

5 – 6 OCTOBER



INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE

BATUMI

*Uncovering the Truth
Mass Graves of the Great Terror
(1937–1938) in Batumi/Georgia*

2023

*Our friends were being
imprisoned, and we
were smiling...
People around us were
being executed
- we were applauding
and smiling.
We were erasing friends
with our own hands
from photos.*

KOLAU NADIRADZE (1895-1990)
GEORGIAN POET

**Mieroszewski
Centre**

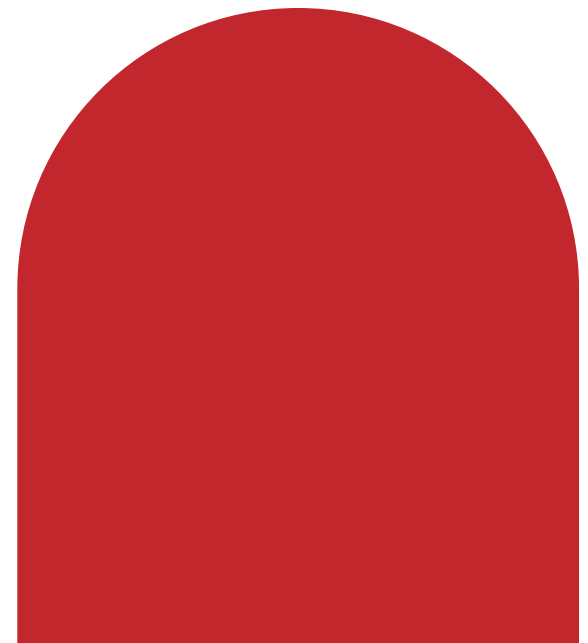


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IDFI | Institute for Development
of Freedom of Information



Working Day 1

October 5

9:30-10:00

Registration

10:00-10:15

Introductory remarks

HE Mariusz Maszkiewicz – Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland to Georgia

Giorgi Kldiashvili – Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Georgia

Ernest Wyciszkievicz – The Mieroszewski Centre, Poland

10:15-10:35

Keynote lecture,

How to talk about the Soviet Repressions,

Yan Rachinsky – Chairman of the International Memorial: 2022 Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

10:40-11:40

Discussion: *History of the communist crimes in Georgia*

Moderator:

Levan Avalishvili – Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Georgia

Discussants:

Nana Janelidze - Film Director, Georgia

Giorgi Mamulia - The School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, France

Harrison King - UC Berkeley History Department, USA

Panel 1

12:00-14:00

Batumi mass graves - Archaeological and anthropological studies

Moderator:

Anton Vatcharadze - Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Georgia

Speakers:

The work carried out on the mass graves of the Great Terror in Adjara in 2017-2022

Father Ilia Khinikadze - Eparchy of Batumi and Lazeti, Georgia

Results of forensic examination of the human remains exhumed in mass grave No. 6 near Batumi

Lukasz Szleszkowski - Wroclaw Medical University, Poland

Exhumation of grave No. 6 from the site of the former Soviet military base No. 3 in Chelwaczauri from the anthropological perspective

Angelika Słodka - Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), Poland

Archaeological report on the exhumation and search work carried out at the military base No. 3 in Batumi, Khelvachauri, Georgia on 24 January - 8 February, 2022

Tomasz Borkowski - Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), Poland

Panel 2

15:00-17:00

Victims of Soviet Terror – Documentation problems

Moderator:

Lukasz Adamski - The Mieroszewski Centre, Poland

Speakers:

Do Stalin's documents tell the truth? Problems of documenting the names of victims of repression

Sergei Prudovsky - International Memorial

The victims of Soviet state terror in Moldova: archival and oral sources, interpretations and challenges

Igor Casu - National Agency of Archives, Moldova

"To count exactly, call by the first name..." – Attempts to document the victims of Soviet repression in Poland by name

Maciej Wyrwa - The Mieroszewski Centre, Poland

Archival sources of the Great Terror in Adjara: Challenges in reconstructing the complete picture

Anton Vatcharadze - Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Georgia

Working Day 2

October 6

Panel 3

10:00-11:30

The role of museums in commemorating Soviet political repressions

Moderator:

Irma Dimitradze - Media outlet Batumelebi, Georgia

Speakers:

Sybir Memorial Museum – the place of authentic emotions

Wojciech Sleszynski - Sybir Memorial Museum, Poland

Museification of History and Memory of the Great Terror (1937-1938) in the Republic of Moldova

Ludmila D. Cojocar - National History Museum of Moldova, Moldova

The exhibitions of the National Museum

showcase the Soviet era of the 1920s-30s

Mikheil Tsereteli - Center for the Study and Promotion of Natural and Cultural Heritage of Georgia, Georgia

Preserving historical memory in museums,

encouraging reflection and dialogue by creating new processes

Natasha Lomouri - Concept author of David Sarajishvili Memorial Museum and of the Museum of Repressed Soviet Writers, Georgia

Panel 4

12:00-14:00

How to popularise knowledge and how to learn about Soviet repressions

Moderator:

Natasha Lomouri - Concept author of David Sarajishvili Memorial Museum and of the Museum of Repressed Soviet Writers, Georgia

Speakers:

Gulag.cz: New technologies as a tool for education and enlightenment on the topic of Soviet repression

Stepan Cernousek - Gulag.cz Association, International Memorial, Czech Republic

How and with whom to talk about political repression? Educational practices of the Perm-36 Museum

Yulia Balabanova - Perm-36 Virtual Museum project, Kazakhstan

The KARTA method - a social movement for documenting Soviet crimes

Justyna Avci - KARTA Centre, Poland

Decommunization, decolonisation, deimperialization, and deideologization. 4D politics: the case of occupied Belarus

Alina Koushyk - United Transitional Cabinet of Belarus, Poland

Popularising knowledge about Soviet repressions through remembering their victims. The example of the "Last Address" project in Germany

Melanie Hussinger - Chair of History of Eastern Europe and East Central Europe, Helmut Schmidt University, Germany

14:00-14:10

Closing remarks

PARTICIPANTS

LUKASZ ADAMSKI PhD in history, political scientist, specialising in the history of Eastern Europe, especially in the history of Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Russian relations, as well as the foreign and domestic policy of Eastern European states. Since 2022 deputy director of the Mieroszewski Centre and editor-in-chief of "AREI. Journal for Central and Eastern European History and Politics". In 2014, he worked as rapporteur of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. From 2006 to 2011 he was an analyst and head of the research group at the Polish Institute of International Affairs. Author of the monograph: "Progressive Nationalist. Mykhailo Hrushevsky and his views on Poland and Poles". In 2022, he published two volumes of sources on Polish-Soviet relations during World War II, and in 2019 - two volumes of sources (together with Grzegorz Hryciuk) on the struggle of the Polish underground against the Soviets in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia.

LEVAN AVALISHVILI is the Programs Director and Co-founder of the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI). He has 13+ years of proven experience in organization leadership, program management, donor relations and advocacy with government structures. Levan has academic credentials as a researcher of Soviet Studies and is the author of several research papers on soviet history. He is a member of the Georgian Association of American Studies and the Georgian Association of History Educators; Board Member of the Institute for American Studies (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University), and Center for Strategic Researches and Development of Georgia. .

JUSTYNA AVCI is an editor and representative of the KARTA Centre located in Warsaw, Poland. She graduated in Polish studies at the University of Warsaw and European Master's Degree at the the Université libre de Bruxelles. The history of Polish emigration in France and Turkey remains at the center of her interests.

YULIA BALABANOVA has worked the past 10 years, as a member of the Memorial Society (since 2015) and as a volunteer, Yulia has taken part in expeditions to Gulag sites in the Perm region, and participated in organizing projects dedicated to victims of political repression. These are such projects as "Last Address", "Return of Names", "Zone of Voice" and others. Yulia performed her author's program of songs and poems on civil topics at such

authoritative venues as the Pilorama International Forum and Perm Civil Seasons. Since the beginning of 2022, Yulia has been an active participant in the launch of the Perm-36 project in its new incarnation as a virtual museum.

TOMASZ BORKOWSKI PhD in archaeology. Specializes in late medieval and contemporary archaeology as well as forensic archaeology; since 2016 he has been employed at the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), where he directed numerous excavations; lecturer of the Postgraduate Studies in Forensic Archaeology at the University of Wrocław. During the excavations in Batumi in 2021, he was the head of the team.

IGOR CASU is the director of the National Agency for Archives, and a Lecturer at the State University of Moldova, Chişinău. In 2016 he was a Fulbright Scholar at Stanford University giving talks on postwar famine at Toronto University, Yale, Harvard, and Stanford. His recent publications include "The Benefits of Comparison: Famine in Kazakhstan in the Early 1930s in Soviet Context", in Journal of Genocide Research, Volume 22, issue 3, 2020, and "Do Starving People Rebel? Hunger Riots as Bab'y Bunty in Spring 1946 Soviet Moldavia", in New Europe College's Yearbook (Bucharest), 2020. He is working on a book on the postwar famine in Soviet Moldavia in the European context, 1946-47.

STEPAN CERNOUSEK is a chairman of the Gulag.cz Association, which focuses on the phenomenon of Soviet repressions and its popularization. He organized five expeditions to abandoned Gulag camps in Siberia and Kazakhstan, he also focuses on the topic of repression of Czechs in the USSR. He has long cooperated with the Russian Memorial Association, initiating the establishment of its branch in the Czech Republic, as well as the Czech version of the Russian memorial projects Last Address and Returning the Names. He is a member of the Board of the International Memorial. He graduated in Territorial Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University in Prague and also studied Russian and Latvian at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University.

LUDMILA D. COJOCARU PhD in History, Associate Professor (2005), Head of the Museum of Victims of Deportations and Political Repressions, National Museum of History of Moldova (since 2022). Fields of interest: memory culture, post-soviet museum, ethnography of deportations. Books: "Exercise of memory", "Archives of memory", vol. I-III; "Romanians in the Gulag". Invited editor at the History and Anthropology for the thematic issue "Politics and Performance

	in South-Eastern Europe". Curator of 5 photo-documentary exhibitions on Soviet deportations and political repressions in Moldova (1940-1941, 1944-1953).		European, and Eurasian Studies from Miami University (Ohio) and an MA in Comparative History from Central European University.
IRMA DIMITRADZE	is a journalist with the independent online media outlet Batumelebi.ge and also serves as the public communications manager for the outlet's owner company, Gazeti Batumelebi. Her interests lie in data and investigative journalism. She holds a bachelor's degree in Finance and Banking from Ilia State University and is currently on a gap year in her Master's program in Administration of Education at the same university. Batumelebi.ge is actively involved in the coverage of topics related to the Mass Graves of the Great Terror in Batumi.	FATHER ILIA KHINIKADZE	graduated from the Theological Seminary of St. John the Apostle in Batumi and serves in Batumi Cathedral, named after St. Gabriel the Confessor and Salos. He is also the spokesperson of the Batumi and Lazeti Diocese.
MELANIE HUSSINGER	has been a research assistant at the Chair of History of Eastern Europe and East-Central Europe at Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg since April 2021. From 2017 to 2020, she studied Eastern European Studies in Regensburg, majoring in the history of Eastern and South Eastern Europe and minoring in law. From 2018 to 2021, she worked as a student assistant at the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies in Regensburg for, among others, the Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas. From 2013 to 2017, she completed the Bachelor's programme in European Studies at the University of Passau. Her research focuses on memory culture and politics in Eastern Europe, civil society movements during perestroika, practices of remembering and commemoration in post-socialist states, and Stalinism and its reappraisal.	GIORGI KLDIASHVILI	is a founding member and Executive Director of the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI). He has more than 10 years' experience of working on openness and anti-corruption policies in Georgia and internationally. Giorgi has been carrying out projects, studies, assessments and providing trainings for different international and civil society organizations and government entities. In addition to his work in applied policy research with IDFI, as a historian by specialty, he has academic credentials as a researcher, undertaking studies in American and Soviet Studies. He is professional archive researcher, and has been working in the historical archives of Georgia and abroad for more than a 20 year. Giorgi holds graduate degrees in Contemporary History and worked as a professor of American Studies at the Institute of American Studies at Tbilisi State University.
NANA JANELIDZE	is a Georgian film director and screenwriter. Janelidze worked with Tengiz Abuladze on the 1984 film "Repentance" as a screenwriter and music designer. The film won the Grand Prix at the 1987 Cannes Film Festival, was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film, and won the Nika Award in six categories, including Best Screenplay. The film was produced in 1984, however, it was banned from release in the Soviet Union for its semi-allegorical critique of Stalinism and was premiered only in 1987.	ALINA KOUSHYK	is the United Transitional Cabinet Representative for National Revival. She has a degree in history and has founded numerous social projects. For the past 15 years, she has worked at Belsat TV as a journalist, TV host and producer. She was the founder of several TV projects and documentaries. In addition, Alina co-founded the Center for Belarusian Solidarity in Warsaw and InBelKult 2.0, as well as a club of Belarusian women in Warsaw. She masterminded the Belarusian business map www.bymapka.me . Alina believes that everyone has a story and national revival is the key to Belarusian victory.
HARRISON KING	is a Ph.D. Candidate in History at the University of California, Berkeley focusing on the histories of the late Russian and Ottoman empires and their successor states. Using Georgian, Russian, and Turkish-language sources, his dissertation project explores the political and cultural history of the Georgian-Turkish borderlands from the end of the First World War to the Cold War. Harrison holds a dual BA in International Studies and Russian, East	NATASHA LOMOURI	was schooled in Georgia and in the US. Started her university studies at the Faculty of International Law and International Relations in Tbilisi State University and continued at the University of Bologna, Faculty of Political Science. She was awarded with a PhD in 2004 after defending her dissertation entitled Arab-Israeli Conflict: Peace Process at the end of XX Century at the Tbilisi State University. From 2011 to 2023 she was the director of the Writers' House of Georgia. She is the curator and concept author of the David Sarajishvili Memorial Museum and of the Museum of Repressed Soviet Writers.

GIORGI MAMULIA	received his doctorate at the Centre d'études des monde russe, caucasien et centre-européén of École des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris in 2008, is an independent scholar specializing in the modern history of the Caucasus. His most recent books include "Les combats indépendantistes des Caucasiens entre URSS et puissances occidentales: Le cas de la Géorgie, 1921-1945", (2009) and "The Eurasian Triangle Russia, The Caucasus and Japan, 1904-1945" (Coauthorship with H. Kuromyia) (2016).	Rachinsky as his successor. Memorial was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022, and Rachinsky received the prize on its behalf.
HE MARIUSZ MASZKIEWICZ	is a Polish diplomat; was ambassador of Poland to Belarus (1998–2002) and is currently in Georgia (since November 2016). Doctor of human sciences, diplomat, publicist, sociologist, and economist. He has authored many articles covering diverse sociological issues, as well as studies into religions, anthropology, and international relations. Graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the Jagiellonian University, where in 1993 received the degree of Doctor of Humanities. Studied theology, and philosophy in Poznań (1979–1980) and as a guest student at Georg August University in Göttingen (Germany) in 1986. In 2017 obtained a degree of habilitated doctor. He read sciences from 1981 to 1989 in the Jagiellonian University of Kraków. During his time there, he became involved in the underground freedom movement that flourished in Poland at that time and led the Wolność i Pokój (Freedom and Peace) organisation between 1986 and 1990. He has published more than 10 books (monographs and collective works) as well as dozens of articles and studies on international relations, anthropology, sociology, history, and culture.	ANGELIKA SLODKA M.Sc. in biological anthropology. For over four years she has been working at the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). She actively participates in excavations directed by IPN's archaeologists. As an anthropologist, she is helping in exhumations and in the process of identification. During the excavations in Batumi in 2021, she was a member of the team.
SERGEY PRUDOVSKY	is a member of the Scientific Information and Educational Center "Memorial" and a metallurgist by training. Since 2009, he has been studying the national operations of the NKVD. He is the author of the following books: "Спасская красавица". 14 Years in the Gulag of Agronomist Kuznetsov," and "There Was Such a 'Nation' - Harbin Residents: The Harbin Operation of the NKVD in Documents" Additionally, he co-authored an article with Sergei Krivenko titled "Statistics of National Operations of the NKVD in 1937-1938". Currently, he is finalizing his work on the book "Anatomy of a Crime: The Polish Operation of the NKVD" and is actively engaged in writing a book that covers all national operations.	LUKASZ SZLESZKOWSKI Ph.D. in medical sciences and an expert in forensic medicine, currently holds a teaching position at the Wrocław Medical University. He has been associated with forensic medicine since the late 1990s and serves as the head of the dissecting room at the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Wrocław. His academic pursuits primarily focus on research concerning exhumed remains of victims of totalitarian regimes. Dr. Szleszkowski has actively participated in exhumations both within Poland and abroad, including Belarus, Georgia, and Switzerland. He is also an author and co-author of numerous scientific articles in the field of forensic medicine, as well as textbooks on forensic medicine and forensic archaeology. Dr. Szleszkowski's professional achievements have earned him state awards and recognitions.
YAN RACHINSKY	is a Russian human rights activist, programmer and mathematician. He has been a human rights activist since the late 1980s when he first became involved in the work and activities of Memorial, a human rights organization examining the crimes of Stalin's regime. When the long-serving chairman of International Memorial, Arseny Roginsky, died in 2018, the board elected →	WOJCIECH SLESZYNSKI PhD, DSc, ProfTit - historian, Director of the Sibir Memorial Museum since 2017. A long-time lecturer at the University of Białystok. In 2012-2016, the dean of the Faculty of History and Sociology at the University of Białystok, and in 2016-2020, the Vice-Rector for Education at the University of Białystok. Head of the Department of Eastern Studies and International Political Relations at the University of Białystok. Author of over 200 scientific publications.
		MIKHEIL TSERETELI is a director of the newly founded non-governmental organization "Center for Study and Promotion of Natural and Cultural Heritage of Georgia" and "Center for Study and Promotion of Natural and Cultural Heritage of Georgia". His educational background is in archaeology and museology. From 2005-2022 he worked at the Georgian National Museum, occupying position of the vice General Director. Starting in 2005 he worked with the StudioMilous and UNESCO experts on the development of a strategy for the transformation of post-Soviet Georgian museums. His main area of responsibility is public programs and education. He has experience working on the international and regional level and has closely cooperated with US and European partner institutions. M. Tsereteli is a member of ICOM (International Council of Museums), member of INTERCOM (International Committee for Museum Management). He is one of the

co-founders and board members of ICOM Georgia actively involved in organization of different international, regional, and local forums for museum professionals.

ANTON VATCHARADZE heads the Memory and Disinformation Studies Direction at IDFI, which he joined in 2017. Anton is a historian by training and has earned his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Tbilisi State University. Since 2009, Anton has worked at the National Archive of Georgia. In 2012-2017, he was the director of the Central Historical Archive. During this period, Anton took part in projects implemented by the National Archive and various non-governmental organizations: including many projects concerning the study of the history and sources of Georgia's first democratic republic, as well as popularization of this period in schools and among students. Three of these projects involved the study of archival documents related to Abkhazia and Samachablo and ensuring their public accessibility. Anton Vatcharadze is the author of several articles on history and memory. He has edited a number of scientific-popular books. In 2021, he participated in archaeological research on mass grave N6 of the Great Terror in Batumi.

ERNEST WYCISZKIEWICZ is a PhD in political science. Since 2016 Director of the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding, now Mieroszewski Centre. Formerly Deputy Director of the Centre, Head of International Economy and Energy Security Programme and Senior Research Fellow at the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM). Graduated in international relations from the University of Łódź and the Dual Diploma Programme of the Université Marc Bloch (Strasbourg) and the University of Łódź in contemporary translation studies. Between 2003 and 2008, the secretary of the editorial board of the Russian-language quarterly "Evropa". Author of numerous analytical studies, expert reports and articles on the energy policy of the Russian Federation, European Union-Russia relations, foreign policy of the Russian Federation and international climate negotiations and sanctions. Co-author and editor of the books "Geopolityka rurociągów. Współzależność energetyczna a relacje międzypaństwowe na obszarze postsowieckim" and "Energy Security and Climate Change: Double Challenge for Policymakers". Member of the editorial board of "AREI - Journal for Central and Eastern European History and Politics" and "Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny".

MACIEJ WYRWA is a PhD of history. Research coordinator at the Mieroszewski Centre. Specialises in researching the history of Soviet repression against Poles and issues of historical memory. Initiator and co-author of the database "Victims →

of anti-Polish terror in the Soviet Union 1934-1938" (www.ofiaryterroru.pl) and educational portals devoted to the Katyn Massacre (www.katynpromemoria.pl) and the "Polish Operation" of the NKVD (www.operacja-polska.pl). Author of the publication "Unfound Victims of Katyn? List of missing persons in the area of the northeastern provinces of the Second Republic of Poland from 17 September 1939 to June 1940".



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