The fall of Communist governments across Central and East Europe in 1989 and the subsequent breakup of the Soviet Union raised fundamental questions of national identity in the post-communist region. This talk examines the challenges arising from this transformation through a discussion of political struggles over monuments and memorials. It explores the many ways in which post-communist political elites have attempted to destroy, alter, and create new monuments and memorials in order to legitimize their regimes, and how those efforts have evolved over space and time. In doing so it focuses especially on controversies over World War Two monuments, once-ubiquitous Lenin statues, and how to memorialize the Communist past.

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