronted with the reality that the distinction between heroes and villains, or victims and perpetrators was problematic and extremely sensitive, as the public grappled with the messy reality of individuals' moral choices and ethical dilemmas. The apparatus of control, which worked through micro-level surveillance and the relationships between agents and the extensive informer networks, and the '"elementary structure" of Securitate work' (Verdery 2018, 196); helped produce a 'vast plurality and diversity of behaviours which placed individuals on the side of the dictatorship or on the side of those critical of it' (Turcescu and Stan 2017, 44). This constellation generated forms of

dissent tinged or tainted with collaboration and vice-versa (see also Andreescu 2017). A great deal of scholarly attention has been dedicated to understanding this dynamic.

The other critical issue which has occupied researchers is the secret police archives themselves. As Petrescu (2017, 240) points out, the disclosure and examination of the secret police records of collaborators and informers provide invaluable evidence of the regime's mechanisms of control. Researchers at the National Council for the Study of the Secret Police Archives (CNSAS) have worked to describe, illustrate, and analyse these mechanisms of control. A series of volumes describes the methods, structures, cadres, and objectives of the Securitate, including their extensive use of informers (see Albu 2008). This particular form of surveillance through informer networks was successful, according to Petrescu (2017, 240), not solely due to the use of punitive threats, but also because it was seen as one route by which individual career advancement or material gain could be achieved. In a society where informers were so widely used, the real moral choices were faced by those who chose to inform whilst doing their best to withhold harmful or damaging information (2017, 240). This form of surveillance was instrumental in the transformation of the notion of resistance and dissent, and produced extremely contested ideas about what constituted 'real dissent' under communism; counterposing former communist revolutionaries, communist-era dissidents and anti-communists, and the forms of 'resistance through culture' (see Turcescu and Stan 2017, 44; and Andreescu 2017, 151). Discovering the 'truth' of all of these claims has, perhaps paradoxically, become the burden of the secret police archives.

According to Apor et al, on the other hand, scholarship across the whole region on the problem of collaboration has been largely restricted to 'agent-hunting stories presented as evidence of a totalitarian past' (2017, 3), and has failed to engage with these narratives in terms of what they reveal about state–society relations. Control of culture, thought, conscience, and religion, worked through many means other than surveillance: the regimentation of every aspect of life, the creation of multiple dependencies on the regime, and systematic disinformation (Andreescu 2017, 164). However, the opening of the secret police archives demonstrated decisively that the Securitate was virtually omnipresent and omnipotent (Andreescu 2017, 164), and that its work involved 'roping other people into it' (Verdery 2018, 185).

As previously mentioned, two key scholars whose work elucidates the wider societal impact and implications of informer-led surveillance culture and its representation in the secret police archives in the Romanian context, are Katherine Verdery and Cristina Vatulescu, a summary of whose works follows.

One of the aims outlined in the preface to Katherine Verdery's, *My Life as a Spy* (2018, xii) is to 'render visible a certain set of surveillance practices and their effects'. Based on her life and

experience as an anthropologist working in Romania in the 1970s and '80s, Verdery does this by basing her work on her own secret police file, her field notes from the time, personal letters, and the interviews she conducted in the 2000s. As an anthropologist, Verdery focuses attention on 'feelings and experience', and the reflexive process of making sense of emotions whilst also standing back and analysing the effects of surveillance on the individual and their social relations.

The basic method of surveillance involved an agent and their informers, and the 'objective' or person under surveillance (2018, 196). The relationship between agent and informer could sometimes evolve into a kind of friendship (2018, 196), whilst the act of surveillance, more often than not, was 'often just a form of socialising' (Verdery 2018, 92). In outlining the informality of this process, Verdery points to the important ways in which surveillance was a kind of 'colonisation of relationships' (2018, 183) which, on the surface, were enacted in an amiable way. After 1965, Securitate agents were often open to 'negotiations' with their 'objectives', and compromises and deals were reached (2018, 286). The relationship could become 'clientelistic' as citizens offered information in exchange for favours or getting problems solved (2018, 287). Verdery challenges Cold War stereotypes which treat the secret police as an instrument of terror and repression – the 'Empire of Fear' paradigm – by revealing the personal and individual side of the agents and informers who made up the surveillance machinery in the last decades of communism. She points out that as intelligence officers, these agents were much better educated and increasingly distant from the brutalities of the first decade of communist rule (2018, 282). The Securitate and their surveillance methods are viewed by Verdery not as being isolated from society but rather as being 'embedded' and part of the 'thick networks of social relations' (2018, 289). This contrasts sharply with the established image of the secret service as an instrument of terror and coercion, an image fiercely defended by anti-communist intellectuals who, as Verdery quotes a dissident friend of hers, mask the 'continuity with communism' and 'reduce the evil produced under communism to the actions of a maleficent organization and a few madmen, the torturers' (2018, 288).

Another stereotype or assumption challenged by Verdery was the secret agents' invisibility, which she sees as the managed performance of secrecy rather than as truly secret or invisible work. Officers could be seen, they were 'the guys hanging out in places where potential "dissidents" might congregate' (2018, 284), they dressed a certain way and had the same haircut. This very visibility enabled them to become a 'preventive institution' (2018, 285). The secret police had to be known to exist without being observed, they were able to achieve their goals based on the dialectic between the visible and the invisible.

Informers, on the other hand, were much more invisible and damaging to social relationships as they 'reshape[d] people's social relationships towards the organization's own ends' (2018, 290). Verdery concludes that 'The basis of the regime's power was less fear, secrecy, and the hidden, than the colonizing of Romanian's sociality, an extraordinary powerful resource' (2018, 290).

Cristina Vatulescu's work intersects with Katherine Verdery's at the dialectic of the visible and the invisible. Vatulescu approaches the legacy of surveillance through the secret police files and how these became entangled with literature and film during communism. In exploring how 'the secret police and its key artefacts' played a role in culture, Vatulescu elucidates the paradoxical nature of what she terms, the 'visible spectacle of secrecy', which was exemplified by the 'public cult' of the NKVD during the Stalinist purges of the 1930s (2010, 2). Referring to the practices of the secret police as 'histrionic secrecy', she explores how secrecy could be exhibited without revealing anything which needed to be hidden (2010, 3-5). In this way, an 'obsessive fascination' (2010, 5) with, and fear of, the secret police and its files was created by offering glimpses of texts which could never actually be read but that nevertheless demonstrated the authority of the texts contained within the files.

Vatulescu, like Verdery, points to the significant shift which took place between Stalinist terror and the 'age or surveillance'; arrests and interrogations dwindled but the 'relative number of surveillance files soared'. Instead of leading to arrests they remained open for whole lifetimes (2010, 46). The significant advance in surveillance technologies contributed to this surveillance boom during the 1970s. The use of bugging devices and advanced hidden cameras now went hand in hand with 'depth informers', people who could penetrate the suspects' inner circles. Under the weight of all this information, the narrative structure of the post-Stalinist file became 'choked' and gave way to a form of 'drab hyperrealism' (2010, 50). This mass of information was designed to ensure that the secret police could demonstrate the depth of their penetration, taking the place of interrogation reports and confessions as the primary 'knowledge base' of the archives. Both Vatulescu and Verdery describe, in some detail, the mechanics of this shift from repression to prevention.

Vatulescu's other significant contribution relates to the visual and material worlds of the secret police files. She shifts her gaze to the hitherto under-explored aesthetic aspects of the files and the artistic works which the secret police commissioned and created. These not only included training films intended for internal use but also feature films for cinema release. Vatulescu explores the ways in which film was used as a policing tool by manipulating or shaping the audience's view of reality. She demonstrates that the secret police gradually became interested in filming fiction rather than documentaries (2010, 10). Her explorations of a range of

textual, visual, and material practices open up our understanding of an array of dialectical relationships which were central to the study of culture and society under communism: between word and image, people and things, and the visible and the invisible (2010, 24).

What is Missing from the State of the Art?

Little attention has been given to the ways in which the secret police and surveillance aesthetics were part of a visual and material cultural world which presented to, and shaped audiences' perceptions of, their own society. Cristina Vatulescu has begun to explore this aspect, but many other areas of cultural life remain unexplored, especially in relation to religious groups and minority cultures who were likewise 'captured' on film or in photographs, represented in some way, and who performed as part of the dialectic between secrecy and visibility.

In relation to the surveillance of various forms of cultural community, whether religious, ethnic, or artistic, the question of the visual and material 'curation' of their materials by the secret police has yet to be explored. The relationship between evidence gathering, visual representational practices, dispossession, and public display practices would be a fruitful avenue to explore as this would further inform our understanding of the uses and meaning of surveillance and its impact of cultural life. An interesting methodological avenue could combine secret police archival research with the ethnographic studies of surveilled communities through the (re)introduction of the visual materials which were produced by the secret police, back into the communities as a catalyst for discussion

Proposed Contribution

In the context of my ERC project, *Hidden Galleries*, my project team has created a database of visual materials, both confiscated images and police photographs, graphics, plans, and maps; found within the secret police archives in Romania, Hungary, and Moldova which relate to religious groups. As my contribution to the COST Action publication, I would like to further utilize this material by exploring the visually surveilled world which was produced through the police lens together with members of surveilled communities. I will contrast secret police constructions of clandestinity, secrecy, and the concept of the underground, with descriptions and accounts produced in Cold War religious dissident and samizdat publications, and place them both in dialogue with the oral accounts and memories of members of the 'real' lived religious underground

3. Religious Dissidence in Albania, 1967–1990

Konstantinos Giakoumis

State of the Art

While all communist regimes maintained a hostile attitude towards religious matters, Albania was the first country to imitate Maoist China in banning all religions and religious activities (1967), and to declare itself the first atheist state in the world (1976) (Lubonja 2011, 6–7). Violent persecution of the remaining religious elements by force of 'voluntary' actions were accompanied by other 'voluntary' actions to 'enlighten' the people about the allegedly destructive effects of religion, as well as to replace religious feasts and customs with feasts and customs which had a socialist content (isomorphism).

An understanding of the relations between the communist state and religious communities after 1967, with few exceptions (Naçi 2012), have mostly been based on the study of popular articles published in the daily press or on TV shows. There is, therefore, a need for a systematic treatment of the subject using historical, theoretical, and methodological rigour. The period under consideration refers to the third phase of the relations between the state and the religious communities. It was launched in February 1968, when the Albanian communist state inaugurated a stark ban on all religious activities and declared Albania to be the first atheist state worldwide (Constitution 1976). Against this backdrop, the dynamics between the state and religious policies, and the dialectics between state officials and agents within the clergy and members of the religious communities, created cultural adaptations formatively impacted by state surveillance and its own particular culture. The aggressive 1968 'war against religion and backward customs' created a new culture of dissidence by way of the persistence of – now clandestine – religious customs, which, in turn, generated a counter-culture of surveillance.

Following the banning of all religious activities, these dissolved religious institutions no longer produced their own archives, we therefore have to turn to in-depth interviews and the accounts of key-religious figures to triangulate the matters addressed in the archival sources, and investigate how these were dealt with from within the religious communities. The culture of dissidence and defiance against the official ban on all religious practices in both public and private life is documented in four key – but non-academic – volumes, three of which are reviewed in the following sections. Their focus is the Orthodox Christian religious community.

The volume on Dhimitër Beduli, 'the selected and devoted son of our Church' according to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (Beduli 1999, 1), traces the life and work of an Orthodox theologian and cantor from the ethnic Greek minority of the Albanian south, who was elevated to

high, non-clerical offices within the Orthodox Church of Albania and continued to be a prominent member of this Church even under the harsh communist regime. The volume, which was edited by his son, Kristofor, thus belongs to the biographical genre. It casts light on dissident activities during Albania's harsh communist times from 1965 to 1975. Especially after 1967, when all religious activities were banned and the totalitarian regime extended its ears and eyes into people's private lives for the purpose of enforcing compliance, notes like the following could be used as evidence in court by the communist regime: 'on 25.12.1967; this is the first Christmas we do not celebrate. There are neither churches nor priests'; and 'on 05.07.1975, the former Bishop Daniel died in his home in Tirana. Due to the situation that was created, with his death the chapter of the history of the prelates of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania closes.' To this extent, it can be argued that the memory of the Orthodox life in Albania, as it was written down for posterity, is in itself an act of dissidence.

The second part of the volume reveals a *communitas* of dissidence in the correspondence of Dhimitër Beduli, here for instance, with Sotir Papakristo. Explanations of the type: 'Glory to the Holy Providence, who takes care of each and every one of us (especially you who served for a number of years preaching the word of truth in the teachings of Christ)' (Letter dated 18.03.1970, Beduli 1999, 103), would have been extremely dangerous for both the correspondents and their families had they come to the attention of the regime. There is no doubt as to the fact that such exchanges were both frequent and involved more people (103–4).

The volume on Theofan Popa describes the life and work of a prominent Orthodox theologian from Elbasan who made a name for himself as an art historian at the Institute of Cultural Monuments and at the Archives of the State, even though he continued to conduct his life in an Orthodox Christian way in the course of the harshest anti-religious phase of Albania's communist regime. It was written by the Greek theologian Vasileios M. Kaskantamis on the basis of interviews, letter exchanges with people who had met him, and research into his personal archives which were put at the author's disposal by the family of this 'contemporary missionary' (Kaskantamis 2001, 5). The photographic material published in the book is also very meaningful. As biographical source, the book was published by a publishing house specializing in books of a religious content and thus it acquired an air of hagiology.

Five types of dissidence can be discerned over all. First, in times of harsh religious persecution, when challenged to make public statements related to his faith Popa would respond that in matters of personal convictions he remained as he was (Kaskantamis 2001, 170-1). Popa's refusal to intervene and alter primary sources for the purpose of alienating religious elements can arguably be considered to be another type of dissent (112–3). His persistence in arguing against the process of demolishing as many monuments as possible, to the extent that

the Party actors wondered 'how Theofan thought of discussing with them [i.e. government officials] on churches at the time when Hoxha gave an oral command for their demolition' (120), is yet another type of religious dissent. The fourth and fifth types of dissidence were more dangerous, but which could be concealed by his academic training and profession. In 1967 he personally intervened to save the relics of St John Vladimir, when the saint's monastery was turned into army barracks; claiming that any damage could cause a diplomatic incident with states where the saint was revered. He persuaded the barrack officers to allow him to have the relics transferred to the church of the Entrance of the Virgin to the Temple (127–30).[11] Last but not least, his practicing of crypto-Christianity and correspondence in mundane matters with religious overtones must have been a constant threat (133–168, 182). Despite having powerful relatives, Theofan Popa and his family had to endure very harsh consequences for such manifestations of dissent (169–186).

The third book (Bulika 2005) clearly leans towards the genre of hagiography. Written by Fr. Spiro Bulika and published by the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania along with historical photographic material, the aim of the book was to show that the Orthodox Church in Albania continued its existence, in clandestine terms, even under the harsh communist regime. To this end, the book deals with the life and work of Bishop Kozma Qirja, an Orthodox cleric who, during the communist period, in defiance of state anti-religious policies and in conditions of relentless surveillance and persecution, continued to practise his clerical calling in secret.

The volume presents evidence for three types of dissident activities which were performed both by Fr. Kozma, and by a community of practising Orthodox Christians during the harshest anti-religious period of Albania's communist regime. First, at great risk, was the performance of sacraments such as the Holy Eucharist/Communion (Bulika 2005, 23–5, 31–2, 38, 39, and *passim*), the marriage rites (25, 32 and *passim*), and baptism (25–6, 32, 34, 37–8, 75–7, and *passim*). The second dissident activity was fasting in an unconcealed way during Lenten periods or before receiving the *antidoron*[12] after liturgies (24 and *passim*). The last type of activity of a dissident nature, for both Fr. Kozma who performed it and for the people in attendance, related to his preaching and homiletic activity (25, 33, 36–8, and *passim*) which, if publicized or denounced, would have been considered by the communist regime to be a conspiracy against the state. The book also outlines the cost at which these dissident activities were conducted, they included: living rough (27, 39 and *passim*), having to travel far and wide on

[11] See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation_(relic).
[12] This is ordinary leavened bread blessed in the course of a holy liturgy and distributed at the end of it, especially to those who did not partake the holy communion. Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antidoron

foot to conduct these activities (27 and *passim*), as well as enduring interrogations and periods of back-breaking jobs for him and his family (27–8, 33, and *passim*).

The hagiographical genre of these volumes reminds us of other books dedicated to important religious personalities from socialist Eastern Europe. Such is the case of the doctor, St Luke Voino-Yasenetsky, of Simferopol in Crimea, whose life became a best-seller amongst audiences of Orthodox Christian ecclesiastical reading in Greece (Antonopoulos 2013; 2015; Loukas 2013; 2016), and who was also known in the United States (Serebrov 2014). A similar case is that of Fr. Cleopa Ilie, a monk who survived communism living as an anchorite in the mountainous zones around the Monastery of Sihastria, Romania (Balan 2000; Sebbing 2003). While all of these books are based on a combination of ethnographic research and archival materials, their engaged agenda requires calm scholarly deliberation as well as a comparative approach with other similar case-studies. A few such works exist today concerning the Soviet Union (Chumachenko 2002), Romania (Hostiuc 2014; Irimie 2014; Leustean 2009) and Bulgaria (Gerasimova 2017).

Gaps in International Literature and Proposed Contribution

General historical accounts like Kenworthy's *Russia and Eastern Europe* (2016) or Mirejovsky's *General Problems of Christianity in Socialist Countries* (1987) fall short of addressing the broader questions, such as the way in which narrative coherence has been constructed in all such biographies despite fragmentary sources, the ends that this hagiographic capital has served after the fall of communism, or the way in which the 'fear of death' from communist repression and reprisals, led to the establishment of underground Orthodox Christian *communitas*. The case of Albania, in regard to all of its religious communities (i.e. not only from an Orthodox Christian perspective), deserves a special place in international scholarship due to its status as the sole officially atheist state in Europe. My project aspires to fill this gap in the literature.

4. Control Society: The Case of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (1940–1991)

Aigi Rahi-Tamm

Focusing on the term 'surveillance', I examine the different methods of social control used during the Soviet period (1940–91) alongside the following keywords: institutions, social reactions, relationship between exile population and the homeland, and access to archives.

State of the Art

Some of the most detailed historical analyses of the Stalinist era concern the Soviet state security services (which carried different names over the years: MGB, NKVD, KGB) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Since archival material about these institutions is more easily available in Estonia for the period before 1960, these works have tended to focus on the 1940s and 1950s. The communist party and the ministries of Internal Affairs and State Security have been one of the key areas of research for historians. For the later period, the activities of the Soviet central authorities have to be analysed primarily through other local Estonian institutions, such as the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, artists' unions, writers, composers and so on, as well as through local party organizations. Historians quite frequently have to face the fact that there are no data concerning the decisions made in Moscow at the highest level. As a result, their research, and therefore their conclusions, have to be based on second-tier documents such as reports or surveys sent out from the republic to the central institutions of the USSR; reports which may only make passing reference to the original decision or to the request concerning a particular regulation.

Two reports illustrate this trend well:

- *Estonia 1940–1945: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity.* 2006. Hiio Toomas, Maripuu Meelis, Paavle Indrek (eds). Tallinn: Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus; and
- *Estonia since 1944: Report of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity.* 2009. Hiio Toomas, Maripuu Meelis, Paavle Indrek (eds). Inimsusevastaste Kuritegude Uurimise Eesti Sihtasutus: Tallinna Raamatutrükikoda.

The website for the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory for Research and Education on Totalitarian Regimes and Ideologies (see http://mnemosyne.ee/en) is also a case in point.

The aim of these reports was to uncover those crimes against humanity committed in Estonia, and to identify the persons and institutions responsible. This is largely a collection of facts outlining the various episodes of repression, and methods of social control and influence. As such, the reports provide a survey, and thus serve only as an introduction to the topic. The further study of these events and developments remains a task for future researchers. The

Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, which aims to study the different tools and measures used for reinforcing the totalitarian regime, have partly undertaken this work.

People's direct or indirect connections with the Soviet security organs, inevitable or not, have been another sensitive issue. The KGB had a wide reach, and monitoring exiled Estonian communities in Sweden, the US, Canada, among others, was one of its tasks. Indrek Jürjo's study, *Pagulus ja Nõukogude Eesti. Vaateid KGB, EKP ja VEKSA arhiividokumentide põhjal* (*The Exile Community and Soviet Estonia. Investigations on the Basis of Archival Documents of the KGB, ECP and VEKSA (Society for Developing Cultural Connections with Exile Estonians)*), published in 1996, still provokes heated discussion even today. The volume mainly focuses on the KGB's work to recruit informants among Estonians both at home and in exile, and to exert ideological pressure on them.

At first, that is until the mid-1950s, attempts were made through intelligence material and undermining activities, such as propaganda and denunciations, to force people who had fled to the West to repatriate; yet this method largely failed. By the 1960s, the secret police no longer counted on repatriation, and it bet instead on developing cultural connections between communities. Intelligence activities were also carried out under the cover of cultural communication. Although material concerning the later period is fragmentary, it vividly reflects the issues with developing cultural contacts between exiled Estonians and the people at home, including the use of formerly friendly relations for social control. Various means, including blackmail, were used to influence people. Data served to map friendship networks, and people who were closely connected with each other through work or other activities. For instance, permission for a trip abroad was only granted on condition that the person meet a former friend or colleague in the country being visited, and entice them to visit Estonia, or to exhibit a Soviet-friendly attitude in some other way (articles, speeches, etc.). VEKSA (the Society for Developing Cultural Connections with Exile Estonians), which was active during the years 1960–90, arranged several propaganda events amongst exiled Estonians, most of which were high-level events.

The issue of surveillance must be studied at different levels: first, through Moscow's orders; second, through the reactions of the officials of the various Soviet republics; and third, at the level of individuals or various social groups, including local functionaries, as seen through microhistorical studies. Elena Zubkova, who has studied Moscow's policies towards the Baltic states, has emphasized that three social categories were of particular importance to the central authorities: the party elite, peasantry, and the intelligentsia (see Zubkova Jelena. 2008. *Pribaltika i Kreml 1940-1953*. Moskva, ROSSPEN).

In building up the Soviet order, the authorities applied different policies to different social groups. The intelligentsia were given more time to adapt than peasants, who had already

experienced more intensive pressure in the 'first Soviet year', 1940–41. But attacks against intellectuals intensified in 1948. In 1952, when cultural institutions were under control, a longer adaptation, or 'soft' period, was no longer an option. A comparative analysis of the 'cleansing' campaigns of the local party elite in the Baltic countries and Eastern Europe reveals clear regional differences which are closely related to the fight for power that they respectively experienced. Tensions among Stalin's close comrades (i.e. between the Malenkov-Beria and Zhdanov-Kuznetsov groups) only worsened the situation. Along with the 'Leningrad case' of 1949–50, a series of criminal cases fabricated by Stalin after Zhdanov's death in order to accuse a number of Leningrad party members of treason – the so-called 'Estonian case' – began to take shape. The leadership of the EC(b)P was associated with the party leaders in Leningrad. The change of party personnel in 1950–52 was an example of disciplining.

The Sovietization process, especially repression and the imposition of control, has been described as a systematic activity, but as we study the implementation of the mechanisms of influence by social categories or smaller groups, we find more than a few examples which are characterized by randomness and selectivity. The events which seem to be of only local significance at first, gain more importance thanks to comparisons which bring variations and similarities to light. For example, when we examine the implementation of measures over the same period in Tallinn and Riga, and Leningrad and Moscow, the results may vary quite significantly. In the 1950s several artists and other creative young people who had been repressed (or excluded) moved to Moscow where they were not as excluded as they were in Estonia. On the other hand, in the 1940s people came from Russia to study in Estonia, where the atmosphere was less oppressive.

Elena Zubkova's monograph is one of the few studies which analyses the Sovietization of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for the period of 1940–53 from a comparative perspective as seen from Moscow. It focuses on the power relations between the centre and the Soviet republics, and maps their specific characters and stages of development. The question is when, and to what extent, Moscow's decisions took into account local contexts. Despite the measures applied, the Baltic republics remained a 'problematic zone' during Stalin's lifetime, and in fact all the way until the end of the Soviet Union. Zubkova's investigation is limited to the period of Stalinism; no comparative studies have yet been made on the era of late state socialism.

Gaps in the State of the Art

The imposition of social control over society and, in particular, the field of culture, is a multifarious phenomenon. It was one important component of Sovietization in the Western

republics of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact countries. The activities of the authorities were aimed at forcing citizens to conform to norms by implementing various measures.

Social control is a set of social measures which secures people's behaviour in accordance to established rules. Different sanctions (I use the word sanction here in its sociological meaning, i.e. as a 'definition of social control'; cf. Hess, Markson, and Stein 2000), be they formal or informal, positive or negative, are used for guiding people's behaviour. Besides the 'obvious' ways, such as arrests, deportations, dismissals, imprisonment, etc., there were also other, less obvious informal sanctions which enforced control: expressing dissatisfaction with a subaltern, ostracism, ridicule, condemnation, and rumours, among others. Coaxing was also used in the form of, for example, rewards, bonuses, and promotions. Our knowledge of the combinations of practices and social-cultural norms which have played a special role in all societies is not yet reliable in Estonia, or in the Baltic context.

As underlined above, we lack comparative studies between Baltic republics and other Soviet republics. However, here is one example of a work which has analysed the measures of surveillance in a comparative manner: Weiner Amir; Rahi-Tamm Aigi. 2012. *Getting to Know You: Soviet Surveillance and its Uses, 1939–1957*; in: Kritika: *Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, Vol. 13, no. 1, 2012, pp. 5–46. This article, which studies the imposition of a surveillance system on the Soviet Western republics, argues that regional features required distinct policies. Whilst implementing their measures, the central authorities had to consider local peculiarities to a greater extent than they had imagined they would need to. The article also describes the situation in the archives: the materials of the Ministry of Security have indeed not been preserved to the same degree in the three Baltic countries. As a consequence, Estonian historians may find answers to their research questions in Lithuanian archives and vice versa.

Elena Zubkova's approach, which tackles the events in the Baltic states in the context of Moscow's wider politics in Eastern Europe, demonstrates that the events in the region were orchestrated by Moscow in a synchronized manner. Comparing them to those elsewhere in the USSR and Eastern Europe, and highlighting the similarities and differences, as she does, is a positive example. Whether, and if so to what extent, the experience acquired during the Sovietization of the Baltic states was taken into consideration by Moscow's leaders during similar processes in Eastern Europe is quite another question, to which there is no simple or clear-cut answer yet.

A Personal Contribution to Future Research

I am compiling a research application at Tartu University on the mechanisms of social control in Estonian society. We focus on the different sanctions (in the sociological sense) which ensure

social control, be they formal or informal, positive or negative. We especially focus on informal (or non-official) measures such as social recognition, support, and authority as a positive value; but also dissatisfaction, ostracism, ridicule, condemnation, and rumours as negative types of sanction, all elements which are not sufficiently studied. Different social groups (intellectuals, youth, peasants, etc.) are included in the sample. The source material consists mainly of the minutes of official meetings and reports, and biographical data (personal files, biographies, questionnaires, correspondence, etc.) which can account for the tactics of the authorities and shed light on individual strategies and reactions, but also on surveillance issues. The members of the project are seeking cooperation with other researchers and research groups.

5. Culture Under Surveillance in East Germany – some Remarks on the State of Research

Jens Gieseke

State of the Art

The following report attempts to cover the case of East Germany from a comparative view. Broad research has been conducted on the role of the secret police (Ministry for State Security – Stasi) and its activities against all forms of dissent. The majority of the literature deals with political dissent in a strict sense, while the literature on the Stasi's activities against cultural dissent has been mainly produced by former stakeholders (e.g. Walther 1996.) However, this cultural dissent, including (more or less) the political activities of artists and writers, has also raised the interest of the academic world.

Thanks to the broad range of archival material available from the Stasi archives and to the strong influence of current state institutions like the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Services (BStU) in shaping research agendas, scholarly work and public debate has been focused strongly on the role of the secret police as the 'natural' oppressor of cultural dissent. The secret police have been presented as an all-powerful institution, pulling the wires of artists behind the scenes. Numerous narratives have been characterized by a certain binary perception of 'the party-state' against the dissident 'heroes'. These scenarios may indeed fit a number of cases, but they have failed to account for a broad range of half-official–half-dissident activities which have occurred throughout the history of the GDR (Braun 2007).

In contrast to some other countries of the Soviet Bloc, cultural opposition in East Germany was rooted mainly in the milieus of critical Marxist, reformist communist intellectuals.

These milieus, at least in the beginning, sympathized with the Communist Party (SED) as well as with the official system of publishing houses, theatres, universities, artists' unions, and so on; or acted from positions within it. This led to a large number of controversies and repressive sanctions within these institutions. The secret police were only one of the actors among others, albeit, usually the most repressive.

This peculiar situation was aggravated by the fact that, during the 1950s, non-Marxist actors in the field of culture had often preferred to leave the GDR and emigrate to the West: this included, for instance, members of religious minorities and would-be bourgeois artists. Even after 1968, East German dissidence was leftist to the core, which seems to be an exception when compared to other Eastern Bloc societies (cf. Bolton 2012). After the 1976 expulsion of the most prominent dissident, singer-songwriter Wolf Biermann, this hitherto clear profile of cultural dissent became blurred by a shift towards non-political or 'anti-political' currents in the avant-garde subcultures (for this concept, see Kenney 2003). All these spheres of culture, as research has shown, had to live under strong surveillance, and sometimes direct repression, but they nevertheless gained broader latitude for their actions during the 1980s.

This holds true, in particular, for popular performing arts like street and underground theatre, and popular youth (sub)culture. As in other socialist countries, the East German secret police had to deal with several waves of Western music styles which had rebellious sounds, attitudes, and lyrics. They disposed of the most politically engaged musicians by expelling them to West Germany. However, by the early 1980s punk and other anarchic, anti-political styles had taken root within the specific late socialist youth culture. Despite attempts at repression, they managed to enter the official structures of the music business.

Gaps in the Existing Research

In terms of research strategies, to challenge the usual patterns of binary state-dissidence relations and an overemphasis on the secret police, appears to be a promising avenue. Existing case studies have pointed to the (relative) limits of the activities of the secret police under the triple impact of international détente, the growing dependence of the party leadership upon Western political and cultural recognition, and its dependence on the West's economic and financial support (e.g. Niethammer and Engelmann 2014).

Open and, to a lesser extent, covert Western intervention in East Germany's cultural dissident milieus has been broadly researched. Needless to say, in the context of a divided nation, cultural dissent in East Germany was impacted by West German ties with East German society, by a common cultural heritage, and by a permanent exchange between East and West

via tamizdat and West German broadcasting, among others. The role of covert activities, and of Western secret services, nevertheless appears to have been under-researched due to restrictions in archival access.

The secret police within East German society in general, and within the milieus of cultural dissent in particular, has played the role of an 'open secret' in contemporary artistic production, mostly mentioned in hidden remarks, descriptions of the atmosphere of suspicion in these circles, and of course presented in narratives of victimhood, heroism, or Švejk-style comedy. The public representations of the secret police, on the other hand, are generally under-researched, including the images and narratives presented in various contemporary cultural forms such as TV series, detective stories, etc. (Gieseke 2016, Kötzing 2018).

After 1989, literature, movies, and other cultural production concerning the Stasi established a new genre of artistic production in intense exchange with a broad public debate about the Stasi's heritage in a united Germany. This genre has culminated in the presentation of, and corresponding public debate on, *The Lives of the Others*; a movie about the role of the Stasi directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck. Although he is West German, Donnersmarck has presented his film as an authentic and insightful piece about the East German Stasi state. Numerous artists have tried to respond to the Hollywood-style narrative of this movie by using other approaches to Stasi memory and to the cultural sphere in East Germany, among them the documentary on the early punk scene, *Too Much Future* (2007), and the TV drama, *The Tower* (*Der Turm)*, 2012, based on the eponymous novel by Uwe Tellkamp.

Personal Contribution

In my own work on the role of state security in East German society I try to address the population's public image of the Stasi. I am particularly interested in the 'image policy' of the Stasi and its interaction with the mix of the personal experiences of surveillance, half-secret rumours, jokes, etc. Moreover, research at the Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam (ZZF) is particularly focused on the subcutaneous changes in political (sub)culture among artists and civil rights activists in the late socialist period, and their impact on politics in post-communist East Germany in the 1990s. This research is part of the project *The Long History of the "Turn", 1980–2000*.

6. Communism: between Nostalgia and Criminalization

Jose Maria Faraldo

State of the Art

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the memory of communism in Central and Eastern Europe has been constructed between two opposing poles: the criminality of dictatorial regimes, and a nostalgia for everyday life. This dynamic is clearly reflected in the historiography, and even though intermediate positions abound – usually of the most solid and innovative kind – both academia (generally dominated by the criminal aspect) and the publishing market (where nostalgia carries great weight, although scandals about agents and crimes do also) seem to surrender to these two tendencies. Plurality seems to increase with time, but it is also true that the consolidation of official memory organizations such as the IPN and BStU, among others, seems to have put those who seek to understand communism rather than the evidence of its crimes, on the defensive. The political transformations in Hungary and Poland, with the triumph of parties which make anti-communism their raison d'être, as well as the occupation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine, are transforming the frame of reference. Analysing communism in a serene and balanced way has progressively become more difficult.

Among other factors, this has to do with the way in which the idea of communism has changed. It has come to be seen not as the result of the 'mistakes' of a political philosophy but as the cause of a 'crime' committed by elites, generally considered foreign. This idea has also been intertwined with the evaluation and consideration of the crimes of National Socialism.

Just nine years after the collapse of the communist dictatorship in Poland, the Polish Parliament enacted the law creating the Institute of National Memory (Instytut Pamięci Narodowy, IPN). This institution aims to investigate and prosecute 'Nazi crimes, crimes against peace, humanity and war crimes' as well as 'communist crimes' perpetrated between 1 September 1939 (for the Nazis) and 17 September 1939 (for the Soviets), and 31 July 1990. It was evident, in the mind of the legislator, that the real object of investigation for the IPN was the latter crimes, since the massacres committed by the Germans had been judged and prosecuted during the post-war period. The definition of the commission's tasks implied, of course, a clear comparison, an equating even, between the 'Nazi' and 'communist' crimes.

This equalizing attempt had begun earlier, for example, with the foundation in 1993 of the Hannah-Arendt Institute for Research on Totalitarianism (HAIT) in Dresden.[13] This centre,

[13] See: "German institutes of contemporary history: Interviews with the directors", in: GHI Bulletin, 38 (spring 2006), pp. 59-79. (http://www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/bu/038/59.pdf)

created by the Saxon Christian Democratic Union (CDU) largely as an intellectual weapon to fight post-communists in the contemporary political landscape, designed and carried out a research program in which the 'two dictatorships', led by the National Socialist Workers Party (NSDAP) and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), were examined comparatively. Many of the initiatives which were taken by governmental institutions in the reunified Germany, such as the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry which reviewed the consequences of the communist dictatorship, or of the Federal Foundation for Research and Evaluation of the Communist Dictatorship in the GDR, absorbed the already established historiographic tradition and German civic education concerning the Nazi dictatorship. The theoretical model for totalitarianism was intellectually discredited in the 1970s and 1980s, but it became a new political and academic alternative tool.

Although there were preliminary attempts to equate communism with National Socialism, the most famous being Ernst Nolte's *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg* (2000), the prime example of the criminalization of communism was driven by French historiography: we are talking, of course, of the *Black Book of Communism*, published in 1997, which has exerted a major influence on the image and concept of communism in Central and Eastern Europe (Courtois, Werth, and Panné 2009). With the *Black Book* came a certain popularization of the notion of the crimes of communism, with an extremely exaggerated number of deaths (100 million) and its equating with National Socialism.

Equating the violence exercised during the Nazi period to 'communist crimes', imposed a very specific direction on the conceptualization of recent history in the region. If, at the beginning of the transition to capitalism, communism was presented as an economic disaster; as an inefficient, corrupt, and unequal regime but to some extent legitimate in its search for equality and modernization of the country; the historiographical criminalization of systems and parties inevitably switched the focus of analysis onto political violence and mass killings. The memory of communism as something strictly negative and pregnant with massive violence, a memory partly created thanks to the activism of the political and civil Right, came to encompass almost the entire public sphere in former communist countries. This phenomenon has become quite prevalent in Hungary, Poland, and the Baltic countries, somewhat less so in Czechia and the Slovak Republic, and present only in some social sectors in Romania (intellectuals, former dissidents). Journals like *Fronda* in Poland, museums such as the Occupation Museum in Estonia, and official institutions such as the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile in Romania are good examples of this phenomenon.

Meanwhile, in the former GDR, people flocked to the newly built multiplexes in brand new malls to watch films like *Sonnenallee* (1999) by Leander Haußmann, or *Goodbye Lenin* (2003) by

Wolfgang Becker, which allowed them to rejoice while contemplating artefacts and images that had disappeared a decade earlier. Similarly, the films made by Sergiu Nicolaescu in Romania during the time of Nicolae Ceaușescu, such as *Nea Mărin Miliardar* (*Uncle Marin, Millionaire*) from 1979; or those of Stanisław Bareja in Edward Gierek's Poland, such as *Miś* (*Bear*) in 1980, were continuously broadcast on television and enjoyed high ratings.

This *Ostalgie* did not affect all the countries in the region equally: it was stronger in Russia and East Germany, for example, than in Poland, where, as in Yugoslavia, it arrived later (Boym 2009; Boym and Basic Books 2016; Brunnbauer 2007). But we must not forget that, faced with the intense suffering of the transition to capitalism, the second half of the 1990s saw the electoral triumph of post-communist parties throughout the area.

Thus, the criminality which seemed to come from 'above' was matched by nostalgia 'from below': this could give rise to the impression that this nostalgia represented a sort of resistance against the official attempt to remember the past as tragic and painful. Anticommunism embodied historiographically in publications promoted from above seemed to respond to a willingness to rescue the positives of the communist experience from below.

In reality it was not quite so, and despite the massive spread of nostalgia, only a minority understood this as resistance and a desire to return to communism. The official historiography contributed decidedly to the recreating of new national myths and to the recovery of elements of the past, especially on the opposition or dissident side, which served to consolidate the new democratic societies. These new myths have sometimes been based on real findings. For instance, the place in German historical memory occupied today by the anti-communist rebellion of 1953 is, due to a discovery by researchers and thanks to the documents preserved in the Stasi archives, that the uprising had been much broader, extended, and shared amongst social classes than had been previously believed (e.g. Fricke and Walter 2016; Eisenfeld, Kowalczuk, and Neubert 2004).

Academic circles in Poland and Czechoslovakia had developed a marked autonomy from communist power in the final years of the system. Those same academies of sciences and research institutes now undertook the historical examination of communist repression and dictatorship. The Research Center for Contemporary History of Potsdam (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, ZZF), the History Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Instytut Historii Polskiej Akademii Nauk), the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR), and the Institute of the History of the Revolution of 1956 in Budapest (1956-os Intézet) are some of the main organizations which have, ever since the second half of the 1990s, been producing many fine analyses of communism. The first of these, ZZF Potsdam, which partly originated in the former Academy of Sciences of the GDR,

developed an intense research activity which managed to escape the repression–dissidence dichotomy and established a new basis for a social and cultural history of communism. With one foot already in the classic social history of the Bielefeld School and the other in the *Alltagsgeschichte* (the history of everyday life centred on the Nazi regime), the centre was open to contributions from the Anglo-Saxon cultural history of the 1990s, developing large projects around GDR society, which were expanded to include other countries in Eastern Europe.[14]

The ZZF also provided the key to analysing the communist phenomenon throughout the region. With German funding, especially thanks to a wide range of private and public foundations, extensive multinational projects have been developed on the most diverse thematic complexes. The latter have achieved a historiographic homogenization of sorts concerning Eastern Central Europe, a state of fact that is particularly evident in regard to the study of historical memory. Although some of the countries in the area had already developed their own theories about collective memory, the reality is that, thanks to German-funded academic projects, the theoretical paradigms of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Reinhard Koselleck, and Jan and Aleida Assmann have become standards of memory and historical politics, with occasional additions from Harald Walzer and the Austrian urban historian, Moritz Csáky (Csáky and Stachel 2001, 2003; Csaky 2010). Especially interesting are the historical–sociological projects dedicated to measuring the memory of traumatic events, such as the Second World War or Stalinist repression, or to evaluating the social transformations during the years of state socialism.[15]

The construction of the negative memory of communism was implemented through a wide catalogue of media (festivals, exhibitions, monuments, filmography, etc.). This negative memory has had to compete with constant resistance at the national, regional, and local levels of government, which have been dominated by post-communist parties. It also has to face the desire from a large part of the population, even from former dissidents who participated in the transition and yearned for a national reconciliation, to draw a line under the past. This has been very clear in Poland, where former dissidents surrounding Adam Michnik and the newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, have fought against the policies of lustration, i.e., the public exposure of ex-communists and ex-collaborators with the secret police.

Finally, the research into social history from a perspective enriched by culturalism and often focused on everyday life has been a historiographical current of great importance. Work on

[14] See the series “Zeithistorische Studien” in Böhlau Verlag: https://zzf-potsdam.de/de/publikationen/zeithistorische-studien.

[15] For example in Poland the series “Współczesne Społeczeństwo Polskie wobec Przeszłości” with authors such as Barbara Szacka and Andrzej Szpociński (Bogumił et al. 2018; Skoczylas and Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar 2014; Kwiatkowski 2008).For the Russian Federation, see the publications of the Levada Center (http://www.levada.ru/en/) and the Memorial foundation (https://www.memo.ru/en-us/).

communist festivities, national symbols during communism, or on the semantics of power, was mixed with an analysis of communist youth, of the resonance of the press, the experience of the queues, consumption and daily resistance, and more. These authors only sought to produce a wider analysis, but they have frequently been accused of attempting to underestimate the extent of the violence of the secret police. When it comes to building the memory of communism, the conservative political and academic spectrum are very sensitive to what they see as a 'banalization of repression'.

A similar phenomenon has taken place with the rise of oral histories and life stories throughout the region, with the emergence of biographies and memoirs of both the anonymous characters and great protagonists of history. Thanks to the action of civil society organizations such as the Karta Centre in Poland and Memorial in Russia, and universities such as Babeș-Bolyai in Romania, the memory of repression has also been collected in large oral history projects whose archives are, in general, available to historians. The life story boom has been especially powerful in the Russian Federation, which is surely linked to the scant official attention received by the memory of the repression since Vladimir Putin's first government. This does not imply that this issue is prohibited or cannot be investigated, but official obstacles have been growing over time. In fact, the Nobel Prize in Literature awarded to the oral history specialist Svetlana Aleksievich in 2015 has thrown light on the work of historians, sometimes mixed with literati and journalists, who research and narrate the lives of those who suffered from their experience of real socialism. These testimonies have largely contributed to building a pluralistic and diverse memory of communism in which there is room for conflicting concepts and experiences: nationalism and solidarity, religiosity and atheism, crisis and stability, violence and apathy, and racial hatred and brotherhood. This has not been an obstacle to the political use of historical knowledge, which has led to real memory wars (Rutten, Fedor, and Zvereva 2014; Mink 2013; Fedor et al. 2017). Probably the most significant of these has been the discursive battle in post-Maidan Ukraine about the issue of anti-fascism versus anti-communism. The actual armed conflict there had a correlate in the media and public history conversation.

Gaps in the Existing International Literature

Although much has already been written, I believe that historiography should begin to focus more on the post-socialist era. So far, it has been mostly sociologists and political scientists who have endeavoured to analyse this period; it is time to use the tools of historiography to do so. Many of the problems of new non-democracies or illiberal democracies probably date from state socialism and the way it was transformed after 1989.

Personal Contribution to the Project

I am planning to write a chapter or article on the cultural transformation of the post-socialist era and the legacy of the communist secret police.

7. Folk Culture under Surveillance: Poetics and the Politics of Ethnographic Representation

Nadzeya Charapan

State of the Art

The ethnographic open-air museum as a museological genre became a pervasive phenomenon in the twentieth century in response to drastic social-economic and cultural changes: 'The new forms of industrial production gradually displaced traditional crafts and the appearance of these museums was a guarantee for their preservation for generations to come' (Vukov, 2012:337). Hence the concept underwent several transformations to comply with the changing ideological regimes of the twentieth century.

As a repository of material vernacular culture, ethnographic open-air museums were actively employed by Soviet propaganda to reflect the poor social-economic conditions, the life and culture of peasants under class society, as well as to promote the achievements of socialism. Despite the established Soviet ideology, ethnographic open-air museums in the Baltic region tended to foster spiritual and cultural identity, and national pride. This ideological ambiguity was criticized by the regime. For example, in 1950s and '60s a Latvian ethnographic open-air museum was declared harmful and ideologically incorrect, and was almost closed down by the Ministry of State Control of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. Over the next several decades, it remained under the rigorous control of the local government.

Despite abundant literature on the history of ethnographic museums in the Baltic states, research on the ideological cornerstone of the ethnographic open-air genre and on the forms of its surveillance is limited. Sten Rentzhog (2007) in his volume, *Open-Air Museums: The History and Future of a Visionary Idea*, devoted a short section to the development of ethnographic open-air museums in the Eastern Bloc. He shows that they tended to be turned into propaganda tools in the service of socialism in Latvia, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia. However, the chapter fails to provide a detailed analysis of the socio-cultural context, exhibition practices, biographies, or the extent of state control over the museums, during the 1948–1991 period.

Eglė Rindzevičiūtė (2011), in her attempt to reconstruct the history of Lithuanian state-building through the cultural narrative of national museums, discusses Lithuanian museums under socialism. She emphasizes that, despite a dedication to Soviet propaganda in line with Marxism-Leninism, Lithuanian intellectuals followed the nineteenth-century template of an ethnic nation, thereby expressing 'silent opposition' to communist rule (Rindzevičiūtė, 2011). They applied the 'double standard' (Soviet yet national) to collections, displays, and interpretations of ethnographic and architectural objects.

Furthermore, she brings up another duplicitous approach concerning surveillance practices: museum ethnographers and historians could form their architectural collections with some independence from governmental control, but the documentation of audience responses and educational activities was actually controlled by the Lithuanian Ministry of State Control (Rindzevičiūtė, 2011:532). Rindzevičiūtė's study is valuable for the current research since it provides a broader perspective on Lithuanian museology under communism; however, it lacks a comparative dimension which takes in the Baltic region in its analysis of non-conformism, expressed through collections and curatorial practices.

Finally, a study authored by Inga Levickaitė-Vaškevičienė (2016) provides interesting insights into the evolution of pedagogical programs and curatorial practices in the only Lithuanian open-air museum. The cornerstone of the exposition was a series of sacral and religious objects – old wooden churches and wayside shrines, which were a thorn in the atheist flesh – that were displayed outdoors. To reduce the ideological constraints, the indoor ethnographic exhibits of the early 1970s did not flaunt a clearly defined sacral or religious theme and were arranged into reconstructed interiors of peasant farmsteads and houses from the pre-industrial era. However, beginning in the 1980s the expression of a latent ideological non-conformism began to appear through interpretations and guided tours. On the one hand, ethnographic objects were selected and arranged in such a way that visitors could not find in them any anti-Soviet element; on the other hand, the displayed cultural heritage was revived and endowed with a meta-level of sacred meaning through additional interpretations and educational programs on ideologically incorrect themes (for instance religion, rituals, and folk beliefs).

The implementation of 'double standards' in curatorial practices was a manoeuvre designed to foster a national ethnocentric ideology without actually challenging the communist rule. On the surface, the silent objects of architecture and ethnographic collections complied with the central agenda of depicting a disadvantaged pre-Soviet past, but the core value of the museum was emphasized through the celebration of Lithuanian national identity and culture.

Existing Gaps and Proposed Contribution

I would like to explore and compare the history of ethnographic open-air museums in the Baltic region during the Soviet period, and to scrutinize how the ethnography served the regime. I plan to visit the museums to conduct interviews with the curators and guides, and work in the archives on the official reports and documentation from the 1950–90 period. This research aims to fill in the gaps concerning the poetics and politics of ethnographic representation and to contribute to knowledge in the forms of ideological surveillance over culture in the Baltic states.

8. Building Paradoxes: Control and Care, Dissent and Participation, Shape and Contents

Gabriela Nicolescu

State of the Art

My contribution reviews the state of the art in research on surveillance, resistance, and dissent, as it appears in four different contexts: contemporary research on the surveillance of everyday life and domestic work of Filipino migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong; research on the sterilization campaigns that took place during the Emergency period in India; research on a post-communist museum in Hungary; and research on communist and post-communist museum displays in Romania.

There are two reasons for this global comparison: first, surveillance did not occur only in former socialist countries; a comparison between the forms of control in communist, fascist, and liberal regimes helps us identify human trends, but also the possibilities for international collaboration. Second, the creative ways of integrating or reflecting on the use of surveillance in contemporary research go beyond the literature which is focused on Eastern and Central Europe. I will review here two books and three articles on the topics mentioned above.

The forthcoming article by Johnson et al., *Beyond the All-Seeing Eye* is a brilliant example of how surveillance methods were integrated in contemporary research to better understand the act of surveillance itself. This article considers surveillance as a two-sided coin and an intrinsic paradox of care and control. It discusses the case of Filipino migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong who are subjected to surveillance, insofar as household employers use cameras to monitor their activities in the home. As a reaction to these forms of control, and as a way of turning the

invisibility of their surveillance into visibility, the workers have been asked to make a smartphone diary of how they are surveilled and to send it to the researchers.

This article addresses the themes of social control and the visibility of the act of surveillance in two different ways. The first has to do with a methodological invention and critical approach. Based on challenging the classical ethnographical forms of data collection, it has turned surveillance from a topic of research into a method of collecting more evidence, thereby inverting the roles of the observer and observed. Other than the playfulness and creativity of the method itself, it also leads us to question the role of the researcher in using sensitive data. He or she adds not only another layer to the act of surveillance, but also another layer of visibility. Here follows the second way of addressing the theme of social control: if we endow ourselves with the simultaneous right of care and control, why should we not acknowledge the same right for the secret agents of police states? Why are our narratives about these agents always and only accusatory? Research and creative writing would benefit from deconstructing these 'absolute', demonizing narratives. Some of these secret agents might have had doubts, and/or the regime's propaganda and brainwashing may have affected them.

This work shows that control is intertwined with care. This alludes, in turn, to the double nature of the image: as document but also as a prop for future activities. It makes us wonder if all forms of surveillance do not contain also in themselves forms or desires of care.

Emma Tarlo's monograph *Unsettling Memories* (2003) is an anthropological research into the sterilization of poor people living on the outskirts of large Indian cities during the 1975–77 period of Indira Gandhi's rule. During this period, known as the Emergency, many poor and vulnerable people were mutilated in an attempt at forceful urban and social regeneration. The volume is about the social categorization of people through bureaucracy, as well as on sterilization, pain, love, sex, cheating, and friendship. It was created by combining archival historical research with ethnographic research among the people involved.

While reading this book, one understands that the archives are a living institution, where even 'ignoring' counts as an active form of controlling the past. By comparing the archives with the interviews it becomes clear that archival documents support multiple versions of the 'truth', not just a single one. This research is specifically relevant to studies on communism and shows that there is no such thing as a univocal historical truth.

Just as in other narratives from Eastern and Central Europe, one can detect obvious comparisons in the way tragic events have been narrated ex post facto. There is always a gap between the witnesses' account and the reports of journalists, politicians, and writers. Tarlo claims that one dominant theme is that of guilt. Many authors, whether journalists, civil servants, politicians, writers, or activists, felt they could have done more to oppose Indira Gandhi's regime.

By comparison, the actual people concerned spoke 'less in terms of insurmountable torture and blinding oppression than in terms of hardship and getting by' (Tarlo 2003: 224).

Similar narratives of hardship and survival under surveillance are found in the other three references I mentioned above. They deal with communist and post-communist museums in Romania and Hungary. I chose these three examples in order to analyse exhibition-making as a form of discourse used to stage political ideas in the past as well as in the present. These texts make us understand that museums and exhibition-making are important tools for the dissemination of knowledge, but can also manipulate the way history is narrated. I would, however, like to point to the fact that the tools for critically engaging with these forms of knowledge shaping are quite new and that more scholarly attention should be devoted to contemporary, critical museography and museology.

Gabriela Nicolescu (2016) discusses how exhibition-making can be seen as a creative method for building anthropological knowledge. Situations in which there is conflict between social classes, curatorial practices, and disciplines, remind us of the existence of a very subtle and enduring museum lexis which governs how political ideas are put on display and how aesthetics, ethics, and politics go hand in hand.

This research was conducted in tandem with an exhibition the author curated in the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant, 21 years after the collapse of the communist regime. Reflecting upon the internal debates within museums, I show how museum employees use a specific lexis which is based not only on existing practices but also on contingency. Two different notions of temporality are mobilized: while practice involves repetitiveness, predictability, and continuity over different historical periods; contingency creates unexpected groupings of things, settings, and meanings. It is the interplay between practice and contingency that dictates how the audience engages with the museum's discourse.

Building upon the preceding reference, another article by Nicolescu (2014) is about surveillance in the field of culture, and the control over exhibition-making in late 1950s Romania. It also tells the story of resistance to a linear interpretation of history at the Muzeul de Artă Populară, which can only partially be translated as the Museum of Folk Art (MFA). This museum was located in Bucharest, Romania and, together with other similar displays of folk art across the country, played a very important role in the transformation of peasants into workers in the late 1950s and early '60s. During this period of time, museum visits were mandatory for school children, workers, and soldiers. As far as these people were concerned, exhibiting folk art and peasant objects as being related to the past, validated the socialist regime's claims to a brighter future.

An example of a 1957 exhibition crucially demonstrates how conflicting versions of history could be displayed simultaneously within the same institution. The catalogue for the exhibition (Bănățeanu, 1957) named and detailed the content of fourteen rooms in a unilinear sequence of temporalities (and progress) from 'Ancient times' (Room 1), to 'Folk Art Transformations under Industrialist Capitalism' (Room XIII), and 'The Valorisation of the Popular Art in Socialist Times' (Room XIV). Although the text of the catalogue and the plan representing the two floors of the exhibition constructed this historical perspective, in reality the exhibition itself failed to do so. Indeed, as a tiny note on the last page of the catalogue indicates, three rooms from the exhibition were changed at the last moment. The museum curators declined to exhibit the room planned about ancient times (containing archaeological objects), or the last two rooms about capitalism and socialism in order to make space for 'new temporary exhibitions' (Bănățeanu, 1957, last page). 'These last-minute changes indicate the fact that the historicism in the display was not particularly important for the museum team' (Nicolescu 2014, 42–43). The theme of visibility thus allows us to reflect on yet another aspect of surveillance: in certain circumstances, museum curators *refused* to exhibit a certain version of history.

Four years after this exhibition, the director of the museum was put under surveillance. This lasted for three years and only ended when a colleague of his testified positively about his work and his support for socialist ideals. Such surveillance indicates that folk art displays were considered political tools for the communication of ideas. Research in the MFA's archives shows that during the years when the director was put under surveillance, he wrote many texts in praise of the achievements of the party. The paradox is that while his texts were praising the regime, some of his exhibitions were not.

István Rév's *Retroactive Justice: Prehistory of Post-Communism* (2005) presents forms of manipulation of memory in post-communist Hungary. It contains a detailed analysis of an exhibition mounted in the Terror Háza museum in Budapest as well as the debates surrounding the creation of this institution. The disproportionate way of dealing with the two totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century is blatant: twenty-two rooms were dedicated to the communist regime while there were only two for Hungary's fascist regime. This led to the museum being strongly criticized. István Rév recounts stories of how visitors were asked to bend down to hear the voices of the people who might still live under the ground, and reflects on the political context in which this institution was created.

Gaps in the Historiography

I have identified three gaps in historiography. First, unmasking the politicization of the display in the Terror Háza museum shows that more attention should be dedicated to critical museology in general, not just to critical research. Displays of all sorts (ranging across literature, contemporary art, folk art, history, and anthropology) are all political tools for the communication of ideas. Second, my contribution problematizes the very term of 'dissent' by presenting the conflicting ways in which the past was exhibited and presented in Central and Eastern Europe. Is the fact that there are no national museums of communism in Romania and Bulgaria a form of dissent? Is the museum Terror Háza a form of dissent? Who defines what dissent is for whom (or rather against whom), according to what context, and in what specific period of time? These questions still deserve to be addressed. And third, a comparison between the forms of control in communist, fascist, and liberal regimes helps us identify human trends, but also the possibilities for international collaboration. This is why I argue that research on the surveillance of everyday life in Central and Eastern Europe needs to enter into dialogue with scholarly publications based on material originating from other parts of the world (as in the examples of Hong Kong and India presented above). Moreover, the combination of research in the archives and interviews with the people who were the target of surveillance, relativizes the notion of the 'truth' allegedly to be found in archival materials, a finding corroborated by Emma Tarlo's research on India and the *Hidden Galleries* research on Central and Eastern Europe.

My Proposed Contribution

My contribution to the *Hidden Galleries* project, led by James Kapaló, consists of participating in the curation of four exhibitions, in four different contexts, on the material and visual presence of religious minorities in the secret service archives in different Central and Eastern Europe contexts. This project, as well as the four exhibitions in question, aims to reveal the multiple truths of the paper archives, and not only repression by the secret police. These joint forms of research and re-interpretation of histories prove that the controlling organs were also – maybe involuntarily – creators of forms of aesthetic creativity. But most importantly, the project and the four exhibitions strive to reveal the paradoxes and nuances in the way we understand both repression and dissent.

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Chapter 2: Culture in the Grey Zone

Authored by Mădălina Brașoveanu, Peter Bugge, Eduard Burget, Jens Gieseke, Adam Hudek, Dorota Jarecka, Iveta Kestere, Zsófia Lóránd, Jan Matonoha, Jan Mervart, Kristóf Nagy, Libora Oates-Indruchová, Magda Radu, Aigi Rahi-Tamm, Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz, Marko Zubak

With contributions from Senka Anastasova, Simone Bellezza, Milena Dragičević-Šešić, Joseph Grim Feinberg, Adela Hincu, Michal Kopeček, Agnieszka Mrozik, Magda Raduta

Edited by Zsófia Lóránd and Jan Mervart (WG2 Chairs)

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1. Introduction: The Concept of the Grey Zone in Existing Scholarship and Alternative Concepts

Even today, we tend to think of state socialism in dichotomies and oppositions, primarily as those between the oppressive state and its heroic dissidents (totalitarian paradigm, Cold War paradigm). In the past few decades, scholarship has been working towards dismantling this dichotomy and aims to show the complexity of how state socialism functioned in everyday life, politics, art, culture, and intellectual production, among others. We chose the concept of the *grey zone* to describe the various ways in which people lived under and survived state socialism – and even laughed.

The broad range of fields which can be analysed and described through this concept make its uses widespread and diverse. In our report, we firstly reflect on the multiple uses of this concept, as well as the alternative concepts which describe the same phenomenon. After reflections on the concept, we provide a summary of the fields of research which operate with, and rely on, the concept of the *grey zone* in their analyses.

The concept of the *grey zone* works both as 'as a category of analysis and as an empirical subject', points out Peter Bugge in his essay written for this chapter about the history of the concept. Bugge locates the origin of the term in Czech sociologist and Charter 77 activist, Jiřina Šiklová's essay, *The 'Grey Zone' and the Future of Dissent in Czechoslovakia* (Siklová 1992; Šiklová 1990). He writes:

> Šiklová defines this grey zone (i.e. the people constituting and inhabiting it) as mostly "good workers, qualified, professionally erudite people" to be found "within every defined social, professional, or interest group". Her grey zone thus consists of technocrats and intellectuals who are formally "part of the 'structure' and more or less fulfil the demands and criteria that the totalitarian state makes of its front lines"; but who sympathize with the dissidents and shares their wish for radical reform.

However, the concept has at least one other interpretation which we also frequently meet in scholarship on state socialism. Bugge also emphasizes that while Šiklová sees the grey zone as an ideological middle ground position, Petr Oslzlý, Havel's appointed advisor, sees the grey zone as the space between official and unofficial culture, which is a very different interpretation. (Oslzlý 1990). Moreover, continues Bugge's argument,

> … in his 2001 study of Czech "alternative culture" Josef Alan offers a differentiated portrait of the various groupings in the Czech art and music scene of the normalization era. He calls the changes in the status of the Jazz Section an example of the difficulties of regulating and controlling the "social periphery" and adds: "Similarly, as in the official structure we find a *grey zone* also in the environment of the alternative culture. Its actors in their striving for legalization then had to undergo the strange play on both sides, in which they often became unequal partners of more or less random *patrons*." (Alan 2002). Alan suggests here that Czechoslovak culture during the normalization era had not one, but *two* grey zones, although he does not specify how he sees the relationship between the two. (P. Bugge)

The *grey zone* concept has an important use from earlier times, which shows the depths of the concept's stakes, as Iveta Kestere sheds light on it here:

> In discussion of the *grey zone* concept, scholars mostly refer to works by Primo Levi and his personal experience in Auschwitz concentration camp (Harboe Knudsen and Frederiksen 2015; Craps 2014). Using Levi, Stef Craps describes the "gray zone" as a place inhabited by an "in-between group"; "victims who compromise and collaborate with their oppressors in various ways and under varying levels of coercion in exchange for material or other benefits not available to the fellow prisoners." (Craps 2014)' (I. Kestere)

This concept is very helpful in deconstructing the binaries which used to dominate the way we talked about post-WWII history. As Peter Bugge writes:

> Gradually, historians and other scholars, therefore abandoned and/or criticized this model as being inadequate and inaccurate. It could not explain the intellectual and social dynamics of the reform processes of the 1960's, nor the numerous ways in which the population, for decades before its collapse, simultaneously criticized, took advantage of, and supported the socialist system. Paulina Bren's 2010 study of Czechoslovak media culture was a significant contribution to this new trend, which also allowed for new perspectives on, and interpretations of, the phenomenon of dissent (Bolton 2012). These new perspectives inform many types of scholarship, but oral history deserves mentioning as a valuable source on how different milieus (including those of art and culture) experienced the socialist era. Also the transnational and international

dimensions of "independent" or "underground" cultural activism is beginning to receive the scholarly attention it deserves. For example in a study by Friederike Kind-Kovács (Kind-Kovács 2014). … Alexei Yurchak offered a different type of critique. In his study of the culture of late socialism in the USSR he argues that most intellectual milieus in Leningrad in the 1970s and '80s considered themselves to be "*vnye*", not part of the inside and not part of the outside, but in a deterritorialized *elsewhere*, where neither the logic of the Soviet state, nor that of dissidents applied, or even appeared to be relevant: in short where the key binary implied in "grey zone" did not count. (Yurchak 2006). (P. Bugge)

Aigi Rahi-Tamm adds to this idea with the advice, that when searching for the boundaries of the grey zone, it is immensely useful to include an analysis of official sources and biographies:

I consider it necessary to study different social relations, how they have developed, and what influenced the norms of mutual behaviour; to what extent we can recognize forced situations or agreement, and what the official and unofficial or conscious and unconscious norms were. (A. Rahi-Tamm)

The immense helpfulness of the term is reinforced by Jens Gieseke, writing:

While historians and political scientists in the past have stuck to classic concepts of state versus dissidence, more recent studies, fuelled by anthropological and ethnological concepts, have opened the field to new approaches. For our research, Yurchak's *Everything Was Forever* (Yurchak 2006) and Kenney's *Carnival of Revolution* (Kenney 2002) proved to be influential case studies on neighbouring societies for new "performative" views on activities of cultural dissent in the grey zone between official culture and political opposition. Approaches like these seem to be promising from at least three perspectives: first, they respond to the ambivalent nature of social behaviour under a condition of weakened party-state control by using approaches like speech act theory etc.; secondly, they open the field of research to the continuities and transformations from late to post communism, and the reinvention and pluralization of publics and cultures after 1989–91; and thirdly, and more generally, such a concept as the *grey zone* responds to the desire to overcome the binary concepts of state-dissident relations. This approach is heading towards the concept of (at least) a triangular space, which includes society as a third, relatively independent collective actor, or, to be more

precise, a plurality of milieus. Such milieus could be researched for their role as resonance chambers for the work of cultural dissidents as well as – in other cases – supporters of state repression against "loony" avant-gardist subcultures ...

Due to the obviously provisional character of the *grey zone* concept, it needs to be conceptualized in respect to its place in state socialist societies. As a first step, I would define the *grey zone* as a field in which people from the cultural sphere act within the framework of party-state institutions (in the broad sense) or other legal associations (such as the churches, in particular) without taking the official authoritative discourse as more than a performative necessity. Such a definition is context-sensitive insofar as the power relations within various periods (Stalinism/post-Stalinism/late socialism) and societies may have offered different spheres of such kind. At the same time, it is context-independent, as it makes a distinction between criminalized and formally legal cultural activities. (J. Gieseke).

Libora Oates-Indruchová directs our attention to the way in which the cultural 'in-betweenness' of the concept is described in the two-volume, *The Global Encyclopaedia of Informality: Understanding Social and Cultural Complexity*, published at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the University College London (UCL SSEES) within the framework of a FRINGE project (an acronym for Fluidity, Resistance, Invisible, Neutrality, Grey zones, Elusiveness) (Ledeneva 2018). The encyclopaedia has a large section on '[t]he unlocking power of non-conformity: cultural resistance vs political opposition', with short articles by Peter Zusi and Jan Kubik which mention the *grey zone* in the sense of cultural in-betweenness:

In a political context, the term "opposition" might appear a synonym for "resistance", but there is an important distinction. Opposition involves counterbalanced or conflicting forces: action and reaction, left and right, yes and no, black and white. These forces engage in tug-of-war, a zero-sum game where the advantage of one comes at the disadvantage of the other. Not only does opposition involve dichotomies or binary forces, it tends to assume formal or even official shape ... Resistance, by contrast, does not operate through such clear dynamics: it is multivalent and poly-directional, and its forms of organization are often complex and informal. Resistance does not simply confront the structures of power head on, but may seek paths or detours around those structures, often seeping into the cracks and fissures in the barriers, or inhabiting spaces that have been deemed outside of or irrelevant to the shape of the discourse ... And when resistance is victorious, it need not necessarily oust or eliminate what it resisted, but

often simply replaces the dynamic of opposed forces with a less structured, more complex swirl of possibilities.

What this means is that resistance (as opposed to political opposition) has a particular affinity for the cultural realm. Or more accurately, resistance occupies a grey zone in between categories such as "political", "social", and "cultural" … First, … resistance has a tendency to seek out symbolic forms … Second, resistance involves a paradox: even when it harbours a clear message, it commonly works through ambiguity … Third, resistance often seeks out informal forms. (Zusi 2018, 336–38).

The *Grey zone* as a concept, writes Dorota Jarecka,

… has not yet been applied in the area of the visual arts as widely as it has in the field of the political history. This seems promising, as it can acquire at least two meanings. The first is connected with the very nature of the field being explored. In recent research on visual arts in socialist countries a big effort has been made to capture phenomena on the boundary of official and unofficial culture, of state and non-state institutions. The *grey zone* seems to be a relevant tool for exploring culture under pressure which is not necessarily dissent in purely political terms. One can mention two illuminating books that take up the problem of performance art in Eastern and Central Europe: *Artificial Hells* by Claire Bishop (Bishop 2014), and *Antipolitics in Central European Art* by Klara Kemp-Welch (Kemp-Welch 2014). Collective Actions by the Moscow group of artists, Julius Koller and Jiri Kovanda, as mentioned by these authors, are all located in the precarious field between neutrality and dissent … The other meaning of *grey* could be connected with the specific language of the art in question. *Grey* could describe the zone which looms between different media, for instance: painting and performance, text and drawing, and so on. The intersection of the two above-described meanings of *grey* could be the most productive. Today, various categories are being applied in the analysis of the field of artistic production in former socialist countries. Klara Kemp-Welch, in her book on the relationship of art and dissidence in Central Europe (Kemp-Welch 2014), builds her narrative around such notions as "anti-politics" (György Konrad), "reticence" (Václav Havel), and "disinterest" (Tadeusz Kantor). Luiza Nader, in her discussion of the happening and installation art around 1970, proposes the notion of "autonomy" to embrace these activities. Seemingly unpolitical, it acquires political meaning when considered from the perspective proposed by Cornelius Castoriadis (Nader 2016) … The participants in the artistic scene tried to invent their own definitions which would grasp

the essence of their ambivalent situation as artists trapped between two powers: the Communist post-totalitarian regime, and the neoliberal pressure for commodification. Proposals like "anti-exhibition" (1963) by Tadeusz Kantor, "anti-happening" (1969), and "post-artistic art" (1970) by Jerzy Ludwiński, or "non-artistic art" by Janusz Bogucki (1980s), belong together. All these do not comply with the binary model, they are based on a specific lack of precision and are therefore operative. The advantage of the term lies in its broad meaning. (D. Jarecka)

As Mădălina Brașoveanu points out that space is very important when discussing the concept of the *grey zone*.

In Czechoslovakia, unofficial art was neither underground, nor integrated into the state institutional system, but instead, found in other places (the natural space or private settings), which led to its being designated as "grey area" art. Nonetheless, with Piotrowski, the term *grey zone* found yet another, more extensive use; namely to describe the whole former East in the context of post-1989 Europe. In 1999, he considered the former socialist bloc as "the grey zone of Europe", as an area that was continuously oscillating between different times and geographies (Piotrowski 1999, 36) (M. Brașoveanu)

The spatiality of the term is also discussed by Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz, who says:

According to recent research, the grey zone is understood as "in-betweenness" – a space between two extrema. With regard to studies on socialism and post-socialism, the grey zone means a space between what is forbidden and what is allowed, between censorship and freedom of expression. It also means a way of avoiding, or omitting control. The grey zone may be associated with limited agency under a dictatorship. In this context agency is defined as a kind of social practice, as an ability to act which is socially, politically, and culturally determined. In this setting, not only can some artistic (and literary) activities be located in the grey zone, but also social activities ... The concept of the *grey zone* can be compared to the concept of "shadow spaces" – different from "'dark' or 'evil'" places, since its meaning cannot be solely reduced to the terrors of the past. Actually, "shadow" implies positive as well as negative interpretations of the past. It defines spaces (cities, as well as single buildings) where there are visible tensions between victimhood and

heroism, and positive and negative memory. “Shadow spaces” are defined by history and by memory. (Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz)

The spatiality of the concept is further explored in the writing of the above cited Mădălina Brașoveanu:

> Leaving aside the dualism that has dominated the geographical imagination (formed by the notion of “the perceived space”, what Lefebvre calls “The First Space”, together with the “the conceived space”, Lefebvre’s “Second Space”), Edward W. Soja theorized a “Thirdspace”, which he identified in what Lefebvre called “lived space”. As Soja argues: “Thirdspace as Lived Space is portrayed as multi-sided and contradictory, oppressive and liberating, passionate and routine, knowable and unknowable. It is a space of radical openness, a site of resistance and struggle, a space of multiplicitous representations, investigable through its binarized oppositions but also where *il y a toujours l’Autre*, where there are always ‘other’ spaces, heterotopologies, paradoxical geographies to be explored. It is a meeting ground, a site of hybridity … and moving beyond entrenched boundaries, a margin or edge where ties can be severed and also where new ties can be forged. It can be mapped but never captured in conventional cartographies; it can be creatively imagined but obtains meaning only when practiced and fully lived.” (Soja and E.W. 2000, 276). (M. Brasoveanu)

2. Art and the Grey Zone

Authored by Mădălina Brașoveanu, Magda Radu, Dorota Jarecka, Kristóf Nagy, Eduard Burget, and Adam Hudek.

Edited by Jan Mervart.

The indivisibility of both the official and the unofficial is emphasized heavily within WG2. Thus, Mădălina Brașoveanu introduces the Romanian case for which it was symptomatic that,

> … most (if not all) the exhibitions considered, retrospectively, as being “alternative” happened in official exhibiting spaces, galleries, or museums; and usually this state of things wasn’t perceived as being a contradiction among the “alternative” artists, quite the contrary, to exhibit in a gallery and/or the museum meant that you were able to penetrate the system which, in turn, “legitimized” that *different* art you, the artist, were

proposing as art. Outside the system nothing existed and could hardly be imagined. (M. Brașoveanu)

The last point of Mădălina Brașoveanu's explanation matches Miklós Haraszti's concept of the 'velvet prison' (Haraszti 1987), which seems to be a departure point for Kristóf Nagy, who examines the grey zone within the official system of culture, stating that:

> ... state-socialism did not offer space to bypass state-institutions (except maybe the few attempts that took place in private apartments), even the counter-hegemonic cultural activities emerged within the state-infrastructure.

In Nagy's view, the Visual Artists' Union represents a 'complex system, where, in several cases, counter-hegemonic projects could be realized'. Similarly, Eduard Burget talks about The Union of Czechoslovak writers (Svaz československých spisovatelů), and about other institutions such as publishing houses and literary periodicals which were, in some cases, incorporated into the official scene after their reformist adventures during the 1960s. Dorota Jarecka approaches the role of artist in their relationship to the system as follows:

> In Poland, at the turn of the 1960s and '70s, artists such as Andrzej Matuszewski, Jarosław Kozłowski, Jerzy Bereś, and Ewa Partum, generated a new language based on performance and participation through which they questioned the authority of the regime and of the art institutions in the country. Emancipating the role of the viewer was their tool for challenging the legitimacy of the system. Their common enemy was, in Peter Bürger's terms, the "Institution of Art". A major means of expression for those ideas were exhibitions. It was a relevant tool, the message was encoded in a specific neo-avant-garde language, yet perfectly legible. (Bürger 2017) (D. Jarecka)

At the same time, Magda Radu, with references to the case of Latin American, warns against the over-politicization of Art:

> It must also be acknowledged that they often employ a complex and sophisticated visual language and should thus be allowed to take the liberty to stray from the register of minimalism. When artists carve out autonomous spaces and affirm their independence vis-à-vis, a stifling, conformist, or outright repressive environment, this does not necessarily mean that they are active in the underground or in isolation from other

artistic circles or communities, or that they are disconnected from the most recent developments in culture. Maybe it is time to untangle these apparent contradictions and to realize that art is a mode of thinking onto itself and that "political and form are not opposed". (M. Radu)

The mutual and often conflicting relationship between the artist and the system is usually presented by the role writers played within state socialist regimes. Thus Andrew Baruch Wachtel (Wachtel 2006) states that more than any other art form, literature has defined Eastern Europe as a cultural and political entity in the second half of the twentieth century. Although often persecuted by the state, Eastern European writers formed what was frequently recognized as a 'second government', and their voices were heard and revered inside and outside the borders of their countries. According to Wachtel, the role of writers and their influence within the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) was always extraordinarily high in comparison with the 'rest of the world'. Even the rebellious or overly critical authors were able to live relatively prosperous lives with the benevolent support of the communist regime, thus effectively constructing their own 'grey zone'. (Mervart 2010)

However, in the last decade, those East-European literary studies with a French background have used an approach which is related to the Bourdieusian and post-Bourdieusian analytical framework, dealing specifically with communism as a 'terminological screen' (Bourdieu i Wacquant 1992, 78 sq; Bourdieu 1994, 31–35); and, even more appropriate to the present research, to the 'adversaires-complices' concept (Bourdieu 1994, 31–35), which places agents (from literary reviews or publishing) in the interstitial position between official and unofficial. In trying to surpass the difficulty of choosing between economical, political, and symbolic capital, Carola Hähner-Mesnard (Hähner-Mesnard 2007, 115) introduces a new category: ideological capital, determined by ideological conformism, and prone to facilitating a proximity to the official circuit. Moreover, using the term, 'Eigensinn', coined by Alf Lüdtke and Thomas Lindenberger, Hähner-Mesnard (Hähnel-Mesnard 2007) distributes the roles and dynamics of self-editing agents to the margins of unofficial space. For Justine Balasinski (Balasinski 2004), the 'clinical case' for Polish literature in the last two decades of communism is also an in-between case, which analyses the ways in which artistic expressions serve as partial substitute for expressing political diversity.

Also using the Bourdieusian and post-Bourdieusian approach, recent Romanian and Moldavian literary research (Dragomir 2007; Macrea-Toma 2010; Negură i Șiclovan 2014) privileged institutional history (regarding writers unions, realist-socialist writers, specific

literary groups and generations) and tried to analyse the particularities and dynamics of capital distribution (cultural but also political).

Following this tendency, today's conceptualization of the *grey zone* attempts to approach artistic life and production from a perspective different to that of the political. Mădălina Brașoveanu employs the conceptual framework of the 'spatial turn' as mentioned above.

At the same time, Marko Zubak calls for a broader definition of art which would enable the various genres of pop culture to be taken seriously. In his view,

> … disco music is by and large missing from the standard canons of local popular music. On the constant lookout for oppositional content, scholars have typically turned to rock instead, at times ascribing to it an overly-political dimension which it did not always carry in all of its manifestations. In fact, with varying degrees, socialist regimes tolerated the import of Western pop styles, resulting in the birth of local popular cultures with a rich infrastructure and Western imprint. Whereas the contemporaneous punk and new wave scenes could easily be integrated within such vocabulary, disco remained ignored and was viewed as a worthless, exploitative product with no artistic merits or subversive potential. Likewise, club culture presents an equally undermined segment of socialist popular culture. While key landmarks in the evolution of rock music were outlined long ago, even the very basic features of the respective club cultures remain unknown to this day, amidst uncertain chronologies, fragile memories, and urban legends. Here, just as in other fields of pop music, former actors were the first to reflect on the issue, framing clubs in the context of local music scenes or within turbulent cultural productions of student centers. (M. Zubak)

3. Academia and the Grey Zone

Authored by Adam Hudek

The idea behind academic institutions directly encouraged the 'grey zone mentality': a high dependence on state patronage and a privileged position versus the specific needs which made it necessary to break the official and unofficial rules of the socialist dictatorship – sometimes with the benevolent tolerance of the representatives of the regime. Scholars, especially in the field of humanities and social sciences, created a distinct social group with common values and sets of practices which are often connected with the definition of the grey zone. The position of scientists and their institutions under socialist dictatorships has already been researched from the local, comparative, and transnational perspective. This is because science academies were

created in all the countries of Central Eastern Europe, and all of them were modelled on the Academy in the Soviet Union (Feichtinger and Uhl 2018).

The specific position of the academies established as 'empires of knowledge' (David-Fox and Peteri 2000, 8) under the regimes, and who declared themselves to be based on science and knowledge, gave them strong instruments with which to negotiate their autonomy. On the other hand, the whole idea of establishing an institution, where expertise could be utilized regardless of ideological shortcomings, points to the fact that the representatives of communist regimes realized that there are specific areas (science and research were certainly two of them) where a degree of pragmatism and benevolence was necessary. We can even say that the communist regime deliberately and knowingly created, tolerated, and even supported various grey zones when its representatives deemed it necessary and useful.

Institutions and interest groups with enough influence were able to negotiate their autonomy with regard to accepted or enforced rules (Nisonen-Trnka 2012). In late 1960s Czechoslovakia, the representatives of the communist party placed high hopes on scientific development and were willing to accept various demands from the scientific milieu (Hruby 1980, 97). Things which were, until then, only tolerated (East-West intellectual exchange, partial de-ideologization, and the democratization of science and research) became part of official state politics. However, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw pact armies in 1968, these same demands were denounced as anti-socialist and subversive.

This development led to a hypothesis regarding the notion of the *grey zone*. It was always the decisive representatives of the communist regime (either from Prague or Moscow) who decided what was subversive, what was tolerable, and what was orthodox. These labels varied greatly depending on time and place. What was part of the grey zone in the 1950s became an official part of state policy in 1960s, but then was again regarded as being a highly subversive activity (even retroactively) in the 1970s. The 'ideological position' of the individual or group under socialist dictatorship always has to be measured according to the actual position of the power holding elite. In this sense, even though cultivating transnational scientific and artistic networks, and introducing Western ideas was, in general, a grey zone activity; there were periods in every socialist dictatorship when such activities were, at least to some degree, supported by the establishment. (Schulze Wessel i Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2019).

4. Experts and the Grey Zone in Late Socialism

Authored by Vítězslav Sommer

Among the specifics of state socialist regimes was the more or less strict control of academia and knowledge production by the State (see Péteri 1998). From the mid-1950s, however, an effort by authorities to use up-to-date expert knowledge in governance was increasingly present in all Eastern Bloc countries. This meant that the relationship between power and knowledge in state socialism was tense and in many aspects, highly ambiguous. In late socialism, and especially during the so-called 'consolidation regimes', the state aimed to mobilize experts in order to 'improve' its ability to govern, and, simultaneously, did its best to establish an ideologically rigid, and institutionally highly centralized and hierarchical regime of knowledge production. In many aspects, experts had to 'square the circle': their task was to deliver innovative and politically applicable knowledge, predominantly in the sphere of economic policy, while conforming unconditionally to highly authoritarian power relations (Brunnbauer, Kraft, and Schulze Wessel 2011; Rindzevičiūtė 2017; Shlapentokh 1987; Sutela 1991). Various expert milieus were thus located in-between the Party and state institutions (central and regional party apparatus, ministries, planning bodies), economic actors (enterprises), academia and other research institutions, and also specific, and very often informal, bodies established by the experts themselves at the margins of the official institutional structure of expertise and academia. As a consequence, the world of experts provided fertile ground for multiple conflicts of interests and loyalties.

It seems that the expert milieus, which occupied the boundary spaces between the various social fields, could be prime examples of the grey zone in late socialism. Experts, who were recognized by authorities as pillars of socialism, were able, at the same time, to produce serious critiques of the existing power relations or economic order. (Myant 1989; Vítězslav Sommer 2017; Sutela 1991; Wagener 2015). The activities of experts were, in many aspects, supportive of the late socialist arrangement of polity and economy. On certain occasions, however, the effects of expertise were controversial or even subversive (Gagyi 2015; Rindzevičiūtė 2017; Rocca 1981; Vitezslav Sommer 2015). It is not an exaggeration to claim that historiographical research on expertise as part of the grey zone has great potential to further undermine the simplistic 'model' which depicts the social structure of late socialism as a society composed of three strictly separate social groups: 'power-holders', 'dissidents', and 'loyal citizens' (G Eyal 2000; Gil Eyal 2003). Given the specific position of the 'in-betweenness' of experts within the complex and multi-layered power relations depicted above, historians studying expertise could deliver a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between knowledge

production and governance in state socialism. This research could also contribute to rethinking notions like 'opposition', 'dissent', and 'social conformity'; and it could perhaps enable us to find a new meanings of *greyness* in our research on the grey zone.

There is also a particular aspect of this topic which is worth mentioning in this report. It is the transnational dimension of the history of expertise (in the 'East-West' but also 'East-East' sense of the word). Although the degree to which academic and expert transnational communication control was imposed from above varied from isolationism to relative support, or at least tolerance of contacts and exchanges, the knowledge production was, of its very nature, transnational even in the most isolationist cases (Bockman 2013; Kilias 2017). This transnational communication materialized in various ways: from the reception of knowledge (i.e. indirect communication), to physical mobility like conference participation, research stays, academic exchange, or even establishing academic careers abroad (see various examples from Kornai, Szelényi, Richta, Kolakowski, Hroch etc.). The incorporation of the transnational dimension in our research on experts as part of the grey zone, could significantly broaden the scope of the concept beyond the boundaries of individual national communities.

5. Censorship, Scholarship and the Grey Zone in the Late Socialist Era

Authored by Libora Oates-Indruchová

Scholarly writing and publishing under conditions of censorship requires complex treatment. In the upcoming book, *Snakes and Ladders* (Oates-Indruchová 2019), I look at all stages of the writing process, from the inception of an idea to post-publication reception; as well as at the institutional and policy contexts surrounding this process. What strategies did the authors, as well the institutions in which the authors worked and for which they wrote, use in the process of scholarly text production? It considers, in turn, a variety of actors who participated in the process, while placing the greatest focus on the self-perceptions of the authors themselves in order to examine the relationship of the author-scholar to his or her text and the reader. In what ways do the authors now perceive how the intellectual communication between authors and readers worked then? The agency and negotiations of the creative actors, rather than their instrumentalization by the censoring repressions of the state institutions, stand at the centre of this inquiry.

Even if we take only the later period of state socialism (the Kádár or Ceaușescu years, the period following the Prague Spring) rather than the whole era, we will find that scholarly publishing differed quite significantly in its relation to censorship across the Eastern Bloc. Some

countries, such as Poland, had a formal censorship body, but small-circulation scholarly publications were expressly permitted greater freedoms than publications intended for public consumption (Schöpflin 1983, 32–102). Others, such as Czechoslovakia and Hungary, had no designated censorship institution. These latter countries provide better grounds for an inquiry into intellectual communication and the structures of text production under repressive conditions. Any restrictions on scholarly creation in countries without formalized censorship had to be 'dispersed' through various elements of the publishing process and 'displaced' away from the overseeing centre (Burt 1998, 17). A pattern of action from one link to the next in the publishing chain, which would have been determined by a set of written-down rules of dos and don'ts, was thus replaced with a pattern resulting from perception and anticipation. These perceptions were likely to be based on an idea of a *system* of state censorship, and countering it – possibly – was a *system* of intellectual communication. At the same time, however, the absence of a formal institution has methodological implications for the present research. Archival documentation is likely to be sparse and any 'perceptions' cannot easily be verified against a written record: the state which claimed it exercised no censorship was touchy about any suggestions of such practices, and about the word itself (Mihalyi 1993; Coetzee 1996, 34).[16]

The element of perception is strongly represented in the pre-1989 works on censorship which were, inevitably, published either outside the Eastern Bloc or as samizdat. They relied on the testimonies of exiles, or dissident and blacklisted authors, who gave accounts of their own experiences with censorship (Dewhirst i Farrell 1973; Zipser 1990a; Siniavski 1989). Testimony has also been the flagship genre of articles in the magazine *Index on Censorship* (Voslensky 1986; Gruša 1982; Šiklová 1983; Demszky 1989). Occasionally, documents detailing censorship practices were smuggled through the Iron Curtain and supplemented the personal experiences of the authors with evidence from contemporary cultural policies, that is, with the perspective of the state. The so-called *Black Book of Polish Censorship* (Curry 1984) is an outstanding example of such a publication; another is George Schöpflin's collection of documents, mainly on media censorship in Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia (Schöpflin 1983). A surge of testimonies came out in the 1990s in the general atmosphere of hunger for 'witness accounts' of state repression. Lidia Vianu was the first to systematically collect such testimonies, which she did during 1991–92. The result, *Censorship in Romania*, contains twenty-six edited interviews with literary critics, poets, and prose-writers, across several generations, about their

[16] Laura Bradley observed that GDR playwrights even called for the institutionalization of censorship, as having clear rules would make the work of the authors and theatre directors easier (Bradley 2006). Recently, Dmitry Kurakin argued that Soviet sociological community 'had a strong bias in favor of oral forms of communication' and therefore, 'important events, trends and facts were never documented' (Kurakin 2017).

experiences with getting their work published during the Ceaușescu regime (Vianu 1998). The detailed descriptions of the parts of the publishing process and the roles played by the various actors also became a crucial inspiration for my project on scholarly publishing during the Czech normalization.

The opening of the archives in the 1990s stimulated a document-based research of institutional processes (Wichner 1993; Tomášek 1994; Kaplan and Tomášek 1994; Dobrenko 1997; Romek 2010; Šámal 2009; A. V. Blium 1998). Interestingly, or perhaps symptomatically, while the works which drew on archival sources revealed details of institutional functioning, they did not bring anything new to the theoretical level which was not already present in the perceptions of the testimonials. This raises the social interaction between the various actors to prominence: they rarely had access to the exact directives, they learned by doing, and at least in the late phase of state socialism it is likely that they, together, participated in the creation of the system of censorship and its practice.

Nevertheless, most of the works of this kind – whether testimonies or studies of documents – focused on the repressive actions of the institutions against the creative spirit, and tried to build a taxonomy of state-socialist censorship. The Hungarian blacklisted writer, György Konrád, writing in 1983, considered censorship during the Stalinist period to be 'positive, aggressive' in contrast to the 1980s' 'negative and defensive' kind (Konrád 1983, 449): 'At that time you were told what to say, now you're only advised what not to say'. The aim of this latter censorship, which pervaded all state and social institutions, was 'to discourage people from thinking'(Konrád 1983, 449), and that made these 'state-owned citizens', who knew what not to say, 'predictable, transparent' (Konrád 1983, 451). Another author, Richard A. Zipser, writing about literary censorship in the GDR in May 1989, distinguishes between self-censorship, editorial censorship (or '*sanfte Zensur*', because it was mostly expressed as a 'friendly' recommendation), state ideological censorship, and Party censorship, which were all conducted at every stage of the publishing process, by many actors (Zipser 1990b). Next, Robert Darnton carried out a comparative study between the *ancien régime* in France and the GDR, concluding that the former's operating principle was 'privilege[d]', because the censors and authors were recruited from the same milieu and shared the same values, while literary censorship in the GDR was based on 'planning': state-socialist propaganda was inserted into every element of the publishing process, the task falling to the editors who thus had the upper hand over the authors (Darnton 1995, 2014).

Deployment at all levels was a defining feature of state-socialist censorship. Marianna Tax Choldin coined the term 'omnicensorship' for the way readers were moulded by library censorship in the Soviet era in contrast to the 'sovereign' censorship of Tzarist Russia (Marianna

Tax Choldin 1998, 26). The system shifted from being 'autocratic' to 'bureaucratic' and was defined 'sometimes by terror and always by secrecy and a remarkable degree of pervasiveness' (Marianna Tax Choldin 1998). Arlen Blium develops this concept and constructs a pyramid model of Soviet literary censorship: starting with self-censorship at the base, and progressing through editorial, *Glavlit*, and secret political police censorship, to the censorship exercised by the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the Party Central Committee, at the apex. The first three levels constituted 'preliminary' censorship, the fourth and fifth 'punitive' (A. Blium 2003, 5:3–8). He then proceeds to articulate the 'repressive, regulatory, model-setting, ideological, selective, protective … [and] prescriptive' functions of censorship in 'totalitarian states' (A. Blium 2003, 5:10–13); and then argues that 'the prescriptive function appears to be an invention of the communist regime … [censors were to] "educate" authors by prescribing what and how they should write' (A. Blium 2003, 5:13). It needs to be said that Blyum focuses mainly on the period up to the 1950s and that is perhaps why he does not make a note of a change from the prescriptive to proscriptive censorship.

These taxonomies rarely explore the reverse process of censorship: the various strategies for circumventing it. One such strategy, writing in an 'Aesopian language', was described by Lev Loseff in his now canonical work on Soviet literature (Loseff 1984). Writers used either 'screens' to hide the true meaning, or 'markers' to draw attention to it (Loseff 1984, 31:50–52), in effect developing a system of communication with the reader. Kevin Moss elaborated on the idea of the code, and argued that in the years before glasnost the Soviets mastered communication in both a 'public' and 'private' code, where certain words or phrases stood for something else; for example, 'Ancient Russian Music' meant 'church music' (Moss 1995, 131). He then presents a range of stylistic devices employed by Bulgakov in *Master and Margarita* to encode intended meaning (Moss 1995, 232–233). The most recent writer on Aesopian language, Irina Sandomirskaja, considers it an ambiguous strategy on several counts. She argues that the camouflaging produces 'a grey zone of uncertainty, vacillating between the mutually exclusive poles of resistance and collaboration, between challenging the power of censorship and conforming to it' (Sandomirskaja 2015, 64). Her perspective is also important for the inquiry into Aesopian language in Snakes and Ladders: Scholarly Publishing and Censorship in Late State-Socialism.

As pointed out above, the taxonomies take a unidirectional perspective on censorship: the state and its agencies act on the writer and work together as a system. In recent years some scholars have drawn on the theoretical insights of *New Censorship* (Li. Oates-Indruchová 2018). They take a less totalizing view of late state-socialist censorship, emphasizing complicity, resistance, and negotiation. For example, Sara Jones in her study of three East German writers

(Jones 2011), or Samantha Sherry in her study of Soviet literary translators (Sherry 2015), which thus introduces agency to the discussion. Jones shifts the research focus to the 'fluid boundaries between opposition and conformity' (Jones 2011, 21), and investigates how and if the writers, each of whom occupied a different political place, achieved a position of clarity in their relationship with the state power. Sherry also brings in the insidious consequence of the pervasiveness of censorship, which Konrád articulated earlier, and with reference to Pierre Bourdieu, argues that,

> censorial practices were governed both by the relation between representatives of power and literary actors and by the action of the habitus, as censorial norms were internalized and functioned unconsciously (Sherry 2015, 7).

As we have seen, most work on state-socialist censorship has investigated literature. The censorship of scholarship and science has been much less in the limelight. Pre-1989 work consists, again, largely of testimonials, such as Voslensky's in the *Index on Censorship* mentioned above, in which he observes how even the choice of a research topic was affected by censorship (Voslensky 1986, 28); or the brief account by Yuri Yarim-Agaev on his experience in Soviet science (Yarim-Agaev 1989). Once the archives and borders opened up, analytical studies using both document analysis and interviews began to appear. Their scope is generally broader than censorship, covering various aspects of research conditions under state socialism, or writing the histories of individual disciplines. The former type of publication is of particular relevance to my project on scholarly publishing and censorship. Slava Gerovitch, for example, investigates discursive strategies in history writing which were developed in direct response to censorship pressures. He notes the development of a particular genre of history writing, 'internalist, factological, and discussion-avoiding', to which the censors could not object, because in the absence of analysis 'facts "spoke for themselves"' (Gerovitch 1998, 199–203).[17] Even more interestingly, he sees this genre as being carried into the post-Soviet era as a legacy that would disappear easily. Sergei I. Zhuk, writing on American studies during the Brezhnev era, found that very same genre established in his research field (Zhuk 2013, 322–23). The studies on particular institutions or disciplines are by now too numerous to list and, moreover, they touch on censorship and the publishing process only sporadically. So far, the one exception is Zbigniew

[17] A somewhat analogous strategy developed in American Cold War social science. There, authors tried to depoliticize their research pursuits by aiming at 'rigorous objectivity': 'to emphasize technical tools of science and to insist on its independence and detachment', although 'this preoccupation with neutral objectivity can itself be seen as a form of politicization by virtue of its very claim to stand outside the value-laden character of the processes and interests that shaped the production and uses of social knowledge' (Porter 2012, ix).

Romek's comprehensive study of the Polish censorship of historiography before 1970 (Romek 2010). Although this belongs to those works which study censorship from the perspective of state institutions, he does allow for the agency of authors and is more accommodating of the function of editors than Robert Darnton was in his earlier work on GDR literature (Darnton 1995).

6. Gender Aspects of Researching and Analysing the Grey Zone

For women, state socialism was certainly not either black or white; state socialist women's emancipation brought with it a radical change in gender relations in the region while leaving most patriarchal practices unchanged. The role of women in 'grey zone' activities is just as essential to take into account here. The contradictions which emerged from women's emancipation politics and the ways in which the regimes' contributed to the strengthening of patriarchy call for the use of the *grey zone* concept as an analytical tool here, as do the roles, activities, and lives of women in the different grey zones between the official and the dissident, for example women who were part of official organizations, but were nevertheless critical of the state's policies. A gender analysis of the way in which dissent, as well as the grey zones, were organized is another aspect to focus on, and this, currently, is a less well explored territory. This section includes issues on masculinity as well, as has already been done, for instance, in the case of Czech research by Libora Oates Indruchová (L. Oates-Indruchová 2012, 2006; Oates-Indruchová 2002) and Maříková (1999). A helpful and comprehensive text on the multiple gender aspects of state socialist history is an 'email conversation between Malgorzata Fidelis, Renata Jambrešić Kirin, Jill Massino, and Libora Oates-Indruchova' in the journal, Aspasia (de Haan 2014). It should be added that the documentation centre for the non-state women's movement in the GDR has the name *GrauZone* (Apor, Apor, and Horváth 2018). The *COURAGE Handbook* has several chapters, which again, use the concept of the *grey zone* in their analysis.

The Czech context proves to be helpful in understanding the complexity of the situation. Jan Matonoha offers a concise picture of the situation:

> 'As Libuše Heczková mentions (Bahenská, Heczková, and Musilová 2011), there was no feminism presence in the Czech cultural environment after the execution of Milada Horáková (she, apart from being a politician, was a feminist, (Vodrážka and Vodrážková 2017). This is surely true, however, gender (not feminism) could be, of course, researched there. While male writers can be seen as displaying male chauvinist and sexist tendencies (to-be-look-at-ness, masculine gaze, etc.) throughout the whole of the 1970s and '80s, as well as the two decades before that (Matonoha 2015, 2016), the work

of female writers: Vostrá, Salivorová, Kriseová, Linhartová, Brabcová, Pekárková, Procházková, Berková, Hodrová, Richterová (Matonoha 2016), can be seen as being more nuanced, especially when compared to the 1950s and '60s (Marie Majerová, Alena Vostrá, and Zdena Salivarová – who runs a slightly tongue in cheek artistic debate with Milan Kundera over gender in her stories). Now a comparatively more extensive list of secondary literature which discusses individual selected names in Czech fiction exists, but a relevant, in-depth analysis of the whole period of the 1970s and 80s still needs to be completed – hence the NEP4DISSENT project. Further crucial, secondary texts include those by H. Gordon Skilling (Skilling 1989); Barbara J. Falk (Falk 2003), namely the passage in her book *Reappraising Civil Society: Feminist Critiques* (Falk 2003, 325–27); Jonathan Bolton (Bolton 2012, 42–43); Hana Havelková and Libora Oates Indruchová (Havelková and Oates-Indruchová 2014, 3–28); in Czech, Linková and Straková (Linková i Straková 2018), Vodrážka (Vodrážka and Vodrážková 2017); and Alena Wagnerová's *Žena za socialismu* (Wagnerová 2017, 215–19).' (J. Matonoha)

The political stakes concerned with a variety of different types of women's involvement has been categorized three ways in the generational approach by Agnieszka Mrozik: 'women who got involved in the communist movement before the Second World War and remained faithful to their political choices throughout their lives', 'women who after a period of involvement in communism questioned its arguments and moved to critical positions against the Party (e.g. after 1956, when Stalinism officially ended, or after 1968, when student protests were brutally suppressed by Polish authorities and when the Prague Spring ended as a result of the Soviet invasion)', and 'women whose political identity was shaped in the anti-communist movement from the very beginning'.

We can safely add that there were also several grey zones even between these types of involvements, such as women who stayed in the official women's organizations, but criticized them from within, or criticized the state itself. There were several cases of this kind of 'dissent within the system – communist women's mass organizations – sometimes resisting party-state policies, criticizing insufficient emancipatory solutions': such is the case of the Polish League of Women in the 1950s; then in the 1980s, the story of the Bulgarian communist women's organizations (Ghodsee 2014); and the case of Yugoslavia during the Croatian Spring in 1971 (Dobos 1983).

As Zsófia Lóránd argues in her book, *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State*, even dissenting feminists found themselves

> "cooperating with the state and criticising the state at the same time", which they did "through rereading concepts and meanings, integrating ideologies and theories from 'Western' feminisms and through transfer creating their own version … In contrast to Western capitalist societies, where feminism was directly clashed with the state about women's emancipation and therefore clearly appeared as dissent, in Eastern Europe the state guaranteed many of the rights which the North American and West European feminist groups were fighting for. In the meantime, new Yugoslav feminism is a counter-discourse vis-à-vis the newly emerging oppositional discourses in Yugoslavia too. The oppositional groups either refused to discuss women's rights in search of an agenda of liberal democracy which disregards difference or, with a bio/ethno-nationalistic agenda, propagated the reversal of the 'unnatural' and forced emancipation of women … The new Yugoslav feminist criticism of the state helps us to understand dissent throughout the region of East Central Europe. The case of new Yugoslav feminism explains to us how the ambivalent emancipation offered by the state socialist regimes made it impossible for liberal or nationalist dissidents, who by the 1980s had almost entirely given up on Marxism, to relate to a feminism, which relied on Marxian ideas in some of its argumentation and at least partly acknowledged the improvements in women's situation in socialist countries. This underscores both the plurality of dissidence in the region, and points to one of the reasons why feminism and feminist ideas were marginalised by liberal and nationalist dissidents during and post-transition." (Lóránd 2018, 2,3,11).

We have an extensive bibliography below for the gender aspects of state socialism, which, even if not directly thematizing the *grey zone*, analyse phenomena and situations that could be described as grey zones. However, there is much left to work on, since very few of these works take into account the relations between dissent and women's lives, activism and feminist political thought, or dissent and gender.

7. In lieu of a Conclusion: Surpassing the Existing State of the Art

There are several fields that have not yet been explored using the *grey zone*, either as 'a category of analysis' or as 'an empirical subject', but which would offer fruitful and relevant fields of study. Eastern Europe itself can be interpreted as a 'grey zone', argues Peter Bugge, which

challenges the orientalizing perspectives of the region, and therefore an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon would make a substantial contribution to the discussions about the *region, its names and definitions*. *Minorities* and how the different groups and individuals dealt with state socialism, often creating their own grey zones or having been forced into them could be another subject of extensive research (see the recent excellent book on the Roma during state socialism (Donert 2017)). *Nationalism and nationalist dissent* often ends up in the grey zone due to the fact that while many state socialist regimes have their own inner nationalist logic, the liberal dissidents look at nationalism with suspicion and these groups often end up in the position of the in-between. The *churches and religious groups* in their diverse ways are often split between pro- and anti-communism, and many are split from within, thus playing a grey zone-role.' (Tížik 2015)

Environmentalist movements are often referred to as grey zones (Apor, Apor, and Horváth 2018), and deserve broader research on both a national and transnational level (for an overview of environmentalist thought in CEE see Trencsenyi (2018). The subjects which have a more extensive scholarly coverage already, such as everyday life under state socialism, censorship, scholarly publishing, gender and women, gain new significance in light of using the *grey zone* as analytical tool, which also brings already explored and unexplored fields closer to each other.

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Chapter 3: Alternative Cultures

Authored by Noga Collins-Kreiner, Antonija Čuvalo, Milena Dragičević-Šešić, Ondřej Daniel, Maria Engström, Sean Homer, Emese Kürti, Vlatko Ilić, Júlia Klaniczay, Endre Eidså Larsen, Petra Loučová, Kristóf Nagy, Jan Olaszek, Burcu Peksevgen, Zrinjka Peruško, Igor Pietraszewski, Alexandra Preda, Irena Ristić, Gabriella Schuller, Bjorn Sorenssen, Paweł Sowiński, Maya Mazor Tregerman, Astrid Muls, Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Marko Zubak, Odeta Žukauskienė, Dina Vozab, Piotr Wciślik

Edited by Katalin Cseh-Varga and Rolf Werenskjold (WG3 Chairs)

When not referenced otherwise, quotations come from the responses to the NEP4DISSENT State-of-the-Art survey (see Introduction to this report).

Source: fortepan.hu

1. Introduction

Alternative culture, within the different academic disciplines, is still mostly defined in heroic terms, as a moment of rebellion against hegemonic order. A deviation from the idea of the socialist commonwealth is, in most cases, described as a gesture of disobedience and as an alternative to the highly ideologized and politicized environment. The risk associated with this understanding is to overvalue the social, political, and cultural effects of the phenomenon, and to investigate alternative culture as something almost separate from the regulated communist regimes. It seems that alternative culture is surrounded by myths, legends, and elitism – both from within the former Eastern Bloc and from without, from the perspective of its contemporaries and from that of historiographers. The gatekeepers of these myths, legends, and elitisms have a central role in our contemporary understanding (or canons) of alternative culture as opponents of socialist order. Views like this are not helpful in thinking against the binaries and dichotomies inscribed in the classic presentation of Cold War constellations. The biggest challenge of this Working Group's activities is to define a methodological and theoretical framework which allows multifaceted research to extract the traces of ephemeral micro- and macro-histories, to 'disarm' mythologies (individual, collective, and mediated modes of (self-)representation), and to reconcile these with the national and transnational systems within which the endeavours of alternative culture took place in the aftermath of World War II and up until the collapse of the Soviet Union along with its zone of influence. The effective and careful implementation of this triangle of perspectives as a form of checklist might be the best way with which to overcome the 'heroism of dissent' mentioned previously. Due to the involvement of experts who have, for instance, researched the Cold War years as a global condition and determiner, and local subcultures defined by music; Working Group 3 offers the potential for a broad, yet in-depth analysis.

The methodological and theoretical challenges of this Working Group's activities include a re-definition of the split between state and counterculture; to simultaneously look at the micro- and macro-levels of the social, political, cultural, and economic spheres; the promotion of more comprehensive and comparative research; and to reflect on the terminology of alternative culture itself. It is important to look into the genealogy of terms, often used synonymously, such as alternative culture, underground culture, or counterculture in their contemporary and historical application. These expressions have their own (hi)stories which need to be elaborated on. Most of Working Group 3's researchers have gone back to primary sources of information to explore how oral history is both a help and a burden, and how, for instance, post-structuralist ('Western'!) thought has influenced scholarship in the area of studies from the early 2000s

onwards. Our multidisciplinary group was able to define focus areas which appear in almost every section of the present report (meaning each individual and collaborative research project). These focus areas are as follows: *information networks and transfers*, *spaces*, and *communities*. Alternative cultures in socialist Europe were mostly linked to the outside world by many ties, and had specific sources from which they channelled information. Virtual and physical spaces for gathering and sharing information with members of the alternative culture were also an essential criterion for its survival. Alternative cultures were group cultures, with their own functional logic, sometimes even with their own hegemonies.

The case studies presented in the following subchapters are extracts from the State of the Art Survey produced and circulated by NEP4DISSENT. Direct citations are from the authors of the respective responses to this survey. The subchapters themselves were grouped together based on the variety of case studies and approaches covered in the survey responses.

Alternative Sexual Practices in Yugoslavia

The research by Vlatko Ilic and Irena Ristic concentrates on a more marginal topic, even within the relatively broad research framework of alternative culture. With the investigation of alternative sexual practices in the Yugoslavian art scene, Ilic and Ristic aim to re-think the common knowledge held about alternative culture in this corner of Southeast Europe (Dragićević Šešić 2012). Besides a focus on queer practices which 'relate to utopian communal politics', their research will explore the paradoxes of sexuality in its essence as socialist (official politics) and non-socialist. These topics and perspectives are currently missing in the scholarship on gender, sexuality, arts, and culture. Previous publications and studies have addressed the Women's Antifascist Front of Yugoslavia, Yugoslav feminism (Lóránd 2018; Gudac-Dodić 2006; Vasiljević and Skrozza 2014), the ideas and social practices of the sexual revolution (Miljan 2018), homosexuality (Dota 2017), and sexual representation in film (Lazarević Radak 2017).

2. Popular Culture, Everyday Culture, and Subculture

Alternative culture is not specifically linked to movements of democratic opposition or subtle criticism within artworks, but to other layers of (everyday) life as well. Disco culture, youth subculture, modes of self-(re)presentation and of popular culture media, can also carry a message which demonstrates a deviation from the state's expectations of a socialist way of living and behaviour.

Socialist Club Culture

Exploring the everyday realities of Eastern Europe during socialism sheds light on a specific aspect of alternative culture, namely, late socialist pop culture in Yugoslavia. Marko Zubak's project investigates socialist club culture, which, drawing on Sarah Thornton's concept, refers to all spaces designed for the collective enjoyment of popular music (Thornton 1996). Identifying the wide range of these spaces, from state-run socialist youth clubs to semi-private cafes, Zubak grounds his research in a recent wave of scholarship on late socialist youth, situating it at the crossroads of related subfields, such as the study of youth organizations, youth subcultures, popular music, and everyday life.

This wave of scholarship has experienced a huge boom over the last decade and a half, characterized by a significant shift away from the outdated polarized Cold War optics. Moving away from the political and official to the cultural and symbolic aspects of youth cultures, they have highlighted the era's ideological erosion, rising consumerism, and growing communication with the West; while insisting on fluid boundaries between the informal and formal spheres (see Crowley and Reid 2002; Yurchak 2006). In line with these new paradigms, Zubak approaches socialist club culture as an alternative milieu whose actors and practices evade the binary categories of conformity and resistance. Instead of being, by default, extra-institutional or oppositional in the traditional sense, they proved capable of interacting with state structures, and involved various youth strategies from open rebellion to private retreats, to working within existing institutions (Spaskovska 2017; Fürst and McLellan 2017).

In his examination of the state of the art, Zubak recognizes the existence of a fitting scholarly tradition for the study of club cultures which preceded the fall of communism.[18] However, he shows how the phenomenon is yet to benefit from the aforesaid new wave of research on socialist youth culture. As in other fields of pop culture, initial research first emerged in local languages within the circles of former actors, mostly youth activists, music journalists, and entire communities of club members who framed their clubs within the context of local rock scenes (Sís 2009; Pawul 2014; Žikić 2016; Ribarić, Slaviček, and Kaplan 2010). But, whereas the evolution of rock culture in Eastern Europe has, by now, been firmly established, even the basic features of their respective club cultures still remain unknown, amidst uncertain chronologies, fragile memories, and urban legends.[19] The dominant informal approach and the

[18] In Yugoslavia, for example, early translations of sub-cultural classics like Hebdige, Frith, and Hall, spurred research into local youth subcultures: (Tomc 1989; Prica 1991).

[19] A range of publications charted the basic narrative of socialist rock from the initial imitation of the West, through the inclusion of local elements into its eventual synchronization with global trends that occasionally merged in the complex Gesamtkunstwerks (Ramet 1994; Ryback 1990; Trencsényi and Klaniczay 2011).

visual focus of available writings, pose an additional challenge to engaging with popular archives from below, thus opening up opportunities for exciting curatorial work.

Alternatively, those few studies which have dealt with state run youth clubs in a more serious manner, have positioned them within the context of youth organizations and cultural student centres, linking them with new forms of politics and art (Rokicki 2017; Muršič 2000; Korda 2008). At this moment there are no more than half a dozen academic articles available in English. The contexts within which they appeared reveal, in turn, the appropriate conceptual tools with which Zubak associates socialist club cultures: late socialist private escapes and enclaves of market socialism (Vari 2013; Zubak 2016); strategies of everyday life, the redefinition of official youth institutions (Zhuk 2017; K. Taylor 2006); and popular, alternative and rock cultures (Kveberg, Gregory 2014).

Alternative Subcultures in Late Socialist Czechoslovakia

Since Alexei Yurchak (2006) we have known about the thin borderline between official (state-socialist) and alternative culture. This is true for a variety of geopolitical regions along the Iron Curtain. In the case of Czechoslovakia, Ondrej Daniel has pointed out that alternative cultures, such as hippies, the punk scene, new wave, football ultras and hooligans, illegal drug users, protest song performances, artistic communities, religious groups, and so on, display features of this very interconnectedness. To undermine the heroic view and the overestimation of alternative cultures in communist dictatorships, Daniel suggests facing methodological challenges such as the problem of oral history with all its subjective connotations. Daniel provides us with two important references on Czechoslovak alternative culture – see Stárek and Kostúr (Stárek and Kostúr 2011; Vaněk 2002).

Queer Dissent in Late-Soviet and Early Post-Soviet Russia (1980s and '90s)

In her research, Maria Engström proceeds in a similar direction to Ilić and Ristić, but from an additional cultural, anthropological point of view. Her focus is on queer dissent in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet Russia with a case study on the Leningrad/St. Petersburg queer art communities. She looks into Timur Novikov's New Academy of Fine Arts (1989–2002). When presenting an overview of the state of the art, Engström observes the increased number of publications since the 1990s, mostly on the poetics of underground texts and their forms of circulation (including samizdat and tamizdat). Besides this observation, she highlights that underground culture, as Engström calls it, was signified by much more: it was multi- and inter-medial – a combination of literature, visual arts, theatre, cinema, performances, actions, and alternative lifestyles. Based on this starting point, Engström deals with the investigation of

underground life-worlds, primarily queer art communities in which visual culture was entangled with socio-political dimensions. With this research, Engström is able to bridge a scholarly gap.

Engström presents a number of past publications on Russian alternative culture (Yurchak 2006; Troitskii 2017), sexuality and visual culture, sexuality and protest culture (Campbell 2007; Epstein 2013; Jonson 2015), and on the leading queer community in contemporary Russia (Engström 2016, 2012).[20] Of special interest seems to be Engström's forthcoming co-edited volume, *A Handbook of the Soviet Cultural Underground (1932–1990)* (M. Lipovetsky/K. Smola/M. Engström/T. Glanc/I. Kukuj, expected publication date 2022). Conferences that deal with the topics of life-worlds[21] and intermediality[22] are also important for a more comprehensive overview of late Soviet underground (life-)cultures. The same goes for institutions (Pushkinskaya 10 Arts Center, Viktor Tsoi Museum, Evgenij Kozlov and Hannelore Fobo's web-archive, Misha Buster – Online Moscow Subculture Archive) and the intense public interest in this topic represented by exhibitions about perestroika's cultural heroes.

Travel Guidebooks as a way of Looking at Eastern Europe

Popular media, such as books, newspapers, magazines, and television and radio shows are active players in socio-historic, cultural, and economic processes (Chartier 1988). This is the reason why Maya Mazor Tregerman chose to work on the case of Israeli travel guidebooks about East, Central, and Southeast Europe as '... a promising, rich field for future research into the ways that Eastern European dissent was, and still is, communicated globally'. Popular culture media and the image they represent about their subjects, reveal economic, political, and social conditions (Bourdieu 1993; Chartier 1995). Mazor Tregerman's investigation will be helpful in understanding alternative culture during socialist times as a form of mediated identity (cf. Baker 2010; Mazor-Tregerman, Mansfeld, and Elyada 2017).

[20] Engström, Maria (2017). "From Sexual Revolution to 'Sexual Sovereignty': Queer-Art Exhibitions in Post-Soviet Russia", *National Convention of the ASEEES*, Panel "Transgressive Masculinities: Contemporary Russian Queer Visual Culture", 8-12 November 2017, Chicago, USA.; Engström, Maria (2017). "Queering Socialist Realism: Timur Novikov's New Academy", International conference *1917-2017: 100 Years of Russian Revolution in Arts and Aesthetics*, 19-21 October 2017, Södertörn University, Färgfabriken, and Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm, Sweden.; Engström, Maria (2016).

[21] *Underground and Lifeworld: Late Soviet Unofficial Culture as a Socio-Aesthetic Phenomenon*, 28-29 September 2019, Stockholm (org. by Maria Engström, Mark Lipovetsky and Per-Arne Bodin);

[22] Neo-Academism and Neo-Conservatism in Contemporary Russian Art, Music and Film: 1989-2014, 7 November 2014, Stockholm (org. by Maria Engström and Per-Arne Bodin).

3. Aesthetic Practices

The experimental and avant-gardist art scene of the 1960s through to the '80s established modes of expression, formats, and genres which confused politicized, yet moderate, aesthetics. Event-based art, through its very ephemeral and fleeting nature, rarely made its way to state-support. Artists, whose work was either not welcome at institutions, or whose project-scopes exceeded these institutions' capacities, turned into self-made event-organizers and founded their own (counter-)institutions. This subchapter also explores film as a medium of dissent in its ability to overcome any sort of aesthetic regulation. Cinema was also a crack in the communist regimes' order, a landscape of international exchange and a tool of everyday agency. Such an image of cinema unloads the propagandist purpose of the film medium and reveals it to be a creative instrument.

Event-based Art in Hungary

The task of Gabriella Schuller's research is to de-construct the myths and legends surrounding Hungarian event-based art (1966–89) through an in-depth analysis of the Artpool Art Research Center's performance art collection. Performance communities were mostly closed groups with their own dynamics and hierarchies (Havasréti 2006; Forgacs 1994). The first event-based pieces took place in private locations, but from about the 1970s these communities started using official venues (Cseh-Varga and Czirak 2018). From 1962 until about 1969 one can talk about a certain 'freedom' in amateur theatres, which were, nevertheless, still the target of secret police surveillance. Schuller aims to explore the very complexities of Hungarian 'live art' with its ephemerality and restrictions, in the context of the permissive-repressive regime that the Kádár era was (Apor, Apor, and Horváth 2018). As a researcher she faces the challenge of problematic documentation (e.g. most pieces were performed just once) (Schneider 2011; Czirák 2012) and the fading, sometimes distorting memories of interviewees (oral histories) (Charlton, Myers, and Sharpless 2006).

The Balatonboglár Chapel Studio (1970–73)

Even though a comprehensive volume was published on György Galántai's famous Balatonboglár Chapel Studio in 2003, there are still a lot of unfinished scholarly tasks attached to the history of this alternative art venue. Emese Kürti aims to decipher the transnationalism and hybridity (inter/transmediality) in artistic projects that took place in Balatonboglár between 1970 and 1973. Kürti takes on the challenge to re-define avant-garde art in the context of this investigation and to work with the specific notion of community which was at the centre of Galántai's

undertaking. To highlight the chapel studio's interconnectedness with other multilingual groups and art projects, Kürti looks into the problem of language as a method in researching the cultural sphere of East, Central, and Southeast Europe. Her research will demonstrate how 'minor language' (G. Deleuze, F. Guattari) can undermine political change and established geographies (Deleuze and Guttari 1986; Klaniczay and Sasvári 2016; Radomska 2016; Kürti 2016).

Oppositional Film Cultures in Albania and Bulgaria

Sean Homer's research focuses on oppositional film cultures in East and Southeast Europe with a spotlight on Albanian and Bulgarian film. He defines opposition not as a direct, ideological confrontation with official socialist guidelines, but as silences, gaps, and absences in the aesthetics, production, and distribution of non-conformist cinema. There is a significant lack of English language publications about Bulgarian and Albanian dissident film cultures for the period between 1945 and 1989: '... in Dina Iordanova's (2006) overview *The Cinema of the Balkans* there are only two Albanian films in the volume and both of these were released after the fall of communism', and there is 'only one work in English that deals with attempts by Bulgarian filmmakers to circumvent state censorship and control' (Garbolevsky 2011). In contrast to this tendency there is a great deal of scholarship on the Romanian New Wave and on Yugoslavian 'Black Film' (De Cuir 2017; Mortimer 2009; Goulding 2002, 1998; Kirn 2011; Levi 2006).

In all of these cases, we are talking about nationalized film production which was located between state-funding and underground experiment. Albanian films were, according to Homer, censored because they were apolitical, as was Bulgarian poetic realism. The same was true in Bulgaria for what Ingeborg Bratoeva-Daraktchieva has called, 'anti-conformist cinema' (Bratoeva 2008, 2007).

Film Festivals throughout Eastern Europe

Bjorn Sorenssen's contribution to the alternative culture of film is divided into three sub-projects. First, he intends to elaborate on the concept of *ketman* as it appeared in Czeslaw Milosz's book, *The Captive Mind* (1953). This concept can be fruitful in explaining the forms of, in this case, artistic filmic reaction, to the circumstances under which individuals, including artists, were forced to live (F. Taylor 2005). The theoretical backing for this will be Michel Foucault's idea of 'hiddenness' in public discourse and the alternative public sphere developed by Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (Negt and Kluge 1972). Second, Sorenssen will take a comparative look into the case of short film festivals in Leipzig, Oberhausen, and Cracow 'as loopholes in East-West

communication in the field of cinema' (Moine, Barrett, and Arndt-Briggs 2018; Kötzing 2013). These film festivals, within the Soviet influence zone, were forums of international encounter and '"loophole" subculture'.

Amateur Film in the German Democratic Republic

Sorenssen's third sub-project deals with the GDR's amateur film movement as a form of alternative culture. Almost like a grey zone, amateur film was partly initiated and partly overlooked by the government, and to some extent an independent practice anchored in everyday life. Sorenssen intends to examine a number of facets inscribed in this cultural practice (Forster 2018).

Montage as Dissent in Armenia (1960s–'90s)

Endre Eidsa Larsen's hypothesis is that the montage technique applied by Armenian filmmaker and film theorist, Artavazd Pelechian, from the 1960s until the 1990s could be read as a form dissent, as an artistic critique. Many of those films which were shelved by Pelechian were discovered in the 'West' in the 1980s, with the interpretation that his works were the 'direct elaboration and reinvention of the notion and practice of montage developed in the [USSR] … in the 1920s'. Yet, Pelechian's oeuvre is under-researched. Larsen focuses on the re-actualization and elaboration of the 'formalist' montage of the '20s' avant-garde during the period of the so-called neo-avant-garde. His interest lies in the radicalization of this montage's formalist and experimental dimensions, which can be characterized as being documentary, experimental, essay film, and poeticism, inspired by New Wave and auteurist cinema – all of which challenge the comfortable position of perception. This 'challenging' happens when Pelechian 'stresses the *gap* between images, the "nonrepresentational" dimension of the image, non-verbal soundtracks, and the nonsynchronous relation between image and sound'; features that might have irritated the socialist aesthetic doctrine.

4. Dissent as Cultural Transfer

For Working Group 3, dissent as cultural transfer means the determination of alternative culture as a product and origin of exchange processes. This subchapter discusses information transfer as a constitutive element of East, Central, and Southeast European alternative cultures. Samizdat publications and their distribution, intellectual influences from outside socialist countries, intellectual exchange in self-thought collectives, the back-and-forth of artistic works and correspondences, radio broadcasts in support of underground political movements, and

targeted political influence through publication transfers, are only a few examples of how cultural transfer manifested itself in and through alternative culture.

Samizdat Circulation in Czechoslovakia

The study of samizdat circulation in Czechoslovakia has seen a number of publications, but includes several problematic issues. Some books are based on research prior to 1989 (Posset and Petráček 1993), based only on data gathered from libraries (Hanáková 1997), and can be regarded as being non-comprehensive (Holečková 2009; Petrová 2009; Romanová 2014), or are just sporadic essays (Gruntorád 2011; Machovec 2009; Prečan 1992; Vrba 2001; The most important of them were collected into a new anthology: Glanc 2019). These are the main reasons why the Lexicography Department of the Institute of Czech Literature at the Czech Academy of Sciences established the research project, *Encyclopedia of Czech Literary Samizdat 1948–1989* (2015–17). As Petra Loucova explains, the areas of investigation included: 'editions (publishing houses and manufactories), journals and anthologies focused on the field of fiction, literary criticism and journalism or simply related to the field of arts and humanities'. The result of the research project was *Český literární samizdat 1949–1989* (*Czech Literary Samizdat 1949–1989*), published in 2018.

In her reflection on previous research, Loucova stresses how important it is to turn the attention of scholarship on samizdat historiography towards regional microworlds as well as the periphery, with a '"non-elitist" view' of the phenomenon. She claims that samizdat was a socio-cultural phenomenon with both a local and transnational range (Kind-Kovács 2014), and which overlapped the official public sphere, suffered state violations of its privacy, and had its own readership (Šmejkalova 2001). Unfortunately, Loucova argues, there are only rare cases of comprehensive analysis in this direction (An exception is Bolton 2012).

> [O]ur knowledge of the samizdat past is mainly shaped by a relatively small subset of samizdat projects, most of them from Prague: *Edice Petlice, Edice Expedice, Kvart*, sometimes *Česká expedice* and the magazines *Revolver Revue* and *Vokno*. This also applies to well-known comparative histories of alternative medias in East-Central Europe (cf. Eichwede 2000).

Independent Publishing in Poland

The academic concerns about Polish samizdat culture are similar to those formulated by Loucova. According to Jan Olaszek, most publications do not investigate samizdat as a part of everyday culture and only a few works are interdisciplinary and comparative (Gasztold-Seń et al.

2016; Parfianowicz-Vertun 2016). He also thinks that past research often excludes the international context and does not consider the aspect of reception.

Olaszek sees a tendency for earlier publications to review the content of samizdat, and only later scholarship concentrated on the context. There are individual research publications (Błażejowska 2010; Olaszek 2015; Doucette 2018), among which many examine the anthropological, sociological, economic, and journalistic aspects of independent Polish publishing (Sowiński 2011; Mielczarek 2006; Dabert 2014; Tatarowski 2016; Olaszek 2018).

Transnational Unlicensed Cultural Circulation

Like Loucova and Olaszek, Piotr Wcislik criticizes the national and regional framework of samizdat research and praises the few comparative and transnational approaches (Skilling 1989; Eichwede and Akademie der Künste (Berlin) 2000; Kind-Kovács and Labov 2013; Gasztold-Seń et al. 2016; Kind-Kovács 2014; Stöcker 2017). His research focus is on the networks of political activism and the missing macro-analytical approach which could collect and evaluate large corpora of structured information in order to measure indicators in samizdat production, circulation, as well as its reception. A digitally supported approach like this might support a thorough analysis of future alternative cultural actors who have arisen from the samizdat movement, in a different way; a look into the 'third circuit' of information; transnational solidarity; the flow of ideas; the formation of canons – to name but a few potential aspects.

The Orientalist Discourse in Lithuania

The individual research project by Odeta Zukauskiene is devoted to the orientalist discourse (*tibetomania*) in non-conformist cultural circles of Lithuania. Zukauskiene plans to look into communities and their modes of communication using sources such as samizdat books of literature, Daoist texts, Chan, Zen traditions, other informal networks, and the like. As with the attachment to the hippie movement as an alternative reality, a third way beyond capitalist and socialist world views; the attachment to orientalist philosophy might have served as a get 'away from the system' and 'to overcome the state of spiritual discomfort' in communist Lithuania.

Dissent, in the words of Zukauskiene, appeared in Lithuania in the 1970s and was an expansion of one's own freedom, involving Catholic, national, and liberal directives. In the current scholarship, she recognizes a tendency of the region to try to avoid '[reducing] Soviet reality to binary values'. Despite a lack of comprehensive publications about Lithuania, there are still a good number of works on alternative culture which deserve to be mentioned. Their subjects cover: direct opposition and activities in the grey zone (Ramonaitė 2015; Putinaitė 2007), social micro-mobilization and self-management as forces which contributed to the fall of the Soviet

Union (Kavaliauskaitė and Ramonaitė 2011), passive resistance and no radicalism in art and culture including problems of terminology (Lubytė 1997), anti-Soviet painting in late socialism (Grigoravičienė 2017), creative modes of creating one's own freedom within the borders of the regime, the relevance of highlighted context(Putinaitė 2018) , and the non-dualist view of literary dissent (Satkauskytė 2015).

The Flying University Project in Poland (1976–89) (Hungary and Yugoslavia)

Historians who research dissent in East, Central and Southeast Europe only find brief mentions of the 'Flying University' project although it appeared all over the region throughout the 1970s and '80s. This blank spot (On Poland see: Terlecki 2000; Friszke, Archiwum Solidarności, and Instytut Studiów Politycznych (Polska Akademia Nauk) 2006; Törnquist-Plewa 2014) should now be filled through the collaborative research of Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (Poland), Irena Ristic (Yugoslavia), and Tamás Scheibner (Hungary).

The history of the Polish Flying University goes back to the nineteenth century, but it continued to exist in communist Poland after 1977 under the leadership of Andrzej Celinski, and in collaboration with the Society for Scientific Courses (TKN). The underground publishing of lectures, tape-recordings of seminars, the involvement of the Catholic Church, and cooperation with oppositional organizations, belong to the Flying University's most important activities. This collaborative research is to have an emphasis on the cooperation between intellectuals and workers, and also on cultural transfers.

Mail Art in Romania

A different mode of alternative transfer, as a form of communication and dissemination, was that of mail art. Alexandra Preda plans to look into Romanian mail art practices in forming transnational communities. Starting from the concept of the 'relational aesthetics' (Bourriaud et al. 2010) of French art theorist, Nicolas Bourriaud, she intends to address mail art as a form of art based on human interaction and its social context, 'rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space'. Going beyond the national frame of research, she focuses on the networks and interactions between mail art practitioners, and, with the help of digital tools, creates a visual map of these interactions and their nodes of communication.

Based on primary research such as interviews and mail art collections, Preda also aims to explore how the concept of 'opposition' was constructed, negotiated, and instrumentalized by the relevant actors. Drawing on Alexei Yurchak's study on the *Last Soviet Generation* (2006) and on Mark Edele's study of Soviet society and the everyday life (Edele 2007), she argues for a reconsideration of the state versus society divide, along the lines of treating the state as a constitutive part of society rather than something apart from it, thus moving away from both

totalitarian and revisionist perspectives. Such an approach would account for situations in which common cultural phenomena were allowed, tolerated, or even promoted under socialism 'within the realm of the officially censored', while at the same time being 'quite distinct from the ideological texts of the party' (Yurchak 2006, 6).

Radio Solidarity in Poland

Radio Solidarity, the radio station of the Solidarity movement, as Igor Pietraszewski mentions, broadcast independent information during martial law in communist Poland. The history of the station also includes interference from the government, which tried to jam the radio broadcasts and investigated broadcasters.

According to Pietraszewski, there are no deep historical and sociological studies available on the topic. Only a few articles (e.g. Wciślik 2017) and two books exist: one of the books is a simple documentation (Rudka 2005), while the other has a more popular character (Pietkun 2018).

US-supported Émigré Publishers and Book Resistance in Poland during the Cold War

Paweł Sowiński's research is about the US-financed book distribution networks in Poland during the Cold War – a topic that is mostly unexplored. Only a few publications appeared during the early period of the operation: some offered a critical perspective (Saunders 2013); others a skeptical perspective with a more balanced judgement, but limited to book distribution within the United States (Wilford 2009); while again others intended to be comprehensive while missing the distinction between state and society, and are laconic about personal relations (Reisch 2013). There are works which use poor sources (Jones 2018); and those with a precise view of the transnational literary community, multilingual material, and unknown facts, but with limited attention to the Polish underground scene (Kind-Kovács 2014). L. F. Stöcker's book, for instance, is a study of the Cold War along the Baltic Sea rim and about the smuggling of consumer goods, as well as having an emphasis on the in-between position between two worlds (Stöcker 2017). Sovinski correctly observes the growing scholarly interest in culture, economics, and social imaginations.

His personal research goal is to analyse the macro-level (US), mid-level (middle-men) and micro-level (Polish readership) of book circulation, with special attention to its tactics, dynamics of distribution, and its connection between diasporic publishers and bookstore owners between 1956 and 1990. This undertaking clearly has a global dimension (through the involvement of the US) and views book distribution as a social network with human agents. The latter is the most innovative aspect of this research.

5. 'In-Betweens' or Grey Zones

This subchapter is one of those instances where the working groups' research interests intersect. Although a number of case studies from the survey responses show interference between state institutions and actions, and the activities of alternative cultures, we only highlight the three areas which put a special emphasis on the zone of 'in-betweens'. One case study is devoted to the very specific case of Yugoslavia and its media systems; the second concentrates on the complex relationship between artistic dissent, state infrastructure, and decision making; and the final section includes information on how the 'freedom' of alternative culture was pre-negotiated with authorities.

Media Systems in Yugoslavia

In their collaborative publication project (*Comparing Post-socialist Media Systems: The Case of Southeast Europe*, Routledge, in preparation), Zrinjka Peruško, Dina Vozab, and Antonija Čuvalo analyse the socialist media systems of Yugoslavia. The case of Yugoslavia is indeed special because the state was centralized, yet communism was desired by and not violently forced upon the population. The researchers consider both the 'authoritarian and liberal eras' when investigating 'the relationship between the media, the state, and its socialist citizens', while keeping an eye on the 'large differences between [Yugoslavia's] republics'. In Peruško, Vozab, and Čuvalo's attempt to answer the question on how to approach socialist media systems, they claim to include socio-political systems beyond the period of socialism and state-borders (Mihelj and Huxtable 2018; Siebert, Schramm, and Peterson 1973).

> [Peruško, Vozab, and Čuvalo] study the political system – political and economic inclusiveness in addition to the type of government, type of pluralism and social cleavages, and levels of polarization, the media market, political parallelism, journalistic autonomy, globalization, and media culture.

They describe the non-democratic nuances of the Yugoslavian media regime, but also commonalities throughout the Cold War and across Europe (Hallin and Mancini 2012).

The three scholars also consider previous research which has been conducted, mostly on the following themes: the problems of state intervention in media, the periodization of socialism in Yugoslavia (Robinson 1977), periods of media autonomy (Siebert, Schramm, and Peterson 1973), Yugoslavia's media systems as 'hybrid cultural and ideological models' (Imre 2014; Mihelj 2011, 2014) with their diverse influences of power from both 'East' and 'West' and beyond, and

the internationally independent position of Yugoslavia in the Non-Aligned movement (Mihelj and Huxtable 2018).

The State and the Artistic Alternative Culture in Hungary (1980s)

Research by Kristóf Nagy will shed new light on the complex understanding of alternative culture as a cultural production which was (and still is) state-bound in Hungary (Janos 2002). The topic of his analysis will be the state's role in shaping state subsidy structures for culture in Eastern Europe. Nagy argues that cultural players and cultural products are a part of the hegemonic project (Williams 2007; Mocănescu 2011). Cultural funds and artist unions (Horváth György 2015; Enache 2017), in their functioning, just as with the *Tendencies* exhibition (1980–81), are to be seen as terrains of counter-hegemony even though they were part of state infrastructure.

The Cultural Policies of Yugoslavia and Serbia

Milena Dragicevic Sesic aims to investigate forms of non-open dissent (film studios, national theatres, and students' cultural centres) with a parallel look at cultural policies in Yugoslavia (Serbia), and the negotiated autonomies of these dissenting circles. She will not only look into the role of 'activist leaders' during the processes of negotiation, but also into the importance of these forms as points of 'East-West' encounter.

6. Eastern European Dissent as Seen from the 'Outside'

In the discussions of Working Group 3, we realized very early on that in order to have a broad and historically adequate understanding of alternative culture, a view from outside of the Eastern Bloc was necessary. The perception of dissent in foreign news reporting, in scholarly publications from the time, and in historical records will most probably bring us closer to how the image of alternative culture in the Second World was created and passed on. This perspective will help us minimize or lessen the gap between the ideologically divided worlds of socialism and capitalism, and even beyond. Our research, which works against dichotomies and forced categorizations, also works against stereotypes in the historiography of socialist Europe during the Cold War.

The Representation of the Polish and Yugoslav 1968 Protests in Norwegian News Media and Journalism

Rolf Werenskjold's investigation is about the representation of the 1968 protests in Poland and Yugoslavia in Norwegian news media and journalism. The political and cultural opposition in

Poland and Yugoslavia were often overshadowed by the events which had taken place during the Czechoslovakian crisis and the violent events in Berlin and Paris in the news media at the time. The study emphasizes both the similarities and diversity of the various events which occurred in Europe in 1968. What characterized the uprising in Poland and Yugoslavia, what triggered the rebels, which groups were involved, and how did the protestors differ from each other and from the protesters involved in what was happening in the rest of Europe? In this study, the Norwegian News media are used as a case study on how the political and cultural opposition in Poland and Yugoslavia were depicted from an 'outside perspective', in a Western NATO country with long historical ties to both countries, and which also had a common border with the Soviet Union.

The general theoretical perspectives used in the project are the agenda setting theory(McCombs 2014) and the framing theory (Entman 2009). In the past there were some renowned theory builders who reported on foreign affairs; people such as Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge who are known for their ground-breaking article from 1965 entitled, *Structures of Foreign News*, which established key theoretical perspectives linked to a number of news criteria (Galtung and Ruge 1965). The Cold War was a golden age of foreign news reporting (seen in the larger context). The Norwegian foreign news system, and its correspondents and foreign news reporters, as a group within the Norwegian media system during the Cold War, are discussed in detail in Werenskjold (Werenskjold 2011), and (Hovden and Werenskjold 2019).

Only a few individual Norwegian case studies cover Eastern Europe and its dissidents. However, there is abundant literature from foreign news correspondents, published both by Norwegian and other foreign correspondents, from various Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union. This study will discuss news reporting from Poland and Yugoslavia as part of the Norwegian foreign news system.

The Leftist Turkish View on the Velvet Revolution and Václav Havel

Burcu Peksevgen has gone in a similar direction with her research on the reception and representation in two selected Left-wing Turkish newspapers (*Milliyet* and *Cumhuriyet*) of the Velvet Revolution and Václav Havel ((See: Topuz 2003; Köktener 2005; Wheaton and Kavan 2018; Havel 1985; Zantovsky 2015). She evaluates and analyses her findings, which include 67 pieces of news about Havel, and 71 pieces about the Velvet Revolution.

Transnational View on Czechoslovak Dissent

Astrid Muls' view is from a different perspective: that of philosophy and its 'outside' reception/presentation. Muls argues that despite some classic and newer investigations on Czechoslovak dissent seen from the 'outside' (Skilling 1989; Garton Ash 1999; Vaněk 2005), the complexity and the broader context of this topic has not been investigated thoroughly enough. As a consequence, the heroization of Czechoslovak dissent remains entangled with a politicized understanding of Eastern European dissent (Bolton 2012; Grémion 1995). But as Muls argues, informal meetings and clandestine seminars between the Czechoslovak dissenters and foreign intelligentsia in the 1970s and '80s (for instance, those organized by the Jan Hus Foundation at Oxford University in 1980), prove the opposite of such a narrow-minded view. The distribution of dissident writings, the international reception, and networks of Czechoslovak dissent, differentiate the intellectual history of a bipolar world (Day 1999).

Muls' research concentrates on the reception and dissemination of Václav Havel and Jan Patocka's works, with special focus on their *Charta 77* texts (Tucker 2000; Patočka 2007; Suk and Andělová 2016). Her method is a critical and reflexive transnational analysis which also considers the generic and formal mutations of these theorists' writing through their circulation (Horn and Kenney 2010; Brier 2013). The sources of this investigation are personal archives and correspondence (Writers in Exile Archives, Royal Library of Brussels; archives of the Jan Hus Foundation, Czechoslovak Center of the National Museum; Jan Patocka Archives, Libri Prohibit, etc.).

Jewish Heritage Sites in Various Eastern European Cities

The dialogue with the past can also be an important research aspect for alternative cultures in East, Center, and Southeast Europe during socialism. Noga Collins-Kreiner explores the touristic impact of Jewish heritage sites (Petrevska, Krakover, and Collins-Kreiner 2018) in various Eastern European cities, with the main objective being to decipher the motivations for preserving these sites. Interviews with policy makers from central and local government support her research on 'dissonant heritage'.

Although publications exist on European cities which explore their Jewish Heritage (Sandri 2013; Corsale and Vuytsyk 2018; Krakover 2013, 2017), the 'motivations of local societies to preserve heritage sites related to others' culture has hardly been treated' (Gruber 2002). Yet, the 'preservation of tangible heritage assets' (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1997), the 'physical reluctance of dominant groups to preserve assets associated with minorities',(Chhabra 2012; Pavličić 2016) 'dissonance heritage' (Bruce and Creighton 2006; Pavličić 2016), and Dark Tourism (Lennon and Foley 2000; Collins-Kreiner 2016), have been widely studied.

7. Conclusion and Trajectories of Future Research

The volume edited by Beáta Hock and Anu Allas entitled, *Globalizing East European Art Histories. Past and Present* (2018), can serve Working Group 3 as a source of inspiration for many reasons. This book elevates the research on East, Central, and Southeast Europe to a global level, as seen from a variety of regional, national, transnational, and international perspectives. Hock, has argued elsewhere (2018, 94–97), that we also need to detach the ideas and practices of socialism from the region under review in order to open up the field of investigation – both virtually and physically.

The contributions to the State of the Art Survey have managed to define, for instance, new views on the heroism of dissent, or have detected innovative trajectories on how to combine socio-cultural, art historical, and anthropological approaches to alternative culture. Through Working Group 3's focus we have spotted stunning ways for how identities were mediated from the outside's representation of the region, and also how transnationalism, multi-linguicism, encounters, and translations of many kinds, can open up exciting trajectories for future research. The same goes for the promising analysis of alternative culture using the methods from Digital Humanities which might be able to 'measure' data which most traditional scholarship is not capable of doing.

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Chapter 4: The Cultural Memory of Dissent

Authored by Tea Sindbæk Andersen, Daniela Koleva, Ferenc Laczó, Eleonora Narvselius, Yulia Oreshina, Tamás Scheibner and Kacper Szulecki

Edited by Ferenc Laczó and Tamás Scheibner (WG4 Chairs)

When not referenced otherwise, quotations come from the responses to the NEP4DISSENT State-of-the-Art survey (see Introduction to this report).

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1. Introduction

This chapter has been prepared by members of Working Group 4, who are researching the Cultural Memory of Dissent. At meetings in Leuven, Belgrade, and Budapest over the course of 2018 and early 2019, members of the group discussed and debated how exactly to define the agenda of the group and how to specify the content and structure of our contribution to the report. As a general principle, our group is primarily interested – though without being inflexible in this regard – in the (roughly) three decades since 1989, and how the East European dissident past has been remembered, contested, and canonized over this period. Following various suggestions and numerous rounds of revision, we have decided to divide the report into three major subjects and altogether eight subsections.

The three major subjects are as follows: 1. Concepts, Actors, Institutions, 2. The Making of Narratives and their Impact, 3. Dimensions and Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion. The main questions associated with respect to these three sections have been defined as: (1) How has dissent and its alternatives been conceptualized and remembered? Which actors and institutions have been crucially important in shaping the process of remembrance? (2) How has the process of remembering and canonizing dissent unfolded on the various local, national, regional, continental, and global levels, and how have these levels interacted? How have post-dissident actors been impacted by the canonization of their past (or its absence)? What were the functions of the narratives of dissent and how have they been made to fit into the broader narratives of the past? (3) What is included in and excluded from the various forms of remembrance, and on what basis?

These main questions in turn resulted in the division of the chapter into eight subsections with the analysis of: I/1 key concepts; I/2 crucial actors; I/3 main institutions; II/1 mainstream narratives; II/2 the canonization of former dissidents and its consequences; III/1 political–ideological perspectives; III/2 gender, ethnic, class, and religious dimensions; and III/3 the role of (the transformation of) the media in processes of remembrance.

As a general rule, all sections aim to provide an overview of the field, or fields, in question, by drawing on relevant selected examples. The chief aim of the exercise has not been to be exhaustive (which would, anyway, have been unfeasible given the limitations of space). Our chief aim has rather been to offer sufficient and reliable information to identify the notable gaps, and to suggest implementation plans in these various areas.

The writing of each of these eight sections has been coordinated and managed by one member of the working group. Altogether, these seven authors – namely Tea Sindbæk Andersen,

Daniela Koleva, Ferenc Laczó, Eleonora Narvselius, Yulia Oreshina, Tamás Scheibner, Kacper Szulecki – have also been responsible for the respective first drafts of these eight sections. At the same time, all sections have been co-written by several of the aforementioned WG members who made various suggestions, added criticisms, or simply expanded the text in new directions. In the case of I/1 and III/3, the report also draws (beyond the position papers collected earlier) on specific internal surveys. Prior to language editing and the incorporation of the chapter into the overall report by the Action's leaders, this chapter has been edited for content and consistency by WG chair and co-chair Ferenc Laczó and Tamás Scheibner, respectively.

2. Concepts, Actors, Institutions

Contested Concepts

While there has been much talk about dissent and dissidents within the CEE, especially during the 1990s, and in a growing body of research since then, the concept remains open to scrutiny and contest, while the criteria which allows the defining of what 'dissent' is and who qualifies as a dissident, have been far from consensual.

The state has been a major actor in shaping the concepts and terms in this semantic area throughout socialism and up until today. The shifting meanings of the key terms associated with dissidence in the times of socialism could be tracked best by following the state press, party documents and discourses, and secret police files on the one hand, and samizdat and émigré publications, on the other. After the regimes changed, the relevant acts of state legislation, the offline and online press, and the documents related to the changing landscape of institutions, could serve as the most important sources for a conceptual history of dissident cultures.

During Stalinism, oppositional agents and activities in Eastern Europe were not only less frequent, but were also grouped into a few categories, such as 'bandits', 'counter-revolutionaries', 'saboteurs', 'spies', or 'deviants', in the press, or 'anti-state activities' in legislation. This corresponded to Soviet legal and public discourses, but was probably also influenced by a practically universal obsession with hostile underground activities during the Second World War and the emerging Cold War. The conceptual field was therefore rather homogenous across the entire region.

Post-Stalinism witnessed the emergence of wider, and to a large extent, country-specific varieties of non-conformism which led to a more diverse range of labels being used by the state and the official press. A plethora of new terms were introduced, especially after acts of collective dissent such as the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the Czechoslovak 'Velvet Revolution', Charter 77, and the 1980 strikes in Poland. The new or reframed terms were not necessarily confined to

linguistic boundaries. It seems, for instance, that the term *huligán* (hooligan), which was introduced as a new term in Hungary after 1956 to identify one group of 'counter-revolutionaries', gained a foothold in Bulgaria where a 1958 legislative act, which was meant to prevent a similar uprising to the one that happened in Hungary, led to the internment of 1,700 *хулигани* (hooligans) in the Belene labour camp. Further, Charter 77 and the waves it created might be understood as a major inspiration for the communist parties in some countries of the region to come to terms with a greater variety of actors in opposition. These re-conceptualizations were often mediated through the press, and did not serve the purpose of some kind of detached analysis, but were political interventions that tried to dissociate the various non-conformist actors from each other by offering ready-made roles for them to fill. The party thus allowed various legitimate or semi-legitimate critical positions in the hope that it would not appear as if it were losing its authority, and could thus keep direct state coercion to a minimal level within the international environment defined by the Helsinki Accords. The new vocabularies also allowed the secret police to organize surveillance in a more effective manner, and bring a greater variety of charges against individuals; therefore contributing to the modernization of the state security systems. Given this prehistory for some of the key terms in the semantic area under scrutiny, a thorough analysis of the use of the concepts in the 1990s should take into consideration the semantic changes which took place during socialism: for these are loaded terms with connotations which might have induced post-1989 legislation to avoid their inclusion in acts of retroactive justice.

Indeed, the new democratic governments, with very few exceptions (Poland, Lithuania), refrained from using the concept of 'opposition to the regime' in the relevant legal texts. Anchored in the human rights paradigm, and following the memory of the Holocaust as an example, post-communist reparative justice has focused on the victims: it has defined categories of victimhood, and categories of offences (e.g. internment, forced labour, deportation, university bans, expropriation of property, etc.), as well as forms of compensation and rehabilitation.

After the changes in the regimes, public discourse had a slightly different focus. No doubt, there has been a great deal of interest in victimhood in this area as well. Still, with the legacy of dissent becoming an important type of symbolic capital in the 1990s, it was not only the level of victimhood that had been publicly contested, but claims to dissident status as well. The attention centred, above all, on personalities (and less often on groups, e.g. the Praxis school in Yugoslavia) and their discussions have often had a moralizing overtone. This endowed dissidents with a high level of moral authority due to both their intellectual or creative output (as if this had anything to do with ethics), and their persistence in 'living in truth' even under a communist

regime, while others – actively or tacitly – compromised with, and became compromised by, the regime. Such discussions have brought about cleavages within the, not so numerous, intellectual communities which have been regarded as dissident, and have given rise to a widespread practice of substantiating one's standing by claiming victim status as well (i.e. proving how one has been repressed by the regime).

Recently, the policy makers of the European Commission have also come to shape this conceptual field. In 2015 the EC published a call for a Horizon 2020 project which explicitly invited research into 'cultural opposition' during Socialism. This term has not been a well-established concept in academia, and remains contested, but the handbook covering Eastern European dissident cultures, which was published by the awarded research project (*The Handbook of COURAGE: Cultural Opposition and Its Heritage in Eastern Europe*), uses the term in its subtitle (Apor, Apor, and Horváth 2018).

While discussions about dissent and dissidents have been simmering for years, post-communist transitional justice has long remained blind to forms of cultural and intellectual dissent ('Dissident' as a legal term exists only in Georgia, in the law on the recognition of victims of political repression from 1997). Such 'parallel talks' concerning law and society is an interesting problem which invites further research.

Any review of the conceptual field should pay profound attention to how dissidents designate themselves. Public labelling has often clashed with self-identification. People who the layperson has considered dissidents, both before and after 1989, were already contesting this designation under communism; not least, they argued, because it isolated the dissident community from the rest of society. Ludvík Vaculík, for example, denied even wanting to be a dissident. In 1979, he argued that dissidents, by whom he primarily meant Václav Havel, were behaving in such a 'heroic' way that they could not possibly be a model for the average citizen, and were, on the contrary, pushing them away. By setting such an impossibly high standard, dissidents were rendering a realistic opposition impossible, he argued, and they therefore unwittingly played into the hands of the regime. This is why he argued for a 'correct' and 'honest' form of behaviour, which would keep 'dissidents' out of jail and thus would not isolate them from others. The Hungarian, Miklós Haraszti, also provoked debates in the underground press by claiming that the 'opposition' contributed to the maintenance of the regime and actually proved itself to be an integral part of the system, so, putting their dissident status in doubt. Another instance is that of the Bulgarian artist Todor Tzonev who, though famous for his satirical caricatures of the party and state head, did not consider himself a dissident.

The question of how dissidents relate to (or perhaps overlap with) other categories of politically repressed persons remains open. Those forming and populating of the so-called grey zone, for example, (youth) subcultures and alternative cultures (*Asoziale* in GDR, *refyuzniki* and *antisovietchiki* in the USSR, *neformali* in Bulgaria, *csövesek* in Hungary, etc.) are difficult to locate exactly on the map of cultural opposition. Next, human rights activists, environmentalists, alternative trade unions, and minority-rights defenders (e.g. of Bulgarian Turks during the forced assimilation in the mid- and late-1980s) have in some contexts also been considered dissidents; although some of them prefer to define themselves in more categorical terms as 'oppositioners' or 'fighters' against the regime. Therefore, the question arises as to what 'counts' as dissent and how is dissent related to other forms of resistance to the communist regimes.

While these questions can best be elucidated by comparing national cases, there is another dimension that necessitates a transnational approach. Even though communication was constant across the 'Nylon Curtain' from the 1960s on, and the human rights discourses in the 1970s greatly contributed to the emergence of a dissident canon; the democratization of Eastern Europe in the 1990s brought new dynamics to the discussions. Since the 1990s, a pan-European 'dissident talk' (i.e. a set of memory practices regarding dissidents and the use of the dissident past as symbolic capital) has become the dominant discursive regime, which was conditioned by cross-border influences and the effective recognition of dissidents on the European scene. As an example of the first, the Czech, and even more so, the Polish, tradition of dissent has acquired a normative significance in Bulgarian debates, whereby certain 'models' of dissent and dissidents were accepted. An example of international empowerment can be seen in the case of the commitments made by figures with dissident pasts, such as Vytautas Landsbergis and Tunne Kelam, who both employed their moral authority to endorse the EP's resolution on 'European conscience and totalitarianism' (2009).

Finally, yet another dimension is the temporal one: how do the notions of dissent and the figure of the dissident change over time. It seems that in many situations being qualified as a 'former dissident' has ceased to provide any form of social or cultural capital. While in some contexts, such as the post-Yugoslav context, the figure of the dissident has acquired nostalgic connotations; while in others (e.g. Poland) 'dissident' has often been used by right-wing politicians as a depreciating term (for instance, in order to allude to the 'communist origins' of members of the democratic opposition). In still other contexts, the figure might still possess the potential to criticize the illiberal turns taken in recent years.

Key Actors in Communicative and Cultural Memory

The agents of communicative and cultural memory are truly varied. The type of variation depends both on the places and the contexts of the commemorative activities, and on the events and periods remembered. The state, through structures, institutions, and political discourse, is the main mnemonic agent in most European countries. More or less independent cultural organizations and institutions also play crucial roles, as do political parties and interest groups. Experts and artists, producing elements of cultural memory in the form of literature, fiction, visual arts, and popular culture, contribute significantly as well. Dissidents themselves often constitute important mnemonic agents, both with regard to the memory of dissident culture (broadly defined), and concerning their own memorialization.

One important arena for mnemonic activities and agency is that of museums, memorial museums, and sites of memory. In many Eastern European countries, dissident organizations and groups of the victims of political repression have been involved in building institutions of memory, for example, in the form of museums. The KGB Cells Museum in Tartu, situated in the main political prison, and created on a private initiative by a group of former prisoners, is a case in point. Initially based on a quite specific perspective, the museum has now been taken over by state authorities who ensure its continued activity. Thus, the mnemonic activities of private actors and former dissidents are being combined with the mnemonic agency of the Estonian state, as institutionalized in the museum. A somewhat similar development lies behind the Museum of Occupation and Freedom Fights (formerly the Museum of the Victims of Genocide) in Vilnius and the Museum of Occupations in Riga. In other Eastern European countries, such as Bulgaria and Croatia, sites of communist repression and violence (e.g. Belene, Goli Otok) are yet to be framed and established as sites of memory. In this ongoing process, mnemonic agency is shared between interest groups, activists, cultural historians, local authorities, and, potentially, state authorities.

An important state agent in the field of memory, and one particularly relevant to the study of dissent, are those institutions responsible for the preservation and study of state-security archives. The earliest among these (which has served as a model for most of the others) is the Federal Commissioner for the StASI archives (est. 1990). In different national settings, these institutions have different responsibilities, ranging from providing access to police files (Germany, Hungary), serving as archives for the study of the communist past (Bulgaria, Romania), to wider research and educational activities (Poland, Slovakia). Funded by the state, they have proven vulnerable to politicization (Poland), and sensitive to changes in government; which is perhaps one of the reasons why their legitimacy has sometimes been contested by

researchers. In 2008, a few of these institutions established the European Network of Official Authorities in Charge of the Secret Police Files.

Another important agent of public memory is the state education system, through which future citizens are introduced to the national mainstream narrative of political history and memory. As a mnemonic agent, the school system probably has a wider impact than any other type of memory mediation, creating the basics for archived historical consciousness in the nations' youth. Though the introductions to dissident histories will be brief, it will probably have a constitutive impact on the widespread public memory.

In the grey zone between state and individual agency, political discourse constitutes an important field for framing and phrasing public memories of dissidence. The ways in which past dissent is being talked about in today's societies, and the roles and importance which are being ascribed to dissidence are well worth investigating.

Within the field of popular culture, as defined very broadly, mnemonic agency is rather diffuse as authors and instigators are many, and sometimes close to being anonymous. We should not forget that the cultural memory of dissidence may be created through popular works of fiction such as Ilija Trojanow's novel *Macht und Widerstand* (2015), which created significant debate both in Bulgaria where the novel is set, as well as elsewhere in Europe. Films, both fiction works and documentaries, contribute significantly as mediators of cultural memory. Thus, Dušan Kovačević's *Profesionalac*, from 2003, remains a lasting fictional monument to regime resistance in Serbia under Milošević.

Needless to say, the internet is probably one of the most influential sources of memory mediation, especially for younger generations. Here we have an unpredictable – and largely uncharted – jungle of mnemonic actors and channels of mediation: ranking from academic sources and national lexica, to Wikipedia, Facebook pages, and remediations of cultural memory on Youtube; as well as through various other sources. Also, online news media contributes to the presence of the cultural memory of dissidence, especially in connection with the anniversaries of events and important dates in dissident biographies. Thus, 'netnographic' work on digital memories of dissidence and how such memories circulate in processes of remediation, seems crucial to the investigation of the memory of dissidence.

A further point of focus with regard to agents of memory mediation should be the role of the autobiographies of dissidents. Here dissidents themselves have been involved in co-creating the public memory of their own careers, and it is certainly worthwhile comparing how these narratives co-exist with more official and professional history writing, biographies written by others, and various types of online biographies created by amateurs.

Institutional Remembrance

We can proceed from the mainstream definition of institutions as established aspects of society. Following this suggestion, when we talk about the institutionalization of dissident remembrance, and the attempts to convert it into a heritage, we need to consider quite a broad scope of symbolic initiatives, and not just state-sponsored or 'top-down' ones. Given the limitations here, a comprehensive cataloguing of the contexts into which institutionalized memories of dissent have been inscribed so far would prove too ambitious. What it is possible to compile on the basis of the obtained information is a preliminary list which may, and should, be complemented in the future.

The list of crucial institutions in the canonization of memories of dissidence (or the absence thereof) can be organized along the axes tangible–intangible and 'top-down'/'bottom-up'. Tangible top-down/bottom-up arenas of institutionalization include institutes of national memory and other institutions studying the legacy of totalitarian regimes, but also cemeteries, monuments, museums, special landmarks, the names of streets, among other places. Intangible top-down/bottom-up domains include political rituals, commemorative concerts and rallies, narratives on dissidence as presented in national curricula, school books, and stories of civil movements, etc. An important aspect is also the popularization of the written/visual legacy of dissident intelligentsia.

In various Central-Eastern European countries these domains of memory institutionalization are all more or less represented, but they have peculiar local features as described below:

Former Yugoslavia

Crucial institutions in the (potential) institutionalization of memories of dissidence would include cemeteries, political rituals (as in the case of Franjo Tuđman), museums (for Alija Izetbegović), national curricula, and school books (narratives of repression under communism, stories of civil movements especially in Slovenia). Social and digital media could be instruments of great importance with regard to dissident memory, however, the memory of dissent has not been particularly emphasized in them. In South-Eastern Europe, there exists several major sites of violent repression (e.g., the Yugoslav prison camp island, Goli Otok) which have not yet been developed very much as institutions for remembrance or education.

Czechia

The memory of dissent is canonized here in certain institutions and actors. The oldest, bottom-up example of tangible institutionalized memory is the Libri Prohibiti, a library headed by former *Charter 77* signatory, Jiri Gruntorad, and whose board is chaired by Ivan Havel, Vaclav's brother. The library holds a collection of Eastern European, primarily Czech and Slovak, samizdat

literature produced between 1960 and 1989. The personal bequest of Vaclav Havel has been successfully institutionalized by the Vaclav Havel Library, currently headed by Havel's biographer, Michael Zantovsky. On an academic level, dissent memory is importantly institutionalized through the Institute of Contemporary History at the Czech Academy of Sciences. It was founded in February 1990 by Vilem Precan as an initiative of the Historical Commission of the Civic Forum, the political movement created during the 1989 Velvet Revolution. Yet another important institution is the Czechoslovak Documentation Center (Československé dokumentační středisko), founded by the same Vilem Precan in 1986 in Scheinfeld, Federal Republic of Germany, which he brought to Prague after 1989, and which is now attached to the National Museum. The centre's mission has been to safeguard Czech and Slovak samizdat and tamizdat literature.

This institutionalization has firmly established the historical narrative of the dissident heritage in the public sphere. Even if personal disagreements between former dissidents occasionally surface, the vast majority of actors and historians agree on a heroized narrative of dissent that is often a combination of commemorative (paying tribute) and historical-analytical parts. In the 1990s both academic research and public history concentrated mainly on the most memorable episodes of repression which marked the Czechoslovak communist rule: 1948, 1968, and 1988–89, as well as on social movements such as the artistic underground which first appeared in the 1970s, the burgeoning opposition and demonstrations in 1988–89 leading up to and including the Velvet Revolution.

The creation of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in 2007 represented a distinct move from victimhood, to the heroization of the 1950s and '60s resisters, and the underground movement of the 1980s. The institute presently has the status of an institute of national memory.

Lithuania

The most important entities of institutionalization in this context is the Museum of Occupations and Freedom Fights and the larger Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (LGGRTC), of which the former has been a part since 1997. Its mission is to study genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Lithuania, the persecution of local residents by occupying regimes, and armed and unarmed resistance against occupying regimes; as well as to initiate the legal evaluation of the activities of the organizers and implementers of genocide, and to commemorate freedom fighters and genocide victims. The publishing department of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania is currently the only organization in the country permanently engaged in publishing and disseminating scholarly and journalistic works,

along with fiction, on genocidal violence inflicted by occupying regimes and resistance to such regimes. The department publishes the journal *Genocide and Resistance*.

In Lithuania the resistance was closely linked with the struggle for Catholic believers' rights. The first significant, uncensored journal, *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, was published between 1972 and 1989. The chronicle received support from the Vatican, a crucial transnational actor.

Ukraine

Aside from such state-sponsored institutions as the Institute of National Memory, a prominent role in the institutionalization of dissident memories is currently played by the Sixties Museum (Музей шістдесятництва). As the result of a civic initiative it was opened in Kyiv in 2012 as a branch of the Kyiv Historical Museum. Another dynamic and important actor involved in both the research and the commemoration of East-European urban history, including the history of local dissent, is the non-state Center for Urban History of East-Central Europe in Lviv. Here, non-governmental local organizations, together with the local municipality, have pursued a gamut of commemorative activities (exhibitions, poetry evenings, film screenings, sponsoring amateur documentary films, and websites) concerning iconic personalities in the local dissident canon (Chornovil, Chubaj, Lysheha, Marynovych, etc.). To this group also belong the first rock groups and musicians/singers who conveyed social (and sometimes political) critique in their lyrics (in Lviv: Braty Hadiukiny, Vuiky, etc.). A particularly interesting commemorative landscape has been presented through the post-1989 performances and activities of youth subcultures, especially hippies, who conveyed stories about translocal and even transnational connections on the basis of their interest in rock music, esotericism, and Eastern philosophies, but also in political issues (e.g. some hippies in Lviv had contact with the local Helsinki group). Nowadays the 'hippie veterans' popularize knowledge about their activities via the Facebook group, *Armianka*, and by means of having transformed their popular café on Armianska street into an improvised museum. Institutionalization of memory of the more 'serious' face of political dissidence is exemplified by the monument to Viacheslav Chornovil, unveiled in Lviv in the early 2000s.

Poland

In Poland the level and scale of institutionalized memory is perhaps the highest in the region, where, due to the scale of opposition after 1980, a large part of the political and cultural elite as well as significant parts of the society as a whole could make legitimate claims to the experience of dissent. Most importantly, this relates to the Solidarność trade union and movement.

Iconic sites of opposition activity – such as the Gdansk Shipyards or the Wroclaw bus depot, have been turned into memorials and important centres of scholarship, education, and ritualized commemoration. The largest of these by far is the European Solidarity Centre in

Gdansk, constructed next to the Shipyard it hosts a permanent exhibition commemorating dissidents from other Eastern European countries as well an academic unit and a publishing house. The Wroclaw based Bus Depot History Centre, hosting the educational and academic centre, 'Memory and the Future' is an example of bottom-up commemoration meeting top-down processes at a regional scale.

In a similar way to the Czech Libri Prohibiti, the KARTA Archive in Warsaw is a key depository of Polish and Eastern European samizdat, which has its roots in the archiving practices of dissident movements. The number of bottom-up initiatives, such as associations and foundations set up by former members of different opposition groups (e.g. the Freedom and Peace Movement Foundation) are difficult to estimate, but an important form of activity is the local commemoration of sites and activists, as well as the self-sustaining institutions for dissent 'veterans'.

The leitmotifs of these initiatives are usually heroism and martyrdom, though a social history approach is increasingly penetrating the way in which the communist experience is represented. The Polish Institute of National Remembrance stands out in this regard. In accordance with its legal mandate, it focuses on terror, persecution, and victimhood to a greater extent than on other elements of societal experience. The Institute's main role is that of a depository and gate-keeper for the archives of the secret police; and its main contribution has been in the area of how the opposition was seen through the lens of the regime and that of institutional lustration processes.

The contribution, not only of political figures, but also of revered religious leaders (the 'chaplain of Solidarity', Józef Tischner, as well as Pope John Paul II) is acknowledged through memorial signs, monuments, and museums. Recently, dissident memory has also been boosted by changes in street names. Early examples of such commemorations were visible shortly after 1989 with initial 'de-communization' and simultaneous 'dissidentization' of toponyms (Solidarity Avenue in Warsaw), while the last few years have seen a further increase, for example, the Workers' Defense Committee and Andrei Sakharov streets in Warsaw, and Vaclav Havel square in Wroclaw.

Bulgaria

Comparisons with other post-communist countries, especially Poland and the Czechia, have demonstrated the limited scope of Bulgarian opposition and have given grounds for the denial of its existence altogether, or at least reduction of the phenomenon to a few isolated cases. At the same time, the political allegiances of the former dissidents – whether their status was contested or not – proved diverse: while some of them became faces of the anti-communist opposition, others remained loyal to the Socialist (ex-Communist) party, in some instances trying

to reform it from within. In most cases, they suffered disappointments no matter where they stood. It appears that the dissidents' agenda has not fitted into the new patterns of public and political life; it has become marginal and as a result no contemporary political bloc has been eager to claim the dissidents' legacy. Against this backdrop, a noteworthy exception – and perhaps the only one – is the legacy of Georgi Markov (1929–78), a playwright and writer who emigrated to the UK, worked for Radio Free Europe, and was killed with the infamous 'Bulgarian umbrella' (a poisonous pellet shot from a gun looking like an umbrella). Nowadays, there is a monument to Markov on a square in central Sofia, and each year the anniversary of his death is commemorated, albeit with no official institutional support.

Russia

To some extent the topic of dissent has been presented and propagated via the museums and memorial houses of well-known writers and scientists (like the one in Nizhny Novgorod for Andrei Sakharov). Enormous work concerning the memorialization of repressed dissidents has been conducted by Memorial, a society which has numerous branches and which, despite tensions with the authorities, continues its activities, especially online.

3. The Making of Narratives and their Impact

The Making of the Mainstream Narrative at the National and European Levels

The largely peaceful end to the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, which Timothy Garton Ash (Garton Ash 1993) has labelled 'refolutions' (i.e. sweeping reform measures with revolutionary consequences, and which are often referenced simply as '1989'; the implosion and dissolution of the Soviet Union some two years later; and the end of the Cold War, which stretched over several years and had no definite beginning; constituted three intertwined but distinct processes. Mikhail Gorbachev, widely perceived as the single most influential actor, and even as someone whose numerous idiosyncrasies go a long way to account for these sudden and unexpected developments (Zubok 2002), was keenly interested in the last of the three and was willing to merely observe and acknowledge the first; but it was the second that destroyed not only 'the last empire' (Plokhy 2015) but also his political career.

The roles played by dissidents, mostly in the more narrowly defined East Central European region, and the oppositional groups and movements growing out of them, mostly by the late 1980s, can be considered to be at the heart of one of the three major narratives concerning the end of communism in Europe and the overcoming of the continent's Cold War division. The other two major narratives focus, respectively, on the triumph of the West in the Cold War and its supposed conclusive defeat of Soviet communism (a narrative particularly

popular in the more hawkish circles in the United States and typically presenting an exaggerated version of the role of Ronald Reagan and the Republican Party), and on processes internal to representatives of the Soviet-type regimes – in the latter case, the key points tend to be the self-destructive reformism initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev, but also the involvement and self-interest of reformist communists in ending the dictatorships and privatizing the centrally planned economies in Central and Eastern European countries.

Of these three, the Western triumphalist narrative has clearly found the least resonance in scholarship concerning the end of communist regimes in Europe. Gorbachev was, after all, a partner in ending the Cold War, and the Soviet collapse did not need to follow from him helping to end the global conflict. What is more, shortly before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States was aiming to help preserve it in some shape in the interest of future stability (Plokhy 2017). In existing scholarship, the other two aforementioned narratives are the much more widely presented and discussed versions of events. Adopting the coinage of Stephen Kotkin and Jan T. Gross (Kotkin and Gross 2010), we might call the contest between the two: the civil society versus the uncivil society disagreement (where the aforementioned authors have forcefully argued in favour of the decisive role of the latter).

At the same time, the narrative which is focused on dissidents and their ideals, which supposedly emerged victorious in '1989' (this version of events has often been captured in the reductionist and sometimes rather kitsch stories focused on Lech Walesa and Vaclav Havel becoming presidents of their respective countries) is closely connected to the mainstream Western vision of the Cold War and its end. In narratives of post-communist Westernization in particular, canonized at the time of the broadly liberal consensus of the so called transition era (i.e. roughly between 1989 and 2004–07), dissidents were the chief heroes as members of – at first usually rather small – groups which had already propagated key liberal values before 1989, and greatly helped introduce liberal democratic institutions, which they have dedicated themselves to legitimizing since this date. As the Chinese example has shown, the turning towards capitalism and an opening-up to the forces of globalization would have been entirely possible, and might even have been pursued highly successfully under the continued authoritarian political setting. From this global comparative perspective, dissidents were supposed to have made a crucial and positive difference to the Westernizing parts of the post-communist world.

This marked connection to, and embeddedness in, the Westernization narrative also frequently led to an overestimation of the actual roles and impact of dissidents within their local and national milieus. At the same time, of the most widely remembered events in the Central and Eastern Europe of 1989 – the roundtable talks, especially in the pioneering cases of Poland and

Hungary; the street demonstrations in East Germany and Czechoslovakia; the opening of the Berlin Wall, usually known as its "fall" which, as shown by Julia Sonnevend (Sonnevend 2016), has managed to emerge as the only truly global symbol and narrative of 1989; and the violence in Romania, including the execution of Nicolae Ceausescu – only the former two were connected with the history of dissent and dissidents, and even those rather tenuously.

Around the turn of the millennium there developed a second wave of remembrance, which was, in several respects, notably different from the wave immediately following 1989. Accompanying the accession of numerous Eastern European countries to the EU, and the strange death of the liberal consensus (Krastev 2007), the early twenty-first century brought the strengthening of the new-old forms of anti-communist mobilization, and such mobilization often had an illiberal impetus. As the European Union proved largely receptive to such typically, though not necessarily rightist-nationalistic, Eastern European inputs to devote more symbolic attention to the crimes of communism, this implied that an image of larger and supposedly homogeneous victim collectives could be fostered with European approval, whereas the specific and often specifically liberal stories of dissidents would receive only limited attention.

Having stated this, one should perhaps not overestimate the role of European institutions: if national institutions and funding schemes have treated the history and memory of dissent rather sporadically, the European Union has been equally slow, if not even slower, to foster the researching and writing of recent history – as mentioned above, the subject of Eastern European dissent before 1989 emerged (not necessarily under this label) as a major new topic for European funding bodies only in the second decade of the new century. The structures of the European Union have certainly helped create more cross-border cooperation and common patterns of remembrance in the early twenty-first century. However, the European integration of Central and Eastern European countries has also contributed to the revival and consolidation of the totalitarian paradigm in the writing of recent history, a paradigm which admittedly has special difficulties in accounting for the dissident phenomena.

Simultaneously, with this broad regional shift to a more anti-communist and also less liberal politics of history – which is not meant to deny significant regional variety in the timing, strength and endpoint of this shift – 1989 has become more contested, and its importance sometimes underplayed even in countries which were considered to have largely succeeded at their complex pro-Western transformation by the early twenty-first century, such as, most notably, Poland and Hungary. As Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik (Bernhard and Kubik 2014) have found in their research on the twentieth anniversary of 1989, only Czechia, in 2009, displayed a pluralistic memory regime in which this pluralism was not at the same time directly

contested. All other countries had either unified or fractured regimes characterized by the strong presence of so called memory warriors.

In other words, the 1989 revolutions, meant to bring about liberal democracies across Central and Eastern Europe, have rarely resulted in liberal democratic forms of their remembrance. As the canonized values of '1989' have come to be contested and, increasingly, also rejected, the remembrance of the dissident heroes of the pre-1989 period has, one might say logically, also suffered in various countries.

Post-Dissidents: Canonization and Consequences

If we only understand the dissident legacy as the direct influence of post-dissident political formations, rooted in the moment of change (1988–90), such as the Czechoslovak Civic Forum and Public Against Violence, the Polish Civic Committee, or the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Alliance of Free Democrats, we could agree with Jacques Rupnik's (2013) judgement that Central European countries witnessed the rapid marginalization of former dissidents, along with their eclipse from political life. However, such a perspective is based on a rather elitist, or even naïve, view of politics, and excludes the pluralism, multiplicity, and fluidity of post-dissident biographies. In fact, post-dissident politics still maintain a firm grip on Central Eastern European political debates, although probably in ways which are not easy to capture in a succinct manner.

First of all, the biographic trajectories of former oppositionists and dissidents are quite varied. We could risk a very crude typology, and suggest that there were four main paths which these people followed in the aftermath of the collapse of communism. The first was openly political, and involved taking up positions of power, or at least joining/forming political parties. If we look at the biographies of many current mainstream politicians in the CEE, we will quickly notice that even if we only look at this path as an illustration of the dissident's political legacy, Rupnik is wrong in suggesting that there was an eclipse of post-dissident politics in the 1990s. In Poland, the current prime minister, the leader of the largest political party, and many ministers and key opposition figures, all share the 'dissident' experience as a common biographical stem; and the same is true for Hungary's prime minister, as well as several key figures in, for instance, Czechia.

What Rupnik's thesis might exemplify is the collapse of a post-1989 dream of triumphant dissident liberalism, rooted in the idea of 'Central Europe', which many dissident intellectuals were strategically constructing throughout the 1980s; and the narrative of a 'return to Europe' which emerged during the transition. This collapse was indeed visible across the region, with the gradual demise of post-dissident liberalism in Hungary, Czechia, as well as Poland. The same can be said of the dissident 'heretical geopolitics' – a program for revising the European order, which was indeed already abandoned by the early 1990s.

The second path was that of the 'public intellectuals', who seemingly fit the dissident figure best, and are most clearly exemplified by Adam Michnik in Poland, or János Kis in Hungary, as well as a plethora of less internationally renowned, but domestically similarly resonant intellectuals.

The third path involves the contestation of both the political and socio-economic choices made by each of the CEE states after 1989, and is that of anti-systemic 'new dissidentism', which overlaps the circles of the radical left and even more often those of the radical right. Finally, the last path involves resigning from any sort of public engagement, and instead looking for a career, for example, in the business sector, or in academia, without 'public pretences'.

What this typology should not obscure is that the choice of each of these paths was not necessarily final or binding, and many post-dissident biographies show that over the last thirty years, one person could very well go through two or three 'roles', often starting in politics, then retiring to 'private' life or contestation, only to re-emerge in yet another role. The biographical research on the former oppositionists is still a large historical lacuna to be filled, and this is related to the broader need to treat the 1990s and even the early 2000s as a historical period rooted in, and overlapping with, the communist experience and the transformation which led out of it.

The canonization of former dissidents, as well as their own self-descriptions, historiographies, and myth making, has had an important impact on these trajectories, along with the reactions of various other social groups and sections of the elite – those who were excluded from the dissident 'club' either due to earlier political choices (e.g. post-communists, often more radical nationalist activists), life stories (opposition vs. 'society'), or age (people too young to catch the dissident train). An important process which ran parallel to dissident canonization, and was often used to challenge the esteem and authority of former oppositionists, was lustration, which provided the tools for internal wars within the post-dissident political camp, and which in many cases, proved even sharper than the post-dissident/post-communist cleavage.

The opposition's experience of communism was unusual – different to the societal average. The intensity of contact with the Party elite resulting from dissent, but also other factors (i.e. having similar social backgrounds) and rumours spread by the secret police, had already been fuelling conspiracy theories in the 1980s, but these gained much added momentum once the criticism of dissenters started to outweigh admiration for them. According to these interpretations, the regime shifts of 1989 were all staged by broader hidden machinations. And so, the Polish and Hungarian negotiations are seen as an arrangement between the communists and the left-wing intellectuals, designed to divide power and influence, with the security service

steering the process from the back seat, i.e. an occasion on which the communists supposedly shared power with their own agents. In a similar vein, the Czechoslovak Velvet Revolution could be portrayed as the result of a Russian plot.

Nevertheless, former dissidents, particularly those who had already reached considerable international celebrity by the 1980s and '90s (Václav Havel, György Konrád, etc.) were involved in a peculiar transnational setup which brought them international authority and recognition, but with time contributed to domestic controversies.

Apart from inevitable political differences between the predominantly social democratic and liberal 'prominent dissidents' and their conservative critics, the critique of former dissidents can be divided into three main themes. The first line of criticism challenged the uniqueness of open dissidence as a privileged and legitimate form of societal opposition, and which stretched the meaning of opposition to all forms of resistance. The other line targeted the dissidents' transnational empowerment as a form of detachment from domestic realities. Finally, the main gist of the critique was directed at their domestic status and followed anti-elitist and anti-intellectual tropes.

Questioning the legitimacy which former oppositionists derive from their experience of dissidence can challenge its uniqueness, as well as intentions – undermining a major foundational claim behind the concept of dissent, which is having acted in the interest of the common good. The resulting counter-narrative concerns a tiny and rather privileged group of grumblers who were showcasing their own moral superiority. To be sure, many former 'prominent dissidents' were eager to romanticize their militant biographies and depict them as unique, often to the mute, dissenting voices of other, often younger groups, with different life stories. This has led even intellectuals who hold the legacy of dissidence in high esteem to call for annulling the post-dissident privilege as a bargaining chip in contemporary political discussions, for example, Jarosław Kuisz (Kuisz 2018) calling for an 'end to captive generations'.

The supposed graver sin of the 'dissident elite' was apparently its international empowerment, an obvious source of jealousy. This too had more than one dimension according to critics. One was alienation and detachment from domestic realities. The other was the selective nature of international empowerment, which could fuel further conspiracy theories. Understanding the importance of transnational networks informed the anti-NGO illiberal policies of several governments in the region. Vladimir Putin's Russia was first to declare foreign-funded NGOs enemies of the state, and thus illegal. In 2017, Viktor Orban's Fidesz government in Hungary introduced a law which required all non-governmental organizations receiving financial support from abroad to register as 'foreign-supported organization', threatening them with closure in the event of noncompliance (*BBC News* 2017).

The last line of critique is anti-elitist, and questions the historical significance of 'prominent dissidents' and instead points to broader movements (e.g. the workers of Solidarity), and marginalized groups, as well as the structural historical processes which brought down communism, with the opposition merely watching the unfolding process from the side-lines. Symptomatically too, Branach calls the dissidents 'prominent characters … used to playing leading roles', whose opposition legend was coined with the help of Radio Free Europe and the likes of Timothy Garton Ash (Branach 2005, 259–60). This is surely not to be lightly dismissed, as Branach's argument carries more than a grain of truth. As other scholars have noted, the dominant historiography of Central European dissent is very selective, focusing on particular dates, movements, and people, at the expense of others.

4. Dimensions and Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion

The Role of Political Ideologies

As might be expected, the remembrance of Eastern European dissent after the fall of the communist regimes has proved to be a heavily politicized process, profoundly shaped by political-ideological differences. This has been the case not least because several former dissidents had prominent political roles shortly after 1989, but also, and perhaps even more crucially, because the various agendas the former dissidents propagated were recurrently identified, by both their supporters and critics, with the dominant agenda being the transformation (such as the establishment of liberal democracy and a capitalist economy, a strong civil society, and respect for – specifically defined – human rights, or avid support for Westernization and Europeanization). While the impact of such a simplistic identification of the process of remembrance is easy to demonstrate, how the various critics of such a transformation package (or at least certain elements of it) related to the legacy of dissent over time would require added attention.

As party pluralism was institutionalized and political-ideological diversity could be openly articulated and debated after 1989, all the various forces that emerged had to take a position regarding the political traditions and legacy of the old regime, and, related to this, the history of dissent (or, more precisely, its dominant forms or relative scarcity in a given country). In practice, taking a position might have meant following a strategy of seeming neutrality and widespread silence. Post-communist successor parties, who were among the leading political parties in most countries of post-communist Eastern Europe and were typically referred to, irrespective of whether they supported or opposed the grand project of liberalization, as the Left; tended to opt for such a strategy. As the communist reform project of the second half of the

1980s led to the collapse of regimes and various, though usually far-reaching, attempts at liberal democratization; decidedly non-leftist, or even staunchly anti-leftist anti-communism, increasingly emerged as the new norm. (As mentioned under II/1, this process was, if anything, accelerated by the accession to the EU of the largest part of Eastern Europe during the early twenty-first century, which helped further canonize anti-totalitarian forms of anti-communism.) In such a discursive environment, there was little that post-communists could have gained, and much they might still have lost, by opening discussions regarding the recent past.

As their acceptance of the new realities was pragmatic rather than ideologically based, they neither explicitly defended, nor condemned their dictatorial predecessors as a matter of consistent strategy. Moreover, they preferred to devote close to minimal attention to the dissident critics of their predecessors: focusing on dissent in a positive manner would simply not have squared with the memory narratives of the majority of their supporters and would in all likelihood have been widely perceived as just too hypocritical. What continuities there were and what specific adjustments might have been made between the discourses on dissidents by party and state institutions from before 1989, and those by the successor parties after 1989, would still require exploration.

Beyond the anti-dictatorial impetus of the anti-communists, the emerging anti-communist consensus often incorporated more general anti-leftist stereotypes and biases. The communist authorities made practically exclusive claim to represent the entire history of the workers' movement and the political Left in these countries up until 1989, which in turn largely discredited leftist platforms in the eyes of members of the first post-communist generation. This broad-brush anti-communism fostered the marginalization, even the willed forgetting, of leftist and more radically critical streams in the remembrance of dissent, i.e., all those various streams which had critiqued the Soviet-type communist regimes in the name of furthering the revolution and/or more equality. More recently, this pattern has been consciously critiqued and partially reversed by members of new leftist groupings who typically belong to the second post-communist generation and are looking for ways to rediscover local and global leftist traditions, and aim, until now with limited success, to transform the political cultures of their respective countries. However, these ambitions for re-evaluation do not necessarily valorize dissent as such, as they often aim to positively reassess various features of the Soviet-type regimes too.

Since several members of the post-dissident and broadly liberal groups who belonged to the political, cultural, or socioeconomic establishment after 1989 had such leftist pasts – which they typically rejected well before 1989 – the topic of how these more radically progressive pasts have been recalled, discussed, and renegotiated since 1989 could be of interest to future researchers. In this regard, a comparison of the uses of the (sometimes radical) '68er' past of

members of the Western establishment (such as Daniel Cohn-Bandit and Joschka Fischer, to mention only two eminent examples among the politicians) could be instructive; not to mention the intriguing special case of former Hungarian Maoist dissident and successful (German-language) author in the 'reunited' Germany, György Dalos, for example.

Next to the marginalization, stigmatization, and renegotiation of leftist streams in the remembrance of dissent, the remembrance of environmentalist activism has been similarly fraught and often insufficient. It could even be performed in an accusatory manner. Whereas environmentalist groups played a notable role, especially in the East Central European dissent of the 1980s where they managed to mobilize larger crowds, green politics – in rather a similar way to feminism as a political movement – has achieved few notable successes in post-89 Eastern Europe. Intriguingly, whereas liberals often critiqued the collectivist and anti-capitalist ethos and ambitions of the greens, and declared that they did not belong to liberal progressive trends, conservatives also often thought of and rejected the green activists as belonging to the other side of the main political divide. What the sources of these simultaneous rejections were after 1989, how they have impacted on the remembrance of pre-1989 environmental activism since 1989, and how they impacted, more generally, on the assessment of Soviet communism's attitudes to, and impact on, the environment are all questions which remain to be more extensively researched.

In most of the countries, after the leftist dictatorships the pendulum shifted towards the liberals and the right, causing many public debates to revolve around the contest between (neo)liberalism and nationalism, with the latter increasingly often taking on the guise of national populism. The aforementioned two politically motivated exclusions or rejections, and the accompanying canonization of negative stereotypes, enabled two alternative readings of the history of dissent to become dominant. Dissent could be politically narrated either as (a) the struggle of proto-liberal groupings whose key members would eventually emerge as the liberal heroes of the transition, or (b) as the struggle of the forces of national conservatism and religious groupings against a foreign-imposed utopian dictatorship of revolutionary hubris. Propagators of both of these narratives could at times be accused of retrospective projections: while the former was largely teleological, as if the central agendas of the transition had already been propagated well before 1989; whereas the latter would often be presented in an ahistorical manner, positing an unchanging national or religious essence inherently opposed to, and supposedly entirely untouched by, communist domination. In other words, liberals tended to be most eager to present themselves as heirs to the dissident traditions but tended to approach these traditions selectively and self-servingly, while national conservatives and populists were

more interested in broader and also less clearly political value-based narratives of opposition and resistance.

Questions worth investigating in relation to these developments might be how post-dissidents thought about the specific forms and advisability of highlighting their dissident credentials (which, save for Poland, clearly distinguished them from the majority of their fellow citizens and was, therefore, not necessarily beneficial under nominally democratic conditions), but also what choices they made and how they aimed to justify them when Western human rights discourses fused with the doctrines of preventive war and the policy of so called humanitarian intervention (the invasion of Saddam Hussein's Iraq being the most outstanding example here, which was supported by a large number of the most prominent former Eastern Europe dissidents). Last but not least, why narratives of national and religious opposition and resistance proved more popular in many countries, and what such processes reveal about continuity and change in terms of political values and perspectives, would similarly require the attention of future researchers.

Gender and Ethnic Dimensions

The dominant view has been that dissent was to a large extent masculine. Women are generally underrepresented and sometimes entirely absent when it comes to the remembrance of dissent in post-communist countries. In terms of numbers, there are just a few female dissidents whose names can be found in today's mainstream narratives about dissent, whereas a great number of men are mentioned when dissident movements are discussed. Further, women who were involved in dissident movements are often represented through classic female gendered roles: as mothers, those who keep the house warm, and those who create and maintain a certain friendly atmosphere. This lack of visibility and gendered remembrance is related to several intertwined issues.

First, the underrepresentation or absence of women in the memory of dissent is directly linked to their frequent, rather low status within the dissident movements themselves. The dissident movement developed in communist countries and was based on criticizing or revising already existing practices. The fight for women's rights and slogans such as 'let's free women from the kitchen slavery' were successfully used both by Soviet and communist authorities in the period prior to the dissident movement; one of the main goals of which was to ensure that more people take on industrial work. Often understood as being part of the communist agenda, the issue of women's oppression, rights, and equality were rarely addressed by dissidents. This was also related to the fact that being involved in female rights activism could have been understood as feminism – a political movement which was of little interest to dissidents in general.

On the other hand, the representation of women as 'mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters', that is, their representation through gender rather than social roles, was imposed by the dissident movement itself. For instance, the Moscow Helsinki Group tried to bring attention to the issue of amnesty for political prisoners in the1980s, and in order to do so underlined in its open letter that the women who were political prisoners were 'someone's mother, sister, or daughter'. Such representations would often not be opposed by the women themselves – it is a suggestive example that one of the authors of the Moscow Helsinki Group's open letter was none other than Yelena Bonner. As a co-author of the letter, she didn't refer to female political prisoners but rather to fighters for human rights, but still chose to highlight their traditional gender roles. To cite a comparable example, one of the Russian writers who shared the dissidents' ideas in her youth, Mariya Arbatova, wrote that she 'hated' socialism most of all because 'it separates a sick child from his mother' (Arbatova 1999).

Of the most active figures in the dissident movement of the USSR many belonged to non-Russian ethnicities and were often concerned with 'national' problems, advocating for their repressed cultures, especially in the later years of the Soviet Union: representatives of the Baltic nations, Ukrainians, and Soviet Jews were particularly overrepresented among them. Often, it was precisely their activities, originally aimed merely at seeking opportunities to express their culture, which would result in situations where they would be branded as opposing the authorities and enter the realm of dissent. A good example here is the so-called 'refusenik' movement in the USSR – a wave of protests by Soviet Jews in response to not being permitted to leave the Soviet Union for Israel. Observing such gender and ethnic biases and rather strict selectivity in remembrance, much remains to be done to counter them and make these underrepresented groups more appropriately represented while also highlighting their specificities.

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Chapter 5: Mediating Research Through Technology

Authored by Jennifer Edmond, Lars Wieneke, Costis Dallas, Michelle Doran, Ingrida Kelpsiene, Geert Kessels, Jessie Labov, Douglas Lambert, Maciej Maryl, Martin Pogacar, Suzanne Psailas, Selma Rizvic, Tamas Scheibner, Pim van Bree
and Piotr Wciślik

Edited by Jennifer Edmond and Lars Wieneke (WG5 Chairs)

When not referenced otherwise, quotations come from the responses to the NEP4DISSENT State-of-the-Art survey (see Introduction to this report).

Source: fortepan.hu

1. Introduction

This chapter summarizes the state of sources and methods in the NEP4DISSENT Action, with particular regard to the current and potential future role of digital technology in supporting and promoting scholarly research. At a superficial level this may not seem an obvious concern for the network, given that the material record of *dissent cultures* is strongly analogue. But dissent also had strong transnational dimensions, and the questions concerning these dimensions can be, perhaps, uniquely supplemented by digital methods and sources. Indeed, projects such as *COURAGE*, *Europeana 1989*, *Hidden Galleries* and others, including many digitization programmes instigated at a national level but which open up the possibility of wider access and aggregation, demonstrate the attraction of digital approaches in this area of research.

Methodology

The approach of WG5 to the needs (and wants) assessment which informs this chapter has been multifaceted. It has not been based on any sort of design process per se, but rather on a multi-channelled, ethnography-inspired approach to understanding the place of technology in the workflows of the NEP4DISSENT participants, thereby trying to tailor the future activities of WG5 as closely as possible to the needs and wants of the network. In this context, the following inputs have been considered:

1. The initial participant survey, circulated at the beginning of the Action, which has supplied us with a broad baseline understanding of the network and the concerns of its contributors;
2. Informal contact and conversations with Action participants, in particular at the first two meetings of members in Brussels (October 2017) and Warsaw (December 2017);
3. Structured, group interviews with key network members whose profiles and interests indicated they may occupy research positions which demonstrate the interface between the analogue and digital sources and approaches. In all, eleven people were interviewed over four sessions of approximately one hour each. The questions are listed in Table 1. As the interviews were loosely structured, investigators also asked follow-up questions based on participants responses;
4. A subset of the WG5 team met over two days in Dublin in 2018 to discuss these sources, share reflections, and draw initial conclusions;

5. The additional NEP4DISSENT survey conducted in Autumn 2018 provided an additional source of input for the considerations of the group.

NEP4DISSENT WG5 QUESTIONNAIRE
1. What do you think about the role of the digital in your research? 2. Your sources/ Your methods /Your tools/Your publications – are they digital? Could they be? How do you capture your evidence/data? How do you structure, document, annotate, or encode your evidence? How do you visualize/analyse it? 3. Is data privacy an issue for you? How does this affect how you work? 4. How do you choose where to share your results (formally or informally)? 5. Your research questions: are aspects of them quantifiable, or formalizable; or are your methods based more on qualitative investigation? 6. What barriers slow your research down? 7. Are there people, projects, groups, publications, or resources (digital or analogue) that you see as exemplary in your field, or as an inspiration for your own approach/work?

Table 1. NEP4DISSENT State of the Art interview questionnaire.

Authorship of the Chapter

This chapter represents the collective work of WG5, *Mediating Research Through Technology*; a diverse group of scholars with backgrounds and research interests in digital humanities (DH), technology development, cultural heritage, and other related fields. We recognize that our conclusions are not necessarily applicable to all researchers in the domain of cultures of dissent, and the tasks in the *Implementation Plan* will be deployed, in part, to test the validity of our conclusions. That said, we feel that the approach we have taken has been sufficiently broad and bottom-up to enable us to learn about those with a research interest in cultures of dissent, as well as, more specifically, those with a focus on meta-research issues, such as how to optimally build infrastructure and support mechanisms for scholars in the process of adopting digital methods or adapting to the imperatives of research in the digital age (indeed, some of our members bring these two fields together in their own work). This approach has been successfully used to generate bodies of knowledge within earlier projects (some of which the NEP4DISSENT WG5 team have been a part of), such as the ESF-funded Network on Digital Methods and Practices (NeDiMAH) and the DARIAH-EU Digital Methods and Practices Observatory Working Group. That said, the WG members share a belief that technology should not be deployed or adopted for its own sake, but rather in those cases where it is appropriate to

the research questions and sources. Understanding the place of the analogue alongside the digital is of key importance in understanding the true nature of any opportunities or barriers, and occupies a central place in the conceptual approach of WG5 to the question of how NEP4DISSENT researchers might, could, should, or do use technology.

2. Context: Digital Tools, Digital Humanities and Dissent

This section offers a preliminary overview of the digital dimension in research on the legacy of resistance and dissent in former socialist countries. It is important to recognize the political nature of working with these sources and their relationships to, and reflections on, soft power, ephemerality, canonicity, quality, non-standard forms, etc. It can be important to recognize these, in particular in the current context where many naive information seekers may feel that information resources which are not digital do not exist. This section starts by offering a broad panorama of the legacy of dissent and the state of its digital readiness for advanced research use using the example of the COURAGE registry. Next, it explains the intricacies and challenges of the digitization of that legacy by focusing on the case of unlicensed print culture (a.k.a., samizdat). Third, drawing on the results of the DIMPO survey, it will explore emerging trends in the propagation of digital humanities tools and methods in the European research area, and, in particular in Eastern Europe, in order to provide background information against which the results of the state of the art review will be discussed.

Broad Panorama: the COURAGE Registry

An online registry of collections documenting the legacy of resistance and dissent in former socialist countries was one of the principal tasks of the H2020-funded COURAGE project. The registry allows us to draw a rich and detailed panorama of the scope of this extraordinary legacy, and the state of its digitization:

Total number of collections registered thus far: 539

Bosnia & Herzegovina		Italy	2	Slovakia	26
Bulgaria	13	Kosovo	4	Slovenia	11
Croatia	53	Latvia	15	Sweden	1
Czechia	80	Lithuania	42	Turkey	1

Estonia	15	Poland	47	Ukraine	7
France	1	Republic of Moldova	2	U.K.	6
Germany	24	Romania	66	U.S.A.	8
Hungary	80	Serbia	20		

Table 2. Collections per country.

alternative forms of education	32	independent journalism	12	student movements	30
alternative lifestyles, and resistance of the everyday	101	literature and literary criticism		survivors of persecutions under authoritarian regimes	53
avant-garde, neo-avant-garde	72	media arts (digital arts)	29	surveillance (various)	64
censorship	72	minority movements	30	theatre and performing arts	31
conscientious objectors	5	music (rock, punk, alternative, classical, etc.)	56	underground culture	66
critical science (against state-supported science)	17	national movements (patriotic opposition)	70	visual arts	64
democratic opposition	148	party dissidents	25	women's movement	9
emigration/exile	94	peace movements	10	youth culture	
environmental protection	21	philosophical movements	18		
ethnic movements	9	popular culture	27		

film	23	religious activism	79	
fine arts	40	samizdat and tamizdat	109	
folk culture	16	scientific criticism	27	
human rights movements	111	social movements (general)	29	

Table 3. Collections per topic.

These two tables represent the scope of the COURAGE registry both geographically and thematically, as well as the encyclopedic extent of the project. Critically, online availability of the collections can range from a full-fledged media repository with robust metadata, to online finding aids for otherwise analogue resources, or curated digital exhibits featuring selected items from a collection. Thus their readiness for digitally-enabled research is quite uneven, in particular when it comes to advanced research use which requires robust and interoperable metadata; the employment of text, layout, and image recognition technologies in digitization; as well as a readiness for aggregation or federation of different types of digital resources.

Finally, it should to be noted that the COURAGE project's registered collections of primary research materials and secondary resources which document the legacy of dissent, in particular reference works such as bibliographies, encyclopedias, and biographical dictionaries, can potentially be of great use in digitally-enabled research, and therefore, their state of digital readiness is of particular concern to this review.

The Case of Samizdat

The legacy of resistance and dissent in former socialist countries belongs to an age in which history has been thoroughly mediatized and mediated, and where overabundance, rather than scarcity of historical record configures the challenges of the study of the past. This statement illustrates the entanglement of history and legacy in the present, and in a context distinctly defined by the increasingly wide use and role of (digital) media technologies, not only in the production of the present (i.e. (re)interpretation of the past, historical revisionism, various nostalgia(s)), but, importantly, in the various modes of the 'production' of the past. The latter emphasis has a double temporal angle: first, it alludes to how, for the purposes of the present socio-political projects/ambitions, the past is instrumentalized, and re-constructed and co-constructed; second, it emphasizes the elusive question of what will be the roles and meanings of the present which we 'produce' now for posterity. In this context, digital technologies intersect

with issues of history, historical research, as well as anthropological, philosophical, and cultural studies on several levels: questions of methodology, conceptual frameworks, and issues related to research (and critically related communications) infrastructures.

Any study of the past is significantly implicated and shaped by the 'research infrastructure' which is today increasingly reliant on such things as databases, archives, software and hardware, electric circuits, rare earth elements (to progress from the most obvious to the least). The technological substrate that supports the pervasive media ecology (Postman 2005; Fuller 2005) however, is often understudied in terms of infrastructural conditions and effects, i.e., how a certain tool or technological affordance (interface, keyboard, video sharing platform) influences the 'how' (methodology), but also the 'what' (topic selection) and the 'why' (relevance, timeliness) of research. This has implications for the selection of research topics, finding relevant research and compiling reading lists, collecting data, as well as for the very practice of research itself: the production and dissemination of results.

From this perspective, the case of the unlicensed print cultures which developed in former socialist countries (known in the English speaking world as samizdat) is worth exploring in greater detail; not least because it illustratively engages several of the above mentioned aspects. Given that samizdat was the emblematic medium of dissent (reliant on available technologies for production), and also because of the complexity of digital access to, and reuse of, the research resources of the dissident legacy, generated both by the nature of the medium itself and the history of the collecting practices; it has broader relevance for other platforms of unlicensed expression. In the context of technological functionalities, and consequently, the drawbacks and incongruences, not only of digital historical resources, but the wider societal processes of adopting a technology, it is also important to remain aware (and sceptical) of adopting and constructing a certain, often medial, interpretation of the past.

This is particularly relevant in the uses of the past in the present, which is a part of any mission which tries to decipher the mysteries of the past. Even more so when it comes to the 'penultimate recent history' in Europe, that is, the history of socialism, its geopolitically situated ideological manifestations, the intricacies and consequences of its collapse, and not least the way in which socialism's legacies and its contemporary historiographical, political, media, and pop-cultural uses contribute to structuring the historical sensorium of the present. Not to mention the various ways in which the legacies of the socialist period are often reduced to a rather binary interpretation of the past, while overlooking the fact that socialism, in a certain historical moment and context, was also a choice – and an emancipatory one at that – just as it was also a choice to overthrow it; this, Boris Buden says, was the utmost democratic political act, but one that lost its contour of 'political maturity' at the onset of the post 1990–91 transition

(2012). Out of (or in) this act of delegitimizing the post-socialist political subject, reducing it to the 'pupil' who still has to be taught the ways of democracy; grows the critical, contemporary, political and mythical imbalance in Europe. In the context of socio-technical and politico-economic instability, where growing re-nationalization and re-traditionalization appear to be taking centre stage, the studies of cultures of dissent and their legacies appear critically connected to the wider questions concerning the (use of) (media) technology.

Samizdat: an Ephemeral and Transnational Medium

The 1980s, which were largely the heyday of samizdat, saw a growth in the variety of the media technologies and techniques applied by cultural opposition in Eastern Europe, as well as an increase in their accessibility. Decidedly DIY, and conceptually and theoretically conversant with Western artistic and scientific production, 'dissidentism' (in its many, often incomparable varieties across Eastern Europe) throughout the 1970s and '80s made use of whatever technologies and techniques were available to devise tactics for negotiating the politico-ideological constraints. So, in this respect the exploration of the uses of technologies in the context of negotiating the regime would surely prove useful (photocopiers, fax machines, cyclostyles, personal computers, video), which in addition to the usual suspects of print, radio, and television, made up a relatively wide selection of tools and affordances which structured the possibilities of expression and communication. What is particularly interesting is how these materials and technologies became part of the legacies of socialism and its dissent cultures. Not least because the 1980s, when dissent went mainstream, so to speak; were also one of the most excessively (audio-visually) documented decades of definitely the most mediated century in the history of humankind. This means that the vast private archives (letters, video, samizdat) exist (and should be studied) in addition to the official archives.

Samizdat is the medium of the copy. Rather than putting a premium on authorial creativity, it existed to disseminate information about instances of human rights abuses and about unlicensed cultural activities. These were not preserved in a central record, which would not in any case be a sustainable solution, but rather self-archived in a distributed way through massive duplication by various more or less Guttenberg-style techniques of print. However, if unlicensed print culture bequeathed a legacy which exists in the many copies collected worldwide – to open up this legacy to advanced digital uses is not an easy task.

One reason is samizdat's ephemerality, which should be understood as the many ways in which the precarious conditions of production of these unlicensed communications under socialism are reflected in material form. Ephemerality creates issues on a metadata level. The obvious case is creator attribution, due to anonymity, the wide use of pseudonyms, or the change

in name of the corporate entities creating the publication. Less obvious, but no less widespread, is the issue of titles. For example, the titles of the periodicals published by trade union organizations often consist of a combination of words such as 'newsletter', 'bulletin', 'Solidarity', and the name of the given factory. Depending on the register, the same title could be deciphered as 'Newsletter of Solidarity in Factory X', or 'Solidarity: Newsletter of Factory X', etc. Obviously this is a problem when it comes to metadata aggregation. Also, capturing the relationships between journal titles in the metadata becomes an issue when a journal periodically ceases publication and reappears under a different publisher, or has mutative versions in various cities, or when one journal splits into two after a splinter group separated from the original publisher.

Ephemerality also poses various challenges for digitization. The first, and very basic, problem is that almost as a rule samizdat print is 'distressed', in the sense of being faint, partially illegible, and untidy, due to both the haste in which it was produced, and the low quality of the materials and equipment used. Second, in what could be called samizdat proper (i.e. publications reproduced by a chain of typists), the fixity of the text is difficult to maintain. Copies of the same journal issue or book can vary from one collection to the next depending on the diligence and/or creativity of the producer of that given copy. In the case of unlicensed publications which employed more sophisticated reproduction techniques (such as the legendary ramka,[23] a screen-printing technique, ditto, or offset printer), this problem diminishes, but never quite disappears (a publication might still be incomplete or contain added elements). Finally, these were not professional editions in terms of stability of layout, headers, title pages, colophons, running headers, style of numeration, or, obviously, proofreading.

Due to these reasons, the digitization of samizdat materials for advanced uses is a demanding task, not only due to the substantial background research required to produce robust metadata, factoring in the non-fixity of the samizdat copy, but also due to the challenge it presents to optical and layout recognition technologies.[24]

Relevance of Provenance

The sustainability and impact of unlicensed print culture depended on its capacity for dissemination, which means that today that legacy is spread over many collections worldwide. For example, sizable Polish samizdat collections are held in various Polish institutions, among others, the KARTA Foundation, the Institute for National Remembrance, the National Library, and Kraków University Library; and around the world, in Budapest (as part of the Radio Free Europe

[23] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirit_duplicator

[24] Another project worthy of note in this context is Hidden Galleries, which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1.

papers held by the Blinken Open Society Archives), Germany (FSO), Czechia (Libri Prohibiti) and the U.S. (Hoover Institution).

When it comes to accessibility to samizdat materials for advanced digital uses, what matters more is not the location, but the historical and institutional context. Historically, the Western institutions which documented the independent lives of the societies behind the Iron Curtain were part of Cold War cultural diplomacy, and their collection policies were biased towards documenting the contentious and political manifestations of unlicensed culture while neglecting its less-directly confrontational instances, such as literary journals or sub-cultural funzines. Some, but not all of these biases were redeemed by post-1989 collection efforts. In many cases the biggest samizdat collections are held by post-dissident civil society associations (e.g. KARTA, Libri Prohibiti), which for most of the post-1989 period have been independent of the state (due to either their post-dissident ethos, or the relative indifference of public administration in preserving this legacy) and thus had limited financial, or, importantly, professional resources for providing digital access to their collections. This translates into antiquated digital infrastructure, and a lack of interoperable metadata standards and formats, or very basic metadata descriptions, to say nothing of the implementation of optical character and layout recognition (OCR and OLR). Relatedly, it is worth mentioning that a relatively new actor is the informal underground veteran groups, who establish their own digital collections by way of memorializing past activities. While the testimonies and the documentation they offer are sometimes unique in terms of putting unlicensed print culture in context, they are difficult to track down and the accessibility for advanced digital research use, using data mining techniques resulting in, for example, topic models or visualizations, is usually very low.

Public academic and cultural heritage institutions usually produce higher quality digital resources, in particular metadata, however, their interpretation of legal and copyright limitations for accessing samizdat materials is often much more constraining than is the case for civil society organizations. Also, while for the latter, the samizdat collection is often at the core of the institutional holdings, in the case of the former it is only one of many and may not always be a priority.

Samizdat in Context

Regarding the legacies of samizdat, it is intriguing to see how the digital remediation of the culture of dissent (in any specific state) manages to prolong, deny, or subvert the aspirations and motives of the creators of original archives. In other words, how the present predicament, deeply and causally (politically, socially, and economically) indebted, particularly to the last decade of socialism, uses that past to legitimate the present. In this respect, it is necessary to reiterate the

importance of understanding the functioning and affordances of specific historical-period-based technologies as it enables us not only to interrogate the modes of production of the content (in this case dissent), but also, via diachronic comparison, facilitates an understanding, not only of changing technological affordances but also the way the 'technology of politics' and 'technologies of dissent' utilize various media technologies for their own gain.

It is therefore also necessary to take into account other digitized (and non-digitized) documents from the era along with their metadata, and secondary resources such as bibliographies, encyclopedias, and biographical dictionaries, which can be of great value for computationally-intensive research approaches. However, to enable advanced digital uses, such resources should ideally have the form of structured (or at least semi-structured) data, which could be federated with resources of a similar type, based on broadly accepted metadata standards and formats, including identifiers to disambiguate the entities (such as persons, places, and organizations, in time) most commonly represented in the dataset.

In regard to unlicensed print culture (and the dissident legacy more broadly), secondary resources are widely available, however, they are either fully analogue, or digital but not ready for advance uses beyond their basic reference value. This is partially explained by the fact that most of the bibliographical, biographical, and encyclopedic works on dissent were begun around 1989 and were completed in the late 1990s early 2000s, when neither technical infrastructure nor awareness of the requirements of advanced digital research was in place. Sadly, it has often been the case that newer documentary initiatives missed the opportunity to lay infrastructural groundwork in this regard. For example, students of Czechoslovak unlicensed print culture have at their disposal an up-to-date and technically advanced bibliography of literary samizdat, but the *Encyclopedia of Czech Literary Samizdat*, an indispensable and complimentary companion for contextualizing this dataset, has recently been published in print only. Another case in point is the *Polish Encyclopedia Solidarności* (ENCYSOL) project, initiated by the Pokolenie Association NGO, which was established by dissident veterans and later put under the auspices of the Institute of National Remembrance. The encyclopedia is one of the richest compendia about Polish resistance and dissent from 1976–89, including almost 4,800 biographical entries, and more than 1,800 subject entries about oppositional groups and initiatives, events, press titles, and publishers; all of which are published in both digital and printed formats. The ENCYSOL website also presents over 150,000 pages of digitized unlicensed publications. However, the digital version of ENCYSOL fully 'remediates' the print edition, but without taking advantage of state-of-the art technical solutions for digital research. The entries are available as unstructured text with some instances of hyperlinking between people and journal titles, but without any

proper authority file or other validated reference structure which would enable advanced queries, or the representation and re-use of the information as linked data.

The greatest challenge for digitally-enabled approaches in samizdat studies is therefore the challenge of federation, that is, aligning the digital objects available from one provider, with high quality metadata produced elsewhere, and contextually rich secondary resources published by yet another party. That in turn requires both a broader propagation of metadata standards and a substantial retro-digitization effort directed towards the analogue data and the digital data available in unstructured, semi-structured, or structured-but-antiquated forms.

Propagation of Digital Research Methods

The challenge of federation and those others identified above, translate into one dimension of digital readiness for advanced research uses of the legacy of resistance and dissent. However, progress cannot be expected unless it is a stakeholder-driven process. Which of these challenges will be tackled depends, to a considerable degree, on the propagation of particular digital research methods and tools. Some foresight in this regard can be drawn from the existing research on digital methods and practices in the humanities. Maryl et. al. (under review), who are also among the authors of this work, recently developed the following assessment of the work done in this field. That work is currently under review, so we include an extended excerpt from it here:[25]

> There are a number of recent studies which either directly or indirectly address digital research practices in the humanities. A subset of this research has been conducted in the context of defining user requirements for digital research infrastructures and services for the arts and humanities. [A] Questionnaire survey and qualitative interviewing research in the context of the Preparing DARIAH and European Holocaust Research Infrastructure project (Benardou et al. 2010) highlighted, among other findings: the persistent use of traditional, non-digital formats to access textual archival resources and books; the high importance attributed to collecting and managing references, as well as to storing both digital and paper copies of both published and unpublished materials; the perceived value of highlighting relevant text passages and storing notes with them; and the importance of named entities for content-based retrieval of primary and secondary sources. Further analysis of interviews under the same project formally corroborated a number of important intuitions, such as a widespread tendency of researchers to use primary data and secondary sources at the same time, or to forge links between objects

[25] Maryl et al., currently under review.

on the basis of their conceptual content (Benardou, Constantopoulos, and Dallas 2013). The Scholarly Research Activity Model, resulting from this work, drew from mixed methods research on the scholarly practices of researchers in the DARIAH and EHRI communities and was used to model, represent, and analyse the findings of such [an] analysis (Benardou et al. 2010). Some recent work within the DARIAH Community Engagement Working Group (CE-DARIAH) continues to analyse the work practices of humanities researchers and how these researchers might be encouraged to better engage with Research Infrastructures (RIs) such as DARIAH (Garnett and Papaki, 2018).

Likewise, numerous projects have tackled research on DH from different perspectives. The CENDARI Project (2012–2016) was funded by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme to pilot the implementation of a virtual research infrastructure for scholars of medieval and modern history. A part of the project dedicated to the Domain Use Cases, aimed to capture the different research practices in transnational history, challenges posed by the fragmentation of archival sources, and how a virtual research infrastructure can help address these challenges. The DESIR project (INFRADEV-03-2016-2017; 2017–2019), created a very informative series of video interviews with DH researchers, focussing in part on their own career paths which can be viewed here. The KPLEX project (2017–2018), funded under the European Commission's Horizon 2020 research programme, conducted surveys and interviews on how big data research might be better informed by humanities research practices. The most relevant pieces of work for DH meta-research are the interviews of WP2, which looked at computer scientists' attitudes toward the definitions of certain key terms in their work (especially 'data'), provenance and data cleaning as productive or destructive processes, and the role of uncertainty in humanities research datasets. The protocol used, background information and analysis of the interviews, were published as a report. The PROVIDEDH Project (CHIST-ERA, 2017–2020) prepared User Stories and Scenarios which present eight cases of how uncertainty arises and is managed in early modern historical research, drawn from interviews with four expert researchers in the field. Finally, The Scholarly Primitives and Renewed Knowledge-Led Exchanges Project (Edmond, Bagalkot, and O 'Connor 2016) was inspired by ethnographic methods, in looking at the practices of knowledge creation in the humanities. Nine interviews were carried out with the aim of pinpointing the key moments and milestones of this process (Edmond 2018).

Many of the authors of this report are also members of the DARIAH Digital Methods and Practices Observatory Working Group (DIMPO) which

aims to develop and provide an evidence-based, up-to-date, and pragmatically useful account of the emerging information practices, needs and attitudes of arts and humanities researchers in the evolving European digital scholarly environment, for the benefit of the digital humanities research community' (Dallas et al. 2017, 8).

The group assesses the transforming landscape of digitally-enabled research in the humanities through both quantitative and qualitative measures. DiMPO's first research endeavour was the *European Survey on Scholarly Practices and Digital Needs in the Arts and Humanities* (Dallas et al. 2017), disseminated in ten languages during the winter of 2014–15, which attracted 2,177 respondents from sixteen European countries. The survey aimed to provide 'an evidence-based outlook of scholarly practices, needs and attitudes of European humanities researchers towards digital resources, methods, and tools across space and time' (Dallas et al. 2017). The survey's findings sketched-out the landscape of digital workflows in the humanities, showing some of the differences in the way researchers assess different types of materials (in digital, and analogue form). For instance, with the exception of books and archival items, where the material component is still important (ibid. 3), contemporary scholars prefer to access research resources via their computer. The survey also gave some insights into dissemination practices, indicating the frequent use of 'open access journals or publications, institutional portals and repositories, personal blogs or websites, and scholarly communities such as Academia and ResearchGate' (ibid. 4). As for the needs assessment, scholars expressed interest in findability, and access to existing digital research resources, but not so much interest in advice and information on digital tools and methods which would allow for novel analytical operations on this material.

The second strand of DiMPO's work is the qualitative case-studies, which aim to provide a fuller understanding of the processes observed in the survey. The group prepared a DiMPO Case-study protocol for meta-research in the humanities (Maryl et al. Under review), which collects the results of qualitative pilot studies and provides a blueprint for such research within digital humanities. One of those case studies is described in greater detail in the following section.

In sum, this research shows a gradual uptake of digital methods by scholars in the humanities, whether it be the mere use of search engines or online library catalogues, or the creation of their own databases, to, finally, the use of advanced software and programming techniques. This phenomenon is very visible in the answers to the DiMPO survey question regarding the use of applications to store research assets, while almost 90% of respondents use

a word processor for this purpose (e.g. to transcribe a document into a separate file), less than two thirds (60%) use spreadsheets, and only one third (32%) take advantage of database management systems (Dallas et al. 2017, 5). So, the point of this research is not only to trace the cutting-edge research in digital humanities, but also to acknowledge the pervasiveness of digital tools among humanities scholars who would never refer to themselves in terms of digital humanities. Members of this Working Group find it fascinating how digital methods trickle down to scholars who try to use them to answer their research questions, or to pose questions they were not able to address without technological support. Hence, this work is situated at the intersection of scholarly needs and technological possibilities, and its aim is to achieve a mutual understanding between them.

3. The Network's Needs Assessment

(Digital) Methods and Sources in the NEP4DISSENT Community

In order to inform this document, the WG5 team carried out a series of four group interviews, each involving two to three scholars. A set of questions concerning their sources, methods, and communication practices were devised and the line between their digital and analogue practices were explored in this way. Of the four interviews, only one was fully transcribed, with the others being annotated live. The group was viewed as representative not of the NEP4DISSENT community as a whole, so much as for the potential for digital use in the community. A number of interesting themes can be drawn from these conversations.

Sources. Many of the primary sources are analogue (print or, for example, microfilm/fiche), and so traditional methods – like reading – are the most useful method for approaching them. In part, this is driven by training in how to deal with such sources, but also by the management structures around the sources (such as being allowed to request only singles pages, or receive CDs containing PDFs). In spite of this, the level of digitization of the sources available is quite diverse: in some places, archives are being systematically digitized; while in others, thematic or curated collections are available; in some cases, simple finding aids or reference material (such as bibliographic data) were considered to be the digital source; while still other bodies of material are born-digital collections of individual memories (text, photos, etc.). The quality, availability, and organization of such digital collections are, needless to say, quite varied.

In certain circumstances, this lattermost kind of source comes via a particular platform like Facebook or YouTube, which brings with it particular opportunities and/or restrictions. There are some concerns in particular about these kinds of sources, in that they are considered

'superfluous', and 'so unstable, so easy, inexpensive' (Tea Sindbæk Andersen). These sources present particular methodological challenges. Even when the ethics and fluidity of the platform are not at stake, the rhizomatic, unstructured nature of web resources poses problems for the scholar who is looking to use, organize, and document these sources.

The question of how sources are organized by researchers is an interesting one. One interviewee characterized their work as 'anarchical', existing 'in my head and in my USB stick' (Tea Sindbæk Andersen), which is not atypical. This seems to be a response to the cyclical nature of humanistic research, where sources are gathered, used, and then returned, either when questions are refined or revised, or when things need to be verified.

Notes and comments are also produced, but largely kept separate from the original documents. Some interviewees had tried many different ways of organizing this material in particular, but no consensus on a good tool was found.

Tools: Many of the tools mentioned are of the simplest type: copy and paste, for example, into Word or Powerpoint, but sometimes, rarely, a bespoke tool like Trello. Bibliographies are supplemented by 'linkographies' (Daniela Koleva), and screenshots for the purpose of documentation. Google searches and 'waterfall' approaches are common ways of finding resources of interest. Sources are managed via files and folders (across time and topic), with some items being duplicated to avoid them becoming lost to a particular thread. Some interviewees would have had specific experience in curating or managing digital resources, but this seems to be at the far end of digital exposure for the cohort as a whole. Mapping and visualizations (for comparing images) are viewed as having great potential where a body of quantitative data had been built up over time.

Qualitative analysis tools are known (e.g. specific software like altas.ti, though references were also made to certain kinds of data mining processes like sentiment analysis), but not systematically used, sometimes due to lack of being fully familiarized with them, and sometimes due to the limitations inherent in the tools. Not having the time to really learn how to use them seems to be a greater barrier than not knowing that they exist. In addition, the output of such tools is viewed as somewhat impoverished: being able to count, for example, the number of people demonstrating a particular attitude does not necessarily create a better understanding of that attitude or its context. Particular tools also impose certain requirements, and capturing and/or tailoring data to fit these requirements may or may not pay off.

Skills Gaps, and Needs and Wants in the NEP4DISSENT Community

Digital tools, in the words of one interviewee, 'don't mean working with more information, but has changed the whole issue of knowledge' (Heikki Hanka). In addition, working digitally may

create barriers due to funding and the time required to use or develop new data and tools. Some of the specific gaps and barriers which were discussed are as follows:

Ethics. The idea that ethical issues lurked within the data and would at some point have to be addressed was a common thread. The desire to observe but not participate, created tension because the researcher's perspective was often not greatly removed from that of the subject's. For this reason acting 'like ordinary people with tools that are easily available' was perceived to be a source of conflict (Tea Sindbæk Andersen). Dealing with personal data often requires anonymization, which in some cases is carried out by the researcher, sometimes part of the system (such as when participants used nicknames on a platform), or sometimes carried out by the institution holding the records. But ethics isn't just an issue for the researcher, it is also an issue for the system as a whole: situations in which many materials simply could not be used, thus closing research avenues. A concern was expressed about a 'moral panic' setting in, which would hamper research but benefit the big data industry players and central political powers wanting to limit access to archives (especially in Eastern Europe). NEP4DISSENT has the opportunity to offer guidelines for others in this respect.

Open Access publishing (OA) is viewed as expensive but worthwhile. Journals are largely accessed digitally; while OA is developing a growing trust, there are still academic prejudices against it; and traditional publishing is still a must in many places and disciplines. Options like using academia.edu to share preprints were mentioned, some social media and blogging activity as well, but this was only a relatively small number. **Open data**, however, is viewed differently, as the question of what that data might be, and for whom, produced scepticism and obscured questions about the value it might bring. This compounded a, perhaps, pre-existing impulse to keep data personal for the researcher or team who derived it, or to judge reuse on the basis of a lack of reciprocity. But additional, real complexities around the question of Open Data do exist: Where, for example, would data be deposited (Europeana? A museum?); How can the intense work on preparing the data be rewarded? All of this said, the fact that the student generation doesn't necessarily know how to work with complex analogue data is another driver toward openness, as is the strong desire to provide value through research to the general public.

The proliferation of challenging **new sources**, such as web archives, is also viewed as an opportunity and a challenge for which researchers will need more knowledge and perhaps help (e.g. in the form of collaborations) to harness. But perhaps more importantly, the need to learn how to work with **heterogeneous, dirty,** and **mixed sources**; and to optimize tools not just for big data but in order to support work on smaller, diverse data as well, is required. This is along with either removing or managing the up-front costs of data preparation.

The Desire to unite digital and analogue practices. Gaps were identified between the digital and the domain strands of some interviewees' work. The archival practices which have developed over centuries are intuitive and designed to 'fix things in memory' (James Kapaló), and while emerging digital tools may offer productive supplements to this process, it can't completely replace it yet – hence the oft repeated stories of using generic tools which can be customized to meet a certain set of knowledge organization needs rather than a more specialized one that might require changes in habits. The idea that in many instances tools could produce interesting results, but not be able to bridge the full gap in order to meet with the capacities of analogue methods, comes through. The fact that such a tool might obscure part of the research process along the way was of particular concern. That said, there are opportunities in using practices and tools which people are already adopting in research, such as their phones and other such devices.

There is, however, a need to make the tools and sources useable via adequate *interfaces* which enable serendipity by providing the means to explore the unknown rather than searching for something that is already known. Such interfaces need to provide generous collateral information above and beyond the actual content; for example, as in the case of newspapers, not just through digitized sources but also through the indicators for optical character recognition quality, the availability of layout recognition, and the extraction of named entities. This is particularly important to cover the variety of potential uses for digitized historical collections: from classical uses, like the searchability of collections and reading options (facsimile, OCR output); to more DH potential uses, exploration using the metadata of collections, and the possibility for exporting data for further uses.

Limitations of tools. Where researchers had gone beyond the use of generic tools, such as Word or Excel or at a stretch Filemaker or Omeka, they often met specific barriers. In general, digital tools are not viewed as a good way to support qualitative research, only quantitative. Pre-epistemic processing technologies like scanning or OCR, are much more familiar and accepted, however. Certain components of the analysis and presentation pipeline are of particular concern: multilingual support, for example, or synchronization between platforms. Standards (such as Dublin Core for metadata) have been applied by some researchers, but not really thought of as tools in the same way, which could be limiting their uptake. Also, storage capacity was deemed a requirement, in the cloud or otherwise.

Data Protection and Privacy Aspects

Issues of data protection and privacy have been noted in NEP4DISSENT conversations with regard to the protection of personal information within born digital and social media data. While

Facebook and other social networking platforms can be seen as fields for the dissemination of memories of dissent, in tandem they also emerge as important primary sources of evidence of such memory work:

> … I've been looking into dissenting memories and what you can do with digital sources and social networks, mainly Facebook, and also Youtube. They are places where anyone can contribute and it's a massive resource for the study of memory … Mainly because it so easily accessible and allows a lot of people to interact. (Tea Sindbæk Andersen)

But even though interactions occur in openly accessible groups and streams in many cases, others may take place within closed membership groups to which researchers of dissent have been granted access. Given the degree of middle- and back-staging (Riggins and Meyrowitz 2010), where knowledge is assimilated away from public discourse, especially in closed groups, conversations can be valuable as they provide unique insights into how memories of dissent manifest themselves in contemporary symbolic practice; but this degree of disclosure comes with unavoidable challenges and contestations regarding privacy, and the protection of participants from unwanted disclosure, even at the risk and possibility of harm.

Researchers still face a lot of uncertainty about how they should approach private information, even within publicly available social network groups. In some cases, this uncertainty discourages researchers from proceeding with their research ideas. A researcher from Israel admits that even though she thinks social networks are very important for all aspects of her tourism related research, she still cannot include it in her work as she is always

> … thinking about privacy issues, whether [she is] allowed to use such materials or not? Whether, [she] should get a [sic] permission … of the manager of the group? What are the rules about it? (Maya Mazor Tregerman)

On the other hand, in some public web groups, anonymization could be done by the users themselves, if a particular website fosters this kind of user representation. For example, on the Bulgarian website for childhood memories of socialism, the users present themselves as avatars, which come with a child's photo and a nickname. In many ways this helps to alleviate the problems concerning research ethics.

Our experience, as well as the conversations with researchers of the digital memory of dissent involved with NEP4DISSENT, point to the need to exercise caution with how the identities and views of individuals on social networking sites are to be reported. How, for example, can the

imperative for seeking explicit informed consent from participants whose views are to be reported in scholarly work be fulfilled, when social media conversations take place before they are harvested for research and thus informed consent needs to be obtained retrospectively:

> … [I am] picking what I think it's [sic] too interesting to let it go and then deciding that I'll have to solve an ethical issue at a later point. Usually done in my case by anonymizing sources and then I have it in my own private archive … (Tea Sindbæk Andersen)

The practice of dealing with privacy issues usually follows the most common research ethics guidelines, although they are not necessary related to digital practice.

> Simply when we collect information, when we do interviews with people we have to have their consent for not only using the material, but mentioning or not mentioning their names. And of course, the rule is that we don't mention the name, that we anonymize … And if there is some other information, which points directly to who this person is, we try to skip it or not use it or change it. (Daniela Koleva)

The assessment of risk and potential for harm to participants who are quoted in research calls for careful consideration. Stories of dissent are fraught with interpersonal and social complexities, and, in what they consider to be the relatively protected environment of an online community, people refer to individuals, collectivities, and events of the raw, recent past: '… [the] project [is] concerned with quite sensitive materials when we are looking back to our recent history … it's not only … positive things there'. (Heikki Hanka)

Certain aspects of the investigation of memories of dissent can reveal important knowledge even if the identities of people, places, and events are stripped away, and in these cases anonymization by using pseudonyms, or altering or obscuring locations and times, may be advisable. But there are many instances, such as those encountered during focus groups and interviewing research with members of the NEP4DISSENT community, where the evidential value of testimonies hinges on the identity of the speakers, and the events, situations, and people they refer to.

Conversations with NEP4DISSENT researchers revealed that privacy issues are also highly dependent on national legislation, especially those that concern archival practices. Usually, strict privacy regulations apply to those archival sources which are considered to be in the recent past and could involve people who are still alive. A researcher from Slovakia reports

on his recent experience regarding this issue, which points to the problem of accessing research relevant information if privacy issues have to be considered:

> It's really hard for me … when I try to get some information, for example, on the purges in the universities in the 50s. Then I have very much a serious problems with staff of the archives because they don't give me the names because, those are the [sic] private information. (Adam Hudek)

More generally, anonymization is considered to be common practice when dealing with archival resources: here indications are made by using archival file numbers rather than individual names, for example,

> … [t]he principle that we are using basically we don't reference individuals, we reference their files. We set up kind of an indicative database, basically it's a tool for researchers … to get to otherwise very difficult to access materials … (James Kapaló)

These issues are, of course, not only restricted to memory of dissent research, but are prevalent in the broader domain of memory studies and in social media research. Appropriate guidance can be sought in the broader methodological literature of those fields.

Finally, researchers also expressed their concerns regarding the recent introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) into the EU law on data protection and privacy for individuals, which might affect the collection of digital data in the future.

> We do have a lot of material which we don't have actually [the] right to use … we are here in Finland now very careful about this data privacy legislation which is going to be put on … (Heikki Hanka)

Some research institutions have already reacted to the GDPR, which in many ways is limiting particular areas of research, especially those concerned with the use of social media. A researcher from Finland acknowledged that these regulations had already affected the research work at the university with particular projects and PhD dissertations being abandoned due to privacy regulations: 'We had cut down our research projects concerning social media, for example, which is actually one of the most important resource[s] of contemporary life research.' (Heikki Hanka) It was also noted that this issue could be related to national legislation practices, where some countries are more quick to adopt and apply them.

It is, however, commonly agreed that the changes brought by the GDPR will impose certain limitations on digital research and the use of particular digital research tools in the future, for example,

> … heard some rumors about that there [sic] was circulating in university in Vienna about that there was other suggestions which kind of digital tools we should work in the future and which don't. (Katalin Cseh-Varga)

Lack of information on GDPR laws was alluded to as a 'moral panic' which could greatly affect, and even paralyze, historical research. In some cases, it was referred to as a 'political issue', especially in Eastern Europe where historical issues related to communist regimes are being evoked and actualized by current political situations.

> … [I]n many in various kinds of peripheries but especially in Eastern Europe states … the central political power uses various laws and directions to limit our access to archives and … to build upon this moral panic on privacy issues to prevent historical research to be done. There are several occasions actually happened just in Hungary. (Tamas Scheibner)

It was also admitted that one of the possible solutions could be to develop contemporary guidelines with regard to these regulations. Historians agreed that the subject is sensitive and needs careful attention from every scholar who carries out research in this area.

The problems of the ethics of human subject research, so far as digital memory of dissent is concerned, imposes additional requirements regarding data storage and disclosure. The group interviews conducted in this study were audio recorded, and these audio recordings are being kept in secure, password-protected, digital storage. In addition, parts of the material have been fully transcribed, with the identity of all participants clearly visible within the transcripts, while in other cases only excerpts of interest were obtained through 'open transcription', again with the identity of speakers visible. As we had committed to not sharing the content of our conversations with others outside this study's research team without obtaining prior consent from the study's subjects, transcripts are also being stored in a secure digital location that is accessible only to the research team members of this study.

Data Publishing

Apart from general academically recognized textual output, data publishing in itself is a valuable addition to the academic publication workflow. As more scholars create and use digital data collections, the relevancy of questions regarding data publication, data re-use, and data interoperability, increases. Curated data collections, for example, metadata or digitized content, can be mediated in various forms and via various channels.

During the interviews undertaken by this WG, it emerged that few scholars are confident in using data publishing methods. While interest in textual Open Access publications exist, this position was missing in relation to research data which is used or generated during the research process – with the prominent exception of the COURAGE project. This WG points out a number of well established data publication practices which need to be addressed in this context: curated data publications, interactive data publications, and publically oriented data publications.

Data publications can be created as finalized data collections, or as regularly or irregularly generated data collections. These publications should follow the FAIR data principles: data should be findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (Wilkinson et al. 2016). A platform like Zenodo (https://zenodo.org/) provides researchers with the tools and infrastructure to be able to publish their data following the FAIR data principles. An example of a published dataset (by members of the NEP4DISSENT network), is the data published by the COURAGE project (https://zenodo.org/record/2550580). Apart from this dataset, it is evident that data publication practices are still a rare phenomenon among the members of our network.

Data publications can also be conceptualized in an interactive manner by publishing APIs[26] or SPARQL[27] endpoints. These method require a significant amount of investment, both at the technical as well as at the data preparation level. Because of this, the availability of these kinds of services is very limited within the network. The COURAGE project aimed to produce a SPARQL endpoint.

Publishing data through the dynamics of museums and (digital) exhibitions offers a way of reaching various audiences in different time frames. Currently, a lot is being done In the WGs which involves outputting through exhibitions and other forms of mediated research output (e.g. viewings, photo exhibitions, organizing and reporting on discussion groups, etc.). To approach this broad range of publication activities from the perspective of WG5, the dynamics of museums and exhibitions would offer ways of (re)publishing/reusing and materializing datasets in various configurations based on the same initial digital publication. Audiences could access the data part of a collection or exhibition purely for the purpose of browsing the catalogue or related source

[26] API: Application Programming Interface. An interface for computer programs to interact with other programs.
[27] SPARQL: SPARQL Protocol and RDF Query Language. A query language for databases.

materials. A more curated editorial approach to publishing data in a GLAM-setting involves offering specific ways of interacting with the data in order to highlight certain aspects or narratives in otherwise static data. This could link to the creation of museum art installations which contribute to a collection by adding new content, or by creating specific traveling exhibitions (which could be donated for permanent preservation). Seen as a digital publication with an online exhibition, the Hidden Galleries (http://hiddengalleries.eu/) project is a good example of how a curated collection could work towards a digitally published scholarly work.

4. Next Steps, Recommendations and Opportunities

General Reflections

Despite the implications of the term, the 'digital turn' in the arts and humanities is a complex, recursive, non-linear, and culturally and technologically, determined process. Its penetration is hugely varied across disciplines, countries, and individuals. It is therefore not rare, but the norm, that domain-based groups will include individuals who share a common thematic interest but display a wide range as pertains to technological adoption, from lagging behind, to cutting edge. Some of the contributors to this disparity operate at a systemic level, far outside the sphere of influence which a group such as the embedded experts within a broad network like NEP4DISSENT can hope to impact upon. There are many generic issues we cannot hope to solve such as the lack of (digital) data, and the inaccessibility of data formats, etc. That said, there are a few areas where our reflections and investigations lead us to believe we can make a difference; these are discussed below.

Entities and Mapping

We recognize that identifying and mapping entities is an essential part of doing research digitally, and we recommend that this effort be put towards thorough decision making processes when modelling data (see Milligan, Weingart, and Graham 2015). Data modelling means establishing an analytical framework in which your source material is captured and analysed. The questions which fuel this process have to do with data availability and what research questions are to be answered. In the discipline of history in particular, these questions are still being dealt with, with leading work being done in collective formats such as the Historical Network Research group (http://historicalnetworkresearch.org/). Based on discussions in parallel fields, entities can be identified within the NEP4DISSENT collections which have a central role in research processes. It is important to note that researchers have the freedom to

create a data model which is customized to the needs of their projects or to apply a pre-existing model.

Based on the responses to the survey, we can identify a number of entity types which could be usefully uplifted within the scope of the research topics associated with this COST Action; including individual, institute, state, and archival documents (surveillance and executive/administrative reports or films/expositions/publications) from, and about, entities, as well as those entities which are overlapping and ambiguous.

The frameworks and contexts in which these entities are being mapped and discussed include:

- The movement and travel of entities in support of dissent
- The counter force movement and the creation of affiliations between entities due to the various forms of dissent
- Entities and their roles in incentivizing dissent
- The roles which entities are being given as forces to counter dissent
- The media, which has a role as a primary source and as an entity in itself
- Theoretical frameworks and specific concepts and discourses

Issues which could be addressed here include:

- How to identify what an entity is and how it should be described; conceptual and epistemological reflections on the nature of the data
- Use of pre-existing ontologies, vocabularies, and standards (e.g. CIDOC-CRM)
- Mapping and connecting the different ontologies, vocabularies, and standards which could be controversial and complicate the connections between them, or which require more discussion when brought together (as done in the grey zone)
- Disambiguating entities
- Dealing with incomplete entities
- Involving and modelling comparative approaches between disconnected topics

The choice of methodology can depend on the (digital) availability of the data:

- Is the data still in a non-digitized format (archived?), and is the scholar creating a digital dataset (conceptualizing and creating databases)?
- Is the data available as structured metadata which can be analysed (network analysis and data mapping)?
- Is the data available as a full text resource that can be analysed (topic modelling, author analysis, etc.)?

- Is the data available as a web service that can be queried through an API or SPARQL endpoint?

Digital Storytelling for Dissemination

Whilst storytelling is a powerful tool for public dissemination, especially *digital* storytelling, it also presents a number of challenges that need to be appropriately addressed for a successful and accurate outcome. That is, if we have enough evidence or adequate data, then digital storytelling is as successful as our digital tool can be. However, when dealing with invisible heritage which is not abundantly backed up by evidence, the success of digital storytelling depends on how the information is portrayed and what knowledge we want to disseminate.

One of the most powerful means of human communication is storytelling, and since the first moments of human existence people have been telling these stories. Once they were told in front of campfires – today they are told using digital technologies through the Internet. Digital storytelling can be defined as a narrative entertainment that reaches its audience via digital technology and media (Handler Miller 2004). Interactive digital storytelling (IDS) involves the user in tailoring the story. Various IDS methods compete in their level of user immersion, and aim to teach viewers about a topic in an engaging and attractive way. The quality of user experience is the main success factor for IDS applications.
The state of the art research shows that there are many kinds of information which can be communicated through IDS. Combinations of virtual reality, augmented reality, mixed reality, and IDS are more and more often used by creative industries to communicate cultural heritage information.

Athena Plus[28] introduces recommendations to cultural institutions which greatly encourage the conveyance of cultural heritage (CH) information through digital storytelling. There are many challenges in designing and developing story worlds for interactive digital storytelling systems (Schoenau-Fog 2015). One of these is the 'narrative paradox' challenge (Aylett 2000) It is defined as a struggle between the user's freedom of choice, and control of the main storyline. Interactive virtual environments as parts of IDS systems, encounter this problem when stories are linked to objects within these environments. Users may miss finding these triggers, and consequently not notice important information. Therefore, solutions to the narrative paradox are important contributions to the IDS methodology.

There are several works which argue in favour of emergent narratives being possible

[28] Athena Plus: Digital cultural heritage and tourism recommendations for cultural institutions. http://www:athenaplus:eu/index:php?en/220/digital-cultural-heritage and-tourism-recommendations-for-culturalinstitutions

solutions to this challen(Louchart and Aylett 2003; Aylett 1999; Temte and Schoenau-Fog 2012). These are presented in the form of stories which emerge from the interaction between players and the systems which govern the gameplay. For applications already containing predefined stories, this proposed solution cannot be taken into consideration. The hyper-storytelling concept (Rizvic et al. 2017) offers a simpler approach, and aims to attract users through the quality of storytelling and efficient information distribution, while enabling them to visit a virtual 3D model of the selected cultural heritage object and thus experience what they have been watching in the stories. A team of multidisciplinary experts from computer science, visual arts, literature, film directing, psychology, communicology, and human computer interaction, established the guidelines (Rizvic et al. 2017), and introducing the motivational factor as a solution to the narrative paradox. These guidelines formed a foundation for the establishment of the Sarajevo Charter for IDS, a free online knowledge exchange platform for interactive digital storytelling.[29]

Another challenge for IDS is to present the information on VR devices such as head mounted displays, where the user can choose his/her view inside a virtual environment; so the rules of film language grammar and shot composition no longer apply. There are several projects using 360° videos to communicate CH information. The authors in the referenced article (Argyriou, Economou, and Bouki 2017) propose a conceptual gamification framework for VR applications based on the use of game elements within a 360° video environment in order to enhance user interaction using the case study of the cultural heritage site in Rethymno city, Greece. The authors use 360° video to convey information, introduce a quiz presenting questions about the videos, and a motivational factor. The game has good replayability value, but, if the user plays the game only once, and chooses only a small subset of the many options, he/she is not presented with all of the information about this historical site.

Ivkovic et al. (Ivkovic et al. 2018) also use 360° videos to present the *Bridges of Sarajevo*. A user study presented within this work has shown that users like 360° videos and also the freedom of choosing the order of the stories, in addition to the reward at the end. The main drawback of this work is that there is no possibility for checking how much information the user has gained from the stories about the bridges. The advantage is a high level of immersion, and the user study by Ivkovic et al. corroborates this, as it is reported that a significant number of users, while watching the 360° videos, felt like they were walking on the real bridge.

A 3D quiz incorporated into the 360° stories about the Old Bridge in Mostar with the intention of evaluating the amount of knowledge gained by the users, also enabled the introduction of a motivating factor by unlocking the opportunity to perform a virtual dive from the

[29] Sarajevo Charter, 2018, http://h.etf.unsa.ba/sarajevocharter/

bridge's 3D model within the application. This was developed as an intangible heritage presentation of Mostar's cliff diving tradition, which is protected by UNESCO.[30]

The Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, in partnership with Russian video production company, Videofabrika, has created a novel VR experience for visitors called The Hermitage VR Experience,[31] which is in the form of a 19-minute movie in 360° video format. Here the user cannot choose the order of the stories, and there is no motivational factor for the user to watch all of the stories.

Finally, the storytelling work done within the H2020 iMARECULTURE project, which aims to present underwater cultural heritage to the general public using VR and AR technologies, resulted in a number of case studies (Rizvic 2018) with different IDS methods targeting the maximum edutainment level for the user experience.

In conclusion: there is still a lot of work in front of IDS researchers to meet the previously mentioned challenges, using solutions which can effectively convey the information and result in maximum user satisfaction. However, this method can be used effectively to present any type of information, including the subject of the NEP4DISSENT project.

Oral History for Experiential Sources: A Brief History for the Digital Age.

Oral History (OH) is a method, an approach, and a multimedia format, focused on recorded interviews, which allows historians and others to document personal memories and individual experiences. Rooted in storytelling, OH can supplement, enhance, and provide alternate perspectives for the historical record. The broadest definition of OH encompasses a range of forms, which includes the pre-technology oral tradition as well as the more recent digital incarnations (Oral History Association 2019). The phrase 'oral history' was documented as early as 1942 ((Donald Ritchie 2011) and the largely academic-based Oral History Association (OHA) was established in the United States in 1966. An accompanying journal, the Oral History Review, followed (in 1973) as did the United Kingdom-based Oral History Society and its journal. Other regional OH organizations have emerged in the USA and worldwide since the 1970's. The International Oral History Association began meeting in 1976, and was formally constituted in 1996 (IOHA 2019).

The identity of OH as something distinct from traditional, document-centred historical research, was established early on by scholars in the field. Alessandro Portelli (1979) argued

[30] E. Selmanovic, S. Rizvic, C. Harvey, D. Boskovic, V. Hulusic, M. Chahin, S. Sljivo, VR Video Storytelling for Intangible Cultural Heritage Preservation, accepted at Eurographics Workshop on Graphics and Cultural Heritage GCH 2019 in Vienna.

[31] Hermitage Museum, Videofabrika: The Hermitage VR experience. http://www:inavateonthenet:net/case-studies/article/immersive-history-russia-s-hermitagemuseum-embraces-vr, 2017.

that 'what makes oral history different', such as narrative form and subjectivity, are 'strengths rather than weaknesses, a resource rather than a problem' (Perks and Thompson, 2016). The complex relationship between interviewer and interviewee was codified by Michael Frisch (Frisch 1990), whose concept of 'A Shared Authority', both as a concept and a book, remains a touchstone for oral historians concerned with, or critical of, interviewer–interviewee dynamics. Other important manuals describing the multiple technical, practical, and theoretical elements of OH have been published, most notably by Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History* (Yow 2015); Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (Ritchie 2014); and Sharpless, *History of Oral History* (Thomas L. Carlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless 2007). Key theoretically-grounded compilation texts include *The Oral History Reader* (Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson 2016) and *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Donald Ritchie 2011). A website authored by dozens of oral history scholars, Oral History in the Digital Age , includes an updated look at OH in the digital context, with emphasis on tools and topics which are new to, or rapidly changing in, OH, like digital audio/video preservation and the importance of metadata for OH curation.

Notable OH collections include multi-collection centres like the Louis B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky, USA (https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/) and the National Library of Australia. Both of these sites provide robust digital access to interviews within and across dozens of collections. The British Library Sound Archives in the United Kingdom includes many digitized oral histories along with an extensive collection of recorded sounds available for historical, linguistic, and music-centred interests. Countless other OH-based organizations have websites and publications centred on oral history, including university departments and centres (e.g. https://library.columbia.edu/locations/ccoh.html), community organizations (e.g. http://www.soundandstory.org/), and students' work (e.g. http://www.arhistoryhub.com/student-produced-content).

Researchers affiliated with oral history organizations and projects do not only include historians, but also folklorists, anthropologists, sociologists, journalists, linguists, archivists, librarians, community groups, filmmakers, family researchers, students, and more. Oral historians have a common basic technical lineage around the ability to record sound (and video), which evolved with the increasingly available recording media, beginning with the wire recorder (1920s–'50s) and later, magnetic tape (1940s–2000s). Cassette tapes and later digital recorders (2000s onwards) brought recording costs down while storage capacity went up. This 'low cost of entry' has meant that interviewing and recording can be executed easily, but some organizations lack the time or resources to complete the analysis and publication. This can result in the 'shoebox syndrome', where tapes or even digital recordings sit in storage because the collection steward lacks a plan or the resources to transcribe or index them. Thus, an oral history project

needs to include a strategy for interviewing, but also a viable plan for bringing those recorded interviews into the later stages of production and archiving.

Digital-age enhancements in OH have made recording simpler, advanced interview processing methods, and made post-interview products like online publications more robust. Continually evolving voice-to-text tools and technologies have meant that word-for-word transcriptions of interviews can be automatically generated with increasing efficiency and accuracy. At the same time, timecode annotation tools and methods now support content mapping approaches via direct audio/video indexing based on the timecodes embedded in the digital media, as an alternative to transcripts. Early work in this area began with Michael Frisch and The Randforce Associates (Frisch 2006), and continues to be the preferred approach in many contexts. The University of Kentucky (USA) developed a system called the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer, or 'OHMS', which supports the construction of timecode-linked transcriptions and indexing-centred approaches. OHMS (http://www.oralhistoryonline.org/) is designed to integrate timecode-level access to oral histories, with library content management systems like CONTENTdm and Omeka.

Timecode access to oral histories has set the stage for controlled vocabulary (CV) to be deployed for better access within and across interviews. CV approaches may include:

- indexing recorded media directly with timecodes using keywords;
- assigning terms to recorded passages from published library authorities like the *Art & Architecture Thesaurus* (AAT), or the *Thesaurus of Geographic Names* (TGN);
- developing custom, localized CVs, as a more subject-specific vocabulary for oral history projects or collections; or
- structuring and organizing CVs so, they can function, for users, like menus or content maps (like an enhanced back-of-the-book index).

Dealing with Issues in Digital Data

The acquisition, use, re-use, and application of data not only imposes technical challenges on the workings of specific tools but also raises issues in other domains which need to be tackled. These issues are shaped by legal, ethical, and methodological issues, but also through questions of access, curation, and management as well as preservation.

Legal issues. Depending on local legislation, the relevant sources for research in contemporary history are often covered by intellectual property rights and copyright which impact on the use and reuse of sources, in particular when it comes to sharing or publishing

datasets.[32] The situation is further complicated by media which combine different media assets (such as photos in a scanned newspaper) where different elements fall under different copyright agreements.[33]

Within the broader context of legal issues, the necessary protection of datasets that contain sensitive information about living persons deserve a specific mention. Its effects provide a significant challenge for historical and legacy datasets which were created before specific legislation (such as the GDPR) was put in place, and therefore often contain no specific information on these topics, thereby threatening to render certain datasets unusable today.[34]

Ethical issues emerge in different forms when it comes to data and datasets, and concern, for example, the provenance of the information (where did the material come from; how was the data collected; did the persons mentioned in the dataset provide consent for the collection, storage, and re-use of the material for other research purposes?) as well as the content of the available information (e.g. interviews with vulnerable persons, trauma).

Methodological issues. With the availability of large and extremely large datasets containing highly heterogeneous data of varying degrees of quality, and of sizes, which simply can no longer be reviewed manually, traditional methods very often reach their limits. See for example Edmond (2016) for a discussion of the different challenges.

Access. Access is a key challenge in dealing with data. Even though the majority of analogue sources are still not digitized, even the availability of existing datasets is limited due to various factors. Data from commercial platforms are often available for individual access, for example, by opening a video on Youtube, or viewing a post on Facebook; but computational access (e.g. through an API),[35] which would allow large scale processing of diverse sources is more often than not strictly limited. Furthermore such commercial platforms do not necessarily share important usage information or provide relevant metadata (e.g. on the provenance of sources).

At the same time, the museums and archives who hold digital collections do not necessarily provide general access, be it due to specific agreements with copyright holders (as is often the case with newspaper archives) or other (internal) restrictions. Finally, access to digitized sources is often influenced by domain specific and individual attitudes which either foster the sharing of data between researchers and projects or inhibit it.

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[32] For a brief introduction to the different intellectual rights and copyright see Intellectual Property And Copyright - Briefing Paper from the Impact Center of Competence.
[33] See https://libguides.ucd.ie/digitisation/copyright
[34] Recital 156 of the General Data Protection Regulation governs exceptions for historical research, but the implementation of these exceptions depends on the individual EU member state. Review your local legislation to be on the safe side.
[35] API: Application Programming Interface

The curation and management of research data are often neglected factors in the data lifecycle. However, without proper curation and management, real life datasets which deal with complex and often messy documents will quickly fall prey to internal inconsistencies, which jeopardizes the potential use and re-use of the data. Various initiatives and methods have been established to support researchers in maintaining their data, most notably the Data Management Plan (DMP), which offers researchers a structured approach to reflect upon the nature of their research data, and provides some models for the sustainable documentation of this data. While DMPs have merit in themselves, and are increasingly valued by funding bodies, which tend to make the existence of a DMP a requirement for funding, the creation and maintenance of a DMP requires time and effort.[36]

Preservation. Datasets can provide significant surplus value to research, and often simply enable it, but this comes at a price. In particular, the retro-digitization of analogue archives, and the manual or automatic information extraction activities necessary to gather structured information, are tedious, time consuming, and pricey. Very often, it is therefore mandatory to preserve the assets for future research. In turn, this creates a demand for sustainable, long term storage of research data, which ideally follows existing standards and practices.

While each of these types of issues demand very specific considerations, changing legal environments and new frameworks enhance the uncertainty surrounding these issues and lead to confusion within the community about what can and what can't be done with specific datasets. Such uncertainty also harms the reuse of already created resources, leading to a lock down of access which only creates the illusion of mitigating potential issues, but in fact, threatens to harm research in the long run.

Transversal Perspective

Within this chapter, we identified a set of needs (and wants) for the NEP4DISSENT research community, with particular regard to the current and potential future roles of digital technology in supporting and promoting scholarly research in the domain of cultures of dissent in Eastern Europe. As stated at the outset, the members of WG5 do not support an approach to digitization for digitization sake, or the application of digital tools without a firm understanding of the value such processes bring. Rather, we advocate a solution which we believe will enhance the research of the NEP4DISSENT community by situating digital technology alongside the analogue in a manner which is both feasible and appropriate. To that end, this chapter has set forth a

[36] See for example the resources of the Digital Curation Centre on DMPs here: http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/data-management-plans

number of domain-specific recommendations. Whilst the implementation of any of these recommendations would undoubtedly improve research conditions, they are not intended to be viewed in isolation. For example, the identification and mapping of entities does not preclude dealing with the issues of digital data. Indeed, the continuing negotiation surrounding the nature of humanities research data necessitates the consideration of these issues in the construction of a data model, which in turn requires the consideration of data accessibility and its related challenges. Though we may identify individual issues to highlight how we might address them, the fact remains that the introduction of digital tools and processes often requires a number of adaptations in existing research processes.

As the foregoing section detailing the issues of digital data highlights, these challenges are not unique to the domain of cultures of dissent, but are prevalent in the broader domain of digital humanities and beyond. From this perspective, we might once again consider the example the accessibility to samizdat materials for advanced digital research, in which the challenges of aggregation and federation come to the fore not least because of the transnational dimension of the medium. The more recombinant a work, the better chance it has of not only surviving but evolving. However, this requires standard file formats and metadata schemas, and the creation of such standards cannot be implemented from the top down, or 'outside in', but rather it must be a stakeholder-driven process.

It is noteworthy that the facilitation of the digitally-enabled research envisioned here will not be achieved by the creation of a single platform or interface. Indeed, many of the challenges in achieving WG5's stated objective to 'facilitate the knowledge transfer of the advances in digital research environments for the specific needs of the Action's participants', are social rather than technical. As Edmond et al. (2019) have elsewhere argued, these social challenges have been exacerbated by the transition to Open Science and to data-driven research and innovation. By investigating the possible solutions to these challenges in a specific context, the working group members, informed by the broader NEP4DISSENT community, may not only make meaningful contributions to the study of cultural dissent but also to the field of digital humanities and the barriers to the Open Science movements.

5. Conclusion

The process of writing this chapter of the NEP4DISSENT State of the Art Report has been a significant enabler for both the WG and the network, allowing for a process of mutual understanding and inspiration to unfold. In the next phase of our work, we will seek to deliver support and training for many of the issues raised here, and improve access to knowledge for the other working groups, but also deliver on a rare experiment in growing our understanding of

the digital humanities, not from the 'outside in', that is, by introducing digital tools and processes to a community to which one does not belong, but more from the 'inside out', working with and through this community over a relatively long period of time with no predetermined output or endpoint for our collaborations. The WG5 Implementation Plan looks forward to a number of activities, both stand alone and embedded within other project initiatives, which will progress digital research fluency in the wider network, and improve our baseline understanding of both the potential for digital sources and methods, and the strengths of the analogue ones, among the network members.

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Chapter 6: Culture in the Grey Zone

Authored by Ieva Astahovska, Flóra Barkóczi, David Crowley, Maria Engström, Julija Fomina, Dorota Jarecka, Júlia Klaniczay, Emese Kürti, Mari Lanaamets, Zsuzsa László, Gabriela Nicolescu, Stella Pelše and Margaret Tali

With contributions from Nadzeya Charapan, Katalin Cseh-Varga, Tomáš Glanc, Thomas Lewe, Pavlína Morganová, Yulia Oreshina, Ihor Poshyvailo and Piotr Wciślik

Edited by David Crowley and Ieva Astahovska (WG6 Chairs)

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1. Introduction

This chapter of the NEP4DISSENT State of the Art Review explores the roles played by exhibitions in the investigation and public understanding of *dissenting* culture in Eastern Europe under communist rule during 1989–91.[37] The observations it contains are the product of an invitation issued to members of the NEP4DISSENT Network to respond to a number of questions about exhibition practices, in addition to the generous responses of other scholars working in the field. Their names appear above. This chapter does not set out a comprehensive record of all exhibitions,[38] instead it offers reflections on a number of different *approaches* to exhibitions in a gallery and museum setting, and, in particular, the underlying conceptualizations of *dissent* which have shaped these curatorial activities. It embraces displays of art and, to a lesser extent, artefacts and documentary material, which relate to the historical experience of cultural opposition to communist rule.

Rather than approach the key concepts in a priori manner by laying down a fixed taxonomy for understanding oppositional practices and their display in exhibitions, this report considers the terms and underlying concepts which have been employed to describe them. They are *dissent*, *nonconformism, avant-gardism*, and *the underground*. This means attending to exhibition titles and curatorial statements, as well as the relationship between the underlying concepts, exhibits, and techniques of display. Recently, a new vocabulary has been developed by scholars to describe different degrees of dissent. To our knowledge they have yet to make an impact on exhibition practices, and so are not featured here.[39] This report also contains some

[37] For a number of discussions on the problematic category of Eastern Europe see Orišková (2013); see also András (2016).

[38] The following exhibitions don't feature in this analysis but would need to be addressed in any comprehensive analysis of the subject: (After the wall 1999); (*Aspects–Positions. Art in Central Europe 1949-1999* 2000); (*Fluxus East* 2007); (*Gender Check. Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe* 2009); (*The Promises of the Past 1950-2010: A Discontinuous History of Art in Former Eastern Europe* 2010); (*There Has Been No Future, There Will Be No Past* 2010); (*Ostalgia* 2011); (*Courage: Risk Factors* 2018)
Although not in the first instance, an exhibition, the Former West research project (2008) has had considerable impact on the research and display of art from Eastern Europe under communist rule. A number of exhibitions relating to the project are listed here: http://www.formerwest.org/ResearchExhibitions

[39] Today various categories are being applied in the analysis of the field of artistic production in the former Socialist countries. Klara Kemp-Welch in her book on the relationship of art and dissidence in Central Europe, *Anti-politics in Central European Art* (Kemp-Welch 2014) builds her narrative around such notions as. 'anti-politics' (drawn from György Konrad, 1982), 'reticence' (drawn from Václav Havel), and 'disinterest' (Tadeusz Kantor). Luiza Nader (2016) in her discussion of the happening and installation art around 1970 proposes the notion of 'autonomy' to embrace these activities. Seemingly

reflections on *artists as interpreters of history*, but first, it offers some comments on *collecting practices.*

Collecting Practices

This overview does not attend to collecting practices (i.e., one of the primary functions of museums and archives) or the role of the art market in shaping the understanding of dissenting practices in the visual arts. These are themes for another analysis and discussion (and, in fact, the role of 'local' private collectors in the Eastern Bloc and former Yugoslavia before 1989–91 remains a largely unexplored subject, though some scholars have started to record this history).[40] But it should be noted that collection – and, in particular, the challenges of collecting opposition/underground material – has an impact on display, the theme of this chapter. The mechanisms for the acquisition and preservation of material relating to opposition was not well established in Eastern Europe prior to 1989, with some exceptions like the Artpool Art Research Center, an independent initiative by the artist György Galántai in Hungary, which was established in 1979 (Galántai and Klaniczay 2013); and collections in the West such as the Archiv der Forschungsstelle Osteuropa in Bremen, established in 1982; the Norton Dodge Collection of Non-conformist Art at the Zimmerli Museum at Rutgers University (Rosenfeld and Dodge 1995, Rosenfeld 1995, Rosenfeld and Dodge 2002, Neumaier 2004); and the Ludwig Collection of Russian and Soviet Art (1948–95), which contains a remarkable number of works by artists who have been characterized by curators as 'unofficial' (Thiemann 2007, Pofalla 2015; on this term, more below). As a result, the practices of exhibition making, curatorial research, and collecting have, by necessity, been closely interconnected in the post-communist period. In fact, one of the most significant endeavours in recent years, for instance, has been the *Parallel Chronologies* research project, which was established in 2009 with the aim of creating an alternative 'historicisation' of art in Eastern Europe during the Cold War era based on events instead of artworks or oeuvres. Within this framework,significant attention has been given to often ephemeral and poorly-documented practices like performance art and conceptual art. Research into fragmented and atomized events which occurred 'in parallel' across the region has resulted in the *Parallel Chronologies* online archive, and in exhibitions in New York (New Museum, 2014), Bratislava (tranzit.sk, 2016), and Prague (tranzitdisplay, 2017) which presented 'constellations' of documents (photos, recollections, manifestos, diaries, press clippings, reviews, guest books,

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unpolitical, it acquires political meaning when considered from the perspective proposed by Cornelius Castoriadis. See

[40] For instance, see Bayer (2008); also Garage Archive Collection which includes the archive of collector Leonid Talochkin, a chronicler and collector of unofficial Soviet art and other collections - https://russianartarchive.net/en (accessed March 2019)

scripts of performances, secret police reports, correspondence, interviews, facsimiles of catalogues, etc.) with the explicit aim of affording plural or diverse readings.

The pioneering Arteast 2000+ collection, established by the Moderna Galerija in Ljubljana in 2000, also warrants special acknowledgment here. Created following the gallery's landmark exhibition, *Body and the East* (curated by Zdenka Badinovac, 1998), the collection is focused on the neo-avant-garde art of former socialist countries of Eastern and Central Europe. It has been given the aim of stimulating the 'process of historicization' by laying the foundations for 'a more equitable exchange of ideas' through interregional comparisons. In a number of exhibitions shown internationally, Zdenka Badinovac and the curatorial team at the Moderna Galerija have done much to develop a critical framework for understanding how the work of artists in the region (broadly defined) before 1989–91 might be understood in terms of *resistance*. For example, the exhibition, *Grammar of Freedom / Five Lessons. Works from the Arteast 2000+ Collection* (curated by Zdenka Badovinac, Snejana Krasteva, and Bojana Piškur for the GARAGE Museum of Contemporary Art, 6 February–19 April 2015) presented in Moscow a selection from the collection. By focusing on concrete connections and deducing parallels between the artists in Eastern Europe, the former Yugoslavia, and the USSR, the exhibition sought to redefine Russia's role in the artistic identity of the region during the communist period. Using the title, *Grammar of Freedom / Five Lessons*, it presented the work of more than 70 artists and art collectives from Eastern Europe from the 1960s to the present. The exhibition was organized around five 'lessons' in freedom:

i. the body as a tool for liberation: Marina Abramović, Yuri Albert, Jože Barši, Geta Brătescu, Tomislav Gotovac, Ion Grigorescu, KwieKulik, Tibor Hajas, and others;
ii. the transformation of systems: György Galántai, Alexander Brener, Barbara Schurz, Kazimir Malevich, Zoran Popović, Ivan Moudov, and others;
iii. the power of collaboration: Vadim Fishkin, IRWIN, Ilya Kabakov, Komar and Melamid, Dmitri Prigov, Timur Novikov, and others;
iv. the practice of self-organization as resistance: Sanja Iveković, Laibach, Józef Robakowski, OHO Group, and others;
v. the potential for uniting through adversity: Nika Autor, Marko Peljhan, Mykola Ridnyi, Slaven Tolj, Milica Tomić, and others.

Organized according to these categories of practice (rather than say periods or geographies), *Grammar of Freedom / Five Lessons* stressed the ways in which artists have historically sought liberty but also how their approaches may resonate in the present.

Perhaps the most ambitious collecting effort in the post-communist period has been *Kontakt. The Art Collection of Erste Bank Group*, founded in 2004. Kontakt's collecting strategy places a strong emphasis on contextualization ('its aim is to develop a collection with a sound art-historical and conceptual basis that deals with artistic positions rooted in a specific location and context'), and what it calls 'Europeanization' (the collection 'aims to present works that play a decisive role in the formation of a common and unified European art history'), and has been shaped by postcolonial perspectives ('reformulating art history and thus questioning the Western European canon of art').[41] The pecuniary advantage of an Austrian bank over museums in the region has also been a matter of critical comment (e.g. Schreyer 2006) .

If state museums and galleries were not willing or able to collect unofficial art prior to 1989–91 (i.e. art that had been given some form of state license – whether in the form of an exhibition, reproduction in the press, or as the output of a member of an official creative union, etc.), it should be noted that materials generated by, or appropriated by, state security apparatuses prior to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc as part of their surveillance operations, form an exception and also constitute an important, if highly problematic seam of historical material (discussed further below). One of the remarkable features of the *Parallel Chronologies* project is the inclusion of reports compiled by state security officials. Here, the historical record is approached as a conflicted achive (Krasznahorkai 2018 and 2015, Jakimczyk 2015; in autumn 2019, HKV Dortmund will mount an exhibition addressing the theme of the state surveillance of artists in Eastern Europe under communist rule, with the working title *Artists and Agents. Performance Art and the Secret Services*).

2. Dissent

Biennale del dissenso culturale, Venice 1977

Dissent has rarely been employed as a framing category in exhibitions since the end of communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe. Significantly, however, the *Biennale del dissenso culturale*, mounted in Venice (15 October–17 November, 1977), claimed 'cultural dissent' to be a category in cultural–political activity (May 2016, Kemp-Welch 2019, Liehm 2010, Bertelé 2017). Organized to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the October Revolution, a number of allied exhibitions (film, samizdat literature, and art) were framed in terms of the dissident experience in the Soviet Union (namely exceptional and bold acts of resistance). Announcing the project in 1977, the president of the Venice Biennale wrote:

[41] Marte, B. 2006, 'We also see our collecting strategy as a political statement' www.sponsoring.erstebank.at/ cited by (Kazalarska 2013)

> ... the world of culture cannot remain indifferent to, for example, the growing emigration of artists and intellectuals from the Eastern countries; to the difficulties (including imprisonment) that well-known international artists and intellectuals often encounter; to the suppression of numerous works; to the circumstances in which *samizdat* editions become necessary to circulate poetry and fiction. Obviously, such phenomena are not restricted to the Eastern countries alone. But precisely because we have examined similar situations in other countries, we cannot ignore these (Ripa di Meana 1977).

Curated by Enrico Crispolti and Gabriella Di Milia Moncada, the exhibition of art featured mainly Soviet, unofficial artists and relatively few from other Eastern Bloc societies. Organized during the Cold War, the exhibition was directly connected to contemporary events (and in particular the emergence of the figure of the dissident) and has been interpreted as a political instrument in its own right. Its effects have yet to be traced systematically in Eastern Europe. In fact, it may be that the Biennale had the effect of integrating independent culture in the region. For instance, Stanisław Barańczak, one of Poland's most important dissident poets and literary critics, wrote for the Biennale a manifesto 'Fasada i Tyły' (Facade and the Backhouse) which became one of the most powerful formulations of the underground (or as Barańczak put it, 'backhouse') art and culture (Barańczak 1978).

Samizdat. Alternative Culture in Central and Eastern Europe from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Samizdat. Alternative Culture in Central and Eastern Europe from the 1960s to the 1980s – which combined works of art with artefacts and documentary materials associated with dissidents – was a landmark exhibition. It was curated by Sabine Hänsgen, Wolfgang Eichwede, Ivo Bock, and Wolfgang Schlott,[42] and was shown at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin in 2000; the National Museum in Prague, and European Parliament in Brussels in 2002; and Millenáris Park, Exhibition Hall D, Budapest, in 2004. Most of the exhibits came from the Archiv der Forschungsstelle Osteuropa (est. 1982) at the University of Bremen, which had at that time more than 120,000 original samizdat documents in its holdings. Exhibits included works of art and samizdat publications, audiotapes, cassettes (*magnitisdat*), documentary recordings of theatrical groups performing their own plays in basements or private homes, as well as the music of Soviet 'bards' (Galich, Okudzhava, Vysotsky in Russia, for instance), and forbidden rock bands. Concrete methods of conspiratorial production were represented in a display consisting of the Erika typewriter from the GDR, duplicating machines, and printing machines. It is notable that

[42] Hänsgen – with Georg Witte – had curated a smaller but closely related exhibition *Präprintium. Moscow Samizdat Books* 14th May - June 27th, 1998 at the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, and from 7th November 7th, 1998 to 7th March 1999 at Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen, Germany.

this exhibition combined works of art along with the material culture of dissent, thus finding common themes and inferring close social and cultural relations between artists and the anti-communist opposition.

Dissent in Museums under Communism: the Experience of Communist Rule

Figures of dissent feature in museums in Eastern and Central Europe which have narrated the experience of communist rule and opposition. These include various private and public initiatives, including the Terror Háza Múzeum (Terror House Museum) in Budapest (established in 2002), and the Okupacijų ir laisvės kovų muziejus (Museum of Occupations and Freedom Fights, formerly, Museum of Genocide Victims, established in 1992) in Vilnius. In these institutions' exhibitionary approaches (typically linear narratives), dissent plays an *ancillary* role in the sense that opposition is typically presented as a conspiratorial activity in the face of state oppression. Much has been written about the principal effects of such exhibitions, particularly how they channel emotion and effect by a combination of dramatic exhibition scenography and the historical 'charge' delivered by the setting (often former sites of state violence; Sarkisova and Apor 2008). Writing of the Okupacijų ir laisvės kovų muziejus, located in the historical building in the centre of Vilnius that served as a KGB prison from 1944 to 1991, art historian Linara Dovydaitytė states: 'the narratives and images that do not fit into the simple scheme of victim and criminal or of resistance and oppression – remain unrepresented.' The museum displays informational panels, and audio and video displays coupled with 'authentic' artefacts: personal belongings, documents, and photos. According to Dovydaitytė:

> The museum has shaped its exhibition in accordance with a theological structure of suffering and resurrection, and represents the image of an oppressed Lithuania, while the fifty years of the Soviet period are presented as a heroic struggle of an occupied nation against communism and its liberation from the regime. The representation of the communist past as a story about crimes and victims is also supported by the fact that there is only one criminal – communism, leaving aside Nazism (Dovydaitytė 2010).

Narratives of Freedom and Oppression

In the face of such criticisms, as well as the practical need to update displays which were first created in the 1990s, some historical museums have attempted to modify the narratives of suffering and the 'solidified prominent position of victimhood' under Soviet rule, to embrace wider themes, criticism, and refusal. When, for example, the Okupatsioonide museum (The Museum of Occupations) in Tallinn was re-launched in 2016, it was criticized from various sides

(and now is known Okupatsioonide ja vabaduse muuseum Vabamu (Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom). The narrative of the previous permanent display of the museum was based on a binary distinction between Estonian victimhood and the violence of the Soviet and German occupations: in the new display, the museum proposed broadening its focus to 'tell the story of Estonia's occupations, but also … the story of Estonia's embrace of freedom during the years since 1991' - writes Lorraine Weekes. The underlying goal was,

> … to become not just an exhibition space, but also a gathering place where Estonians, especially youths, could come to contemplate and debate the meaning of freedom … not just [to] provide the narrative of suffering and victimization, but give more hope to people and talk about freedom and how Estonian people achieved their freedom and what their recovery process was.

Such self-reflective and multivocal approaches to the past, as well as the wish to reflect diverse personal histories under the occupation and 'normalization' of late socialism, were criticized as being not just historically wrong but also geopolitically dangerous – that such an approach would serve Russian political interests and would help to 'rehabilitate Soviet crimes and play into the Kremlin's delusional and dangerous assertion that Estonia's participation in the Soviet Union was voluntary'. 'In this account', Weekes concludes,

> an unwavering and uncompromising commitment to articulating and disseminating a unified, strident, and consistent national narrative of illegal occupation is important, in part, because of the purchase and persistence of alternative versions of the past (Weekes 2017).

Exhibiting Surveillance

One of the most important recent exhibitions to address dissent directly was *Charta Story. Příběh Charty 77* (*Charta Story: The Story of Charter 77*, National Gallery in Prague, 14 March 2017–13 January 2019, curated by Irena Nývltová). Running for more than a year, the exhibition drew large audiences. By using documentary images, legal documents, as well as artworks and artefacts (including typewriters – a favourite object in all samizdat exhibitions), *Charta Story* tells the history of the dissident movement in Czechoslovakia which formed around the signing of *Charta 77*. Its approach was predominately biographical: the life of the poet, art historian, and patron of the underground, Ivan Martin Jirous, also known by his nickname Magor (Madman), was given particular attention, for instance. Artworks by artists with close personal ties to the

movement such as Jiří Kolář, Otakar Slavík, Jan Šafránek, and Olga Karlíková also featured, as well as documentary material relating to the Czech musical underground (such as The Plastic People of the Universe). This added to the curator's characterization of culture as a field of dissent. Strikingly, the exhibition drew on material which had been gathered by the Czechoslovak secret police when conducting surveillance on figures who it judged to be a 'threat':

> The photographs selected for this exhibition are a mere sample from extensive archival collections. They came about to serve a variety of goals: some were taken by specialized unit of the secret police while surveilling selected individuals, while others were taken during home searches for the use of State Security investigators for prisoners' records. The photographs were taken almost exclusively for internal use and were never intended to be made public.[43]

One powerful quality of much of this material is its intimacy: secret police photographs capture the 'ordinary' lives of the signatories of the *Charta*, and the active members of the *Výbor na obranu nespravedlivě stíhaných* (VONS / The Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted); while home addresses and other 'private' pieces of information appear in state documents. Here arise some of the questions which attend to other abusive uses of the lens (such as the use of photography in the Holocaust, see Stok 2004): in a time when the production of this material was an abuse of human rights, what kind of permissions and negotiations are required, or even possible, to display it publicly now?

Absences: The Case of Romania

Contrasts, as defined by the experience of communist rule, can be drawn across the region. In Romania, for example, there have been relatively few attempts to examine the experience of communist rule and opposition within state museum institutions. The reasons for this relative absence can be traced back to the 1990s. The Ceaușescu regime was followed by a second echelon of communists coming to power, and in most institutions the same people were kept on as employees. This political context had two important effects on the life of communist material symbols during post-communism. On the one hand, it froze any attempts to create public institutions to interrogate the recent communist regime. Romania, unlike Hungary, Poland, and Germany, does not have any state funded museums which put the historical experience of

[43] *Through the lens of the repressive apparatus* – exhibition panel in the Charta Story. Příběh Charty 77 exhibition. In this regard, the exhibition drew on material akin to that already been exhibited in *Praha Objektivem Tajne Policie* (Prague through the lens of the Secret Police), organized jointly by the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Security Services Archive in 2009.

communist rule on display. On the other hand, the lack of volition to analyse and critically debate the recent communist period radicalized anti-communist discourses, and created a situation where certain elites in Romania proclaimed themselves anti-communists and created anti-communist institutions which demonized communism as a whole. One such example is the case of the Museum of the Romanian Peasant in Bucharest, where priests were invited to purify the exhibition space, its offices, stores and employees with holy water, hymns and scent.[44] Moreover, the first museum to 'exhibit communism' privately in Romania was opened by a group of anti-communists in 1997 in a former prison in the very north of the country on the border with Hungary and Ukraine. The Sighet Memorial Museum, located in a former prison, exhibits both life in detention, as well as aspects of the everyday during the period of communist rule. In doing this, it demonizes communism as a whole (Vukov 2008; parallels between this private museum and the Terror Háza Múzeum in Budapest could be drawn). This phenomenon was taken further when other prisons were transformed into museums, including Pitesti and Aiud prisons.

Interestingly, these institutions are still marginal and, to the general public in Romania, appear somehow elitist. Nearly 30 years after the events of 1989, most museum directors, and their employees who work in many of the country's museums, do not know how or what to exhibit concerning the country's experience of communism. After 1989, for instance, the National History Museum of Romania in Bucharest closed the rooms it had dedicated to the communist period and never re-opened them again, despite having stores full of communist paraphernalia and mounting several temporary exhibitions related to the communist period in its main hall. Most local historical museums (institutions which exist in all the major cities of the country) have failed to approach the subject: they have emptied their chronological displays of any reference to the communist period and left them empty (or have mounted temporary expositions of idyllic rural paintings commissioned from local painters). Very often the last rooms in the chronology of display are simply empty and visitors rarely notice the lack of material about Romania's recent historical period.

How can this lack or failure to exhibit the experience of life under communist rule in Romanian museums be explained? Some directors simply do not know what to exhibit or how. Often, the displays dating from the 1970s and '80s were produced by Decorativa, a state-studio in charge of exhibition-making(Nicolescu 2016). After 1989 this studio drastically reduced its activities and no longer provides exhibition materials to the country's museums. This, and the lack of curatorial experience and practice among museum employees, is an important theme that needs to be considered (especially when communism is now associated with standardized

[44] For discussion of the position of this institution as a symbol of 'anti-communism' in Romania, see Cristea and Radu-Bucurenci (2008), and Nicolescu (2017).

practices and a lack of creativity, while neoliberalism is associated with creativity and innovation). Another explanation has to do with dealing with the difficulty of exhibiting a controversial past. If the people in power in museums – as well as in local councils – are former communist party members, how can communism be described in negative terms? Reflecting on the lack of exhibitions about communism in Bulgaria, social researcher, Vukov, says it is a lack of knowledge about how to remember 'unmemorable' and 'unrepresentable' events, which is key(Vukov 2008). In her studies on Romania, Nicolescu makes a different argument, indicating that much of the creativity of the 1990s is itself the product of understanding and integrating communist work practices. In an article entitled, 'On Ruination, Piercing the Skin of Communism', Nicolescu argues that much of the anti-communist creativity following the events of 1989, was constructed in opposition to communist practices in museums (Nicolescu 2017). By focusing on the case of the Museum of the Romanian Peasant, she shows how the exhibitions, from concept, to labels and mannequins, were built in opposition to communist solutions. Consequently, she argues that many self-identified anti-communist artists made use of what the communist regime produced during and after the regime: some were promoted and took full advantage of it, others acted in opposition to it, while others tried to resist by detaching themselves from it, and trying to create dissent through culture.

3. Nonconformism

Cold War Categories

Nonconformism has sometimes been used as a synonym for unofficial, alternative, or underground art and culture in Eastern Europe: it is another influential concept in the exhibition history of dissenting art practices and is often used in the global art market.[45] 'Nonconformist' is frequently used as a general term to identify forms of 'dissident expression and oppositional practice to the forced [communist] culture' in art in Eastern Europe during the Cold War era (Svede 2012). As a term, it became particularly influential during 1990s and early 2000s, largely thanks to the influence of Western scholars, gallerists, and collectors. The Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection of Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union (housed today at the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, New Jersey, USA) is still today the largest and most comprehensive collection of its kind. It has actively promoted the concept in its numerous exhibitions – most recently, *Through the Looking Glass: Hyperrealism in the Soviet Union* (curated by Cristina Morandi, 2015); *Thinking Pictures: Moscow Conceptual Art in the Dodge Collection* (curated by Jane A. Sharp, research curator for Soviet Nonconformist Art at Rutgers,

[45] See for instance *Escape Artists: The Non-Conformists Online* 2018, .

2016); *Dreamworlds and Catastrophes: Intersections of Art and Science in the Dodge Collection* (curated by Ksenia Nouril, 2016); and *A Vibrant Field: Nature and Landscape in Soviet Nonconformist Art, 1970s and '80s* (curated by Anna Rogulina, 2017).[46]

Another representative example of an exhibition based on this premise is the *Artists Against the State: Perestroika Revisited* (2006) show at the Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York; a gallery that prides itself on its historic association with non-conformist Russian artists which dates back to 1976 when it put on an exhibition of smuggled works by the pioneers of the Soviet 'Sots Art' movement, Alexander Melamid and Vitaly Komar. The concept of *Artists Against the State* focused on the survival strategies of non-conformist artists. The gallery's publicity declared:

> … working outside the parameters of government sanctioned art, unofficial artists developed various strategies for survival that ranged from public confrontation to withdrawal into the private sphere. Subject to persecution, the underground existed at great risk … Nonconformist art evolved with its own systems of signification characterized by: text and commentary, the deconstruction of Soviet ideology, banalities of daily life, fictional mythologies and shifting truths, and arcane hermeneutics – an anti-utopian conceptualism laced with irony and biting satire.[47]

In the *Parallel Chronologies* online archive by East European art events (see above), the term nonconformism was adopted as one of the thematic keywords that 'connects events that happened in different locations and are parts of different narratives in order to see what exhibitions have in common within the realm of "East-Europe."' That being said, in practice, 'nonconformist' has tended to refer to Soviet Russian art as well as that of the Soviet republics in the Baltic. For instance, *The Baltics: Nonconformist and Modernist Art During the Soviet Era,* an exhibition at the Zimmerli Art Museum (curator, December 2001–March 2002) was the first major survey of modernist art from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia of the Soviet period after the Second World War, and stressed the opposition to Socialist Realism, the official aesthetic. It warrants comparison with local strategies in the Baltic region which are outlined immediately below.

[46] Rutgers University Press also has published a number of books in the Dodge Soviet Nonconformist Art Publication Series, thus making a significant contribution also to the research of this field. See Rosenfeld 1995, Rosenfeld and Dodge 2002, Neumaier 2004.
[47] https://feldmangallery.com/index.php/exhibition/250-artists-against-the-state-group-5-6-6-24-2006

Inbetweenness

The term nonconformism also marks a polemical position; one usually inferring a confrontation between a *totalitarian* regime and the art which opposed it (and thus differing radically from state-supported art, Trilupaityte 2007). This position has been criticized as being over simplified, and the concept itself as being problematic due to its dichotomous and reductive meaning, which does not consider sufficiently the fine line between official and unofficial art, nor the differences between various regional art scenes. For instance, the 'art scene' in Russia during the Soviet period differed from the art scenes in the Baltic republics where a strict canon of Socialist Realism was never fully imposed. Consequently, direct manifestations of non-conformism in the visual arts, and the division between what might be characterized as official and unofficial art, were less clear. This is the reason why the display of non-conformist art on display at the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University includes the works of many artists who played an integral role in the official art scene. This apparent paradox was characteristic of Latvian, and also Lithuanian and Estonian art production during the Soviet period and represents an attempt by the authorities to incorporate those artists whose thinking and work did not fit into Soviet models. In light of these seeming contradictions, art historian, Ekaterina Degot, has proposed distinguishing between unofficial and official means of distribution, instead of 'official' and 'unofficial' (or non-conformist) art or artists (Thiemann 2007, cited by Tali 2018) .

Silent Modernism

Various attempts have been made to fashion subtle constructions to describe the relationship of culture to power. *Tylusis modernizmas Lietuvoje 1962–1982* (*Silent Modernism in Lithuania 1962–1982)* was mounted in 1997 at the Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius and was curated by art historian Elona Lubytė. It remains one of the largest representations of unofficial artistic practices in Lithuania from the Soviet period. And the notion of 'silent modernism', coined by the curator, is still used in Lithuanian art history discourse today as a term referring to the artistic practices of a generation of artists who worked both officially and unofficially under the Soviet regime. The exhibition presented 43 artists and 220 artworks, alongside which, and also presented in the extensive catalogue, were a rich collection of miscellaneous objects and 'marginal' art forms (including ex libris by artists, and unique handmade Christmas cards that artists exchanged) as well as official documents (e.g. governmental reprimands issued to artists). Lubytė declared that her main curatorial objective was research into the dissemination of Lithuanian art during the Soviet period, and to show how, within that body of work, modernist art challenged official norms (*Tylusis Modernizmas Lietuvoje 1962-1982,* 1997). In other words, she did not claim that there was underground art in Lithuania during the Soviet period; on the

contrary, she emphasized the ways and means by which modernist artworks made their public appearances. The exhibition was subject to criticism, primarily for creating an artificial picture of artistic dissent since the same artists participated both in official and unofficial artistic life. In fact, in those places in Eastern Europe – such as the Baltic Soviet republics – where counter-cultural practices were marginal, the most radical and critical projects emerged out of official structures (e.g. various youth organizations). As a result, one of the challenges in displaying 'dissent' is to show the complexity of the relationship and the mutual dependency between dissent and the official state structures.

Difficult Choices

In Tallinn, the Kumu Museum's first collection display, *Difficult Choices*, (prepared when its new building was unveiled in 2006) focused on these subtle moments of dissent by putting a spotlight on Estonian art of the Soviet period. Curator Eha Komissarov's decision to include Socialist Realist practices was internationally praised but, locally, caused disagreement (Tali 2018). The question was asked, why artists who had emigrated from Estonia did not feature in the exhibition, and why Socialist Realist works were included? Some doubted the place of these ideological works in an art museum at all. In defence of the curators approach, others insisted on the need to acknowledge compromise alongside resistance and dissent in art as accurate reflections of society at large. Among others, Piotr Piotrowski has written about the exhibition, and sees Komissarov's decision as being traumaphilic in the midst of a recurrent traumaphobia in Eastern European art's historical narratives (Piotrowski 2009b). Komissarov's chronologically constructed display, which focused on the subtle resistances of particular artists, remained open to the public for a decade (2006–16). During this decade a separate touring exhibition was produced for Nordic countries, called *Under the Red Banners* (2008–9), which included only Socialist Realist art and posters, and reflected the international fascination in this disparaged face of Baltic art (Tali 2018). In 2016 Anu Allas substantially reorganized the *Difficult Choices* collection display, presenting it under the title *Conflicts and Adaptations: Estonian Art during the Soviet Era*, modifying some of the sharp contrasts, and narrating the Soviet period to a generation that had not experienced it first hand.

Personal Time

Critics of the concept of nonconformism have stressed the need for a more nuanced view of the relations between the state and dissent. There is a need to show the complexity of the relations and the mutual dependency, between dissent and the official state structures. Separating aesthetic practice from political gestures is not straightforward, moreover, meanings shift

across different ideological contexts. Descriptions of nonconformist art has often placed emphasis on 'artistic freedom', 'independent expression', and 'reaction against aesthetic restrictions'. Often the works which carry this label do not have direct political overtones, but focus on matters of formal artistic concern or positioned themselves 'outside' the regulated zone of official art (until the mid-1980s the political climate in the Soviet republics did not permit any criticism of the regime or open opposition to its ideology, and repression addressed not only to political contexts, but also to artistic expression). Criticism of the system was expressed in oblique, indirect, or hidden ways, as well as through the organization of seemingly apolitical events. In searching for autonomy, artists ignored the ideological context, and thus were in opposition to the ethos of 'commitment' required by the regime. Another tactic was the 'game' between art and political reality – usually taking the form of neo-avant-garde events and works in which artists skilfully adapted the system's own rhetoric and frameworks to 'play' with alternative visions of Soviet reality.

Recognizing these positions and looking for alternative concepts and approaches with which to describe such practices, curators have looked for more integrated and inclusive terms or metaphors. One such example was the exhibition, *Personal Time. Art of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania 1945–1996*, which took place in the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw and in the Manege central exhibition hall in St Petersburg in 1996 (chief curator Anda Rottenberg, curators Helēna Demakova, Sirje Helme, Raminta Jurėnaitė) and positioned the regional and comparative perspective of art which did not follow the official Soviet aesthetics. The metaphorical title of the exhibition emphasized that its focus was on art and artists 'who had chosen their own personal time' and were driven by 'personal choice and privacy in the period of deep stagnation and total surrender'(Helme 1996). Referring to the Soviet period, 'personal' is a term with dense meanings, as Soviet life was declared to be communal, and privacy was marginalized and even ideologically suspect. Exemplifying the complexity of the scene where official and unofficial art was often interrelated, *Personal Time* included both works by artists who were barred from exhibiting (or simply didn't try to show their works in official settings) during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, along with works by artists who were lauded on the art scene at that time. A common feature of most of these works was that they did not tackle social, political, or ideological contexts, and instead sought to create new types of imagery: this represents an approach towards a system that demanded political obedience, and suppressed alternative ideologies.

4. Avant-garde

Avant-garde Integration

It is important to note that there is a broad correspondence between 'canonical' art historical concepts and the particular characterization of art practices in Eastern Europe under communist rule. This concerns the notion of the avant-garde/avant-gardism, concepts which have long occupied a central place in the historiography of modernism. Avant-gardism has been identified with utopianism; with transgressive approaches to tradition and long-standing cultural shibboleths; with a disdain for 'bourgeois' values and cultural forms; and so on. The historical avant-garde of the early twentieth century has many intellectual legacies, but one persistent theme is the idea that the artist ought to be, by definition, an independent or 'free' agent, acting according to his or her own artistic vision and/or critical perspective. When avant-gardists unite, they do so to challenge orthodoxy. In the most romantic expression of this formula, artists are 'subversives', using their expressive powers to undermine convention. This idea has been given additional force because of the experience of Socialist Realism (a phenomenon which was short lived in some parts of the former Eastern Bloc and Yugoslavia and much longer in others) in which the themes and forms of artistic expression were determined by diktat. A commitment to the concept of the avant-garde has underscored many of the exhibitions mounted after 1989 as acts of 'restorative justice' (i.e. to reunite art practices which had been divided by the Cold War, or to draw attention to Eastern European artists whose practice was, at the time of its creation, little known even in their own national contexts).[48] The earliest of these major exhibitions, *Europa, Europa. Das Jahrhundert der Avantgarde in Mittel- und Osteuropa (Europe, Europe. The Century of the Avant-garde in Central and Eastern Europe)* in Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik, Deutschland, Bonn (27 May–16 October 1994), a survey curated by Christoph Brockhaus and Ryszard Stanisławski; was framed by the 'master' concept of the avant-garde. In their characterization of the work by Eastern European artists who were active from the 1950s onwards ('Tadeusz Kantor, artists and experimental theatre companies, Zoltan Kemény, Dusan Dzamonja, Gabriel Stupica, Jiri Kolár, Alina Szapocznikow, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Adriena Simotová, Ana Lupas, Vladimir Vejsberg, Vladimir Jakovlev and others'), the curators stressed their '*konspirativen Bedingungen*' (conspiratorial actions) in the face of repressive politics. Despite the particular conditions in which these artists operated as citizens of socialist regimes, the model of the transgressive avant-garde, allowed for 'inscribing the art of Eastern Europe ... into the universal context of modern art history' .According to Piotr Piotrowski, these frameworks, 'subjected the art of Eastern Europe to an inspection of the West, an inspection that

[48] An example of the latter is *Aspects–Positions. Art in Central Europe 1949-1999* (2000).

used its own language and its own value system as the criteria of significance and excellence' (Piotrowski 2009a).

Avant-garde Subversion

In Maya and Reuben Fowkes' words, there has been an 'expectation that East European neo-avant-garde artists act as bearers of political resistance and ideological struggle'(Fowkes 2016). An example of this expectation was *Subversive Practices. Art under Conditions of Political Repression, 60s–80s* (Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, 2009), an exhibition which sought to trace parallels between the art practices in Eastern Europe and those of Latin America. The curators of *Subversive Practices,* Iris Dressler and Hans D Chris, announced a

> focus ... on artistic practices that not only radically question the conventional concept of art, the institutions, and the relationship between art and public, but that have, at the same time, subversively thwarted structures of censorship and opposed the existing systems of power. Here, body, language, and public space represent the pivotal instruments, of resistance, symbolic and performative in equal measure (Siegel 2009).

Dressler and Chris drew on an advisory team of 13 experts from those countries represented in the show (the former GDR, Hungary, Romania, the former Soviet Union, Spain, Chile, Brazil, Argentina, and Peru) and exhibited 300 works. Although the historical and political contexts in which these artworks were produced were different – from the Soviet Union stagnating under Brezhnev to the rule of the modern juntas in South America – the curatorial concept highlighted shared responses to power: mail art in the face of censorship; temporary interventions in public space; and enigmatic iconography and symbolism (*Subversive Practices* marked an early interest in drawing parallels between Latin America and Eastern Europe which has grown in recent years – most recently evidenced by MOMA's *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960–1980* (5 September 2015–3 January 2016, curated by Stuart Comer; Roxana Marcoci and Christian Rattemeyer)). It is telling that *Subversive Practices* was exhibited in Stuttgart and that the term 'subversion' in its distinct variations in Eastern Europe (e.g. *wywrotowy* in Polish, *subversyvus* in Lithuanian, *felforgató* in Hungarian) is rarely used in either curatorial practice or art historical discourse. Perhaps the term seems hubristic and fails to capture the complexity of cultural opposition. Instead, curators have often sought more subtle constructions to describe the relationship of culture to power: see the discussion of *Silent Modernism in Lithuania 1962–1982,* the *Difficult Choices* display at KUMU, and *Personal Time. Art of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania 1945–1996* above.

5. Artists as Interpreters of History

Archivists

Interrupted Histories (14 March–28 May 2006) was organized as the third show in a series of exhibitions staged by Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, entitled *Arteast Exhibitions* (Badovinac and Soban 2006) . In presenting the art projects of 27 artists, *Interrupted Histories* aimed to offer instruments for new processes in historicizing art, thereby creating a new relationship between art and its history. The term 'interrupted histories' referred to the histories of cultural places outside canonized art history which needed to find their functions and roles in the international cultural scene from a historical perspective. The show asked the question: what are the implications of the absence of the systematized historicization of spaces outside the Western art world, or on its margins, and what sort of methods are needed to activate the processes of such historicization? This exhibition, as well as others, dealt with spaces of interrupted collective histories and with the spaces of 'little histories', that is, in the countries of the Eastern Bloc during the 1970s and '80s. As Zdenka Badovinac, the curator of the exhibition, declared, during this period particular neo-avant-garde artists were most often their own historians and archivists. This characteristic was emphasized in the exhibition; several participating artists appeared as archivists of their own and other artists' projects, or of various phenomena in their national history; and as curators who researched their own historical context and established a comparable framework for various big and little histories. They played the role of historians, anthropologists, and ethnologists, who recorded current and pertinent events in the interactions between tradition and modernity as well as the rapid changes in the local landscape. The exhibition also emphasized the role of self-publishing and reproducing within the underground scene with a whole section focused on samizdat publications. The following is a selection of projects presented at the show: Artpool's *'active archive'* (overview of the Balatonboglár Chapel Studio from 1970–73 and the *Hungary Can Be Yours* exhibition from 1984, see below); IRWIN (founded in 1983) and its East Art Map project; Lia Perjovschi and her Contemporary Art Archive founded in 1977; and artists such as Komar & Melamid, Zofia Kulik, Ivan Grubanov, Dmitry Gutov, and others. The exhibition extended beyond the museum: the website (currently unavailable) and the catalogue aimed to generate further discussion.

Artpool

Many of the unofficial or semi-official exhibitions in communist ruled Eastern Europe drew small audiences to churches, student centres, and semi-independent venues, where they were mounted. Lacking access to the publicity mechanisms of the state and, sometimes subject to

censorship, they were viewed in small numbers, often by members of the social networks to which the exhibiting artists and curators belonged. Outside the frameworks of official culture, these exhibitions were typically not well recorded (by means of reviews, for instance). Much of the work of art historians in recent years has been to 'reconstruct' these obscure exhibitions in their research and writing – to better understand what was originally shown, as well as the responses of audiences and the authorities (Danilova et al. 2015). In fact, this might be understood to be a central task of art historical scholarship in Eastern Central Europe.

However, a further category of activity has been engaged during the post-communist period, namely, the literal restaging of exhibitions from the period of communist rule. In some cases, this has been undertaken by the original participants themselves in order to restore life to activities which had been terminated prematurely, as well as to draw attention to the state control of culture. As an example of this, the *Hungary Can Be Yours* exhibition was restaged in December 1989. The original was held in 1983 (proclaimed by the UN as World Communications Year). At the time, György Galántai, inspired by a special issue of *Commonpress* mail art magazine on the subject of Italy (No. 9, edited by Adriano Spatola), started to circulate an international call for works about Hungary, which were intended to be published in a future *Commonpress* issue. Its coordinator was the Polish artist, Paweł Petasz). The title of Galántai's call, *Hungary Can Be Yours*, could also be interpreted as an appropriation of a Rákosi slogan 'The country is yours, you build it for yourself.' While collecting together the submitted works, Galántai received an offer from the artistic director of the Budapest Club of Young Artists to exhibit the collection there. So Galántai made a second call for local artists (as well as other intellectuals) to submit works on the same theme, in this case not only to be reproduced but exhibited. For the event, 110 works were collected from both Hungarian and international artists (some notable participants: András Böröcz, Ildikó Enyedi, Miklós Erdély, the Inconnu Group, János Sugár, Tamás Szentjóby, Henryk Gajewski, Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt, Klaus Groh, Carlo Pittore, Geoffrey Hendricks). Some works were only loosely associated with the theme, while some picked up on the iconology of the conventional 'country image' of brochures, or national symbols like the map or flag of Hungary in a humorous or metaphoric way, or made puns on the word Hungary; and a few – mostly by Hungarian artists – directly criticized or made fun of Hungary's international isolation and subordination to Soviet rule.

As a complex and subversive metaphor for how Hungarian artists could establish relations with the international art scene and how Hungarian culture was viewed internationally, contributions from abroad were displayed separately in a darkened room ('Black Room'), where a TV set was also placed to broadcast what was happening in the other, bigger exhibition space ('White Room') where the works by local artists were exhibited. The exhibition also contained two

sound installations, one played in the Black Room, and was the Hungarian program on Finnish Radio (in Finnish); the other played in the 'White Room' and consisted of songs of the workers' movement. At the vernissage, Radio Artpool's sixth program, *Hungary*, was broadcast. This was a compilation of sound documents of alternative culture: excerpts of underground music, samizdat literature, and public and private discussions on the dysfunctionality of the Hungarian cultural scene. It was compulsory to invite a jury to examine the exhibition prior to the opening; however, the organizers had already been informed that, because of the inclusion of provocative works which failed to conform to the regime's cultural policies and the official 'image' of the country, the exhibition could not receive an official permit. Since approximately 300 hundred people came for the opening, in order to avoid a scandal, only those who could present an invitation card were let in. The director of the club had the right to keep the exhibition open for three days as a private event, to be visited on request only by those who could present an invitation card. This was the last banned exhibition in Hungary.

The exhibition applied the 'curatorial' principles associated with Mail Art: no jury, no return; so each work submitted was exhibited without selection and they became part of Artpool's archive and were reproduced in *Commonpress* (issue 51), which was finally published in 1989. This somewhat belated issue, printed in 300 copies, functioned as a catalogue of the exhibition with a cover designed to mimic an official tourist brochure from 1984, while the inside was compiled as a genuine bookwork. Regarding the critical reception of the event, it is noteworthy that a cultural TV program came to the opening to shoot some footage, even though they knew it would not be possible to include the report in a TV program. The footage was given over to cultural authorities who used it as a source of information on hostile cultural activities.

The impact and reception of the event was first dominated by the question of censorship. *Hungary Can Be Yours* was reconstructed in December 1989 as one of the first art events after the political change. The exhibition was accompanied by roundtable talks which discussed why the exhibition had been banned. Cultural officials invited to comment on the issue revealed – as an excuse – that liberalization in the political control of arts in one case, for example, supporting a more progressive professional to become the director of the Budapest Kunsthalle, was counterbalanced by such repression in another. In this case the reconstruction was also a matter of controversy, with questions asked about the ethics of the exposure of persons who had effected censorship. In the year 2000, reports by agents concerning Galántai's activities and this particular exhibition were found in the State Security Archives. The exhibition was restaged again. This time, the artworks were accompanied by reports made by secret agents in 1983 discussing whether they carried politically hostile or harmless messages. This was the first case in Hungary in which secret police reports were exhibited.

The exhibition is documented on Artpool's website in this format, with the artworks and the passages from the agents' reports linked together; and was also presented at several international exhibitions. The restaging of *Hungary Can Be Yours* opened up a new approach in historicizing cultural dissent since it was among the first to confront different viewpoints and expose the logic of cultural repression, not just that of opposition.

Restaging

Other examples of restaging have taken the form of artistic projects by younger artists to capture and recast activities from the period of communist rule. In what has been described as a 'transversal reading of history', Vienna-based artist, Andreas Fogarasi, investigated the response of Hungarian society to the state patronage of the émigré artist, Victor Vasarely, in 1969. The Paris-based artist was given a major retrospective at the Műcsarnok Kunsthalle in Budapest at a time when modernist and avant-garde art were given, at best, a marginal place in culture. The authorities appear to have sought to tap the considerable celebrity and popular appeal of this internationally renowned artist with a Hungarian background. He was a strong draw and 70,000 people visited the exhibition. To highlight the state's double-standards, local artist János Major performed a minor gesture of protest. He approached people at the opening at the Műcsarnok with a small sign which read 'Vasarely Go Home.' Fogarasi gathered together documentary material as well as video testimonies from modernist and noe-avant-garde artists who recalled this event in order to form an installation which was exhibited in Madrid's Museo Reina Sofia (2011–12), Budapest's Trafó Gallery (2012), Leipzig's Museum of Contemporary Art (2014), and Museum Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich (2014).[49] Combining Vasarely's spectacular art and Major's minimal gestures, Fogarasi's project addressed the challenge of how to record ephemeral acts of protest, as well as the vagaries of memory.

Other artist-led reconstructions include Dainius Liškevičius's project *Museum* which was exhibited in an evolving form in National Gallery of Art, in Vilnius (2012), the building that had housed the Museum of Revolution until 1990; the Gallery for Contemporary Art, Leipzig (2012); and the Lithuanian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2015).[50] Accompanied by all the accoutrements of a museum (guidebooks, souvenirs, etc.), Liškevičius's project takes the form of a collection of historical artefacts and facsimiles from the Soviet period. In *Museum*, Liškevičius's own life story was intertwined with those of celebrated revolutionaries, dissidents, and philosophers (including Jean-Paul Sartre). As such, it sought to unsettle the divisions

[49] *Vasarely Go Home* is a documentary film by Andreas Fogarasi produced for his exhibition *La ciudad de color / Vasarely Go Home* at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (September 13th, 2011 – January 9th, 2012)

[50] Dainius Liškevičius's project was thoroughly recorded in Liškevičius (2013).

between fact and fiction, objective history and subjective experience. Perhaps freed from the obligations to truth and education which all conventional museums carry, Liškevičius's project embraced doubt and uncertainty.

6. The Underground

Notes from the Underground

A historically specific conceptualization of *the underground* was a kind of idealized state for a generation who came of age after 1968. Clearly, in the setting of anti-communist dissent in Eastern Europe under communist rule, as well as longer histories of opposition (which can be traced back to the nineteenth century), this term has strong Eastern European footings. But for this generation, there was a strong sense of affinity with the counter-culture's notion of *the underground* as being social formations outside the norms and social mores of mainstream conventions. This points to an underexplored phenomenon, namely that of alternative social experiments in Eastern Europe under communist rule: communes, for instance, of which there were examples in Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, and the former Yugoslavia.[51] In fact, in the early 1970s it seems clear that some underground groups eschewed politics as it had been framed by the state (both positively and negatively) in favour of a kind of escape into social forms of what might be called 'antipolitics'. The Plastic People of the Universe in Czechoslovakia might have been turned into scapegoats by the Husák regime (and heroes by Charter 77) but it is fairly clear from the writing of the group's chief 'theorist', Ivan Martin 'Magor' Jirous, that the group, and the social milieu to which it was closely connected, espoused 'independence' (see the discussion of *Charta Story: The Story of Charter 77* above). Martin Machovec notes that Jirous had no political agenda, and confrontational slogans were formulated to create a space for 'doing one's own thing' rather than to achieve any kind of political change (Machovec 2010). He also believes that state oppression played a role in the crystallization of the underground's positions and operating methods, writing that 'they were compelled to become politically radicalized because of the totalitarian regime's intolerance and brutal oppression' (not least in the remarkable attack on the Czech underground TV broadcast, *Atentát na kulturu* (*Assault on Culture*), directed by Ladislav Chocholoušek, 1977). Parallels can be drawn with other and later social groups

[51] In 2012, Gallery 101 in Kaunas mounted a historical exhibition on the activities of theatre director Modris Tenisonas who established a unique pantomima group, a sort of unofficial commune that was active in 1966–72. http://www.bernardinai.lt/ - accessed February 2019.

including the New Artists around Novikov in Leningrad in the 1980s, who have been subject to considerable attention in recent years.[52]

These understandings of alterity were explored in *Notes from the Underground. Art and Alternative Music in Eastern Europe 1968–1994*, curated by David Crowley and Daniel Muzyczuk (Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź, 2016; and Akademie der Kunste, Berlin, 2018). The exhibition explored the close and productive relations between visual artists and musicians in Eastern Europe under communist rule, resulting in diverse outputs – including fashion, videos, stage shows, etc. Works from Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union featured (including Latvia, Estonia, and Russia). While, say, jazz, had an important role to play in music in Eastern Europe, *Notes from the Underground* treated rock, punk, and new wave as sensibilities which shaped a wide range of forms of cultural expression. As such, the exhibition examined the ways in which these 'movements' shaped new sensibilities in Eastern Europe, predicated on a richly imagined sense of community with like minds on the other side of the so-called Iron Curtain. Young artists and musicians in Eastern Europe were very aware of the activities of their peers in the West: the Iron Curtain was, as numerous scholars have claimed, far more porous than the name infers (Peteri's concept of the 'Nylon Curtain' for instance, Péteri 2006). Music travelled on the airwaves and as smuggled vinyl; music magazines occasionally travelled East too. There were also times when the local music press were surprisingly open and interested in Western practices (perhaps most surprisingly in Czechoslovakia in 1969). New forms of music and style were often perceived as a kind of threat by the authorities, one to which they responded in various ways: sometimes the approach was censorious and sometimes permissive (licensing Western music, producing jeans, broadcasting pop music on TV and Radio, etc.). Rather than see the musical and artistic cultures which emerged as derivative of what appeared in the West, particular emphasis was put on trying to understand what was distinct about the context in which they were practiced. This meant thinking about the relationship of punk's avowal of DIY to samizdat and magnitizdat publishing; or to reflect on the meanings which might be attached to improvisation in a setting marked by shortage.

Left Performance Histories

Clear parallels can be drawn between *Notes from the Underground* and *Left Performance Histories* at the nGbk, Berlin (Feb–March 2018). Curated by Judit Bodor, Adam Czirak, Astrid

[52] In recent years there have been exhibitions dedicated to Perestroika's cultural heroes such as rock musicians Viktor Tsoi, Petr Mamonov, Boris Grebenshikov and others in Russia: *I saw rock and roll* – the photographs of Igor Mukin at Rosfoto, St. Petersburg 29 June 2016–28 August 2016; *Alternative cultures of the 80s*, 2017 in Moscow at MMOMA, Moscow 17 February–17 March 2017; *Timur Novikov. On his 60th birthday*, Marble Palace of The State Russian Museum. St. Petersburg. 24 September – 23 December 2018.

Hackel, Beáta Hock, Andrej Mircev, and Angelica Richter, this exhibition developed out of a curatorial research project called Action Art Behind the Curtain, which was established in 2014.[53] Adopting a broad understanding of performance art in Eastern Europe, the curators put a spotlight on gender and sexuality. It had a strong emphasis on Yugoslavia where, perhaps, some of the boldest challenges to normativity were made.

Joining the scholarship of academics like Josie McLellan (Furst and McLellan 2017), *Left Performance Histories* invites reflection on the extent to which communist authority in the region emphasized conservative and conventional social values. Sex, for instance, was understood in very prurient terms in the Soviet Union; and even in the more liberal settings of, say, the Hungarian People's Republic and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, it was managed through licensed pornography and 'glamour' (though the tawdry strip joints which could be found in many Eastern European cities in the 1980s hardly lived up to this claim). Homosexuality, too, was almost invisible. Always at risk of stimulating unmanageable desires, fashion was also a 'problem'. It is unsurprising then that the authorities in the 1970s often encouraged a kind of ersatz fashion – largely copied from the West – in order to vent the desire for fashionability.

Many of the exhibits in *Notes from the Underground* and *Left Performance Histories* might be understood as 'queer'. This means an eschewal of heteronormativity, but it is also the practice of subverting the straight lines of convention. Recalling her activities as a video artist (with Aina Šmid), activist, and writer in Yugoslavia, Marina Grzinič writes:

> … queer positions – every form of non heterosexual positioning we understood, exclusively and entirely, as a political stance. This queerness – and the word queer means literally "not right/not quite" – demands, of us and of the viewer, a rethinking of the conditions of life, work, and possibilities of resistance (Gržinić 2008).

The symbols and ideological claims of socialism were 'made strange' by practices of 'queering': Tamás Király, a Hungarian fashion designer, created a self-consciously ridiculous 'red star dress' to mark the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution. Elsewhere, Vladimir Mamyshev-Monroe and close colleagues, Yuris Lesnik, and Timur Novikov in the Soviet Union, created *Pirate TV* in 1988 – an underground television programme distributed on VHS cassettes. Mamyshev-Monroe presented improvised and uncensored 'series' that had the liveliness and busy energy of MTV, the global cable and satellite channel, if not its production values. One was entitled 'Culture News', and another, 'The Deaths of Famous People'. Dressed extravagantly for the screen, Mamyshev Monroe set about queering the icons of history, politics, and popular

[53] Action Art Beyond the Iron Curtain www.aktionskunst-jenseits.de/ - accessed March 2019.

culture. Mamyshev Monroe assumed a hybrid persona combining Adolf Hitler and Marilyn Monroe, dissolving 'both of them in myself, thus appearing as the model of the new man' (Mamyshev 1997). At the end of the Soviet Union, a figure who had once been announced as the harbinger of a world to come, was, it seemed, invoked to announce the utopia of queer futurism. But irony allows one thing to be said, and another meant.

It is important to note that some of these performances were spectacular, and conducted in public: events like *Mode von Frauen für Frauen* in Erfurt in 1988, and El Kazovszkij's androgynous 'Dzsan Panoptikum' brought excess and fantasy to societies which are often understood in terms of shortage and control. Neither hymns to authority, nor the expression of the earnest politics of dissent, underground catwalk shows, or willfully absurd performances and bold declarations of sexuality, were self-consciously 'other'.

7. Issues

In preparing this report, a number of challenges and opportunities for art and cultural historians as well as contemporary curators, have emerged. They are presented in outline here:

i. The role played by private collectors before 1989–91 is an underexplored subject. This might include local collectors who lived in the region as well as international figures who collected there (like Norton Dodge discussed above), as well as artists who formed their own archives and collections (like Artpool, also discussed above). What impact has their activities had on the 'narratives' which explain forms of cultural dissent? And what material effects have they had on museum collections today (as international institutions like Tate and MOMA attempt to fill in the 'gaps' in their collections)? To this, one might add the artist's personal collections and archives.

ii. Similarly, the historical role played by curators working in state institutions before 1989–91 in forming collections and making displays, warrants further investigation. In light of the reflections above about the difficulties in drawing clear lines between official and unofficial cultural activities, might we consider whether curation before 1989–91, itself, could be understood as field embracing dissent? As exhibitions like *Left Performance Histories* show, underground art could exist in official spaces. The long-standing identification of underground cultural forms with marginal or private spaces needs to be expanded to include settings like museums.

iii. The focus here has been on exhibition practices, which, by definition, are predicated on what can be shown. Many 'dissenting' practices – even by visual artists – were not necessarily recorded, or have left few traces. This might be called immaterial dissent. Here the question of how to display the effaced, the censored, or the ephemeral, remains a curatorial challenge – a

matter addressed by Forgarasi above. What might, for instance, an exhibition of censorship contain?

iv. When curators research and display historical material which was created by the authorities in Eastern Europe as part of their attempts to control and suppress opposition – such as photographs taken during surveillance operations – what ethical questions need to be addressed?

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