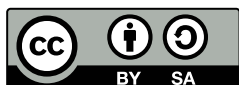


## INTRODUCTION

### LITERATURE OF SOCIALIST TRAUMA

This special issue of “Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny” represents the first set of outputs of the project “Literature of Socialist Trauma: Mapping and Researching the Lost Page of European Literature (LOST)”, funded by the Italian Ministry of Education Universities, and Research (MIUR) within its PRIN 2022 PNRR scheme. The project is the first attempt to evaluate the literature triggered by state repression in the countries of the former USSR and the so-called Eastern Bloc under a comparative perspective. The research team is comprised of 12 scholars – based in three Italian universities, the University of Bari, Naples “L’Orientale” and Palermo – specialists of different national literatures in the geographical areas involved in the research. The first year of the project has produced some significant results, such as a set of specialized bibliographies, three seminar series, a conference and a literary festival (i.e. the 2024 edition of the “Pagine di Russia” literary festival in Bari). Most of all, it has created a platform for the exchange of ideas and expertise across different disciplines, as happened in the June 2024 seminar series in Palermo, when Antonio Onofri, a scholar and a clinician specialized in the treatment of traumatized patients, held his seminar as a dialogue on literature and trauma with the research team based on the literary texts provided by them.

While the final results of the project are yet to be defined, this first set of articles shows how the original idea of the project proves particularly promising, and capable of opening new perspectives of research. In the first article, I propose a wide theoretical piece to introduce the concept of “Literature of Socialist trauma” against the backdrop of the research landscape in a variety of areas. The following articles, other than providing thought-provoking and rigorous studies on a variety of study cases, display the interconnections between this wide, transnational and transgenerational literary corpus. Leona Toker, Blerina Suta and Antonella D’Amelia analyse the works of some of the authors whose work has been directly or indirectly influenced by state repression, highlighting some shared features, such as, for instance, the



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necessity to restore memory in Ismail Kadaré and Iurii Trifonov and the narrative strategies implemented by both authors to fulfil their duty. Dunja Dušanić and Judit Papp analyse an extremely interesting and reciprocally enriching body of texts, i.e. the poetry created – orally or post-liberation – by Hungarian and Yugoslavian authors who went through the camps in the USSR and Yugoslavia. The last three articles, by Josefina Lundblad-Janijc, Duccio Colombo and Natascia Barrale, offer insights on wider issues related to both thematic and structural features of several texts as well as the literary context in which the works analysed are generated, such as the representation of children in Gulag narratives, the literary models of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* and the *Protokoll-Literatur* in the GDR. A second set of articles will be published in the journal "Автобиография. Journal on Life Writing and the Representation of the Self in Russian Culture".

At the end of this endeavour, I would like to thank all contributors, reviewers and colleagues who helped me with their insights and concrete deeds. A special thank goes to the Heads of the two Research Units of the project "Literature of Socialist Trauma: Mapping and Researching the Lost Page of European Literature (LOST)", Andrea Di Carlo (Naples "L'Orientale") and Simone Guagnelli (Bari), for their constant help and support. Most importantly, my wholehearted gratitude goes to the editorial staff of "Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny" for believing in this project and providing a prestigious platform where the first outputs of the project can be read by scholars, and to Dario Prola, for his continuous support, devotion and understanding throughout the preparation of this issue. Without him, this publication would not have been possible.

Andrea Gullotta