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**Differences Between National Memory of
Communism in Poland and the Czech Republic.**

Master Thesis

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Abstract

This work aims to demonstrate differences in national memory of Communism in the Czech Republic and Poland. It looks into the principles surrounding the practice of collective memory and then uses this to create a working methodology for the study of it in these two nations. In evaluating memory in these countries it relies upon the "Three Pillars" of past events, cultural output and popular opinion and stresses the interconnected nature of these academic areas. A further emphasis is placed upon the role of belief in shaping personal and group self-identity. The overall conclusions stress that both of the national memories of these countries have been shaped by their history, culture and popular opinion, and that this has created a divide between the Polish and Czech views of events during the Communist period. The divide is seen as characterised by particular "Czech" and "Polish" viewpoints which are the product of discourse on previous aspects of what it means to belong to these respective groups. National memory in essence builds upon itself, and will continue to do so. Future perceptions of what it means to be Czech or Polish will be shaped by this latest chapter in national memory.

Abstrakt

Úkolem této práce je představit a zobrazit rozdíly v národní paměti pokud jde myšlení o komunismu v České republice a Polsku. Prozkoumává pravidla, jež se uplatňují během praxe v použití kolektivní paměti, a následně používá je k vytvoření základní metodologie studia tohoto problému u obou zmíněných národů. Při hodnocení paměti v těchto zemích, se práce opírá o „Tři Pilíře“, které tvoří: minulé události, kulturní dědictví a veřejné mínění, zdůrazňuje také jejich vzájemnou propojenost. Další důraz je kladen na funkce víry ve formování se osobní a skupinové identity. Závěrečné úsudky ukazují, že v obou případech, v České republice i v Polsku, národní paměť byla vytvořena na základě národního dějepisu, kultury a veřejného mínění, což právě způsobí rozdíly ve vnímání období komunismu v obou státech. Rozdílnost projevuje se v konkrétních, specifických „českých“ a „polských“ pohledech a názorech, jež jsou důsledky diskurzu o tom co znamená příslušnost k těm jednotlivým skupinám. Národní paměť se zpravidla vyvíjí samostatně, a nadále bude v tom sebe-vyvíjení pokračovat. Budoucí přesvědčení o tom co znamená být Čechem nebo Češkou, Polákem nebo Polkou, budou konstruovaná během současné, nejnovější kapitoly národní paměti.

Klíčová slova

Polsko, Česká republika, národní paměti, kultura, historie, média, politika

Keywords

Poland, Czech Republic, national memory, culture, history, media, politics.

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Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
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Key Research Questions (20 words)	How do Czech and Polish national memories of Communism differ and why? What recurring themes are in each?
Brief Description of Theory (50 words)	This thesis uses the principle of collective memory, and an Olick based interpretation of it which stresses the symbiotic relationship between the past and present. The role of belief is also important as within the context of memory belief creates fact.
Brief Description of Methodology (50 words)	Three main methods are used; an analysis of past events. Surveys of popular opinion and cultural investigations. Though all of these elements are seen of depending and borrowing from each other to create national memory.
Conclusions (50 words)	Each national narrative about its history and Communism is reflected by the national motto of the nation. Past events analysis, surveys and cultural investigations provide reasoning for why this is. Identity builds upon itself and adapts.

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1. Introduction

It was man who ended the Cold War in case you didn't notice. It wasn't weaponry, or technology, or armies or campaigns. It was just man. Not even Western man either, as it happened, but our sworn enemy in the East, who went into the streets, faced the bullets and the batons and said: we've had enough. It was their emperor, not ours, who had the nerve to mount the rostrum and declare he had no clothes. And the ideologies trailed after these impossible events like condemned prisoners, as ideologies do when they've had their day.

John LeCarre, *The Secret Pilgrim*¹

Why is it worthwhile to study memories? One reason is that the memories of a given ethnic group are a key to the understanding of that group. The collective memories of a national group-for it is mainly within the nation states that memories are being catalogued and conserved-provide a key to the self-understanding of a national group and, for those who do not belong to it, they provide clues to the way its politicians and people react to events or generate them. A study of the ways of remembering also enables us to see more clearly what is being forgotten or suppressed. Ewa M. Thompson.²

On the day Margaret Thatcher died I watched the BBC coverage on my laptop, amidst all the debate and discussion of a woman who was a highly divisive figure in the country³ I managed to catch a comment by a Member of Parliament that “Three people ended the Cold War; Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev.”⁴ Those three people are not the focus of this piece, they played a role certainly but the speaker’s comments created an interesting narrative. It raises the important question of how we think about the Cold War, in this case it was a triumph for western values, particularly those of the right. It did not consider the dead bodies of those who had fought for change, it did not consider those who took to the streets, nor did it consider those who lived their lives in fear that an inopportune word to a friend or loved one could seal their fate. Talk to someone from behind the Curtain and they would give you a quite different story. It was resolutely a

¹ Le Carre, John. *The Secret Pilgrim*. Penguin 1990. Ch2

² Thompson, Ewa. *Ways of Remembering: the Case of Poland*. Toronto Slavic Quarterly. 2005
<http://www.utoronto.ca/tsq/12/thompson12.shtml>

³ An event which, I am sad to say, brought out the worst in a large portion of the country who deemed it an occasion to celebrate.

⁴ Boyes, Roger. The Times. *How Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev ended the Cold War* 08/04/2013 <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article3734324.ece>

narrative born of the person who spoke it; Conservative, hierarchical, deferential to authority, classically, blimpishly, British. I will not write about that, nor am I focused on the fate of people who lived under Communism, This dissertation is focused on what happened after, and how we view the past, for we naturally create our own specific narratives of it. No matter what the actual truth may be.

1.1 Life After The Curtain

It has been a quarter of a century since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The same amount of time as divided the first powered flight and the first time an airplane crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and over half the time for which Communist governments were in power in Europe for. Yet the rule of these governments, from shortly after the end of the Second World War until their collapse in 1989, still has a clear impact in shaping how people in the region think about themselves and their nations; read a recent Czech or Polish novel, watch a film, take a walk through the outskirts of Prague or see the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, or even just sit and talk to people. The period has undoubtedly left a footprint. It exists within living memory for a great many people, those for whom it doesn't see it and hear it though the reminisces of their elders, the media and the way the issues of the era still influence politics in their home countries. It has become part of the national story and as the new generation grows up it will increasingly be created not by actual experience but by what people have been told, read or watched. This paper will demonstrate how Poland and the Czech Republic hold very different perspectives on the period of Communist rule in their countries.

Life after the Curtain has changed these two countries greatly; both are now members of the European Union, (an organisation of which Poland is the fastest growing economy) both have entered NATO, (the very alliance which decades earlier their troops had braced themselves for an attack by) both possess the standard shopping centres found throughout the rest of Europe, the same fast-food restaurants, popular culture from elsewhere is readily available. In opening up however neither has lost the unique nature of itself, nor have they been consumed by an outside culture; Karel Gott is still popular, football rivalries continue, the regalia and imagery of the nations are still current, as are old grudges and friendships. Most important are the changes which have occurred in the individual ability of the citizenry and civil society to form groups, discuss or even simply to socialise outside government control. These nations also possess far greater control over their individual destinies than they did before 1989, membership of the EU and NATO (whatever their faults) has not brought with it the replacement of one master for another. Any influence from Brussels or Washington is miniscule compared to the heavy-handed directives which were issued from Moscow. Importantly both nations asked to join these

organisations, particularly in the case of Poland as a means of preventing the horrors of the past.⁵ No longer dependencies or colonies, but partners and, if there is any justice in the world, equals.

No doubt there are problems still to be encountered, challenges to be faced. The increasing control over national destiny raises the important question of what kind of people and state will develop. During Communist rule concepts of the nation and the past were directed along strongly ideological lines and during the times when they could be considered fully independent within the 20th century; The Second Polish Republic, and the First Czechoslovak Republic lasted only twenty years (and of those only Czechoslovakia could actually be considered fully democratic for the majority of its tenure). Poland has not had as much control over its destiny, for as long as a time, since the 18th century and the Czechs haven't since the Battle of White Mountain. In moments such as this there is the ability to place a unique perspective on the past, to create a new chapter in the national narrative and how people within these nations create the national memory, those collective memories which determine what a nation represents in the eyes of its citizens, what its past is and what its culture is.

⁵ Havel, Václav. *To The Castle and Back*. Vintage 2007 p262

1.2 Purpose, Aims and Structure

While scholarship on collective memory in relation to nationalism has largely been focused on the 19th century, the current period presents vast opportunities for study. Francis Fukuyama⁶ in 1992 may have proclaimed the “End of History” but the last two decades have aptly demonstrated the extent to which it is very much still in motion. Fukuyama stated that the end of the Cold War had brought with it the triumph of liberal democracy, and that the main dangers facing humanity in the future would be our lack of control over technology and the threat of a technological singularity. Margaret MacMillan and Misha Glenny on the contrary, argued that the end of the Cold War had “unfrozen”⁷ nationalist tendencies; seen in Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine, often spurred on by the ravings of demagogues and those eager to use it to consolidate their power and authority. The other main products of the last two centuries; Fascism and Communism have gone the way of the dodo, while Nationalism remains an extremely potent force.⁸

There is a reason for this, Fascism and Communism gained their momentum from the promise of a new world, a better one. Nationalism by comparison gains its following from the simple realization that we all belong to different tribes. Place a group of people from all the corners of the world in a room and get them to talk to each other, one of the first questions they will ask is the nationality of the other people. This is the crux of Nationalism, it is the ideology of identity, of belonging, for it is still the nation-state which is the primary political, cultural and social unit. What interests me is the manner in which our memories serve and inform these concepts, how does the concept of national memory, come into existence and how does it inform how we perceive the past? To a lesser extent, what role do narratives and stories play in self-identity? How does culture shape us? I intend to investigate this by using a comparison between two nations; similar, yet utterly distinct.

In looking at Nationalism it is important to note that it should not be thought of as a completely negative state. After all, without it would we have Tennyson, Chopin,

⁶ Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*. Perennial 1993

⁷ MacMillan, Margaret. *The Uses and Abuses of History*. Profile 2009 P10

⁸ Glenny, Misha. *The Rebirth of History: Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy*. Penguin 1993 P5

Dvořák or Yeats? The negative aspects of it are invariably jingoism, militarism and chauvinism, an inability to critique aspects of one's nation for fear of being "unpatriotic." Nationalism is not ideal, it simply is, the mechanisms which constructed it being hard to counter and in many cases against the interests of those with the power to do so. A sense of belonging in and of itself is nothing bad, it provides comfort, a community and a sense of place to the individuals involved. In many cases Nationalism can be compared with religion, which in many ways it succeeded, it is a faith based issue. People believe they belong⁹ and they do; they create groups, communities, memories. Ernest Renan in his 1882 essay: *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*¹⁰ quite capably highlighted the spiritual aspect of this:

"A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form."¹¹

It is not the idea of a nation itself which is abhorrent it is when nationhood becomes an excuse for atrocity, xenophobia, exclusion and notions of superiority. Invariably those nationalisms which have become repellent have been based on issues of blood, ethnicity, land or religion,¹² things which can be labelled more easily, rather than a spiritual or abstract self-identification. Therefore a further aim will be to examine the nature of national memory in Poland and the Czech Republic and how it may inform the matters in the future, for better or worse.

Specifically I will outline; current theory on collective memory and particularly its role within national groups, look into how these narratives and processes of memory are created and constructed and then use this to create a means of evaluating and comparing the current situation in Poland and the Czech Republic. My use of theoretical literature will

⁹ Renan, Ernest *"Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?"*, conference faite en Sorbonne, le 11 Mars 1882

¹⁰ "What is a Nation?"

¹¹ Renan *"Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?"*

¹² I distinguish clearly and deliberately here between religion and faith, in that faith is the belief and religion is the practices and observances which surround the belief. This will be used later in both a religious and secular context.

act as a guideline and not rigid conformity, as each memory is constructed differently so different methods and combinations of some theories will be used when it seems prudent, though I will show my reasoning when I do so. Having established a methodology I will then move on to the practical application of the methods I have developed and use them to investigate the creation of national memory in Poland and the Czech Republic, contrasting and comparing the two and looking for any reasons why differences may have occurred. After this the effects of national memory on matters in the present will be examined and again contrasted. The reason for this structure is so that the argument can flow naturally; theory, method, application, results and relevance. The conclusion will hopefully give a broad overview of the material covered and draw together all the various strands.

2. Theory and Practice

“All human activity takes place within a culture and interacts with culture. For an adequate formation of a culture, the involvement of the whole man is required, whereby he exercises his creativity, intelligence, and knowledge of the world and of people.”¹³

Pope John Paul II

Brother Alwyn: *Faith sustains us in the hour when reason tells us that we cannot continue, that the whole of our lives is without meaning.*

Brother Michael: *Then why were we born able to reason, if reason's useless?*

Brother Alwyn: *Not useless. But it's also not enough. Faith and reason are the shoes on your feet! You can travel further with both than you can with just one.*¹⁴

The difficulty of studying a foreign country and culture is a very important to address. For that purpose the methodology of this piece must work to correct any faults that might be created from lack of knowledge of cultural or social practices on my own part. It is important to keep in mind that ideas and values are not universal but rather the product of context, as is quite skilfully demonstrated in Laura Bohannon's excellent article on her time in Nigeria among the Tiv people: *Shakespeare In The Bush*. Convinced that the story of Hamlet transcends time and borders she attempts to tell the story to a different people:

“No, no! It was not a dead body the witches had animated to sacrifice and eat. No one else made Hamlet's dead father walk. He did it himself.”

“Dead men can't walk,” protested my audience as one man.

I was quite willing to compromise.

“A ‘ghost’ is the dead man's shadow.”

But again they objected. *“Dead men cast no shadows.”*

¹³ Pope John Paul II *Encyclical Centesimus Annus*, 1 May 1991 Source: Libreria Editrice Vaticana

¹⁴ Straczynski, Michael J. *Babylon 5: The Deconstruction of Falling Stars*. Warner Bros. Season 4 episode 22

*"They do in my country," I snapped.'*¹⁵

It is an extreme example but one which is useful in illustrating how jarring certain differences in perspective can be, certainly Polish and Czech culture and social practices are more similar to my own than in this case but context is still important. As an example of a Czech case of this consider the following picture (figure 1) of a protest in Prague against the Iraq War of 2003. Without the proper context and with a literal translation one could interpret this as being in favour of the invasion. However with the knowledge that the central figure is dressed up as the Good Soldier Švejk, one can use knowledge of an episode in the book where Švejk goes around Prague in a wheelchair shouting "Na Beograd!"¹⁶ aping the gestures of those in power and thus turning them into one gigantic joke. It therefore shows its satiric nature and the manner in which it is mocking the American-led invasion in a peculiarly Czech manner.



(Figure 1)¹⁷

It is therefore important the theory and by extension the methodology I will be using should be flexible enough to accommodate regional differences and that it should likewise strive to analyse within the proper context. An action must be interpreted through what it means for the members of the nation being studied and not because of the viewpoint of the writer. This may seem to be redundant but it is of particular important when the issue of

¹⁵ Bohannan, Laura *"Shakespeare in the Bush. An American anthropologist set out to study the Tiv of West Africa and was taught the true meaning of Hamlet"* *Natural History* 75: pp. 28–33 1966

¹⁶ To Belgrade!

¹⁷ Anon, *Protest the Prague Summit*. November 17-22. <http://www.alter.most.org.pl/nato/protestpraha.htm>

memory is being studied, as memory and collective memory are a unique attribute of the individual or group to whom they belong. Any conflicts over the constitution of national memory must also be seen in this light and the perspectives of those involved considered.

This naturally lends itself to using a variety of disciplines as each portion of what created memory and self-identity comes from a different place. Eric Hobsbawm when introducing the anthology “The Invention of Tradition” states it best: “The invention of tradition is interdisciplinary. It is a field of study which brings together historians, social anthropologists and a variety of other workers in the human sciences, and cannot adequately be pursued without”¹⁸ For this purpose national memory is essentially an “invented tradition” it is an abstract, something which exists only in the mind and is therefore produced by the mind, in this case groups of them working together. One could not properly discuss such a matter only by looking at a nation’s history for the very same reason that one cannot know a language only by being able to read it, it is part of the whole but not the sum of it. Therefore the following chapter will separately focus on different disciplines and how they will but used. It will however focus strongly on how these different approaches interconnect.

¹⁸ Hobsbawm, Eric & Ranger, Terence. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press. 1983 p14

2.1 Collective and National Memory

The ideas and principles behind the study of collective memory are nothing new, indeed part of its genesis can be seen in the theories of Ernest Renan which were mentioned in the previous chapter. It was however another Frenchman, Emile Durkheim who can be credited with largely creating the field. His main observation was that societies depend upon continuity and connection with previous events in order to function.¹⁹ Focusing his studies on religious communities he argued that the use of rituals creates a united group, the objects, totems and items associated with sacred acts become a means of individually remembering the group experiences which the worshipers have shared. Durkheim's view was that ultimately the individual experience is what creates the collective and celebrations and totems merely act as a trigger for the group memories. These ideas extend beyond the religious sphere, while he does not mention it actions such as the pledge of allegiance in American schools in this theory would have a similar effect.

It was Maurice Halbwachs, one of Durkheim's students, who coined the actual term "collective memory"²⁰ he differed by stating that social structure and institutions construct the memories of individuals; through private one such as families, and public ones such as schools or organisations. Most importantly however he stated that private memory can only be understood through the memories created by groups, the only truly independent private memory Halbwachs believed were dreams because they are disorganised. Halbwachs used commemorative events as an example of group memories being reinforced once those with primary experience of the events were gone. For example remembrance services provide continuity and memory reinforcement, as well as stressing certain narratives. The key aspect is that Halbwachs believed that the social constructions of memories of the past are shaped by the needs of the present. Pasts are constructed to fit the needs of society in the present and events are brought to the forefront, relegated to the background or merely forgotten depending on how they fit the way society wishes to see itself. Comparisons and

¹⁹ Durkheim, Emile. 1995 (First Published 1912). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. by Karen Fields. New York: The Free Press.

²⁰ Halbwachs, Maurice 1992 (First Published 1952). *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis Coser. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

contrasts are made between situations in the present and the past, comparisons give the group a means to rationalise the way the word operates. Events and narratives are shifted to conform to what the group requires. This approach can be termed “presentist” due to its emphasis on the present being the defining aspect of collective memory creation.

Pierre Nora²¹ and Eric Hobsbawm²² expanded upon the presentist approach; the former by demonstrating how memories become detached from the events which they were created from and create a life of their own, the latter by stressing the role of modernity leading to the creation of new “imagined traditions” which fill the void left by traditions destroyed by the transition to modernity. A common feature of the two of these writers is that they focus upon the way in which collective memory is, as they see it, a manipulated construction placed upon the group by those with the power and authority to define memory and state what it should be. The truth essentially becomes fluid and while in other cases, events were given greater importance and others marginalised here the meaning and truth of events is determined by the group memory. It is a system which is most visible in the rhetoric of dictators like Slobodan Milošević, where impartial truth comes in second place to the “good-truth.” (the truth which is needed at the time) It does however, appear in democratic societies as well; largely in ones where national rhetoric is strong enough to drown out other interpretations, they do however have the advantage of discourse merely being limited by social mores, instead of state control over what can and cannot be said. This allows much more free discussion, however it would be hubristic and wrong to state that democratic societies do not form memories in this way. People do after all wilfully mislead, lie, and cheat as they go about their daily lives. One of the first principles of the craft of the historian is to identify the reliability of sources for this very reason. The collective memories of a group from anywhere will have elements of fiction to it. A reason for this is the appeal of clear-cut stories. Consider for instance the popularity of the Second World War in British and American media; films, television, computer games. A good portion of the appeal is the good vs evil narrative, for the most part any of the more questionable actions undertaken by the Allies (Dresden, Nagasaki) are not mentioned. A stronger example, and one which involves much more fabrication is the portrayal of the Red

²¹ Nora, Pierre, 1996. “The Era of Commemorations”, *Realms of Memory: the Construction of the French Past, Volume III*, Lawrence Kritzman ed., trans.by Arthur Goldhammer, New York: Columbia University Press.

²² Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger. 1992. *Invention of Tradition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Army in Russian media as liberators of the European continent; while the war was undoubtedly won with Soviet blood, the brutal repression²³ which followed in what would later be known as the “Soviet Bloc” as well as the atrocities committed by Soviet soldiers are dismissed as either slander or belittling the sacrifices made by the Red Army.²⁴ A side effect of this is the melding of people and state; a critique of Stalin’s policies is seen as attacking the bravery of the Red Army,²⁵ and a critique of current American policy in some circles might bring the retort: “Well we saved you in World War II.” By contrast the First World War is neglected by the media; with memories largely being the reserve of each country’s remembrance services, which themselves have a distinct national character. Invariably however the image presented of these is one of loss, a far cry from the triumphalism associated with memories of the Second World War.

Due to the mechanisms behind it largely being focused on groups with shared qualities such as; a language, ethnicity, culture or even just self-identity, collective memory often becomes national memory as the attributes which consolidate groups around a shared memory are often those which create an idea of a nation. A large portion of collective memory research has focused on how it relates to nations, and the brief overview of the field given previously contains a few examples of this. A further distinction should be made between communal and collective memories; communal ones (as described by Ewa Thompson²⁶) are constructed by groups which have a shared experience, whereas collective memories are where part or a portion of the group does not remember the events but share a sense of belonging:

“Collective memory is the property of cultural groups and nations. It is shared by communities that do not necessarily live in the same neighborhood and have not directly experienced the events in question but have the same group loyalties.

“Collective memory reworks, compresses, and ideologizes communal memories. It

²³ Applebaum, Anne. *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-1956*. Barnes and Noble 2012 p27

²⁴ Zarakhovich, Yuri. *Why Putin Loves World War II*. Time. Tuesday, May 08, 2007.
<http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1618531,00.html>

²⁵ Thompson, Ewa. *World War II Victory as Remembered and Not*. The Washington Times. 14/05/2004

²⁶ Thompson, Ewa. *Ways of Remembering: the Case of Poland*. Toronto Slavic Quarterly. 2005
<http://www.utoronto.ca/tsq/12/thompson12.shtml>

sometimes mythologizes events and incorporates them into the already congealed categories of *national mythology*.”²⁷

A good reason to study the viewpoints of those who have no direct experience of events; such as those born after the end of Communism in Poland and the Czech Republic, is that their viewpoints will largely determine what the prevailing opinions and viewpoints will be once the narrative has congealed. They present a way of finding out what the collective has chosen as the key ideas and items to remember and present a wider view of the priorities of their society in general through the particular perspective on this event.

One of main issues that any study of presentist collective memory encounters is the problem of causality. If a memory is shaped by the present then how are we to accommodate past events? Certainly they must have an effect; it would be nearly impossible for instance to argue that the Holocaust has not impacted heavily on the collective memory of the state of Israel, and that this memory continues to have a large impact on how Israeli policy is conducted. Past events exist in a symbiotic relationship with collective memory; providing a stimulus and a source, but also a means for collectivising memories of those events through the viewpoint of the present. Jeffrey Olick presents a convincing case for this:

“Additionally, a purely presentist approach, critics argue, fails to explain where present interests come from in the first place. Moreover, an instrumentalist approach is unable to give a good account of why it is that the past works so well as an instrument of present interests. In contrast, then, a second possible understanding of the contemporary relationship between past and present is one that seeks to understand why the past is usable at all. What is it, exactly, that the past does for us? How does the past work on the present to shape identities and define purposes?”²⁸

While a presentist approach is useful in manner ways it should not become the be-all-and-end-all of the discipline, one should remember that there are matters which first caused these present interests. The notion is appealing, certainly and there is a certain Socratic

²⁷ Thompson, Ewa. *Ways of Remembering*

²⁸ Olick, *Usable Pasts and the Return of the Repressed*. 2007. *The Hedgehog Review* 9(2):19-31.

appeal to it but it should be a complement to, rather than dominating the discourse. The past and present relationship in collective memory studies should not become a one-way street in which a certain interpretation is exclusive. A more apt way of putting it would be that while we gaze into the past with our presentist viewpoint, the past gazes also into us. It is this technique which I will attempt to use in the course of this work. The influence of the past upon us will be noted, as will our own ability to change and influence the past through the process of collective memorialisation.

A key aspect of Olick's approach is the importance of trauma in shaping memory. A side effect of this is to move collective memory from a study of elites and power structures to being more focused on human groups in general, as well as their preoccupations and psychoses. It is these however which make us change; we are all the product of our tears, if there is too little then the ground is not fertile, too much and the best of us is washed away, moved to obsession. It can also be used functionally, Likewise, while both past and present interact on a daily basis, so too do other factors:

“While there are cultural and communicative dynamics not reducible to psychic ones, ultimately we need to see all these dimensions as necessarily intertwined. Sometimes we use the past, and sometimes, for better (functional) or worse (traumatic) it uses us, but there is always a combination of all of these going on in every case, historical or psychiatric.”²⁹

Olick essentially stresses the interdisciplinary nature of his perspective on collective memory. It is not simply a matter of power structures, current interest, psychology, past events or popular opinion but a combination of these which forms the process of memory, the human mind after all has no need to respect the boundaries between academic disciplines. The question of what to include in this particular study deserves a chapter of itself as it must be attuned to the peculiarities of the nations under examination, since each nation creates its society differently so national memory is a product of the situation in the nations in which it is formed and not due to any universal law, since as previously shown in the example of *Shakespeare in the Bush* culture and understanding is not universal. Memory

²⁹ Olick. *Usable Pasts*. P25

therefore cannot be either. The matter of what to include is the purview of the following chapter.

2.2 Three Pillars

Methodology is an issue which always presents a twin dilemma; in tailoring it too deeply to a situation it risks merely existing to prove a point which already exists in the author's mind, narrowing the focus until all that exists is a narrow, streamlined viewpoint. On the other hand if it makes no accommodation for the particular situation and therefore has to take into account every detail it can become imprecise, too focused on the wider concepts to say anything concrete about the problems it is attempting to investigate. The question of maintaining that essential balance between the two is therefore essential.

Most academics who study collective memory stress the importance of past events; either in relation to how they affect us currently, or how our present affects our interpretation of them, the previous chapter focused on this dilemma and reached the conclusion that Olick's approach had merit in these circumstances. Arguably the role of trauma in Poland and the Czech Republic³⁰ is larger than in countries west of the old Cold War divide; there is the experience of a struggle for nationhood, occupation by the Nazi government of Germany, a war which brought in another repressive regime. In one way or another there has been a greater level of authoritarianism, restrictions on speech and persecutions of individuals based on race, religion or class in these two countries. This naturally leads to trauma, which in turn becomes a part of basing yourself upon what has happened in the past. We are not however the sum of all our traumas and historical baggage, if we were we would be reduced to nothing more than automatons and if there is one thing which is essential to keep within history it is the human aspect of it. That it is more than a collection of dates, battles and atrocities. Past events are certainly important, as is how they are used but any study requires more pools of information. The key fact to remember is that the analysis of such matters should focus on the human aspect and the effects that such events have, rather than the events themselves. Likewise it is important to stress the plurality of opinions within any group, there is nothing more counter-productive than assuming that all members of a group follow a certain line blindly. Collective memory is

³⁰Eyal, Gil. *Identity and Trauma: Two Forms of the Will to Memory*. History & Memory, Volume 16, Number 1, Spring/Summer 2004, pp.5-36 (Article) Published by Indiana University Press

an active process,³¹ constantly in shift, shifts which are caused by cleavages within these societies themselves. Change is the natural order of things and discussions, debates and dialogues are the means by which it is accomplished. A belief is finished when it has demonstrated that it has failed; as Fascism did, and as Soviet Communism did. The acknowledgement of this happens in the public sphere, through the viewing of the sins of the previous belief system.

Therefore the first key matter which must be addressed in this methodology is the role of history; I will term this “past events” because whether it is a question of us affecting the memory of the past, or the events of the past affecting us it is ultimately a matter focused on the past, history remains essential. Particularly when involving countries which have seen a century of sudden and dramatic changes.

What else to include then? Milan Kundera stated that the constant within Central European life and what distinguished it from elsewhere was the unique role of culture.³² While he may have overstated his point somewhat, it is however true that the role of culture has been a constant for the debate of memory and the nation in both countries; the Czech national awakening can be directly tied to cultural discourse,³³ when there was no Poland, or Czechoslovakia it was the culture of these peoples which allowed them to view themselves as separate from their overlords. More important however is the role of cultural viewpoints and perspectives, the ability of which to influence is undoubtedly great. The *Slav Epic* by Alfons Mucha is arguably such an example, number twenty in the cycle: *The Apotheosis of The Slavs, Slavs for Humanity* (see figure 2) is arguably the best example of this within Mucha’s magnum opus. Depicting the independence of Slavic countries after the First World War it melds men, women and children in traditional costumes with the soldiers and symbols of the Entente powers, a Christ-like figure is in the background and the Slavs are depicted with an angelic light behind them. The Mucha Foundation describes the painting thus:

³¹ Eyal, Gil. *Identity and Trauma*.

³² Kundera, Milan. *The Tragedy of Central Europe*. New York Review of Books Volume 31, Number 7 · April 26, 1984 Translated from the French by Edmund White

³³ Kimball, Stanley. *Czech Nationalism: A Study of the National Theatre Movement. 1845-83*. (Illinois: University of Illinois Press. 1964)

“Each represents a successive period in Slav history: the blue in the bottom right of the painting represents the early years of Slav history; the red in the top right corner signifies the blood shed in the Hussite wars during the Middle Ages; the figures cast in shadow below represent the enemy and the repeated attacks inflicted on Slavic tribes; finally a yellow band in the centre lights up the Czech and Slovak soldiers returning from World War I, signaling the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the dawn of a new age for the Slavic people. They are saluted by young boys who wave green branches at them.”³⁴



(Figure 2, Courtesy of the Mucha Foundation)

The work is a prime example of the cultural influence on national memory; the Slavs are depicted throughout as spiritual, with a pacific nature, strong desire for freedom and connection to the earth. The piece is the culmination of a work which has consistently portrayed them in such terms, and focused on such themes throughout; whether in depictions of Jan Hus, Jan Komenský or in any of the other twenty paintings. One of the defining attributes of cultural works is that they celebrate our ideals and promote them.³⁵ Such matters inevitably have an effect on self-image, and self-image will inevitably lead to shaping the views of any groups we identify with. Cultural values and perceptions interact

³⁴ Anon. Mucha Foundation. http://www.muchafoundation.org/gallery/browse-works/object_type/paintings/object/231

³⁵ Gombrich, E.H. *Ideals and Idols: Essays on Values and History in Art*. Oxford Phaidon 1979 p224

with those of groups through the ideals and idols that both adopt. We view the world through the lenses of our culture, is it any surprise then that it should play this role?

Cultural works will provide the next portion of the methodological equation. They will however be divided into distinct categories; those created before 1989 can be termed influences, for the simple reason that they influence a culture but provide no expression of it in the time period under study. They provide part of the building blocks of national culture however and remain important for that reason. Works created after 1989 can be defined as both influences and expressions, because they fulfil the same role as the previous ones with the additional caveat that they can provide insights into how a people are viewing themselves during the time period under study.

A problem with the two methods I have currently outlined is that they are largely focused on elites within society; the production of cultural works is dominated by those within the intelligentsia, while past events are often motivated by elites (except in cases of mass action) or their interpretation subject to the prevailing system. Either way neither of these two approaches are properly representative of prevailing thoughts within a group itself, merely factors which influence them. Without any research into that this dissertation could easily become focused on the writing of ivory tower intellectuals and the writer's own specific interpretation of past events and their role. In adding a study of popular opinion to create a triumvirate I hope to reconcile this. For this purpose I created a survey which was handed out to young Czechs and Poles. The respondents were not great enough in number to provide a self-supportive investigation, but in concert with the previous areas of importance in this dissertation they do provide corroboration that certain ideas remain part of everyday society and demonstrate differences of perception of events between countries in the time period covered. As the nature of the questions and the presentation of the surveys is deeply connected with the reception of their results they will be discussed together with the analysis of the results in a later chapter, so as to provide a better logical link between the structure and the conclusions.

These "Three Pillars" as I am naming them of; past events, cultural output and popular opinion are strongly interconnected. Cultural works can be said to be a product of the mood of people in the country and are also influenced heavily by the past, while at the

same time changing how we view the past. Past events provide inspiration to authors, writers, musicians and artists, while also shaping the opinions of people towards current issues. Popular opinion decides a large portion of what is chosen to be remembered and mainstream consensus of what the past is, but also is shaped to a certain extent by the other two. None of the pillars is separate, each depends upon the other, remove one and the structure would collapse. I view this as representing the interconnected nature of collective memory described by Hobsbawm,³⁶ importantly the methods I will use to analyse them also create checks and balances upon each other. Past events and cultural works are to be studied qualitatively, as doing so plays to my previous training and also follows logically; people do not remember statistics but events and images, quantitative analysis of cultural works would deprive them of their supreme influence which is the themes of messages of the work, which are better suited to a qualitative approach. Popular Opinion however provides a quantitative counter to these two and allows prevailing opinions to be investigated through how often certain ideas and memories emerge and what people think generally about the period. The different approaches are, in my opinion, justified for these reasons since they allow a fuller and more complete picture of the topic and enable the study of it to reach multiple levels of society, the three approaches complimenting each other nicely.

³⁶ Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*. P11

2.3 Faith Manages

A final matter to take note of on issues of methodology is that this dissertation is largely not concerned with matters of fact but of faith, that is in the context of belief and belief systems. It is not concerned primarily with establishing the truth of what happened but rather what people believe happened and why. Faith is primarily used in a religious context but here is used in the broader sense of a confidence or trust which is not arrived at logically, or with proof but through belief. It is worth stressing that belief plays a huge role in the world; currency works on a system of faith and belief,³⁷ politics increasingly is dominated by irrational actions by voters,³⁸ Nationalism as acknowledged by Hobsbawm requires faith: "Nationalism requires too much belief in what is patently not so"³⁹ We may view ourselves as being reasonable, logical actors because everyone wishes to see themselves as so, our decisions however are much more affected by irrationality and belief than we would like but they are still affected by them whether we admit it or not.⁴⁰ Faith has positives; it tells us to persevere and endure when we know rationally that we cannot, it gives us a sense of belonging to something greater whether it be a religion, a nation, or even something as mundane as a sports team. It is still a huge portion of how we act and how we view the world; the unique paradoxes of human beings allow them to be both rational and irrational at the same time.

Faith is particularly important in this case because of its role in the formation of groups, as Hobsbawm pointed out nationalism is based on beliefs, which are often not true, but people attain faith in them despite reason. As collective memories are shared between the members of their groups they too depend upon "truths" that they create and believe in. It is also the most difficult form of resistance to stop, as it is difficult to reason with and harder to eradicate, killing a belief is just as hard as killing an idea. As long as someone's head contains it, it still exists.

³⁷ Atwood, Margaret. *Our Faith is Failing in the God of Money*. The Financial Times. 13/04/2012
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9ef26578-83ca-11e1-82ca-00144feab49a.html#axzz31YT3gXeg>

³⁸ Caplan, Byran. *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies*. Princeton 2007 p2

³⁹ Hobsbawm, Eric. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Program Myth Reality*. Cambridge 2012 p27

⁴⁰ McKenzie, Craig R. M.. *Rational models as theories – not standards – of behavior*. TRENDS in Cognitive Sciences Vol.7 No.9 September 2003

The reason for the inclusion of this section is that national narratives essentially become matters of faith, the mythic histories of a nation in the far-away past are based not on fact but what the populace thinks; a particularly fine example of this being the persistence of the story of King Arthur in Britain. Myths and a belief in them remain a consistent part of how we define ourselves.⁴¹

⁴¹ Berger, Stefan. *On the Role of Myths in the Construction of National Identity in Modern Europe*. European History Quarterly. Pp490-pp502

3. Brother Lech and Brother Čech

*"Play the man, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out."*⁴²

Hugh Latimer

*"All in all, it seems to me that the Poles have a different and far more heartfelt relationship to their own statehood than we do. It's also true however, that few nations have had to sacrifice so much for their independence and freedom."*⁴³ **Václav Havel**

On the 16th January 1969 Jan Palach, a student of the Faculty of History at Charles University in Prague, walked up Václavské náměstí, poured a flammable liquid on himself and lit a match. The event occurred at a fountain on the square situated just below the National Museum and above the statue of Saint Wenceslas; martyr and patron of the Czech nation. He was rushed to hospital and pamphlets were found in his suitcase containing a manifesto demanding just one thing, the abolition of censorship in the country.⁴⁴ A few days later he died. On the 18th a hunger strike was organized by students on the spot of his act, on the 20th thousands took part in a march of remembrance. At his funeral more still came to pay their respects, his grave became a shrine. Members of the government stated that Palach had been mentally ill, or tricked into his actions believing that he would not be harmed. When this did not succeed in stopping visits to the tomb after two years the secret police removed his body from its grave, melted down the headstone, put another in its place and cremated the corpse. His legacy lingered still; Charter 77 drew inspiration from him and stated so, on the 20th anniversary of his death opposition groups gathered on Václavské náměstí, despite a government ban, demonstrating up until the 21st January when they were forcibly removed. After the Velvet Revolution the square upon which the university philosophy department is located was named after him, President Havel conferred Jan Palach and Jan Zajic (a student who had also killed himself by burning) with

⁴² Foxe, John. *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days, touching Matters of the Church (Foxe's Book of Martyrs)* 1563

⁴³ Havel, Václav. *To The Castle and Back*. Vintage. 2007 p263

⁴⁴ Charles University Multimedia Project. *Jan Palach*. Charles University <http://www.janpalach.cz/en/default/jan-palach/priprava>

the Order of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk 1st Class, the highest award the Czech government can give. Today his name is mentioned in nearly all discussion on the topic of Communist Czechoslovakia.

Ryszard Siwiec was an accountant; who four months before in Warsaw, in a crowded stadium, during a festival, with thousands of people around, burned himself alive as an act of protest against the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.⁴⁵ He held a banner with the words "*Za naszą i waszą wolność*"⁴⁶ and "*Honor i Ojczyzna*"⁴⁷ he shouted "I protest," refused all help and was filmed by a camera. He remained forgotten, only getting recognition after the fall of Communism and even then was remembered little in Poland compared to the lofty position of Palach in Czech narratives, Solidarity published a pamphlet about him in the 1980s, but little else happened. The Czech Republic awarded him the Order of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk 1st Class, two years later he was honoured by his homeland with the Order of Polonia Restituta, the second highest award the Polish government can give.

The purpose of any act of suicidal protest is to draw attention to the cause one dies for, in the hope that one's death can empower an idea greater than oneself.⁴⁸ By these criteria Palach had a significant effect, Siwiec did not. Why? If anything Siwiec had more people see his protest, it was recorded and he had visible posters and pamphlets. The authorities reacted in largely the same manner in each case and attempted to downplay it or to portray Palach and Siwiec as insane. Word of mouth generated protests in Prague quickly, while in Warsaw it did not, why? Certainly Palach's status as a young student rather than a middle aged accountant is part of it, as is the fact that Siwiec was protesting about Czechoslovakia and not Poland, these however merely present deeper questions about the matter; why was Palach's status as a student so important? Do acts of protest have to fit into a national or group context to be successful? I aim to show that the response to these acts, as well as all memory of Communist rule is, like any collective memory, constructed and created by the specific circumstances of the place in which it happens. People

⁴⁵ Stolarik, M. Mark. *The Prague Spring and the Warsaw Pact Invasion of Czechoslovakia*. Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers. 2010 p. xxv.

⁴⁶ "For our Freedom and Yours," a motto of Polish troops fighting overseas.

⁴⁷ "Honour and Fatherland"

⁴⁸ Andriolo, Karin. *The Twice-Killed: Imagining Protest Suicide* *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 108, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 100-113

remember specific events unique to their country certainly; but what is remembered, how it is ultimately shaped by national viewpoints and the particular nature of each collective group is what moulds it into a narrative, a collective memory.

For this purpose I will be using the “Three Pillars” discussed in the theory chapters to contrast and compare the national environment in Poland and the Czech Republic and how this affects the memory of Communism. As mentioned before the interdependency of these must be stressed; culture and popular opinion may be influenced by past events, but so too do they inform the responses of individuals and more importantly mass groups. Hopefully these methods will illustrate the differences between national memory among Poles and Czechs, who despite both belonging to the West Slavic language group and even having the same mythological routes⁴⁹ in the old tale of the brothers; Lech, Čech and Rus,⁵⁰ have had particular experiences which have influenced them into adopting their own extremely distinct perspectives.

⁴⁹ Jirásek, Alois. *Staré pověsti české* Chapter: Bohemian Arrival. 1894

⁵⁰ Rus became increasingly dropped from the narrative as antipathy to Russia increased.

3.1 God, Honour, Fatherland and Truth Prevails: National Narratives

The use of symbols in imagery of the nation is widespread but of greater import still is arguably the use of motif, recurring themes and ideas within discourses of the nation, things which linger with us down the ages. National mottos can have an effect like this, and arguably the ones of the Czech Republic and Poland show a lot about how these nations view themselves. The Czech Republic has "*Pravda vítězí*" meaning: "Truth Prevails" which echoes through Czech history from Hus to Havel; with the quote by the former: "Seek the truth, hear the truth, learn the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, hold the truth and defend the truth until death"⁵¹ and the latter's concept of "living in truth" and oft quoted phrase "Truth and love must prevail over lies and hatred"⁵² The concepts associated with these phrases are abstract, not overly tied to land, people or the country. This will provide an important companion to the Czech view of the nation and how it is represented.

Poland's mottos present a sharp contrast, they are the previously mentioned "*Za naszą i waszą wolność*" and "*Bóg, Honor, Ojczyzna*" translating as "For our Freedom and Yours," and "God, Honour, Fatherland" respectively. The concepts here are very clearly in distinct national terms, but there is more to it than that, these are very physical and material concepts; the first slogan comes from a time when Polish soldiers fought in wars and revolutions across the globe, with the idea that supporting freedom elsewhere supported it in Poland. The key theme of this motto is that a separate and independent Polish state is needed for Poland to be free. For the second it implicitly identifies each word within the national context; a Polish-Catholic God, Polish Honour, the Polish Fatherland and what is essential for this is the independence of the Polish state. The sentiment is most accurately displayed in a letter written in December 1950 by Łukasz Ciepliński in prison, a soldier of the Home Army who was imprisoned, tortured and executed by the Communist authorities: "I believe that Christ will be victorious! Poland will regain her independence and human dignity will be restored."⁵³ The Polish perspective is extremely active, there are

⁵¹ Holý, Ladislav (1996). *The little Czech and the Great Czech Nation: national identity and the post-communist transformation of society*. Cambridge University Press. p. 40

⁵² Gordon, Dane R. (1998). *Philosophy in post-communist Europe*. Rodopi. p. 57.

⁵³ Lazarowicz, Zbigniew "Mord na Mokotowie," *Nasz Dziennik*, 3 March 2003.

values and they must be fought for, while the Czech supposes that the truthfulness and justness of the cause will lead to its eventual victory without the need for direct action.

There are reasons for why nationalism takes a particular path in each of their countries; Poland had been partitioned between Austria, Russia and Prussia for the third time in 1795, a year which saw the end of an independent Polish state until 1918. Since 1795; Poles had fought for Napoleon to secure a Polish state between 1797 and 1813, launched an uprising in 1806 against the Prussians, rose up again in 1830, 1846, 1848, 1863, 1866, 1905, and had units fighting on both sides of the First World War because of the promise of an independent Poland. The Czechs by comparison had only revolted in 1848 and when they did, paradoxically, stayed loyal to the Hapsburg monarchy. A partial reason for this is the state of the aristocracy in both nations; the Polish aristocracy had survived partition whereas the Czech one had become germanised under Hapsburg rule.⁵⁴ The Poles had also been ruled by Polish rulers for generations, while the last Czech King of Bohemia was Jiří z Poděbrad who died in 1457. The Poles had only been under foreign rule for decades, the Czechs had for centuries.

There is a further element however; Polish rebellions were largely unplanned, disorganised affairs, depending more on nationalist fervour than any real situational advantage. Alfred Block's description of the uprising of 1830 makes this abundantly clear:

“The Patriots never took into consideration the international situation of a Europe in which conservative policies prevailed, never thought that there was no power in whose interest it would have been to help them, and never really calculated their chances of winning an armed struggle against the might of the Russian Empire.”⁵⁵

Polish uprisings were inevitably romantic, heroic, dashing and ultimately futile, accompanied by often appalling body-counts. The Czechs meanwhile, focused their nationalist energies in their “National Revival” with a focus on language and culture as the defining elements of “Czechness.”⁵⁶ Czech nationalism was not to be found in images of

⁵⁴ Glassheim, Eagle. *Noble Nationalists: The Transformation of the Bohemian Aristocracy*. Harvard 2005. P44

⁵⁵ Block, Alfred et al. *The Real Poland An Anthology of National Self-Perception*. 1982 Continuum p16

⁵⁶ Kimball, Stanley. *Czech Nationalism*. P5

military glory but in Smetana's *Má Vlast*, the National Theatre and the *Sokol*, as these were the expressions of it which could be accomplished under the Hapsburgs. It was a cultural and civic nationalism but it was still nationalism.

These two approaches see their most striking examples during the period of German occupation as part of the Second World War. The Polish resistance was the largest and best organised in Europe,⁵⁷ it is quite accurately described as an "Underground State" a continuing Polish state in the middle of a German occupation. (complete with its own schools, police, legal system, parliament and postal service.⁵⁸) It was completely dedicated to two things; restoring an independent Poland, and inflicting as much damage on their occupiers as possible. The scale of scope of their operations were truly staggering, an important point to emphasise are the lengths that it went to in establishing alternate systems of authority within an occupied country, with the idea that at long as a Polish state remained Poland was not lost. The legitimacy that this "Underground State" created and its communication with the government-in-exile gave it continuity and the strong feeling of preserving an integral part of Polish identity.⁵⁹

The Czech response to occupation was also to preserve what was seen as the integral part of the nation; its culture and everyday life. The Czech authorities had realised that armed resistance was hopeless first in 1938 -when their allies the UK and France had signed away their border forts, defensible frontier, and main manufacturer of arms without even consulting them- and then next year in 1939 when German forces completed the conquest of the country almost unopposed.⁶⁰ During the occupation the situation, terrain and conditions did not favour resistance groups; the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia had less places to hide, weapons had been confiscated, the region's heavily industrialisation made the German authorities less outright murderous than in Poland and Prague had the misfortune of hosting Reinhard Heydrich.⁶¹ Initially Czechs had jokingly described the

⁵⁷ Davies, Norman. *God's Playground: 1795 to the present*. Columbia University Press. 2005 p. 344.

⁵⁸ Garlinski, Jozef The Polish Underground State (1939-45) *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Apr., 1975), pp. 219-259

⁵⁹ Poland also holds the highest number of people listed as 'Righteous Among the Nations' at Yad Vashem.

⁶⁰ There was a firefight between Czechoslovak and German forces on 14th March at Frýdek-Místek. By all accounts it went fairly well for the Czechoslovak forces.

⁶¹ Bryant, Chad Carl. *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* Harvard. 2007 p185

Protectorate as “*Potentokrát*” (for the time being)⁶² this changed after the defeat of France and led to a fear of the destruction of the Czech way of life. It was seen as more important to preserve this than to risk everything on futile gestures of defiance: “Good Czechs disobeyed the regime when possible and, most important, acted Czech in the few ways that were still possible”⁶³

The uprisings at the end of the Second World War present some of the clearest and most striking examples of the way that these two countries differ in dealing with foreign oppression and occupation. The Warsaw Uprising marked the high-water point of the Polish resistance, and like most Polish uprisings it was doomed to failure before it even began.⁶⁴ Those inside fought bravely and heroically and they were defeated. The non-Communist resistance was dealt a body-blow from which it would never recover and the city was left in ruins, that which remained of it was destroyed by the German army before they retreated. The most important fact however, for this thesis, are the two demands the Poles made when they surrendered; that they be treated as official prisoners of war,⁶⁵ and therefore would be come under the Geneva Convention, secondly that civilians would be treated humanely. This in itself is astonishing, as the German army had a long standing reputation for taking an extremely dim view of insurgency as being against the lawful rules of war.⁶⁶ It ensured that those involved would be sent to transit and prisoner of war camps, and not the other far more dreadful places but a key point is that it legitimised the struggle. It made them Polish soldiers, of the Polish state.

Those who longed for liberation in Prague waited longer before acting, the Prague Uprising occurred in the final days of the war in Europe. Although the Red Army was actually further from Prague at its start than it had been from Warsaw in 1944. The climax of it saw the Czechoslovak insurgents reach an arrangement with the German forces; German civilians and military personnel would be permitted to withdraw, and in return Prague

⁶² Bryant, Chad Carl. *Prague in Black* p66

⁶³ Bryant, Chad Carl. *Prague in Black* p180

⁶⁴ The halt order to the Red Army destroyed the only practical hope of support the Poles had, many think (with quite a large amount of justification) that it was a deliberate move to allow the crushing of the resistance.

⁶⁵ Davies, Norman. *Rising '44. The Battle for Warsaw*. London: Pan Books. 2004 pp 332-334

⁶⁶ Lipkes J. *Rehearsals: The German Army in Belgium, August 1914*, Leuven University Press 2007

would not be destroyed.⁶⁷ This was seen as the most important issue, even the start of the uprising had been opened with the words: “Come with us! We are defending Prague! “We will defend Prague! Prague exists and it will remain free!”⁶⁸ Greater than revenge, greater than force was the promise that the cultural heart of the country would remain intact. Both countries retained what was important to them; the Poles fought for God, Honour and Fatherland amidst the ruins of a shattered Warsaw, and the Czechs ensured that their culture, their truth prevailed. The comparison between the two cities in 1945 is stark (see figures 3+4):



(Left: Figure 3, Warsaw January 1945⁶⁹. Right: Figure 4, Prague May 1945⁷⁰)

These two perspectives of resistance would have their effect on how opposition to Communism was organised. In Poland it centred on two organisations; Solidarity and the Catholic Church, both of which could mobilise huge amounts of people. Conflict between the Communist state and the Catholic Church became a defining cleavage between two interpretations of the nation. The culture clash which occurred during the celebrations of the millennial celebration of the Christianisation of Poland reflected this, the government stressed the 1000th anniversary of the first Polish state and the Church the Christianisation

⁶⁷ Skilling, Gordon H. *The Czechoslovak Struggle for National Liberation in World War II* The Slavonic and East European Review Vol. 39, No. 92 (Dec., 1960) , pp. 174-197

⁶⁸ Dominik Jůn. *Czechs commemorate anniversary of Prague Uprising*. Radio Praha. 05/05/2008 <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curaffrs/czechs-commemorate-anniversary-of-prague-uprising>

⁶⁹ Jankowski, Stanisław and Ciborowski, Adolf "Warszawa 1945 i dziś" Wydawnictwo Interpress, Warszawa, 1971, p66

⁷⁰ Anon, *Czechoslovakia 1918-1992 in dates* Radio Praha. <http://old.radio.cz/en/html/ceskoslovensko.html>

of the country. Both had "rival, and mutually exclusive, interpretations of [Poland's baptism] significance."⁷¹ Again Poland faced two rival systems of authority.

Opposition in Poland was in this context and it focused on ideas which appealed to the Polish psyche; with Catholic social teaching and a strong nationalist backing, Solidarity practiced grassroots large scale mobilisation, the leader was not an intellectual but an electrician. Intellectuals mostly acted as advisors.⁷² The irony of the situation was that a solidly working class movement overthrew Communism in its country. Before it was banned it was estimated to have 9 million members, including half the Communist party. Solidarity was identified with the nation⁷³ and it represented a truly separate Polish nation, not like the Communist government which was seen as receiving its instructions from Moscow. One of the things the Polish Communist state never did truly accomplish was to connect itself completely with the Polish nation, Solidarity achieved that through using means which were already well ingrained within the Polish national psyche. Just like when under German occupation, when the state controlling them was hated, the Poles made a new state. Solidarity used the same methods of providing an alternate system and way of living as a Pole.

In keeping with the focus on culture,⁷⁴ the most famous Czech opposition movement: Charter 77 consisted of writers, artists and prominent intellectuals. It consisted of around 1,800 signatories by 1989.⁷⁵ The movement lacked the numbers of the Poles, notably the Velvet Revolution succeeded due to mass action which Charter 77 could not itself provide but could serve to inspire. The Chartists managed to harness the need of the public for an alternate cultural life, in a state where all cultural aspects were under close scrutiny and control this served to be revolutionary. This moved the struggle from merely a political argument to a deeper national debate over the freedom of cultural life. Havel commenting on the trial of the band, 'The Plastic People of The Universe' states:

⁷¹ Davies, Norman. *God's Playground*. P15

⁷² Baumann, Zygmunt. *Intellectuals in East-Central Europe: Continuity and Change*. East European Politics and Societies 1987, no 1 pp162-186

⁷³ Havel, Václav. *To The Castle and Back* p263

⁷⁴ I am deliberately avoiding talking about Slovak nationalism and culture here. Throughout this piece I will mostly be focused on the Czech perspective of matters.

⁷⁵ Univerzita Karlova. *Podpisy Prohlášení Charty 77 (1977–1989)* <http://libpro.cts.cuni.cz/charta/>

“Their trial was not a confrontation of two differing political forces or conceptions, but two differing conceptions of life. On the one hand, there was the sterile Puritanism of the post-totalitarian establishment and, on the other hand, unknown young people who wanted no more than to be able to live within the truth, to play the music they enjoyed, to sing songs that were relevant to their lives, and to live freely in dignity and partnership”⁷⁶

The Chartists succeeded because they were able to tap into something which the Communist state could not provide. People flocked to Solidarity because it could supply “God, Honour, Fatherland.” Charter 77 provided the option of “Living in Truth,” something anathema to a regime where the truth was routinely distorted and twisted on a daily basis, it provided an alternate way of living. Few signed the Charter, but by existing and appealing to a cultural nationalism it was able to act as an inspiration to others. The moves by the authorities to suppress a way of life which they disagreed with had led to that way of life becoming a means of protest. Between the hidebound gerontocracy of Husák and sex, drugs and Rock n’ Roll it was clear what would appeal to the younger generation. It was a fight which the usual methods of government control of cultural life of the country had no effect on. Tom Stoppard phases this point best in his recent play ‘Rock n’ Roll’ where the character of Jan states that his dissident friend Ferdinand (a stand-in for Havel) is free and Jirous of the ‘Plastics’ is in jail:

“because the policeman insulted *him*. About his hair. Jirous doesn’t cut his hair. It makes the policeman angry, so he starts something and it ends with Jirous in gaol. But what is the policeman angry about? What difference does long hair make? The policeman is angry about his fear. The policeman’s fear is what makes him angry. He’s frightened by indifference. Jirous doesn’t *care*. He doesn’t care enough even to cut his hair. The policeman isn’t frightened by *dissidents*! Why should he be? Police *love* dissidents, like the Inquisition loved heretics. Heretics give meaning to the defenders of the faith. ... But the Plastics don’t care at all. They’re unbribeable.

⁷⁶ Havel, Václav. *The Power of the Powerless*.
http://vaclavhavel.cz/showtrans.php?cat=clanky&val=72_aj_clanky.html&typ=HTML

They're coming from somewhere else, from where the Muses come from. They're not heretics. They're pagans."⁷⁷

It would be easy to claim that this anarchic attitude did not have elements of nationalism, but that would be untrue. While dissatisfaction with the regime was focused in the cultural sphere, Czech nationalism has always been linked with cultural life and the demonstrations which toppled the regime were no exception, as Ladislav Holý points out ideas associated with the nation had a habit of becoming fused together: "all the Nationalist symbols were fused at the equestrian statue of St Wenceslas; a Czechoslovak flag was tied to the leg of the horse, pictures of Masaryk and Dubček were displayed beneath it, and its plinth was covered with posters demanding freedom."⁷⁸ The demonstrations also erupted on the anniversary of significant events in Czech history,⁷⁹ in this case the anniversary of the storming of Czech universities by the Nazi authorities which led to the execution of many students and lecturers and the deportation of many others to concentration camps. There were also demonstrations on the 20th anniversary of Jan Palach's death.

This presents an interesting paradox, the most prominent leaders of the movement for Czech independence from the Hapsburgs (such as Masaryk) and those involved in Charter 77 (such as Havel) advocated a humanist approach. How could this contribute to nationalist feeling? The answer is that Masaryk's philosophy regarding nations has persevered within Czech memory, Zdeněk Suda describes it in the following terms: "Masaryk argued that a nation is not an accidental cluster of anthropologically similar humans but a body of conscious individuals bound together by a shared system of values. This bond he called a 'programme'"⁸⁰ This is perhaps the best explanation, people were seen as tied not by language and ethnicity but by values and beliefs. Havel adopts this attitude too, the principle of "Living in Truth" is indeed based upon it, that civic and cultural values are a more inclusive and better way of organising society. Is it any surprise then that Communism in Czechoslovakia faced the most opposition when it tried to infringe on civic and cultural life; Jan Palach burned himself in opposition to press censorship, Charter 77

⁷⁷ Stoppard, Tom. *Rock n' Roll*. Faber & Faber. 2006 p36

⁷⁸ Holý, Ladislav. *Great Czech and Little Czech*. P56

⁷⁹ Holý, Ladislav. *Great Czech and Little Czech*. P42

⁸⁰ Suda, Zdeněk. *The Curious Side of Modern Czech Nationalism* Czech Sociological Review, Vol. 9, No. 2, The Relevance of Ernest Gellner's Thought Today (FALL 2001), pp. 225-234

formed after the trial of the “Plastic People of the Universe,” state insistence on controlling all forms of dialogue provoked a harsh response. There was a state yes, but it was not their state, no more than Communist Poland represented what the Poles thought a state should be. Suda summarizes the viewpoint:

“The Czechs realised that mere international status of a sovereign state does not guarantee freedom to its citizens; that a nation is free only if each of its members is free. Forty years spent in the role of a Soviet satellite, too, brought again to their attention the merits of the alternative concept of national solidarity presented by Masaryk, a solidarity based not on external anthropological or linguistic affinities but on a consensus about basic social values.”⁸¹

This overview has aimed to demonstrate that a nation represents what people believe it represents. Acts of opposition are remembered by how they fit into this scene of representation; Palach was a student who burned himself for the sake of values dear to the Czechs, his being a student helped represent those values. Siwiec burned himself not for God or Fatherland but for Czechoslovakia and so remained forgotten by his fellow Poles. National narratives work by appealing to the nation; Solidarity succeeded because it could create a separate Poland within the Communist state, Charter 77 did much the same thing when it encouraged “Living in Truth” this movements succeeded due to their appeal to those for whom Communism was crushing a part of what it meant to be Polish or Czech. These viewpoints shape who we are, how we react and how we view the past. It would only be exaggerating a little to state that the Poles believed in God and Poland, the Czechs believed in Masaryk.

Factually however there is much doubt to this, there has been a good deal of work done on the “Castle Myth” in Czech culture. Revisionist have done a large amount of work on showing some of the flaws and faults within interwar Czechoslovakia, and the way intolerance gained a foothold in the country. Mary Heinmann presents an in-depth, but rather overly spiteful, look at it and there is a good amount of truth to what she states; Czechoslovak democracy was not perfect,⁸² there were deep issues in the Czech attitude

⁸¹ Suda, Zdeněk. *Czech Nationalism*

⁸² Orzoff, Andrea *Battle for the Castle the Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe*. 2009 Oxford University Press. P220

towards minorities and the Slovaks.⁸³ The First Republic still however remained fairer, more open and democratic than anywhere else in the region, it had flaws certainly and the men who made and ran it were all too fallible, as are all men.⁸⁴ What Heinmann fails to grasp however is that even if the “Castle Myth” is a myth it remains a good one; one to inspire people, one to encourage a system based on its perceived values. That itself does some good. The different attitudes had effects under Communism; while the Poles organised underground Scout troops, the Czech organised underground Jazz bands.⁸⁵

The Polish narrative also contains some myths, ones which are arguably more destructive and dangerous. As mentioned before the three main elements of the national motto are centred a combination of the nation and the state; it is a Polish-Catholic God, Polish honour must be protected, the Polish fatherland must be made safe. The genesis of this viewpoint can be seen in the contrasting views of Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski on Polish nationhood. Each had a separate ideal vision of the nation; Piłsudski’s favoured a multi-ethnic state, based on the historical Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which would counter any threat from Poland’s former colonial masters. Dmowski and his National Democrats argued for a homogenised state, with the reasoning that the fall of the Commonwealth had been due to its multi-ethnic and multi-religious character making it weak. Dmowski’s admiration of social Darwinism led him to argue that strong nations survived while weak ones perished.⁸⁶ This of course had the effect of creating a very exclusive nationalism for the followers of Dmowski; ethnicity, language and religion were seen as the defining aspects of Polishness. He stressed the Piast state which led a, more or less, homogenous Poland in the 10th-14th centuries as an ideal past. There was more, the view of social-Darwinist influenced history was frightening:

"A thousand years ago and more, the Polish population had supposedly lived on its ancestral land in unity and harmony, ruled by the benevolent hand of its first legendary ruler, a peasant called Piast....however, the Poles lost their unity and lost

⁸³ Heimann, Mary. *Czechoslovakia: The State That Failed*. London: Yale University Press, 2009. P114

⁸⁴ *The Economist*. Czechoslovakia: A chequered history. 19/11/2009.
<http://www.economist.com/node/14902546>

⁸⁵ Applebaum. *Iron Curtain*. P494

⁸⁶ Dabrowski, Patrice. *Uses and Abuses of the Polish Past by Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski* Source: The Polish Review, Vol. 56, No. 1/2, COMMEMORATING JÓZEF PIŁSUDSKI (2011), pp. 73-109

control of their native land. All manner of aliens and intruders - Germans, Jews, Ukrainians and Russians ...took large parts of Poland's towns and countryside for themselves....Poland was robbed of her inheritance. So the message was clear. All patriotic Poles had a duty to unite and drive all foreigners from their native soil: 'Poland for the Poles!'"⁸⁷

The “us and them” divide within this view makes it vital above all that Poles stand together. Piłsudski’s viewpoint was contrary to this, he envisioned a romantic, revolutionary Poland, which was an ethical principle and a home to Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and all the other ethnic minorities which were part of the state. The Commonwealth before the Partitions was seen not as the weak state of Dmowski’s view but as a trailblazer in modern inclusive society. The two interpretations of history represent a cleavage which shapes a vast amount of current Polish discourse.⁸⁸

These national narratives, myths and concepts of the nation play a large role in the way it is imagined and inform most of the other matters within this thesis. This chapter has focused on them from a historical perspective, later ones shall investigate how they function in the present and how they are used in the present. Currently however the other two pillars shall be used to demonstrate some of the ways they reinforce and influence opinions and national memory with these two countries.

⁸⁷ Hosking, Geoffrey A. and Schöpflin, George. *Myths and Nationhood*. 1997 Routledge. p. 152.

⁸⁸ Dabrowski, Patrice. *Uses and Abuses*

3.2 Popular Opinion

As mentioned previously this section will differ from the others, largely because it seeks to use quantitative methods to investigate how perspectives and viewpoints are within larger groups. For this reason I decided to perform a survey of people under 28,⁸⁹ while it received a relatively low response rate of seventy-one people I aim to use this in conjunction with the research in the previous chapter and the following one to present a bigger picture. It is my hope that in not depending solely upon this data, the danger of using smaller samples will be mitigated. The emphasis will be on repetition of memes and how often they appear in the two national groups surveyed. The aim is to organise this largely like an opinion poll, as essentially that is what it is. As this is a fairly simple poll by a beginner at statistics most of the theory behind it comes from George Gallup, father of modern polling, and his excellent work *The Public Opinion Referendum*⁹⁰ which aims to be a guide on projects such as this. The second influence is a minor one from the theories of Dr Sigmund Freud, namely regarding the language used within the survey and the need to relax the participant to allow the process of free association, and not to use leading questions.⁹¹ This last one seemed applicable due to my desire to get the broad and general impressions of the participants regarding the Communist era; if it was in English their language skills might fail them, or they might be nervous enough regarding a phrasing that they might not write an important detail, participants were encouraged to type all they could think of to get a broader impression of their views.

The first question was one of the most important, it asked what the first thoughts of the participant were when they thought of the period.⁹² The vast majority of items mentioned were sharply negative but in very specific manners for Czechs and for Poles. For Poles the five most mentioned things were; queues, food cards, rationing, martial law and Solidarity. For Czechs it was; no freedom, (mentioned far more often than anything else) 1968, emigration, planned economy and queues. In this case it reinforces the assertion

⁸⁹ The reason for the age of 28 was that it broadened the sample while not bringing in people who had a large amount of actual experience of the Communist period. An adult of 28, after all, would only have been 3 or 4 in 1989.

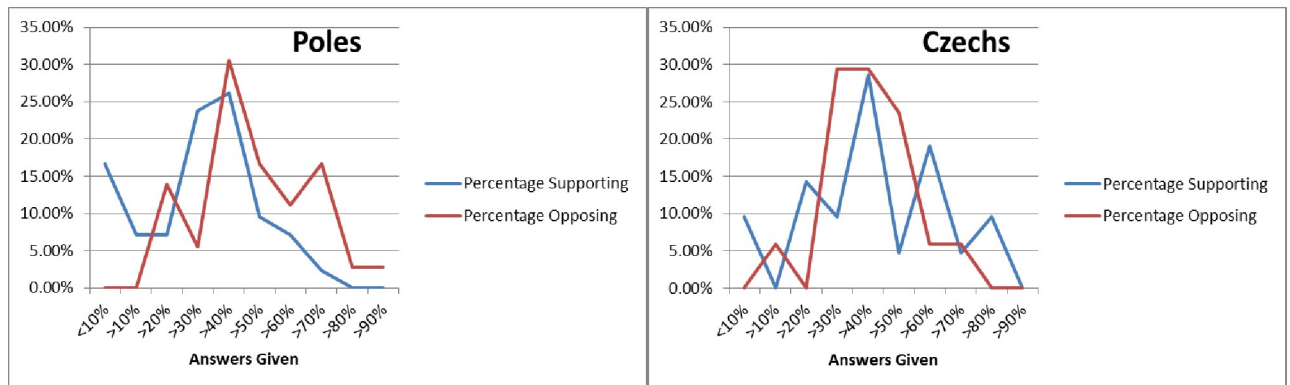
⁹⁰ Gallup, George Jr. *The Public Opinion Referendum* The Public Opinion Quarterly Vol. 35, No. 2 (Summer, 1971), pp. 220-227 Published by: Oxford University

⁹¹ Freud, Sigmund. *On the beginning of treatment*. 1910 p. 135

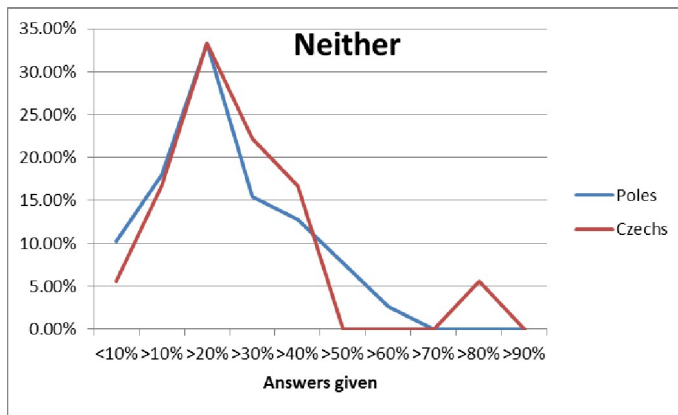
⁹² Results of this and other questions are available in the appendix.

made in the past events chapter that freedom of speech was a key concern for Czechs. The Polish comments mark the failure of the Communist state to provide the essentials its people needed, and the alternative offered by Solidarity.

The next question asked what percentage those questioned believed; supported, opposed and neither supported nor opposed the Communist government in their countries. The graphs are available below:



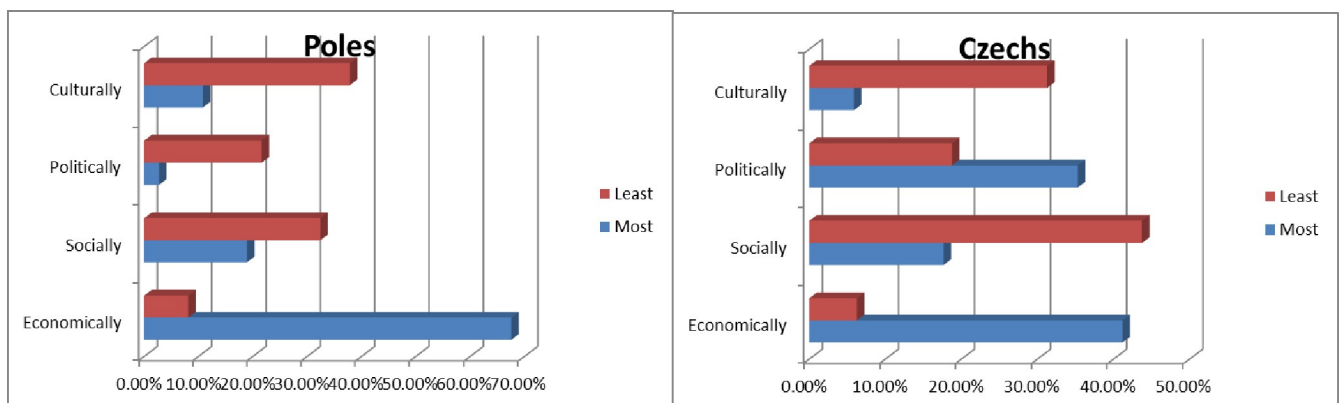
While for the majority of their course they remain similar, Poles gave a generally lower figure for those who had supported the Communist government; with a higher percentage believing that hardly anyone supported it, and a lower percentage towards the right hand of the graph. They also have a higher representation for opposing on the right of the graph. This is indicative of a more defined and solidified position. The Czech response being so high in opposing suggests a different definition of opposition, as I explained earlier the Polish opposition was centred on large-scale acts while the Czech was more small-scale. This suggests that the act of opposing the regime in your mind and committing minor actions of rebellion is considered satisfactory, which is in keeping with Havel's philosophy of "Living in Truth". The responses for neither supporting nor opposing synchronised almost exactly, both reaching their peak in the farthest left quarter.



This suggests, in both cases, a tendency to firmly establish someone as for or against.

Removing the complexity that: "Sometimes the regime's passive opponents and reluctant collaborators were actually one and the same"⁹³ This is indicative of a narrative, there is a clear for and against with the grey areas in between being largely forgotten.

Thirdly, people were asked how they thought their country had changed the most and the least since 1989. Four categories were given; cultural, economic, political and social.



Poles were far more likely to say that economic change had been greatest. Czechs viewed political change as being greater than Poles; indicating that a major source of the failure of the Communist regime among young Poles is seen as its failure to provide, while for Czechs it was the political system which oppressed them. In this analysis I am using the information gathered in the first question to complement the findings, as it seems to be backed up by this data; the key failings of the Communist government in that question remained economic for the Poles, and political for the Czechs.

⁹³ Applebaum, *Iron Curtain* p439

The last question asked everyone to name five people which they thought had had an important impact on their country during the Communist period. In order the highest five for each country were:

Poland: Lech Wałęsa, mentioned by 63%

General Jaruzelski, mentioned by 57% (often while being called a traitor to the nation)

John Paul II, mentioned by 51%

Edward Gierek, mentioned by 45%

Władysław Gomułka, mentioned by 36%

Czech Republic: Václav Havel, mentioned by 63%

Klement Gottwald, mentioned by 56%

Gustav Husák, mentioned by 56%

Mikhail Gorbachev, mentioned by 50%

Josef Stalin, mentioned by 50%

These demonstrate the prominence of certain figures, interestingly the percentages given compare almost exactly for the top three figures in Poland and the Czech Republic. Opposition movements were largely boiled down into a number of key figures; Václav Havel for the Czechs, Lech Wałęsa and John Paul II for the Poles. This is interesting because not only do these leaders embody some of the values I described in the previous chapter but there were alternative opposition leaders who were largely forgotten by the respondents. Cardinal František Tomášek, was not mentioned at all by Czechs despite his work for the opposition. Intellectual and artistic dissidents were barely mentioned by Poles, despite their existing and being active. These answers provide a narrative; these top figures eclipse all others, because their movements were able to take into the national spirit but also because the national spirit still views them as representative. The highest ranking Communist leaders in the poll also are interesting as they symbolise much of what was hated. Many of the

respondents, without being prompted, decided to vocalise just how much they disliked these figures; Jaruzelski was a Polish soldier who turned his forces against Poland-Solidarity,⁹⁴ his actions may be seen as a “lesser evil” but they are still counted as negative.⁹⁵ Gottwald was a “little Stalin” whose total and brutal grip over cultural and social life in his country makes him the complete opposite of Havel’s playwright-President. Heroes and villains are seen within the national memory established in the previous chapter.

A further development is this, only the Czechs had foreign leaders within the top five. This will be explored within the course of the next chapter but ties into Kundera’s theories on the “lot of small nations”⁹⁶ The idea that politically and militarily that would be pushed around by the larger nations but that they retained a moral correctness while doing so, agency is not in the hands of the smaller nations but morality is.

This data therefore reinforces some of the ideas posited previously and will serve as a complement to further discussions on the nature of national memory within this thesis. It had made apparent quantitatively some of the differences which were theorised and like everything else in this thesis is intended to be used in conjunction with the other studies.

⁹⁴ I’m deciding to use this term to represent the formation of an alternate state within Poland.

⁹⁵ Repa, Jan “*Profile: Poland’s last communist leader*”. British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News. 16/05/2001 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1332541.stm>

⁹⁶ Kundera, Milan. *The Czech Lot*. Listy. December 1968

3.3 Švejk and Sienkiewicz: Cultural Comparisons

The third pillar, cultural works, presents two main areas of interest; works which have in the past contributed to national identity and memory, and works which exist as expressions of national memory in addition to their normal cultural role of influences. Major past cultural works will first be looked at to demonstrate recurring motifs, the chapter will then move on to looking at popular culture in the post 1989 period.

If there is any defining figure in Czech culture, it is Josef Švejk; faithful soldier of the great Austro-Hungarian Empire, seller of stolen dogs, conscripted by a state he despises, into an army which is a shambles, for a war he does not believe in. Through his travels Švejk exposes the stupidity of the Hapsburg Empire by religiously obeying it to the point of absurdity,⁹⁷ through it all Švejk manages to survive not through being a heroic soldier or hero but by feigning stupidity and exasperating his superiors. His legacy is staggering: “The ideal Czech dissident is not Havel or Palach or even Hus but Švejk, the fat, beer-loving, bumbling, self-proclaimed, certified idiot of a soldier. When Czechs resist a political power, Švejk comes back to life.”⁹⁸ Acts of opposition by the Czechs to; Nazism, Communism and even their own post-1989 government followed a pattern of non-violent disruption and then feigning ignorance:

“At the end of the Prague Spring, Czech leaders were not looking for the heat of summer and a Hungarian-style of Soviet invasion so they called for the people to avoid violence. Underground radio and newspapers asked Czech citizens to remove street signs and house numbers. When Russians asked for directions they became frustrated with the “švejkian” answers that were cooperative but confusing and impossible to follow. The railway workers worked their magic again and misrouted, delayed, and lost Soviet equipment.”⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Hašek, Jaroslav. *The Good Soldier Švejk and his Fortunes in the World War*. Trans. Cecil Parrott Penguin 1974

xv

⁹⁸ Bludau, Heidi. *The Good Dissident Švejk: an exploration of Czech morality and cultural survival*. Kosmas. Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences. 2009

⁹⁹ Bludau, Heidi. *The Good Dissident Švejk*

Signs were even changed to read “Dubček” the reform Communist whose actions had started the Warsaw Pact invasion. These are the type of actions one takes when it’s clear that any opposition would be useless and indeed harmful, especially when you feel strongly in the right.

Czech cultural discourse has been preoccupied with this type of situation, what role can one’s actions achieve if it seems that they will accomplish nothing? This can best be seen in the debate between Václav Havel and Milan Kundera shortly after the Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968. Kundera argued that political repression in the country was nothing next to the survival of the nation’s cultural life:

“it hasn’t accepted doctrinal restraints on intellectual life, it hasn’t renounced itself, it hasn’t betrayed its principles, it hasn’t surrendered its people, and not only has it not lost the support of the public; at the very moment of mortal danger it united behind itself the entire nation, whose internal existence is stronger than it was before August.”¹⁰⁰

He stressed the moral superiority of the Czechoslovak position in the face of overwhelming force. Havel responded that cultural life had to be public and that remaining content with one’s “lot” merely created inaction which then doomed the rest of the country to inaction.¹⁰¹ Havel explicitly mentions the kind of national self-delusions which are common in collective memory and stressed that the Czechoslovak people had a concrete responsibility to act for their country, only by doing that could they affect change:

“In closing: if we accepted the premise that Kundera has outlined for us -- the notion that tiny, ill-placed, good, intelligent, tormented and condemned-to-torment Czechoslovakia became by its own assiduity the most important point in the world, for which its evil neighbors, whom it did not select, cruelly punished it, so that the only thing that remains for it is its spiritual (and cultivated in private, apparently) superiority over them -- if we accepted this kitschy notion of our “lot,” we would not only find ourselves far away from all traditions of criticism (not just Czech, but any

¹⁰⁰ Kundera, Milan. *The Czech Lot*

¹⁰¹ Carey, Phyllis. *Critical Essays on Václav Havel*. G.k. Hall & co 1997 p42

kind); we would furthermore fall into national self-delusions that could paralyze us -- as a national community -- for decades”¹⁰²

The divide centred around essentially conservative and activist positions. Kundera maintained that there was the Czechs had a certain fate or “lot” while Havel stressed believed that culture could only affect change if it acted, an idea he would later refine into the concept of “Living in Truth” and not surrendering to the lies of the regime. Later Havel would state that keeping such truth alive could serve to inspire others and was useful, as the overthrow of any dictator is a group act:¹⁰³ “History is not something that takes place “elsewhere”; it takes place here; we all contribute to making it”¹⁰⁴ It is worth noting here that even Havel’s perspective, which was arguably one of the most activist among Czechs, seems passive next to a lot of the Polish positions. Czech opposition have always been more subversive than direct and very focused on cultural life, this spills over into national memory through defining what constitutes opposition and collaboration.

When Poland lost its sovereignty it was writers such as Adam Mickiewicz and Henryk Sienkiewicz who tried to continue a distinct Polish culture. Their writings inhabit a staunchly romantic nationalist niche and invariably are written from a singularly Polish perspective, using historical novels, and national epics as a medium. They strongly opposed the powers which had divided Poland and supported the reestablishment of the Polish state. Their writings are often virulently anti-Russian.

Mickiewicz depicted Poland as the “Christ of Europe”¹⁰⁵ cruelly slaughtered only to resurrect itself, dying for the sins of Europe, a shield against a barbaric east. This merged well with the role of religion among the Poles and has become one of the most enduring self-images of Poland; whether it be in its original context, the Soviet-Polish war, Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Katyń or the period of Communist rule. A side effect of this was the ubiquity of narratives which present Poland as an eternal victim.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Havel, Václav. *The Czech Lot?* Tvar 1969

¹⁰³ Havel, Václav. *Disturbing the Peace*. Vintage. 1991 pp175

¹⁰⁴ Havel, Václav. *Disturbing the Peace* p180

¹⁰⁵ Koropeczyj, Roman Robert. *Adam Mickiewicz: The Life of a Romantic*. Cornell 2008 P197

¹⁰⁶ Lim, Jie-Hyun. Walker, Barbara and Lambert, Peter. *Mass Dictatorship and Memory as Ever Present Past* Macmillan 2014 p64

Sienkiewicz wrote a trilogy of historical novels set in Poland's past; filled with the cavalry charges of the Winged Hussars, glorious battles and the decency and piety of the Polish people. It is hard to imagine any image which clashes more with Švejk, and yet there were only about three decades between when *The Trilogy* and *The Good Soldier Švejk* were published.

These works show a continuing legacy under Communism; novels and poems continued to be read (in many cases because even the authorities know that banning them would lead to riots.) Plays were also performed, but these were more likely to be banned since they were a social and visual form:

“In 1955, Adam Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve* [1823-1832] was staged in Warsaw. The play presents Russians in an unfavorable light, and at that time the Russians were perceived as the chief perpetrators of Communist mischief. *Forefathers' Eve* played to a full and enthusiastic house until the authorities shut it down. In 1956, during the Hungarian Revolution, theaters in Warsaw and Cracow staged *November Night* by Stanislaw Wyspiański, another drama of anti-Russian resistance dating back to the early twentieth century. (...)The Polish theater played a cat-and-mouse game with the Communist authorities, as historical plays about Polish resistance were successfully staged and then banned, and then staged again”¹⁰⁷

Theatre found a way to subtly convey ideas.¹⁰⁸ Shakespeare became particularly good for this means, as his enormous reputation discouraged attempts to ban him.¹⁰⁹ *Hamlet* and *King Lear* were favourites for their subject matter: “The line ‘Denmark is a prison’ could be understood as an allusion to the Soviet occupation of Poland. ‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark’ had the same force. Even the division of King Lear’s kingdom could be seen as a metaphor for the division of post-war Poland and the loss of eastern territories.”¹¹⁰ The crowning achievement of art in this respect is to apply subtle critique, and many people were ingenious in this respect.

¹⁰⁷ Thompson, Ewa. *Ways of Remembering*

¹⁰⁸ The work of Krystyna Skusznicka is particularly interesting in this regard.

¹⁰⁹ Makaryk, Irena and Price, Joseph. *Shakespeare in the World of Communism and Socialism*. University of Toronto Press. 2013. P228

¹¹⁰ Applebaum. *Iron Curtain*. P382

Films also found means of including taboo subjects while avoiding the censor, Andrzej Wajda's film *Popiół i diament*¹¹¹ (*Ashes and Diamonds*) has a scene where two characters sit at a bar and set two glasses of vodka on fire while reciting names. No one states that these are supposed to be acts of remembrance for friends killed in the Warsaw Uprising, (taboo under Communism) people however understood the meaning. *Seksmisja* (*Sexmission*),¹¹² by Juliusz Machulski sees two men frozen only to wake up in an authoritarian regime run by women, whose apparatchiks meet and have conferences in a manner similar to the Polish government, their riot police resemble ZOMO. To avoid being "naturalised" into women the two men escape into what the government claims is a hellish wasteland but is in fact a paradise, and they even do it by jumping over a wall. Some are less subtle, one character remarks upon finding out that he's been frozen for fifty years: "But I was due an apartment in 1997!"

These cultural ideas have been consolidated into the national memory of Communism, two recent films which were both put forward by their governments for the Academy Awards; *Hořící keř*¹¹³ (*Burning Bush*) and *Katyn*¹¹⁴ provide examples of this happening. They remain distinct not only in terms of story, but in the way and manner events are depicted. The director of *Hořící keř* is Polish but it is a Czech film and I intend to demonstrate how it ties in with the Czech narrative of Communism.

Katyn takes its name from the Soviet execution of much of the Polish officer corps (20,000) in the Katyn forest in 1940, an act which distinguishes itself even among other Soviet crimes. Focusing on two Polish officers Andrzej and Jerzy and their families it depicts the act and the reaction to it. It shows the act of the executions as Christ-like, connecting the deaths of the Poles with the death of the country. In a "Gethsemane moment" Andrzej is offered the chance of escaping from his fate with his family by fleeing before the NKVD come for him, but refuses because of his oath to the military and his duty to his country. Jerzy who survives the war, enlists in the People's Army of Poland. Upon realising the truth of the massacre, due to some clothing he lent Andrzej, he shoots himself in the head because his personal honour will not allow him to work for those who killed his comrades.

¹¹¹ Wajda, Andrzej. *Popiół i diament* (1958) Zespół Filmowy "Kadr"

¹¹² Machulski, Juliusz. *Seksmisja* (1984) Zespół Filmowy "Kadr"

¹¹³ Holland, Agnieszka. *Hořící keř* (2013) HBO

¹¹⁴ Wajda, Andrzej. *Katyn*. (2007) Akson Studio

This is not depicted as an act of protest, but as one of purification. Religious symbolism plays a heavy role:

“Religious symbolism is rife in Katyn. In one early scene, the character Anna rushes to remove a coat that is obscuring the face of the man underneath. The coat is decorated with a tiny blue ribbon, and so Anna believes the man underneath is her husband. The coat is instead being used to cover a fallen statue of Jesus Christ, and a priest wordlessly pulls the coat back over the statue once Anna has removed it. The stand-in of Jesus for Anna’s husband, Andrzej, can be interpreted as foreshadowing. The scene foreshadows his later death, and positions him as a martyr akin to Jesus.”¹¹⁵

If I was asked to describe Katyn in three words, I would not hesitate in saying: “God, Honour, Fatherland” precisely because so many of the themes, concepts and ideas of it are based around this motto.

Hořící keř, on the other hand takes a different approach. The opening titles show 1960s dancing intercut with footage of Warsaw Pact tanks in Prague, a good montage which establishes the two in opposition, and builds to showing the two coming into conflict. Palach’s act is only seen briefly at the opening of the film, and the plot isn’t focused on his character but rather on his family and those who get involved in his case. His act is not romanticised but is horrific, even from the brief glimpses we see. As the film continues we see more and more acts by the government which are taken in the name of public safety and order and see that same government exert more and more pressure to convince those involved to stay in line. This is where the film excels, in showing petty and everyday abuses of power and in depicting the ways that those who do not agree with the narrative are harassed and pressured; The lawyer who finds her life monitored, her doctor husband who loses his job, her colleague who gives information to the secret police in return for amnesty for his daughter, the judge who is casually molested and threatened by the defense attorney, Mrs Palachova: confined to a mental hospital. Holland however provides little glimpses of humanity to allow you to see the characters as fallible human beings such as the secret policeman who muses about the joy of his first grandchild to his informant. The

¹¹⁵ Contess, Kate. *History and Memory in Wajda’s Katyn* (unpublished dissertation) Duke 2012

pivotal point of the film comes not in a scene of high drama but in a simple conversation. Outside the courtroom Dagmar Burešova (Mrs Palachova's lawyer) talks with Villem Nový, whom she is prosecuting for slander:

Burešova: I would like to know one thing: why do you do it? I understand that in prison your life was at stake, but now? What are you looking for now?

Nový: The Truth.

B: But you know that it's all a lie.

N: Madam you understand absolutely nothing. I am a politician, and for a politician the Truth is what is beneficial for the nation.

(...) Try not to take it too personally.

B: Would you have the courage to say that to Mrs. Palach?

This becomes the crime of the regime; it subverts the truth, for its purposes, twists the justice and police systems to enforce its view, bribes, coerces, imprisons, all in the name of serving those very people on which it wields this appalling power and the worst thing is even those in charge know that it's for a lie. It is worse than opposing the national motto, it is a corruption of it. The film ends with Mrs. Palachova's case defeated, Jan Palach's tomb moved and his body cremated -burned a second time. The epilogue provides the final ending, moving the action to 1989. Stating that; as long as people talk, discuss and remember Jan Palach then the truth cannot be killed or corrupted. The reason? Truth Prevails, if we choose to live in truth.

These two films represent starkly different attitudes toward the memory of Communism; *Katyn* depicts a violent crime against the idea of Poland, it focuses on the Christ-like nature of those killed and associates their death with the death of a free Poland. This is entirely in keeping with past uses of these themes in Polish culture and a continuation of the legacy of Polish Romanticism applied to the national memory of Communism. *Hořící keř* follows in the tradition of Havel and Masaryk, but also depicts the Švejkish element of pointing out the absurdity of power. The legal case in the film has little hope of actually succeeding, but it is followed because it demonstrates the government as

what it is, and aims to be public enough that everyone knows the truth. It is not outright Švejking but it certainly contains elements of it, and there does exist a certain element of dark humour at the situation in the film. Both these films present fine examples of the way our cultural heritage shape our views of the past.

4. Effects Today

*Once our God was History . . . She formed us, we were molded by our great past, which gave us the right to demand a future better than that offered by People's Poland.*¹¹⁶ - **Andrzej Wajda,**

*"Today you can meet in the streets of Prague a shabbily dressed man who is not even himself aware of his significance in the history of the great new era. He goes modestly on his way, without bothering anyone. Nor is he bothered by journalists asking for an interview. If you asked him his name he would answer you simply and unassumingly: 'I am Švejk....'"*¹¹⁷

How is Communism viewed today? A Czech views it from a Czech perspective, A Pole from a Polish one, and a Brit from a British one. We are all shaped by our pasts but sometimes we have the ability to shape the past. How does this happen? Precisely the same way Masaryk, John Paul II, Havel, Wałęsa, Palach, Hašek, Wajda, Holland, Sienkiewicz, Mickiewicz, Piłsudski and Dmowski did. Create something which appeals to people, if an idea doesn't take root then it will not grow, this is how narratives are made. People believe what they want to believe.

Under Communism Poland shifted toward Dmowski's interpretation of history. His desire for an ethnically strong state was appealing to those who aimed to deport the Germans from the newly acquired territories and helped shore up the Nationalist credentials of the Communists.¹¹⁸ Now Poland faces a choice; Piłsudski or Dmowski? Is Poland to be "for the Poles" or is it to be part of a multi-ethnic confederation? The result will be down to how history is interpreted. Particularly the history of Communism, as that is in many cases still being written. If ethnic and religious unity against an un-Polish, un-Catholic Communism are stressed then Dmowski will win; moral rightness, multiculturalism and the need for freedom and it will go to Piłsudski. The main opposition movement, Solidarity, contained elements of both of these approaches. Like before, which interpretation is in vogue will largely be the result of present conditions. This divide does

¹¹⁶ Wajda, Andrzej. *Polityka*, 5 June 2004

¹¹⁷ Hašek. *Svejk* preface

¹¹⁸ Applebaum. *Iron Curtain* p431

however seem to be shaping Polish politics and not just from the obvious Europhile/Euroskeptic angle. There has been a general tearing down of myths as figures are attacked on past connections to Communism, the only major person remaining immune being John Paul II.¹¹⁹ The idea of universal victimhood (stemming from the national association with Christ) remains strong, the past and victimhood of Poland is often invoked as a reason for or against a measure; when it joined the EU debates in the *Sejm* on the sale of land invoked this,¹²⁰ and saw a divide emerge over the issue of killings of Jews at Jedwabne¹²¹ during the Second World War.¹²² Much of this can be attributed to the opening up of public space after Communism, Anthony Polonsky discusses the matter:

“It is clear that in Poland, history has formed a vocabulary for debate and a space for politics, to an unusual degree. That is to say that cultural and intellectual and political figures in Poland are prone to argue "in" history, using images and stories from the past to frame their discussions about the present. It is not clear to what degree this predilection is shared by the wider society (...) This development, together with the abandonment of long established myths, is a painful process, but a necessary part of the creation of a democratic and plural society.”¹²³

A further divide is the issue of the role of history in representing Communism. Is it to be highly critiqued, in case its crimes are forgotten by the young? As Adam Michnik points out this does run the risk of glorifying other repulsive groups simply for being anti-Communist.¹²⁴

While this chapter may have hinted that the Dmowski view is prevalent, matters seem to be changing: “over the past few years the importance of the romanticized military effort is on the wane. Nowadays Poles look to the past for examples of well-functioning political systems, of reason, effectiveness, and success on the international scene. There has

¹¹⁹ Galasińska, Aleksandra. *The Post-Communist Condition*. John Benjamins. 2010 p8

¹²⁰ Galasińska, Aleksandra. *The Post-Communist Condition* p35

¹²¹ A fascinating topic but one which would be out of my remit to discuss in much greater detail, particularly considering the wealth of scholarship which has been written on it. The important thing to note is that the issue of victimhood represents a fundamental divide in Polish society.

¹²² Wolentarska-Ochman, Ewa. *Collective Remembrance in Jedwabne: Unsettled Memory of World War II in Postcommunist Poland*. History & Memory, Volume 18, Number 1, Spring/Summer 2006, pp. 152-178

¹²³ Polonsky, Anthony. "The Conquest of History?" *Toward a Usable Past in Poland Lecture 1: An Assessment of the History of Poland since 1939*. Harvard Ukrainian Studies, Vol. 27, No. 1/4 (2004-2005), pp. 217-250

¹²⁴ Michnik, Adam "Mantra zamiast rozmowy," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 1-2 April 2000

also been a rise in "microhistory," that is, in the study of family and local histories."¹²⁵ This by itself means history is becoming a much more personal rather than national matter, largely due to the restriction of limitations and the end of state control over documents.

Whatever the result the positive to take away from this is that at least such matters are available for open discussion in public space, today in Poland the past is being shaped. Present events and the vicissitudes of politics will decide whose version gets accepted.

Last year in the Czech elections of October, the Communist party won just under 15% of the vote. During the campaign cardboard cut-outs with ropes around their necks had been placed above lampposts with Communist party posters on.¹²⁶ A large wave of dissatisfaction at the ruling and opposition parties had increased their vote-share substantially. The Czech Republic is unique in the region as having the only unreformed Communist party, indeed one of the key elements of Havel's speedy and bloodless transition had been not to ban it and not to remove all its members from the organisation of the state. The issue of how Communism is remembered in a country with a large and active Communist party is clearly relevant.

If there is a matter which will change how Czechs view Communism it will be the through the actions of their own government. Not due to authoritarianism or any such thing, but corruption and scandal. In Václav Havel's final play, *Leaving* a corrupt member of the government in cooperation with the sinister businessman Gambacci, steadily climbs the ladder of politics at the expense of the more honest former Chancellor, Vilem Reiger.¹²⁷ Such figures do not inspire respect, merely annoyance and disgust. Somewhich which grew to quite high heights in the October 2013 elections, in a classically Czech this annoyance was articulated by avant-garde art. A gigantic middle finger pointing at the Presidential Residence was erected on the Vltava.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Kwiatkowski, Piotr Tadeusz. *Collective Memory and Social Transition in Poland* International Journal of Sociology, Vol. 36, No. 4, Collective Memory and Social Transition in Poland (Winter, 2006/2007), pp. 3-7

¹²⁶ The Economist. *Czechs Brace For Growing Communist Influence After Elections*. 23/10/2013 <http://www.rferl.org/content/czech-elections-communists/25145714.html>

¹²⁷ Havel, Václav. *Leaving*. Faber & Faber 2007

¹²⁸ BBC *Czech floating finger sends president message* 21/10/2013 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24607870>

Czechs embraced the idea of democracy because they had figures like Masaryk and Havel to place on pedestals. Without such leaders, without a fairy-tale king in Prague Castle there is a risk. Masaryk and Havel set a high example, the difficulty was that every leader afterwards found themselves compared to them. Disgust and distrust of current politicians is what is most likely currently to lead to a change in the interpretation of Communism. As seen with the hanging figures though, the current dislike of Communism certainly outweighs any support for it.

Again these perspectives can be seen as being shaped by continuing national narratives, with the Polish focus on victimhood, land and God contrasted with the Czech emphasis on the legacy of Masaryk and Havel being the most obvious points. Importantly these exist in a state of change, whatever happens now the peoples of these two nations have far greater agency over the interpretation of their past, and what to do in their present.

5. Conclusion

“S’il n’y avait pas de Pologne il n’y aurait pas de Polonais!”
“If there was no Poland, there would be no Poles!”¹²⁹ Alfred Jarry

Perhaps we didn't win anyway. (the Cold War) Perhaps they just lost. Or perhaps, without the bonds of ideological conflict to restrain us any more, our troubles are just beginning.

John LeCarre, *The Secret Pilgrim*¹³⁰

Summarizing the argument of this thesis it seems that the persistence of narratives in national memories of the Communist era in Poland and the Czech Republic can be attributed to the appeal of certain key themes and ideas to the population. Hopefully this paper demonstrated how each event and issue is inevitably tied into larger themes when deciding how it is perceived. The best example of a motif for Poland and the Czech Republic are the national mottos, which stress certain perspectives of history but can also be appropriated. These perspectives are not static and national myths can be adapted and changed, as seen in the case of Piłsudski and Dmowski where rival and completely opposed interpretations maintained a constant struggle.

Also of importance is the symbiotic nature of collective memory, the present influences the past and the past influences the present. Collective memories are constructed slowly, over time but ultimately they are shaped both by past events and present ones acting in concert. The interdisciplinary nature of it remains important too. Since all the factors which are a part of the national memory have a dependence upon each other and therefore cannot be individually analysed in this context, one must include a number of fields drawn from study of the nation under investigation. In this example past events, culture and popular opinion formed the backbone of the investigation and were shown to interact greatly with each other, with all of them making reference to each other and contributing to the narrative.

¹²⁹ Jarry, Alfred. *Ubu Roi*. (trans David Ball) Norton Anthology of Drama 2010

¹³⁰ Le Carre, John. *The Secret Pilgrim*. Penguin 1990. Ch2

The end result of this is that, for nations with free speech, it placed the conception and creation of history squarely at the foot of the everyday person, others might have more individual agency but it is the vast majority of the people who actually decide what to remember and why. A further point is that because of this the people as a whole have a say in what their nation represents to the world, the responsibility to ensure that this does not descend into the more appalling aspects of nationalism lies with the citizens of the nation. Ultimately it is they who must decide, for good or ill. For this reason the national memory of historical events, particularly those which are still forming, are extremely important in the future course of the nation.

Ultimately, as Ewa Thompson points out in the opening quote of this piece, the groups which we practice collective memory with invariably are nations. For it is within nations that the conditions for such collectives emerge. This shows that little has replaced the nation as the primary way in which people visualise themselves. The implications of this are important; nations and nationalism are not themselves violent or exclusory, but can easily be made to be so. In understanding this we can move to prevent such things happening. In talking about the decline of the nation as a concept we risk hubris and falling victim to its worst excesses again. If our nations succumb to that we have only ourselves to blame.

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7.1 Appendix A: Survey Data for Poles

- (19) Queues - kolejki (mainly with an association with a shop)
- (17) kartki/vouchers given mainly for food and other goods - kartki na zakup produktów, mięso na kartki, towary na kartki, kartki na żywność
- (15) rationing/regulation/ empty shelves in shops/ lack of everything/lack of food and good in shops/small choice and availability/vinegar on shelves/no meat -reglamentacja, Reglamentacja produktów, pustki w sklepach, brak wszystkiego, puste półki sklepowe, niedobór żywności, Brak artykułów w sklepach, puste półki w sklepach, brak towaru w sklepie, mały wybór i trudna dostępność towarów, ocet na półkach, niedobór produktów, brak mięsa
- (10) martial law - stan wojenny
- (10) Solidarność
- (8) censorship - cenzura
- (8) strikes (this word itself 8 times)/protests/protests in shipyard in Gdańsk/worker's protests/strikes in years 1954, 1968, 1970 (those dates were mentioned twice)/shipyard in Gdańsk was mentioned at least 3 times (in total this association 12) - strajki, protesty w stoczni gdańskiej, stocznie, protesty robotników, strajki w roku 1954, 1968, 1970; stocznia gdańska, krwawo tłumione strajki
- June 1976 protests http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/June_1976_protests - Radom i Ursus
- (7) ZOMO <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ZOMO>, 'milicja', police - ZOMO, milicja, Policja i wojsko
- (7) Gierek, 'za gierka to było dobrze' – 'in Gierek times it was good' (sarcastic)
- (6) Poverty, lack of money - bieda, brak pieniędzy, niedostatek
- (5) Lech Wałęsa
- (5) planned economy - plany n-letnie, gospodarka sterowana, centralne planowanie, gospodarka odgórnie planowana, 300% normy,
- (4) communist architecture, so called 'wielka płyta' (type of a bulding and bulding material) - architektura komunistyczna, mieszkania z wielkiej płyty, bloki z wielkiej płyty, bloki wielomieszkaniowe
- (3) gen Jaruzelski– someone calls him 'zdrajca państwa' a traitor of the counrty
- (3) Gomułka,
- (3) greyness - szarość
- (3) Jerzy Popiełuszko
- (3) Pewex
- (2) Safety Office?, dunno how to translate it http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urz%C4%85d_Bezpiecze%C5%84stwa
- (2) Urząd Bezpieczeństwa, abbreviation: UB, ubecja
- (2) State Agricultural Farm http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Agricultural_Farm - PGR
- (2) Bolesław Bierut
- (2) bureaucracy - biurokracja
- (2) carnation/gillyflower for Women's Day - goździki na Dzień Kobiet, goździki
- (2) control - kontrola partii komunistycznej, kontrola
- (2) lack of perspectives - brak perspektywy
- (2) making travelling/leaving the country difficult - blokady w podróżach, ograniczenie mobilności
- (2) one party - partia, jedna partia
- (2) PRL
- (2) repressions /captivity - represje, l, zniewolenie
- (2) Stanisław Bareja (and his movies) - filmy Stanisława Bareji, Bareja
- (2) USSR - Związek radziecki
- (2) political persecutions / (1) dissidents in prisons - prześladowania polityczne, prześladowania polityczne, opozycjoniści w więzienach,
- 1st of May ceremonies - obchody pierwszomajowe,
- a brand of orangeade Ptyś - oranżada Ptyś
- a false vision of well-being - Fałszywa wizja dobrobytu.
- a phrase, literally „to soap someone's eyes”, means basically 'lying', to bluff - mydlenie oczu
- a saying that rhymes in polish: no matter if you stand or lie down, you'll get your payment - "czy się stoi czy się leży, się należy", 'czy się stoi czy się leży 2000 się należy'
- a special kind of furniture made out of a very shiny material that is supposed to look like wood - meble "na wysoki połysk",

a strong division between authority and society - silny podział władza-społeczeństwo,
 a type of coffee - Inka,
 absurdity chasing absurdity - absurd goniący absurd,
 abuse - przemoc
 alcoholism - alkoholizm,
 apathy - apatia,
 authoritarianism on every level of life/in every aspect of life - autorytaryzm na każdym szczeblu życia
 car Fiat 126p - maluch,
 communists in government till today - komuchy w rządzie do dzisiaj
 conections - układy
 conections on a high rank positions - układy na wysokich stanowiskach
 corruption - korupcja
 demagogy - demagogia
 dirt (slang) - syf
 evil - zło
 falsified elections - fałszowane wybory
 fight - walka,
 fur coats and berets and the type of glasses that Jaruzelski wore - futra + berety (oraz okulary Jaruzelskiego),
 game England -Poland, Wembley 1973 - mecz Anglia-Polska na Wembley (1973)
 government debt - zadłużenie państwa
 helplessness - bezsilność,
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udarnik> - przodownik pracy,
<http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C5%82oporobotnicy> chłopo-robotnik
 IIWW - II Wojna Światowa,
 informers - konfidencja
 internments - internowania,
 interrogations - przesłuchania
 intervention in Czechoslovakia - interwencja w Czechosłowacji,
 irony - ironia
 Jacek Kaczmarski
 Jacek Kuroń
 lack of individual and social responsibility - brak odpowiedzialności indywidualnej i społecznej
 lack of work (didn't mean it as unemployment :/) - brak pracy
 monotony - monotonia,
 mug (as a face, very impolite) - mordy
 murders – morderstwa
 my parents wearing flares and afro-hairstyle - noszenie "dzwonów" oraz fryzury afro przez moich rodziców
 Nil,
 no civil rights of any kind - brak jakichkolwiek praw obywatelskich
 no contact with other cultures and nationalities, cultural and mental seclusion - brak kontaktu z innymi kulturami i narodowościami, zamknięcie kulturowe i myślowe,
 no sovereignty - brak suwerenności
 no unemployment - brak bezrobocia,
 no/lack of freedom - brak wolności
 occupation - okupacja
 oranges for Christmas (so true) - pomarańcze na święta,
 ORMO <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ORMO>
 Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw - pałac kultury i nauki w Warszawie,
 passivity - bierność
 polish soap operas or tv series for ex. 'Alternatywy' - Stare seriale polskie, np. Alternatywy
 polluted/contaminated mentality - skażona mentalność
 propaganda movies - propagandowe filmy,
 PRL consitution - PRL konstytucja,
 propaganda
 prosperity on the countryside - dobrobyt na wsiach,
 protectorate of USSR/being politically dependent on USSR/russian servants ruleing the country- protektorat ZSRR, uzależnienie polityczne od ZSRR, rosyjskie pacholki u władzy,

queues for toilet paper - kolejki po papier toaletowy
 reconstruction of the country (WWII) - odbudowa kraju
 red – czerwony
 regime - reżim,
 resistance - opór
 restricting freedom - ograniczenie wolności
 restrictions/limits - ograniczenia
 Rotmistrz Pilecki,
 rudeness - niegrzeczność, nieuprzejmość
 rule of Polish United Workers' Party http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish_United_Workers%27_Party - rządy PZPR
 russian fairytales - ruskie bajki,
 siermiężność (an object or art, sculpture, not well done, boorish, caddish)
 so called 'renounced soldiers' http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cursed_soldiers, it's a term - żołnierze wyklęci
 so called 'round table' - okrągły stół
 social advancement - awans społeczny
 social property - własność społeczna,
 social realism - socrealizm,
 socialism - socjalizm
 Stalin
 surveillance - inwigilacja
 system - ustrój
 tanks - czołgi
 the hammer and the sickle - sierp i młot
 theft - złodziejstwo
 tights... - rajstopy
 toilet paper (hanging i guess, or packed) on a string - papier toaletowy na sznurku,
 trips to/holiday in Bulgaria - wyjazdy do Bułgarii
 underground literature - podziemna literatura
 Warsaw Pact - Układ Warszawski,
 workes, working class - robotnicy, klasa robotnicza

+Choć są też dobre strony tego okresu, bo wydaje mi się, że ludzie żyli wtedy bardziej sielsko. Mieli mniej, więc bardziej potrafili się z tego cieszyć.
 There are bright sides of that period too, because i think that people's lives were more idyllic. They had less so they appracied more what they had.

+ Każda epoka ma swoje plusy i minusy. Żyło się biednie, ale mam wrażenie, że rodziny były bardziej zżyte, niż dzisiaj.
 Every period in time/era has it's advantages and disadvantages. People were living poor, but i have an impression that families were closer to each other than they are today.

Komunizm kojarzy mi się głównie z [...] rzeczywistością, której osobiście nie poznałam, ale znam z opowiadań, lub z książek, czy artykułów.
 I associate communism mainly with the reality I myslef haven't personally lived through/experience, but I know it from stories, books and articles.

Kultura PRLu, niepowtarzalna, w żółtych kolorach. Takich brudnych żółtych kolorach. Może budki z piwem, to jeszcze wypływa w pamięci z opowiadań dziadków. No i to, że niczego nie było, ale wszyscy wszystko mieli.
 The culture of PRL (Polish People's Republic) times, inimitable, in yellow colours. In those kinf of dirty yellow colours. Maybe beer-stands, that is what also emerges in my memory from the stories my granparents told me. And the fact that there was nothing, but everyone had everythig.

Very negative feelings. Historically associate communism in Poland with USSR non-interventionism during the Warsaw Uprising and the visual reminder of this even today in the ruined and hideously reconstructed city, the atrocity of Katyn where several members of my family were executed. My experience of Polish communism

comes through my parents, who emigrated in the 1970s to escape it and were active in the Solidarity movement before their departure. They describe a time of poverty and oppression, the policies of the communists being considered farcically ridiculous. Sometimes PRL recordings are played by my parents and their friends and met with much amusement.

Question 2

Poles:

	Percentage Supporting	Percentage Opposing	Neither
<10%	7		4
>10%	3		7
>20%	3	5	13
>30%	10	2	6
>40%	11	11	5
>50%	4	6	3
>60%	3	4	1
>70%	1	6	
>80%		1	
>90%		1	
	42	36	39

Question 3

	Most	Least
Economically	25	3
Socially	7	12
Politically	1	8
Culturally	4	14
	37	37

Question 4

21 Walesa

19 Jaruzelski

17 John Paul II

15 Gierek

12 Gomulka

10 Stalin

7 Gorbachev

5 Brezhnev

4 Bierut

3 Chruszczow
3 Wyszynski
3 Roosevelt
3 Popieluszko
2 Churchill
2 Kiszczak
2 Anna Walentynowicz
2 Mazowiecki
2 Reagan
1 Kuron
1 Michnik
1 Gieremek
1 Moczar
1 Rodowicz
1 Cyrankiewicz
1 Anna German
1 Pugaczewa

7.3 Appendix B: Survey Data for Czechs

(10) lack of freedom - nesvoboda, Nesvoboda, nesvoboda, nesvoboda, nesvoboda, nesvoboda, nesvoboda, nesvoboda, nesvoboda, nesvoboda
(3) planned economy - plánované hospodářství, plánovaný hospodářský růst, plány - pětiletky
(3) Queues fronta, fronty na zboží, fronty
(3) emigrace/ emigration of country's intellectual elites - emigrace intelektuálních elit,
(3) 1968 Occupation
(2) censorship - cenzura, cenzura
(2) dissident - disident
(2) feeling helpless - pocit bezmoci, bezradnost
(2) Jan Palach, Jan Palach
(2) lack of media freedom - nesvoboda médií, nesvoboda médií,
(2) normalization - normalizace, normalizace
(2) oppression - útlak, útlak
(2) red - červená, červená
(2) State Security (Státní bezpečnost) - Stb, StB
(a civil initiative that was established 1st of May 1989, they did a series of happenings) - Společnost pro veselější současnost,
(people that were illegally selling other currencies or vouchers to people wanting to buy stuff in Tuzex <http://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veksl%C3%A1k>) - veksláctví
an ideology that toppled over - ideologie, která se naprosto zvrhla
antisemitism - antisemitismus
bananas - banány,
being on first name terms and calling someone 'comrade' - tykání a oslovení soudruhu/soudružko
cherries - třešně
closed borders - uzavřené hranice
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia - KSČM,
controlling people - ovládání lidí,
cooperation with countries with the same ideology - Spolupráce se státy se stejnou ideologií.
Criminal regime - zločinný režim
defaming West - hanění západu;
degradation - degradace
dictate of Moscow - diktát Moskvy,
Didn't experience. I was just really pissed off when I had to study about them.
difficult border traffic - Ztížený přeshraniční pohyb
dissident literature - disidentská literatura,
dunno? - jednotná politická kandidátka,
embellishing USSR - přikrášlování Sovětského svazu,
everyone had a job but didn't do anything - všichni měli práci, ale nic nedělali
everyone has a job and a place to live - všichni mají práci, domov;
fighting against justice/smearing the justice? - potírání spravedlnosti,
false promises and assurances - falešné sliby a jistoty
fear - strach,
greyness - šed', šed'
hijacked/abducted Europe - unesená Evropa, ,
I don't remember much about those times. Only orangeade and Skoda 120 that Public Security used.
injustice - nespravedlnost,
interrogation - výslechy,
Jakeš
lack of food - nedostatek potravin
lack of some products in shops- nedostatek některého zboží v obchodech
Major Zeman,
I don't remember much about those times. Only orangeade and Skoda 120 that Public Security used.
nationalization - znarodňování,

Nezažila jsem je. Jen mě hrozně štválo se o nich učit.
 non democracy - nedemokracie,
 nonexistence of free-speech - neexistence svobody slova
 not enough work places for everyone - dostatek pracovních míst pro všechny
 opportunism - oportunismus,
 Oppressing the society in a sense of intolerance towards others than ideal (ideological?) ways of living. Ideology and ideological criteria pervade the society. - Represe společnosti ve smyslu netolerance jiných, než ideálních způsobů života. Ideologie a ideologická kritéria všeprostupující společnost.
 period of many prohibitions - Období mnoha zákazů
 philosophical faculty - filozofická fakulta,
 political laws - politická práva,
 political prisoners and executions - političtí vězni a popravy
 political protest - politický protest,
 political trials - politické procesy,
 political trials - politické procesy,
 poverty - nedostatek,
 prisons - věznění,
 prohibitions- zákazy,
 propaganda,
 Public Security - Veřejná bezpečnost,
 repression of freedom - utlačování svobody;
 restrictions on contact with the world surrounding - omezení kontaktu s okolním světem
 restrictions on freedom of speech - omezení svobody projevu
 Russians - Rusové
 secretiveness - uzavřenost
 security of livelihood for the price of political oppression - Životní jistota za cenu politické nesvobody.
 sickle - srp,
 Solidarność - Solidarnosc,
 soviets - sověti,
 Soviets on the dancings - Sověti na tancích,
 SSSR,
 Stalin on Letna (the monument) - Stalin na Letné,
 star - hvězda,
 suppression of individualism - potlačení individualismu
 tanks - tanky,
 the rule of one party - vláda jedné strany,
 thieving - zlodějství
 to leave the country - vycestovat
 totality - Totalita,
 tough times - těžká doba,
 tv news - televizní zpravodajství,
 underground culture - undergroundová kultura
 Using communism nowadays as a threat or an excuse for a whole spectrum of socio-political issues. - Hojně využívání komunismu jako strašáka či výmluvy v současnosti pro celé spektrum společensko-politických problémů.
 Václav Havel,
 who sticks out – threat - kdo vycnívá - hrozba;
 year 1989
 Zajíc,

Question 2

Czechs	Percentage Supporting	Percentage Opposing	Neither	
<10%	2		1	4
>10%		1	3	7
>20%	3		6	13

>30%	2	5	4	6
>40%	6	5	3	5
>50%	1	4		3
>60%	4	1		1
>70%	1	1		
>80%	2		1	
>90%				
	21	17	18	39

Question 3

	Most	Least
Economically	7	1
Socially	3	7
Politically	6	3
Culturally	1	5
	17	16

Question 4

Czechs 16

11 Havel

9 Husak

9 Gottwald

8 Stalin

8 Gorbachev

5 Dubcek

5 Brezhnev

3 Palach

2 Patocka

2 Kundera

1 Zápotocký

1 Walesa

1 Tito

1 Pithart
1 Magor
1 Lenin
1 Kohout
1 Karel Kryl
1 Horakova
1 John Paul II
1 Jaruzelski
1 Hajek
1 Gierka
1 Gabcik and Kubis
1 Bilak