



Foundation History of Totalitarian Regimes and their victims. Why?

Dictators who control every aspect of public and private life and who suppress and kill people is a fading memory of the distant past and far away. Fortunately, in The Netherlands this situation ended almost seventy years ago. But not everywhere in Europe people were as fortunate. Take for instance the countries of the former communist bloc in Eastern Europe. For them it is only 25 years ago that they got more freedom. Moreover, not yet everywhere. In Belarus people are still imprisoned

– or worse – because they refuse to do what dictator Viktor Lukashenko demands. Elsewhere old communists try to fight back.

The foundation ‘*History Totalitarian Regimes and Their Victims*’ (SGTRS = Stichting Geschiedenis Totalitaire Regimes en hun Slachtoffers) wants to draw attention to this situation. Freedom is not self-evident. One has to fight for it. This can be done with words, arguments and by remembering frightening examples from the past. The SGTRS attempts to do so. In particular it wants to raise the awareness among the youth of the dangers of totalitarian regimes, whether they were left or right, communists or fascist.

The SGTRS cooperates with other like-minded organizations in the ‘Platform of European Memory and Conscience’. The SGTRS is *founding member* of this Platform; a European umbrella organisation which comprises 48 member organizations (this number is growing) from 13 EU countries and Canada, USA, Iceland, Ukraine and Moldova. It is not by coincidence that most members are from countries in eastern Europe. They still have the most vivid memories of totalitarianism.

In its own country the SGTRS is primarily engaged in the dissemination of reliable information, especially in education. In doing so, it draws upon the information from other members of the Platform. After all, we did not live under communist domination – they did! Or,



to put it differently, the SGTRS is the ambassador of the Platform.

In the short existence of the Platform much has already been achieved. In cooperation with other members the Platform has published a reader, 'Lest we forget', for pupils in secondary schools. This reader is a book with stories from people who have suffered under two totalitarian dictatorships: national socialism and communism. The SGTRS has also contributed to this reader. The book has been published in English, German, French and Czech. Translations in other languages are in the pipeline. The SGTRS is planning to bring out a Dutch translation.

Furthermore, the Platform, in cooperation with its partners, has organised a traveling exhibition, called 'Totalitarianism in Europe'. This exhibition consists of show panels with information about numbers of victims (deportations, mass murders) of the two totalitarian regimes: national socialism and communism. Two panels per country. Thus one can see how many victims these regimes have made. In addition, the Platform, aims at exposing the crimes of communism.

What is the purpose of all this? In our country we strive for real European unity. Of course not an imposed one. The SGTRS is convinced that unity based on interest in each others' history, the recent European history, and particularly the tragic history of the totalitarian powers, leads to real solidarity. Because without history and remembrance no identity! This does not only apply to individuals, but also to societies. Consequently also for Europe. We therefore applaud the program 'Europe for Citizens' which attempts to uncover European history with a view to building a European identity.

SGTRS is active in various European networks which are engaged in revealing recent European history. The Platform is such a network.

Finally, the SGTRS is a NGO with a minimal budget. This implies that it depends on donations from people who sympathize with its objectives and activities. Therefore we welcome donations to our foundation. If you would like to become a regular contributor, please contact us via our website (tab 'contact') or mail to sgtrs@sgtrs.nl. We will inform you of our activities by e-mail.



Members of the board of the SGTRS:

Ir Johann Grünbauer
Drs Klaas van der Horst
Dr Sybe Schaap

Official address:

Dr Mees ten Oeverlaan 29
3648 XA Wilnis

Office:

Facility Centre 'De Staalfabriek'
Venserweg 7
1112 AR Diemen (near Amsterdam)
Tel: +31655117696
E-mail: sgtrs@sgtrs.nl
website: www.sgtrs.nl

KvK 30281102
IBAN NL07 RABO 0154 8659 58
BIC RABONL2U



ANBI status
received



*PM,
SGTRS is primarily active in The Netherlands. That is why the website of SGTRS is only in Dutch. Those who can not read this language, we suggest to visit the website of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience (<http://www.pemc.eu/>).*