

The language of violence: remembering counter-revolutionaries and traitors in socialist Mongolia

Drawing upon interviews conducted by the Oral History of Twentieth Century Mongolia research project, in this paper I examine the narrative use of terms such as counter-revolutionary (*esergүү*) and traitor (*urvagch*) in Mongolian life histories. In particular, I look at the way such terms are currently deployed in contrast with the associations and meanings they carried under early socialism. How, if at all, have these terms changed since their original use? Do people still use them to talk about the violence of the 1930s? If not, what terms are used and how? In drawing upon oral history narratives to understand how language is used, I also seek to show some of the possibilities beyond recounting the past that oral history provides.