

## COURAGE - Connecting Collections

Cultural Opposition – Understanding the  
Cultural Heritage of  
Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

*The COURAGE project will recognize the importance of dissent in former socialist countries by surveying and connecting collections on cultural opposition.*



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/ Fortepan / Center for Female Studies (Belgrade)

## What is COURAGE?

Culture in Eastern Europe before 1989 meant more than socialist realism and dull propaganda art. An alternative cultural scene flourished despite the controls of socialist regimes, embracing diverse practices such as

- non-conformist avant-garde art,
- cinema, performance art, music, dance, and fine arts,
- unofficial education and publication (samizdat),
- youth subcultures, underground punk, and rock bands,
- human rights and environmental (green) movements,
- nationalist/popular cultural movements,
- exiled and emigrant groups,
- alternative ways of life, and even
- novel religious practices.

**COURAGE** is the first international research project that tackles this **rich and colourful legacy of cultural opposition** in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe by exploring and comparing **collections** on cultural opposition. In so doing, the project will help us recognize and acknowledge forms of dissent and preserve these manifestations of resistance as part of our common European heritage.

- *Courage wants to understand **the role of collections** in shaping the concepts of cultural opposition. Therefore,*
- *Courage collects data on collections of cultural opposition.*

## COURAGE will create

- a comprehensive international **online database** (electronic registry) of existing but
- **scattered public and private collections** on the histories and forms of cultural opposition in the former socialist countries and thereby
- make the collections more **accessible**.

**COURAGE** will further a more nuanced understanding of

- **how these collections work,**
- what **functions** they serve in their respective societies, and
- how they **represent** their holdings and findings to the national and international public.

The general aim of this analysis is **to allow for the expanded outreach and increased impact of the collections** by assessing the historical origins and legacies of various forms of cultural opposition.

## Activities

COURAGE will develop an innovative range of activities. In addition to creating the online database of collections, the project will generate

- a web **portal** in English and in the national languages of the respective countries,
- **online teaching** material for education,
- online and travelling **exhibitions**,
- country reports and **policy** recommendations,
- **film festivals**,
- a **handbook**,
- **training** days for the stakeholders of the collections to enhance their cooperative capacity.

## Target Groups

- Professional staff and the stakeholders of the **collections**. COURAGE will **strengthen their standing** by making the collections readily accessible to the wider international public;
- **Academics, researchers and teachers**. For them, the online database will serve both as an instructional tool and as a gateway for further research;
- **Policy makers** at the local and national levels, and the European Commission and other European institutions. COURAGE will produce a set of policy recommendations concerning the use of collections for research and education;
- **Members of the younger generation (school classes, students, young professionals)**. With engaging audio-visual tools, interactive activities, and contemporary social media, COURAGE will transform the values and legacy of cultural opposition into a personal experience for them.

## Participants

- MTA BTK** - Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Coordinator)
- IFIS PAN** - Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences
- TCD** - Trinity College Dublin
- IOS Regensburg** - Institute for East and Southeast European Studies
- MTA TK** - Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences
- LII** - Lithuanian Institute of History

- CUNI** - Charles University in Prague
- UB** - University of Bucharest
- HIP** - Croatian Institute of History
- Comenius University in Bratislava**
- The University of Oxford**
- MTA SZTAKI** - Institute for Computer Science and Control

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