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## Sites of Memory in the Public Space of Chile and Georgia: the Transition and Pre-Transition Period<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** By undertaking discussion on the aspect of special forms of commemoration, we may obtain a lot of useful information about the remembrance policy of a given country. That is why the analysis of the issue of the sites of memory seems to be of key importance for understanding problems related to the state's interpretation of the past from the perspective of an authoritarian regime, political transition and democracy. The aim of this paper is to address one of the elements of a broader issue, i.e. the study of the politics of memory. This element focuses on the presentation of the most significant sites of memory in two countries with the experience of authoritarianism – Chile and Georgia – emphasizing changes which took place in the sphere of commemoration from the beginning of democratic transformation to the moment of achieving full democracy. By describing these places we are showing the main directions and framework assumptions of the remembrance policies of Chile and Georgia, reflected in the form of spatial and visual objects of the „living history”.

**Keywords:** *sites of memory; politics of memory; democratic transformation; democracy; Chile; Georgia*

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<sup>1</sup> The paper is an outcome of the research project “The Politics of Memory as the Constitutional Factor of New Identity during the Transition from Authoritarian Regimes” realised by Professor Dr. Hab. Joanna Marszałek-Kawa and the team in the years 2013–2016, financed by the National Centre of Science in Kraków (Poland), under the decision no. DEC-2012/05/E/HS5/02722.

*The most complete pictures are formed in our minds of the things that have been conveyed to them and imprinted on them by the senses, but that the keenest of all our senses is the sense of sight, and that consequently perceptions received by the ears or by reflexion can be most easily retained if they are also conveyed to our minds by the mediation of the eyes*  
– Cicero, *De oratore* (as cited in: Yates, 1999).

## Introduction

What does the term „site of memory” – so frequently cited in studies in the field of history, political science or sociology – mean? What object or element can be deemed to be such a place? Following Andrzej Szpociński’s deliberations – and at the same time referring to Nina Assorodobraj’s arguments – it should be stated that sites of memory are the living history and they cover almost all spatial and visual forms of the presence of the past in the present day (Assorodobraj, 1963, pp. 4–28; Szpociński, 2008, pp. 11–20). Thus, sites of memory should also include: monuments, plaques, museums, archives, graves, and churches (Nora, 1989, pp. 7–24; Szpociński, 2008, pp. 11–20).

The basic functions fulfilled by such forms of the presence of history first of all include transmitting, creating and maintaining the memory of specific past moments. Each site of memory should convey some contents in order to create a desired catalogue of attitudes towards history. It should thus influence its audience, constructing their memory of the past and viewpoints on past events through transmitting selected interpretations of the past. Therefore, sites of memory should have an impact on the perception of the past of a given community with the help of a catalogue of culturally understandable signs and symbols, which strengthen specific contents in the audience’s minds and often evoke – due to the applied form of communication – strong emotions, which reinforce the desired effect (Szpociński, 2008, pp. 11–20)<sup>2</sup>.

Taking the above into consideration, it should be stated that the principal general tasks of the sites of memory, which aim at producing specific results in the sphere of imaginations about the past of a given community, remain unchanged regardless of the political system in which this community exists. In other words, no matter whether there is an authoritarian or democratic system in a given country, the fundamental function of the existing sites of memory is to convey certain contents, create attitudes and behaviours, influence a catalogue of shared values, and maintain the memory of

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<sup>2</sup> See also: Szacka, 2006, pp. 44–45

the selected events from the past. It does not mean, however, that the detailed goals of such places are the same in different political systems. It depends on the destination and author or founder (including their place in the society and the character of the political system they serve) of a given spatial and visual form of the presence of history in the present time whether the site of memory should be conducive to social reconciliation and to the unification of the society around some shared values or whether its aim is to show the triumph of one group over another and to force one attitude, which absolutely excludes pluralism, even if it keeps people hating each other and gives rise to serious conflicts and divisions. Thus, it might be said that sites of memory created and promoted by authoritarian governments significantly differ from those built by democratic authorities in terms of a catalogue of detailed tasks. Therefore, what seems to be the turning point in the process of the creation of such spatial and visual forms of the presence of history is the transition of the system. This assumption is only partly true. The political transformation from authoritarian regimes to democracy do not have to, and often – due to high social costs – cannot mean that one interpretation of the selected part of history (authoritarian) is replaced with another (democratic). Therefore, the transition does not lead to the demolition of the sites of memory of authoritarianism and building the new ones, which condemn the previous undemocratic regime and are a tribute to its victims. What is more, even the end of political transformations does not have to entail fundamental changes in this sphere. It often happens that for years after the transformation has been completed, the post-authoritarian sites of memory – which often commemorate the glory of the past dictatorship – remain intact owing to various reasons, especially in the name of pluralism and aversion to social conflict.

What is important, by undertaking discussion on the aspect of special forms of commemoration, we may obtain a lot of useful information about the remembrance policy of a given country. That is why the analysis of the issue of the sites of memory seems to be of key importance for understanding problems related to the state's interpretation of the past from the perspective of an authoritarian regime, political transition and democracy. Thus, the aim of this paper is to address one of the elements of a broader issue, i.e. the study of the politics of memory. This element focuses on the presentation of the most significant sites of memory in two countries with the experience of authoritarianism – Chile and Georgia – emphasizing changes which took place in the sphere of commemoration from the beginning of democratic transformation to the moment of achieving full democracy. By describing these places we will show the main directions and framework assumptions of the remembrance policies of Chile and Georgia, reflected in the form of spatial and visual objects of the „living history”.

## Chile

The attempts to create the foundations of social order in the period of the transition of the system in Chile<sup>3</sup> were based on the values such as truth, justice and reconciliation. The goal was national unity rather than the victory of one group of citizens over the other. Instead of settling accounts, forgiveness and compensation to victims' families were promoted. The renunciation of revenge and the pursuit of compromise were in turn the expression of responsibility and justice in a democratic state, which objects to divisions and conflicts. That is why the decisions of the new democratic authorities were aimed at creating conditions conducive to the unification of the society around shared assumptions and ideas. It became clear in different spheres of the functioning of the Chilean state, including the sphere of the existing sites of memory. It was important to reveal the truth about the crimes of the military regime and to restore the memory of its victims, while being aware of the acts of terror committed by extreme leftist groups aimed at people connected with Augusto Pinochet's government. That is why, on the one hand, efforts were made to encourage various forms of commemorating people killed and murdered in the period of the junta's government, on the other hand, the memory of those killed in terrorist attacks organised by the extreme left was preserved.

For years, the memory in Chile was thus built on the basis of the recognition that the terrorist activity of radical leftist groups violated human rights in the same way that crimes of the military regime did. This was the case both during the political transition and after it was completed. All the time, seeking truth was considered to be tantamount to compromise rather than retaliation or vengeance. What was a clear

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<sup>3</sup> The period of bloody authoritarian rule in Chile began with a coup d'état of a military junta led by general August Pinochet Ugarte, which took place on 11 September 1973. After that, Augusto Pinochet effectively increased the scope of his power and assumed the office of the President of the Republic of Chile in 1974. At the same time – beginning from the day of the putsch – the political and state apparatus subordinate to him dealt with the physical elimination of real and potential enemies of the new system. Terror and strong-arm regime supported action aimed at the permanent transformation of the political system. This process was crowned with the establishment of the new Chilean constitution, which entered into force on 11 March 1981. This way, the authoritarian fundamental law made it possible to begin a political transition. What was the turning point was the plebiscite announced in the constitution which was held in 1988. From that time on, the opposition had an opportunity to have a say in Chile. A difficult transition period began, full of compromises and fears, and lasted until the beginning of the 1990s. The decisions and sacrifices of that time determined the domestic situation of Chile and its position in the international arena in the following years (for more details see: Ratke-Majewska, 2016, pp. 15–47; see also: Stern, 2004; Stern 2006; Stern, 2010).

example that confirmed this view was the outrage as a reaction to not including Pinochet among the presidents of Chile in the series of postcards entitled *Presidentes 1970–2010* (Presidents 1970–2010), which were sold as souvenirs in La Moneda Palace (what is important – protests led to the suspension of sales). Some people commented that the exclusion of Augusto Pinochet must be deemed as a mistake, because he actually held the post of the Chilean president, and sympathy or antipathy to his person or deeds should not matter.<sup>4</sup> It is an unquestionable fact, however, that – despite promoting reconciliation – the number of sites commemorating the victims of the military putsch and of Pinochet’s regime was increasing year by year. Far fewer monuments dedicated to people killed by the extreme left militants were erected, so they were soon outnumbered by the sites of tribute to the victims of the junta. This phenomenon was not in contradiction to the idea of compromise and to the attitude based on listening to the opinions of both sides (the memory of the violations of human rights committed by the left was still preserved), although it was often considered to be a moral victory. What is important, the activities aimed at the commemoration of the victims of the regime had an increasing scale and impact, since, due to the applied tools of influencing the audience’s emotions, they became more and more effective in illustrating an awful lot of terror and crime committed by the junta. Moreover, this tendency did not emerge only after Pinochet’s death in 2006. It was present as early as at the end of the 20th century, becoming stronger with years, largely owing to a decreasing fear of the return of military government (see: Aguilera, 2013; *Memoriales...*, 2007; *Informe...*, 1991; Ratke-Majewska, 2016, pp. 15–47; Spooner, 2011, pp. 1–10; *Suspenden...*, 2006; see also: Cáceres, 2012, pp. 53–66; Collins, Hite, Joignant, 2013; Vidal, 1997). The list below shows the selected sites of the „living history,” building the memory of the victims of Chile’s authoritarian

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<sup>4</sup> Mary Helen Spooner presented this event in the following way: “La Moneda also hosts concerts and guided tours, and the former dictator’s bunker has been transformed into a new museum and cultural centre, which opened in January 2006. But shortly after the cultural centre was inaugurated, a controversy erupted over souvenirs sold in the gift shop. A series of postcards, «Presidentes 1970–2010,» included the ill-fated Salvador Allende, three civilian presidents who served after military rule ended, and the newly elected Michelle Bachelet, Chile’s first female president. Conspicuous by his absence was Pinochet, and when some visitors to La Moneda complained, sale of the postcards was quickly suspended. Chilean officials offered mixed explanations: some said that the postcards were the work of a private company offering what it thought visitors would buy, while others explained that the postcard series was limited to democratically elected presidents. The culture minister suggested that it might be more appropriate to have a set of postcards featuring all heads of state dating from the nineteenth century. It was a mistake to exclude Pinochet, he said, for Pinochet had been president of Chile for seventeen years, «whether we like it or not.»” (Spooner, 2011, p. 2).

regime. They may be considered to be among the most important spatial and visual forms that co-create the memory of that period. They are all located in the capital city of the country — Santiago de Chile.

### *The General Cemetery in Santiago*

The General Cemetery in Santiago de Chile is the location of the sites of memory that are exceptionally significant from the point of view of the existing forms of commemorating the victims of the junta's government. What should be emphasised, these sites neighbour graves of great heroes and important figures in the history of Chile, surrounded by monuments dedicated to them and works of architectural and sculpting art, which constitute an important element of Chile's cultural heritage, and by thousands of gravestones of Chilean citizens. This surrounding – being both ordinary and extraordinary – and the atmosphere of reverie typical of such large necropolis make a tribute to those suffering, killed and missing in the period of Pinochet's rules a special act of meaningful symbolism.

As the first site at the General Cemetery in Santiago which evokes the memory of the junta's terror, let us mention Patio 29. It is a cemetery quarter in which the victims of the putsch of 11 September 1973 and people secretly murdered during the period of authoritarian military government in Chile were buried in nameless graves. Before the coup d'état this separate part of the Cemetery was used as a mass grave for the homeless, people mentally ill and those who died in the streets and were not identified by relatives. Their graves were marked as NN – *Nomen Nescio* (Unknown Name). After the events of 11 September 1973, this group also included people murdered by the authorities. Burials which were to hide crimes committed by the junta's complex terror machine of the junta were kept secret (the places where people were detained and tortured were kept secret as well). In 1979, after the reports about illegal burials in Patio 29, the issue was investigated by the Vicariate of Solidarity (*Vicaría de la Solidaridad*) – the institution related to the Catholic Church, the goal of which was to protect human rights and help people repressed by the authoritarian regime in Chile. The matter was taken to court and the truth about this place was partly unveiled. In 1981, the military prosecutor of Santiago banned the exhumation, cremation and transferring of the bodies from the Patio 29 quarter, although many of them were supposedly illegally removed after that decision in order to cover up the crimes. The first exhumations and attempts to identify the bodies began as late as in 1991, thanks to the process of democratisation in Chile. The democratic Chilean authorities informed that all bodies from Patio 29 had been exhumed by 2006, although some families denied it. What is important, in July 2006, the quarter was

given the status of the National Monument in the category Historical Monument. Since then, Patio 29 has been on the list of state monuments, constituting a symbol of the memory of mass violations of human rights, repression and acts of terror, which were committed by the political and state apparatus subordinate to Augusto Pinochet's junta (Bustamante, Ruderer, 2009; *La Vicaría...*; *Patio 29...*, 2006; Ratke-Majewska, 2016, pp. 35–36; Stern, 2010, pp. 117, 127, 334–335).

A niche near Patio 29 is a grave to Víctor Jara – the Chilean bard, poet, theatrical director, singer, guitar player, academic teacher and political activist, a member of the Communist Party of Chile. After the junta took over the power in the country, he was detained by the army. He was cruelly tortured and then killed at the stadium *Estadio Chile*. Since 2004, the stadium's name has been *Estadio Víctor Jara*. In 2009, Víctor Jara's ceremonial funeral was held at the General Cemetery in Santiago. It was attended by tens of thousands of Chileans, including many theatrical and stage actors (Serrat, 2009; Tyler, 2013; *Víctor...*, 2012; see also: Luscombe, 2016).

Another important place is the grave of President Salvador Allende, who held the office in the years 1970–1973, as the representative of the coalition of left-wing parties, Popular Unity (Unidad Popular, UP). The grave is located in the old part of the General Cemetery and is a tribute to the democratically elected head of state, who lost his life under the pressure of enemy forces (on 11 September 1973, when the junta's troops were storming the presidential palace, President Allende committed suicide). His official funeral was held at the General Cemetery in Santiago as late as on 4 September 1990. For the whole period of Augusto Pinochet's rule, he lay in a nameless grave of the Grove family he was related to in Viña del Mar (*El último...*, 2003; Spyra, 2013, pp. 626–627; Śmierć Allende..., 2011).

It should also be noted that there is Orlando Letelier's grave at the General Cemetery. He was a Chilean politician and diplomat, a member of the Socialist Party of Chile, who – during Salvador Allende's presidency – held the post of the Ambassador of Chile to the United States, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Internal Affairs, and the Minister of Defence. After the coup d'état, Letelier was arrested. He was released thanks to strong international diplomatic pressure, and then emigrated. First he left to Venezuela, where he actively campaigned against Augusto Pinochet's regime and for the restoration of democracy in Chile. He died on 21 September 1976 in Washington, D.C., in a bomb attack organised by DINA agents.<sup>5</sup> His body was

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<sup>5</sup> DINA (*Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional*) – the National Intelligence Directorate – a specialised intelligence unit, which performed operations against the political opponents of Pinochet's regime. It was the Chilean secret police entitled to detain individuals and conduct house searches without court warrant and to carry out secret operational activity. It was responsible for numerous

transported to Chile only in 1992, on the wave of Chilean democratic changes (see: Dinges, 2015, pp. 28–29, 247–249; *Orlando Letelier...; Remains of Letelier...*; Trefler, 2014, pp. 467, 711).

The last, although not the least important site commemorating the victims of the junta's bloody government at the General Cemetery is the monument Memorial del Detenido Desaparecido y del Ejecutado Político. This place is dedicated to the memory of people who were arrested, executed or went missing in the period of the military regime. This marble monument was unveiled in 1994. There is the name of President Salvador Allende. On the left side of the monument, there are names of detained and missing people, while on the right side those executed for political reasons are listed. All these names constitute a long list consisting of more than 3,000 names. In front of the monument, there are also two statues that complement the structure – faces of a man and a woman with their eyes shut (see: Brodsky Zimmermann, 2012, pp. 30–34; see also: Krause Knight, Senie, 2016).

### *Villa Grimaldi*

Villa Grimaldi (Santiago de Chile) is another site of the memory of the victims of the authoritarian regime in Chile. The residence, located in the outskirts of Santiago, was one of DINA's secret centres. Before Pinochet came to power, it belonged to a wealthy family and was the place where the Chilean intellectual and artistic elites met and where progressive circles could exchange their opinions. Soon after 11 September 1973, the owners' daughter was captured by the army, which released her only on the condition that the family would give the premises away to the military regime. This way, Villa Grimaldi became the place where political opponents were held, brutally tortured (which led to the physical and mental exhaustion of victims) and murdered. The complex of buildings was used in the years 1974–1978. Just before the end of the military government, the buildings were demolished.

Villa Grimaldi has been a site of memory since 1994. In 1997, in place of the destroyed complex, Park for Peace (Parque por la Paz Villa Grimaldi) was established. Its goal is to commemorate victims and promote the protection of human rights through extensive educational activity. There are both the original elements of the former place of torture, the remains and ruins of the buildings, and the reconstructed facilities

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violations of human rights, a number of murders, coups, detainments and tortures. In 1977, DINA was disbanded and replaced with a newly established National Information Centre (*Centro Nacional de Información, CNI*). (See: Kornbluh, 2013, pp. 165–181; Komosa, 2005, pp. 48–73; Spyra, 2013, pp. 545–552).

and entirely new forms (artistic projects and installations). All this makes a symbolic structure reflecting the enormity of crimes committed here, at the same time being the expression of a tribute to the victims (see: *Villa Grimaldi – Historia*; *Villa Grimaldi – Parque...*; *Villa Grimaldi – świadectwo...*; see also: Knippers Black, 2010).

### *The Museum of Memory and Human Rights*

The Museum of Memory and Human Rights (Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos) in Santiago is another special place of the memory of the events from the period of the military government in Chile, dedicated to the issues of the violation of human rights by the Chilean authorities in the years 1973–1990.

The museum's primary objective is to disseminate democratic values and the culture of respect for human rights so that they would become – in the spirit of tolerance and respect for other people – an inseparable element of social awareness and shared ethical foundation. The museum's goal is thus to pay a tribute to the victims of Pinochet's regime and their families. Moreover, it serves the purpose of stimulating the reflection and discussion on the essence of the acceptance of basic democratic values (*Sobre...*).

The Museum of Memory and Human Rights was opened by President Michelle Bachelet in 2010. Since then, this institution has run intensive educational activity both through permanent and temporary exhibitions and by presenting various documents (writing and non-writing materials, including audio-visual ones) with the application of electronic platforms. What significantly supports educational initiatives are digital applications commonly used in the museum. Its Documentation Centre (Centro de Documentación del Museo de la Memoria) provides the society with an easy access to historical information (*Centro...*; *Sobre...*).

The moment the project of the construction of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights was announced, it gained large support on the one hand, but on the other hand, it became the subject of huge criticism. The critics claimed that the Museum would present a biased version of history, which did not take into consideration the causes and background of the events of 11 September 1973. Therefore, it would contribute to the deepening of the conflict between the opponents and followers of Pinochet, thus dividing the Chilean society. Those in favour of building the Museum of Memory refuted that argument by stressing that any justification of the coup and its consequences in the context of human rights would be tantamount to moral relativity. Despite stormy discussions, the objections to the project did not change its assumptions concerning the contents of commemoration (Auzas, 2015; Lennon Zaninovic, 2007; Collins, Hite, Joignant, 2013, p. 247).

## Georgia

There is no doubt that the understanding of the past not only explains the present day, but it also helps to understand who we are. As it is indicated in the literature, shared experiences and memories, as well as values and beliefs create and maintain the identity of individuals and societies (Lebow, 2006, p. 3; Golka, 2009, pp. 51–66; LaCapra, 2009, pp. 51–96; Wawrzyński & Schattkowsky, 2015, pp. 73–94; Wawrzyński et al., 2015, 125–139). As John Paul II wrote, „Memory is the force which creates the identity of human beings both on the personal and collective sphere. It is through memory that a sense of identity is formed in the mind of an individual” (as cited in: Golka, 2009, p. 51; cit.: Jan Paweł II, 2005, p. 148). Marian Golka (2009, p. 54) accurately remarks that thanks to narratives, the past acquires a meaning and becomes “an organised drawer rather than a rubbish heap.” Tales of the past present the course and order of events, either emphasising or marginalising or even ignoring them. They also identify cause and effect relationships, interpreting and indicating their implications. The importance of the politics of memory for the establishment of a new Georgian identity – when the Soviet interpretation had lost its significance – was fundamental. The creation of a tale of the past, which would be an element of the new history of the nation, became an important challenge for the new elites. In the new circumstances of independence, Russia was seen as an aggressor and an invader. What is more, after the war of 2008, this government paradigm grew stronger. As Malkhaz Toria (2014, p. 316) points out, the authorities found links between “the Russian occupation in 1921 and the war in 2008”. The process of the reevaluation of history began and it naturally involved especially educational programmes.

The construction of Georgian statehood after the fall of the Soviet Union was based on the pro-European idea. In his speech on the New Year’s Day in 1991, Zviad Gamsakhurdia stressed that „Georgia declared its independence in 1918 and it is still legitimate. Therefore we do not need to announce our independence again” (Toria, 2014, p. 318). He also demanded that Russia should officially confirm that it had illegally occupied Georgia.

Stephen F. Jones, a recognised historian, an expert in the history of Georgia, quotes Noe Jordania’s words spoken in 1920 in the Georgian Constituent Assembly: “Our life today and our life in the future is... indissolubly tied to the West, and no force can break this bond”. He points out that this Europe-oriented idea has been adopted by the post-Soviet Georgian elites (Jones, 2014, p. 4). His thesis is confirmed by numerous speeches of Mikhail Saakashvili, who held the office of President in the years 2004–2007 and 2008–2013. He referred to Russia as an imperialistic, Asian, barbarian and anti-Western state, as opposed to brave and dedicated Georgia,

based on Western patterns. He also emphasised that Georgians had always perceived themselves as Europeans and made Europe-oriented decisions, and that Georgia should head towards Europe, while Russia wanted it to join Asia (Toría, 2014, p. 321). Such a pro-European Union and pro-NATO orientation, despite the accusations of favouring Russia (Wojtasiewicz, 2012), was also presented by the next government, which was established after the Georgian Dream coalition won the presidential election on 27 October 2013 (*Presidential Election ...; Presidential Elections 2013*). Both Saakashvili's successor in the office of President, Giorgi Margvelashvili, and the leader of the Georgian Dream, the Prime Minister of Georgia from 25 October 2012 to 20 November 2013, Bidzina Ivanishvili often stressed the need for establishing friendly relations with Russia, at the same time consistently declaring their Europeanism (*Iwaniszwili...*, 2012; Jastrzębski, 2014, pp. 300–301).

In Georgia, there are not many sites of memory that would be dedicated to the victims of the Soviet regime<sup>6</sup>. As Joanna Piechowiak-Lamparska (2016, pp. 90–91) notes, the monuments or museums of today are mainly devoted to the distant history of Georgia, dating back to the beginnings of its statehood. It should be stressed, however, that after the Revolution of Roses, a lot of new sites appeared. Not only do they present the idea of Georgian independence, but they also stimulate the reflection on the victims of Soviet occupation. The new elites believed that the establishment (as well as destruction) of such sites constitutes an important element of the project of creating true narratives of the Soviet rule. To this end, the „Fact-Finding Commission on Historical Truth” was founded in 2010 (Toría, 2014, p. 331).

### *Joseph Stalin Museum in Gori*

Given the above, it must be noted, however, that the Joseph Stalin State Museum still occupies an important place on the map of Georgian museums. It has operated in an unchanged form since the 1930s. The museum devoted to the leader of the USSR was built in the style of real socialism. The collection of the museum includes 47,000 items, including Stalin's personal articles, gifts he received, photographs, newspaper cuttings, books, and documents. There is also one of the twelve bronze masks made after his death here. The museum presents history, including Stalin's life story, in a selective way. The atmosphere in its gigantic rooms and spacious corridors is depressing, despite the cult of the Soviet leader promoted by the exhibition. Joseph Stalin is shown smiling on photographs from his childhood, school, and, finally, from the days of his rule in the USSR, but his happy mood is not shared

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<sup>6</sup> For more details on the sites of memory see: Golka, 2009, pp. 67–120.

by visitors. It is hard to forget about people that were interned in gulags, kept in concentration camps, victims of terror and of pacts with Hitler. It is not Georgian people that think in this way though. For them, the museum is a sanctuary and Stalin is a good uncle, a hero, the builder of a great nation, the creator of a superpower. In Georgia, the cult of Stalin is mainly of a private nature, but the Soviet leader has become the tourist brand. Next to the main building of the museum, there is a 19<sup>th</sup> century wooden family house of J. W. Stalin, in which he was born and spent the first four years of his life. As comrade Beria wanted, the house was transferred from the suburbs and it was thoroughly renovated and lined with concrete. Stalin's family actually lived in one room on the left hand side of this duplex. On the other side, the owner of the hut lived. Stalin's father maintained his workshop in the basement. Stalin's railway carriage is exhibited next to the museum (*Ioseb...*; North, 2015; *Stalin-land...*, 2016).

It should be reminded here that until 2010, the statue of Joseph Stalin has stood in the central square of Gori. It is six metres high and was placed on a three-level granite base of 9 metres. It was erected in 1952, one year before the death of the Soviet leader. The authorities had tried in vain to change its location a few times. In the authorities' official stance, Stalin played a key role in the occupation of Georgia after all. After the war of 2008, finally a decision was made to move it to the Stalin Museum. On the night of 25 June 2010 – as the authorities wanted to avoid residents' protests (*Stalin monument...*, 2010; *Taking the time...*, 2011).

On the social conflict concerning the issue of moving the statue of Joseph Stalin (see: Jastrzębski, 2014, pp. 273–274) – the statue was taken off the base with the help of the police and moved to the courtyard of the Joseph Stalin Museum in Gori. The fate of this monument is the reflection of history (Golka, 2009, p. 129).

### *The Museum of Soviet Occupation*

According to a number of authors, it is obvious that the goal of those in power is to establish such a form of social memory which breaks with “the existing continuity of memory in some aspects, but it preserves this continuity in other issues that fit in the government's narration, and which uses the past to legitimise the current social, economic and political relations by showing that they are the natural consequence of past events (Golka, 2009, p. 124). The new sites of memory such as the Museum of Soviet Occupation, the Monument of Heroes, or the Memorial of Georgian Warrior Heroes in Gori – composed of 11 statues of knights and dedicated to people killed in the war of 2008 and to the victims of Stalin's repression – are a part of the official narration, which stresses Georgian resistance and pro-European sentiments.

The Museum of Soviet Occupation was officially opened on 26 May 2006. It is actually a small exhibition room on the fourth floor of the National Museum of Georgia in Tbilisi. The exhibits, archival documents, newspapers, films, photographs and private collections that are on display show the Soviet-era and the cultural and political repression of the communist regime in Georgia. The exhibition is also devoted to the memory of the anti-occupational, national-liberation movement of Georgia and to the victims of the Soviet political repression throughout this period. It is also dedicated to the executed participants of the national uprising of 1924 (*Museum of Soviet...; Soviet Occupation*). The idea of the establishment of this museum, objected by Russia as an expression of nationalist propaganda, is based on the Latvian and Estonian patterns. Playing a rhetorical game, M. Saakashvili often emphasised that this exhibition should be treated as the commemoration of the seven decades of „the Soviet (1921–1991) rather than the Russian occupation of Georgia (...)”. He also argued that “if anyone, anywhere, at any level, takes this personally, then that is their problem and not ours” (*Museum of Soviet...*).

Scholars indicate that after the period of rapid transition in the sphere of memory, we now observe the process of the revision of the image of the past approved earlier. The new elites in power question the previous interpretation of events, giving them a new meaning, which is the outcome of the entirely new perception of the same events, situations and experiences by the representatives of the opposing sides of past conflicts (Kwiatkowski, 2009, p. 127; see also: Kwiatkowski, 2008, p. 442).

According to S. F. Jones, the removal of Joseph Stalin’s monument in Gori in 2010 and the unveiling of the country’s tallest, 48-metre high monument, called the “Monument of Heroes” in Tbilisi – with the names of 3,500 victims, soldiers killed in the years 1918–2008 in the struggle for territorial integrity and independence against the Soviet invaders – are a component of the policy officially based on „imperial victimization”. Saakashvili called the “The Tower of Heroes” „(...) shining soul of our warriors” (Jones, 2014, p. 12; see also: *Saakashvili opens...*, 2010; Toria, 2014, p. 328).

The literature has adopted a view that the concept of “great Georgia” under the rule David IV the Builder in the years 1089–1125<sup>7</sup> and Queen Tamar I the Great in the years 1184–1213 is currently considered to be the foundation and justification of the

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<sup>7</sup> He united Caucasian peoples and officially assumed the title: “His Majesty, Supreme King David, son of George, by the will of God, King of Kings of: Abkhaz, Kartvelian, Azerbaijani, Kachetian and Armenian people, Shahanshah of the East and West, Sword of the Messiah” (Jastrzębski, 2014, p. 19) and conducted a number of domestic reforms (Ostrogorski, 1968; Baranowski, 1987).

ongoing transformation of the system (Ostrogorski, 1968; Baranowski, Baranowski, 1987). That is why the sites of memory in Georgia more often refer to the distant, glorious history of the country. There are far fewer places of a tribute to the heroes of the Soviet Union (Piechowiak-Lamparska, 2016, pp. 90–91). According to Jey Winter, they promote the tale of the past that reflects the collective memory and „a sense of national and social solidarity” (Toria, 2014, p. 328).

## Conclusion

There are a lot of factors that contribute to the creation of a site of memory which should evoke specific permanent effects in the sphere of the audience’s awareness. Among the things that matter most are its appearance, strength of expression, ability to trigger people’s emotions, target audience, and the scope of influence that may often determine whether the process of transmitting, creating and maintaining specific attitudes to a given part of history is successful. Sites of memory actually play a significant part in the process of transforming collective (political and national) memory, creating some of its elements, and even building the whole from scratch. That is why these spatial and visual objects of the “living history” are so important in the period of strong system and social transformations. Thus, every action related to them may cause strong shocks. The crisis may break out both on the wave of demolishing monuments and removing plaques of the old regime, as well as during the creation of new forms of commemoration, which convey quite different contents than the previous ones. It is particularly clear in the cases of Chile and Georgia presented above, where not only during the political transition from an authoritarian system to democracy, but also for years after the transformation, decisive action (which differs from the initial decisions of the transition period) in the sphere of the landscape of memory was not commonly accepted. The creation of the conditions for reconciliation and the foundations for the bright future for all excluded more drastic efforts in the field of commemorating the past for a long time. For years, the redefinition of values in the sphere of memory was an issue that these countries were afraid of and that fear led either to extreme caution or to abandoning action.

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