



COURAGE
connecting collections

**Understanding
the Cultural Heritage of Dissent
in Former Socialist Countries**
<http://cultural-opposition.eu/>



CHARLES
UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



HAS

Research Centre for
the Humanities



Institute for East and
Southeast European Studies



Trinity College Dublin

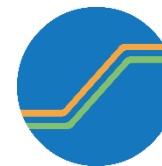
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
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OXFORD



The Lithuanian
Institute
of History

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Scope of Research

In Focus: Late Socialism



+ Exile

+ Exile Communities
Worldwide

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COURAGE will show that people under authoritarian regimes frequently created cultural products that they themselves treated as a **civil practice of dissent**.

COURAGE will analyse such practices on a comparative and transnational basis.

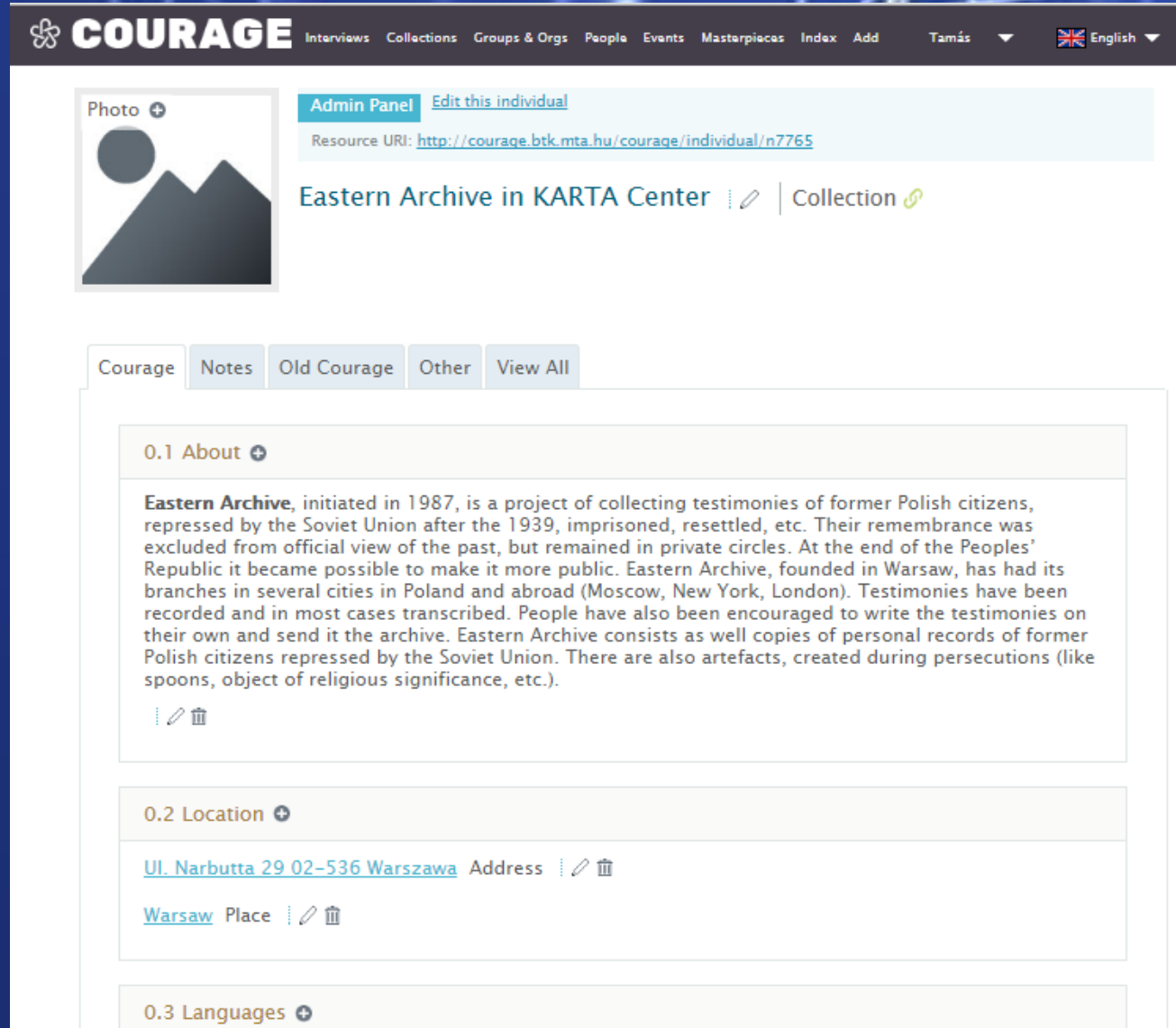
<http://cultural-opposition.eu/>

Outcomes



We create the **first digital database** of both online and offline private and public collections in Europe which testify to the survival of various forms of cultural opposition in the former socialist countries.

We show **how these collections work**, what functions they serve in their respective societies, and how they represent their holdings and findings to the national and international public.



The screenshot displays the COURAGE website interface. At the top, a dark navigation bar contains the COURAGE logo and links for Interviews, Collections, Groups & Orgs, People, Events, Masterpieces, Index, and Add. A user profile 'Tamás' and a language selector 'English' are also present. Below the navigation bar, the main content area features a profile for 'Eastern Archive in KARTA Center'. This profile includes a placeholder for a photo, an 'Admin Panel' with a link to 'Edit this individual', and a 'Resource URI' pointing to a specific individual record. The profile is categorized under 'Collection'. Below the profile header, there are tabs for 'Courage', 'Notes', 'Old Courage', 'Other', and 'View All'. The 'About' section (0.1) provides a detailed description of the Eastern Archive project, its history, and its mission. The 'Location' section (0.2) lists the address as 'Ul. Narbutta 29 02-536 Warszawa' and identifies it as 'Warsaw'. The 'Languages' section (0.3) is partially visible at the bottom.

COURAGE Interviews Collections Groups & Orgs People Events Masterpieces Index Add Tamás English

Photo +

Admin Panel Edit this individual

Resource URI: <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n7765>

Eastern Archive in KARTA Center | Collection

Courage Notes Old Courage Other View All

0.1 About +

Eastern Archive, initiated in 1987, is a project of collecting testimonies of former Polish citizens, repressed by the Soviet Union after the 1939, imprisoned, resettled, etc. Their remembrance was excluded from official view of the past, but remained in private circles. At the end of the Peoples' Republic it became possible to make it more public. Eastern Archive, founded in Warsaw, has had its branches in several cities in Poland and abroad (Moscow, New York, London). Testimonies have been recorded and in most cases transcribed. People have also been encouraged to write the testimonies on their own and send it the archive. Eastern Archive consists as well copies of personal records of former Polish citizens repressed by the Soviet Union. There are also artefacts, created during persecutions (like spoons, object of religious significance, etc.).

0.2 Location +

[Ul. Narbutta 29 02-536 Warszawa](#) Address

[Warsaw](#) Place

0.3 Languages +

Training Days



Networking. TDs will open opportunities for new network developments among stakeholders of the collections, experts and scholars.

Tutoring. TDs will provide researchers and stakeholders advice on how to use the COURAGE register.

Registration. TDs will let one know how to register a collection in COURAGE.

Guidance. TDs will inform teachers on how to use the collections in a more effective way for pedagogical purposes.

Dissemination. TDs will assist stakeholders to represent their collections more effectively with the assistance of international and national cultural and scientific funds and through international exhibitions.

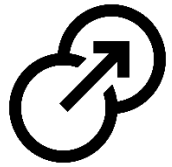
COURAGE is not just a database. It is more.

COURAGE promotes groundbreaking research into social and cultural practices generated by the collections. **Collections** are seen as **key vehicles of cultural memory** that themselves represent measures of faith in the potential of the archive as a repository of the past.

By interrogating the dynamics of the creation and operation of collections, we adopt a fundamentally **metahistorical** perspective. We examine the **collections as historical agents** and producers in the processes of the fashioning of histories (including the history of cultural opposition).

Thus, the project goes far beyond the mere creation of a database (registry) of the collections on cultural opposition.

What We Ask?



What are the **genesis** and typical **trajectories** of collections? How did the **transition** of collections from opposition to mainstream and (if relevant) from private to public occurred?



What the **political and social roles and uses** of the collections were before 1989 and have been since then? What efforts have been made by national governments to preserve, maintain or add to them?

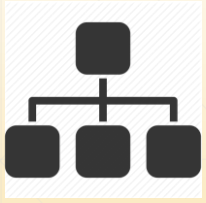


What were the **role of the exile** in supporting, preserving and disseminating these collections beyond the Iron Curtain and back home? How those collections were used that were created by the exile community?



How is the **material culture** represented by the documents, objects and audio-visual footage? What was and what was not regarded as worthy of collection and preservation? What objects were deemed important as potential historical sources or relics and what objects were omitted or discarded?

What We Ask?



How collections are **organized** (dataset and reference systems)? How is the material **collected**?



What is the social background of the **working staff** (including age and gender)? How are their life trajectories?



How are the legal frameworks, financial backgrounds, ownership and management of institutions and stakeholders (their **sociology** in general)? What is the social and cultural composition of their audiences?



What are the **networking and cooperative capacity** of different types of collections? What are the existing and possible platforms and forms of cooperation and public presentation? How can we contribute to the development of strategies with which to strengthen cooperation among the collections?

Handbook

Creates a **set of analyses** that compare the **genesis, institutional framing and social uses** of the collections on cultural opposition in the former socialist countries.

Comprehensive in terms of analytical categories and **comparative** descriptions. Includes **thematic** chapters covering **clusters** of countries (instead of providing detailed descriptions of individual countries).

Describes both differences and similarities between **relevant cultural policies** in Eastern Europe.

Demonstrates how professionals, policy makers, organisations and public media are important actors and arenas for negotiating, developing and eventually **changing the concepts and uses of the collections**.

Country Reports

How were the concepts and institutions that govern the collections established?

How they have evolved from the late socialist period to the present day?

Who are the major actors?
Which are their hopes and strategies?

What are the patterns of changes in the political, legal, financial and cultural contexts?

Social Relevance

What uses may the heritage of cultural opposition have?

How to make the cultural opposition in the state socialist countries part of a pan-European cultural heritage?

How to link the collections with commemorative events to keep the heritage of cultural opposition alive?

How to use the the collections for educational purposes?

Policy Recommendations

Legal,
institutional
and financial
frameworks

Identification
of problems
and of best
practice

Networking
and visibility
on a European
scale

Raising
consciousness
among local
and national
decision
makers

Please, contact us: <http://cultural-opposition.eu/>

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