

Introduction

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More than 25 years after the fall of the Soviet bloc, contested memories of Communism are being constantly reactivated by political and social actors in the former Eastern bloc. Conflicting narratives on the Communist past are simultaneously getting torn out of their national frameworks through the increasing involvement of international and transnational actors in the “management of the Communist past.”

This section aims at discussing the recent proliferation of debates on Communism in local, national, and international venues by focusing on *the writing of the history of Communism* (textbooks, museums, historical debates); *the legal assessment of Communism* (domestic laws, trials, management of Communist archives, and transitional justice institutions); and the *internationalization of narratives and norms* (symbolic condemnation of the “crimes of Communism” by the Council of Europe and the European Union, case law of the European Court of Human Rights).

Three of the papers were initially presented in the frame of the 9th World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies in Makuhari, Japan, in July 2015 (Antony Kalashnikov, Georges Mink, and Laure Neumayer). Máté Zambory’s paper comes from the Paris workshop held in the frame of COST Action IS1203 “In search of transcultural memory in Europe (ISTME)” dedicated to *The Memory of Communism in Europe*. All those papers reflected different aspects of memories of Communism.

Memory adjustment in Europe is Laure Neumayer’s main topic. After the end of the Cold War, various actors who shared the perception of the Communist past as “criminal” and “totalitarian” entered transnational assemblies and set out to reshape European public policy in the field of history and memory. Demands for acknowledgement and redress of “Communist crimes” have been a controversial issue in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) since 1992, and in the European Parliament (EP) since 2004. One of the outcomes of these debates is the EU program “Europe for Citizens” created in 2007 to support, among others, projects related to the “commemoration of victims of Nazism and Stalinism.” Neumayer’s contribution, based on on-going empirical research, is focused on these “memory entrepreneurs” and on the logic of their mobilizations in the PACE and the EP, in order to understand the production of a new institutional discourse on the European past. It investigates the role of three factors in the success or failure of these memory claims: the effective resources of MPs, either through a position of moral authority linked to personal sufferings under Communism, high partisan support, or institutional role; a coincidence between domestically driven mobilizations

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and existing national or ideological cleavages within European institutions; and the influence of transnational advocacy networks directed toward European institutions. This case study is part of a broader debate on European efforts to establish a common culture of remembrance, and the actors and practical mechanisms through which European memory politics operate.

Georges Mink's paper examines an institutional dimension of the politics of memory in the post-Communist countries. Post-Communist Europe has not chosen to imitate the Truth and Justice or Truth and Reconciliation Commissions set up on several other continents, though from time to time appeals are made to follow those examples. The main hypothesis is that the notion of reconciliation with the Communist regime is not of much interest to political parties, many of which are rooted in the protest against the deals and compromises that were part of the negotiated revolutions in 1989. For a decade, the model most admired by post-Communist countries was the one conceived by the Germans of the former German Democratic Republic. Almost all the countries founded specific institutions – institutes – for managing memory, and the archives are located in these institutes. Some have archives that date from before World War II to 1990, and they handle both totalitarianisms, Nazi and Soviet. The paper argues that the Polish Institute of Remembrance (IPN), created by an act of parliament in December 1998, is a bureaucratic institution in the Weberian sense, with its own internal and external dynamics. Based on the IPN's detailed reports and extensive press materials, the author presents a substantial critique of the development of the IPN under successive directors. He underlines “structural anomalies” resulting from the fact that this single institution operated under a mixed formula, combining both prosecuting and research and educational units. What is to be feared is that through the game of partisan appointments, these institutes will become little more than instruments in less than honest hands for use in political contests. The specialized literature usually explains the trials and tribulations of Poland's IPN in terms of the personalities of its different directors and the period in which each occupied that post.

Máté Zombory's paper addresses another important aspect of Communist memory games that of the narrative visualization of the Communist past. Memorial museums of Communism can be seen as laboratories where the main elements of the discursive repertoire applied in post-accession political debates about the definition of Europe were elaborated in a pan-European way. Most importantly, they create, visualize, and materialize a political space which is organized according to the equality of victimhood. They constitute a binary political space in which the stake is the legitimate comparison of the two symbols of evil in history. It is against the background of the space of equal victims that one of the most important arguments of challenging the uniqueness claim of the Holocaust was formulated: that the West applies a double standard when recognizing and restoring the dignity of the victims of Nazism while denying the same for victims of Communism, and this is morally unacceptable. It was decisive to the post-accession European debates about historical legacies that the argumentative repertoire of challenging the uniqueness of the Holocaust by the memory claim of Communism had been elaborated *before* 2004: based on a pan-European anticommunist discourse of historical revisionism and *according to* the norms imposed as symbolic criteria of accession. As a result, political struggles for the definition of Europe took the form of a mimetic competition of the victims, in which two similar, depoliticized, and abstract images of the past clashed.

Finally, the fourth paper (which can be found in *Nationalities Papers* Vol. 45, No. 3, 370–392) investigates collective memory of the Soviet experiment in the narratives of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), in the period 1993–2004. Antony Kalashnikov's research related in his paper finds that ideological differences

within the CPRF led to the creation of multiple and contrasting depictions of the Soviet past in the discourse of its leaders. Challenging dominant assumptions, Antony Kalashnikov argues that these differences did not conflict and undermine one another, but were structured to strengthen the public appeal of the CPRF. The paper adds empirical findings to the study of the CPRF and collective memory at the (so far underdeveloped) level of public organizations. The paper also challenges the prevailing assumption that diverging historical narratives necessarily imply conflict and contestation.