

## Margaret Comer

### Dr Margaret Comer



#### Contact

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Margaret's research focuses on the heritage of mass repression, Soviet and post-Soviet memorialization and heritagization, Holocaust memorialization and heritagization, grievability and memory, and contested memory. She is specifically interested in how post-repression societies variously portray violence, suffering, perpetration, bystanding and victimhood at sites associated with mass violence. The overarching goal is to analyse how the heritage of past violence can be instrumentalized in order to avoid reckoning with past violence and, further, how this heritage can be weaponized in order to further contemporary violence.

#### [Area of interest](#)

heritage studies, memory studies, museum studies, dark heritage, uncomfortable heritage, heritage and memory of Soviet repression, heritage and memory of the Holocaust, heritage of mass repression and genocide, grievability, contested memory, instrumentalization and weaponization of the past

Research areas: Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia

#### [Biography](#)

2023-2025: Research Fellow, Institute of Advanced Studies, University College London

2020-2023: Postdoctoral Researcher, School of Humanities, Tallinn University

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2019-2020: Research Assistant, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge

2015-2019: University of Cambridge (PhD)

2013-2015: University of Cambridge (MPhil)

2008-2012: University of California, Berkeley (BA)

## Selected publications

### **Research Papers Published in Internationally Distributed Publications Peer-Reviewed by an Editorial Board**

Comer, M. 2023. 'Portraying Perpetration, Victimhood, and Implication at Sites of Soviet Repression in Moscow'. *Slavic and East European Journal* 67(3), pp. 303-323.

Comer, M., and E. Laanes. 2023. 'Introduction: Perpetrators, Collaborators, and Implicated Subjects in Central and Eastern Europe'. *Slavic and East European Journal* 67(3), pp. 288-302.

Comer, M., and Laanes, E. (ed.) 2023. Perpetrators, Collaborators, and Implicated Subjects in Central and Eastern Europe. *Slavic and East European Journal* 67(3).

Comer, M. 2023. 'Lubyanka: Dissonant Memories of Violence in the Heart of Moscow'. *Memory Studies* 16(3), pp. 561-575. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980231162332> [1].

Comer, E.A., and M. Comer. 2022. 'Heritage Communities and Human Rights: A Case Study from Catocin Furnace, Maryland'. *Nordic Journal of Human Rights* 41(1), pp. 87-104. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/18918131.2022.2151736> [2].

González, P.A., Comer, M., Viejo Rose, D., and Crowley, T. (ed.) 2018. Themed Section: Heritage, Revolution and the Enduring Politics of the Past. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25(5).

González, P.A., Comer, M., Viejo Rose, D., and Crowley, T. 2018. 'Introduction: heritage and revolution – first as tragedy, then as farce?' *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25(5), pp. 469-477. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2018.1509231> [3].

### **Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters**

Comer, M. 2022. 'Dark Heritage Research Methods: A Case Study from Contemporary Russia' in O. Jones and J. McGlynn (ed.), *Memory and Identity in Post-Communist Europe: Interdisciplinary Methodologies in Practice*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 57-72.

Comer, M. 2019. 'Heritagization of the Gulag: A Case Study from the Solovetsky Islands' in M.L. Stig Sørensen, D. Viejo-Rose, and P. Filippucci (ed.), *Memorials in the Aftermath of Armed Conflict: From History to Heritage*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 95-125.

Comer, M. 2017. 'Uncovering violent narratives: the heritage of Stalinist repression in Russia since 1991' in M. Frihammar and H. Silverman (ed.), *Heritage of Death: Landscapes of Emotion, Memory and Practice*. London: Routledge, pp. 164-177.

Comer, M. 2017. 'Harald Bluetooth's Welfare State: The Archaeology of Danish Royalty and Democracy' in A. Brooks and N. Mehler (ed.), *The Country Where My Heart Is: Historical Archaeologies of Nationalism and National Identity*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, pp. 202-221.

### **Full Articles in Encyclopedias**

Comer, Margaret. 2025. 'Gulag Heritage' in I. Saloul and B. Baillie (ed.), *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Cultural Heritage and Conflict*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61493-5\\_55-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61493-5_55-1) [4].

## [Conferences and visiting lectures](#)

### Organization of conferences:

2025: **Co-organizer** with Zuzanna Bogumińska of [Mobilizing and Weaponizing Memories of Soviet Repression](#) [5], Warsaw, 29-31 October 2025. The conference is being organized as part of the project "Memories of Soviet Repressions in Post-Multi-Colonial Post-Soviet Spaces," funded by Poland's National Science Centre (grant no. 2020/39/B/HS6/02809).

2021: **Co-organizer** with Eneken Laanes of [Victims, Perpetrators and Implicated Subjects in Central and Eastern Europe](#) [6], Tallinn, 3-4 June 2021. The conference was organized as part of the project "Translating Memories: The Eastern European Past in the Global Arena," funded by the European Research Council (grant agreement No 853385).

2017: **Co-convenor** with Pablo Alonso González, Dacia Viejo Rose, and Tom Crowley of the 18th Annual Cambridge Heritage Symposium, [Heritage and Revolution: First as Tragedy, then as Farce](#) [7], Cambridge, 5-6 May 2017.

### Invited talks:

2024. 'Dark Heritage in Tallinn: Memory Narratives at Sites of Nazi and Soviet Repression'. Invited paper presented in 'Myth & Memory: Presentation and Commemoration' (Ryan McNutt, chair). International conference 'Fields of Conflict', Savannah, GA, USA.

2022. 'Dark Heritage in Tallinn: Analyzing Sites of Soviet and Nazi Repression'. Invited paper presented in 'Responsibility to Remember: Issues and Perspectives' (Ieva Pranka, chair). Paper presented in academic seminar hosted by the Baltic-German University Liaison Office, Tallinn, Estonia.

### Interviews and podcasts:

2025. Idoyatova, Galiya (host). 31 May. [????????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????? - ? ?????????????/????????? ??????/ ?????????????????????? ?????????? \[8\].](#) ?????, ??????. [in English with Russian subtitles]

2025. Gulyaeva, Shura. "[????? ?????????? ?????????? ?? ?????????? ?????????????? ??? ???-?? ?????????? ???????????](#) [9]" ??????, 15 February.

2023. Gardner-Gill, Ben (host). 13 September. "[Dark Heritage: Exploring Memory Building in Estonia](#) [10]." *Baltic Ways*, FPRI Eurasia Program.

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### Links

[1] <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980231162332>

[2] <https://doi.org/10.1080/18918131.2022.2151736>

[3] <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2018.1509231>

[4] [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61493-5\\_55-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61493-5_55-1)

[5] <https://fb.me/e/5yJWIO4T8>

[6] <https://translatingmemories.tlu.ee/events/workshop-victims-perpetrators-implicated-subjects-in-central-and->

eastern-europe/

[7] [https://www.heritage.arch.cam.ac.uk/system/files/documents/Heritage\\_and\\_Revolution\\_prog.pdf](https://www.heritage.arch.cam.ac.uk/system/files/documents/Heritage_and_Revolution_prog.pdf)

[8] [https://youtu.be/ka66vSI\\_Ls0?si=nLjZ7gOy7nkU1Gm5](https://youtu.be/ka66vSI_Ls0?si=nLjZ7gOy7nkU1Gm5)

[9] <https://meduza.io/feature/2025/02/15/zachem-stavit-svechki-za-pogibshih-politzekov-eto-kak-to-pomozhet-preodolet-bessilie>

[10] <https://open.spotify.com/episode/5bKHBnpR80kPqTgPWqHjZA?si=b-GzfA-YRi-O561tRdjjHw>