

Shared Memory after the End of the Totalitarian Communist Era in Latvia

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Totalitarian Communist Era?

- Violent Repressions of stalinism **'40-'53**
- **1984(?)**: orwellian means of non-violent, but not less **Total control**
- -> **1940-1989/90/91**

Last Political Prisoner, 1983-1988
Gunārs Astra



Duality? of Latvian society

- **Riga as Center of Baltic Military District**
 - Social/ideological origins of “Russianspeakers”
- **Popular Front of Latvia vs. Interfront**
- Opening of the theme of Repressions (1940/1949)
xxx% of Latvian society affected
- Re-evaluation Soviet “liberation” within context of first Soviet occupation ->Year of Horror
- Concept of three occupations of WWII+
- -> *Self-victimisation vs. Lost glory*
- -> + **Generation without own memories and**



Shared Memory?

- Collective memory/Social memory/Historical memory(knowledge)/Grand narratives/Memoirs
- Family stories/Educational/History policy/Political narratives/Media products



Restoration of Independence

- **Concept of State Continuity**
- **Casus what:** 1918 vs. 1940
 - Opening of Family Memories / Memory Gaps
- **Casus how:** competing ways of Restoration of Independence: Popular Front vs. Citizens committees
 - unknown in Soviet past: role of KGB/army/western agents
- **Casus who:** Bright Communists vs. Hardliners
 - Blind spot of “Forest brothers” and “Emigrees”
 - Anarv losers



Anti-communistic revisionism '88-'99

- Return to **pre-war narratives**
- **Denial of Soviet** historiography/interpretations
- Influence of **first generation Latvian emigree** evaluations/historiography
- Growth of Nationalism (Latvian vs. Soviet)
- -> *“Warm” memories of late soviet period/youth experience*



Westernization of Memory Sharing '99-ongoing

- Generation of **Children of Perestroika**
- Western Academic practices/traditions
- Globalisation of contextualization



Hollywoodisation of shared Memory

- True story based fiction
- Sharing memory/shared memory as a personal cure/trauma
- Binar perception (good/bad)



Living memories (of late 80ies)

- **Ridiculization** of State: Stirlitz, Chapaev and Brezhnev
- **Phenomenon of golden youth**
 - Ice-cream was tasty
 - Education and Healthcare – free of charge
 - All-Union mobility vs **Wild 90ies**
- *Uncritical perception of family stories of prewar (authoritarian) childhood/youth perceptions*
- *Uncritical perception of family stories of late*



KGB agentism of shared memory

- Inkens's five
- Opening of KGB archives for research (2014)
- Governmental commission for research of KGB archives: failure of research (2018)
- Journalistic research after publication (ongoing)
- -> overall **condemnation of KGB agents** without understanding the KGB and LCP and CPSU and Soviet system behind them.



Kremlin's Memory War

- Soviet (Latvian) past = integral part of history of USSR/cornerstone of Russian national identitybuilding
- Glorification of Soviet (Latvian) history by Russian media/politicians/diplomats (since 2003)
- Demonization of anti-soviet narratives/history
- Collectivisation of guilt/heroism
- Neocondervatarism (since 2014/15)



- -> *Collective perception of the Past as a mean of evaluation/shaping the Present*
- *Radicalization of memories 2014/2015*

Preambula of Latvian
Constitution, 2014



Collective Absence/Amnesia

- Denial of Soviet past/unacceptance of collapse of USSR
- Denial of victimization / lack of positivism in historywriting
- Poor and fragmentarised archival materials especially in politically/socially “hot” themes
- Shortage of human resources in historical research
- Closeness of Russian archives

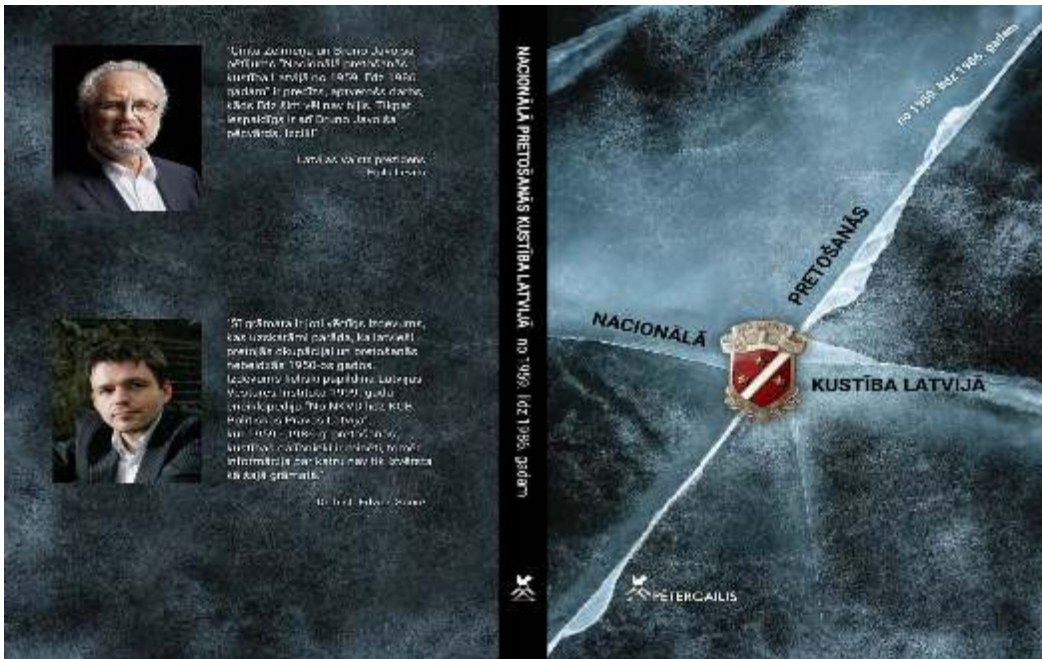


Institutionalisation of Memories

- Institute of Social Memory (University of Latvia)
- Oral History Project (National Library)
- Governmental Commission of Research of **xxx** of Occupation
- Governmental Commission of Research of the KGB



Plurality of Memories shared



Thank you!

Q&A



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