

## REMEMBERING COMMUNISM IN SOUTH AND CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE: POLITICS AND CULTURES OF MEMORY AFTER 1989



*«Qualestoria», a journal of the IRSREC FVG (Regional Institute for the History of the Resistance and the Contemporary Age in Friuli Venezia Giulia), hosts contributions by Italian and foreign authors, promoting the publication of monographic and miscellaneous issues. The journal traditionally – but not exclusively – proposes topics related to the contemporary history of the Upper Adriatic and border areas, paying particular attention to the study and historiography of the countries of Central-Eastern Europe and the Balkans.*

The year 1989 constituted a caesura in the field of European and world history, which also affected the politics and cultures of memory. In Southern and East-Central Europe, the collapse of communist regimes brought with it a “liberation of memory”, breaking the previous official narratives that had been established after the end of the Second World War. The anti-fascist paradigm, from “founding myth” and State ideology, was eroded and undermined, replacing resistance heroism with an emphasis on victims, both of Nazism and communism. Moreover, the assertion of an anti-totalitarian paradigm led in some cases to equating Nazism and communism, especially in terms of repressive practices and the use of terror.

In the post-communist countries, albeit with different national narratives, some common trend lines were established. An exclusively negative reading of the communist period prevailed, obscuring more articulate judgements that positively evaluated certain aspects of it, such as the modernisation of the economy or forms of social protection. In the countries that had been part of the Soviet bloc, communism was predominantly described as a phenomenon imposed from outside and extraneous to national history, allowing post-communist societies to be presented exclusively as victims, and obscuring the question of consensus, such as the multifaceted phenomena of adherence, acceptance, or

collaboration with the regimes. Lastly, the reinterpretation of the Second World War and the communist experience has often been declined by accentuating a reading with nationalist traits, which in the pre-eminence given to the national anti-communist struggle has sometimes led to the rehabilitation of supporters of Nazism, also responsible for anti-Jewish persecution (see the case of Marshal Antonescu in Romania).

Examining both the countries of the former Soviet bloc – Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic – and the area of the former Yugoslavia and Albania, where communist regimes but not aligned with the USSR were established, the monographic issue of «Qualestoria» aims to investigate how, in the course of the now thirty-five years that have passed since 1989, the cultures of memory and the official memory policies promoted by the institutions have changed, questioning also the public use of the history of communism. How did the different political actors rework the experience of communism after the collapse of the regimes? Is it possible to identify periodizations within the past thirty-five years? Have different judgments been established with respect to national regimes and the USSR? Has the memory of communism in the former Yugoslavia and Albania developed along different paradigms, compared to that of the countries belonging to the Soviet bloc? Has the entry of the former communist countries into the European Union led to changes in the memory of communism?

The monographic issue of «Qualestoria» invites potential contributors to submit essay proposals that develop both analyses of individual country cases and comparative approaches. «Qualestoria» evaluates proposals focusing on one or more of the following aspects:

- Commemorations and national anniversaries;
- Places of remembrance and museums;
- School manuals;
- Historiographical disputes;
- Political conflicts related to the memory of communism;
- The memory of 1989 and the end of the communist experience.

## **HOW TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE**

Authors may submit a proposal to participate in the monographic issue. The abstract, with a maximum length of 1500 characters (including spaces) must be sent to [qualestoria@irsrecfvg.eu](mailto:qualestoria@irsrecfvg.eu) by **30 March 2024**; acceptance or rejection of the proposal will be communicated by **7 April 2024**. The deadline for submitting articles is **30 June 2024**. Contributions will be published in the issue 2/2024 of the journal. Abstracts and essays can be written in Italian and English. Essays will be subjected to an anonymous double-blind peer review; they should be between 40,000 and 60,000 characters (including notes and spaces) and comply with the editorial rules and instructions for authors that will be provided.

For any additional information, please write to: [qualestoria@irsrecfvg.eu](mailto:qualestoria@irsrecfvg.eu)