

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Institute of International Studies

Department of Russian and East European Studies

**M. A. Dissertation**

2012

Sander Roberto Maurano Filho

**CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Institute of International Studies

Department of Russian and East European Studies

Sander Roberto Maurano Filho

**Producing and Consuming the Nation: Ethnography of a Czech National Memorial**

*M. A. Dissertation*

Prague 2012

Author: Sander Roberto Maurano Filho

Supervisor: PhD. Jiří Vykoukal

Year of defence: 2012

## **Bibliographical record**

MAURANO, Sander R. F. *Producing and Consuming the Nation: Ethnography of a Czech National Memorial*. Prague 2012. 115 pp. M. A. Dissertation, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of International Studies, Department of Russian and East European Studies. Supervisor: PhD. Jiří Vykoukal

### **Abstrakt**

Podle Billig (1995), Palmer (1998) a Fox (2008) současná výzkumná agenda musí studovat aspekty každodenního života, které reprodukuje národ, a proto tento výzkum analyzuje Národní Památník na Vítkově, část českého Národního muzea v Praze. Cílem je analyzovat jak národní kulturní produkce omezuje praktiky lidí a jejich znalosti. Tento práce je etnografická studie o produkci a spotřebě pomníku, a popisuje praktiky spotřeby a okupaci, které reprodukuje nebo podvrací národní konstrukce. Národní Památník na Vítkově funguje jako památník, muzeum, socha a park, které změnili významy podle různých politických režimů v průběhu 20. století. Národní Památník byl znovuotevřen v roce 2009 s cílem opravit národní dějiny, identitu a paměti v souvislosti demokratickou a evropské České republice. Národní Památník spojuje oficiální obřady, vojenské přehlídky, prezidentské rituály a expozice a vystavy s národními funkcemi. Národní památník byl plánován na oslavu národa, ale návštěvníků mohou změnit významy výstavy. Ačkoli byl plánován na vojenských přehlídkách a národní obřady, různé sociální skupiny, např. starší lidé, rodiče s dětmi a mládeží, doplňují nebo změni oficiální národní konstrukce v každodenním životě v Národním Památníku.

### **Abstract**

Following a research agenda stimulated by Billig (1995), Palmer (1998) and Fox (2008) towards the study of aspects of everyday life through which nations are reproduced, this work approaches the National Memorial on Vítkov Hill, part of the Czech National Museum in Prague. In order to investigate to what extent national cultural productions constrain people's practices and understandings, this research offers an ethnographic study of the production and consumption of the monument, considering practices of consumption and occupation that reproduce, subvert or negotiate its national content and colossal planning. The National Memorial on Vítkov Hill combines memorial, museum, statue and park, which had their meanings re-negotiated by different political regimes during the 20th century. Re-opened in 2009 aiming to 'make sense' of national history, identity and memory in the context of a new, democratic and European Czech Republic, the monument combines official ceremonies, such as military parades and presidential rituals, with permanent and temporary exhibitions with national functions. Although planned to celebrate the nation, exhibitions are consumed by visitors that distort the national narratives presented. The space planned for military parades and national rituals is occupied in everyday life by different social groups such as elderly people, parents with children and youngsters that complement or change the official national landscape constructed by the National Memorial.

### **Klíčová slova**

Nacionalismus, každodenní život, muzeum, kulturní spotřeba

### **Keywords**

Nationalism, everyday life, museum, cultural consumption

**Extent:** 115 pages.

**Statement:**

1. This statement is to confirm that this paper is a product of my own work and also to confirm that I used the listed sources in producing it.
2. I agree that the paper can be checked for research and studying purposes.

---

Prague, 18 May 2012

Sander Roberto Maurano Filho

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to thank Dr. Jiří Vykoukal for his fine supervision and instruction during all stages of this research.

I would like to thank David Short and Barbora Šmídová for excellent teaching of Czech language that permitted the independent conduction of the ethnographic research.

## Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1. <i>Nations and Everyday Life.....</i>	10
2.2. <i>National Museums, Memorials and Monuments.....</i>	16
2.3. <i>Cultural Consumption.....</i>	21
<b>3. METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>4. ANALYSIS OF PRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>30</b>
4.1. <i>Historical Cultural Production of a Czech Nation.....</i>	30
4.2. <i>Construction of the National Memorial.....</i>	34
4.3. <i>The Fourth Revival.....</i>	42
4.3.1. <i>The Official Opening.....</i>	46
4.3.2. <i>Re-unveiling the Statue of Jan Žižka.....</i>	50
4.3.3. <i>Re-burying the Unknown Soldier.....</i>	55
4.3.4. <i>Mausoleum.....</i>	58
4.3.5. <i>Permanent Exhibition.....</i>	63
4.3.5.1. <i>Columbarium.....</i>	66
4.3.6. <i>Temporary Exhibitions.....</i>	69
<b>5. ANALYSIS OF CONSUMPTION.....</b>	<b>75</b>
5.1. <i>Groups and Practices on the Vítkov Hill.....</i>	76
5.1.1. <i>Older generations.....</i>	79
5.1.2. <i>Families.....</i>	82
5.1.3. <i>Youngsters.....</i>	86
5.2. <i>Performing the Nation on Holiday.....</i>	93
5.3. <i>Reacting to exhibitions.....</i>	100
<b>6. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>7. SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>8. REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>ANNEXES.....</b>	<b>114</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The initial motivation of this research is to evaluate current theoretical propositions within the literature of Nationalism Studies that suggest the study of nations in relation to everyday life. Further, the concept of cultural consumption is adopted to approach individual agency in order to expand contemporary understandings about possible interactions between nations and individuals. Considering previous studies of national museums, memorials and monuments, which tend to focus on problems of representations and national narratives, this research aims to identify forms of consumption and occupation of national spaces that may negotiate or subvert national contents. Therefore, the main theoretical question raised is to what extent national cultural productions constrain people's practices and understandings.

To approach the main theoretical research question, this research brings a detailed case study of a national cultural production: the recently re-opened Czech National Memorial on Vítkov Hill<sup>1</sup> in Prague. The study of one case does not intend to dismiss the applicability of a particular theory, but it can show how the combination of interdisciplinary perspectives is valuable to understand social reality in its complexity. The in-depth analysis of one case study aims to investigate possible contributions and limitations of the theories reviewed in dealing with the density of a concrete case. As Stake (1995) states, a case study combines particularity and complexity, which can challenge previous generalisations by emphasizing the interpretation of multiple realities within one current setting. Avoiding generalisations, the objective of focusing on a single national space is to provide deeper understandings of dynamics involved between people and a particular national production, which can serve for future comparative research on the topic.

For these purposes, this research raises two specific questions about the case selected. Firstly, this research interrogates how the NM produces the nation. Initially, this question

---

<sup>1</sup> The National Memorial on the Vítkov Hill will be here referred as NM.



aims to revise how representations of a Czech nation in the NM have changed according to different political regimes in the 20th century, indicating the negotiation of national contents and contested pasts. Further, this question intends to explore the current version of the NM looking for its principles, objectives, modes of representation and narratives. Therefore, narratives, aesthetic artefacts, curatorial texts, speeches and media reports are analyzed as primary and secondary sources indicating contemporary features of the NM. This analysis provides a critical approach to the cognitive function that national spaces can assume, accounting for the creation of patterns of understandings.

Secondly, this research questions how Czech visitors consume the NM. Considering that the analysis of national contents and patterns of understandings produced by the NM is incomplete if only their production is considered, this section considers their consumption. The cognitive function of a cultural institution becomes pertinent precisely when it is consumed by visitors. The answer to this question intends to describe which social groups consume and occupy the NM as well as to identify their main patterns of behaviour based on the primary data collected through participant observation and unstructured interviews. The analysis of cultural consumption aims to understand ways of consuming that socially reproduce, negotiate or resist the national content of the NM, expressing forms of individual agency.

In summary, the present work starts with a focused literature review about nations and everyday life, national cultural institutions and cultural consumption, which lead to the following methodological choices. The analysis is divided in the production of the NM (chapter 4) and its consumption by Czech visitors (chapter 5), gathering how the NM portrays the nation and how people relate to it, looking for connections and/or disconnections between the production and consumption of national culture. This approach intends to understand in which situations official national contents are reinforced by people in everyday practices as well as when individual agency assumes a leading role. Approaching the research questions is

a way of generating understandings that in conclusion contribute and challenge the theoretical frameworks initially reviewed.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

### 2.1. Nations and Everyday Life

Nations appear to be one of the most established forms of social, political, economic and cultural organization in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Human beings are often understood in relation to their nationality and their social realities are influenced by the nation they belong to. Along with the intensification of globalizing processes, nation-states remain powerful actors in international relations. Worldwide business companies often carry the name of their nation of origin. Cultural productions such as literary works, museums, films, are commonly categorized as ‘national’ and represent their nations internationally.

Bringing the nation into research does not mean to advocate its totalizing power or to accept it as an incontestable category, but to investigate its continuing spheres of influence that contradict post-modernist propositions about the contemporary world. Referring to a postmodern condition, theorists (Jameson, 1984; Lyotard, 1986) have instigated the incredulity in ‘grand narratives’ such as religion, science or nation by claiming that they lost the totalizing power they had in modern times over culture and individuals. Further, Appadurai (1996) defended a post-national era in which non-national social forms are materialized, even towards a post-national global order. A more moderate position about postmodernism, although, is adopted by Harvey (1990), who stresses the globalizing changes, but does not agree with the death of modernity and its features.

It is comprehensible that nations do not determine unilaterally every circumstance of contemporary existence to acquire a totalizing description. However, nations cannot be ignored as a widespread notion associated with current conditions and realities. Also, nations should not be seen as declining or oppositional category to globalization. According to Chouher (2003, p.17), “not only does globalization create the conditions in which

nationhood continues to be a valued and functional sociopolitical formation, it also provides mechanisms that enhance our capacity for constructing, imagining, and maintaining nations”. This understanding justifies the study of nations and their possible roles in the configuration of contemporary societies.

In this perspective, studies approaching nations, national identities and nationalism have explored several dimensions of nations according to different ontological and epistemological orientations, being conventionally understood as political entities, cultural and historical formations, modern social constructions, symbolic and discursive practices, as the review following shows. These understandings, frequently seen as contradictory, are enriching when considered interactively as dimensions that nations can assume in different contexts, instead of closed explanations, justifying their revision.

The emergence and sustainability of nations has been largely discussed between ethnosymbolist and modernist theorists. For ethnosymbolists, the existence of nations is justified based on essentialist arguments such as natural extensions of ethnic ties or emotional attachments to historical events and places, shared memories, myths and symbols. This way of understanding is clear in the work of Smith (1986), which assumes a primordialist perspective to explain national phenomena. Besides variations in the historical formation of nations, in general for Smith (1986, p. 149) “all nations bear the impress of both territorial and ethnic principles and components, and represent uneasy confluence of a more recent civic and a more ancient genealogical model of social and cultural organization. No nation-to-be can survive without a homeland or a myth of common origins and descent”.

Although the work of ethnosymbolists have indicated many relevant aspects of nations, they failed to consider that contents such as ethnicity, shared past and beliefs are not fixed natural entities that cause nations, but malleable resources available for the social and political construction of nations. As Handler (1994, p. 30) proposed, “nationalists believe profoundly in the uniqueness of their cultural identity. They also believe that the boundaries

they construct to define that identity are naturally given and not a symbolic construction of their own devise”. In this constructivist perspective, ethnosymbolist explanations are in line with nationalist discourses, which promote the nation as natural and do not account for instrumental uses of national contents. Özkirimli (2003), for example, argues that the ethnosymbolist approach ignores that a selection process occurs and certain cultural elements can be ignored and others emphasized, distorting perceptions about history and reality.

In opposition to ethnosymbolists, modernists have considered the emergence of nations as a result of the transformations occurred during modernity. Considering the features of industrial society, Gellner (1996) argued that nations attended the needs of a modern notion of rationality oriented to production, in which individuals have instrumental roles, permitting the creation of centralized education and culture as shared media for the growth of industrial societies. A major argument raised by modernists is the role of elites in imposing the national form to attend political and economic interests: “contrary to popular and even scholarly belief, nationalism does not have very deep roots in the human psyche” [...] “specific factors are superimposed on to a shared universal human substrate. The roots of nationalism in the structural distinctive requirements of industrial society are very deep indeed” (Gellner, 1996, p. 35). In a similar perspective, Hobsbawn (1983) argued that traditions, including national ones, are created according to different intensions.

The work of modernists is important to provide instrumentalist and constructivist arguments about the establishment of nations, contra essentialist explanations. However, modernist theories tend to reduce their understanding of nations to deterministic propositions, overemphasizing structural forces such as historical circumstances and the role of elites. Therefore, both ethnosymbolist and modernist works are limited in considering the reproduction of nations in contemporary societies. As ethnosymbolists and modernists emphasize discussions about the origin of nations, they do not offer enough understandings about contexts in which nations become socially relevant today. Considering that the

sustainability of nations is not only influenced by macrostructural forces, but by the connection between nations and ordinary people, other approaches considering more subjective aspects of nations should be investigated. Besides questioning the origin of nations, there is a current need to explore why and how nations survive as a strong social and cultural category.

Although also understanding the formation of nations in the context of modernity, the work of Anderson (1991) highlighted the importance of considering ordinary people in the study of nations when arguing that nations became relevant when most people became aware of imagined attachments to other people under the national frames. For Anderson (1991), the constitution of a general national consciousness involved a set of processes that permitted communities to be imagined, such as the development of print technology, the establishment of capitalism as a mode of production and the existing language diversity among people<sup>2</sup>. The concept of imagined communities has been defended by contemporary researchers concerned with ways people relate to nations in terms of belonging, identification and consumption.

Adopting Anderson's concept of imagined communities, De Cillia et al (1999, p. 153) argue that nations are mental constructs "represented in the minds and memories of the nationalized subjects as sovereign and limited political units and can become very influential guiding ideas". De Cillia et al (1999) defend two other assumptions relevant to the study of subjective aspects of nations, and, therefore, relevant to this research. First, national identities are understood as discursively "produced, reproduced, transformed and destructed" (p. 153), becoming real through political discourses, media, education, sports. Second, based on Bourdieu's notion of habitus, national identities are seen as "a complex of common ideas, concepts or perception schemes", including: "(a) of related emotional attitudes intersubjectively shared within a specific group of persons; (b) as well as of similar

---

<sup>2</sup> Particularly, Anderson (1991) emphasizes the emergence of print-languages that enabled the formation of unified fields of communication which made people feel connected to each other, gave fixity to language helping the image of antique attachment, and became language-of-power.

behavioural dispositions; (c) all of which are internalized through ‘national’ socialization” (p. 153). Considering these assumptions in accordance with De Cillia (1999), what matters for contemporary research about nations is to look for the ways through which national ideas are produced and how people relate to those products.

An alternative way for researching subjective aspects of nations is inspired by Billig’s critique (1997) of traditional studies indicating their lack of analysis of ordinary aspects of nationalism in people’s lives. In opposition, he defends that “only if people believe that they have national identities, will such homelands, and the world of national homelands, be reproduced” (1997, p. 8). According to the author, the understanding of nationalism was reduced to extraordinary events, crisis, radical movements or periphery zones, ignoring mundane nationalist traits present in established western societies, which support the eventual rise of dangerous nationalism: “there is something misleading about this accepted use of the word ‘nationalism’. It always seems to locate nationalism on the periphery. [...] In consequence, those in established nations – at the centre of things – are led to see nationalism as the property of others, not of ‘us’ (1997, p. 5)”.

For Billig (1997) nationalism is common in unnoticed aspects of everyday life, such as political discourses, cultural products, structuring of newspapers. As they are masked, national features are daily reproduced unconsciously, constituting what Billig (1997) calls banal nationalism. As an example, he proposes that “the metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building” (1997, p. 8). What matters, for Billig (1997), is that unnoticed everyday national contents are become influential in people’s understandings; forming what is perceived as national identity. Therefore, he proposes that the study of national identities need to explore ‘embodied habits of social life’, ‘habits of thinking’ and ‘ways of talking about nationhood’ (Billig, 1997, p. 8).

A research agenda after Billig (1997) is valuable for overcoming mainstream explanations about nations. These studies focus on micro-levels of analysis, in other words, practices of everyday life by ordinary people, understanding them in relation to macro-structural forces that reproduce national characteristics as such. As Fox (2008) summarized, there are four 'ways of researching' nations from below: discourse analysis of the ways people express themselves about nationhood; analyses of how nationhood can frame people's choices, like language restrictions for national minorities; analyses of rituals and symbolic practices that make people feel part of a nation, such as the collective effervescence of football World Cups and Olympic games; and analyses of ways of consuming the nation like schools, museums, holidays and tourism.

The 'ways of researching' suggested by Fox (2008) are inspiring for listing possible interactions between nations and ordinary people. However, they should be considered interactively. For example, in practices of consumption (fourth way), one can identify the role rituals and symbolic attachments (third way) as well as the limitations of choice (second way). In this sense, the multi-dimensionality of nations proposed by Yuval (1996) seems to be appropriate and enriching for the development of further research on the topic. According to Yuval (1996), the construction of nations is a successful project precisely because of its multi-dimensionality, in a way that the nation exists simultaneously in various aspects of social relations, such as ethnic visions, gender relations, class struggles, cultural contents.

Therefore, this research emerges from a critique to limitations of ethnosymbolist and modernist explanations about the sustainability of nations contemporarily and from the consideration that researches approaching more subjective aspects of nations can provide more innovative understandings. This research follows the research agenda (Billig, 1997; Fox, 2008) that emphasizes the social interactions between the nation and the everyday life of ordinary people. However, this study does not take the theoretical assumptions here reviewed for granted, but focuses on the case studied for theoretical analogies.



## 2.2. National Museums, Memorials and Monuments

The study of national cultural institutions can offer valuable insights to understand contemporary aspects of society, especially when approaching them as forms of materialization of nations influencing people's understandings. Although national spaces have been explored in terms of representation and collective memories, there is a lack of research about everyday forms of consuming that can reinforce or negotiate national contents. Looking at previous studies about national cultural institutions, links established between nations and individuals are valuable for this research, however, it is intended to expand analyses of national cultural institutions from their production, not assuming that the organization of such spaces is fixed or accepted by visitors.

Macdonald (2004, p.2) says museums are “key cultural loci of our times. Through their displays and their day-to-day operations they raise questions about knowledge and power, about identity and difference, and about permanence and transience”. The potential of museums for researchers is not limited to their spaces as the boundaries between museums and institutions such as the nation-state have disappeared (Macdonald, 2004). Macdonald (2004, p.4) highlights that “museums remain powerful and subtle authors and authorities whose cultural assumptions are not easily dislodged. Museums are socially and historically located; and, as such, they inevitably bear the imprint of social relations beyond their walls”.

In terms of representation, museums reproduce social categories such as gender, ethnicity, and class. The main point of the ‘representational critique’ (Macdonald, 2011) was to indicate that representation is a way of producing and disseminating inherently political knowledge, and the meanings depend on who inscribe them as right. Considering this cognitive function of representational forms such as museums, Hall (1997) argues that they engage in processes of meaning-making about the world, people, objects and events, which become institutionalized.

In relation to nations, museums are considered major spaces materializing and disseminating symbols, myths, narratives and identities as nationally bounded. Anderson (1991) demonstrated how museums, in addition to census and maps, were tools for the legitimization of national domination in colonial nation-states. The ‘museumizing imagination’ for Anderson (1991) helped colonial rulers to attach native monuments, antiquity and culture to the umbrella of the dominating nation, revealing colonial systems of classification and sub-classification of people and culture. Anderson (1991) points the concretization process of national ideals through the ‘museumizing imagination’ that supports an infinite ‘replication’ of the nation, which is valid for the contemporary analysis of national spaces.

In this perspective, for Macdonald (2004, p. 7) museums are places where “seductive totalizing mythologies of nation-state and Enlightenment rationality” pursue legitimacy: “museums are also technologies of classification, and, as such, they have historically played a role in the modernist and nationalist quest for order and mapped boundaries”. Museums serve nationalist schemes precisely through cultural objectification (Handler, 1988 cited by Macdonald, 2004, p. 7), in other words, they construct culture and society as natural through objects available to be gazed and transformed into reality, consequently, national museums construct ‘national’ culture and the ‘national’ people as such.

These questions of representation are in line with Steiner’s position (1995) that national museums are part of ‘politics of nationalism’ favouring nation-building. The problematic configuration of national museums is equivalent to nationalist politics and its contradictions according to Steiner (1995, p. 3) as there is a “tremendous distance which can be felt between the symbols of national representation and the nationals who are supposedly being represented”. Nonetheless, once the national representations are established in national museums, they may shape the interpretation of those represented, reducing the distance between representation and reality: “interpretations of artefacts can range widely through the

spectrum of the possible, yet [...] interpretation is bounded by the physical constraints of the object itself” (Steiner, 1995, p. 5). Therefore, as physical objects and artefacts are constructed and organized according to the nationalizing policies, they bound the range of interpretations available to individuals.

Expanding studies of national representations beyond museums, memorials and monuments have been equally considered as reproducers of the nation. For White (1997, p.8), although they are constructed as “distinct kinds of cultural activity (that is, what people think they are doing in such contexts)”, they all combine mixed functions and ambiguities. White (1997) summarizes: museums are explicit, textual, educational, speaking in disembodied voices and supporting truth on documents; memorials are implicit, iconic, constructed as testimonial and to be experienced, speaking in the personalized voices of citizen subjects, supporting truth on immediacy. Linenthal and Heyman (cited by White, 1997) describe the dualities of different types of institutions and their discursive practices, such temple/forum and historic site/shrine. These functional distinctions cannot be considered isolated as they may be combined in the same national space, indicating representational tensions that should be studied, as White (1997) defends, based on specific sites like the NM.

Critiques of national representations have also been instigated by contradictory relations to collective memories. As Crane (1997) shows, national museums in America and Germany<sup>3</sup> became sites of disagreement between national histories and personal memories. When collective memories are compared to historical representations, Crane (1997, p.1) argues that there is a distortion between memory and history, not so present in facts or interpretations, but in the “lack of congruity between personal experiences and expectation” in opposition to institutional representations. For Coombes (1988, p. 66), “despite any criticism levelled at the museum as an institution, its authority speaks louder than the voices of those represented within its walls”. However, as national museums seem to be embedded in national

---

<sup>3</sup> For example, “the Smithsonian’s Air and Space Museum, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the German Historical Museum” (Crane, 1997, p.1).

ideologies, the cognitive power of national representations are commonly taken for granted, missing other relations that can possibly be established between individuals and national spaces.

In terms of consumption of national spaces, studies that account for individual and collective voices in comparison to representational forms traditionally focus on tensions between History and memories. Wertsch (2002, p. 117) defended that “even the most exhaustive study of text production cannot tell us whether narratives will be used in the way intended by their producers. Hence, when analyzing textually mediated collective remembering, it is essential to complement studies of textual production with studies of textual consumption”. Wertsch (2002) argues that systems of signs should be considered together with their use in particular situations, understanding whether speakers see the text as authoritative, sacred or persuasive discourse. This perspective is enriching for taking people’s understandings into consideration.

If national museums have different functions, combining exhibitions with memorials and monuments, studies about consumption should not approach just relations between History and memory. The complexity and multi-functionality that national museums acquire enables the establishment of different forms of interaction that go beyond visitors’ memories. Taking possible relations between museums and visitors offered by museology studies and aesthetics, it is visible that also national museums cannot be reduced to unilateral intentions shaping collective memories.

Current Museology studies have emphasized that not only museum methods and organization should be considered, but social and cultural purposes (Macdonald, 2011). Macdonald (2011) shows main aspects of museums to be considered: meanings of objects, the continuities between museums and other spaces and practices, and how museums and exhibitions are perceived by visitors. Therefore, to account for the complexity involved in relations between meanings, spaces and visitors, aesthetic perspectives need to be considered.

In the study of national museums, particularly, the possibility of aesthetic interactions has been overlooked.

The multi-dimensionality of national museums in relation to visitors is expanded by the notion of aesthetics of nations (Mookherjee, 2011). For Mookherjee (2011, p. 1), it is comprehensible that the nation “needs to be performed and materialized” and that the national representation “through various aesthetic artefacts and practices seeks to evoke and regulate multiple senses and feelings”. However, the author (2011, p. 3) challenges the accepted “straightforwardly productive national affect”, claiming that other subjective relations are possible within aesthetics. For Mookherjee (2011), besides serving as tools of education, indoctrination, and enculturation, artistic and aesthetic artefacts provide moralizing, introspective, and cathartic possibilities that animate and perform the nation<sup>4</sup>.

National museums, memorials and monuments are primary loci of national aesthetics, which for Mookherjee (2011, p. 4) constitute not only systems of representation, but “ways of knowing the world through sensory registers”. Although Anderson (1991) considered museums as tools for the construction of nations, Mookherjee (2011, p. 5) argues that modernist theorists have ignored the “the role of face-to-face relations in consolidating the nation or inaugurating a different nation-form”. Therefore, instead of taking for granted that national spaces conduct people’s national understandings authoritatively, Mookherjee (2011) proposes research questions approaching the regulation of national sentiments, complex subjectivities, redemptive criticism that history can play. For Mookherjee (2011) it is precisely in the study of exhibits and visitors that researchers find identifications that alter processes of ownership and appropriation of emotions by the nation-state.

---

<sup>4</sup> ‘Aesthetics (the original Greek form *aisthētikos* denotes ‘perceptive by feeling’) here refers to an affective domain in which various objects and phenomena animate and perform the nation. Aesthetics may involve visual and auditory sensory experiences, perception, and imagination which may be either pleasant or disturbing. Aesthetics may include a personal experience of a peculiar emotion, what appear to be very private feelings about an object or practice. They are, however, always dependent on psychological dispositions and anxieties, politics, class, desire, values, and knowledge, which all contribute to the conditions under which one experiences the aesthetic object. Aesthetics are thus intrinsically linked to ideology’ (Mookherjee, 2011, p. 1).

Hence, although previous studies showed that national spaces are problematic because of their common attachment to national and political projects as well as their simplification or manipulation of collective memories, other dynamics between national spaces and visitors should be investigated. However national spaces tend to adopt defined purposes and practices in their forms of representation and narration, the relation to visitors cannot be reduced to questions of collective memory. Therefore, the analysis of forms of cultural consumption of national spaces can expand the understandings of the complex interactions between museums and visitors.

### 2.3. Cultural Consumption

The concept of cultural consumption in relation to national spaces is appropriate for considering possibilities of individual agency and performativity, breaking with the paradigm that individuals are passive and automatically reproduce structural forces such as the nation. It is argued that subjectivity has to be considered in the study of national cultural productions, considering individual and collective active roles as consumers.

In Cultural Studies, Cavallaro (2001, p. 89) proposes that “subjectivity can only be understood by examining the ways in which people and events are emplotted: inscribed in the narratives that cultures relentlessly weave to fashion themselves”. Nevertheless, approaches to subjectivity remain limited in dealing with the dichotomous view of ‘structure versus agency’. According to Kirchberg (2007, p. 118), “on the one hand the objectivity of traditional structuralism, à la Durkheim, Saussure or Levi-Strauss, neglects the structuring capabilities of people; on the other hand, the subjectivity of existentialism, phenomenology and symbolic interactionism neglects undeniable forces like political power structures”. To overcome this dichotomy, cultural productions should be studied through people’s perspectives, though aware of their existence in ambiances where structures, discourses, symbolisms cannot be

neglected. In this sense, theories considering the interaction of individual agencies within categorized realities, such as the works of De Certeau (1984) and Butler (1993), are inspiring for considering the possibility of transgression of existing categories such as the nation.

Looking at practices of everyday life in relation to structural forces, the work of De Certeau (1984) sees individuals as ordinary heroes in the sense that they adopt tactics to reclaim their autonomy, permitting authoritarian systems of sense-making to be subverted. This understanding highlights that the presence and circulation of representations does not prove their manipulation over people as individuals have their own tactics of practice. According to De Certeau (1984), culture is also composed by systems of operational combinations and models of action commonly ignored because of the status of dominated that individuals appear to have. The study of culture should include not only the analysis of cultural representations and productions, but also the modes of behaviour of individuals, here seen as consumers of culture. In this perspective, cultural consumption embraces what individuals/consumers make or do with cultural products, constituting a second stage of production (De Certeau, 1984).

In addition, the notion of performativity proposed by Butler (1993) is indispensable for considering individual agency, which can be applied to the study of cultural consumption. For Butler (1993) performativity occurs within cultural discourses and it enables the individual to dissimulate conventions and challenge social structures while creating its own identity. The notion of performativity is relevant to understand that cultural identity depends on how individuals relate to cultural productions, discourses, and structures. The notion of performativity (Butler, 1993) added to the analysis of cultural consumption form a consistent theoretical background to approach cultural structures in relation to individual agency, as intended by this research. As Leach (2005, p.10) proposed “it is through the repetitive performativities of various modes of perception that a mirroring can be enacted and a sense of identification with place can be developed and reinforced through habit”.

The consideration of individual agency within cultural consumption as a complementary side of the binary set production-consumption proposed by De Certeau (1984) is a starting point for the study of national cultural institutions that try to influence individual understandings about the nation. Therefore, considering the Czech NM, this research tries to identify practices of visitors that make individual agency noticeable and performativity in relation to the national structure.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

Considering the case of a national space, this research adopts a variety of qualitative methods combined into two parts: analysis of production and analysis of consumption of the NM. The use of qualitative methods is in line with interpretivist epistemology and constructivist ontology (Bryman, 2008) as the understandings pursued by this research are concerned with the socialization of larger social categories, specifically the nation. In other words, adopting an anti-foundationalist position, it is considered that the social phenomena to be approached exist subjectively connected to agents' perceptions and experiences, independent of established foundations.

Accordingly, the interpretivist epistemology is justified as an approach to deal with the complexities and uncertainties of subjectivity (Denscombe, 2007), considering people's perspectives in their constructions of social reality. For Blaikie (2007) researchers approaching social phenomena need to realize that people construct their social world throughout activities they continuously reproduce. What is relevant is that these performances of everyday activities constructing the social world are accompanied by interpretive agencies that make senses and meanings for their actors. In order to generate knowledge from the study of social phenomena, therefore, it is indispensable to look at people's actions and situations in which they occur as well as to interpret them as their actors do. This interpretivist epistemological position is fundamental for the methodological choices that follow.

The first part of the analysis (chapter 4) is dedicated to explore the contemporary cultural production of the NM<sup>5</sup>, in which content analysis is the main research tool. The choice of content analysis is justified by the consideration that the spaces and exhibitions of the NM, as well as their dissemination on the media, communicate messages to the visitors.

---

<sup>5</sup> Gathered in Chapter 4, the analysis of production of the NM includes its construction, re-opening, and current organization of spaces and exhibitions, which are: the statue of Jan Žižka, the tomb of Unknown Soldier, the mausoleum, permanent and temporary exhibitions displayed between September 2011 and March 2012.

Singleton and Straits (2005) suggests content analysis as ideal to study verbal and nonverbal materials. In this sense, content analysis is here taken as a qualitative method as defined by Atheide (1996 cited by Bryman, 2008), in which the aim is not to quantify messages, but to identify the main themes and categories transmitted. As Babbie (2004, p. 314) defends, “content analysis is well suited to the study of communications and to answer the classic questions of communication research: who says what, to whom, why, how, and with what effect”.

The content analysis provides a critical description of spaces and their contextualized forms of representation, showing the variety of functions that the place assumes. This analysis includes promotional materials that disseminate the NM and connect it to visitors, mainly available in the official website and media reports in mainstream Czech news<sup>6</sup>. The selection of this material was qualitative, including materials published since 2009 that indicate relevant aspects about the production of the NM, the events analyzed and the speeches of those responsible for the place. The analysis also contains materials available at the NM, such as the official guide for visitors and curatorial texts.

The second part (chapter 5) focuses on the consumption of the NM by Czech visitors. In order to study the cultural consumption of a national space from people’s perspectives, ethnography is taken as the research approach that provides meaningful insights from subjective understandings, combining multiple qualitative research methods. The choice of ethnography is also motivated by the research agenda that studies the nation in everyday life (Billig 1995; Palmer, 1998; Fox, 2008). Billig (1995) defended that banal nationalism should be studied through alternative methodologies, and Fox (2008, p.554) suggested Hobsbawm’s approach ‘from below’ formulating ‘what-questions’ to identify everyday national contents through analyses of speeches, news, history textbooks and interviews; and ‘when-questions’

---

<sup>6</sup> Media reports were found using the search engines of main Czech portals available online such as the website of the Czech state TV channel ‘Česká Televize’, the website of Czech radio ‘Česky Rohlas’, Idnes and Novinky. The words typed were ‘Narodní Památník’, ‘Jan Žižka’, ‘Vítkov’.

for contexts of everyday life that make the nation influential through participant observation: “researchers interested in the salience of nationhood in everyday life therefore need to spend some time in everyday life” (Fox, 2008, p.556). To identify when the nation becomes important in everyday socialization, ‘wait-and-listen’ is required, talking to people about banal activities waiting for them to bring topics placing the nation as central<sup>7</sup> (Fox, 2008).

In this perspective, to analyze the cultural consumption of the NM, an ethnographic study that in practice includes participant observation and unstructured interviews was developed between September 2011 and March 2012. As Bryman (2008) explains, a research can be considered ethnographic when besides realizing participant observation, the researcher has a more consistent degree of involvement with the field. For Bryman (2008, p. 402), the ethnographer “immerses him- or herself in a group for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the fieldworker, and asking questions”. Bryman (2008) makes an important distinction between full-scale ethnography traditionally adopted by anthropologists during more than a year, and micro-ethnography recommended for master dissertations during several weeks or few months. This research can be considered a micro-ethnography in Bryman’s terms (2008) as, although a great degree of involvement with visitors of the NM was achieved, including constant visits to the field, the ethnography was carried out during 6 months because of limitations of schedule of the master program.

The combination of participant observation and unstructured interviews aims to approach two basic dimensions of people’s consumption of the NM: what people do, considering common practices of consumption when visiting the Memorial; and what people say, approaching the conversational processes through which people make sense of the NM and about their own practices of consumption. Looking at ‘what people do’ and at ‘what they

---

<sup>7</sup> For example, in his research ‘Consuming the nation’, Fox (2006) participated in several events such as sport competitions and holidays, observing talks among Hungarian and Romanian university students.

say' it is possible to analyze the relations established between their performativity and the national content of the NM previously analyzed in chapter 4.

The advantages of participant observation include access to “implicit features of social life”, “prolonged immersion that permits to see as the other”, “sensitivity to contexts”, “flexibility”, “encouraging the unexpected” beyond what formal interviews would propose, and to keep “members’ normal flow of events” (Bryman, 2008, p. 465). For Kidder (1981), participant observation enables the researcher to analyze actions that people do in their normal lives, while the regular involvement with the setting studied helps to indicate which patterns of behaviour are permanent and socially relevant. Among the difficulties of participant observation is the question of sampling. As Bryman (2008, p. 414) shows, as probability is not used in ethnographic studies, “ethnographers have to ensure that they gain access to a wide range of individuals relevant to the research question as possible, so that many different perspectives and ranges of activity are the focus of attention”. In practice, the concept of theoretical sampling proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998 cited by Bryman, 2008, p. 415) seems to be accurate: “theoretical sampling is done in order to discover categories and their properties and to suggest the interrelationships into a theory”.

Therefore, instead of defining how many people will be approached during the participant observation, this research will look for a theoretical saturation (Bryman, 2008), in which enough data will be collected until categories and their dimensions appear to be relevant for the field studied and can answer the research question. Other potential difficulties of participant observation such as access to the field, and how they were solved, will be considered in the ethnographic description of the cultural consumption of the NM in chapter 5. In the NM, participant observation consisted of looking at people’s practices when visiting the place. It involved following people during their visits to the NM and noticing which parts are more relevant for them according to time and reactions they give to each artefact.

During the participant observation, field notes were taken to describe the occasions, interactions and main findings discovered, following Bryman's advice (2008) to try to write down as detailed descriptions of the setting as possible, as they enable posterior reflection on the findings. Another advantage of field notes (Bryman, 2008) is that as they can be written during the observation or right after interactions with people, they do not make people conscious that they are being recorded, so they act as they would normally do. Although people studied were informed of the research being conducted for ethical reasons, the use of field notes instead of an audio-recorder for example, helped not to interfere in how usually social interactions take place. In addition, photography was used as an instrument to record and analyze people's practices as well as an ethnographic passport (Marion, 2010). As Bryman (2008) summarizes, photography can serve as illustration of the participant observation, as a source of data and as prompts.

The unstructured interviews aim to approach people's behaviour and meaning-making processes during their visits to the NM, indicating how the national space enables forms of socialization that may be related to the nation and national contents. Also called depth interviews, they require "active listening on the part of the researcher to understand what is being said and to access its relation to the research. The ethnographic analysis of interviews should focus on the context in which the interview occurred" (Seale, 2004, p.233). Less structured interviews (Kidder, 1981, p. 187) help to approach the personal and social context of the subjects studied, helping to "determine the personal significance of their attitudes". For Kidder (1981), the role of the researcher is not to ask direct specific questions, but to encourage people to speak about their activities and perceptions.

The choice for unstructured interviews is precisely motivated by the possibility of letting people free to talk about the experience that they are having, avoiding to propose any direct topic such as nationalism, national identity or the role of the NM. In this sense, this research follows the wait-and-listen approach proposed by Fox (2008). The purpose is to start

conversational interactions with basic questions<sup>8</sup> that open dialogues in which people express themselves about their activities and experiences in the NM eventually referring to national contents, being registered in extensive field notes.

Ethnography is taken as a research approach that enables to understand meanings through which actors construct their actions, which in the context of consumption of the NM leads to the understanding of how visitors adopt and/or refuse national contents, and how they socialize around the national space constructed. Ethnography seems to be fundamental for contemporary research seeking to propose multi-dimensional critical studies, avoiding one-sided conclusions or deterministic relations such as the influence of structures over people's agencies. Ethnography can account for multiple forms of interaction that are reinforced everyday in the field studied, providing data for theoretical questions.

---

<sup>8</sup> Explained in subtitle 5.1.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF PRODUCTION

### 4.1. Historical cultural production of a Czech nation

As a wider tendency towards the formation of modern nations legitimized by the construction of bounded national cultures, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century Czech history saw an intensification of cultural productions naturalizing the nation. As Macura (1998, p. 182) explains, a moment of national revival, known in Czech as “vykříšení (resurrection), znovuzrození národa (national rebirth), obrození (revival)”, became prominent in establishing the foundations of modern Czech language, literature, and theatre. Although this historical acceptance of the term ‘revival’ implies an essentialist idea of the pre-existence of a natural nation coming back to life after a period of suppression, it provides an account of how official representations of national culture are selective and may shape cultural understandings on the ground, in other words, people’s cultural attachment to the nation.

Understood as a reaction to the administration of Habsburg monarchy and as an intellectual effort to place Czech culture within the map of prestigious European nations, Macura (1998, p. 184) sees the period of ‘national revival’ as “the constitutive epoch of nearly all areas of national culture”. Besides the emergence of grand Czech cultural productions in the arts, including literature, visual arts and music, Macura (1998) cites the constitutive role of the emerging scholarship in Czech language, mainly represented by the publication of the ‘Časopis Českého muzea’ since 1827, which became the contemporary Journal of the National Museum. The National Museum can be considered, therefore, since the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a central institution constituting and unifying cultural productions as national.

Like other processes of homogenization of culture under the umbrella of a nation, in the Czech context revivalist cultural productions had to revise disconnected past events and reinforce their relevance to the present through rituals, mystifications and artificiality.

Macura (1998) highlights that as the cultural heritage in the Czech lands seemed to be too discontinuous and fragmentary, the revivalist cultural production focused on high culture mostly deprived of public life. In his words, “revivalist culture as a whole engaged in a hoax – both through its original creative efforts, which produced the illusion of a normally functioning Czech society, fully developed and autonomous; and through the forgeries, which modified the picture of the past by direct falsification” (Macura, 1998, p. 192).

The author emphasizes that cultural productions by elitist patriots of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were composed of ritual symbolisms that constructed a former Czech glory achieved by heroes that should be awakened, creating an image of a natural cycle in which Czech culture is “passing from history to nature” in the words of Barthes (1984 cited by Macura, 1998, p. 192). According to Macura (1998, p. 194) these trends of projecting the national culture into an illusory past, constantly re-evaluating history for the future, are present in the Czech nationalist agenda also in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which he characterizes as a “persistent starting from zero”.

The presence of historical negotiations is a main feature recognized in the extensive ethnographic study of Czech national identity by Holy (1996), who considered not only nationalist historical constructions, but how perceptions of history are used by Czechs to understand themselves. For Holy (1996, p. 10), “what is understood as Czech history is a construction which makes possible the understanding that *we are what we are today because this or that happened in our past*. It is a construction which is an integral part of the discourse which perpetually constructs and reconstructs Czech identity”.

This understanding of a constant reinterpretation of history by Czech cultural productions in favour of the naturalization of the nation in accordance to current political and social circumstances is fundamental to understand the establishment of the NM. Particularly, the selection of events, heroes and myths to be claimed as part of a coherent national culture



in order to support the consolidation of a nation-state (and its different political regimes) seem to be a main feature of Czech national projects since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

To explain how the Bohemian lands became predominately Czech, Wingfield (2007) looks at main strategies adopted by competing Czech and German nationalists since the 19<sup>th</sup> century to nationalize people that lived in the region with multiple and fluid identities. The construction of national public spaces is considered as one of the main strategies to make nationality a major aspect of everyday life. According to Wingfield (2007, p. 1), nationalists “sought to take symbolic possession of expanding public sphere in the name of their respective nationalities through the unveiling of statues and other memorials, the celebration of holidays, and the celebration of historic persons or events, thus politicizing local cultural and social life”.

When analysing how the management of public spaces shaped Czech national memory in opposition to Germans, therefore constructing a Czech national identity, nationness is understood as defined by Brubaker (2004, cited by Wingfield, 2007, p. 3): “an event, as something that suddenly crystallizes rather than gradually develops, as a contingent, conjuncturally fluctuating, as precarious frame of vision and basis for individual and collective action”. For Wingfield (2007, p. 5), while “Czech nationalists asserted that their people embodied a natural democratic spirit and love of equality”, collective memory was shaped through the “exclusion, repression, and suppression of particular symbols” as well as “appropriation, adaptation, and even the reinvention of cultural icons and national myths”.

The process of cultural construction of a Czech nation was institutionalized with the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic<sup>9</sup> in 1918. For Wingfield (2007, p. 12) the national struggle against the Habsburgs during the First World War was “firmly anchored in such historic figures as Jan Hus and Jan Žižka, who became popular during the nineteenth century, and newer national heroes such as Masaryk and the Legionnaires, who rapidly took on iconic

---

<sup>9</sup> The Czechoslovak Republic founded in 1918 will be conventionally referred as First Republic in this research.

status”. Therefore, the national content was interpreted to support an emerging state, seen as a natural result a Czech nation.

The construction of a coherent national culture to sustain the Czechoslovak state involved suppression of contradictory elements of the cultural landscape and creation of new ones. As Wingfield (2007, p. 13) describes, “after 1918, the Czechs had removed symbols of earlier German, Habsburg, and Roman Catholic presence”, a process accompanied by the establishment of a historical capital, new holidays and celebrations for an Independence Day on October 28 and for the Battle of Zborov on July 2. According to the author, criteria for defining what is Czech were confusing, and nationalists justified the removal of symbols and monuments as they were not sufficiently democratic and egalitarian, what contradictorily meant excluding Germans, Roman Catholics, Hungarians, Poles and Ruthenians from national symbolism.

In the same perspective, Paces (2009) considers the plurality of struggles to define a single nation through the construction of national spaces in Prague. Her analysis of main national spaces in the capital city shows that the debates about what is to be selected as Czech were not restricted to the First Republic, but continued as Macura (1998, p. 194) described as “persistent starting from zero”. For Paces (2009, p. 3), “from the urban elite of the Habsburg era, to the leaders of the First Republic, to the Nazi Protectorate, and the communist and post-communist governments of the late twentieth century, leaders had a strong stake in demonstrating that the capital city was a Czech city and the arbiter of what the nation represented”.

Therefore, Paces (2009) sees places in Prague as creators of meanings administrating different versions of the nation, influencing collective understandings through national symbols, museums and monuments. Analyses of national spaces help to understand “the historical mentality of people in the past, about the commingled beliefs, practices, and symbolic representations that make up people’s perceptions of the past” (Confino, 1997 cited

by Paces, 2009, p. 5). In this point, Paces (2009) adopts Nora's conceptualisation (1992) of *lieux de memoire* (sites of memory), which considers that collective memory resides precisely in public spaces as physical markers. Paces (2009) highlights the Hus memorial, statues dedicated to national historian František Palacký, patron Saint Wenceslaus, and Hussite general Jan Žižka, all part of an "era of monument fever" (Paces, 2009, p. 56), which are particularly relevant for the cultural construction of a Czech nation focusing on historical figures. The materialization of personified monuments perpetuates the attachment of glorious individuals as nationally Czech.

Taking Paces' thinking (2009) further, one can look at the historical places made 'national' in the past also for understanding contemporary uses of history. Although many national places in Prague were established in the past, their current contextualisation, official and popular understandings may change their relevance for national identity and society beyond collective memory as already proposed by Nora (1992).

Considering the materialization of a Czech nation through the removal of contradictory symbols, monuments and memorials and the implementation of new ones to attend the contextualised needs of the nation-state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the analysis of the NM should start considering historical contexts in which it was constructed and adapted. Considering how the NM was used to construct the nation according to different political regimes, it is possible to further analyse the recent re-construction of the NM in the context of the Czech Republic.

#### 4.2. Construction of the National Memorial

Historical and aesthetic analyses about the construction of the NM emphasize its intentional form and content towards the cultural production of the nation. The adaptations to different regimes and re-interpretations of history during the twentieth century demonstrate

intentional aspects that were politically negotiated. Considering historical accounts of the NM, and inspired by Macura's consideration (1998) about constant 'revivals' seen in Czech history, this research proposes a number of 'revivals' of Jan Žižka as a national monument in Prague. Although conclusions about the current role of the NM based on historical accounts can be problematic, the history of its construction contextualises the nationalizing functions that may survive today.

The initial ideas for a great monument in Prague to commemorate the Czech nation emerged from the nationalistic tendency among intellectuals and political figures during the period of 'national revival' (Macura, 1998) previously mentioned. Still under administration of the Habsburgs, nationalists devoted to the public consolidation of a Czech nation connected to a shared past of struggles and triumphs found in the figure of Jan Žižka enough historical material to support the construction of a grand monument in Prague.

Although being a controversial idol among Czech people, mainly for its religious connotations, Jan Žižka's military achievements in the Battle of Vítkov could provide proud and be adapted for national causes. As Paces (2009) describes, particularly for a group of radical nationalists living in the suburb of Prague near the Vítkov Hill, Jan Žižka became an important element of their Czech identity under construction. As the German speaking population lived primarily in the central areas of Prague, in opposition, in 1877 Czech speaking residents of the suburb near Vítkov renamed the area to Žižkov (Paces, 2009), honouring the national hero as a way of fixing their separate identity to the soil of Prague.

The adoption of an old historical figure to represent a local group of Czech speakers can be considered as the 'first revival' of Jan Žižka as a national monument. According to the current official history presented to visitors by the NM (Guide for visitors, 2011), in 1882, the Association for the Construction of the Žižka Monument in Žižkov was established in the hall of the 'U Deklarace' pub. Besides creating an identity for local Czech speakers, Jan Žižka was associated to the separatist movement against the Habsburg rule, which for Paces (2009)

explains why Habsburg authorities never allowed the construction of the monument. The impossibility of constructing a national monument under Habsburg administration reinforced the national attachment of Jan Žižka, instigating common feelings of struggle among the Czech speaking population.

The idea of Jan Žižka's monument opposed to the Habsburgs would be reinforced by the liberating feelings related to the foundation of a Czechoslovak Republic, when attention to the construction of a great national monument re-emerged. Only in 1913 the Association for the Construction of the Žižka Monument in Žižkov found the appropriate political environment to raise funding among the local community and open the first public competition for projects (Paces, 2009). According to Paces (2009), fifty-seven submissions were displayed at the Palace of Industry, acquiring strong criticism at the daily press and art journals about the adequate architectural style.

Three main projects, proposed by sculptors Bílek, Štursa and Gutfreund indicate the problem of representation of a nation. Bílek's project portrayed Jan Žižka together with twenty boulders symbolizing the whole Hussite era, which according to Paces (2009) was rejected because it did not fit the nationalist attempt to secularize the Hussite period. In addition, the massive monument by Štursa and the cubist revolutionary monument by Gutfreund were considered too abstract and, therefore, too Germanic by the Czech nationalist elite (Paces, 2009).

The controversies about the style in which the nation should be commemorated indicate disputing versions among the population about the nation and its past as well as the power that political and intellectual elites had to decide which version is more appropriated. The historical account of the selection process of projects to materialize the nation exemplify how nationalist projects cannot fully account for diverse cultural understandings that people have while they select single projects to become universalized, excluding opposing voices.

The problem of homogenizing people's cultural understandings about the nation, which involve collective memories, different political views and competing processes of identification, would retard the selection of the ideal project for the national monument. As Paces (2009, p. 73) demonstrates, while intellectuals did not accept traditional designs to represent the nation as their orientation was modernist towards a progressive future, public intolerance did not accept avant-garde projects: "Prague's avant-garde believed that art must acknowledge the human struggle against individual and social chaos [...]. National leaders, on the other hand, asserted that art should honor the past and inspire contemporary citizens to support the movement's political goals". Finally, the jury of 1913 never managed to take a decision about the design of the national monument and with the advent of the First World War the construction of most monuments was postponed (Paces, 2009).

A 'second revival' of the monument by the new leaders of the now established First Republic was supported by the local group of Czech nationalists living in Žižkov. As part of First Republic's nationalism, for Bartlová (2011), Jan Žižka's troops were chosen by the Czechoslovak State for historical legitimization, based mainly on the accepted idea of a Czech linguistic ethnicity of the Hussites. Bartlová (2011) explains the concept of Czechoslovakism<sup>10</sup> saying that the project of Czechoslovakia was nationally dominated by themes connected to a history perceived as only Czech while Slovaks and Germans were excluded. According to Bartlová (2011) 'national liberation' suited the concept of Czechoslovakism, so that a local project of Czech speakers was transformed into the 'Liberation Monument', including not only a statue to Jan Žižka, but also a necropolis of heroes as a kind of Czechoslovak House of Invalids. This understanding exemplifies the notion that nationalistic projects are exclusionary and selective, while elites choose what should represent and form the national identity, independent of complex senses of identification existing in a multicultural society.

---

<sup>10</sup> 'Čechoslovakismus' in the Czech original by Bartlová (2011, p.94)

The connections between the national monument and the goals of the First Republic became tangible in 1919 when the Ministry of National Defence established a separate military institution to build the renamed National Liberation Memorial, merging later with the local Association for the Construction of the Žižka Monument in Žižkov, as described in today's visitors' guide of the NM (2011). After another failed competition in 1923, in 1925 the architect Jan Zázvorka was chosen, when the "beacon of nationalist promise, the Žižkov Monument was to become a symbol of promise achieved" (Witkovsky, 2000, p. 1). Witkovsky (2001) describes Zázvorka's design as ignoring principles of functionalism, supposed to have a practical function for society, adopting its form as a mere modernist look for a layout of a Gothic church.

In relation to the nation, Zázvorka's project uses the model of a Gothic church (main nave and lateral halls) to create a sacred space for the nation while the modernist look accounts for the secular character that the state should portray. In addition, as Bartlová (2011) suggests, the success of Zázvorka's project is in avoiding references to Roman Catholic churches as the rectangular forms refer to Protestantism, reinforcing the connection to the Hussite movement. Zázvorka's project includes long stairs as in the tradition of great theatre and aesthetic reference to Egyptian architecture, which for Bartlová (2011) is a way of connecting to classical ideas of a great origin of European culture. The project seemed to solve several contradictory intentions held by nationalists from Žižkov in addition to political goals of the new state. In this sense, the construction of the monument has to be considered as a project of the nation-state, in which for legitimization nation and state are merged.

The construction of Zázvorka's project finally started in 1928 commemorating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Republic (Guide for visitors, 2011), when Tomas Masaryk laid the foundation stone and Beneš gave a speech (Paces, 2009). In 1938, it was almost ready for the grand opening coinciding with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Republic in October; however, the celebration never took place because of the decisions taken in Munich and the advent of

the Second World War (Paces, 2009). According to Witkovsky (2000, p. 2) “the Wehrmacht occupied the site immediately upon entering Prague in 1939, and one year later a general decree calling for the destruction of all objects symbolizing Czechoslovak autonomy”. Although the controversies about the ideal project to represent the nation delayed its construction, all failures and delays would support feelings of a Czech national struggle against foreign forces.

The ‘third revival’ of the project came right after the end of the Second World War, and concretized with the establishment of communist Czechoslovakia. In 1947, still during the period of shared power among Czechoslovak parties, the first exhibition at the site was dedicated to the soldier who died fighting in the Second World War, reinforcing the site as a resistance against Nazism (Paces, 2009). As the place was occupied by the German army, Paces (2009) argues that clearing the area and replacing patriotic art would be a symbolic representation of the communist liberation of Eastern Europe.

Finishing the monument would perpetuate the attachment of Jan Žižka as a medieval national hero to the modern resistance against foreign rules, revealing the national character of communist Czechoslovakia. The Hussite warriors would be used for the nationalization of the new communist ideology of the state. As Paces (2009) describes, the restructuring of the project of the NM reinterpreted the communal living of Jan Žižka’s warriors in Tábor as an early form of socialism, even to the extent of placing Christian and Communist imagery next to each other. The adaptation of spaces planned for the monument by the new communist government involved changing the focus from legionnaires to soldiers of Red army as the main celebrated national heroes. For these purposes, Bartlová (2011) registers that the original author Zázvorka was recalled to design a new hall entirely dedicated to the Red army, while the works already planned for the legionnaires were renamed in honour of all ‘fallen soldiers’ that once defended Czech lands. The participation of the original author Zázvorka can be



understood as a way of legitimizing the historical continuity of the national monument despite its new ideological adaptation.

The NM became a major site for the performance of rituals during the communist regime. Before the finalization of the complex that includes building, park and statue, the hall was already used to welcome public visits for the remains of the second president of Czechoslovakia Edvard Beneš, who died in 1948 (Paces, 2009). Paces (2009) describes the ritual as a way of negotiating controversies of Beneš against Stalinist Soviet Union, and an occasion to reinforce connections to Czech national history for legitimizing the new regime. The official communist newspaper *Rudé právo* (in Paces, 2009, p. 174) published: “On Vítkov hill, the site of the most celebrated battle of the Czech people-fought by the ancestors of today’s democratic order-you [Beneš] symbolize the culmination of this centuries-long national struggle, not only as a spiritual leader, but also as an intrepid warrior”.

This statement demonstrates how political leaders would be attached to national history in the NM, using a medieval past event to legitimize the nation-state. Chosen by communist leader Gottwald a “showcase for the new socialist state”, as Witkovsky (2000) describes, the NM became also a mausoleum for Gottwald’s mummified body following Lenin and Stalin’s model. Witkovsky (2001) adds that the cult of the dead body and the politics of burials in the NM represented the contradictory use of sacred rituals in a secular state. After Khrushchev’s famous speech denouncing Stalinist crimes, Gottwald’s body lost its military uniform and appeared with civilian clothes, being removed in 1958 (Paces, 2009).

Besides all the adaptations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the removal of Gottwald’s mummified body of the NM proves how the national content is negotiated by political changes of the state. In this sense, the nation is here reduced to a political resource for legitimization. As the historical accounts show, the NM changed not only when the nation-state changed its political system, but when new political contexts emerged. Therefore, in this

case, the nation can be considered a negotiable instrument of power rather than a fixed natural feature of people.

The history of first and second ‘revivals’ of Jan Žižka’s as a national monument shows that the construction of this national representation could not account, initially, for the varied cultural understandings existing among people, though it was transformed into a nationalist project by a group of Czech speakers from Prague and became a national cause politically raised. With the advent of communist Czechoslovakia after the Second World War, the third ‘revival’ of Žižka completed the NM, which was adapted and concretized as a place of national continuity to serve the political regime at the time. The negotiation of national content and reinterpretations of history to serve the communist ideology have been extensively criticized by Paces (2009) and Bartlová (2011).

Paces (2009) argues that since the period known as ‘normalization’ after the Prague spring in 1968, the NM lost its popularity and the state tried to make its masculine image softer by inaugurating a statue named *New Life* portraying a feminine image of a happy socialist family. Although, Witkovsky (2000) says the NM remained, in the 1980’s, a compulsory destination for school tours and Soviet visitors during the tourist season. After the Velvet Revolution, Witkovsky (2000) registered that in 1994 the NM was acquired by the robber-baron entrepreneur Vratislav Cekan, who organized several gala private parties in the space of the former mausoleum and planned to build a hotel and a kind of Czech Disneyland. Although the private ownership ceased the state administration, its occupation still remained representative of the changes occurred in the country.

Reviewing the communist period of the NM, Paces (2009, p. 188) concludes that “Vítkov hill continued to be a scar on the Prague landscape, one that reminded citizens of tyranny rather than of revolutionary struggles for freedom”. Similarly, Witkovsky (2000) suggests that the aesthetic aspects of the NM are incapable of creating contemporary relations with citizens, being a projection of collective schizophrenia and lacking of meanings as the

'new western' Czechs do not engage with nationalistic history. Bartlová (2011) adds that the NM rested as a broken memory of the demise of Czechoslovakism and that it cannot create memories among contemporary Czechs like other places such as Wenceslaus square or The Prague Castle.

Although these understandings based on historical accounts of the NM and its negotiable form and content during the 20<sup>th</sup> century provide strong arguments about the political use of national content, they do not account for the current placement of the NM in the Czech Republic. Therefore, this research now focuses on the new configuration given by the National Museum and the Ministry of Culture, which completely reformed and re-opened the NM in 2009, trying to investigate if the site really remains as a broken memory as Bartlová (2011) proposed or if it is now capable of establishing new relations between citizens/visitors and the nation.

#### 4.3. The Fourth Revival

The NM was abandoned by the state since the beginning of the 1990's, and the previous national meanings of the place became insignificant. The history of the NM until the end of the 1990's shows that the place has a potential national content to be awakened, however, when the state does not use the place as a national space, its social relevance is also mitigated. Witkovsky (2000, p. 3) concluded that "the reversals on Vítkov Hill have taken place rapidly and within living memory, and these shifts give the lie to the building's very premise: the existence of a unitary Czech nation". Witkovsky (2000, p.) argues that the NM represents "so many contradictory philosophies and ideologies - post-imperial statism, German fascism, Stalinist communism, bureaucratic totalitarianism, and crass commercialism" that the previous capability of adaptation to different political and cultural contexts was lost and had no compromise to the Czech society in the 1990's.

However, in the end of the 1990's, voices about the abandoned situation of the NM emerged in the media and political discourses. Witkovsky's study (2000) during this period has listed several opposing understandings about the place and its functions. The deputy director Eduard Simek recognized that residents of Prague did not identify with the place, but defended the rehabilitation of the rooftop with a view to Prague to attract visitors and tourists (Witkovsky, 2000). The architect Jan Vavrik said that the building was a funeral-cathedral structure that would not find any new uses, proposing a café and park for children (Witkovsky, 2000). The local Vítkov Citizens' Association defended the creation of a museum about the world's totalitarian regimes, while an official statement from the Ministry of Culture said the place presented terror and challenges (Witkovsky, 2000). Finally, the Czech cultural critic Josef Kroutvor defended that the entire Vítkov hill had to be demythologized for society (Witkovsky, 2000).

These discussions and opposing views about the NM in the end of the 1990's are similar to the disputes about the project in the beginning of the twentieth century. Both demonstrate that there is nothing such as a national unity or a single national cultural understanding about monuments, history and people themselves. This indicates, therefore, that there is no national culture or nation itself until the moment someone with a convincing power of cooptation, such as the state, declares and constructs it. In the case of Vítkov Hill, only when the NM is awakened the national relevance of the area is created and, consequently, the nation starts to exist in the cultural landscape as a unique category.

Even with the variety of cultural understandings among Czech people, intellectuals and local associations, visible in the opinions gathered by Witkovsky (2000), in 2001 the NM became once again part of state administration, integrating the National Museum (NM website). The NM was listed in a government resolution for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of several monuments associated with the Czechoslovak history of the 20th century. Bartlová (2010) says that the Government Resolution 1998-2009, called

‘Rehabilitation of Monuments fighting for Freedom, Independence and Democracy<sup>11</sup>’, spent millions of public money in several reconstructions suspected of corruption<sup>12</sup>.

Bartlová’s critique (2000) points that the words of the Director of the Department of Museums and Galleries part of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic proclaiming the benefits to the entire society based on the museumification of the Czech history of the twentieth century for the purpose of ‘returning memory’ does not account for the official selection process that involves remembering and forgetting. Just as the monuments chosen for reconstruction, many other modern monuments were dropped from the list. For Bartlová (2000, p. 93), the government’s resolution privileged the construction of “politically desirable memory” and the forgetting of “politically undesirable memory”, and the NM is the most representative case of these processes. This perspective about the selection of national monuments is another example of how the nation is not necessarily linked to people’s culture, but constructed as relevant by groups of interests such as politicians currently administering the state.

The reconstruction of the NM involved a complete adaptation of spaces and new functions with a total cost of 321 million crowns (Prague official portal, 2009). The new purposes of the NM can be understood by looking at the statements made by the director of the National Museum Michal Lukeš, whose discourse became dominant in the media and legitimized as the speaker of the right version of the NM. Lukeš stated:

“The National Museum took itself this challenge to open this so far largely enclosed building to the public. Trying to do the best, so that this site is not just a silent symbol of our statehood, but also a modern museum, which is mainly for younger generations that will be able to be acknowledged about the important moments of our modern history” (Prague official portal, 2009).

---

<sup>11</sup> In the original Czech: ‘Rehabilitace památníků bojů za svobodu, nezávislost a demokracii’ (Bartlová, 2000, p. 92).

<sup>12</sup> The reconstructions included the Memorials for Nazi victims in Terezin and Lidice, the Memorial to the Second World War of the Silesian Museum, the Memorial to Edvard Beneš of the Hussite Museum in Tábor, the Memorial to victims of Communist persecution of the Mining Museum in Příbram, and the NM in Prague.

The main purpose of the ‘fourth revival’ of the NM is to bring the national history into the lives of citizens, demonstrating a new national project to be concretized through the future generations. Lidovky news (2009) published that, after the reconstruction, the NM will not remain just as an exhibition space, as the National Museum’s programme is trying to revive the place on the cultural map of the capital city of Prague, bringing live to the venue through concerts, workshops, theatre performances and educational activities. According Lukeš, the new NM should be “a lively place, not a graveyard” with a new concept based on three pillars: the tradition, culture and museum; the major functional monument and symbol of Czech statehood became the only museum of our modern history, but also a pleasant place where people should go (Česká Televize, 2009).

The contemporary negotiation of national history is present in the intentions revealed by Lukeš. Firstly, he reinforced that the NM “was built as a tribute to Czechoslovak legionaries and the last resting place of President Masaryk” (Prague official portal, 2009). This indicates that the rehabilitation of the NM is justified by bringing back an idea of national project of the First Republic, which is to be understood as the legitimate ancestor and defender of today’s Czech nation. Although Lukeš stresses that the NM reflects crucial events of Czech history, including ‘positive and negative ones’, he says after the reconstruction the place is

“Now entering a completely new era in its history’ [...] ‘the National Museum tried to do everything possible to bring the newly reconstructed monument to life and give a decent role, the proper one that should belong to it’ [...] “We want to create if possible a nice place where people will have a reason to go. We tried to return the monument above venerable tradition, and if possible remove it from the curse of Klement Gottwald” (Česká Televize, 2009).

The ‘new era’ proclaimed is, therefore, the one that chooses which past events should be reinforced as important to be commemorated as part of a contemporary Czech nation,

while ‘negative’ moments have to be either erased or used as an oppositional reference to create a positive image of the present. This is an example of what Bartlová (2010) considers as politically desirable and undesirable memory. The creation of a new era (fourth revival) by giving the NM a new proper role represents how the state, in this case through the administration of the National Museum, is able to choose which role national contents should have, while previously there was no common sense (popular nor intellectual) about the significance of the place.

#### 4.3.1. The Official Opening

The re-opening of the NM on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 2009 was a sign of the new institutional role of the place, which embeds new national functions in the context of a new Czech Republic. The performance of national content included not only re-opening of spaces and exhibitions of the NM, but also a children’s choir singing the national anthem and the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra playing the Czech suite of Antonín Dvořák. The official website highlighted that the NM was inaugurated by president Václav Klaus. In addition, other state authorities were present such as the Prime Minister, the Mayor of Prague, the Minister of Defence, Chief of General Staff of the Army, deputies, senators and ambassadors, which transformed the opening in an event awakening national contents available on Vítěk Hill. The new performativity of the Czech nation in the NM official opening is visible in Picture 1.

The way the national contents are awakened today became visible mainly in the speech of president Klaus (Presidential website, 2009), which had two major parts: firstly emphasizing the new version of the history of Vítěk hill; secondly addressing people to consume the NM. Initially, the president highlighted that the proper version of the NM is the

one created during the First Republic, referred as a natural collective expression of the Czech nation, no reference to Slovaks was made:

“As a result of historical upheavals of the twentieth century our public perception often differed considerably from the original ideological intent of its creators. [...]

The aim of the First Republic was to establish the tradition of the new state. The intention was to encourage feelings of belonging, national consciousness and pride. [...]

The memorial was witness to the heroism, human courage and determination, but also should be a reminder of our identity and our newly acquired national freedom, which must be defended. [...]

The need to build a memorial to the children of the nation and liberators legionaries was universally felt. [...]”  
(President’s speech, presidential website, 2009)

Besides all the controversies about the original construction of the NM, considering its form and content to represent the Czech nation, as the historical review demonstrated<sup>13</sup>, the statements of Klaus demonstrate that the new version of the NM revives an ideal authentic national project of the First Republic, used as a form of historical legitimization for the ‘fourth revival’ of the place and for its new national functions. The association between today’s NM to an original legitimate project ‘universally felt’ connects today’s Czech Republic to the First Republic as two states of a single unified nation.

This connection is also visible in the way how the NM described the visit (website): “Václav Klaus is interested in the entire exhibition and stopped for a moment at the entrance of the Castle photo archive 1918-1933 to look the equally named book containing photographs of his predecessor, president-founder T. G. Masaryk”. The NM puts, therefore, the figure of Václav Klaus as successor of Masaryk emphasizing an idea of continuity, in the same way that the new Czech Republic is portrayed as a natural national continuation of the First Republic. This official version of national history is reproduced by other officials like

---

<sup>13</sup> See subtitle 4.2.



the Mayor of Prague, who declared: “I am pleased that the memorial back its dignity from before the war, and I believe that significantly contribute to an objective understanding of the history of the twentieth century” (Praha1, 2009).

The perspective of the contemporary project of the NM, therefore, contradicts what Bartlová (2010) proposed as the death of the concept of Czechoslovakism, meaning the end of the Czech ethnic characterization of a civic state. In the new version of the NM, the national project of the First Republic as essentially connected to the history of the Czech nation is not only revived, but reinforced. In addition to the connection to the original project of the First Republic, presented as accurate and coherent, the speech of Klaus about the NM condemned the use of the place during the communist period. This indicates how a cultural institution is used as a negotiator of national content. The idea of today’s Czech nation is therefore constructed based on choices of periods of national history to be revived and to be denied.

“Change in policy direction in 1948 led to a change of the understanding about Vítkov, from place of worship it became a place for leaders of the totalitarian regime. And that's thankfully behind us. In a few weeks we will commemorate the 20th anniversary of 1989 that led to the downfall of communist rule and thus the end of communism associated with the understanding of Vítkov. [...]  
I am pleased that today the monument re-opened and that it will - for the first time in its history - serve the public. I wish therefore for all who stood at the birth of a new era memorial that their wish and intention are achieved, and for the visitors that come here to gain knowledge and respect for our history”. (Václav Klaus, presidential website, 2009)

“Bring people here, talk to schools, talk to the soldiers, and take all the ambassadors here. It would be worth it to make it become a living place.  
[...]  
Buy it all. National Museum at least will not have to ask for so much money from the state budget”. (Václav Klaus, Idnes, 2009)

After defending the NM as part of Czech culture as a nation, Klaus addresses Czechs to visit and consume the place, now presented as a symbol of a free and democratic nation. As it was previously acknowledged, there was a lack of interest in the NM both from people and

from the state. However, the relation to the public is portrayed as authentic and needed, while the inauguration of the Memorial is used to reinforce the positive view of today's Czech nation-state, as the first in the history of the country to make it in service of the public. When people are invited to visit, learn and respect the new version of the NM, this cultural institution becomes a reproducer of national contents.

The analysis of the fourth revival and speeches about re-opening the NM challenge what Witkovsky (2000) proposed in his study about the place. According to Witkovsky (2000) the NM had lost its power of national adaptation would not be relevant in the context of a democratic society. However, re-opening of the NM in 2009 is creating a new space for the performance of negotiated national contents, becoming again relevant in the Czech Republic. As Klaus (cited above) stated, the place is planned for people to come and live the nation as well as serving official functions such as receiving ambassadors and military parades.

The construction of the myth of a long-term existing nation supported by historical analogies to old figures such as Jan Žižka is not restricted to nationalistic projects of modernity or totalitarian regimes. National contents vary also under democratic regimes and the idea of a state supported by a nation is reinforced by cultural institutions such as the NM, perpetuating national imagining. Even if some people offered alternative versions of national understanding, such as opposing voices that defended the NM as a symbol of tyranny in the 1990's (Witkovsky, 2000) as mentioned in subtitle 4.3, the nation-state had the power to chose which national perception will be revived in 2009, establishing new functions for the NM.

Picture 1: Children's choir and Czech soldiers



Official website of Czech army (2009)

#### 4.3.2. Re-unveiling the Statue of Jan Žižka

The statue of Jan Žižka is a major component of the NM massively imposed over the landscape of Prague, visible from different points of view around the capital. As already mentioned, initial ideas for the construction of a national monument on the Vítkov Hill were restricted to celebrate Jan Žižka, though the actual projects during the 20<sup>th</sup> century expanded the local plans of habitants of Žižkov to a monument to the nation. Besides being part of the same project, the construction of the statue itself involved particular controversies as well as negotiations of meanings in rituals and speeches both times it was unveiled, indicating the lack of unity around national contents.

Today's official guide of the NM (2011) explains that in 1931 the model of the statue was commissioned to sculptor Bohumil Kafka, a professor at Prague's Academy of Visual

Arts, to be monumental and realistic. The official guide (2011) points that Kafka took ten years in cooperation with specialists in historical armament, clothing, and other precise details about the position of warriors at the time, highlighting that the result is a historically accurate statue which is 9 m high, 9.6 m long, and weighs 16.5 tons. This is reproduced by the media; when the statue was unveiled Česká Televize (2011) stated that Kafka's statue was chosen in 1931 because it was the most historically accurate model. In addition, the official guide (2011) informs that before dying the sculptor completed a plaster model in 1941, although the statue was officially unveiled in 1950 to celebrate the Battle of Vítkov.

This description of the statue and its construction presented by the NM (2011) tries to convince visitors about its authenticity, firstly pointing the accuracy as a historical representation, and secondly describing it as a project of the First Republic, inaugurated in 1950 because of the anniversary of the Battle of Vítkov. This shows how the contemporary NM pursues a connection with the First Republic while it tries to mitigate its communist history for contemporary acceptance. The absence of controversies surrounding the model of the statue during the First Republic in addition to forgetting the use of Jan Žižka as a revolutionary of communist ideology in the new official guide (2011) indicate that the contemporary version of the NM revives and reconstructs Jan Žižka as a coherent Czech figure in the national history.

The model of the statue cannot be understood simply as a result of a historical research without intentional representations. In the 1930's the model of the statue was not accepted as historically accurate as the Minister of Defence at the time František Udržal accused Kafka because of the peaceful expression of Jan Žižka, demanding the artist to change his design and include a Žižka carrying a mace, while the actual final version in bronze was transferred to sculptor Karel Mašek (Paces, 2009). According to Verney (2009), Udržal said the horse was a Noric, an Austrian breed, which he considered an unacceptable representation for

Czechs independent of Austro-Hungarian Empire, arguments also defended by the Republican Party and Catholics who did not want a statue honouring Jan Žižka, a hero of the Hussites.

Additionally, although the model of the statue began to be planned during the 1930's, it was open in 1950 by the communist regime mainly to serve its ideology rather than celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Vítkov, what for Witkovsky (2000, p. 2) means that “the idealizing verism and gargantuan scale of the Žižka statue fit perfectly with the glorification of Hussitism propagandized in communist-era history texts”. Described by Bartlová (2010), the concept of Kafka's model of Jan Žižka is art representative of Art Nouveau Modernism, being conservative and timeless, fitting perfectly the naturalistic style of socialist realism.

In 1950, the unveiling of the statue represented a central setting for national rituals under communist ideology, gathering people, performing military movements and addressing political speeches as Picture 2 and 3 demonstrate. According to Paces (2009), a speech of the Minister of National Defence Alexej Čepička during the opening of the statue was responsible for connecting the legacy of Jan Žižka to the interests of the communists, proclaiming that Žižka's ideas were revolutionary for the nation against the Catholic Church, the bourgeoisie and capitalists. Jan Žižka's battle on Vítkov Hill was compared to the Soviet army fighting the Nazis to liberate Europe: “Today, after the overthrow of the government of oppressors, our people's democratic army proclaims Žižka's legacy”, said Alexej Čepička (in Paces, 2009, p. 181). As Paces (2009) proposes, in 1950 the revival of Žižka's legacy served to create an atmosphere of victory and achievement, boosting the self-esteem of a nation without a recent history of heroism.

In 2011, re-unveiling the statue of Jan Žižka represented its re-insertion into the national imagining, not displayed as a socialist revolutionary anymore, but as a national hero to be honoured by contemporary rituals in accordance to the new national orientation of the Czech Republic. In the occasion of the re-unveiling, Tomáš Bursík responsible for the

reconstruction explained: “we fully harmonize with the rehabilitation of the Memorial of the First Republic [...] the statue of Jan Žižka was a clear part of the Hussite tradition, Legionnaires tradition, on which stood the First Republic” (Česká Televize, 2011). As presented by the NM (website, 2011), on the 24th of October the Czech Minister of Culture Jiří Besser and other distinguished guests officially re-unveiled the statue of Jan Žižka, one of the largest equestrian in the world. The main rituals performed were the special lightening with the colours of the tricolour national flag, which illuminated the NM for three consecutive days, and the national fire, as seen in Pictures 4 and 5.

According to the director of the National Museum Michal Lukeš, “the re-unveiling and several special lighting is not only to emphasize the beauty of this sculpture, but also to alert the public of the significant moments of our history and how the present is important to remember our history, national symbols and celebrities” (Novinky, 2011). The efforts of the NM to revive Jan Žižka as a national hero for the contemporary Czech society was not restricted to the recreation of national rituals such the lightening. A special programme included guided tours for adults and children, historical fencing demonstration, and open lectures about Jan Žižka (NM website, 2011). The NM officially teaches the importance of Jan Žižka as a Czech hero: “Jan Žižka z Trocnova (1360–1424) was follower of Jan Hus. He was born at Trocnov around 1360 and despite he had only one eye, he became the most respected military Czech general and Hussite leader” (website, 2011). As transmitted by Česká Televize (2011), the NM had a special day free of charge to mark the re-unveiling of Jan Žižka with tours, lectures, art workshops, narrative sample about the art of fencing accompanied by arms of the Hussite movement.

The re-unveiling of Jan Žižka demonstrates that the NM cannot be seen as a silent representation of the nation, but it is planned to re-introduce historical figures and events into Czech life according to a new version of Czech nation emphasizing eternity by portraying a medieval figure. The event of re-unveiling combining free entrance, teaching, historical art

performances and high-tech illumination aim to portray the image of an ideal nation achieved in the post-communist period to be learned and perpetuated. In this sense, besides the different ideological interpretation, the opinion of Paces (2009) about the communist unveiling of the statue mentioned above is also applicable for the contemporary unveiling; it uses new rituals and discourses to create an atmosphere of victory and achievement for the Czech Republic.

Picture 2 and 3: Unveiling Jan Žižka's statue in 1950



Česká Televize (2011)

Pictures 4 and 5: Unveiling Jan Žižka's statue in 2011	
	
Official website (2011)	Česká Televize (2011)

#### 4.3.3. Re-burying the Unknown Soldier

Tombs dedicated to Unknown Soldiers exist all around the world, indicating that the cult of imaginary national death is a main cultural tool for the construction of national attachments among those alive. The Czech Unknown Soldier has a particular history of mutability since his ‘death’, which besides indicating that Unknown Soldiers were initially planned to sustain feelings of respect and national commitment, shows that the ‘politics of death’ are still alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Having Unknown Soldiers became a form of pursuing respect in a world modelled by nations. According to Hanson (2007), in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century almost every country that had an army had a tomb dedicated to Unknown Soldiers. His narrative including the individual accounts about an American, a British and a German identified soldier



represent that these tombs assume a significance that erases individual stories rather than remember them, transforming individuals into national ideas. That is the case, for example, of the Romanian Unknown Soldier, which besides having his identity revealed by his son who chose which dead body would become the 'Unknown Soldier', is still portrayed as anonymous (Hoggart, 2006).

Presented as a celebration of unidentified individuals remembered by their glory, tombs of Unknown Soldiers became a matter of proud, making nationalist entrepreneurs to look for cases of dead bodies to be nationalized. Burying unknown individuals to perpetuate national proud became a common practice in modernity. Anderson (1991, p.9) says "no more emblems of the modern culture of nationalism than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers". Anderson (1991) argues that tombs of Unknown Soldiers are absurd for combining religious and nationalist imaginings to create cultural roots, and that's why nationalism cannot be understood only as political ideology, but as constructed cultural systems. For reproducing the nation, the anonymity of Unknown Soldiers tries to create the idea of ideal courageous men who sacrificed themselves for the nation, and, therefore, should be honoured and followed by contemporary citizens.

The Czech Unknown Soldier can be considered a clear example of Anderson's theory (1991). Today, the tomb of the NM includes bodies of two Czech soldiers: the first died in 1917 in the Battle of Zborov, First World War; the second died in 1944 in the Battle of Dukla, Second World War. The connection of the two battles as essential for Czech nation instigates respect and permanent mourning, which is maximised by today's planning of the sarcophagus: special lightening, blue carpet, massive bronze statues and golden inscriptions. The antechamber is responsible for creating the atmosphere of mourning, where two bronze statues are allegories of the military virtues of courage and loyalty (Guide for visitors, 2011).

The official guide of the NM (2011) explains that originally the body of the soldier of Zborov was located in the Old Town Hall, but it was destroyed by Nazis in 1941 as it was a

symbol of national resistance. Further, another resistance is represented against the Soviet pressure that did not allow the restoration of the tomb of the soldier of Zborov, but created another tomb for the soldier of Dukla in 1949 (Guide for visitors, 2011). However, the recent re-opening of the NM solved the problem when, according to the guide (2011, p. 4) “on 8 May 2010 other relics of an Unknown Soldier from Zborov were put in the Tomb next to the relics of the Unknown Soldier from Dukla, thus fulfilling the original idea of the Monument. The sarcophagus is surrounded by six marble-clad pillars which support the statue of Jan Žižka of Trocnov”.

The re-burying of the soldier of Zborov represented a national ritual awakening the dead body to make sense of a contemporary nation, being reproduced by the media. Before joining the tomb in 2010, Česká Televize (2009) showed that the remains of the Unknown Soldier fallen in the Battle of Zborov landed at Prague's Ruzyne airport with official military honours to celebrate victory. The Czech Prime Minister Jan Fischer declared: “Our freedom and democracy are also the heroism of soldiers from Zborov. No State shall not arise without the willingness to fight for it, no state will be sustained without it defend itself”; while the Minister of Defence highlighted the value of sacrifice which is not in vain (Česká Televize, 2009). The death of an individual for the nation is celebrated as an example to be followed, while dying for the nation means to create a free and democratic state.

The Czech Unknown Soldier shows that in the post-communist context, the Czech Republic continues the world model of nations by ‘reviving’ Unknown Soldiers. Besides being a recently constituted state, the Czech Republic does not represent an alternative civic formation, but officially pursues the modern concretization of national goals not achieved in the past. Re-unveiling statues and re-burying soldiers exemplify the “persistent starting from zero” of Czech nationalism proposed by Macura (1998, p.184). If Anderson (1991) proposed that modern nationalist projects made people believe that nations were fixed and natural, today, the revival of national projects such as ‘fulfilling the original idea’ of a tomb (Guide

for visitors, 2011) is a way of pursuing the reconstruction of people's attachment to national boundaries.

Picture 6: Unknown Soldier arrives from Zborov, Ukraine, to be re-buried



Česká Televize (2009)

#### 4.3.4. Mausoleum

While the tomb of Unknown Soldier continues the 'politics of death' for sustaining the contemporary Czech nation by re-burying personalities, the sarcophagus of the mausoleum formerly placed in the Main Hall was removed, giving space for temporary exhibitions. However, the history of the mausoleum is awakened by the NM in accordance to today's national orientation. A recently opened exhibition was responsible for re-affirming the anti-communist character, pointing the communist ideological misuse of the place by addressing questions such as the cult of personality and condemning popular feelings of nostalgia.

As reviewed<sup>14</sup>, since the First Republic's project, one of the main functions of the NM was to serve as a mausoleum for celebrated personalities of the nation, perpetuating the influence of those who made the nation proud. Formerly placed in a main hall<sup>15</sup>, a red sarcophagus fulfilled this plan during the communist regime after the death of Klement Gottwald, also following a tendency of perpetuating communist leaders in countries of the Soviet sphere of influence, inspired by Lenin's mausoleum on Moscow's Red Square. The guide (2011) explains:

“The original layout placed a sarcophagus in the Main Hall as the place where President T. G. Masaryk was to be buried. He eventually rejected the plan, and so did his family after his death. In 1953 this area was given a new function – it was rebuilt into the Klement Gottwald Mausoleum. [...] Klement Gottwald's body was exhibited in the centre of the Mausoleum in a glazed sarcophagus. The lid had built-in lights with small mirrors. The body was moved in and out the underground laboratory by a vibration-free telescopic device”.

The official guide (2011) highlights that although the mausoleum was a plan of the First Republic, President Masaryk denied it, strengthening his positive view as a national hero, reinforcing the place only as part of communist propaganda. The anti-communist character of the NM was expanded in February 2012 with the inauguration of an exhibition entitled ‘Laboratory of Power’, which was pioneer in opening secret rooms formerly used for conservation of Gottwald's mummified body and creating an atmosphere of darkness to represent the communist past, becoming one the most popular exhibitions in Czech media.

The NM website announced the opening of this exhibition that “recalls not only the very person of Klement Gottwald, but also the deformation of the Memorial's Mausoleum, as well as communist propaganda and the period of 50 years of the regime in its worst totalitarian manifestations”. According to the website, the long-term exhibition of the NM “rehabilitated the tomb, returned it to the original purpose as a symbol of a democratic

---

<sup>14</sup> See subtitle 4.2.

<sup>15</sup> See item 8 in annex 2, today's exhibition area.

Republic [...] The exhibition Laboratory of Power can then present the dark side of existence of the Memorial, which was abused by Communist propaganda”.

The first room of the exhibition presented four main topics in panels: propaganda, rebuilding the memorial, death of Gottwald and cult of personality. The curatorial text starts describing communist propaganda as violent, puts communism as opposed to the First Republic when adapting the NM and explains Gottwald’s death as part of his ‘communist behaviour’:

“Communist messages were simple. Stated in a form of slogan, they often used aggressive expressions and a confrontational tone. [...] The regime was trying to convince the public that a violent change of society, class struggle and political processes are necessary. [...]

From its original purpose – that of celebrating the Czechoslovakian statehood – the Memorial has been converted to the stage scene for one of the most striking of propaganda actions of its time. The World War I legionnaires reverence was left out even though their fight helped Czechs and Slovaks in obtaining their independence. [...]

Even though doctors were dissuading Klement Gottwald from air travel, he flew to Stalin’s funeral [...] Last years of his life he was living in a constant fear that he himself would become a victim of the purges and he was drinking increasingly”.

Further, the second room presents a reproduction of the room where Gottwald’s mummy was treated by specialists in embalming. Initially, four rifles point to visitors when they enter the room (Picture 7). The presentation of a reconstructed mummy of Gottwald covered by a white sheet and special lightening create an atmosphere of darkness and death, suggesting the evil absurdity of the mausoleum (Picture 8). In addition, a last small room presents communist posters next to pictures of people dying (Picture 7), showing that the rifles that pointed at them in the entrance are connected to propaganda.

Besides the exhibition ‘Laboratory of Power’, the NM simultaneously organized an educational program entitled ‘Also evil can have a gloss’<sup>16</sup>, including guided tours to hidden places, lectures on cult of personality, communist political processes, intentional artistic decorations of the NM in the 1950’s, and the last correspondence from Milada Horáková’s execution in prison (NM website). The program against ‘evil’ was also accompanied by films on human rights violations and the film series ‘Lost Soul Nation’ approaching how communism affected the nation, causing the loss of dignity, loss of decorum, loss of faith, and loss of tradition (NM website).

A special opening was held and a television studio was set for live reports. The event was coordinated by the Minister of Culture Alena Hanáková and Vice-President of the Senate Premysl Sobotka (NM website). Premysl Sobotka together with an opera singer Soňa Červená addressed the public and “warned against the dangers of nostalgic idealization of the 50 years of the communist regime in general” (NM website). The condemnation of nostalgic feelings is reinforced by the director of the National Museum Michal Lukeš (Český rozhlas, 2012) when presenting the exhibition and associating evil to communists:

“Launching a special project, which we called ‘Also evil can have a gloss’, we want especially to warn the younger generation about any form of totalitarianism and make them aware of how fragile democracy can be and also that often evil and totalitarianism come with a smile and offer a simple solution [...] the period reconstruction [of the premises] presents the way the Vítkov Memorial was abused by the communist propaganda. It highlights the personality of the first ‘workers’ president (1948-1953) and the personality cult that led to building the mausoleum”.

The exhibition condemns the communist past by using the history of the mausoleum, involving exoticization and demonization of the period by adopting titles such as ‘Also evil can have a gloss’. Although the display Gottwald’s mummy was constructed during the Stalinist period, being removed and cremated 9 years later when Stalin’s cult of personality was

---

<sup>16</sup> ‘*I zlo může mít pozlátko*’ in the original Czech (NM website).

denounced by Khrushchev, starting the period of normalization (Paces, 2009), the exhibition generalizes the communist ‘evil’ practices as common to the entire regime. In addition, the context created by the exhibition in the Czech media, as shown above, was conducted to condemn contemporary feelings of nostalgia present among the population, trying to shape people’s memory of communism as negative and dangerous for Czech nation.

Picture 7: Communist rifles and posters



Laboratory of Power exhibition. Photo by author

Picture 8: Re-creation of Gottwald's mummy



Laboratory of Power exhibition. Photo by author

#### 4.3.5. Permanent Exhibition

‘Crossroads of Czech and Czechoslovak Statehood’ is the main historical exhibition of the NM, occupying the central hall<sup>17</sup>. The exhibition forms the most important narrative about the political history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Czech Republic. Dealing with the history of the Czech state, the NM proposes a narrative that creates a sense of community with shared past and common struggles. The focus of the exhibition is the history of the formation of the state, and it should be considered in relation to nationalism as it works towards the identification of visitors with a Czech imagined community formed upon the struggles for a sovereign Czech state.

According to the NM official website, the aim of the exhibition is to present the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century in “harmony with the historical premises of the Memorial” by placing

---

<sup>17</sup> See item 4 in annex 2.



the foundation of Czechoslovakia as connected to old reliefs of the Memorial of Czechoslovak legionnaires by Pokorný and the Chapel of Fallen Soldiers. This intended 'harmony' assumes an appearance of celebration of the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 using more symbolic representations than textual narratives, such as the re-established coat of arms of the Republic described as Masaryk's Republic of 1918 and the replica of the pen used by Masaryk to sign the 'Declaration of Independence of Central European nations' (Pictures 9 and 10).

The history of the formation of the state is presented in five important milestones:

1. "The founding of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918
2. The period of the Munich Agreement in 1938 and dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1939
3. The re-establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1945 and the communist coup d'état three years later
4. The establishment of the Czechoslovak federation in 1968
5. The fall of communism in 1989 and dissolution of Czecho-Slovakia in 1992". (NM website)

After the symbolic commemoration of the foundation of the First Republic, the permanent exhibition explains the other 'crossroads' using texts and iconic objects for listing main political periods:

"The other crossroads are placed in the in-built 'kaaba', which fully respects the impressive architectural design of the Memorial [...]. Among these we can find the last letters by Milada Horáková and Heliodor Píka; personal belongings of Jan Palach; important state awards and orders; a presidential standard; or the first Czechoslovak law". (NM website)

The inspiration of the Muslim 'kaaba' creates a sense of sacred space within the massive building of the NM, telling visitors the common struggles of the Czechs and Slovaks as two oppressed nations in the creation of their independent states, referring to stories of individuals that were oppressed and brave since the period of the Munich agreement. Besides creating an attachment to individual struggles as a national cause within the variations of states, the narrative creates the idea of independent nations, rather than states, after 1989

towards the conclusion of the narrative. The last text of the exhibition indicates that the nations had a new beginning, in which Macura's notion (1998, p. 194) of permanent starting from zero is again visible:

“New start after 1989

The end of the 1980's brought collapse of the power of communism.  
[...]

The idea of normalisation did not take hold in Czechoslovakia [...]

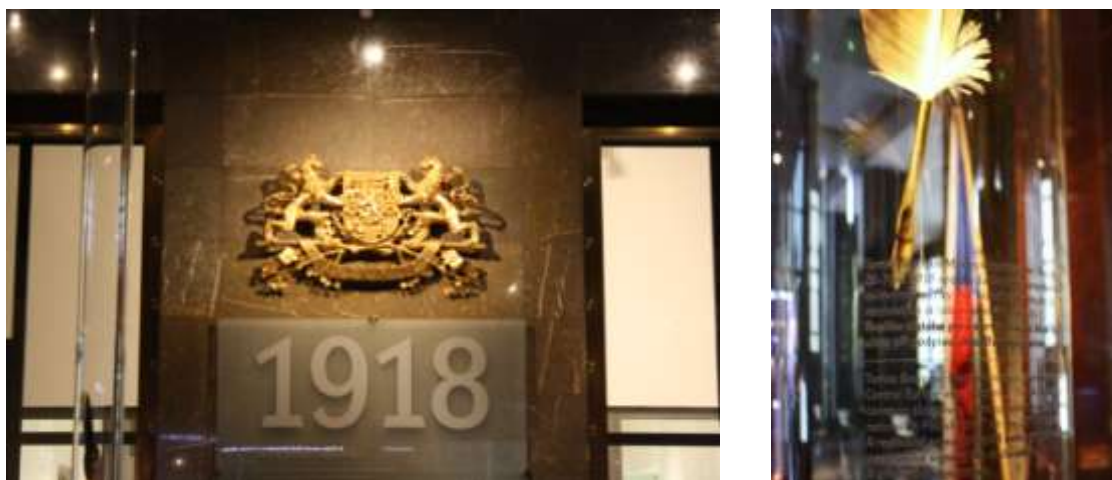
Unlike the previous crossroads, those, who protested on November 17, 1989, did not choose out of options that were offered to them. They were aware of being citizens with the right to decide. Soon, it was time for another decision-making, decision-making about the independent Czech and Slovak states. However, unlike the previous crossroads, it did not involve the power of emotions. This time, the decision was made by politicians. [...]

Establishment of the independent Czech and Slovak states in 1993 was a logical climax of the previous development. The path came to an end. The idea of Czechoslovak statehood was replaced by two new conceptions that put both nations to the new start”.

As the narrative ends in 1993, the ‘new conceptions’ are not described by the exhibition. However, the main point of the narrative is that the statehood is over, so that the nations have a new start. The use of expressions such as ‘logical climax’ as well as stating that this time (1993) decisions did not involve the ‘power of emotions’, indicating that they were rational, create the idea that the nation replaced the statehood naturally as how it should be. The image of nations is, therefore, portrayed as permanent categories that re-start after the artificial attempts of statehood.

Besides the factual chronological description of political events until the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1992, the national character of the narrative emerges in the conclusion, highlighting that the result of so many common struggles was the freedom of the two nations that survived and now can exist independently as nation-states. The idea of suffering for independent states connects individual struggles to national goals that succeeded, giving the idea that as the nation survived different states it will always survive.

Pictures 9 and 10: Coat of arms of Masaryk's Republic and Masaryk's pen



Permanent exhibition, photo by the author

#### 4.3.5.1. Columbarium

The Columbarium is an extension of the central hall<sup>18</sup> which today integrates the permanent exhibition of the NM. Although connected to the narrative ‘Crossroads of the Czech and Czechoslovak statehood’, it acquires an independent form of national representation. The columbarium follows the main policy of the NM highlighting an original plan of the First Republic distorted by communists, in which the new version of the NM re-establishes authenticity. It should be pointed that, although the use of the NM was ideological during the communist period, the function of the Columbarium has been stable in the sense that it is used for displaying important figures in relation to the nation. The official guide of the NM explains the Columbarium:

“This place of reverence was originally designed for the burial of distinguished Czechoslovak legionaries. However, they were never buried here. Starting in 1951, it was used to bury leading Communist Party Officials, such as Bohumir Smeral or Stanislav K. Neumann, whose relics were all removed after 1989, the urns placed in the Olsanske graveyard or given to the survivor families”. (Guide for visitors, 2011)

---

<sup>18</sup> See item 6 in annex 2.

In addition, the official guide (2011) explains how the Columbarium was rehabilitated: “nowadays this place is used to commemorate remarkable personalities who influenced, whether in a positive or negative sense, Czech and Czechoslovak history in the 20th century”. Table 1 shows the list of personalities displayed in the Columbarium; they are not shown in a chronological order, their appearance on the screen is unsystematic. The marble of former graves serve as a screen for the contemporary projection.

Table 1: List of Personalities displayed in the Columbarium	
-	Milan Kundera (1929 - )
-	Václav Klaus (1941 - )
-	Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878 - 1962)
-	Milan Hodža (1878 - 1944)
-	Alois Elias (1890 - 1942)
-	Vladimir Krajina (1905 - 1993)
-	Antonín Švehla 1873 – 1933
-	Emanuel Rádl (1873 – 1942)
-	Vojtěch Preissig (1873 – 1944)
-	Ferdinand Peroutka (1895 – 1978)
-	Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850 – 1937)
-	Jan Patočka (1907 – 1977)
-	Václav Havel (1936 –2011)
-	Milan Rastislav Štefánik (1880 – 1919)
-	Ladislav Rasin (1900 - 1945)
-	Pavel Tigrid (1917 – 2003)
-	Vladimír Mečiar (1942 - )
-	Andrej Hlinka (1864 - 1938)
-	Josef Pekař (1870 – 1937)
-	Edvard Beneš (1884 - 1948)
-	Josef Dürich (1847 - 1927)
-	Petr Pithart (1941 - )
-	Karel Kramář (1860 –1937)
-	Wenzel Jaksch (1896 –1966)
Screening at Columbarium	

The columbarium represents a critical discourse to the national history. It reveals that the singularity of the Czech nation was not influenced only by 'positive' personalities, but also by 'negative' ones. In this sense, the message communicated is that, in opposition to the communist cult of personality when main political leaders were buried in the marble graves in the columbarium, the contemporary NM aims to show the 'reality' of history instead of creating an utopia. This critical discourse considers that the public is educated and would not accept the mere 'cult' as in the past.

However, the screening of personalities cannot be understood as a neutral selection. Besides aiming to list personalities that influenced Czech history during the 20<sup>th</sup> century even 'negatively', communist leaders that were formally buried there do not appear on the list. Also, the main political leaders of the communist regime do not appear as influencing the history of the Czechs in the 20th century, such as Klement Gottwald, Antonín Zápotocký, Antonín Novotný, Ludvík Svoboda, or Gustáv Husák, excluding their influence from national history, even from the 'negative' category.

This approach can be considered innovative as it tries to pass an image of neutral by showing 'positive and negative' personalities; however, those associated with communism are erased. This realistic image communicates that, besides personalities are diverse and have contestable characters, they are here united under the umbrella of the nation. In this sense, the exhibition is re-affirming the unity of the nation precisely by showing that there is a reason to gather this diverse list in a columbarium. The interpretation of the exhibition can be summarized as 'no matter what they did, they contributed to the singularity of Czech nation, except communists'.

#### 4.3.6. Temporary Exhibitions

The Main Hall, formerly occupied by Gottwald's sarcophagus, was re-opened for temporary exhibitions. The archive (NM website) shows that temporary exhibitions hosted by the NM approached mainly political topics associated to the history of Czechs in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which aspects of communism have been especially portrayed. Focusing on shared experiences of political history, temporary exhibitions function as cultural propagators of the distinctiveness of the nation, constantly attracting visitors to think about nationally shared topics. This analysis focuses on the exhibition 'Red Museums' opened in December 2011 for further comparison to the consumption by Czech visitors in chapter 5.

The exhibition 'Golden ? Sixties' hosted from September 2010 to May 2011 questioned people's memories from the communist regime during the 1960's preceding the Prague Spring, known for relative economic normalization and political democratization in comparison to the 1950's. The aim of the exhibition is to question people's positive memories of everyday life, claiming that besides the 'relaxation' the characterization as 'golden' is contradictory. Besides the neutral approach presented by the question mark, inviting visitors to formulate their own answers, the exhibition offers an implicit answer conducting visitors to change positive memories. According to the official website,

"The exhibition aims to capture the contradiction between people's memories of the 1960s and reality as it was manifested in the everyday lives of residents.

[...] the lives of the population were far from perfect. The exhibition focuses on the common assortment of consumer goods in its drabness and lack of variety as well as on the lifestyles of individual social groups, and poses the question: Were the golden sixties really golden?" (NM website)

From June to November 2011, the NM presented an exhibition entitled 'Elections', which approached the evolution of elections among Czechs and Slovaks from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1990's (NM website), criticizing electoral systems in general. The focus was on social

events and perceptions of elections people had during the recent national histories, creating national boundaries both for Czechs and Slovaks by generalizing how each of them experienced elections and political culture distinctively. The exhibition shows that although elections were held by different political systems, the Czech people, as a unified homogeneous group, experienced elections equally. Also, shared experiences of elections support a contemporary uniqueness of Czech people based on common political experience continuing since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The exhibition ‘Red Museums’ presented from December 2011 to April 2012 was the most innovative at the NM, proposing the question ‘how communism has influenced museums?’ The answer to this question is based on extensive textual material approaching museology and museum theory about the use of museums as political tools as well as objects showing how this theory fits the communist period. According to the NM website, “during the communist period, museums belonged among institutions, which helped to form historical knowledge of the Czechoslovak society – by means of its expositions and short-term exhibitions”. The curatorial text stated:

“The museums are an important communication tool between the power structures and the society. As they create the historical images, they help forming the collective identity of nations. Their representation of the past can also form stereotypes or the required view of the world. During the communist regime, the museums preserved a memory, the memory which was not the public memory, but a memory of a tiny group of people in power”. [Sic]

According to the NM website, “they [museums] had a remarkable impact on formation of historical memory of the Czech and Slovak society. And this memory still resonates in various forms even nowadays. The museums also became places of jubilee ceremonies and rituals firming and consolidating the communist power”. The use of symbols and rituals for the construction of a communist collective memory is approached by the exhibition through the display of objects (Pictures 11 and 12). The exhibition divides the communist regime in

two periods (1948-1970; 1970-1989) to investigate the development of museums, approaching communist interpretations of the Hussite movement, the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Munich agreement, the Slovak National Uprising, and the Victorious February. The curatorial texts explain:

#### “Museums and Society prior to 1989

*Museums have never been subject to an open criticism (from the public or the intellectuals), nevertheless they played a remarkable role in forming of the identity of the Czech society. The historical stories presented there during the normalization had no official alternatives. [...]*

Unlike museums in Western Europe, the Czechoslovak museums did not favor discussions on history and memory. Visiting them was more of a ritual of confirmation of the stereotypes of their own nation.

#### Development of museums between 1948-1970

These [museums] were important symbolic national places and a tool for forming of the political identity of the Czechoslovak society. Nationalisation of these institutions gave the Communist Party a monopoly for spread of its interpretation of the Czechoslovak history. [...]

*By means of carefully organized activities, and a massive use of promotion, the new regime tried to legitimize itself by discrediting the previous regime and by incorporating the communist history into the story of the Czech nation.*

#### Development of museums between 1970-1989

*A period of mandatory happiness and memories*

Leadership tried to utilize the museums primarily for the justification of the August occupation, and to describe the post-war development as a story of success. [...]

*An emphasis was put in the didactic role of museums.*

#### Interpretation of history

*There were commemorated historical events and persons from whom the communist regime could derive its legitimacy.*

Everything related to the Hussites was considered patriotic and progressive.

#### Rethoric on museums

*Language was an important part of the interpretation of history. [...]*

*An important element was the tendency towards stereotypes and depersonalization.*

The Czechoslovak society was described as a homogeneous body in which everyone shared the same aim”.



The use of museums by communists is well documented and presented as a feature of Czech national history that should be overcome. However, the critical approach against communist museums ignores contemporary constructions of the Czech nation. Using the critical terms quoted above to approach today's national production, it should be asked if stories presented by museums today have *official alternatives*, if representations of the nation for visitors at the NM itself are not also *a ritual of confirmation of the stereotypes of their own nation* and if the *nationalisation of institutions* today create a *monopoly of interpretations of history*. The criticism against communist museums are also applicable to national museums today; the quotes in italic above also serve to understand contemporary museums, such as: *by means of carefully organized activities, and a massive use of promotion, the new regime tried to legitimize itself by discrediting the previous regime.*

It should be argued that, although ideologically different, the adaptation in the NM continues similar functions criticized by the temporary exhibition 'Red Museums', such as the construction of new national narrative and collective memory, which is anti-communist, revives national projects of the First Republic and adds values such as freedom as an essential distinctive character of Czechs resisting foreign struggles. The same way communist museums considered everything related to the Hussites as *patriotic and progressive* is how the NM today approaches the First Republic, as shown in subtitle 3.3. Like objects of communist personalities were celebrated (Pictures 11 and 12), today the NM celebrates Masaryk's pen (Picture 10). The exhibition Red Museums criticizes the construction of collective memory through communist rituals and symbols. A similar process can be found in the use of new national symbols and rituals such as re-opening the NM<sup>19</sup>, re-burying new martyrs<sup>20</sup>, and choosing new personalities<sup>21</sup>, which are currently constructing a Czech nation.

---

<sup>19</sup> See subtitle 4.3.1.

<sup>20</sup> See subtitle 4.3.3.

<sup>21</sup> See subtitle 4.3.5.1.

The analysis of temporary exhibitions shows that, besides re-constructing the Czech nation through the adaptation of permanent spaces such as the Tomb of Unknown Soldier, the Statue of Jan Žižka and the Permanent exhibition, the NM is also concerned in revising memories of the past by using ‘communism’ as the background for most exhibitions. Particularly, the exhibition ‘Red Museums’ was outstanding for adopting a strong theoretical criticism against the ideological use of museums. However, the use of Czech museums for shaping collective memory and national history is only portrayed as a plan of communists without offering the critique to the contemporary construction of a Czech nation.

Critical frames adopted by temporary exhibitions today such as formulating questions to be apparently answered by visitors and criticizing communist ideological tools pursue the acceptance by the public of the new national narratives. The narratives construct political memories in a certain tendency, emphasizing the continuity of the Czech nation towards democratic values and contesting the communist past as a form of redemptive criticism (Mookherjee, 2011)<sup>22</sup>. The exhibitions can be considered creators of national distinctiveness as they highlight common experiences Czechs historically had as a single unified people under different political regimes.

---

<sup>22</sup> Reviewed in subtitle 2.2.

Pictures 11 and 12: Presentation of communist objects



Red Museums exhibition (Česká Televize, 2011)

## 5. ANALYSIS OF CONSUMPTION

This chapter aims to analyze the consumption of the NM by Czech visitors. It is here argued that, besides the cognitive function of representations in museums in terms of production of knowledge and culture, visitors do not necessarily agree or reproduce what is imposed by exhibitions. Although the content analysis of the NM has shown that its adaptation since 2009 tries to make sense of Czech nation, history and memory, the consumption by Czech visitors has to be considered in order to investigate to what extent national cultural productions can actually shape people's understandings. Also, forms of consumption and occupation of the NM can indicate if visitors follow modes of interaction proposed by the NM or if they resist the constructed national content.

The aim of the re-opened NM is to become lively, attracting Czechs to Vítkov Hill based on the revived historical relevance of the place for Czech nation, which should be remembered and consumed<sup>23</sup>. The NM website constantly publishes that events, permanent and temporary exhibitions organized attract many Czechs interested in learning and thinking about the nation. For example, according to the official website (2012) only the weekend of 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2012, when the educational program explaining how communists used the NM entitled 'Also evil can have a gloss' combined with the exhibition 'Laboratory of Power', attracted a record number over 2000 visitors (Picture 13). The increasing number of visitors to new exhibitions approaching national history mainly focused on revealing hidden aspects of the communist period, show that the NM is gaining influence in Czech society. Constant publications and documentaries about the NM shown by main media channels such as 'Česká televize' connect the productions of the NM and the public.

Therefore, the analysis of consumption aims to explore the connections established between the NM as a propagator of Czech national contents and people's everyday life.

---

<sup>23</sup> See subtitle 4.3.1.

Initially, this analysis describes forms of consumption, expressions and practices in the NM, identified during the ethnographic research carried from September 2011 to March 2012, which involved participant observation and unstructured interviews, indicating how relevant national contents become to specific social groups visiting the place. The ethnographic data considers special events held by the NM and their attendance by the public. Further, the guestbook of the NM, where people write their reactions to exhibitions, is analyzed to evaluate the influence of the narratives presented.

Picture 13: Queue for entering the NM



Official website (2012)

### 5.1. Groups and practices on the Vítkov Hill

The initial participant observation among people visiting the NM when this research started in September 2011 aimed to identify which social groups appear more frequently on the platform located in front of the statue of national hero Jan Žižka and surrounding areas of the NM. Once these most visible social groups were identified, their characteristic practices were observed closely in order to describe what people do when visiting the NM. Finally,

establishing categories of social groups, each of them was approached through unstructured interviews to hear what each group talk about when visiting the NM, including eventual expressions about the place and how they relate to it.

Visits to the NM happened mainly on weekends. It was considered that, besides the park surrounding the monument is constantly open to the public, the opening hours of the NM are normally from 10am to 18am between Wednesdays and Sundays, despite eventual changes for particular events. Every day of the week was initially observed and it became clear that when the NM is closed the surrounding areas are mostly empty with very few people eventually walking around the green areas of Vítkov Hill. Also, between Wednesdays and Fridays, the presence of visitors is not very frequent and patterns of behaviour are difficult to be identified. Therefore, the observations were on Saturdays and Sundays when more visitors allowed identifying which social groups adopted more repetitive forms of interacting with the NM.

The NM is located on the top of Vítkov Hill around 260 meters above the average level of the capital city of Prague. The main entrance is an incline facing the bus station Florenc. Other accesses include stairways from Žižkov neighbourhood. Most visitors access the Memorial from the main entrance, which has a steep incline that challenges elderly people and amuses youngsters. Elderly people look like tired pilgrims climbing the hill to reach the NM while youngsters use the incline for practicing sports such as skating and cycling. Going up the Vítkov Hill towards the NM involves interacting visually with the landscape of Prague where main symbolic buildings such as The Prague Castle and Žižkov Tower are visible.

After distant observations in September 2011, since October 2011 every weekend between 3 and 5 groups of people were approached during their visits to the NM. This number does not intend to be statistically representative, but the approaches to people were qualitatively considered sufficient as the content of the unstructured interviews became repetitive, achieving a theoretical saturation that permits the description of the most relevant

forms of behaviour and consumption. During the months of January and February 2012, with the advent of the winter the number of visitors to the external areas decreased considerably, when the observation was more focused on visitors inside the building and exhibitions.

The first observations of the public visiting the NM indicated the heterogeneity of people consuming the monument. Considering this perception, generalizations about how Czech visitors behave or how they consume the NM cannot be formulated. However, the long-term observation has shown that some categories of social groups are more repetitively consuming and performing around the monument. Accordingly, each of these social groups adopts a characteristic set of practices that permit their categorization. Therefore, trying to establish informal conversations with each of these groups during their visits and performances, using basic sentences in Czech such as ‘Excuse me, could you tell me what is this?’; ‘What does that mean?’; ‘Is that important?’; ‘Interesting, tell me more...’, ‘Can I take a picture?’; ‘Actually, I’m researching about this place, do you come here often? Why?’ it was possible to understand how people make sense of the NM through their individual practices. The objective was to keep conversations going according to what the interviewee was proposing, doing or looking at. The informality was a major advantage, therefore questions about name and age were not raised, and dialogues were not registered in front of the interviewees. For ethical concerns, the description and analysis of the unstructured interviews will use the term participant (1, 2, 3...), without making individuals identifiable.

To investigate how individual agency operates as a form of cultural consumption in relation to the structure of the NM, during the participant observation, unstructured interviews revealing individual understandings were registered in the form of field notes right after the dialogues were finished. Although this research is focusing on the micro-level of analysis to study people’s understandings through individual expressions, the content of the dialogues were often repeated within the same social group, supporting their categorization. Therefore, the selection of dialogues to be registered and here analyzed did not intend to generalize how

Czechs behave in the NM, but to show enriching individual cases of interactions with the constructed national content of Vítkov Hill, which are associated with three main social groups identified: older generations, families and youngsters.

#### 5.1.1. Older generations

The first social group approached is formed by individuals of older generations, apparently around 70 years old. This group usually spends longer times observing and interacting visually with the building of the NM. Usually gathered in small groups of two or three people, they start informal conversations about architectural details of the NM, specially pointing to the reformed statue of Jan Žižka and to the panels on the main door that represent different battles associated to the Czech nation, such as the Battle on Vítkov Hill, the First and Second World War. This group pays significant attention to historical facts and representations. Following their visits and positions near the monument, most conversations I could establish were about detailing the meanings of the panels of Czech battles. These were two dialogues proposing a realistic narrative by the participants:

[Standing in front of the panels]

Researcher: Good morning. May I ask you what these panels mean?

Participant 1: Do you know Czech history?

Researcher: I am studying it.

Participant 1: You should know; these are the main parts of our history. This is Jan Hus [pointing first panel], the religious reformer, I think you know him. And here is the Catholic Church trying to convince people. The others are Hussite soldiers defending Czech lands and Jan Žižka, the same of the statue.

Participant 2: Well there are also modern wars; the last ones are from the Second World War, look at the tanks.

Participant 1: Yes, we always had to fight.

(Man and woman, October 2011)



[Standing between the statue and the panels]

Researcher: Excuse me, could you tell me what does it mean?

Participant 3: The history of Czech army.

Researcher: Aha. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

Participant 3: In our entire history. You can see more the Second World War, it is more recent. But the important here is Jan Žižka, that's why we have the statue.

Researcher 3: I see; I've heard the statue is one of the tallest.

Participant 3: Yes, because it is important. It is new, I mean it is old, but it was just restored. We have to preserve our history. And it's beautiful [the statue].

(Man, October 2011)

The first dialogue shows a main initial aspect to consider about the unstructured interviews: when I approach people I am positioned as a foreigner, who cannot avoid underestimation about the knowledge of Czech history. Considering older generations, I can also be seen as young, so less informed about history than the speakers. Although before approaching participants 1 and 2 it was visible that they were discussing about which panel belongs to which period, making signs of confusion and doubt, once I asked about the meanings, the visitors, positioned as nationals in opposition to me, did not make their confusion perceptible and the representations become clearly located in a chronological narrative, like the official description offered by the NM (official guide). The first dialogue considers the panels as a logical representation of national history, although recent history was not emphasized by participant 1.

It was expected that meanings associated with the Second World War would be predominant among older generations. Although war veterans are usually related to the NM, the unstructured interviews did not encounter personal experiences in the war willing to be expressed. The second dialogue even pointed the medieval history of the nation as more relevant. The explicit importance of preservation of old national history to the self indicates a form of agreement with the reconstruction of the NM as logical. However, the old aspect of the national history, more associated with Jan Žižka, cannot be considered unanimous. The relativity of historical representations is also brought up, as pointed in the following dialogue.

[Standing between the statue and the panels]

Researcher: Good morning. Excuse me, could you tell me what these panels mean?

Participant 4: Oh, these are our wars. But they are all mixed, you can't tell who is a Hussite and who is a communist. There were many wars.

Researcher: Aha, I see this one looks very old.

Participant 4: Yes, this is a Hussite. I remember when we came here many years ago, in the 1950's, they told us these were our first revolutionaries. You know, every old Czech was a revolutionary for them.

Researcher: Did you come on a tour?

Participant 4: School tour, we had to learn about Žižka here. But now we come just to have a walk and see Prague.

(Woman, November 2011)

The senses expressed by this participant referred to a past experience. It is highlighted that it was compulsory to visit the NM and that people did not believe the stories been taught because they were taught by communists. It is interesting that historical figures such as Jan Žižka are referred as old Czech, like 'us', while 'communists' are simply as 'them'. The panels are creating feelings associated with a contemporary nation as the wars are mentioned as 'ours'. There is a form of thinking about an authentic history which was distorted by communists while now they understand the truth. In addition, there is a positive sense about the present Czech Republic given the expression of freedom to come visit the NM today while in communist times the visits are blamed as mandatory. It is considered that in this case the NM is understood as a place for negotiating understandings of the past. There is also a sense of normality associated with contemporary achievements of Czechs. It could be questioned if in the past they actually subconsciously contested the communist version of history or accepted it. However, emphasizing the individual freedom as a contemporary Czech is a way of making the present valuable in opposition to the communist past.

### 5.1.2. Families

The second group identified as most frequently visiting the NM is formed by parents with small children. Parents are mostly young couples or single parents. Bringing dogs is also a main pattern. It seems that the platform facing the statue of Jan Žižka can offer entertainment for people as a family. Typical interactions in the NM with children involve photographing and playing in front of the Czech coat of arms, as shown in pictures 14, 15 and 16.

[On the platform in front of Jan Žižka's statue]

Researcher: Excuse me, can I take a picture [of dog and child playing]?

Participant 5: Sure. [Child runs away] He likes coming here, there is space to run.

Participant 6: Can you take a picture of us with our camera?

Researcher: Sure.

Participant 6: [Calls child] Come here, let's take a picture with Žižka.

Child: Me on the big black horse.

Participant 6: It's too tall for you. [Laughs]

(Man and woman, October 2011)

The dialogues established with parents and children tended to be limited to the reproduction of their practices. The observation of their behaviour shows that their main practice in the NM is photographing with the statue and the Czech coat of arms. Frequently, I did not start a conversation as by standing next to people they asked me to take pictures of them together with their cameras. These interactions involving children were often accompanied with simplistic explanations by their parents about who is that big man on the big black horse: an old Czech warrior<sup>24</sup>. In addition, as children are brought to play near the Czech coat of arms, they tend to try to stand on the plaque, when their parents call their attention to respect the place indicating it is forbidden to jump on it. A major tendency of

---

<sup>24</sup> Válečník in Czech.

children is to try to read the phrase written with big letters on the plaque 'glory to fallen heroes for the homeland', when parents correct their reading.

For families the location of the NM seems to be randomly chosen as a place for spending an afternoon as in any other public space. However, once families are around the monument, it is clear that closer interactions are established with the building. And these interactions tend to serve as a form of identification with the national content embedded in the NM. The monumentality of the statue of Jan Žižka on a horse is attractive for children's eyes. Bringing children and taking pictures of them with the statue of Jan Žižka and the Czech coat of arms is a way of constructing their memories in national terms. It is visible the role of digital cameras in making practices of everyday life to be remembered and shared, in this case, portraits featuring the national hero Jan Žižka function as a link between the national content of the NM and people's individual stories.

Teaching children how to behave on the plaque dedicated to soldiers is a way of creating an aura of respect around the monument, demonstrating the importance of respecting national symbols. This process of creating memories for children in the NM during weekend visits is reinforced by the guide for children (Annex 3) and national playgrounds (picture 17), intended to teach about important facts of the nation related to the monument. The guide for children is a simplified version of narrative of the NM connecting the battle on Vítkov Hill to the foundation of the First Republic, the tradition of legionnaires and pointing that during communism it was different as it served as a mausoleum. In addition, two speech balloons emphasize the importance of the Tomb of Unknown Soldier and the statue of Jan Žižka. The focus on remembering national contents through basic questions maximizes their importance for children's memory.

This observation of contemporary everyday life around the NM contradicts what Bartlová (2011) propose. For the author (2011), Vítkov Hill was not significant in Czech identity because her generation has childhood memories of other more important places in

Prague, such as The Prague Castle, Wenceslaus Square or the National Museum (main building). However, it seems that in 2012, after the revival of the NM in 2009<sup>25</sup>, the place became a destination for families with children. Therefore, in the creation of national memory of some of today's children, the NM will be remembered and serve the construction of self-identifications as Czechs.

Picture 14: Father and children playing on the panel of Czech battles



Photo by the author

---

<sup>25</sup> See subtitle 4.3.

Picture 15: Photographing with the Czech coat of arms



Photo by the author

Picture 16: Girl photographs her toy with national hero Jan Žižka



Photo by author

Picture 17: National playground



Photo by author

### 5.1.3. Youngsters

A third relevant social group occupying the NM is formed by youngsters. Youngsters are more visible in the area than other social groups as their activities are outstanding in the scene. The groups of young people that repeatedly occupy the platform in front of the Czech coat of arms and the statue of Jan Žižka can be associated with the notion of urban tribes. These groups adopt idiosyncratic forms of performance associated with some individual practices, mainly sports and activities such as skating, cycling and flying kites, as shown in Pictures 18, 19, 20 and 21. This social group is the one that offers more subversive forms of occupation of the NM. The purpose of honouring the nation planned by the surroundings of the monument may be mitigated when facing the individual practices of young individuals. However, this behaviour described as subversive can also carry alternative forms of identification with national feelings instigated by the NM.

[Flying a kite]

Researcher: Hello, can I take a picture of your kite?

Participant7: Yes... you'd better take it when it is flying.

Researcher: There is enough wind?

Participant7: Yes, but it takes some time. When it flies it goes higher than Žižka.

Researcher: Is this a good place for flying a kite?

Participant7: Yes, it is the best in Prague. There is also Letná [park].

Researcher: Oh I know Letná park.

Participant7: It is popular, but we don't like it there.

(Man, November 2011)

[Preparing a kite to fly]

Researcher: Hello, can I take a picture of your kite?

Participant8: Sure. Do you like kites?

Researcher: It looks cool [pointing to the shape and colours of the kite].

Participant8: You know, we Czechs love kites. You can see many people around here with cool kites.

(Man, November 2011)

First observations of youngsters around the NM showed that in a hidden area behind the monument there is a meeting point where they prepare kites. Only once kites are ready to fly they are carried to the front of the monument, where the statue of Jan Žižka stands. The backstage preparation shows the importance these youngsters give to their performance. When they are trying to fly the kites, they cannot fail, because it would be a reason for public embarrassment. As soon as kites are flying in front of the NM, the attention of visitors is conducted from gazing the monument to the performance of these youngsters. In this sense, it can be considered that this individual occupation is a way of distorting the purpose of the NM, which is to honour and remember the nation as an official place. These practices fit De Certeau's approach (1984) reviewed in subtitle 2.3. However, this form of occupation is also a way of belonging or dominating the NM, attaching the self to the national space.

A major feature of groups of youngsters flying kites is the military adornments, clothes and kites themselves are decorated with green camouflage, as seen in picture 20. During the unstructured interviews, considering my foreign accent when speaking Czech, I am usually identified as a stranger who does not know or understand the local culture. With



youngsters the conversation would quickly turn into English, as they commonly thought I would not understand their answers. Therefore, I am again positioned as the 'other'. This process is particularly interesting when investigating forms of national identification. Youngsters tried to create an image of authentic locals to be represented to the other (me). In this sense, their national identification seemed to be strengthened by my presence.

Looking at the first dialogue quoted above, it is clear that their individual activity – flying kites – becomes associated with the NM, mainly with the massive size of the statue of Jan Žižka and the possibility of transcending it through an individual practice. Further, considering my presence and their practice taking place in a national place, they refer to themselves as 'we = Czechs' instead of 'we = young people' or 'we = lovers of kite'. Their personal activity in conclusion is linked to their national identification: 'we Czechs love kites'. Another interesting point is that Vítkov Hill is being understood in opposition to Letná park, which is a place on a hill where the conditions to fly kites are similar. However, although not explicit in the personal opinion 'we don't like it there', a hypothesis for this expression could be that Letná is often associated as a place integrated to foreign tourism in Prague, frequently visited by foreigners during the summer, while the NM is a place with meanings for Czechs and unnoticed by tourists.

[Skating in front of the panels of Czech battles]

Researcher: Hey, is it allowed to skate here?

Participant9: Of course, this place is public.

Researcher: The guard keeps looking.

Participant9: I know, he knows he can't do anything, this place is ours; we do what we want.

(Man, November 2011)

The space between the panel of Czech battles and the statue of Jan Žižka is often occupied by youngsters skating. The activity is controversial as it blocks the access of other visitors to look at the panels closely. Before approaching these youngsters to ask about their activity in the NM, there was a tension between their practice and the guards, but the activity

was not forbidden. From the expression ‘we do what we want’ in the dialogue above, it is perceptible a proud of freedom to occupy the NM with individual activities which also creates a sense of freedom in the contemporary Czech nation. Allowing a space officially used for military parades and presidential rituals to be occupied by youngsters that provoke the authority of guards works as a proof to the visitor, as a citizen, that he/she is free and that the NM belongs to him/her. The new version of the NM gives the impression of belonging to the individual as well as the individual belongs to the nation, seen in the previous expression ‘this place is ours’.

[Seating by stairs with bikes]

Researcher: Hello, can I ask you how you come upstairs with the bike?

Participant10: There is a road behind the monument for cycling, it finishes here; of course we don’t use these stairs.

Researcher: I see, so you stop here.

Participant10: This is a good place to seat after exercising. We stop here to wait for friends still cycling.

Two other sports bringing everyday practices to the NM are cycling and skating. The road and pathways in the surrounding areas of the monument are used mainly for cycling and jogging. The planning of the park guides pathways to the main platform<sup>26</sup> where the national flag stands on a tall pedestal and where the national hero Jan Žižka looks at the capital city. The activities observed in the park can be compared to everyday activities practiced in any other park of the city. However, the imposition of the flag, the Czech coat of arms and the monumental structure of the NM on the top of Vítkov Hill create a gathering point. Therefore, once everyday activities are held there, they become united by the national structure. People practicing different sports end up in the main platform, especially in the end of the afternoon when the sunset gives a singular aura to the statue and the pedestal of the national flag.

---

<sup>26</sup> See Annex 1.

The NM becomes a place for socializing around national symbols, which integrates the visual landscape. In this sense, the NM works as described by Billig (1997). As previously reviewed, for the author (1997) forms of nationalism are produced and reaffirmed in contemporary societies not as explicit extreme political manifestations, but it integrates people's lives through banal activities carried out unconsciously. And it is precisely by the combination of national symbols and banal activities repeated on weekends and holidays around the NM that a sense of everydayness and essentiality is given to the constructed national content of Vítkov Hill. Adopting Billig's terms (1997) it can be considered that people occupying the NM are not conscious about the cultural construction of their national understandings, however, by using Vítkov Hill as a place to practice their individual activities they became so familiar and used to the national symbolism surrounding them that they start considering the nation as a natural feature that was always there, not constructed or recently re-opened. When the attachment to a national content looks normal and banal it can easier become a stronger national feeling.

Picture 18: NM as a meeting point for cycling



Photo by the author

Picture 19 and 20: Flying a kite higher than Jan Žižka



Photo by the author

Picture 21: Skating between the panel of Czech battles and Jan Žižka

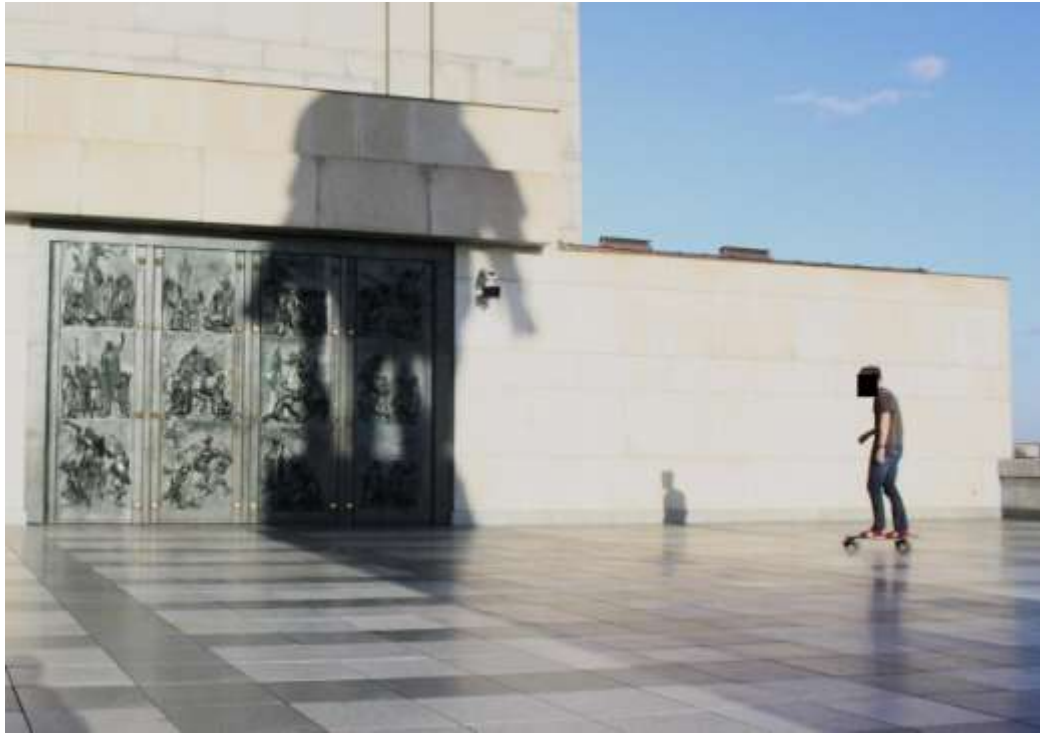


Photo by the author

Picture 22: Looking at sunset with national flag



Photo by the author

## 5.2. Performing the nation on holiday

The national holiday of October 28<sup>th</sup>, when extraordinary celebrations are held in the NM, is a particular day to be analyzed separately. Especially during this day, practices such as sports, hobbies and individual activities did not appear relevant around the NM. Instead, official national rituals and ceremonies dominated the scene (picture 23), also being reproduced by people's practices. The main finding of the observation during this day was that social groups did not appear as divided as in every weekend, but their behaviour became more unified following a pattern while visiting the NM. This was a day that gestures of respect and reverence to the nation were more evident than any other individual practice.

According to Česká Televize (2011), on October 28 the Czech Republic commemorated the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia starting with President Václav Klaus and other officials<sup>27</sup> having their duties traditionally in the NM. Klaus declared to the public: "I was glad for this day, when the statehood was taken very seriously" (Česká Televize, 2011). In addition, according to (Česká Televize, 2011), during this day the streets were occupied by extremists, euro-sceptics and royalists.

President Václav Klaus conducted a military parade with combat brigades. After offering flowers to the nation, a minute's silence in memory of all those who fought for the nation was observed. The president told the media: "I am glad that for the celebration on October 28, our biggest holiday, we start here at the NM. So I hope that it stands in this spirit the whole day today" (Česká Televize, 2011). The words of the president turned into reality. On the afternoon of October 28<sup>th</sup> 2011, the platform of the NM was occupied by Czech visitors offering candles, flowers and balloons with the colours of the national flag to the

---

<sup>27</sup> Officials present in the celebrations of the national holiday at the NM included constitutional officials, President of the Chamber of Deputies Miroslava Némčová, chairman of the Senate of Milan Stech, Minister of Defense Alexandr Vondra, the head of diplomacy Karel Schwarzenberg, the head of the Roman Catholic Church Archbishop Dominik Duka, the Mayor of Prague Bohuslav Svoboda, military leaders, the youth sport movement Sokol, former political prisoners and war veterans. (Česká Televize, 2011).

nation. Most of the practices were held in front of the Czech coat of arms under the statue of Jan Žižka.

[Standing in front of the Czech coat of arms]

Participant11: Excuse me, can you take a picture of us?

Researcher: Sure.

Participant11: With the statue.

Participant12: Can you take another one with the flowers?

Researcher: Yes. Do you want the flowers?

Participant12: Yes, we saw the president putting the flowers, we should take a picture with them.

Researcher: You were here in the morning to see the ceremony?

Participant12: No, we saw it on TV and decided to come as it's an important day.

The national rituals performed by the president, and shown on national television in the morning, became reproducible the entire day, as seen in pictures 27, 28 and 29. The spontaneous dialogue by the Czech coat of arms quoted above is representative of the way national contents are reproduced in everyday life. An important role of the media, especially the television as mentioned, becomes evident in connecting the national content of the NM in official performance to people's practices. In the same occasion of the dialogue, parents were instructing children to light candles, which was a difficult task because of the wind. Even when children gave up trying, the parents returned at least three times to the place to light the candles again. This practice shows that the honour to the nation was taken seriously by that family, like a religious practice, so that candles blown out would not be appropriate and were lighted again and again. The features of the rituals performed in the NM on the national holiday serve as an example of what Rousseau (cited by Bellah, 1967) described as civic religion.

The dialogue shows how the rituals in honour of the nation during the national holiday were not spontaneous by this particular family, not originally part of their practices, but mediated. Once the pompous military parade was held and the president appeared on TV talking about the importance of remembering the date and giving the example of offering

flowers to the nation, the practice was followed. This micro-process started with the official production of rituals, followed by their reproduction in the media, turning into socially constructed rituals. As soon as some people perform the rituals, they become an authentic part of the scene, and more people present follow the practice.

The celebration of the national holiday can be considered the most important day of the NM influencing people to feel part of the nation. During this day the tomb of Unknown Soldier was more visited than usual (picture 26). Also, visitors spent more time in the room that gives access to the tomb, looking at flags and reading the list of glorious battles of the nation (picture 25), which include references until the recent participation of Czech soldiers in Afghanistan. This observation shows the combination of national cultural productions and the performance of official rituals as one of the strongest forms of reproduction of nationalism contemporarily.

It should be highlighted that this is not a sociological study of the entire Czech society, but a micro-analysis of how some practices carried by some people relate to national contents. For contemporary understandings of nations, it was not intended to demonstrate a nationalistic behaviour among the population in political terms, but to show that cultural productions such as the revival of a NM and the performance of symbols influence certain individuals towards the cultural reproduction of the nation. Once the culture of the nation becomes an individual practice, it also acquires an appearance of essential and natural. People soon do not realize if the rituals and other national contents were recently created or if they were always there, if they were copied from the president on TV or if they were part of their own individual cultures. This process of essentialization of practices initialized by cultural productions becomes an effective way of making people feel part of a certain category, that of nationals.



Picture 23 and 24: Official rituals and ceremonies



Česká Televize (2011)

Picture 25: Reading about the glorious battles of the nation



Photo by author

Picture 26: Visiting the Unknown Soldier



Photo by author

Picture 27: Lighting candles to the nation as instructed by parents



Photo by author

Picture 28: Socializing through national rituals



Photo by author

Picture 29: Elderly people lightening candles to the nation



Photo by author

Picture 30: Introducing the son to the nation



Photo by author

### 5.3. Reacting to exhibitions

The participant observation and unstructured interviews were fundamental for maximizing and analyzing forms of behaviour and consumption of the NM by different groups of Czech visitors, indicating that they assume particular practices in relation to the national content embedded around the external area of the monument. Further, the observation of visitors attending permanent and temporary exhibitions inside the building demonstrated that they rarely deviate from the path indicated by curators to follow the narratives of the exhibitions. When visiting the exhibitions, there is a predominant silent atmosphere, which shows that exhibitions are mostly taken as serious forms of representation serving as a source for thinking and learning about topics displayed. Exhibitions mostly are visited by adults while children are left in the 'national playground' (picture 17).

However, because of the educational environment created during the visits to the exhibitions, people do not immediately express opinions or talk. While participant observation indicate this atmosphere, the level of socialization inside the exhibitions is very low, which limits the realization of unstructured interviews to gather spontaneous reactions about the narratives presented. Therefore, to address people's understandings specifically about the content of the exhibitions, maintaining the ethnographic character of this research, which aims to identify when the national content of the NM becomes relevant for visitors instead of proposing direct questions about their national identity, this analysis considers the guestbook.

The guestbook is located in the exit of the exhibitions. The value of the guestbook is in the fact that it contains spontaneous opinions and reactions visitors had during exhibitions, pointing which aspects addressed by the NM they consider relevant in positive or negative terms. Besides being spontaneous, the opinions written on the guestbook permit a free expression of the visitors' feelings about the exhibitions as they do not have to be signed or

identified, keeping the visitors' personal identities anonymous. At the same time, visitors can spontaneously identify themselves when they want to make public that they have a particular opinion as an individual. The guestbook integrates the exhibition itself and is available for public consultation. The public character of the exhibitions and the guestbook as well as a specific authorization for photographing<sup>28</sup> made this analysis possible without infringing ethic or legal issues. Although some opinions are signed and identified, this analysis will keep visitors' identity anonymous, simply indicating when they were signed.

The content of the guestbook can, therefore, indicate how visitors of the NM agree or contest national contents based on individual agencies. The guestbook was accompanied until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2012. A great amount of expressions signed on the guestbook contain only name and city of visitors. Especially for visitors from small cities in remote regions of the Czech Republic writing their place of origin seems to be a way of expressing that although they are not from Prague they came to see the NM, publicly marking their individual participation and insertion of their cities in the national community. In addition, several expressions are limited to stating 'We have been here', 'It was interesting' or 'We liked it'.

However, for the purpose of analyzing visitors' agency, more significant opinions were selected to be quoted into 2 categories: those agreeing and those contesting specific contents of exhibitions, as listed in tables 2 and 3. It should be considered that, until the date the guestbook was analyzed, the main temporary exhibitions were 'Laboratory of Power' and 'Red Museums', which have questioned practices of the communist regime as previously analyzed, influencing visitors to express more about aspects of the communist past of the nation.

---

<sup>28</sup> The payment of a fee of 50 Czech crowns permits photographing all contents of exhibitions.

Table 2: Quotes agreeing with the exhibitions of the NM

*'We have been here. We liked the mausoleum. Signed'*

*'The exhibition was beautiful and instructive. It was interesting'.*

*'Communists are swines'*

*'Everyone should see the communist obligations. Signed'*

*'Death to the communists'*

*'Those years nobody can return to us. Those that communists took from us'.*

*'Karel Kryl: Close the Door, Little Brother'<sup>29</sup>*

*'It's a pity that we experienced those 40-50 years. For young people it is like for us the First World War. It's a big, big pity that we let that now influence. PS: My grandfather also produced clothes and bread in the concentration camp. That was all surely for Nazism'.*

*'Today people who are 30 years old don't remember and it's even more difficult to imagine if you are 15 years old. This is the case of visitors of this exhibition. In the year 1989 I was in the first year of primary school and I am the only one who remembers these red notice-boards and polystyrene letters. Thank you that this exhibition exists for understanding depth and horror'.*

*Signed.*

*'Sad part of the history of this Republic. The "funny" exhibits on the corner on the wall made me sad'. [reference to posters and guns shown in picture 7]*

*Signed. 30 years old.*

Guestbook of the NM

<sup>29</sup> Popular song from 1968 by Karel Kryl.

Table 3: Quotes contesting the exhibitions of the NM

*'It was interesting. Cool story, bro, but it is not true'*

*'It's a pity that Gottwald is not here'*

*'With the Soviet Union and never otherwise' [Communist symbol of hammer and sickle drawn].*

*'This is a horrible exhibition. It's so bad that there could be no worse again. Signed as Klement Gottwald'.*

*'Never say never. Used to lie, lied and will lie. Cultural workers and scholarship always adapted themselves to the regime, even today. They feared communism during 50 years of the regime, during normalization feared expulsion and punishment, today they fear unemployment. Ps: in the Middle Ages they feared inquisition'. Signed and email address.*

*'It was not all that bad [in communist times]. There were no junkies, homeless people nor fees for doctors. At home we were only Czechs and no Ukrainians or Vietnamese people'.*

Guestbook of the NM

The richness of the guestbook as an ethnographic source of research show that, in the same perspective as the heterogeneity of groups occupying external areas of the NM, visitors attending permanent and temporary exhibitions cannot have their reactions generalized. The variety of opinions in tables 2 and 3 shows that the NM offers a single official version of the Czech national history that may not be accepted by everyone. Those who accept the narratives of the NM establish a process of reproduction of the nation influenced by the power of knowledge production that national constructions assume towards the public. For example, the demonization of communist past identified in subtitle 4.3.4 became reproduced in people's way of understanding in table 2.



However, a second category of comments show that some individuals express their agency in opposition to the official version presented, relating the anti-communist forms of representations of the exhibitions to their personal experiences and memories, which they assume as reality. The exhibition is therefore understood by these individuals expressing their agency as an artificial contemporary construction. This is a clear example of how national cultural productions are constructed and selective as they do not actually represent what people think or feel, although they have the power to influence public memory in national terms.

In addition, more complex opinions show that, resisting the narrative of the NM does not mean resisting the construction of the nation itself. For example, the last opinion listed in table 3 shows that one of the visitors does not agree with the anti-communist character of the exhibition as he points some positive aspects of the totalitarian regime, such as the availability of free medical treatment and the lack of homeless people, while it is also added as a positive aspect of the communist regime the lack of foreigners, assuming a nationalistic and xenophobic position.

It can be concluded, that, although some visitors may not agree with the national narrative presented, the forms of resistance identified are based on different individual perceptions about the nation, but the nation as a category is not challenged. The entire discussion about aspects of the nation such as history, identity and memory proposed by the NM can be plural; however, the nation as a strong social category continues to be reproduced. That is a way how national cultural productions reproduce nations contemporarily, they may assume innovative critical perspectives also in line with values such as democracy and freedom, but they do not lose their role in the insertion of particular national forms into everyday lives.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The review of historical backgrounds of the construction of a national monument on Vítkov Hill has demonstrated that, besides external factors such as foreign occupation and wars commonly used by nationalists for defending the establishment of nationalizing policies, competing nationalist discourses about culture since the 19<sup>th</sup> century have delayed the project of Czech inhabitants of Prague to concretize their national cultural boundaries beyond language. The accounts offered by historians such as Macura (1998) show that the construction of a Czech NM had no consensus among the Czech speaking population, political and intellectual elite. This historical position is in accordance with modernist theories of nationalism that contested nations as results of natural cultural divisions existing among people, emphasizing selection processes of popular features to be constructed as national. The discussions about form and content of the NM on Vítkov Hill and the failed public competitions for an ideal monument exemplify how nationalist projects are selective and exclusionist as the variety of cultural voices is not homogeneous.

The construction of monuments is usually considered as a strong form of concretization of national contents that define the nation itself, such as history, identity and memory. Once monuments are constructed, their materiality makes national contents look real and become taken for granted. However, the case of the Czech NM has an outstanding storyline of mutability and political adaptations that make even clearer that national culture cannot be assumed as a fixed or natural category, but is a product of political negotiations that can have its materiality contextually challenged. This perspective deconstructs, therefore, explanations adopted by ethnosymbolist theorists of nationalism such as Smith (1986). Although this study accounted for rituals and symbols, they are not sociologically relevant because they carry bounded identities as ethnosymbolists proposed, but because they are performed in ways that negotiate meanings and forms of understandings.

The history of the NM has accompanied interests and ideologies of different political regimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The reconstruction of a new version of the NM in 2009 shows that also in contemporary Czech Republic the place goes through adaptations to attend current views of national contents. During the 1990's, Vítkov Hill was abandoned and researchers (Witkovsky, 2000; Bartlová, 2011) concluded that the artificiality of the NM and its contradictory representations would not have space in a free and democratic Czech society created after the Velvet Revolution. Nevertheless, the state administration, through the cognitive power of the institution of the National Museum, which has the legitimacy for negotiating the authenticity of Czech national culture, has revived Vítkov Hill as a major contemporary symbol of the nation by defending the 'original' project of the First Republic and combating the communist legacy of the monument. The NM was officially transformed for celebrating and honouring the national existence, for performing rituals and fetishisms typical of a civic religion (Rousseau cited by Bellah, 1967), for remembering and forgetting controversial aspects of collective memory for the construction of a victorious and normalized national present, and for pursuing the consumption of a new Czech nation that awakes medieval historical figures such as Jan Žižka, reinforces national connections to the First Republic and denies the communist past.

Trying to overcome mainstream studies of nationalism, this research was not restricted to the analysis of the cultural production of the nation in the NM. Although the new policies adopted by the National Museum can be described as nationalist attempts to construct a new version of the nation (connected to historical heroisms and opposed to communist ideology), the mere cultural production does not prove that national contents become sociologically relevant among people in everyday life. Therefore, forms of consumption and occupation of the NM by visitors have been considered as processes completing the discourses initialized by national cultural productions as well as contesting them. The ethnographic data collected by this research shows that a 'national behaviour' cannot be generalized from the variety of

interactions visitors establish with the NM. Although, certain social groups perform particular practices that demonstrate how they deal with the presence of the constructed nation on the landscape. The interactions described show that the NM cannot be understood sociologically only in terms of memory as commonly concluded by studies of national monuments that follow the research agenda of Nora (1992). Reflexions upon memory are also present among people consuming the NM, however, other performativities even considered subversive for the official ceremonial environment constructed by the architecture of the NM innovate in creating everyday forms of national socialization, such as the practice of sports and individual hobbies that end up being described in national terms. In conclusion, it does not mean that Czechs strongly adopt national identity or emphasize it as part of their beings, but understanding national identity as constructed ideas, inter-subjective attitudes and behavioural dispositions as proposed by De Cillia (1999) and reviewed in subtitle 2.1, a Czech national identity becomes lively in settings like the NM, where constructed national contents become the environment for people's banal practices.

It is precisely the connection of individual practices with the idea of a national environment imposed by the massive structure of the NM that offers an innovative understanding about how national forms of understanding survive in the era of globalization overemphasized by postmodernist theorists. In this perspective the research agenda inspired by the work of Billig (1997) towards the study of nationalism in everyday life has proved to be a rich source for new understandings. The findings described by this research serve therefore to expand this research agenda, offering a concrete case study that sustains the theoretical proposition of Fox (2008, p. 550) when considering that "ordinary people are not simply uncritical consumers of the nation; they are simultaneously its creative producers through everyday acts of consumption. [...] Consumption constitutes, reinforces and communicates social membership". The creativity of ordinary people in reproducing the nation through forms of cultural consumption can make even practices apparently subversive

be inserted under the umbrella of the nation. The aspect of nationalism that permits its reproduction in the contemporary world is its interactivity and capacity of combining heterogeneous forms of existence (or dimensions as proposed by Yuval, 1996) under a larger homogeneous form of understanding, making the nation a difficult category to be culturally deconstructed in everyday life.

Word count: 27.211

## 6. SUMMARY

The research agenda proposed by Billig (1995), Palmer (1998) and Fox (2008) instigates towards the study of aspects of everyday life through which nations are reproduced, this work approaches the National Memorial on Vítkov Hill, part of the Czech National Museum in Prague. Formulating the theoretical research question ‘to what extent national cultural productions constrain people’s practices and understandings’, this research develops an ethnographic study of the production and consumption of the monument, considering practices of consumption and occupation that reproduce, subvert or negotiate its national content and planned functions. The National Memorial on Vítkov Hill combines memorial, museum, statue and park, which had their meanings re-negotiated by different political regimes during the 20th century. Re-opened in 2009 aiming to adapt national history, identity and memory to the context of a new, democratic and European Czech Republic, the monument combines official ceremonies, such as military parades and presidential rituals, with permanent and temporary exhibitions with strong national features. Although planned to celebrate the nation, the exhibitions are consumed by some visitors that agree and some that contest the national narratives presented. The space planned for military parades and national rituals is occupied in everyday life by different social groups with characteristic practices such as elderly people, parents with children and youngsters that complement or change the official national landscape constructed by the National Memorial. The findings of this research indicate that the concept of cultural consumption is valuable for approaching forms of individual agency, which can be analyzed in relation to national cultural productions as ways of negotiating national contents. In conclusion, it is proposed that the success of nationalizing constructions depends on their capacity of merging different individual expressions under homogenizing national boundaries.

## 7. REFERENCES

- Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities*, Revised edition. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, A. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Babbie, S. 2004. *The practice of social research*. 10 ed. Belmont: Thompson
- Bartlová, M. 2011. *Národ, stát a oficiální místo paměti. Národní památník na Vítkově. Historické fenomény a rizika jejich instrumentalizace*. Collegium Bohemicum
- Bellah. 1967. *Civic religion in American way of life*. Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
- Billig, M. 1997. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage.
- Blaikie, N. 2007. *Approaches to Social Inquiry*. 2 ed. Cambridge: Polity
- Bryman, A. 2008. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Butler, J. 1993. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Cavallaro, D. 2001. *Critical and Cultural Theory*. London: Athlone press.
- Crane, S. 1997. *Memory, distortion, and history in the museum*. History and Theory Vol. 36, No. 4, Dec., 1997 Wesleyan University: Blackwell Publishing
- Croucher, S. 2003. *Perpetual Imagining: Nationhood in a Global Era*. International Studies Review 5, 1–24. Miami University
- Česká Televize. 2009. *Národní muzeum zbavilo památník na Vítkově Gottwaldova prokletí*. Available at: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz>. Accessed: March 2011.
- Česká Televize. 2009. *Armádní speciál přivezl ostatky neznámého vojína z bitvy u Zborova*. Available at: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz>. Accessed: September 2011.
- Česká Televize. 2011. *Ruda Muzea*. Available at: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz>. Accessed: September 2011.
- Česká Televize. 2011. *Oslavy 28. října: Kladení věnců, přehlídka, vyznamenání*. Available at: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz>. Accessed: September 2011.
- Česká Televize. 2011. *Žižka i jeho kuň opět v plném lesku*. Available at: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz>. Accessed: November, 2011.
- Česká Televize. 2011. *Žižka v novém světle*. Available at: <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz>. Accessed: November 2011.
- Coombes, A. 1988. *Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities*. Source: Oxford Art Journal, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 57-68.

- Czech army official website. 2009. *Národní památník na Vítkově byl slavnostně otevřen*. Available at: [www.mocr.army.cz](http://www.mocr.army.cz). Accessed: October 2011.
- De Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The practice of everyday life*. Los Angeles: University of California press.
- De Cillia, R., Reisigl, M. and Wodak, R. 1999. *The Discursive Construction of National Identities*, Discourse and Society, vol. 10, no. 2.
- Denscombe, M. 2007. *The Good Research Guide: for small-scale social research*. 3 ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press
- Fox, J. E. 2006. *Consuming the nation: Holidays, sports, and the production of collective belonging*, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 29: 2, 217 — 236.
- Fox, J.E. and Miller-Idriss, C. 2008. *Everyday nationhood*, Ethnicities vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 536-63. SAGE Publications. Available at: <http://etn.sagepub.com/content/8/4/536>
- Gellner, E. 1996. *Nations and Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guide for visitors. 2011. *National Memorial on Vitkov Hill*. Available at Reception. Printed.
- Hall, S. 1997. *Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Culture, Media And Identities Series. SAGE Publications
- Handler, R. 1994. *Is 'identity' a useful cross-cultural concept? In: John R. Gillis (ed.), Commemorations. The politics of national identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.27-40.
- Hanson, N. 2007. *Unknown soldier: the story of the missing of the great war*. Vintage, Random House Inc.
- Harvey, D. 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T. (eds) 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hoggart, S. 2006. *President of the plains*. The Guardian, Saturday 23 December
- Holy, L. 1996. *The little Czech and the great Czech nation*. Cambridge University press
- Idnes news. 2009. *Přiveďte sem školáky i vojáky, vyzval Klaus při otevření památníku na Vítkově*. Available at: [www.idnes.cz](http://www.idnes.cz). Accessed: September 2011-February 2012.
- Jameson, F. 1984. *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. New Left Review 146:53–92.
- Kidder, L. H. 1981. Selltitz, Wrightsman and. *Cook's Research methods in social relations*. (4th ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Kirchberg, Volker. 2007. *Cultural Consumption Analysis: Beyond Structure and Agency. Cultural Sociology*. Sage publications. Available at: <http://cus.sagepub.com/content/1/1/115>



- Leach, N. 2005. *Towards a Theory of Identification with Place*. In Hillier, Habitus: a sense of place. London: Ashgate
- Lyotard, J. 1986. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Lidovky news. 2009. *Opravený Národní památník na Vítkově stojí na křižovatkách*. Available at: <http://www.lidovky.cz>. Accessed: September 2011.
- Macdonald, S. 2004. *Theorizing museums: an introduction*. In: Macdonald, Sharon; Fyfe, Gordon (ed.). *Theorizing museums: representing identity and diversity in a changing world*. P. 1-14. Oxford: Backwell Publishers, 2004.
- Macdonald, S. 2011. *Expanding museum studies: an introduction*. In: Macdonald, Sharon (ed.). *A companion to museum studies*. Oxford: Backwell Publishers.
- Macura, Vladimír. 1998. *Problems and paradoxes of the national revival*. In: Teich, M (org.) *Bohemia in History*. 1998 Cambridge University Press
- Mookherjee, N. 2011. *The aesthetics of nations: anthropological and historical approaches*. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S.)*, S1-S20
- National Memorial official website (NM website). *National Museum*. Available at: <http://www.nm.cz> Accessed: September 2011-February 2012
- Nora, P. 1992. *Lieux de memoire*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Novinky. 2011. *Na Vítkově opět stojí zrestaurovaný Žižka*. Available at: <http://www.novinky.cz>. Accessed: November 2011.
- Özkirimli, U. 2003. *The nation as an artichoke? A critique of ethno-symbolist interpretations of nationalism*, *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 9, no. 3
- Presidential website of Vaclav Klaus. 2009. *Proslov prezidenta republiky při otevření Národního památníku na Vítkově*. Available at: [www.klaus.cz](http://www.klaus.cz). Accessed: October 2011.
- Paces, C. 2009. *Prague Panoramas: national memory and sacred place in the twentieth century*. University of Pittsburgh Press
- Prague official portal. 2009. *Národní památník na Vítkově se otevírá*. Available at: [www.praha.eu](http://www.praha.eu). Accessed: September 2011.
- Praha1. 2009. *Starosta se zúčastnil slavnostního otevření Národního památníku na Vítkově*. Available at: <http://www.praha1.cz>. Accessed: September 2011.
- Český rozhlas news. 2012. *Laborator moci na vitkove varuje pred totalitou*. Available at: <http://www.rozhlas.cz> Accessed: February 2012.
- Seale, Clive. 2004. *Researching Society and Culture*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: SAGE publications
- Singleton, Royce; Straits, Bruce. 2005. *Approaches to social research* by (4th Edition, 2005). Publisher: Oxford University Press
- Smith, A. 1986. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

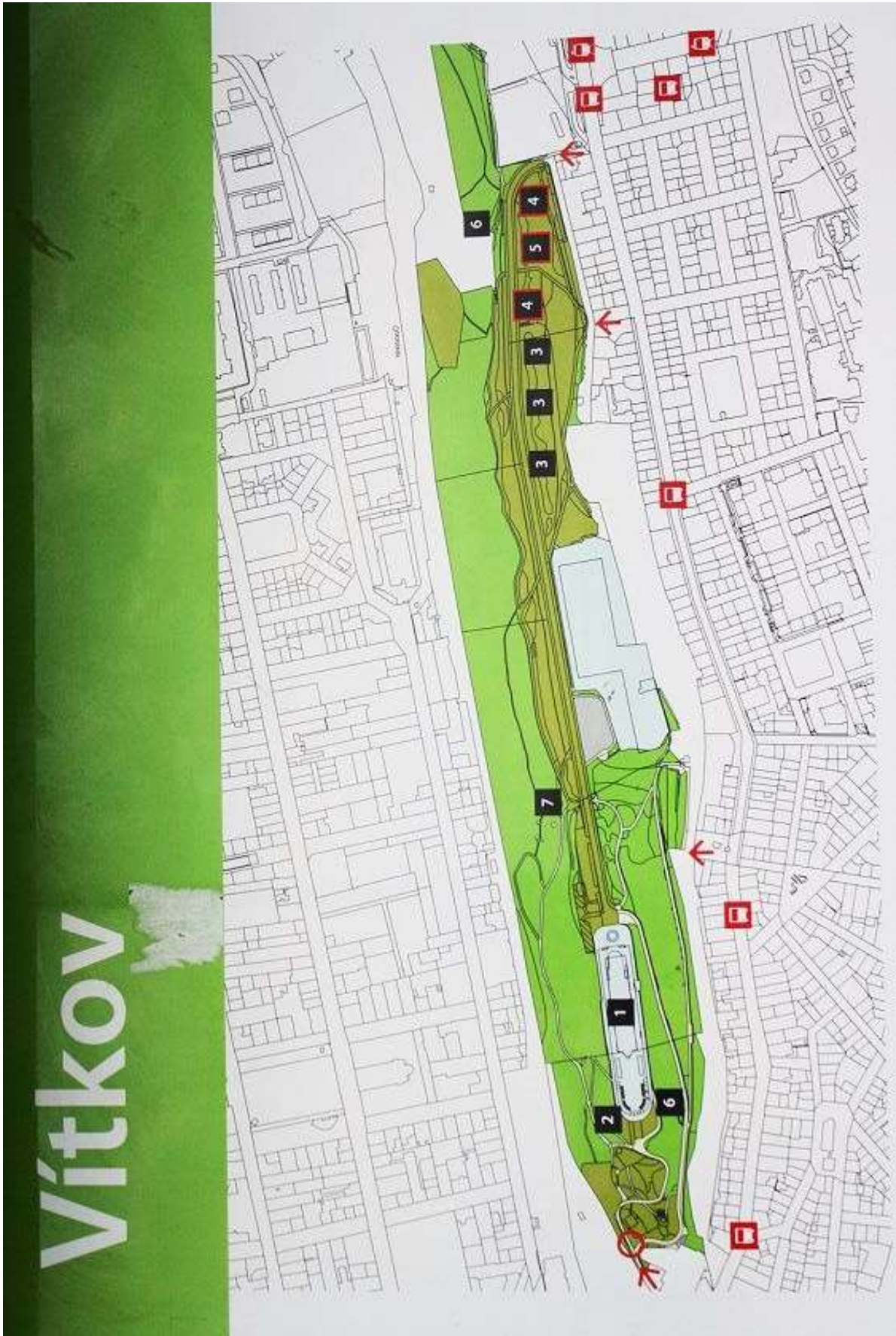
- Stake, R. 1995. *The art of case study research*. London: SAGE publications
- Steiner, C. 1995. *Museums and politics of nationalism*. *Museum Anthropology* 19(2): 3-6. American Anthropological Association.
- Verney, Victor. 2009. *Bohumil Kafka: Jan Zizka monument*. L'Université de Montréal, *Erudit*, Espace Sculpture, n° 89, 2009, p. 45-46.
- Wertsch, J.V. 2002. *Voices of Collective Remembering*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- White, G.M. 1997. *Museum/Memorial/Shrine: National Narrative in National Spaces*. *Museum Anthropology*, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 8-26.
- Wingfield, N. 2007. *Flag Wars and Stone Saints: how the Bohemian lands became Czech*. Harvard University Press
- Witkovsky. 2001. *Truly Blank: The Monument to National Liberation and Interwar Modernism in Prague*, *Umění* 49, 2001, s. 42–60.
- Witkovsky, S. 2000. *Tales of an Absent Monument*. Available at: <http://www.art-omma.org>. Accessed: September 2011.
- Yuval-Davis, N. 1996. *Gender and Nation*. London: Sage – chapters 1 and 4

## ANNEXES

### List of Annexes

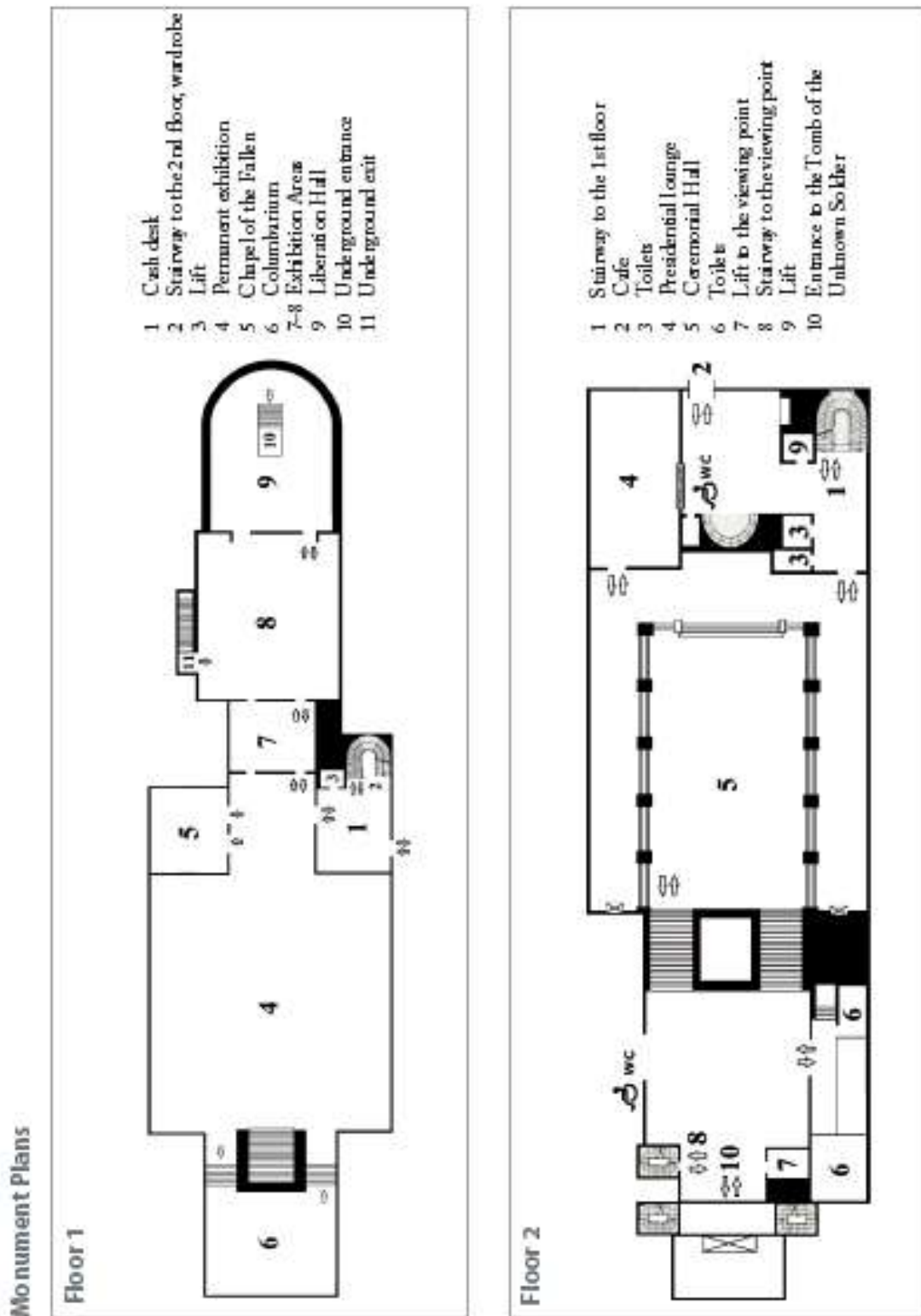
1. ANNEX: Map at the entrance of Vítkov Park
2. ANNEX: Map of the internal area of the National Memorial
3. ANNEX: Guide and national game for children
4. ANNEX: Photographs taken for content analysis of guestbook available at NM

1. ANNEX: Map at the entrance of Vítkov Park



\*1 - National Memorial. Photo by author

2. ANNEX: Map of the internal area of the National Memorial



Guide for visitors available at the reception of the NM.

### 3. ANNEX: Guide and national game for children



## Tajuplná cesta Památníkem

Věděli jste, že místa a budovy mohou vyprávět příběhy? Národní památník na Vítkově v sobě jeden takový příběh ukrývá. Staňte se badateli a vydejte se po stopách minulosti.

#### Jak to vše začalo?

Kopec Vítkov, na jehož vrcholu byl Památník postaven, se významně zapsal do dějin v létě roku 1420. Proběhla zde památná bitva na Vítkově, v níž se střetla vojska křižáků s husity, v jejichž čele stál slavný husitský vojevůdce Jan Žižka z Trocnova.

Osud Památníku, který byl postaven dle návrhu architekta Jana Závorky v letech 1928-1948, se začal psát po roce 1918, kdy byla vyhlášena Československá republika. Původním účelem stavby bylo oslavení legionářské tradice a uložení ostatků legionářů (vojáků z 1. světové války). Zášahem dějinných událostí se však toto nenaplnilo a s nástupem komunismu se v 50. letech Památník stal pohřebištěm představitelů KSČ a v roce 1953 v něm bylo vybudováno Mauzoleum Klementa Gottwalda.

Prozkoumejte Památník a zjistěte odpovědi na následující otázky.

Stopy našeho mamuta a plánky Vám pomohou.



K jakému účelu měla původně sloužit Slavnostní síň?

.....



Kdo měl být původně pohřben v Kapli padlých?

.....



Kdo je znázorněn na reliéfech Karla Pokorného v rozích Ústřední síně?

.....



K čemu v minulosti sloužilo Kolumbárium?

.....



Jaká významná osobnost měla být původně pohřbena v Hlavní síni?

.....



Kam vede schodiště v Síni osvobození?

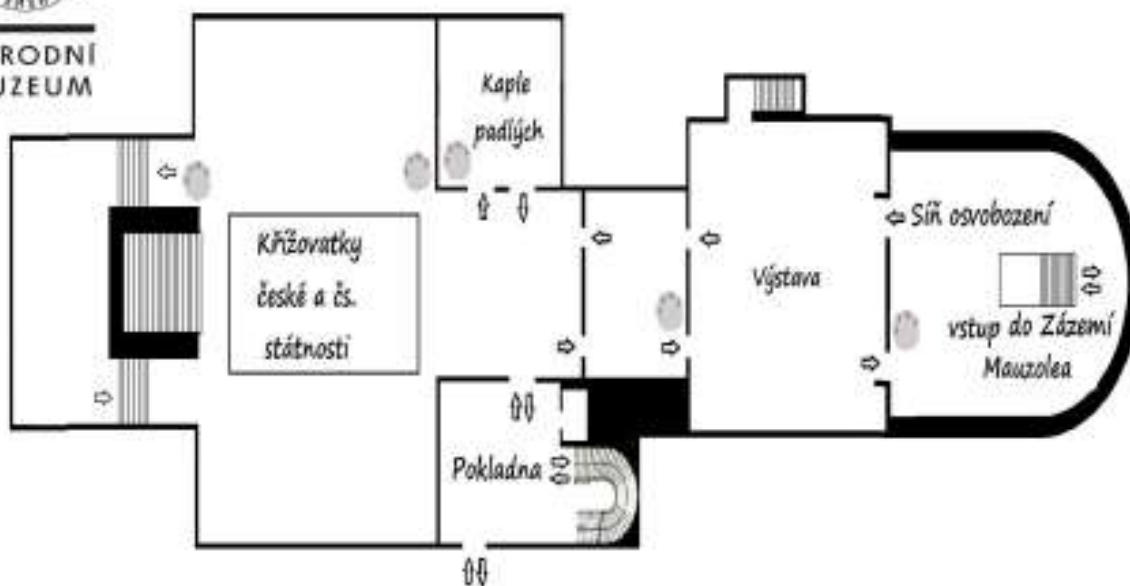
.....



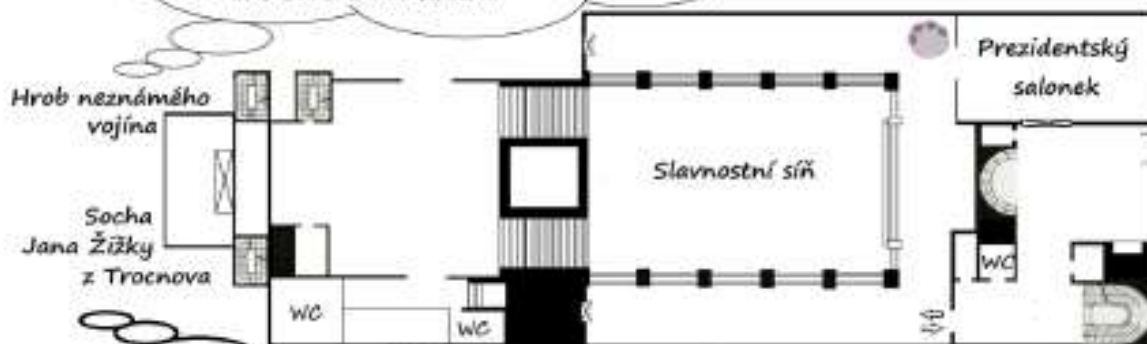


NÁRODNÍ  
MUZEUM

## Kudy tudy?



Hrob neznámého vojína představuje výraz díky vojákům padlých v boji. Jsou zde uloženy ostatky neznámého vojína, který padl v bitvě u Zborova a ostatky vojína od Dukly. Od roku 2006 je zde pohřben generál Alois Eliáš s manželkou.



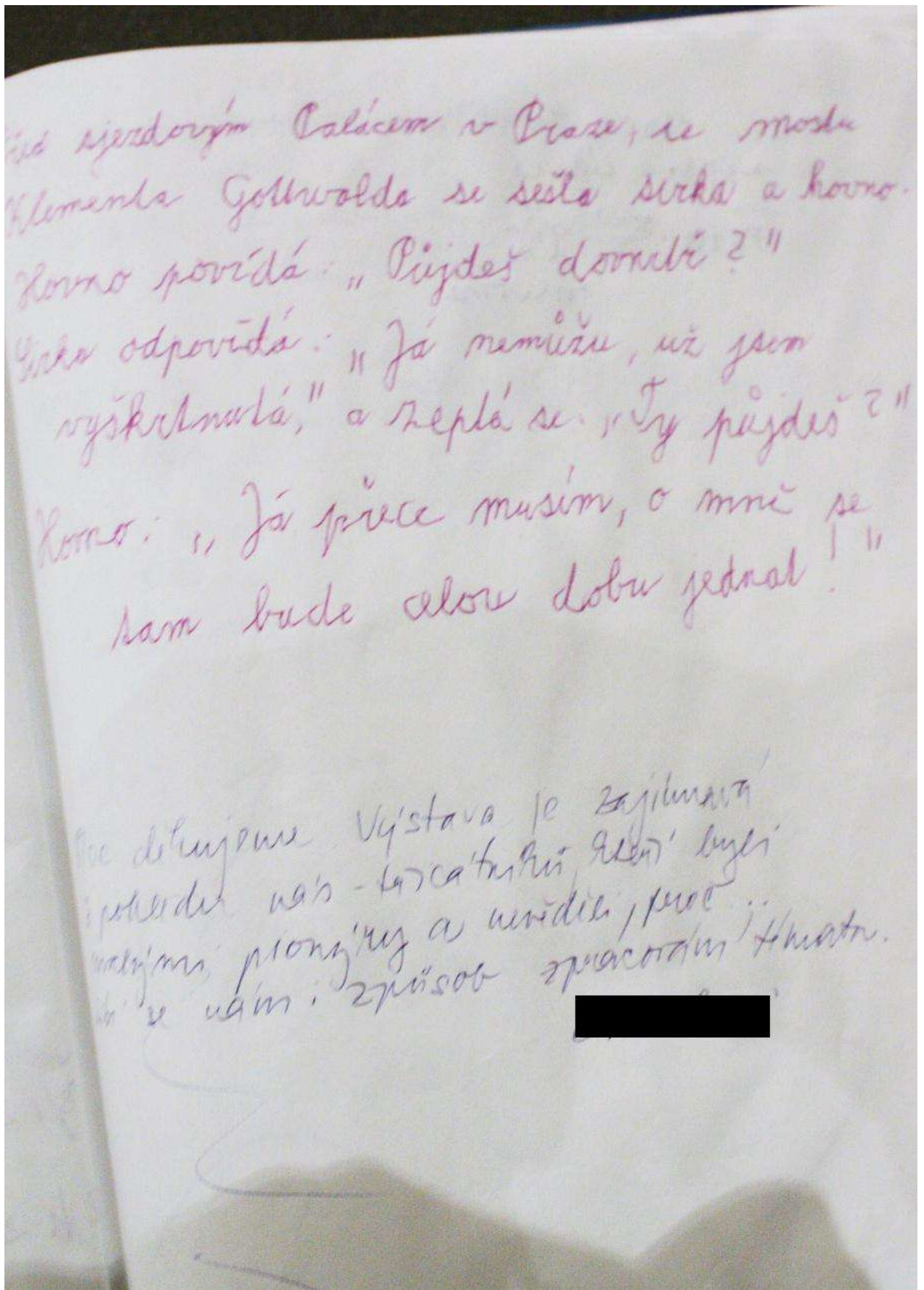
V čele Památníku se nachází největší jezdecká socha ve střední Evropě - Jan Žižka z Trocnova. Sochař Bohumil Kafka na modelu sochy pracoval v letech 1931 - 1941. Krátce po jeho dokončení zemřel. Socha byla slavnostně odhalena 14.7.1950, v den výročí bitvy na Vítkově.

Národní muzeum, Národní památník na Vítkově, U Památníku 190 00, Praha 3  
[mod@nmz.cz](mailto:mod@nmz.cz), tel. 222 781 676



Available at national playground

4. ANNEX: Photographs taken for content analysis of guestbook available at NM





# JE TO NEJHORŠÍ VÝSTAVA A HORŠÍ UŽ SNAD NIKDY NEBUDE

Klement Gottwald

Děkujeme za zajímavou výstavu + info

K+S+)

Dne 11.2.2012

Jan + Robin

Bylo to velmi dobře.

ke hromadnému napísa "Někdejší nikdy!"  
Shalo se, lže se a buď se lhat! Pracovníci  
kultury a školství se přizpůsobovali všelijak  
lép režimu a je to vlny. Za komunismu  
se bali v 50. letech vězněno, za normalizace  
vyhazováno a posíláno pátoměr, dnes se bál  
o místo (nejspíš ani to u lopaty) a bál se  
byla nahrazena debilní a amoralní

PS se sbělohájen se zase bali vato sulk-  
vixice.

Tak jak bylo rozhodnuto s jedním z audiencí a tímto  
uřízání (EB, odpodem 70. léta) : Druhá část byla si  
bylo události nepaměti a ještě lepší je představit  
si to u patřičných " (nebo podobně) ...  
je to tak i s mým případem a <sup>se stala</sup> vzrušené navštívit  
tuto expozice. Možná jsem s ní dobře, s roce  
89 jen byla s 1. křídla, jediné, co si pamatuji, jsem  
byl rudi' mástičky a podyky, což je plomena... O čina  
dítě...

Tak napadá návštěvníci o stane, jinde mnoh -  
díky, JE DOBRĚ, ŽE TAKOVÉ EXPOZICE  
EXISTUJÍ : jen pro ně musí člověk dozrát, aby  
pochopil hodnotu a "význam".

Monika



I LOVE

laboratoř je strašidelná :-)

AT CHCÍPNOM KOMUNISTI!

25.2.2012

MOC SE MĀM TU LÍBĪLO

25.2.2012

ŠKODA ŽE TU NEMÍGOTNALO.

TOH TO BYLA SUINĚ SUINUP

26.2.2012

Výstava je krásná a zajímavá!

Byla to zajímavá

krásná výstava

lajda 9 let

líbilo se mi tu

K. Býgl

„Bratříčku zavírej rohlík...“

Škoda že kloblík nezarábí 40-50 Kč lidí.

Pro mladší je to jako pro nás 1. svět.  
válka.

Velká, velká škoda že jsme nechtěli  
srdě rychle dopravit

P.S. Můj dědeček je v koncentraci  
také „vyrobí“ šarpy z chleba.  
To ovšem bylo za nacismu, že...

15. 2. 12 12

Moc pěkně

Je SSSR a nikdy jindy!



PAPUŠKA, HEND - výskum je melis roji mohol

12. 4. Samotná cista dojni toto Pop. tr. J. 3. 0. 2

"Mach" export se konala mosti mliec na

mi kubi samohl.

Nebylo vše tak kle' - nebyli tets'ci,  
izeedomovei a ani poplatky u k'kare.  
Dom a isme t4 byli my c'c'ci a  
ne Ukrajnici a Vietnameci.

čid -  
Klem  
Hov  
Girko  
Hov  
Hov  
Hov  
Hov  
Hov

XD  
byde jime  
Aadya  
masakum sa mes libito  
čestně

KOMUNISTI 1500  
HOVADA 0

Handwritten signature and scribbles

Chytání...  
[redacted]

28.1.2013  
FRIDAY 11:00

Boh time to a...  
[redacted]

Handwritten signature  
[redacted]

25.1.2013

