

Transnationalism and (Anti) Communism in Museum Practice

The case study of the Emerging Bratislava Museum

Abstract

Having the experience of living in the different social regime have a massive influence on the memory of the people. The polarity of the memories and the demarcation lines are starting to occur when the remembering the past. With the new socio-political system the new elites are coming on the stage to construct new discourses. One of them which is introduced into the public spheres is the anti-communism. For the use of the paper I work with the anti-communism, not only as the discourse but as the ideology which is probably carried by the people engaged in the realization of the museum of communism.

In the communism same as anti-communism can be seen two tendencies of looking at the national perspective. One is strictly nationalist-emphasizing the national context of communism or anti-communism. The second is the transnational perspective focusing on the interest of the class in the communist ideology, or the interest of the people as defined by the anti-communism.

In the essay I would like to map the ground of the national and the transnational tendencies of the (anti) communism as the memory material in the Central Europe (more concretely the Visegrad region). This is the soil where the roots of the museum practices are originating. In Bratislava is emerging the Museum of the Communism. The museum has not yet been builded, though the representants of the initiative are having the very practical visions and are gaining the political support.

On the theoretical basis I would like to analyse the (trans)national perspective in the ideologies in the region, whereas in “practical” part I would like to use the theories to analyze the situation with one concrete museum practice. Though the museum is not there standing and having the visitors, I consider it of worth to study the mental plans of the actors. I intend to use the knowledge I can gain from the interviews with the people responsible for the realization of the museum project.

The net of the theories I would like to use are the concepts connected to the museum practice (MacDonald) , memory studies connected to the issue of the communism (Rouso, Breckner et coll.) and the transnationalism studies (Levitt, Khagram, Jaworski). Naturally, I will employ the identity theory to analyze the construction of the national identities in the narratives which are used by the representants of the museum.

Research question

Main research question:

What kind of narratives are used to construct national or transnational identity in the museum practices reflecting the ideology of communism or anticommunism?

Related research questions: How the transnational dimension of ideologies of communism and anticommunism construct the identity of the people? What are the memories connected to the communism that are to be marked in the museum? How the anticommunism is articulated in the museal practice?