

TO ALL MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO BECAME VICTIMS OF TOTALITARIAN REGIMES
ALL PEOPLE FIND SOMETHING PLEASANT IN LIFE. AND THAT HELPS THEM TO LIVE ON. IT IS TO
THIS THAT THEY RESORT WHEN THEY ARE AT THE END OF THEIR STRENGTH.

I MAY NOT ACKNOWLEDGE SOMETHING, BUT I NEED NOT SLANDER IT BECAUSE OF THAT, AND I
CANNOT DENY OTHERS THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE IN IT.

Albert Camus

inscription placed as a copper relief strip along the upper block of the memorial

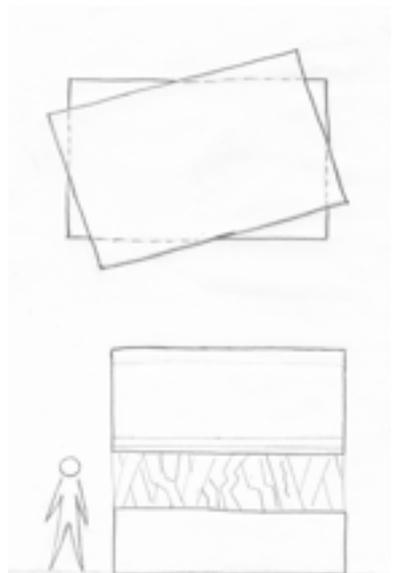
central idea

The entire memorial is proposed in such a way as to look like a giant press or jaws which are pressing a set of columns together with tremendous force and crushing them with their merciless weight and might. This might and mercilessness is expressed particularly by the upper block of the memorial. The upper and lower part of this imaginary press are a metaphor for the totalitarian regimes - they are huge and everything suffers under them. They have a clearly given order, which is also expressed by the complex shape of both blocks. They are two large rectangular blocks - i.e. shapes having clear boundaries, clear lines and they are absolutely exactly dictating and delimiting the space which they are filling, just as the totalitarian regimes very precisely dictated the life conditions and rules. Between both blocks people who suffered under these regimes are symbolically depicted as columns - the pillars of society.

rotation

The upper block of the memorial is slightly turned around its vertical axis passing through its centre. This slight rotation of the two blocks in relation to each other namely has several meanings to it. At the moment when you cannot destroy something anymore by compression, you can continue destroying in other directions, for example by breaking, friction (shifting) or by twisting. This is therefore a further direction of destruction of society by the totalitarian regime and it is an accentuation of totalitarian brutality. At the same time however it represents the resistance of people who suffer under the regime, who are not getting ready to give up just like that, to get crushed or stamped into the ground and who are trying to stand up against the regime in some way and to intervene - it was such people who were crushed by totalitarianism the most. The rotation also gives the memorial an optic dynamism so that it does not feel like a huge monolith.

Beside its rotation, the upper block is placed in such a height that a person can see its lower side - at such a height that those who are viewing the memorial should also feel the pressure which is acting is so powerfully on the columns below.



pressure

The pressure is acting on the columns, damaging them in various ways. Some have been broken by the pressure, others bent and cracked, others only bent or twisted but they have remained without cracks. Once again it is an image of how the pressure of totalitarianism impacted the people below - some of them it broke, others it killed, suffocated, others it sent to the gas chambers and burnt them, others it left to die of hunger, shot them and God knows what else. Many people survived after all these sufferings of totalitarianism, but they carried away their bruises - these are the cracks, weathered holes, partly broken columns... The regime also destroyed the reputation of many of them, twisted their characters - those are the columns slanted or twisted by pressure. The regime banned its outcasts to the fringes of society - some of the columns are standing alone away from the others. The regime divided society - the columns are sometimes in small groups closer to one another, but still there are gaps among them, some smaller and some larger.

material

For the memorial to stand in a public space, it must be made of durable materials. At the same time, different materials carry a different meaning. In view of the concept and the main idea of the entire proposal I needed two different materials, contrasting in their nobleness. Regarding the jaws of the press, meaning the upper and lower block, I chose rough concrete. For some time I also considered black or at least dark stone, but I did not arrive at such a stone which could be in the block and not give off a dignified impression, so concrete seemed to be the ideal option - as a material, it suppresses nobleness. Totalitarian regimes namely were not noble at all. Moreover, the roughness of concrete again expresses the treatment of people and the impact of the regimes and its grey, by no means optimistic colour adds to the drastic effect and sombreness of the entire memorial and the events to which it relates.

For the material for the middle part and the inscription around (the strip set in the upper concrete block) I first thought of wood with which you can express many influences caused by the regimes - wood can be cracked, split, burnt and twisted, simply a lot can be expressed with it. Moreover it is a truly broadminded material - just as the people who fought for their ideal. Over time however wood loses its durability. As another option, glass offered itself. When cracked, it is capable of a wide range of effects, e.g. if shards were strewn among the blocks. Glass however is transparent and it could give a meaning of triviality or lack of substance to what these people struggled for, and I certainly did not want that. The third and final possibility then became copper. It is a noble material. Because it is a metal, all sorts of versions of distortions and crookedness, wrinkling upon bending and much more can be expressed and shaped with it. Beside the pliability of metal it brings along another dimension of damage caused by the pressure of totalitarianism, or to be more precise, by the foul atmosphere of totalitarianism and the mercilessly long time of its impact. Copper as a metal is namely subject to corrosion which will most certainly start to show on the memorial, depicting a further defect wrought on the human character or on human health.

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