

## [Reflections on a Ravaged Century Conference](#)

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Type:

Conference

Date:

November 7, 2017 to November 9, 2017

Location:

District Of Columbia, United States

Subject Fields:

Diplomacy and International Relations, Eastern Europe History / Studies, European History / Studies, Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, Russian or Soviet History / Studies

On November 8-9, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation is hosting a two-day conference in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, entitled, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*.

The first day of the conference will feature Congressional remarks and panel discussions dedicated to an examination of the connections between Marxist ideology and the political, economic, cultural, and foreign policy practices of the Soviet Union. Specifically, panels will discuss: how Marx's ideas are reflected in the revolutionary practice of the Bolsheviks and the establishment of the Soviet Union; the failure of Marxism as economic theory and the collapse of the Soviet Union; Soviet totalitarianism's war against the intermediary institutions and voluntary associations that compose civil society; and Soviet imperialism, the Captive Nations, and the Cold War.

The second day will feature Congressional remarks and panel discussions dedicated to an examination of the interrelatedness of Truth, Memory, and Justice in rendering an account of and coming to terms with the crimes of communist regimes. Specifically, panels will discuss: the scope of Soviet subversive activities abroad, the scale of communism's crimes at home, and the ideological hurdles that must be overcome in writing a true account of both; the importance of memory to reconciliation and justice and the danger of current attempts to whitewash the history of the Soviet era; and whether the legacy of the Soviet Union can be overcome and the Russian people finally be free.

As part of the pre-conference program, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation will host the premiere of *Women of the Gulag: A Documentary Film* as part of the Victims of Communism Centennial Commemoration. The screening will be held on November 7, 2017 at 4:00PM (location TBD).

*Women of the Gulag* is a documentary film inspired by Paul Gregory's book of the same name, which addressed a significant gap in the literature detailing the experience of life in the Gulag. While the experience of women prisoners shares much in common with that of their male counterparts, it nevertheless often diverged from it. Their connections to others, the relational aspects of their identities, often lie at the center of women's experiences and memories, and lead them to recount aspects of life in the Gulag not typically addressed in male accounts.

Filmed in Russia, Russian-American director Marianna Yarovskaya has spent five years on location

interviewing the “last survivors” of the Gulag. Yarovskaya selected six characters from different economic strata and regions, including “special settlers” from the Urals region, the daughter in law of the party boss of Abkhazia, an aspiring pianist from Moscow, Solzhenytsin’s personal secretary, and the survivor of a uranium mining camp. The film incorporates unique footage from former prison camps: Perm 36 in the Ural Mountains, Butugychag in Kolyma, and “North” and “West” camps in Chukotka. In each case, we learn about the survivors’ parents, the women’s own arrest and incarceration, and the difficult return to “civilian” life. The women are in their 80s and 90s, and their stories reflect the remarkable features which allowed them to survive.

As part of the screening, Yarovskaya and Gregory will introduce the film, which will be followed by a discussion with both.

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