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# **‘PUBLIC HISTORY’ AS A VOCATION**

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## **‘PUBLIC HISTORY’ AS A VOCATION**<sup>2</sup>

The paper analyzes the contents and objectives of ‘public history’, the relationship between scholarly and popular knowledge, conventions governing the representation of the past outside the academic context, and the transfer of scholarly knowledge from academic to media environment. The article is divided into sections titled *What? Who? When? Why? What for?* and *How?* These lapidary subtitles reflect the fact that very little has been written about public history yet, and a preliminary review of the field is necessary. First of all, we need to determine what kind of new historical work it is, and to draw several distinctions between different types of historians who engage in professional and/or public history. Public history is treated as a specific type of historical judgment and historical practice, thus the analysis of ‘public history’ covers cognitive aspects as well as social ones.

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*We have spent a century building professional knowledge, translating common sense into science, so that now, we are more than ready to embark on a systematic back-translation, taking knowledge back ...*

*(Michael Burawoy)*

Although public history (also known as people's history, *histoire publique*, policy-relevant history, history for the laity, weekend history, *angewandte Geschichte*, etc. hereafter PH) has been developing quite rapidly since almost half a century, it remains surprisingly little studied<sup>3</sup>. Public historians themselves (as opposed to public sociologists) reflect upon their activities rarely and not very profoundly. They are mostly 'practicing historians'. That, apparently, is why so little critical reflection can be found in most of their books (let alone PH magazines and websites), which mostly are kaleidoscopes of PH practices and cases<sup>4</sup>. The aim of this paper is to analyze (a) the contents and objectives of 'public history', (b) the relationship between scholarly and popular knowledge, (c) conventions governing the representation of the past outside the academic context, and (d) the transfer of scholarly knowledge from academic to media environment. Thus the analysis of 'public history' will cover cognitive aspects (conventional ways of speaking about history and description languages applied to the past) as well as social ones (the formation of institutions, mechanisms for recognizing knowledge, professional identity)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> For public history, see Evans R. J., *Telling Lies About Hitler: The Holocaust, History and the David Irving Trial*. London: Verso, 2002; Jordanova L. *History in Practice*. 2nd Ed. London: Hodder Arnold, 2006 (2000); Korte B., Paletchek S. (Hg). *History Goes Pop. Zur Repräsentation von Geschichte in populären Medien und Genres*. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2009; Rickard J. & Spearritt P. (Eds.) *Packaging the Past? Public Histories*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991; Samuel R. *Theatres of Memory*. Vol. 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture. London: Verso, 1996 (1994). For similar if much later development of PH in Germany cf. Tomann J., Nießer J., Littke A., Ackermann J., Ackermann F. *Diskussion Angewandte Geschichte: Ein neuer Ansatz?* Version: 1.0 // Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte. 2011. 15 Februar ([http://docupedia.de/zg/Diskussion\\_Angewandte\\_Geschichte](http://docupedia.de/zg/Diskussion_Angewandte_Geschichte)).

<sup>4</sup> For PH practices cf.: Hardtwig W., Schug A. (Ed.) *History Sells. Angewandte Geschichte als Wissenschaft und Markt*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009. Pp. 3–4.

<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank Elena Vishlenkova, Alexander Makhov and Boris Stepanov for their discussion of this article which helped me to further elaborate some of its key points. I am grateful to Oxana Zaporozhets for inadvertently sparking my interest in public sociology during a master-class on academic writing which she offered in my seminar for research techniques.

In his introduction to the series *Making Sense of History* the editor Jörn Rüsen writes that, while many theorists proclaim the end of academic history, ‘historical matters’, such as popular memory, TV- and Hollywood histories, and public and political debates on the past “seem to replace it with vengeance”. Having said that, he asks “whether the academic discipline of ‘history’ as it existed in Western universities for the last two hundred years, presents a specific method or type of historical reflection that could be distinguished from other forms and practices of historical consciousness”<sup>6</sup>.

This question can be applied to public history as well. Is it a specific method or type of historical judgment and historical practice, and if so, what is its relationship with the *academic* historical discipline?

To answer this question, one should analyze the entire ‘extended reproduction cycle’ of historical knowledge in which equally important roles are played by production, transmission (especially through the education system and the media), and finally, perception of knowledge by the public. I know of no studies that specifically address the *transformation* of scholarly historical knowledge into public one, so as a template for my research, I rely on studies in public sociology, especially the articles of its originator and proponent Michael Burawoy<sup>7</sup>.

The methods of collecting and analyzing the empirical data for this study were chosen in accordance with the specific characteristics of different sources which include works of public historians, professional historians’ judgments on public history (academic publications, speeches, interviews, surveys), and amateur historical literature, as needed.

The previous research done by Andrei Poletayev and myself on the theory of historical knowledge and on the formation of everyday knowledge about the past<sup>8</sup> offers a conceptual and methodological tools which can be relied on in this study. While we studied the scholarly

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<sup>6</sup> Western Historical Thinking: An Intercultural Debate. 2002. Pp. vii, ix.

<sup>7</sup> Burawoy M. For Public Sociology // The British Journal of Sociology. № 56 (2), 2005. P. 259– 94. [http://www.amazon.com/Public-Sociology-Research-Action-Change/dp/1412982634#reader\\_1412982634](http://www.amazon.com/Public-Sociology-Research-Action-Change/dp/1412982634#reader_1412982634); 2004; Beck U. How not to Become a Museum Piece // The British Journal of Sociology. № 56 (3), 2005. P. 335–343. Cf. also Obshchestvennaja rol' sociologii / Romanov P., Jarskaja-Smirnova E. (red.). M.: OOO «Variant», CSPGI, 2008; Nyden Ph., Hossfeld L., Nyden G. (Eds.). Public Sociology: Research, Action, and Change. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2011; Loader I. and Sparks R. Public Criminology? London and N.Y.: Routledge, 2011; Jeffries V. (Ed.). The Handbook of Public Sociology. Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009; Jacobsen M. H. (Ed.). Public Sociology: Proceedings of the Anniversary Conference Celebrating Ten Years of Sociology in Aalborg. Aalborg: Aalborg University Press, Denmark, 2008; Clawson D. et al.(Eds.), Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics and the Profession in the Twenty-First Century. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Savelieva I. M., Poletayev A. V. Klassicheskoe nasledie (Classical Heritage). M.: ID GU–VShJe, 2010; Iidem. Social'nye predstavlenija o proshlom, ili Znajut li amerikancy istoriju (Social Representations of the Past, or Do Americans Know History). Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2008; Iidem. Znanie o proshlom: teorija i istorija. V 2-h t. 1: Konstruiro-

knowledge and mass representations of the past, dimensions of the media historical knowledge, such as its production, recognition criteria, transmission, and acquisition remained unexplored, as did the types and levels of this knowledge. PH presents an excellent testing ground for an analytical intrusion into this area because in this area scholars and the public work together producing and preserving knowledge about the past.

The article is divided into sections titled *What? Who? When? Why? What for? and How?* These lapidary subtitles reflect the fact that very little has been written about PH yet, and a preliminary review of the field is necessary. First of all, we need to determine what kind of new historical work it is, and to draw several distinctions between different types of historians who engage in professional and/or public history.

### **What?**

It is easy to find an answer to the question ‘What is public history?’, because there are many around, but it is more difficult to choose the best one. The American researcher Jennifer Evans has found a number of definitions (See Table 1):

Table 1. Descriptions and definitions of public history

<p>Public history means the presentation of historical knowledge to a general public audience. Public history takes many forms – museum presentations, television documentaries, historic preservation projects, collection and recording projects, and the re-translation of traditional historical knowledge into modern, micro-computer-based formats, to give some examples. As an academic discipline it also focuses on the efficient and ethical management of our nation's his-</p>	<p>Public history most often refers to the employment of historians in history-related work outside of academia, and especially to the many ways in which historians recreate and present history to the public-and sometimes with the public.</p> <p><i><u>From the syllabus for Introduction to Public History taught by Michael Gordon at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee</u></i></p>
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<p>torical heritage and collective memories.</p> <p><u><i>University of Baltimore Public History web page</i></u></p>	
<p>Public history is history, practically applied. It is based on the understanding that history is not taught solely in the classroom, but is learned in a variety of places, and in a variety of ways. Public historians disseminate historical information to a wide audience through institutions such as archives, historical houses or societies, museums, consulting firms, history libraries, and Web sites. They are providers of primary and secondary source materials, and they often present information to patrons so that the patrons can form their own ideas of history and historical events through exhibits and research.</p> <p>My particular experiences with public history are diverse, and they have helped inform my definition of public history. In providing historical information to visitors, public historians give these visitors a chance to form their own opinions and ideas about history and to create books, essays, dissertations, works of art, and other products that in turn shape other people's ideas about history. Practical and entertaining, applications of history are what set public history apart</p>	<p>Cultural differences may account for some of the differences between American and English historians. Public history in America seems to have gone down a very patriotic pathway, supportive of conservative, middle-class values. Public history in England appears to be an active, if sometimes flawed, 'people's history' understanding of public history co-existing with a redefining of heritage (castles and monuments) to meet the commercial demands of cultural or heritage tourism.</p> <p>... Public history not only reflects the history of the community it seeks to serve, but the very history of that community will shape the nuances of what is understood as public history by that community.</p> <p><u><i>From the syllabus for Public History 209 taught by Dr. Robin McLachlan at Charles Stuart University in Australia.</i></u></p>

<p>from classroom history, and both have their place in the overall process of teaching history.</p> <p><i>Emma Wilmer, Emeritus Editor, PHRC</i></p>	
<p>As public history has evolved from a quest for ‘alternative careers’ to a way of understanding and practicing the craft of history, it has on the campuses run headlong into the sacred trinity of research, teaching, and service—with the greatest of these being research embodied in refereed publications...</p> <p><i>Scarpino, Philip V., ‘Some Thoughts on Defining, Evaluating, and Rewarding Public Scholarship.’ <u>The Public Historian</u> Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring 1993) 55-61.</i></p>	<p>Public history refers to the employment of historians and historical method outside of academia.</p> <p><i>Robert Kelley, The Public Historian, Vol. 1 (1978): 16.</i></p>

Source: excerpts shown in the tables are compiled by Debra DeRuyver, Managing Editor, PHRC; For full text, see: <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/history/publichistory/main.htm>

One can summarize all these definitions stressing the cognitive, occupational and functional characteristics of public history. PH appears to be a set of approaches and practices designed to identify, preserve, interpret, and present historical artifacts, texts, structures and landscapes by way of professional historians’ interacting with the public.

It should be noted right away that we are not talking about historical policy, a political (ab)use of history. In the United States, in Britain, and in Germany, PH is ‘people’s history’ not ‘policy-relevant history’. Of course, like academic history, PH exists in many different national versions. Graham Davison, who compared American and British public historians, sees a significant difference between the two in that PH in the U.S. presumes social consensus, whereas

the British PH presumes an environment of social conflict and injustice. The work of the public historian, and the public history presentation too, proceeds accordingly in these two societies<sup>9</sup>.

It is clear that co-operation with the public is not always easy even to begin, especially since different PH practices involve interaction with different audiences, and the public can be both a target audience and a partner. In the latter case this public is a well-defined, specific group, often having very specific interests, which makes it necessary to find mutually acceptable methods of working with the past and to set common goals.

### **Who?**

While answering the ‘*what*’ question was about finding the best definition, there are two fundamentally different approaches to answering the ‘*who*’ question. The first, extremely broad approach describes four groups of public historians:

- authors of books that are widely read, much discussed and influential with the public;
- persons who speak to the media about topical issues concerning interpretations of the past;
- persons who offer expert assessments to customers;
- practitioners of a public history that involves active interaction with the public organized in various groups.

Obviously, all the four versions reflect the long-standing function of the historian as the one who transmits professional knowledge about the past to the public (educated strata, masses, groups). This function has been articulated and emphasized in numerous manifestos and studies. But, I should note, quite often this function is not something that distinguishes one group of historians from another: rather, it is just another function of historians at large. Many famous professional historians are active in the field of public history as well.

The term ‘public historian’ has lost much of its meaning due to its being excessively used (typically by European authors) in a broad sense. Maybe it happened because originally the

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<sup>9</sup> Davison G. "Paradigms of Public History" // *Packaging the Past? Public Histories.* / J. Rickard & P. Spearritt (Eds). Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991. Pp. 4–15.



term was too generic and was used in different contexts. As a result, today one always has to specify what kind of public historian one is talking about. Indeed, the broad concept as well as its components should better be redefined. Here, I confine myself to a description of the narrow approach, which regards only the fourth group of historians as ‘public’, i.e. the one that interacts with the public in a kind of *joint production* of historical knowledge. For sociology, where a similar phenomenon exists, Michael Burawoy uses the term ‘organic’ public sociologist<sup>10</sup>. Ludmilla Jordanova, Hilda Kean, David Cannadin, Barbara Korte, Sylvia Paletchek, Roy Rosenzweig, David Thelen, Raphael Samuel, John Tosh and some others represent a generation of ‘organic public historians’ (a term which could be introduced some day but which I will not be using here)<sup>11</sup>. The following definition applies to this type:

“Public history’, as the name suggests, is anything that involves the widest possible public involvement in the creation, recording and interpretation of ‘history’. It involves the work of professional historians, but hopefully engages with as many people as possible and is more often than not, now a collective enterprise, rather than one for lone individuals.

As such, good public history depends on the services of a range of professionals who work in what might be termed ‘the wider historical infrastructure’, namely people working in archives, galleries, museums, heritage sites, country houses and libraries, as well as the more commonly thought of teachers in school, further and higher education.

Public history often entails presentation of research findings in alternative formats to print, such as exhibitions, photographic and film displays, dramatic representations, music and dance”<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> “Organic” public sociologist “works in close connection with a visible, thick, active, local and often counterpublic. The bulk of public sociology is indeed of an organic kind—sociologists working with a labor movement, neighborhood associations, communities of faith, immigrant rights groups, human rights organizations. Between the organic public sociologist and a public is a dialogue, a process of mutual education. The recognition of public sociology must extend to the organic kind which often remains invisible, private, and is often considered to be apart from our professional lives”. Cf. Burawoy Michael. For Public Sociology. Presidential Address 2004 // *American Sociological Review*, 2005, Vol. 70 (February): Pp. 4–28). P. 7–8.

<sup>11</sup> To the PH typology proposed here, which includes a ‘broad’ and a ‘narrow’ interpretation of public history, one could add a PH concept that lacks the ‘narrow’ version. This is, for instance, what Jerom de Groot has put forward, who does not even mention such form of working with the past as cooperation between historians and their audience. Cf. Groot J., de. *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*. London and N.Y.: Routledge, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew Foster, Chair of the HA Committee for Public History  
[http://www.history.org.uk/resources/public\\_resource\\_2772\\_75.html](http://www.history.org.uk/resources/public_resource_2772_75.html)

In this description, the key word is ‘*with*’, meaning interaction. The latter is important because it articulates the creed of these public historians, according to which PH is an interactive communication between the historian, the public and the historical knowledge or object.

A definition of public history as a cooperative one can be found on the website of the New York University's online graduate program in public history:

“Public History is history that is seen, heard, read, and interpreted by a popular audience. Public historians expand on the methods of academic history by emphasizing non-traditional evidence and presentation formats, reframing questions, and in the process creating a distinctive historical practice .... Public history is also history that belongs to the public. By emphasizing the public context of scholarship, public history trains historians to transform their research to reach audiences outside the academy.”<sup>13</sup>

Under this view, a non-professional audience is not a recipient but a co-worker and a co-author of the historian. Moreover, it is assumed that a new and even more ‘correct’ knowledge about the past can be created in an open and productive dialogue between professionals and the public outside the academy. Finally, this description specifies the tasks and resources of PH. All components of this definition taken together allow us to see the difference between a public historian and an academic one, be it a researcher, an educator, or an expert of the old style. In this case, it is possible to talk about PH as a vocation, that is, a set of skills which a public historian has and a ‘traditional’ historian has not. These skills concern ethics, on the one hand, and efficiency, on the other (cf. “As an academic discipline it also focuses on the efficient and ethical management of our nation's historical heritage and collective memories.” - University of Baltimore Public History webpage, see Table 1 above). This implies that, when it comes to the uses of knowledge in society, a traditional historian who lacks these specific skills cannot *a priori* be a professional ‘historian for the public’. At best, he or she can become a self-taught public historian.

I am interested particularly in a figure of a public historian in the narrow sense, i.e. a practitioner who works in cooperation with the public, because it is a relatively new phenomenon. However, in what follows I often will have to speak about all versions of PH.

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<sup>13</sup> What is Public History / PHRC. Written and Mounted May 8, 1999 Revised September 2000. [http://www.publichistory.org/what\\_is/definition.html](http://www.publichistory.org/what_is/definition.html)

## When?

According to Roy Rosenzweig, a pioneer and a leading representative of PH in the United States, the idea of public history emerged in 1932 when Carl Becker published his article ‘*Everyman his Own Historian*’<sup>14</sup>. However, medievalist John Arnold, not exactly a fan of public history, said in a different context that “in the fifth century BC we find an historian drawing a distinction between a spuriously entertaining ‘public history’ and serious ‘proper history’”<sup>15</sup>.

Rather than yielding to the temptation of seeking the origin of PH, I am going instead to look at this issue in terms of ‘historian and society’ and briefly trace the evolution of the relationship between professional and popular historical knowledge since history had been established as academic discipline.

The social role of history in the Modernity is described by the following scheme: emergence of historical consciousness – rapid development of historical knowledge and a high social prestige of the historian’s vocation (a process that reaches its peak by the middle of the nineteenth century) – professionalization of history as a scholarly discipline, accompanied by a relative decline in the social role of historians (late nineteenth – early twentieth centuries) – skepticism increasing over the last century about history’s ability to ‘teach’ – simultaneous rise of mass interest in the past, which in the last decades of the twentieth century was usually referred to as the ‘historical memory’ issue<sup>16</sup>.

Until the emergence of positivist historiography that marked history’s becoming scientific, historians wrote for the ‘broad’ educated audience. One has to bear in mind that the nineteenth century was not yet a ‘century of the masses,’ but it was a ‘century of the public,’ a time when the public opinion strongly influenced politics as well as many other areas of life<sup>17</sup>. The nineteenth century made history a genuinely ‘popular’ domain. Numerous historical societies, commissions, and journals were founded, the collecting of antiquities remained a popu-

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<sup>14</sup> Becker C. "Everyman His Own Historian," *American Historical Review* 37 (Jan. 1932): 233–255. Rosenzweig R. *Afterthoughts: Everyone a Historian*. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/survey/afterroy.html#32>

<sup>15</sup> Arnold J. *Why History Matters – and Why Medieval History also Matters*. This paper is an expanded version of a speech given by John Arnold at the launch of John Tosh's book *Why History Matters* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) at Birkbeck College, London, on 28 May 2008. <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-81.html#S3#S3>

<sup>16</sup> See Savelieva I. M., Poletayev A. V.. *Znanie o proshlom (Knowledge about the Past: Theory and History)*. V. 1: Ch. 8 for details.

<sup>17</sup> Habermas J. *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*. Neuwied: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, 1962.

lar hobby. Up to the early twentieth century, history was part of culture rather than science<sup>18</sup>. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, as history was enjoying its maximum public recognition, the prestige of historians began to decline – primarily due to the fact that history as an academic discipline developed, and professionalization of historians took place. Historians began to write for historians.

The German historical school drew a clear distinction between the scholarly and the popular (including the ‘useful’) approaches to the past and developed the criteria of scholarly historical research. The German thoroughness with which this was done meant that by the end of the nineteenth century few in the major European countries and the United States would have difficulty to tell scholarly history from non-scholarly one. The establishment of the positivist paradigm in historiography resulted in the production of popular history being almost completely taken over by ‘intermediaries’ (e.g. writers, artists, then journalists and filmmakers) who used historical themes to create their ‘images of the past.’

In recent decades, the rapid development of mass media has led to mass production of ‘history books’ (historical fiction, historical detective stories, time travel stories, popular history, alternative history, alternate history and comics). A huge number of historical films and series, including documentary ones, has been produced, giving birth to such expressive terms as *faction*, *docudrama* etc. Television has been offering specialized historical shows and whole channels, featuring even a ‘Historische Docu-Soap’<sup>19</sup>. Digital history evolves rapidly; on the Internet, an exponential proliferation of amateur historical websites is in progress.

Since the late 1960s many different attitudes towards ‘massification of history’ took shape inside the professional historical community. A number of well-known historians tried to novelize their writings for the broad lay audience. In the late 1960s, for example, leading British historians such as John Taylor, Hugh Trevor-Roper, Eric Hobsbawm, Asa Briggs, John Elliot, Owen Chadwick, Lawrence Stone, and Christopher Hill began to author books designed to reach a mass readership. A little later, a new wave of scholarly historical bestsellers followed that were written by famous historians such as Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Carlo Ginzburg, Robert Darnton, Natalie Zemon Davis, Roger Chartier and many others. Not only do these

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<sup>18</sup> Historical consciousness was shaped by culture as a whole, based on many different arts such as architecture, sculpture, painting, historical novels, drama, ballades etc. See e.g. Potthast B. *Die Ganzheit der Geschichte: Historische Romane im 19. Jahrhundert*. Göttingen: Wallstein. 2007 for more detailed discussion.

<sup>19</sup> For TV-history, see Cannadine D. (Ed.). *History and the Media*. London: Basingstoke, 2004. The volume features academic authors as well as those who ‘do history’ on television.

historians write well, they also know how to produce ‘history for sale’, they are familiar with commercial book publishing, they know the tastes and interests of the public.

The democratization of knowledge involves not only novelization of narratives but also democratization of the language. New standards of writing, called ‘intellectual writing’, are applied by well-known historians along with the ‘academic’ one. Intellectual writing shapes the canons of drama and interest. Of course, literarily gifted historians are not many. What is more important, however, is that their success with the professional as well as lay audience is changing (some would say, has already changed) the language standards of historical writing. A consciously novelistic style, the ability to easily put oneself in the shoes of one’s characters, to insert cut-ins and digressions etc., down to fictitious dialogues with historical characters are sure to make a historian’s book a commercial success.

Another strategy employed by professional historians involves activities in the field of public education. Indeed, why not use television and then the Internet, which became so widely used by journalists and amateur historians, for the promotion of historical knowledge? The year 1957 saw the first TV star-historian John Taylor, a prominent specialist in the history of European diplomacy whose shows were watched by millions<sup>20</sup>. As a result, he was denied the position of Regius Professor at the University of Oxford “because he did too much of that sort of thing”<sup>21</sup>. But the situation changed at the end of the 1960s, and many leading historians became actively involved in the production of media knowledge, especially on television. They began to influence the public opinion, appearing not only in historical shows but in televised political discussions as well. In particular, German historians participated in a series of talk-shows that accompanied the broadcasting of *Holocaust* in 1979, and then in the debate that ensued from the publication of Ernst Nolte’s articles ‘*The Negative Liveliness of the Third Reich*’ (1980) and ‘*The Past that Won’t Go Away*’ (1986) in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Today, well-known professional historians can often be seen as advisors and commentators in serious historical shows on Western television, especially such channels as BBC, PBS, Discovery Civilization, etc. The post-Taylor era on English television has seen such TV star historians as Richard Halls, David Starkey, and Simon Schama. In Russia, leading historians (Oleg Budnitsky, Igor Danilevsky, Alexander Kamensky, Sergey Mironenko, to name a

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<sup>20</sup> The combination of academic rigor and likability typical of D.A.P. Taylor allowed the historian Richard Overy to describe him as ‘Macaulay of our age’. (Overy R. "Riddle Radical Ridicule" // *The Observer*. (30 January 1994).

<sup>21</sup> Daunton M. Interview. Institute of Historical Research, London, *Making History: The Changing Face of the Profession in Britain*, 19 May 2008.

few) often appear on screen, as do the heads of the Russian Academy of Sciences' institutes for Russian and world history.

Finally, public historians begin to use the media in order to create 'meeting points' for professionals and non-professionals, bringing together archivists and authors of diaries and photo albums, or scholars and historical movie-makers, or initiators of public investigations of past crimes, or representatives of rivaling memory concepts.

Since the late 1970s, public history is a prominent field of activity for leading professional historians in western countries who use it as a format to present their research findings to the non-academic public. In the U.S., the late 1970s saw the first specialized MA program and the first issue of the journal *The Public Historian* published by the National Council on Public History (NCPH) that was founded about the same time<sup>22</sup>. A regular column titled '*History in the Media*' first appeared in the '*Radical History Review*' about that time<sup>23</sup>.

Since the second half of the 1990s, Barbara Korte and Sylvia Paletchek wrote, history has been surrounding the common man in the form of nonfiction press, historical literature, museums, exhibitions, historical theme parks, medieval market squares, in the movies, on television, in video games<sup>24</sup> and the Internet<sup>25</sup>. The emergence of the very concept of 'public history' meant that an intermediate appeared between two old antipodes, professional and popular history, and the dichotomy of professional and public history was conciliated to some extent. Today, a triad exists: history professionals – public historians – popular historymakers. I would like to point out that people holding a degree in history may be found in the third category (the well-known Russian journalist Nikolai Svanidze, for instance), but they work as media popularizers not scholars. What is important for us is the fact that some academic historians who are public historians in the broad sense have learned to be public, and therefore popular, while remaining within the boundaries of the academy and not compromising its principles in their *main* work. For others, who are public historians in the narrow sense, PH is a vocation in the sociological sense, which implies solidarity, reproduction of their kind, often

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<sup>22</sup> Johnson W. G. The Origins of The Public Historian and the National Council on Public History // *The Public Historian*. Vol. 21, No. 3, The National Council on Public History: Reflections on a Twentieth Anniversary (Summer, 1999). P. 168.

<sup>23</sup> Table of Contents // *Radical History Review*. № 18-21. URL: <http://rhr.dukejournals.org/content/1978-79/19.toc>;  
<http://rhr.dukejournals.org/content/1978/18.toc>;  
<http://rhr.dukejournals.org/content/1979/20.toc>;  
<http://rhr.dukejournals.org/content/1979/21.toc>.

<sup>24</sup> Computer games offer many different levels of 'dealing with history' ranging from primitive shooters to extensive learning about the past (Maccalum-Stuart E. Geschichte und Computerspiele // *History Sells*. P. 119—130. Rainer Pöppinghege, however, casts serious doubt on the educational potential of computer games. Cf. Pöppinghege R. «Wenn Geschichte keine Rolle spielt» (Ibid. P. 131—138).

<sup>25</sup> Korte B., Paletchek S. Op. cit. P. 9.

lifelong specialization and institutionalization in the form of educational institutions and corporate associations.

## Why?

Technically it was the development of communication media that turned history to a 'public domain', but the social and cultural causes that led to the emergence of public history in the narrow sense were many.

The first cause was the democratization of Western society after 1968, a process that promoted participatory thinking and participatory action<sup>26</sup>. In his same-name article, Michael Frisch says that professional historians involved in leftist movements tried to introduce a more democratic ethos to their research practice. Risky endeavors such as oral history programs, photo exhibitions, historical guided tours, documentary filming, lectures and courses in history often grew directly out of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s<sup>27</sup>. Since then, the need to 'democratize' the production of historical knowledge or, more precisely, to make a 'public domain' was being proclaimed incessantly. The American researcher Susan Crane, who insisted that history written by historians should not be forced upon the individuals having a historical consciousness of their own, described this urge as an attempt at "writing the individual back into collective memory"<sup>28</sup>.

Concerned about the isolation of the academy, James Banner said it was time to recognize history as "the most democratic of the arts." "We fail as historians," James Banner continues, "when we limit the definition of professional historian to academic historian alone"<sup>29</sup>. Christopher Brooke, not a public historian himself, put it just as clearly: "history is going to wither on the vine if it doesn't have a natural roots outside the academy"<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> For participatory historical culture see Thelen D. "Afterthoughts: A Participatory Historical Culture," <http://chnm.gmu.edu/survey/afterdave.html>

<sup>27</sup> Frisch M. A Shared Authority, xx, xxii. Cf. Rosenzweig R. Afterthoughts: Everyone a Historian. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/survey/afterroy.html#32>. For a more detailed analysis, cf. Mahov A. S.. Roj Rozencvejj: delaja istoriju publicnojj // Dialog so vremenem. Forthcoming.

<sup>28</sup> Crane S.A. Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory // American Historical Review. 1997. P. 1372-1385.

<sup>29</sup> Banner J. M., Jr. and Gillis J. R. (Ed.) Becoming Historians. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009; 290 pp P. 288.

<sup>30</sup> Making History: the Changing Face of the Profession in Britain <http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/> Christofer Brooke. This interview took place in Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, 10 March 2008.

Generally speaking, we are witnessing a radical inversion: history no longer has authority over the public, it *shares* authority with the public and *belongs* to the public. Michael Frisch has introduced the concept of ‘shared authority’ which can be “rooted more in culture and experience than in the academic expertise.” “This authority can become central to an exhibit’s capacity to provide a meaningful engagement with history” and to “forge a dialogue about the shape, meaning, and implications of history”<sup>31</sup>.

The next step is thus taken: ‘shared authority’ is said not only to be good for the profession (historian’s authority) but also to the development of the cognitive side of the discipline and its contents.

The second important factor that contributed to the development of PH was the diversification of the subject matter of history. During the second half of the last century, the range of traditional fields of study that used to include political history, history of international relations, history of wars, economic history, social history, etc. rapidly expanded to encompass a vast variety of histories of diverse practices, ideas, and individuals. This had to do with an ongoing diversification within the academic discipline and fragmentation of history’s subject field, which in turn went a long way to increase the public’s interest in the past. Historians began to study such subject matters as childhood and marriage, mentality and cultural patterns, carnivals and holidays, food and smells, reading and education, gossip and military everyday life. New sources came to be examined, including photographs, household items, folk culture artifacts, maps, city plans and train schedules, recipes, etc., which proved to be so interesting that many lay people felt like doing such kind of history themselves.

The third cause was the fact that education in the humanities in general, and history in particular, was giving ground even at the elite universities, not to mention community colleges. The decline in the prestige of the humanities and the shrinking of their domain are universally admitted facts<sup>32</sup>. The decreasing demand for academic historians in the labor market has forced people holding degrees in history to diversify their fields of interest<sup>33</sup> and seek new forms of employment outside universities, archives, museums, libraries or schools. The idea of securing employment for practicing historians beyond their tradition-

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<sup>31</sup> Frisch M. A Shared Authority, xx, xxii. Cf. Rosenzweig R. Afterthoughts... <http://chnm.gmu.edu/survey/afterroy.html#32>

<sup>32</sup> In a public lecture, Mikhail Epstein stated that going public is one way out of the crisis (<http://www.hse.ru/news/media/72105180.html>). M. Epstein has founded the Center for Humanities Innovation at Durham University (UK).



al habitat was articulated by members of the National Council on Public History (NCPH) who drew attention to the fact that a public historian can be sought-for by businesses, private organizations, and administration bodies at different levels to write their own histories in line with professional standards<sup>34</sup>. Historians are urged to engage in expert evaluations and consulting, extending the range of their occupation to cover such areas as service history, market history, etc. The wish to find new niches in the labor market for graduates of history departments that are non-teaching but require the skills of a history professional has soon resulted in new qualifications and competencies being offered at universities, PH included<sup>35</sup>. Today, quite a few MA programs in public history exist. Those in public history proper differ from those in didactic history. Public history is usually studied together with mass media, whereas the study of didactic history is accompanied by training in social pedagogy<sup>36</sup>. Russia's first PH master's degree program, called 'Public History: historical knowledge in modern society', was offered in 2012 by the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences<sup>37</sup>.

The fourth cause of PH development was the production of 'historical memory' becoming very widespread by the end of the twentieth century<sup>38</sup>. The phenomenon as well as the concept of 'historical memory', whose content may be quite diverse, originated primarily due to strong and largely justified attention attracted by the memories of the survivors of the twentieth century's great tragedies (e.g. the Holocaust, Stalin's terror or other ethnic and political genocide campaigns) as well as war and revolution veterans. Later on, the term 'memory' and political initiatives associated with it spread rapidly to cover most different aspects of social representations of the past<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Donaghue F. Can the Humanities Survive the 21st Century? // *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. September 5, 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Kelley R. Public History: Its Origins, Nature and Prospects // *The Public Historian*. 1978. № 1. P. 16, 19; Johnson W. G. The Origins of The Public Historian and the National Council on Public History // *The Public Historian*. Vol. 21, No. 3, P. 168; Johnson W. G. Editor's Preface // *The Public Historian*. 1978. № 1. P. 6-7.

<sup>35</sup> For university PH programs, see Savelieva I. M. Publichnyj istorik: problema identichnosti. (Public historian: Problem of Identity). Forthcoming.

<sup>36</sup> At the University of Mainz, for example, these disciplines are studied as two different programs with their respective subsidiary subjects.

<sup>37</sup> Although the students graduating from Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences get a British MA degree (University of Manchester), the master's program matches Russian standards and demands. Its curriculum is supposed to be combining the experience of European public history curricula with the experience of Russian MA programs in history. Vera Dubina told about this MA program in a paper delivered at the conference 'Professionalization of Knowledge: History and its Significance for the Condition of the Humanities Today', 25 February, 2013, sponsored by the Institute for Historical and Theoretical Studies in the Humanities (IGITI) and the Laboratory for Cultural Studies, HSE Center for Fundamental Research. See <http://igiti.hse.ru/news/75236959.html> for a detailed account of the conference.

<sup>38</sup> For an analysis of public history in the light of memory studies, cf. Glassberg D. Public History and the Study of Memory // *Public Historian* 1996. Vol.18 pp.7–23.

<sup>39</sup> The consolidation of historical memory practices has attracted researchers' attention long ago and is relatively well studied (J. Assmann, B. Dubin, M. Kammen, D. Lowenthal, P. Nora, O.G. Oexle, P. Ricoeur, L.P. Repina, R. Rosenzweig, R. Samuel, D. Thelen, M. Ferro, as well as oral history).

Over the last decades of the twentieth century, new social groups (ethnic minorities, gender groups, vested interests such as survivors of tragic events, descendants of victims etc.) were identifying themselves, which spawned new ideological constructs such as genderism, multiculturalism, etc. Like social groups based solely on a common past (i.e. those uniting participants of historic events), these groups in search of identity needed their own archives to be maintained and their own history to be written. Their private past required a revision of universal history. John Arnold questioned: "...does one have to admit that any attempt to make history 'matter' to a wider audience must at some level commit to a particular politics, and this in turn must align with a particular interpretation of history?"<sup>40</sup>

The formation of these groups' historical memory coincided with the emergence of new electronic tools for information recording, storage and playback. As a result, a whole 'memory industry'<sup>41</sup> has originated recently, in which numerous political activists, journalists, artists, museum workers and historians are active.

In addition to the pragmatic interest of such groups, a 'pure' interest in history is taken by many on many different levels, from individuals and families curious about their past down to historical societies uniting experts, local patriots, etc. Nostalgia for the past means regarding the cultural tradition of Modernity as something that is being completed before one's very eyes. Historicization as if compensates for the loss of significance suffered by an event that takes place in the present. Thus, "workers history thrives when the working class ceases to play an active political role, family history thrives when family ties break"<sup>42</sup>. Explaining the post-modern attitude towards the present, the French historian François Hartog<sup>43</sup> points out that today the past is determined by the present which, more than ever, is able to perceive itself as the 'future of the past', deliberately providing materials for future historical research. Besides, the term 'histotainment' has come into being, a reminder of the 'pure' pleasure of history.

Which brings us to the fifth cause, the growing interest in the past (interrelated with points 1, 2, and 4) that is clearly testified to internationally by history books sells, public opinion surveys, and proliferation of grass-root initiatives (e.g. historical theme clubs, lo-

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<sup>40</sup> Arnold J. Why History Matters – and Why Medieval History also Matters. This paper is an expanded version of a speech given by John Arnold at the launch of John Tosh's book *Why History Matters* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) at Birkbeck College, London, on 28 May 2008. <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-81.html#S3#S3>

<sup>41</sup> Donaghue F. Can the Humanities Survive the 21st Century? // *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. September 5, 2010

<sup>42</sup> Samuel R. *Continuous National History // Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* / Ed. R. Samuel. 3 vols. L.; N. Y.: Routledge, 1989. V. 1, pp. 9–20.

cal museums, historical performances, re-enactors' movements, amateur historical films and chronicles, public lectures, historical internet sites, family history writing, etc.)<sup>44</sup>.

To be sure, factors that caused the upsurge of PH can be specified by country. For example, explaining the extraordinary popularity of public history in the UK, David Cannadin pointed to political factors such as the millennium, the fall of the Empire, the events in the royal family, the increasing number of graduates with degrees in history as well as fundamental changes in the social structure of the British education system and consumption of media products<sup>45</sup>.

Describing the opinions of respondents as to who 'owns' history, Roy Rosenzweig, the co-author of *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*<sup>46</sup>, a landmark book for public history, wrote:

“While the history wars have often focused on content – what should be taught in classes or presented in exhibits – our respondents were more interested in talking about the experience and process of engaging the past. They preferred to make their own histories. When they confronted historical accounts constructed by others, they sought to examine them critically and connect them to their own experiences or those of people close to them. At the same time, they pointed out, historical presentations that did not give them credit for their critical abilities – commercialized histories on television or textbook-driven high school classes – failed to engage or influence them”<sup>47</sup>.

The gap between science and everyday life, society's demand for history, a participatory consciousness, the imperatives of the labor market and other socio-cultural factors mentioned above have led amateurs and professionals to join their efforts in public initiatives aimed at studying and representing history, and a platform for dialogue and research has been created. PH texts bear convincing evidence of many PH enthusiasts obsessively caring for 'the people.' Are they in for disappointment? I think they are not, because unlike

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<sup>43</sup> Hartog F. *Regimes d'historicite. Presentisme et experiences du temps*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. the proceedings of the conference 'Non-Academic Working with the Past' that was sponsored by IGITI with a view to meet people who dwell outside our ivory tower and work with the past by different standards: <http://igiti.hse.ru/announcements/77065506.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Cannadine, D. (Ed.) *History and the Media*. London: Basingstoke. 2004. Introduction.

<sup>46</sup> Rosenzweig R., Thelen D. *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. N. Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1998. P. 292. The authors drew upon telephone interviews to examine the motives, the ways and the effects of ordinary Americans' referring to the past in their everyday life practices.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted after Rosenzweig R. Afterthoughts... <http://chnm.gmu.edu/survey/afterroy.html#32>

the nineteenth-century Russian *narodniki* they are not trying to preach, teach or heal ‘the people’. Instead, they want to cooperate with them. There is no socio-cultural conflict between them and those to whom they are reaching out. They share an interest, and the only difference is that some hold a degree in history and some don’t. According to Philipp Scarpino,

“As historians, we all do research, we all analyze and interpret our findings, and we all communicate the results. The primary difference between public and academic history is in the area of communication – in the audiences that we attempt to reach and in the products that we use to convey our scholarship to those audiences”<sup>48</sup>.

As public history can mean history for the public, history of the public, history by or with the public, the public has to be defined. Although the sociology of the public has a long tradition of studying this phenomenon<sup>49</sup>, such well-known sociologists as Alan Wolfe, Robert D. Putnam, Theda Skocpol, R. Sennett think that the public is now disappearing under the destructive influence of the market, media colonization and bureaucratic tricks<sup>50</sup>. However, the very existence of public history and the socio-cultural factors that contribute to its emergence testify to the contrary. In a sense, the public is just emerging now. It is no longer a mass listening to authoritative specialists but a communication partner. Still when speaking of PH, one should always bear in mind the specific nature of the audience which the historian is addressing or with which he is working together, because an indiscriminate general concept of ‘the public’ is not always instrumental.

### **How? Or the Skill of Transmission**

I was talking mainly about public history in the broad sense when answering the ‘when’ question and in the narrow sense when answering the ‘why’ question. But at a certain point these two begin to clash with each other. The broad interpretation of PH implies an *a priori* segregation of professional and non-professional contexts of a historian’s activi-

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<sup>48</sup> Scarpino, P. V. "Some Thoughts on Defining, Evaluating, and Rewarding Public Scholarship." *The Public Historian*. Vol. 15, No. 2 (Spring 1993).P. 55-61.

<sup>49</sup> E.g. Robert Park, Walter Lippmann, John Dewey, Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, Richard Sennett, Nancy Fraser, Michael Warner and others.

<sup>50</sup> Burawoy M. For Public Sociology. Presidential Address 2004 / *American Sociological Review*, 2005, VOL. 70 (February: Pp. 4–28). P. 8.

ties, emphasizing the priority of the former as his 'primary employment' and the increasing importance of the latter as his 'side job' or even a hobby. The narrow interpretation of the PH concept implies that we assume a new professionalization, or even a new discipline, suggesting new identification, new specialization, and creation of appropriate education and communication institutions such as training programs, journals, associations, conferences, etc.

When we are talking about 'authors of books that are widely read, much discussed and influential with the public, and persons who speak to the media about topical issues concerning interpretations of the past', what is at issue is not the vocational context of PH but the strategies (probably different ones) that are employed by historians and ensure their success in each of these areas, and the reaction they cause on the part of the public and professional community. What mechanisms control the transformation of an 'academic' historian into a 'public' one when he or she acts as a transmitter of knowledge? How do the knowledge itself and the experience of those producing it change in the process? Is this the same knowledge or a different one?

If there are people who identify themselves as *professional public historians*, what skills, values and norms are constitutive for PH as a vocation in its own right? The definitions cited above suggest that the cognitive peculiarity of PH has to do not with its status as a new cognitive program as opposed to academic history but, rather, with a new object of study - 'history of the public.' To be sure, this may also mean theoretical and methodological peculiarities as well, because new connections to sociology, anthropology etc. are necessary.

In so far as communication tasks ('effective and ethical management') are to be solved by PH, they involve issues that are fully relevant for professional historians, such as the following: how can the ambiguity of the past that is shown by academic studies be translated into a language comprehensible for the layman? How can scholarly knowledge about the past be integrated into the dynamic and media-influenced life experience of modern people? How should the accumulation of historical sources be reorganized, given the differentiation of storage systems, new mechanisms of communication and new information preservation tools, etc.?

I see a very important research issue that concerns the transformation of skills and the transmission of knowledge that occur when a professional historian assumes a public role as a 'part-time job'. A dialogue with a lay audience differs from the scholarly discourse in rhetorical, argumentative and psychological aspects. The historian has to realize that he or she is speaking to ordinary people, bearers of 'naive knowledge', and make allowance for that without sinning against 'professional knowledge'. At first, I intended to use empirical data, interviews in particular. But, although there are quite a lot of interviews containing questions about PH<sup>51</sup>, I could not find in them questions concerning the application of skills. When playing successfully the role of public historians and using their research findings as a resource for the promotion of scholarly history, historians fail to think about *how* they self-express in public. So I have included a question about this transformation in the interviews that were conducted by participants of the 'University Memory Culture' student lab within the framework of the project 'Culture of Memory in Russian University: Mechanisms of Formation and Preservation'<sup>52</sup>. The results obtained so far do not contradict my observation: scholars respond readily and differently to the question *why* they act as public historians but decline to answer the question *how* they transform their skills. At best, their answers are cut and dried.

However, having raised this question in a talk on public history, I received the following remarks from Kirill Levinson:

"After participating in a radio broadcast on Echo of Moscow, I came up with an answer (one of many possible ones) to your question about what switches in a history professional's mind when he or she acts as a public historian. When speaking in front of colleagues, who know a lot, the speaker's task is to tell them something new and make a personal contribution to their common stock of scholarly knowledge. When talking to the 'public', a historian has to tell his audience many things which historians know well but ordinary people don't. Here,

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<sup>51</sup> Cf., e.g., a collection of interviews with English historians at „Making History: the Changing Face of the Profession in Britain”: <http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/>

<sup>52</sup> In six months, members of the lab have designed two questionnaires and conducted 31 interviews (most of them with historians). The interview texts are available on the website of the Center for University Studies, IGITI HSE <http://igiti.hse.ru/unimemory/interview>. I have suggested the following questions:

- Do you act as a public historian? What do you think are the benefits of this role for a history professional?
- When acting as a public historian/scholar, what do you draw the attention of the audience to? Do you prefer writing popular history or talking on TV/radio?
- Can you tell what happens to you when you are acting as a public historian? Do you regard public history as a set of specific practices? Do you see a difference between academic and public history in terms of conventions governing the construction of the past?

the task is not to augment the knowledge stock of historians but to present it to the public.

Furthermore, the technicalities such as research methods, the state of research, conceptual debates, and epistemological issues in general should only be discussed with professionals, whereas laymen should primarily be presented the conclusions and told ‘how it actually was’. It has to be a narrative about events and persons, told in a simple and common language with a minimum of terms of art (each term has to be explained!) and a minimum of references. Here, references only give the speaker’s words more weight, rather than allowing the audience to ‘hook’ into the researcher’s work process”<sup>53</sup>.

The mechanism of a professional historian’s transformation into a public one is even more difficult to detect in practice. Examples of historians working with the public can be found in specialized publications and on numerous PH websites, but these descriptions don’t show the transformation mechanisms. Of course, some skills and competencies that imply maintaining professional standards when working with the public are taught in relevant MA programs at universities because public historians have to understand the rules by which historical knowledge functions outside of the scholarly community, they have to know the social groups with which they are engaged in dialogue, and they have to know well the subject matters that arouse the public’s interest. In this respect, the curricula of master’s programs can provide interesting data showing what conventions with the consumers public historians strive for and how these conventions are achieved.

Perhaps one comes to feel the boundaries of ‘the professional domain’ as one works in the field of public history, but it is not possible to conclusively confirm this hypothesis, except for the statements that professional history is a *conditio sine qua non* of public history<sup>54</sup>.

How, then, can we analyze this aspect (which, to my mind, is one of the most interesting) at this stage? When it comes to PH in the broad sense, we could compare ‘professional’ and ‘public’ texts written by the same historians. However, their distinction may be diffi-

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<sup>53</sup> From K. Levinson’s letter to I. Savelieva, March 16, 2013.

<sup>54</sup> Cf., e.g. the answer by Igor Danilevsky: “When speaking in public, I make a point of remaining professional: I explain how we know this or that, what the sources that contain information on a certain event, person, or process are like, how this information can be correctly dealt with and what happens if historical information is dealt with in a biased way” (I.N.

cult at times, as Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out citing as an example the list of books that were awarded the Wolfson History Prize for excellence in the writing of history of the general public since 1972. According to Hobsbawm, this list represents what “is in a sense serious history, invariably being judged by serious professional historians, but which has been aimed at readers who are not necessarily professional historians. You'll see that it is a very respectable, very high class series of things. It's been mostly first-class works, but first-class works that are written for the general public”<sup>55</sup>.

The study of different modes of historical writing or talking is a work in its own right, and a time-consuming one too. In this article, I can only point to it as a promising future research field. In addition to textual analysis, a psycholinguistic approach may provide interesting findings. When studying historians' working with different social groups and organizations, topic-guided interviews and field research would, of course, be productive.

In the meantime, to answer the question whether public history is just a set of specific practices or a vocation in its own right with its own conditions of knowledge legitimization, I intend to analyze the mechanisms of historical knowledge production, transmission and recognition and the conventions that govern the construction of the past in scholarly and popular history. Thus I will be looking for clues in the field that is more familiar to me, i.e. in the analysis of different types and levels of social knowledge. Interestingly enough, despite all the conflicts and debates that keep arising due to distortions of the ‘historical truth’ in the media knowledge about the past, this issue remains theoretically unexplored. Textbooks, historical novels, monuments etc. are lumped together (Pierre Nora gave this mess the sublime name ‘lieux de mémoire’), although in my opinion theoretical aspects of how the knowledge about the past is produced can rather be studied in the framework of the phenomenological sociology of knowledge (for research on the formation of expert and everyday knowledge, see works by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, David Bloor, George Gilbert, Michael Malcolm, Karin Knorr-Cetina, Jaakko Hintikka, etc.)<sup>56</sup>.

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Danilevsky, interview on the website of the Center of University Studies, IGITI HSE. URL: [http://igiti.hse.ru/unimemory/int-danilevsk?\\_r=207011363983774.48311&\\_t=478029&\\_r=OK](http://igiti.hse.ru/unimemory/int-danilevsk?_r=207011363983774.48311&_t=478029&_r=OK)

<sup>55</sup> Hobsbawm E. Making History: the Changing Face of the Profession in Britain. <http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/interviews/>. This interview took place at the interviewee's home, London, 17 June 2008.

<sup>56</sup> Gilbert G. N. The Transformation of Research Findings into Scientific Knowledge; Gilbert G. N., Mulkay M. Opening Pandora's Box: A Sociological Analysis of Scientists' Discourse. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984; Landy M. (Ed.) The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media. New Brunswick (NJ): Rutgers Univ. Press, 2001; Knorr-Cetina K. D. The Manufacture of Knowledge. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981.



History is just one type of knowledge about the past social reality. Religion, philosophy, ideology, arts and social sciences, too, construct their images of the past, even if today it is academic history that dominates all representations of the past. One of the major discoveries made by Andrei Poletayev is that the past is constructed in different ways and by different laws, depending on the type of knowledge<sup>57</sup>. In ‘*The Social Organization of Knowledge about the Past: an Analytical Scheme*’, our last work written together, we attempted to systematize various approaches to the analysis of how social representations of the past are formed. The concept we put forward demonstrated the heuristic capabilities of different cognitive discourses and the relations existing between them<sup>58</sup>.

As with other types of knowledge, historical knowledge has always existed as connoisseur one and as popular one (even though many bearers and disseminators of popular knowledge were professionals). If only for that reason, the mass knowledge and the ‘sublime’ one are linked. The relationship between popular media products and the public's attitude towards history is quite complicated. What common people most often expect from professional historians is ‘the truth’ (i.e. a single and coherent version of history), while from fiction authors they expect imaginative story-telling and entertainment. They have difficulty locating popular quasi-scientific history books somewhere between these two ‘comprehensible’ extremes. This, probably, is why people tend to regard such books as credible, especially when these feature signs of scientific character such as document quotations, eyewitness accounts, and the causal argument system. The popular historical knowledge has a long tradition, which is also important. Based on this indisputable thesis, advocates of history democratization usually insist that history is not the prerogative of historians but a “social form of knowledge, the work in any given instance, of a thousand of different hands”<sup>59</sup>.

To describe the interaction between scholarly and popular knowledge in the work of a historian, I would like to cite first the argument of Wolfgang Mommsen. Speaking of the verification criteria of *scientific* historical knowledge and judgment, he wrote:

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<sup>57</sup> Savelieva I. M., Poletayev A. V. Znanie o proshlom: teorija i istorija (Knowledge about the Past: Theory and History). V. 1: Construction of the Past. V. 2: Images of the Past. V 2-h t.

<sup>58</sup> Savelieva I. M., Poletayev A. V. Social'naja organizacija znanij o proshlom: analiticheskaja shema (Social Organization of the Knowledge about the Past: an Analytical Framework) // «Dialog so vremenem. Al'manah intellektual'noj istorii». 2011. Vyp. 35. S. 7—18. In this article, the complex formation process of social concepts of the past is represented as a diagram dividing it in the phases of production, transmission and assimilation of the knowledge about the past. We isolate three levels at which concepts are formed and, hence, three objects of analysis: the sources, the formation mechanism and the results, i.e. the contents of these concepts.

<sup>59</sup> Samuel R. Theatres of Memory. 1994. P. 8.

- Historical works and historical judgments are scientific, because they are ‘intersubjectively understandable and verifiable.’ Intersubjectivity of historical knowledge is constituted by the judgments of other people, especially historians. Similarly, the verifiable nature of historical judgments (discourses) is evident when it meets at least three specific criteria:

- 1) Were relevant sources used and the results of previous studies, including the latest ones, taken into account?
- 2) To what extent do these historical judgments incorporate all the historical data available?
- 3) Are explicit or underlying explanatory models strict, coherent and consistent?<sup>60</sup>

It is easy to see that this definition regards verifiability of scientific judgments as a prerogative of professionals, leaving it unclear how laymen can judge on the scientific quality of versions of history offered to them. Imagining the public as a subject, can knowledge be considered scientific if it is incomprehensible and not verifiable for this subject (i.e. if its presentation relies on arguments that the public cannot understand)? Obviously, only the third criterion is indisputable as far as public history is concerned, and it clearly can be met in the absence of the first two. But perhaps, the first two are present implicitly (invisibly and inaudibly)? Perhaps the scientific nature of popular history writings can be testified to by the existence of the same author's academic works on the same issues?

Finally, the main question: while it is obvious that professional communities have to formulate some criteria for the evaluation of their own activities, what are these criteria in a situation when cognitive criteria relevant to academic history do not work or do not work well? What do truth and objectivity mean in the discourse of public history?

To address these issues, I have compiled the following table, which is not intended to be comprehensive or ultimate in any way (Table 2).

Table 2

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Academic history</b>	<b>Public history</b>
Target audience	The academy	A group, a community, the

<sup>60</sup> Mommsen W. J. Social Conditioning and Social Relevance in Historical Judgements // «History and Theory», December 1978, vol. 17, no. 4, p. 19–35. P. 33.

		public. These terms mean a variety of social bodies that differ in age, sex, social strata, ethnicity, residence, education, interests, life experience, etc.
Goals	Historical truth	Participation, education, memory preservation, identity construction, but possibly the truth as well.
Method	Historicist methods  (causal, comparative, statistical, semiotic, interpretive) as well as methods of other human sciences.	Unconventional sorts of evidence and presentation formats, literary reconstruction, receptive esthetics, empathy.
Products and practices	Scholarly books, articles, lectures, conference papers. Reviews in academic periodicals. Research projects. Research work in museums and archives.	Popular books, articles, lectures, and conference papers. Reviews and columns in popular periodicals. Projects, performances. The founding of museums and archives (to preserve memories, identities, etc.)
Form	Academic writing <sup>61</sup>	Intellectual writing. Democratized speech.  Visual media playing a special role

<sup>61</sup> “No matter how many [scholarly] terms penetrate into [everyday] life, the scholarly language always has things that cannot be translated into everyday language” - Filippov A. F. *Mehanika objasnenija v social'nyh naukah: po tu storonu ritoriki i politiki / Poletayevskie chtenija*. 27 sentjabrja 2011.

It seems to me that legitimate modes of historical knowledge production outside the academy, the conventions governing this production, and the function of the historian in the context of sharing the authority with the public can be better understood if we take into consideration what Michael Burawoy said about the consensus regarding the status of truth in professional and public sociology. I quote his remarks in full.

“In the case of professional sociology the focus is on producing theories that correspond to the empirical world, ... whereas with public sociology knowledge is based on consensus between sociologists and their publics. Each type of sociology has its own legitimation: professional sociology justifies itself on the basis of scholarly norms, public sociology on the basis of its relevance. Each type of sociology also has its own accountability.

Professional sociology is accountable to peer review, public sociology to a designated public. Furthermore, each type of sociology has its own politics. Professional sociology defends the conditions of science, public sociology understands politics as democratic dialogue. Finally, and most significantly, each type of sociology suffers from its own pathology, arising from its cognitive practice and its embeddedness in divergent institutions”<sup>62</sup>.

Applying this reasoning to the analysis of the relationship between scholarly and public history opens up another prospective line of thought. In disciplinary aspect, the question can be formulated as follows: is the role of public ‘knowledge transmitters’ just one of historians’ roles, or is it a vocation in its own right? If we accept Burawoy’s thesis (and it is reasonable), then PH is a vocation, but not a scholarly discipline. Professionalism in this case implies knowledge of history (historical education) plus special skills of working with the public.

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<sup>62</sup> Burawoy M. For Public Sociology. Presidential Address 2004 / *American Sociological Review*, 2005, Vol. 70 (February: Pp. 4–28). P. 15.

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