

The CRCE Newsletter

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New on the CRCE Website

“European Conscience and Communism” – CRCE’s first web book.

Papers and discussion from the Autumn 2009 conference are available on:

<http://www.crce.org.uk/publications/>

For easy downloading and reading, the text has been divided into four parts, covering the four different conference sessions:

Experiences of Accession to EU;
Russia and Europe and the Countries in between;
Russia’s relationship with former Warsaw Pact countries;
Russia’s economic relations with Europe including energy security

Contributors include Philip Hanson, Andrei Illarionov, Geza Jeszensky, Oleg Manaev, Miroslav Prokopijevic and Krassen Stanchev.



Pension Zaplata, where the Colloquium was held

Two recent briefing papers to download:

<http://www.crce.org.uk/briefings/>

“Russia: Crisis, Exit and Reform” by Philip Hanson

“Property Rights Analysis of the Transition in Europe” by Svetozar Pejovic

COMING SOON!

A special occasional paper “Recollections on the Fall of the Berlin Wall”

<http://www.crce.org.uk/lessons/>

Professor Geza Jeszensky of Budapest and Doctor Krassen Stanchev of Sofia share their memories of the events 20 years ago.

Your Freedom and Ours
(a great blog)

“Another mass grave

This time it is near Vladivostok where there were numerous transit camps in the thirties and forties for those who were to be deported to Kolyma. Some, presumably, were disseminated to some other camps. The great poet Osip Mandelstam died in one of those transit camps and was buried in one of the many mass graves. Maybe the one that has just been found.”

<http://yourfreedomandours.blogspot.com/2010/06/another-mass-grave.html>

Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation

Visit this superb website, which has a new page on Ukraine

<http://www.ukraine.globalmuseumoncommunism.org/contact>

Truth: Freedom's brother

Keith Miles OBE argues that it's time to come clean about Tito's crimes

Most of us know the phrase from the Bible 'Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free'. We also know that sometimes for political reasons the truth is hidden or avoided or obscured. We can think of many current examples such as soldiers' equipment shortages, or repeated spending announcements, or calling spending investment. Also MPs' expenses and EU fiddles are in the news.

We also know that one casualty of any war is the truth and the Cold War was no exception. Most people are astonished when they are told that Tito was not just a communist but also an officer in Stalin's secret police, the NKVD, later called the KGB. It suited the west to keep him detached from the Soviet Block and Warsaw Pact and therefore the myth of the great ally was maintained, and even though most historians knew of the accusations about his NKVD past there was never concrete evidence. However, now a Slovene historian has had complete access to the archives in Moscow and has written a book called Tito's secret years in Moscow, complete with copies of his reports about and denouncing colleagues. Sadly this is only in Slovene at present but one would hope that an English language version will appear.

One consequence of this hidden truth was that Tito became an acceptable hero for the left, many of whom had become nauseated by Stalin's crimes. Some of course still revered Stalin whatever he did.

Recent discoveries of hidden graves in Slovenia show the full extent of Tito's and his comrades' crimes. When the Hidden Graves Commission first started work many thought they would find about 100 graves with perhaps 40,000 victims, however to date this has resulted in over 600 graves and an estimated

over 100,000 victims. These range from capitalist class enemies to German soldiers, Ustasi fascists to Catholic Homeguards, former politicians to Russian Cossacks, Croat conscripts, and even women and children. The Director of the Commission has described this as the greatest post-war massacre in the whole of Europe. Undoubtedly some were war criminals but the vast majority were those caught up in a civil war and red revolutionary situation, and for Tito and his Bolsheviks they were merely enemies or potential enemies to be eliminated.

Once there was a 'falling out of thieves' between Tito and Stalin, no doubt engendered by Tito seeing what was happening to Communist leaders in Eastern Europe and his own direct experience in Moscow, he jumped ship and we in the west were happy to let the truth take a back seat.

What is worrying however is that the full truth about the return by the British Army of 12,000 unarmed surrendered anti-communist Homeguards to Tito has never quite come fully out, and to this day the Foreign Office and the Government refuse to acknowledge that a mistake was made or express any regret. The fact that the forcible return was against the instructions of Prime Minister Churchill and Field Marshal Alexander makes it even more uncomfortable. The discovery of more and more graves compounds our involvement and every day makes us look like accessories to the Tito crimes. Of course, it is possible to understand, in the great urgencies of the Cold War, to justify (barely, but just about) the silence but not any longer.

Jews know that not only must the truth be known but for the health of future generations we need reminding otherwise repetition takes place. Crimes committed in the dark and hidden from view are more easily repeated and in the case of former Yugoslavia we have the precise proof of this with the massacres in Bosnia. We know that the situation in Bosnia was a civil war type and this was exactly the position in Yugoslavia during the Second World War. It may have suited our aims to support Tito in World War Two and after but now we need truth and realism. Many

on the left in former Yugoslavia would prefer the crimes to be ignored not least because they grew up in the Communist system many as willing travellers or their parents or grandparents were involved but that is no excuse for hiding the truth. Amazingly, there is a move to name again a street after Tito and still no streets named after the politicians who brought Slovenia back to the democratic world.

Of course, many would say that truth is a matter of interpretation, but it is important that the facts, as far as possible, are established for the maintenance of a healthy democracy.

It was not by chance that in South Africa the Commission was called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Programme for Peace in Northern Ireland has the same title. They know in these countries that truth is vital, and also we know that in Darfur and Rwanda secrecy helped the criminals and it looks as if there have been bad acts in Sri Lanka.

Because of the involvement of the British army at the time, the British Government should be pushing for a Slovene-British Historic Commission so that all the facts can come out. Interpretation can then be made, but not when many facts are hidden. Is it too much to ask for politicians with some moral courage?

The relatives of the victims will not be free of the past but they will no longer be fighting for the truth. As we all know, Truth is the brother of Freedom, and the truth will set you free.

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