

Elena Zhemkova, Public Figure.

Biography

Born in Saratov, USSR (current Russian Federation) in 1961.

In 1983, she graduated from the Mathematical Faculty of Odessa University, majoring in "Equations of mathematical physics".

In 1997, she graduated from the International Management Systems Consulting Company (MSI, USA), where she specialized in international evaluation standards of project activities.

In 1987, she became one of the founders of the original Memorial, the "Memorial Initiative Group". In 1988, she was named a member of Memorial's Board. It would later become the International Historical, Educational and Human Rights Society "Memorial" ("International Memorial"). Since 1995 until 2022, the day the International Memorial was liquidated by the Russian Supreme court, she has held the position of Executive Director.

Among several Memorial projects, she has been responsible for the project: "Victims of two Dictatorships", dedicated to the fate of former "Eastern workers" – the 3 – 5 million persons taken from the former Soviet region during World War II by the Nazis for forced labor. Upon return to the Soviet Union, these same people were persecuted again by their own government due to their past status as forced laborers under the Nazis. She has been involved in major original research, publications and exhibitions in relation to this work for over 30 years.

In recent years, she has coordinated the International Memorial network, which includes more than 30 regional organizations in Australia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Ukraine.

In 1996-2011 - member of the Supervisory Board of the Russian Foundation "Understanding and Reconciliation", which paid compensation for forced labor in Nazi Germany (funded by the German government).

In 2018-2022 – member of the Russian Interdepartmental Working Group for the coordination of activities aimed at implementing the Concept of the State Policy of the Russian Federation to perpetuate the memory of victims of Political Repression.

From 2015 to the present, member of the International Scientific Council of the Topography of Terror Foundation (Germany), which studies the crimes of the Nazi regime; From 2018 to the present, member of the International Scientific Council of the Documentation Center for Forced Labor by the Nazi Regime, in Berlin-Schoeneweide.

In 2022, she was awarded the title of Honorary Doctor of Sciences, The Paris Institute of Political Studies, the public research university, grande école and grand établissement, known worldwide as "Sciences Po" (France).

Since 2023 — Elena works as the director of Zukunft Memorial in Germany. Zukunft Memorial (Future Memorial) is one of the 15 founding organizations of the new International Memorial Association. Zukunft Memorial was founded by Memorial members who were forcibly relocated from Russia to Germany. Zukunft Memorial has non-profit charitable status under German law and continue the activities we carried out in Russia for many decades related to state repression, including historical research, collection and preservation of archives, and public education.

Areas of Interest:

The main areas of her research interests are the history of political repression, comparative analysis of Nazi and Soviet repressive mechanisms, memorialization of victims of political repression (monuments, toponymy, etc.). The areas of her public interests include: the development of civil society organizations and their means of support; educational work with young people; and the establishment of democratic values and human rights.

Recent public speaking events:

21 June 2022, Paris, France, On the event of being awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of Sciences Po.

25 August 2022 Rimini, Italy, "The Person and Censorship", Festival Rimini.

7 October 2022, Tbilisi, Georgia, Opening Address at the Joint Exhibit: "Fathers' Letters", SovLab Georgia and International Memorial, Goethe Institute Georgia.

29 October 2022, Berlin, Germany, "Victims of Communism", Memorial Germany.

3 November 2022, Geneva, Switzerland, "Kofi Annan Geneva Peace Address", The Kofi Annan Foundation, the Geneva Graduate Institute and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, at the Geneva Graduate Institute.

15 November 2022, Warsaw, Poland, Presentation of the Film: "The Right to Memory", School of Civic Education, at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

18 November 2022, Bonn, Germany, "Freedom of Expression in the 21st Century: Between democratic backsliding, disinformation, and the limits of tolerance", at the Academy of International Affairs.

18 August 2023, Caux Forum, Switzerland, keynotespeech

Foreign language: German

Work e-mail: