

FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
***Making the History of 1989* [Grant EE-50370-06]**

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Report covering the period from October 1, 2008, to March 31, 2009

Since receiving the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant in April 2006, the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University (CHNM) set out to create a web-based resource, *Making the History of 1989* (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989>). This online resource makes visible to teachers and students the events of 1989 and the processes by which historians turn those events into narratives, providing students with the sources and intellectual tools they need to be history makers rather than passive consumers of the past. The *Making the History of 1989* website creates the rich learning resource that CHNM promised to deliver in the proposal.

Over the last six months of this grant, we have continued to add content to *Making the History of 1989* and have rolled out an extensive publicity campaign. Content added since the last report includes: two teaching modules, two scholar interviews, one case study, and numerous finalized primary sources. Most notably, the publicity and growing popularity of the project has resulted in the increased use of the project by over 400 percent from the same time last year.

Primary Source Database

The largest feature of *Making the History of 1989* remains the substantial collection of high-quality, annotated primary sources (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/items/browse>), complimented by tools for analyzing and contextualizing these documents and images. All of the sources in this database are in English; original language versions are available for many as well. All primary sources have been annotated with head notes (150-word descriptions) that provide crucial contextualization for each source. The number of sources available in the database stands at 380, almost 100 more than originally proposed. We have also linked to the Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) and National Security Archives (NSA) digital collections within the bibliographic citations for relevant sources, helping visitors explore new lines of inquiry quickly and reliably on given topics.

Featured sources found in this database include:

- Photographs of Busts of Lenin
- Declaration of Charter 77
- Czechoslovak Anti-Charter 1977
- Environmental activism in the Soviet Union Poster
- Lech Walesa's Plan for the Roundtable Talks
- *Let's Go! Support Perestroika!* Poster
- Memorandum of Conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and HSWP General

- Minutes of Meeting of the PZRR CC Secretariat after Elections
- *Perestroika and the Changing Soviet Workforce* Poster
- Photographs of the St. Stanisław Kostka church in Warsaw
- “How to vote for Solidarity in Zoliborz,” Solidarity election Flier
- “High Noon, 4 June 1989,” Solidarity election Poster
- Thälmann Pioneer’s Shirt
- The Campaign to Save the Danube River Speech
- UN Security Council Letter on the Civil War in Yugoslavia

Teaching Modules

We have received, edited, and posted all six commissioned *Teaching Modules* on a variety of themes, topics, and geographic areas (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/teaching>). Each *Teaching Module* draws together eight to ten primary sources from the database centered upon important topics and provides a historical background essay that frames the problem, provides context, and addresses the challenges teachers face. In addition, each module offers strategies for teaching the topic, including discussion questions and possible answers. For high school teachers, each module offers a detailed lesson plan and document-based question, providing specific strategies for working with that set of primary sources.

Since the last report, we have added two modules: T. Mills Kelly, Associate Director of the Center for History and New Media and an Associate Professor in the Department of History and Art History at George Mason University wrote a *Teaching Module* about the role of economic factors in the events of 1989 entitled *Economies in Transition*. Irina Livezeanu, an Associate Professor at the University of Pittsburgh wrote a *Teaching Module* about Romania’s communist regime named *The Unique Experience of Romania*. Additional *Teaching Modules* topics include: *The Catholic Church in Poland*, *Everyday Life in Eastern Europe*, *Nationalities in the USSR*, and *Solidarity Comes to Power*.

Scholar Interviews

The multimedia *Scholar Interviews* (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/interviews>) address varying scholarly interpretations, including attention to how interpretations have changed in recent years as scholars access new archival materials formerly closed to researchers. Bradley Abrams (Czechoslovakia), Maria Bucur (Romania), Padraic Kenney (Poland), Vladimir Tismaneanu (Romania and Poland), and Gale Stokes (Yugoslavia) are all prominent scholars of East European studies and most were in the region just before or during the events of 1989. They describe their personal experiences, changing interpretations, research challenges, and the key moments as they see them. These interviews model how they analyze different types of primary sources (found in the project database) and make visible the often invisible processes by which scholars use primary sources and create historical narratives. Interview excerpts may be viewed by

scholar or by theme, such as *Personal Experiences*, *Changing Interpretations*, *Research Challenges*, *Key Moments*, and *Teaching and Learning*.

The most recent interviews, added to the project since the last report, include Woodrow Wilson Center Fellow Vladimir Tismaneanu, professor at the University of Maryland, and notable historian Gale Stokes, Mary Gibbs Jones Professor of History, Emeritus, at Rice University whose books include: *Three Eras of Political Change in Eastern Europe*; *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*; and *From Stalinism to Pluralism: A Documentary History of Eastern Europe since 1945*. Their inclusion brings the total number of *Scholar Interviews* to five, one more than originally proposed.

Teaching Case Studies

Making the History of 1989 offers twelve *Teaching Case Studies* (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/casestudies>). Each case study explores issues involved in teaching specific sources in the high school and college classroom. They cover a wide variety of source materials and geographic concerns. The most recently completed case study, *Simulating the Velvet Revolution*, provides the opportunity for students to comprehend the process of the extraordinarily quick (and often peaceful) overthrow of various communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989. The simulation provides a powerful experiential study of how dissent can quickly cascade through a group, leading to fast, and dramatic, change. Other case studies include: *Consumerism in Poland*, *Reagan at the Brandenburg Gate*, *Memory in East Germany*, *Letter by the Bratislava Five*, *Czech Independence Day Speech*, *Humor as Resistance*, *Women in Romania*, *The Collapse of Yugoslavia*, *Remembering Tiananmen Square*, *Soviet Health Posters*, and *Surnames and Nationality*. These *Teaching Case Studies* exceed the ten originally proposed for the project.

Outreach

Publicity, outreach efforts, and word of mouth have led to a dramatic rise in the number of website visitors. The log numbers show that website traffic has increased by more than 400 percent in the past year, from 850 unique visitors per month to more than 6,000 unique visitors in the month of March, 2009.

The outreach plan has included a range of strategies to reach the diverse audiences of scholars, researchers, teachers and students who will find valuable and useful resources on the history of 1989. Publicity activities have included postcard mailings, advertisements, conference presentations and outreach tables, as well as general promotion via CHNM flyers and websites.

On two separate occasions, we mailed postcards to thousands of advanced placement high school teachers of World History, U.S. history, and Modern European history from

around the country and at overseas English-speaking schools. (*Please see Appendix A for enclosed postcard.*) The postcards were mailed in August 2008, just in time for the start of the fall semester 2008, and again in February 2009 to coincide with the teaching of 1989 in the US and world history curricula. After the first postcard mailing, the average number of unique visitors to the website doubled to 1,660. The second postcard mailing had similar success, increasing the utilization of the project by an average number of 4,139 monthly users. One final postcard mailing will go out this summer, in time for the beginning of the 2009-10 school year. We anticipate this last postcard mailing will further increase site traffic.

Since the last report, we have presented on *Making the History of 1989* to a range of audiences. These include:

- Mid-Atlantic World History Association annual conference (October 2008);
- American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies annual conference (November 2008);
- Slovak Embassy (November 2008);
- American Historical Association annual conference (January 2009);
- George Mason University (GMU) conference, “1989: Looking Back, Looking Forward,” attended by former Soviet President and Nobel Laureate Mikhail Gorbachev (March 2009); and
- New England Historical Association Annual Conference (April 2009).

Making the History of 1989 has a growing audience of teachers, students, and interested parties on the Internet. Links to the website continue to be added on research library resource lists and Wikipedia. (*For a list of many known websites that link to the project, please see Appendix B.*) The links that most often refer Internet users to *Making the History of 1989* reflect its use: general research via Google and Wikipedia, academic research through numerous university library and resource pages, and student use via teacher webpages or blackboard/college course management systems. Indeed, at the current rate of use, the project will exceed 70,000 users per year and this number will only increase with growing familiarity and continued use in classrooms across the country and overseas.

Feedback

CHNM receives a significant amount of positive feedback from users of the project, including a recent unsolicited email from Dr. Robert Moeller, Professor of History and Department Chair, University of California-Irvine. In addition, positive reviews have been circulating about *Making the History of 1989*. Please see Appendix C for reviews on the project by *Intute*, a service that offers reviews of the best Internet resources for education and research in Creative Arts and Humanities and the *Scout Report*, a blog from the College of Letters and Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison that is focused on research and development projects for scholars and researchers.

One long-term result of the success of *Making the History of 1989* is the clustering of new and diverse digital sources for the study of the events of 1989. Project staff receive regular requests from scholars, teachers, and research institutions to add sources to the database. Commonly, inquiries are made on the possibility of expanding the project's scope to include 1989 historical source collections related to other geographic areas of the world, such as China and South Africa. The George Bush Presidential Library in College Park Texas, the National Security Archives (NSA) in Washington D.C., and the Baker Institute at Rice University each have sources pertaining to 1989 events in China. In the event the project pursues this increased scope, funding will be necessary to prevent perpetrators from launching denial-of-service (DoS) attacks on CHNM servers (which hosts numerous historical web projects used by over twelve million people per year). Even without the expansion of the project's geographic scope, the potential for developing more educational materials for this project is very high. For example, additional *Teaching Modules* would ensure inclusion of every Eastern Europe country and additional trans-national themes. The interest by scholars, teachers, and archivists in developing these potential directions to the project is a testament to its current value which will sustain the project for many years to come.

Infrastructure

The digital infrastructure for the project ensures its long-term sustainability. *Making the History of 1989* utilizes the new *Omeka* web publishing platform developed by CHNM creative lead Jeremy Boggs and *Omeka* head developer Kris Kelly. *Omeka* is a free, standards-based, open-source web platform for publishing collections and exhibitions online. Designed specifically by CHNM for cultural institutions, enthusiasts, and educators and funded with a national leadership grant from IMLS, *Omeka* facilitates community building around collections and features a standardized Dublin Core metadata structure and standards-based design that is fully accessible and interoperable with other widely used collections management packages. This means that metadata for *Making the History of 1989* is standardized according to widely accepted library and archival standards and the front end website complies with WC3 and web accessibility standards, including section 508. It also means that the website is fully compatible with Zotero, CHNM's research management tool, currently in use by nearly 1,000,000 scholars and students worldwide. This *Omeka* platform, using Asynchronous JavaScript and XML (AJAX) and Cascading Style Sheets allows us to achieve our design goals and provide interactivity while ensuring a high level of accessibility.

Summary

We believe we have produced an engaging, persuasive and successful educational website that will significantly advance the understanding of the general public, scholars, history teachers, and history students concerning the events of 1989 and the ways in which that history is “made.” *Making the History of 1989* achieves our objectives of capitalizing on students’ habits of mind in the digital age while contextualizing the primary and secondary sources contained in the project. The website provides teachers with specific lessons and sources they need to grapple with complex topics in more expert ways. It provides much needed English language resources on the events in Eastern Europe in 1989 that are often difficult to find.

Making the History of 1989 will be the starting point for scholars, educators, and interested general visitors seeking more information about Eastern Europe, the fall of communism, and the events of 1989. Furthermore, by expanding the number of annotated primary sources, *Scholar Interviews*, and *Teaching Case Studies*, and by employing the latest web publishing and collections management technology, we have exceeded our goals and have assured the project’s reach and sustainability.

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Appendix B

Top Referring Websites to *Making the History of 1989*

- *UCL Library Services*, UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) Library, <http://www.ssees.ac.uk/histlink.htm>,
- *REESWeb*, a virtual library for Russian and Eastern European Studies lists the project under “The Fall of Communism,” <http://www.ucis.pitt.edu/reesweb/?q=search/node/fall%20of%20communism>
- *Russian & Eastern European History* resource page, University of Washington Libraries, <http://www.lib.washington.edu/subject/History/tm/russia.html>
- *WWW Virtual Library*, maintained by the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, <http://www.iisg.nl/w3vl/#newlinks>, 30 March 2009
- *Clio-Online* is a central Internet gateway for historical scholarship in teaching and research. Sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), http://www.clio-online.de/site/lang_en-US/mid_10638/ItemID_25289/returnTabID_1/75/Default.aspx, web directory
- *Europe in 1989 - in 2009: A New Europe* (in German), <http://www.1989-2009.at/?story=15>
- *European History Primary Sources (EHPS)* portal provides historians with an easily searchable index of websites that offer online access to primary sources on the history of Europe, <http://primary-sources.eui.eu/website/making-history-1989-fall-communism-eastern-europe>
- *The History Guide: Resources for historians*, <http://www.historyguide.org/resources.html>
- *Revolutions of 1989* Wiki entry, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutions_of_1989
- *1989* Wiki entry (in German), <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/1989>
- *Yugoslavia* Wiki entry, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugoslavia>
- *Soda fountain* Wiki entry, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soda_fountain
- *Fall of communism* Wiki entry, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_communism
- *Collapse of communism* Wiki entry, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collapse_of_Communism
- *Autumn of Nations* Wiki entry, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autumn_of_Nations
- *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* which contains a rich archive of texts, images, maps and audio and video materials from the Soviet era (1917-1991), <http://soviethistory.org/index.php?page=bibliography>
- *Fort Lewis College course management system*, <http://moodle.fortlewis.edu/>
- *Blackboard at Wayne University*, <http://blackboard.wayne.edu/wsuaauth/>
- *Mr. Dewberry's History Class website*, St. Johns, Florida, <http://www-bths.stjohns.k12.fl.us/teachers/derryb/>
- *Loughborough University Virtual Learning Environment*, <http://learn.lboro.ac.uk/>