Narratives of Exile and Identity

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Soviet Deportation Memoirs from the Baltic States

Edited by

Violeta Davoliūtė, Tomas Balkelis



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This edited volume is a revised and expanded version of a pilot publication *Maps of Memory: Trauma, Identity and Exile in Deportation Memoirs from the Baltic States* (Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2013) that was published in the framework of the research project "Maps of Memory: Identity, Trauma and Exile in Gulag Testimonies." The project was based at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Ethnography and funded by the Lithuanian Research Council.

Foreword

The history of the Baltic states is not well-known outside of the region itself. This holds true for the period of the Second World War and its aftermath, when the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia suffered multiple occupations, mass killing, large-scale deportations, and radical social transformation, resulting in multiple layers of trauma. This volume, published with the support of the Lithuanian Research Council, offers English-language readers up-to-date information and critical insight into one aspect of the wartime ordeal experienced by the people of these states—forced deportation by the Soviet regime. In two major episodes in 1941 and 1949 alone, approximately 145,000 people were torn out of their homes, crowded into cattle cars, and deported to the depths of the Soviet Union. Sporadic deportations during Stalin's domination of the Baltic states made that number even higher. During the Cold War the general public in the West knew little of these forced resettlements; Western scholars, kept from the relevant archives and often seeing the postwar deportations as internal Soviet matters, paid them scant attention. Within the Soviet Baltic republics themselves, these episodes were taboo topics, discussed, if at all, in hushed tones in family circles only. Memorializing these repressions and their victims was out of the question; in fact, returning deportees were generally stigmatized by their own societies. As a result, memory of the deportations was suppressed and distorted.

This volume gives a critical account and analysis of the return of this memory to Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia that began with Gorbachev's policy of glasnost in the late 1980s. In the Baltic region, leaders as well as ordinary people began to recover deportation stories at that time. These stories played a critical role in forging unity against Soviet rule, and then became a powerful source of identity for the newly independent states. In this heady period of perestroika and the establishment of independence, each of the Baltic states witnessed a rush to build museums documenting and honoring the deportees, and to collect their accounts while the survivors were still alive.

Scholars, both within the Baltic region and without, have set about researching relevant archives, reading testimonies, interviewing former deportees, and examining the artifacts of memory that have been produced since the late 1980s. The present volume is the result of a collaboration of

researchers from the Baltic states, Western Europe, Canada, and the United States. Hosted by the Lithuanian Literature and Folklore Institute and supported by the Lithuanian Research Council, this international group of scholars met at the Lithuanian Institute of Literature and Ethnography in Vilnius in October 2012 to discuss their work. As the reader will see, they have opened new avenues of research into the Baltic deportations, focusing, for example, on children and gender, comparing the experiences cross-culturally, and delving into post-Soviet culture. They employ methodologies unknown in the region during the Soviet period, including social history, gender, and trauma theory. In so doing, the book represents one of the first steps in bridging the gap between the study of the Gulag experience in general, and that of the peoples in the Baltic region in particular, along with broader developments in international scholarship. As such, it will appeal to a broad range of scholars, especially those studying war and occupation, displacement, memory and trauma, independence movements and nationalism, and post-Soviet culture.

Significantly, the scholars whose work is included in this volume study not just memoirs but memories, in various forms. In the words of the editors, they focus on the subjective experience, social impact and transmissibility of the trauma of deportations. Their research aims to help us understand the recollections of the past that form the heart of the national narratives in the Baltic states today. Together, these contributors show us an underlying diversity in the experience of deportation that is often overlooked, and demonstrate that both official and popular (and sometimes individual) representations of the deportations to the USSR are quite often idealized. They thus try to understand not only the subjective experience, but the way it functions in collective national memory.

The Soviet deportations profoundly affected the societies of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Yet they constituted just one of multiple, interrelated tragedies and displacements that befell the Baltics in the middle of the twentieth century. Coming to terms with their own tribulations during the war, including their victimization at the hands of the Soviets, might facilitate their examination of other difficult wartime issues, including the killing of Jews in the Baltic region, and collaboration. Such reckonings are necessary for understanding the cumulative effects of the violence and painful displacements that wracked the area. This volume, which illuminates the way the Soviet deportations helped to shape postwar and post-Soviet society in the Baltic states, contributes to that larger undertaking. Given that multiple traumas have and continue to effect societies across the globe, the book's relevance extends well beyond the region.

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Introduction

Soviet Deportations from the Baltics in Context

The testimonies and memoirs written by people deported to the Gulag were avidly read during the time of the popular movements against Soviet rule throughout Baltic societies. Freed from the restrictions of Soviet censorship, they were published in serial format in popular journals and sold as books in enormous print runs. They fulfilled a widespread desire to discuss and condemn the historical injustices of the Stalinist period and were instrumental in the construction of post-Soviet identities and collective memories. At the time, journalists and commentators coined the term "the return of memory" to describe the outpouring of interest in and discussion of the past. But after just a few years, the issues of political resistance and national identity took second place to the challenges of European integration and economic reform. Testimonies and memoirs very quickly dropped off the public agenda, and remained of concern only to a relatively small group of readers and specialists. The return of memory, it seemed, had come to an end.[1]

As a result, this important corpus of historical testimony to the Soviet deportations from the Baltic societies was passed over, at least in part, by the massive wave of research conducted on testimonies of historical trauma in Western Europe and North America during the last decade of the twentieth century. Studies of Holocaust representation and memory, in particular, went through a period of rapid and intensive development, drawing together scholars of history, literature, psychology and philosophy, among other fields.[2] Studies of other historical traumas, such as the Gulag, the

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[1] Jan-Werner Müller, ed., *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9; Aigi Rahi-Tamm, "Trėmimų tyrimai Estijoje: dabartinė padėtis ir perspektyvos," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 24 (2008): 154.

[2] On Holocaust memory, see Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Saul Friedländer, *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Michael F. Bernard-Donals, and Richard R. Glejzer,

genocide of the Armenians, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, or the many atrocities that occurred in the wake of colonialism, to name just a few, witnessed a similar growth in number and sophistication.[3] They established the basis for a wide-ranging dialog on issues of history, trauma, memory, textual representation, and the relationship between the individual and the community.

Meanwhile, the study of Stalinist-era atrocities in the Baltic societies stayed focused largely on establishing the basic facts, cataloging the hardships, and researching the organizational structure of the Soviet camp and prison system, rather than studying the subjective experience, social impact, and modalities of recollecting of the trauma of the deportations.[4] In retrospect, the growth of this gap between the methodological approaches to the Baltic deportations and other historical traumas of the twentieth century was determined by several overlapping factors. Society in the Baltic states was focused on the future, and it would take time for innovative approaches to the past to work their way into the rather conservative estab-

eds., *Witnessing the Disaster: Essays on Representation and the Holocaust* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Zoë Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Clifton R. Spargo and Robert M. Ehrenreich, eds., *After Representation? The Holocaust, Literature, and Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010); Jakob Lothe, Susan R. Suleiman, and James Phelan, eds., *After Testimony: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Holocaust Narrative for the Future* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2012).

[3] On Gulag memory, see Jehanne M. Gheith and Katherine R. Jolluck, *Gulag Voices: Oral Histories of Soviet Incarceration and Exile* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Aleksandr Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); Nancy Adler, *The Gulag Survivor: Beyond the Soviet System* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002); Stephen F. Cohen, *The Victims Return: Survivors of the Gulag after Stalin* (Exeter, NH: PublishingWorks, 2010); Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Doubleday, 2003). On the Armenian genocide, see Ronald R. Suny, *"They can live in the desert but nowhere else": a History of the Armenian Genocide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). On the bombing of Hiroshima, see Michael J. Hogan, ed., *Hiroshima in History and Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Ran Zwigenberg, *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). On postcolonial trauma, see Abigail L. Ward, ed., *Postcolonial Traumas: Memory, Narrative, Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[4] This tendency, for example, was recently noted also by Estonian scholar Aigi Rahi-Tamm. See Rahi-Tamm, "Trėmimų tyrimai Estijoje,"155.

lishments of historical study. Moreover, it was only natural that research into the Soviet deportations, like that of the Holocaust from the fifties through the seventies, would begin with empirical studies and only later branch out into more analytical and multidisciplinary explorations of subjectivity and identity.

In any event, it was only during first decade of the twenty-first century that memory studies as an academic discipline turned its gaze to Eastern Europe in general and the experience of population displacement in particular.[5] Three interrelated developments account for the renewal of interest in the memoirs of the Soviet deportations from the Baltics, and thus the professional collaboration and discussions that led to the emergence of this edited volume. First, the gradual dissemination of the methodology of memory studies; second, the growing awareness of population displacement as a subject of study in its own right, with special application to the borderlands between Europe and Russia; and third, the Europeanization and transnationalization of the memory of atrocities committed by totalitarian regimes.

Studies of mass population displacement and its effect on identity made a significant contribution to breaking down the traditional, national framework in which most studies of the memory of historical atrocities have been framed. The movement of individuals and groups across borders, questions of identity and change, of home and exile, have naturally pointed to the global and transnational dimension of major historical change, especially as concerns Eastern Europe.[6]

It is against this background of renewed interest in questions of memory, identity, displacement, and testimony to historical trauma in Eastern Europe that the present collection of studies on the Soviet deportations from the Baltic states is offered. And in this regard we seek to build first of all upon the foundation established by our colleagues in the Baltic region. Vieda Skultans wrote one of the best-known works on the memory of the

[5] For a discussion of how the academic practice of memory studies came to be applied, adapted, and transformed in Eastern Europe, see Uilleam Blacker, Aleksandr Etkind, and Julie Fedor, eds., *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Georges Mink and Laure Meumayer, eds., *History, Memory and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Memory Games* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[6] For some of the most notable examples of such studies, see Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, eds., *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet–East European Borderlands, 1945–50* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Nick Baron and Peter Gatrell, eds., *Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia, 1918–1924* (London: Anthem Press, 2004); Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944–1948* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).

Gulag in Latvia, based on hundreds of hours of interviews she did with Latvian deportees. Writing with a background in anthropology, Skultans brought a new level of insight into the analysis of the social function of deportee testimonies, demonstrating that these were not only the reports of individual but of collective experience, based not only on personal experience but on stories heard from other deportees. Skultans discerned a specific feature of deportee memoirs, structured on the narrative of departure to the Gulag and return to the homeland, which privileged the role of place and displacement in the formation of identity.[7]

Skultans's work has been influential in promoting the "life stories" approach to deportation memoirs, which sets the individual's memory and memoirs firmly in its social and intertextual context. Particularly in Estonia, this approach has led to a strong emphasis on questions of gender and women's life stories in the work of Leena Kurvet-Käosaar, Marju Lauristin and Tiina Kirss, for example.[8] In Lithuania, a similar approach was adopted by Dalia Leinartė who published a series of life stories of Lithuanian women during the Soviet period.[9]

Writing from a political science perspective, Eva-Clarita Pettai has brought together several contributions that address various aspects of deportation memory in the Baltics, including an important monograph on transitional justice.[10] A number of conferences, including the Biennial Conference of the International Auto/Biography Association and the annual Memory Studies Workshop held since 2013 at the University of Tartu, have addressed the broad cultural and historical impact of the deportations on the peoples of the Baltic states.[11]

In Lithuania, one of the most innovative studies in this direction is a collective volume edited by Danutė Gailienė on the psychological trauma

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[7] Vieda Skultans, *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia* (London: Routledge, 1998).

[8] Tiina Kirss, Ene Kõresaar, and Marju Lauristin, eds., *She Who Remembers Survives: Interpreting Estonian Women's Post-Soviet Life Stories* (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2004); Leena Kurvet-Käosaar, "Imagining a Hospitable Community in the Deportation Narratives of Baltic Women," *Prose Studies* 26, nos. 1–2 (2003).

[9] Dalia Leinartė, *Adopting and Remembering Soviet Reality: Life Stories of Lithuanian Women, 1945–1970* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010).

[10] Eva-Clarita Pettai and Vello Pettai, *Transitional and Retrospective Justice in the Baltic States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Eva-Clarita Pettai, ed., *Memory and Pluralism in the Baltic States* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[11] Kristi Kukk, Toivo U. Raun, Alliki Arro, Madli Puhvel, and Lilian Puust, eds., *Soviet Deportations in Estonia: Impact and Legacy: Articles and Life Histories* (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2007); Leena Kurvet-Käosaar, Piret Peiker, and Mari Peegel, *Trajectories of (Be)longing: Europe in Life Writing: Abstracts* (Tartu: Estonian Literary Museum, 2011).

of those who have suffered political repression, which attempted to situate the deportation experiences within a transnational comparative framework of other victim groups.[12] Sociologist Irena Šutinienė explored the connections between biography writing and Soviet deportations.[13] Overall, in the last decade in Lithuania the most innovative research in the field has been conducted under the auspices of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania.[14]

Since the Soviet deportations from the Baltic societies were part of the broader policy of Soviet repression, we also draw our inspiration from several major studies that have dealt with the memory of Gulag deportations. First, Anne Applebaum's classic history of the Gulag stands out among them as the study that placed testimonies of Gulag prisoners and exiles at the very center of any discussion on Soviet repressions and their memory.[15] She also firmly established the deportation experiences of women and children as separate categories of a more general narrative of deportations.[16] We also draw insights from the recent studies of Steven A. Barnes, Nancy Adler, Stephen F. Cohen, Alexander Etkind and others who have raised important issues about the functions and long-term impact of Soviet repressions on post-Soviet societies.[17]

The deportations were just one aspect of the destruction suffered by the Baltics and other East European countries that were occupied by the USSR and Nazi Germany in succession after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939.[18] Population statistics provide a dry but telling sign of the scale of loss. By mid-1945 the population of Latvia was reduced from a prewar (1939) total of two million to about 1.4 million.[19] Between 1940 and 1953 at least 140,000 people were repressed including those who

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[12] Danutė Gailienė, *Sunkių traumų psichologija: politinių represijų padariniai* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2004).

[13] Irena Šutinienė, "Sovietinių represijų atminties reikšmė lietuvių autobiografijose," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 24 (2008): 127–35.

[14] See the bibliographical survey of the center's journal *Genocidas ir rezistencija* published on its website: http://www.genocid.lt/centras/lt/1202/a/. Accessed December 17, 2015.

[15] Applebaum, *Gulag.*

[16] A similar approach was also taken by Katherine R. Jolluck in her *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).

[17] Steven A. Barnes, *Death and Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of Soviet Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Adler, *The Gulag Survivor*; Cohen, *The Victims Return*; Etkind, *Warped Mourning.*

[18] For an overview, see Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

[19] Andrejs Plakans, *The Latvians: A Short History* (Stanford: Hoover Press, 1995), 152.

were deported and imprisoned in Latvia.[20] As a result of the war, the Holocaust, and Soviet repressions, Lithuania lost almost a million people—about one-third of its prewar population, including virtually all of the 200,000-strong community of Lithuanian Jews.[21] Among the victims there were about 332,000 people deported and imprisoned by the Soviets between 1940 and 1958.[22] Estonia fared little better as it lost about 170,000 people (17.5 percent of the whole population) between 1939 and 1959.[23]

Specifically, with respect to the deportations, about 10,500 Estonians were deported in 1940–41. The majority were swept away by the infamous Soviet deportation of June 1941 that took place simultaneously in Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, western Belarus and Ukraine, and present-day Moldova. More than half of these early Estonian deportees were women and children. The second deportation (the so-called operation *Priboi*) hit Estonia in March 1949 when about 20,700 were deported. Of those almost 90 percent were children, women and pensioners.[24] While the first deportation targeted political and cultural elite, state officials and their family members, the second one included larger numbers of farmers (so-called kulaks) and supporters of armed anti-Soviet resistance. Thus, in total more than 31,000 people were deported from Estonia.

As a result of June 1941 deportation, about 15,400 persons were deported from Latvia, of those 5,300 went to camps and prisons and 10,200 ended up in exile settlements. Of those imprisoned in camps and prisons, almost 80 percent died in incarceration in comparison with about 20 percent of those who perished in exile.[25] About half of these first Latvian de-

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[20] Daina Bleiere, ed., *History of Latvia: The 20th Century* (Riga: Jumava, 2006), 349; Valdis Lumans, *Latvia in World War Two* (Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2006), 398–99.

[21] This figure includes all ethnic population groups in Lithuania whose members were killed, forced to repatriate, had to flee or were deported and imprisoned between 1941 and 1958. See, Arvydas Anušauskas, *Teroras, 1940–1958* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2012), 280. On the Holocaust in Lithuania, see Alfonsas Eidintas, *Žydai, lietuviai ir holokaustas* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2002). A more conservative, yet similar estimate is provided by Liudas Truska who claims that between 1941 and 1953 Lithuania lost (killed and displaced) about 900,000 people. See, Liudas Truska, *Lietuva 1938–1953 metais* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1995), 125–28. Both estimates do not include the killed Soviet POWs and those displaced people who were able to return from exile.

[22] Anušauskas, *Teroras*, 280.

[23] Velo Salo, ed., *The White Book: Losses Inflicted on the Estonian Nation by Occupation Regimes, 1940–1991* (Talinn: Estonian Encyclopedia Publishers, 2005), 25.

[24] Toivo Miljan, *Historical Dictionary of Estonia* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2004), 169.

[25] Jānis Riekstiņš, "The 14 June 1941 Deportation in Latvia," in *The Hidden and Forbidden History of Latvia Under Soviet and Nazi Occupations, 1940–1991,* ed.

portees were also women and children who were sent to exile settlements. Latvia was also hit hard by the deportation of May 1949 when about 42,000 people were deported. Of those more than two-thirds were women and children.[26]

The numbers of the deported and imprisoned were even higher in Lithuania. In June 1941 almost 17,000 people were deported from Lithuania: of those, 12,300 were sent into exile and 4,700 went to camps and prisons.[27] About 73 percent of the 1941 deportees were ethnic Lithuanians, about 13 percent were Jews, and 10 percent were Poles.[28] Among the deportees there were about 5,000 children. Almost 18 percent of the 1941 deportees died in exile. Yet the mortality rate among those who ended up in camps was much higher—54 percent. Only about 40 percent of these early deportees came back to Lithuania.[29]

Between 1945 and 1952 Lithuania was hit by at least nineteen different waves of deportations.[30] Among them three stood out for their brutality and massive numbers of deportees. The first took place in May 1948 (Operation *Vesna*) when 40,000 were deported (among them 11,000 children). Another 29,000 were taken during the abovementioned deportation of March 1949 (including 8,300 children). The last major deportation (Operation *Osen'*) sent away 16,100 people in October 1951. In total, about 104,400 people were deported from Lithuania from 1945 to 1952.[31] Of those, between 11,000 and 16,500 died while in exile.[32] It was not before 1954–55 that deportees started to be allowed to return from exile in massive numbers. Yet in January 1958 there were still 37,500 deportees from Lithuania in exile. Some of them were able to come back as late as 1963.[33]

Against this dreadful backdrop of war, genocide, and mass murder, scholars have only recently begun to appreciate the nature and extent of the harm caused by mass population displacement. Indeed, not long after the Nazi concentration camps were liberated, Attlee, Truman, and Stalin signed an agreement to deport German families from their homes in Poland and Czechoslovakia, an agreement that called for an "orderly and

Valters Nollendorfs and Ervin Oberlander (Riga: Institute of the History of Latvia, 2005), 70–72.

[26] Nollendorfs and Oberlander, *The Hidden and Forbidden History of Latvia*, 251.

[27] Birutė Burauskaitė, ed., *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas, 1939–1941*, Vol. 1 (Vilnius: LGGRC, 1999), 49.

[28] Ibid., 63.

[29] Ibid., 52.

[30] Anušauskas, *Teroras,* 210–11.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 266.

[33] Ibid., 274–75.

humane" population transfer of several million people.[34] It would be hard to imagine world leaders using that kind of language to describe mass deportations today. Having witnessed the resurgence of genocide in the former Yugoslavia, we have become more attuned to the intimate relationship between displacement and violence.[35] But at the time, the transfer of populations to solve minority issues was a standard tool of the "gardening state," a term introduced by Zygmunt Bauman in 1989 to describe the gaze of the state toward society as something to be designed, cultivated, and when necessary, culled.[36]

The first use of mass population transfers grew out of the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, when Bulgarians, Serbs, and Greeks sought to create nation-states with newly-drawn borders by expelling minority populations. The Swiss anthropologist George Montandon turned this practice into a prescription and proposed that natural borders be established according to ethnic criteria and those minorities not willing to assimilate should be subject to resettlement.[37] Sometime in the 1920s, Britain's Prime Minister David Lloyd George is said to have quipped that the only way to solve the conflicting claims of Lithuanians and Poles over the city of Vilnius would be to order everyone to leave, and to turn the contested capital into a museum.[38] These words would prove tragically prophetic, as the Holocaust, war, and postwar population exchanges quite literally emptied Vilnius of its inhabitants.

The Soviet practice of forced migration emerged in this transnational context but also has its own unique genealogy. As described by Alain Blum

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[34] *Agreements of the Berlin (Potsdam) Conference, July 17–August 2, 1945.*

[35] The July 1995 Srebrenica Massacre in Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular, being the largest mass murder committed in Europe since WWII, did much to bring renewed attention to the relationship of displacement and violence. Bosnian Serb field commander General Ratko Mladić, since convicted of genocide, allegedly warned the Serbian political leadership: "People are not little stones, or keys in someone's pocket, that can be moved from one place to another just like that. . . . Therefore, we cannot precisely arrange for only Serbs to stay in one part of the country while removing others painlessly. I do not know how Mr. Krajisnik and Mr. Karadzic will explain that to the world. That is genocide." In Edina Becirevic, "Bosnia's 'Accidental' Genocide," *TRI*, Nr. 470 (October 5, 2006).

[36] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 13. See also the important collection of articles on this theme in Amir Weiner, ed., *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-century Population Management in a Comparative Framework* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[37] Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 17.

[38] Tomas Venclova, *Vilnius: A Personal History* (Riverdale-on-Hudson, NY: Sheep Meadow Press, 2009), 170.

and Emilia Koustova in this volume, the first population transfers were ordered by Stalin as part of the collectivization campaign in 1929. In 1931 and 1932, nearly two million people were forcibly displaced to the Soviet Far North, the Urals, and Siberia.[39] The use of mass displacement as a tool of governance continued after this wave of peasant deportations for different purposes. In 1936, Poles living on the western frontiers of the Soviet Union were suspected of providing assistance to foreign spies preparing an invasion of the USSR and so were forcibly removed to the interior of the Soviet state. Shortly thereafter, the Korean population of the Soviet Far East, the Kurds in Azerbaijan and Armenia, and other frontier zones were "cleansed" of populations suspected of disloyalty by the authorities.

Relatively little was known of these displacements until Gorbachev's policy of glasnost allowed for free discussions of the past, aside from the early works of Robert Conquest and Alexander Nekrich.[40] More broadly, forced migration was not a widely studied topic in the social sciences or humanities. But the subject has gained attention over the past few decades, and a growing body of literature has disclosed the significance of phenomena like "ethnic cleansing," a recently invented term that conveys a new sensitivity to the inherent violence of forced migration.[41]

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[39] For an overview, see Lynne Viola, *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[40] Robert Conquest, *The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (London: Macmillan, 1960); Alexander M. Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War* (New York: Norton, 1978). For more recent studies drawing on archival materials, see Alexander Statiev, "Motivations and Goals of Soviet Deportations in the Western Borderlands," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 6 (2005): 977–1003; Greta L. Uehling, *Beyond Memory: The Crimean Tatars' Deportation and Return* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Brian Glyn Williams, "Commemorating the Deportation in Post-Soviet Chechnya: The Role of Memorialization and Collective Memory in the 1994–1996 and 1999–2000 Russo-Chechen Wars," in *Genocide: Critical Concepts in Historical Studies*, vol. 6, ed. A. Dirk Moses (London: Routledge, 2010), 319–46; Yaacov Ro'i, "The Transformation of Historiography on the 'Punished Peoples'," *History and Memory* 21, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2009): 150–76.

[41] Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, eds., *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Post-War Europe, 1944–1949* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Naimark, *Fires of Hatred* and chapter 5 of *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010); Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, eds., *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe*, 1944–1948 (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001); Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, *Warlands;* Alfred J. Reiber, *Forced Migration in Central and Eastern Europe, 1939–1950* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

Explaining why forced deportation seldom occurs without murderous violence, Norman Naimark notes: "People do not leave their homes on their own. They hold on to their land and their culture, which are interconnected. They resist deportation orders; they cling to their domiciles and their possessions; they find every possible way to avoid abandoning the place where their families have roots and their ancestors are buried."[42] Indeed, the trauma of displacement has been shown in several studies of the region to have a profound effect on identity, both individual and collective.

The studies by Naimark, Applebaum, Snyder, and other Western scholars cited above have been enthusiastically received in East Central Europe as recognition of the traumatic experience East Europeans have suffered, and long sought to convey. At the peak of the popular movement in Lithuania during the late 1980s, the poet Marcelijus Martinaitis sought to convey the signficance of displacement as an aspect of Soviet rule: "In my life I saw abandoned homes three times. After the war, after the deportations, and after melioration. . . . That is a lot for one lifetime. . . . And I know one thing. When a home is abandoned, something terrible has happened there: robbery, death. Nobody just leaves, or is forced to leave without a reason."[43]

Building on such observations, British historian Peter Gatrell has argued that a broader view of deportation together with other forms of displacement like collectivization, urbanization, mobilization, and wartime refugee flows is essential to understanding the experience of the twentieth century in the Baltics.[44] Thus, the Soviet deportations were only one form of population displacement in the Baltic region along with the Holocaust, forced expulsions, mobilizations, political arrests, population transfers, evacuations, collectivization, and hasty urbanization.

A major conceptual goal of this collection is thus to bring out the diversity of the experience of Soviet deportation. The intention here is to grasp the multidimensional and multifaceted view of the deportation rather than to construct an aggregate or master narrative of the event that currently dominates public discourse. Therefore, in the first part of the volume we seek to investigate how the Soviet deportation affected distinct groups of people—children, adolescents, women and men—and how the subjectivity of these groups is expressed in discourse.[45] We ask: How do these memoirs

[42] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 4.

[43] Marcelijus Martinaitis, "Mūsų kalčių vieškeliai," *Literatūra ir menas* 35 (August 27, 1988), 2.

[44] Peter Gatrell, "Population Displacement in the Baltic Region in the Twentieth Century: from 'Refugee Studies' to 'Refugee History'," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 38, no. 1 (2007): 43–60.

[45] In this we build on the work of Tiina Kirss, Ene Kõresaar, and Marju Lauristin, *She Who Remembers Survives*; Birutė Burauskaitė, "Lietuvos vaikai – 1948-ųjų tremtiniai," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 24, (2008): 64–70; Jūra Avižienis,

negotiate the relation between individual and collective identity? What were the social networks and modes of interactions that developed among the deportees in camps and exile settlements? How are the experiences of distinct national and social groups reflected? Finally, what role do they still play in society many years after the traumatic events have passed?

In his chapter, Tomas Balkelis analyzes the corpus of memoirs written by Lithuanians who were children when they were deported, to uncover a distinct dimension of their deportation experience that has long been neglected by research. The distinctive character of children's perspective is due to their immediate perception of reality, unclouded by ideological categories gained from mature experience and socialization. Close attention to the memoirs of child deportees reveals ignored dimensions of the history of the deportation, and of the approach of the Soviet state toward young people subject to displacement.

Moreover, the memoirs of children speak of the role of displacement in the formation of personality, due to the relative weight of the time spent in exile compared to the limited time spent in a sedentary life in the homeland. Simply put, child deportees spent their formative years in exile. Thus their memoirs, even when written as adults, provide a clear look into how the experience of displacement affects the formation of personality and subjectivity. In their memoirs, the categories of home and exile, and of national identity, are put into question, revealing how principles of ethnicity were in fact strengthened, rather than weakened, by the experience of exile.

Aigi Rahi-Tamm focuses on the survival strategies and post-deportation return stories of the Soviet deportees from Estonia. She analyzes their numerous written testimonies (memoirs and questionnaires), and argues that their survival in exile among other factors was determined by their ability to preserve their prewar attachment to their homeland, in particular, to their private home and space. This attachment was clearly visible in their ability to adjust to the grave living conditions in the places they were deported to by building new homes. The majority of returnees experienced trauma after returning to their homeland when they were not able (except in rare cases) to reclaim their homes. Both the Soviet government and local people often stigmatized the returnees making their adaptation to life in Estonia very difficult.

The experience of displacement is given meaning through the act of memory: the recollection and relating of one experience to another through

"Learning to Curse in Russian: Mimicry in Siberian Exile" in *Baltic Postcolonialism,* ed. Violeta Kelertas (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006); Cathy A. Frierson and Semyon S. Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Katherine Jolluck, *Exile and Identity*; Meinhard Stark, *Frauen im Gulag: Alltag und Überleben 1936–1956* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2003).

oral or written discourse. The focus of this collection is on testimonies of deportation, and thus questions relating to the process of transcribing experience onto text are key. Whether the text takes the form of a government record, memoir, diary, letter, or even a fictionalized account, the fact that it points back to the experience of trauma and injustice gives it the character of testimony.

Long before the survivor was able to transcribe his or her experience into text, the deportee was inscribed into the bureaucratic system established by the Soviet secret police in 1932 to record, classify, and organize the "special population" of deportees and prisoners who made up the Gulag. Each individual and family was assigned to either the category of deportees or that of prisoners, a designation that determined their fate not only during incarceration and exile, but also set the limitations on the rights they would enjoy as "free" citizens after receiving amnesty or being freed. The Stalinist way of thinking, as described by Alain Blum and Emilia Koustova, was founded on social and territorial determinism and collective responsibility. It created a community on paper, turning the imagined construct of kulaks, an anti-Soviet social element or hostile borderland nation, into a reality, which in turn established a common social experience of arrest, deportation, and submission to the camp system. At the same time, the authors make clear that the existence of such a community of experience does not in itself create a community of destiny, for when one examines the testimonies of several survivors (as Blum et al have done in a separate work),[46] it is the singularity of each life story that makes the greatest impression.

In his survey of Latvian writings on the deportations in a range of genres, Aldis Purs tackles the first essential question that troubles the historian faced with the firsthand account of traumatic experience, a problem which he describes as the challenge of seeing the forest for the trees. How can the subjective, individual perspective offered by the testimony of the deportee be reconciled with the broader narrative of national history? And by the same token, how can the search for a usable or even comprehensible past be reconciled with the individual, irreducible experience and expressions of an individual victim of trauma? Historians seek to ground their understanding of the past on documentary evidence, on sources claimed to be authoritative when it comes to the observation and recording of events. Testimony is suspect because it represents the perspective of an individual with an ax to grind, that is, a person whose expertise as an observer is difficult to establish, and whose subjectivity is undermined by her status as a victim.

But with respect to the Soviet deportations, Purs notes that the historian is faced with little choice. With no access to Soviet records and in light of

[46] Alain Blum, Marta Craveri, and Valérie Nivelon, *Déportés En Urss: Récits d'Européens au Goulag* (Paris: Autrement, 2012).

the censorship and repression of Soviet rule in the postwar era, the personal memoirs of deportees remained the only source of information, however subjective, that was available, at least until the partial opening of the archives that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. Purs surveys the broad scope of the testimonies to deportation recorded by Latvians, as well as the tremendous efforts made among Latvian exiles during the Cold War, and by various groups within Latvia beginning in the late 1980s, to record, compile, and preserve the firsthand accounts of the survivors of deportation. In this, Purs highlights the critical role of the editor or compiler of testimonies, whose expertise and dedication have been essential to the recording and presentation of traumatic experience for subsequent generations.

Interpersonal and intergenerational transference of memory is closely related to the question of the transmissibility of trauma and the notion that memory is indexical, and that what is transmitted cannot be the survivor's own historical and embodied memory. What passes from one member of a community of memory to another, or from the persecuted generation to its children can have a traumatizing effect precisely because it is at once emotionally charged and underspecified, that is, deliberately vague or full of lacunae. A concept such as the later generation's "absent" or "post" memory not only acknowledges this but also evokes the pathos of a suffering that includes a sense of guilt for not having suffered. What is passed on can be described as a melancholy that must still be converted into a work of mourning appropriate for subsequent generations.

The metaphor of memory's return, one of the most powerful tropes of the Baltic popular movements of the late 1980s, suggests that the publication of deportee memoirs was indeed an important cause for the velvet revolutions that brought an end to the Communist regimes. But was the relationship of causality so simple? It was not merely the publication of memoirs in massive numbers that drove the people to revolt, but the manner in which they were read, the transformation they effected on the self-conception of the individuals who read each text. Even while recent interpretations of deportee memoirs struggle to recover the individual voices of the authors from the totalizing narratives of the nation, which have eagerly assimilated them as martyrologies, the task of achieving a critical understanding of how deportee memoirs contributed to the formation of collective memory, and to the remarkably coherent collective action during the popular movements, remains. Thus the third part of the volume is devoted to the issues of transmission, commemoration, and public uses of the memory of deportations in contemporary social, cultural, and political contexts of Baltic societies.

Dovilė Budrytė focuses on women who were deportees and also participants in the armed anti-Soviet resistance movement and their efforts to ensure that their experience of trauma remained a substantial part of the

metanarrative of the Lithuanian nation-state. By focusing on their experience of having been deported during the Soviet period, Budrytė uncovers their personal narratives and strategies of survival. Based on in-depth interviews with two women, Budrytė explores how women resistance fighters remember their roles as related to violence as well as their traumatic experiences of torture and deportation, and how these memories speak to national metanarratives about trauma. She notes that both women felt a strong "duty of memory," which resists an instrumentalist approach to collective memory, and expresses dissatisfaction with the lack of transitional justice in post-Soviet Lithuania. Budrytė concludes that while the narratives in question underscore the distinct experiences of women, the emancipatory capacity of the presented narratives lay in their attempt to conceptualize the experience of exile and resistance as a source of empowerment at the individual level.

Violeta Davoliūtė's contribution analyzes the cultural and social context for the reception of deportee memoirs in Lithuania, explaining the process of reception whereby the experience of the individual, transcribed in a memoir, is appropriated by the collectivity of readers. Describing the experience of displacement, understood as not just deportation, but also collectivization, meliorization, urbanization, and mobilization as a universal feature of Soviet modernization, she traces the emergence of a "discourse of displacement" in Soviet Lithuanian culture that prepared the ground for the explosive reception of deportee memoirs in the late 1980s.

Taking the memoirs of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė as an example, she demonstrates how some deportee testimonies were structured as Christian narratives of martyrdom, with a strong thematic emphasis on burial and autochthonous concepts of national identity as connected to territory, and a corresponding sensitivity to displacement as trauma. This religious and nationalist dimension of deportee memoirs was enacted in mass rallies dedicated to the reburial of the remains of deportees, brought back to Lithuanian soil from the furthest reaches of the Soviet Union. The testimonial nature of deportee memoirs, combined with the powerful rituals of commemoration that structured their reception, built on the common experience of displacement to catalyze a powerful social movement.

Aro Velmet and Eglė Rindzevičiūtė offer contrasting and complementary views of the role of museums in the commemoration of the deportations in the three Baltic states. Velmet's starting point is that the museums represent the dominant discourse of national identity, but he goes on to demonstrate how different practices of representation in each of the museums build upon and disrupt these narratives in distinctive and non-trivial ways. For example, he shows how the Estonian Museum of Occupations showcases a more academic and conservative approach; the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia and the Lithuanian Museum of Genocide Victims

represent a modern, visually and structurally dynamic approach; while Grūtas Park in Lithuania provides an example for a museum with a more commercial approach. These museums, regardless of their style, often present their narratives in terms of Manichean oppositions of "good" natives and "bad" colonizers, "victims" and "oppressors." As a result the deeper complexities of the occupation periods, such as the role of native collaborators in perpetuating the Soviet regime or the impact of the Holocaust on prewar minorities in the Baltics, are often left unexplored. However, curatorial choices, geographical location, the politics of space and experience, among other factors, shape these narratives in ways that sometimes reinforce, but often complicate the exclusive notions of ethnicity and nationalism presented in the expositions. Thus, in addition to revealing the explicit politics of exclusion and inclusion at work in each museum, Velmet underscores the importance of presentation and representation in the shaping of narratives of national trauma.

Rindzevičiūtė analyzes the production of knowledge in museums as a process of assembling and representing. As distinct from Velmet, she begins by questioning the assumption that state museums present a hegemonic narrative of the deportation, and focuses on the contingent and at times accidental construction of historical narrative in Lithuanian museums of the occupation. Given a general lack of resources and absence of clear political guidance, gift-giving assumed a central role in the assemblage of the exhibitions about deportations. Rindzevičiūtė shows how gift-giving not only played an important role in materially sustaining particular communities of former deportees and political prisoners, but also contributed to the inclusion of certain stories in the museums. As a mode of production of the museum collections and exhibitions, gift-giving explains a discrepancy between a rather coherent verbal discourse about the Soviet deportations, formulated in the governmental documents and parliamentary speeches, and the fragmented stories assembled in the museums.

Part I:
Experience of Deportation

Alain Blum, Emilia Koustova

A Soviet Story: Mass Deportation, Isolation, Return*

At 3:00 a.m. on the night of June 14, 1941, troops of the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, better known as the NKVD,[1] launched a large-scale operation to transfer a sizable number of Lithuanian men, women, and children to prison and labor camps or to deport them to the distant reaches of the USSR.[2] The operation was carefully prepared. Rumors had circulated among the population of the territories recently annexed by the USSR about deportation lists. Some reacted to these rumors by hiding, others dismissed them as absurd. The repression came in the wake of the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact, signed on August 23, 1939, by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and the Reich. The pact included a secret protocol that partitioned Poland and the whole of Eastern Europe between the two countries into spheres of influence. The Red Army invaded eastern Poland in September 1939 and annexed most of this territory to the socialist republics of Ukraine and Belarus. Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, which regained the city of Vilnius at this time, maintained a precarious independence. In 1940, the Soviet authorities demanded complete loyalty from these three countries. Soviet troops arrived in June 1940, taking power and installing puppet governments. They drove

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* This chapter is partially based on a collective research *project* "Sound archives—European Memories of the Gulag," coordinated by Alain Blum, Marta Craveri, and Valérie Nivelon. See http://museum.gulagmemories.eu/en.

[1] Created in 1934, the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) was the main instrument of repression in the 1930s. Its name and structure changed several times: split twice (in 1941 and 1943) in two commissariats, the NKVD and NKGB, these ones were renamed as MGB and MVD in 1946 and, after the death of Stalin in KGB and MVD.

[2] This text uses "deportation" to denote forced displacement and assignment to residence in villages of the Far North, Siberia or Central Asia; whereas imprisonment or confinement is limited to those transferred to the camps of the Gulag. The distinction is discussed in more detail below.

the transformation of these independent states into Soviet Socialist Republics, integral parts of the USSR. Finally, in line with the secret protocol, the USSR forced Romania to cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, which led to the creation of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova in August 1940.

Plans for deportations were approved in early May 1941, and the operations themselves were launched in Western Ukraine on May 22, on June 12 and 13 in Moldova, June 14 in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and June 19 and 20 in Western Belarus—just a few days before the launch of operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the USSR by Nazi Germany on June 22. The NKVD was assisted by local authorities, members of the Communist Party in particular, whose numbers had increased after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. They had prepared lists of people to be deported—including members of former governments, higher state officials and judges, higher military personnel, former politicians, entrepreneurs, merchants, artisans, and peasants.

More than 100,000 people were deported during these operations. Among them, nearly 20,000 inhabitants of Lithuania were loaded into cattle cars. Some, mostly adult men, were sent to a POW camp in Ukraine—a camp that held some of the Polish officers shot in 1940. They were quickly transferred further east, to the labor camps of the infamous Gulag—the Soviet camp administration. The wives of these men, their children, and older men were sent under equally difficult conditions to an undisclosed destination. For weeks on end they tried to guess where they were headed, peering through the doors of their wagons as the railway stations passed by. Having arrived in Siberia they were "discharged" and told they had been deported for a period of twenty years.

From this point on onwards their fates would vary considerably. For example, the largest group of Lithuanian deportees (7,232 people) arrived in the summer of 1941 to the Altai region, but in June 1942 some were sent to a region far north of the Arctic Circle, to the mouth of the Lena River "to develop" the local fishing industry. This task followed from a decree issued by the Council of People's Commissars[3] on January 6, 1942, entitled "On the development of the fishing industry in the basins of the rivers of Siberia."[4] In order to increase food supplies to the Red Army, thousands of deported Lithuanians, Soviet Germans, and Finns from the Leningrad region were displaced to the Siberian river estuaries. Entire populations of certain collective farms of Yakutia and other regions were also forcibly displaced. Some of them were relocated beyond the Arctic Circle, where no-

[3] Before 1946, Council of Ministers was named Council of People's Commissars.

[4] Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik), January 6, 1942.

body lived aside from the indigenous Evenk peoples, where there was nothing to eat and nothing to build. In total, 2,785 Lithuanians were left on the island of Tit-Ary, at the mouth of the Lena, and at various other sites along the banks of the Laptev Sea. Only 1,157 would return to Lithuania. More than half would die, mostly during the terrible winter of 1942–43, living in semi-buried huts covered with snow and ice, with almost no wood for warmth, since any attempt to gather fuel would have been punished by the guards.

Lithuanian children who came with their mothers were called "children of ice." This extreme experience lies at the core of the Lithuanian collective memory of the deportations, even though it involved only a very small proportion of those who were deported. Therefore, the testimonies of those who survived, including Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, mentioned often in this book, have a special place in Lithuanian collective memory.[5]

History of the USSR, History of Deportations

The story of the 1941 deportation from Lithuania is by no means exceptional in the history of the USSR. Mass deportations were widely practiced by Stalin, addressing two tasks at the same time. First, to repress people perceived as potentially hostile. Second, to compensate for the low population densities of the Far North, Siberian, and Central Asian territories of the USSR. This policy was launched in 1929–31, when Stalin destroyed the agrarian structure of the country, forcing peasants to gather into kolkhozy, or collective farms. The policy of mass collectivization was accompanied by the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of peasant families, who were accused of opposing collectivization. In 1930 and 1931, nearly two million peasants were forcibly displaced to the Soviet Far North, the Urals, and Siberia, under very precarious conditions. Nothing was organized or built to prepare for their arrival in the sparsely populated territories where they faced a hostile natural environment.[6]

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[5] There are several publications on this extreme experience in addition to the testimony of Grinkevičiūtė, some of which can be found on the site of a virtual museum: http://museum.gulagmemories.eu/en.

[6] The literature on collectivization and the deportation of peasants is prominently large. Alexis Berelowitch and Viktor Danilov gathered an essential collection of primary material in *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK-OGPU-NKVD, 1918–1939: Dokumenty i materialy v 4 tomakh* (1998). Other key works include Lynne Viola, *The Unknown Gulag: the Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Sergei Krasil'nikov, *Serp i molokh: krestianskaia ssylka v Zapadnoi Sibiri v 1930-e gody* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009); A. B. Suslov, *Spetskontingent v Permskoi oblasti, 1929–1953* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2010);

The use of mass displacement continued after this wave of peasant deportations in other contexts. For example, in 1936 Poles living in the western frontiers of the Soviet Union were suspected of providing assistance to foreign spies preparing an invasion of the USSR. On the sole basis of their ethnicity, they were deported to the Karaganda region of Kazakhstan. Shortly thereafter, the Korean population of the Soviet Far East, falsely associated with the Japanese enemy, was subject to the same fate. The Kurds in Azerbaijan and Armenia came next, and other frontier zones were "cleansed" of populations suspected of disloyalty by the authorities. The Great Terror, which struck the entire country in 1937 in a different modality and led to the execution of over 600,000 people, did not interrupt the forced displacements of collective groups that were taking place at the same time.

The signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939 led to new waves of deportations from the recently annexed territories along the western border of the USSR, from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, from Galicia (Western Ukraine) and Western Belarus, reaching Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The invasion of the USSR by Nazi troops on June 22, 1941, served as a pretext for further mass deportations. The potential disloyalty of the Soviet Germans led to their total deportation in August 1941. Other nations were deported due to suspicion of collaboration with the enemy in the occupied territories, or for their unwillingness to join the Red Army. In such cases, deportation was not an act of prevention, but of collective punishment. The "punished peoples" of the Crimea and Caucasus suffered this fate in 1944.[7]

The conquest and takeover of territories lost during the Nazi invasion was followed by the resumption of repressions and deportations, now almost exclusively from the western territories, which were not part of the USSR before 1939: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Western Ukraine, Moldova and Western Belarus. Deportation was now used as a means of subduing non-Sovietized populations that were sometimes openly opposed to the regime. The struggle against guerrillas combined with repressions against collaborators, the resumption of the interrupted process of Sovietization, and the collectivization of agriculture. It goes without saying that invention was mixed with reality. The opposition and the resistance were real, especially in Lithuania and Western Ukraine. But to this the Soviet authorities

Hélène Mondon, "Les premiers 'déplacés spéciaux' de Stalin et leur destinée dans le Nord européen de l'URSS (1930–1948)" (PhD dissertation, Paris 4, 2011).

[7] Aleksandr Nekrich was the first to use the term "punished peoples" in the first significant work on the deportations conducted during WWII: Aleksandr Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War* (New York: Norton, 1978).

added unfounded suspicions and falsification—a common practice in the Stalinist USSR.

Thus, in Lithuania between 1945 and 1947, several deportations hit the families of those who were suspected of carrying out armed struggle against Soviet power. In 1948 a large deportation operation called *Vesna* (Spring) was conducted in the country, followed by another in 1949, named *Priboi* (Surf), which covered the entire territory of the former Baltic states. These were the largest operations carried out in these three republics, but not the only ones. Furthermore deportation operations hit other newly annexed territories in Western Ukraine, Western Belarus, and Moldova.

The last large deportation would be conducted in Lithuania in 1951, affecting peasant families first and foremost. Although the use of administrative exile continued after Stalin's death, the widespread employment of forced mass displacement was stopped. This did not, however, lead the Soviet authorities to renounce their suspicions of those who had already been deported. As discussed below, their return would be neither immediate nor easy.

Identifying the Target

In this quick survey of the Stalinist deportations, we only briefly mentioned the principles governing the selection of the deportation targets. Yet they reflect the essential features of Stalinism. Repressions in the western territories were based primarily on social and territorial criteria. The "cleansing" of eastern Poland in 1940 first affected the "osadniki" who came to populate these areas in the wake of the First World War. Many refugees (Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, etc.) who fled the annexation by Nazi Germany of the western part of Poland were also deported when they refused to take Soviet citizenship. The deportations of May and June 1941 were also determined by a combination of territorial, social, and political criteria. For example, the deportations in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were justified by the presence of a "significant number of former members of various counterrevolutionary nationalist parties, former police officers, gendarmes, landowners, manufacturers, key officials of the former State of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and others conducting subversive anti-Soviet activities and used by foreign intelligence services for espionage . . ."[8]

The deportations of 1941 followed the repressive logic of the 1930s, in that they presuppose the existence of "foreign elements" and "class ene-

[8] RGANI, f. 89, op.18, d. 3, l. 2–6. Reproduced in N. L. Pobol' and P. M. Polian, eds., *Stalinskie deportatsii: 1928–1953*, (Moscow: Fond 'Demokratiia' Materik, 2005), 215–17.

mies" who would in theory oppose the establishment of Soviet power. In this scheme the peasantry was not the only suspect: all professions and occupations seen as belonging to the old bourgeois world came into focus. All that was eliminated from the Soviet world during the twenty years since the revolution of 1917—nobles, merchants, independent artisans, former police officers, and so on—was eliminated from the newly occupied territories in just a few days through imprisonment and deportation. These operations were aimed at the total dismantling of existing political and social life in the regions.

This repression was based on a partially imaginary relationship between social origin, on the one side, and intention and loyalty on the other. Suspicion and condemnation were triggered not by any preparation to commit a crime, let alone an actual criminal action, but the mere idea that some groups are dangerous and harmful because they are by definition disloyal due to their social origins. Here we see the consequences of a Marxist interpretation of society that connects socioeconomic origins and position on the one hand, with political views and ideological commitments on the other. The son of an industrialist can only be a counterrevolutionary, while a poor peasant must share the views of Communists (and when he does not, the authorities are sometimes willing to forgive this error more easily).[9] Without a doubt, among those persecuted, many were actually hostile to the new authorities, and some sought to resist the occupation. But the repressions were by no means based on the identification of those who prepared or took actions, but on the imaginary construction of what these categories of population could do.

The deportations that were carried out from 1944 onward throughout the western territories, as the Red Army advanced westward, were based in part on a different logic. The territorial criterion remained essential: for example, this deportation was conducted only in the western regions of Ukraine annexed in 1939 and not in the whole of Ukraine, or in those three districts of the Pskov region of the RSFSR that were part of Estonia before the war and not in the other districts of this region.

But the principles behind the designation of groups affected by these deportations were partially different. Deportations became a powerful tool in the fight against the guerrillas, the armed insurrection, which spread in 1944 throughout these western territories. It was a means to fight organized insurgents whose bases were scattered throughout the country, especially in rural areas. The armed opposition to Soviet occupation was formed during the Second World War, either through collaboration with Nazi Germany or

[9] See, for example, the letter written by Antanas Sniečkus, the First Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party to G. Malenkov, secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1953, LYA, f. 1771, ap. 133, b. 29, l. 139–42.

in the process of fighting against this power, and was reinforced from 1944 onward when many young Balts and Ukrainians refused to be mobilized into the Red Army and joined forces hiding in the forests instead. The motivation of those joining the resistance was varied, ranging from those who rejected the annexations, those who fled conscription, as well as those hiding for collaboration with Nazis or participation in the massacre of Jews.

The emergence of guerrilla warfare stoked the fears of 1941, fears that were partly imaginary and yet at the core of the Soviet political culture and practice. The fight against real opponents blended with the pursuit of social cleansing, a process where the existence of "forest brothers" and "nationalists" became the basis of suspicion against the *byvshye lyudi*[10] and the peasants. In the eyes of the repressive apparatus, social origin and former social status were indicators of potential opposition and necessitated pre-emptive actions to "extract" potentially harmful elements at the collective level.[11] So, in the context of a real armed struggle, the Soviets classified as "opposition" or "resistance" not only those who committed or intended to act against the regime, but those who simply were ascribed to one or another category that was suspicious by definition. Any new deportation operation produced various "labels" that were applied to its victims. People found themselves swept away as a "bandits' accomplice" or a "kulak," or the family member of a "bandit-nationalist" or "active participant in armed bands," etc. These labels would follow them throughout their life in exile (and sometimes even after). It was the responsibility of local authorities, political or administrative, or the Ministry (Commissariat) for Internal Affairs, to find people to fit into these categories. Moreover, these people were assembled not only by mechanically connecting social categories and political suspicions but by attributing automatically the assumed guilt of one person to all members of his or her family. The real or imagine culpability of an individual became the collective guilt of family.

The blurring of these categories most often led Moscow to specify the number of persons to be deported, following the familiar pattern that worked so violently during the great purges of 1937. During these operations, the decisions to deport were mostly based not on any judicial decision, but were purely administrative. It was often a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Lithuanian SSR (after 1946, the Council of Ministers) or the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic, sometimes a simple decision of the Ministry of the Interior which decided the

[10] An expression used after the Russian revolution to stigmatize notables from the tsarist regime.

[11] In the case of Lithuania, for example, the Soviet authorities distinguished between social origin based on the occupation of the parents and the current economic status of an individual or family.

fate of these people. There was not even any attempt to stage a semblance of judicial practice or to demonstrate the guilt of the deportees. They were sent to Siberia only because they were suspected of being able to join the resistance or to help those who would, and this suspicion was usually based on the social or political category to which they were ascribed by the local authorities.

Extract, Remove, Isolate

The deportation of peasants identified as kulaks between 1930 and 1933 was mostly unprepared and had dramatic consequences for the deportees, who suffered high mortality rates on the long voyages and upon arrival. These early deportations of peasants would constitute the pattern of all deportations that followed. The technology of deportation "improved" over time. With a great deal of improvisation and uncertainty, a status, a type of settlement, and a form of surveillance were invented. Various categories of deportees were created: "work settlers" (*trudposelentsy*), "special settlers" (*spetsposelentsy*) and "special displaced persons" (*spetspereselentsy*). They were placed to "work settlements" or "special settlements" (*trudposelki* and *spetsposelki*). During the first deportations, these settlements were mostly created *ex nihilo* and inhabited solely by displaced persons, while later the deportees were often sent to already existing villages, inhabited by the regular population. Finally, a special form of surveillance emerged. At first it was delegated to local administrations, but was then quickly transferred to the OGPU[12] and the NKVD when the latter was established at the all-union level in 1934. Their "commandants" were made responsible for monitoring and above all preventing escapes by collecting the signature of deportees at short intervals to attest to their presence.

The deportations of 1940–41 were better organized than the operations of the early 1930s. NKVD troops were now more experienced in the implementation of mass forced displacements, though the conditions at the beginning of the war greatly complicated operations in 1941. This was drastically evident in the case of men sent initially to prisoner of war camps and then transferred in a panic to Gulag camps. Moreover, the effects of the Nazi invasion obviously increased mortality rates during long journeys to Central Asia or the Far North. In addition to the poor condition of

[12] The Joint State Political Directorate (*Obyedinyonnoye gosudarstvennoye politicheskoye upravleniye* or OGPU) was responsible for ensuring state security until 1934 when it was folded into the newly established all-union People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) in 1934.

transportation, some of the convoys were hit by bombings. Living conditions in special settlements were particularly difficult during the war, causing many deaths. Meanwhile, the mortality rate in the camps in 1942 reached 25 percent.

The operations that took place after the Second World War showed the results of twenty years of repressive practice, combined with the lessons of war. The combination of quasi-military organization and bureaucratic practices transformed the operations conducted between 1948 and 1951 in Lithuania into formidable manifestations of organized violence. Operation *Vesna*, led in 1948 in Lithuania, and operation *Priboi* conducted in 1949 in all three Baltic republics were based on plans established well in advance, with complete lists of those to be deported and with clearly defined destinations, testifying to the efficiency of a well-oiled bureaucratic machine.

Once deported, all those subject to forced displacements were submitted to a special regime—comprising a set of rules, partly established during the early peasant deportations in the 1930s—that defined the space of freedom that "special settlers" could enjoy or the restrictions they had to face.[13] The duration of their exile varied, depending on the moment of deportation and the group to which the deportees belonged. No clear logic emerged to explain why certain groups were deported for six years, others for ten or twenty years, some forever, and others with no specified term. The uncertainties were much larger because the decisions were sometimes changed. Thus, some groups who had been deported "for the duration of the war," were still not released in 1953. In 1948, with the regime introducing much harsher policies toward these populations, several "contingents"[14] of special settlers were informed that, although initially deported for twenty years, they were now to remain in exile forever.

This set of institutions, places and rules led to the creation of a gray area located between the camp population and the rest of society. Those who belonged to this world could not move out of the village to which they were assigned, but they lived without fences or watchtowers—deportees roamed here along with the free populations, especially from the time when the first were sent to ordinary villages. They were given jobs that were half coercive and nevertheless poorly paid. And they were given some freedom to perform other work that could improve their precarious situation. They had a few rights and could fit into some social institutions, such as schools. In these villages shortages were serious, sometimes resembling those in the camps, but daily life preserved a semblance of "Soviet normality."

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[13] About the notion of regimes in Soviet Union, see Tamara Kondratieva, ed., *Les Soviétiques: un pouvoir, des régimes* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011).

[14] In this way were designated groups of people deported by the same decree or order (see later in this chapter).

Camps

Deportations to special settlements were only one component of the repression. Forced labor camps were established early in Soviet Russia, and flourished from the early 1930s. They became one of the central instruments of repression: sentences of up to twenty-five years generated a confined population that would grow until the death of Stalin. Administered for a brief time by the Commissar for Justice, they were quickly organized under a new body specially created to administer such camps, the notorious Gulag (Main Administration of Corrective Labor Camps), a name that came to be used to describe the Soviet confinement system itself.

We make here only brief mention of the Gulag, the essential component of the Stalinist system, because it is so well-known.[15] These forced labor camps and colonies were central to the repression that accompanied the annexation of the western territories. As mentioned earlier, beginning in 1941, men capable of work were sent to these camps while their families were deported. From 1944, the fight against the insurgency in the western territories led to many new arrests. Suspected persons were interrogated to discover or invent their accomplices, and to unravel the underground networks that were believed to support and lead the armed struggle against Soviet power. In this case, convictions were not collective but the prisoners were seen to be part of relational networks, whose members would be subject to interrogation. The files on prisoners preserved in the archives are large, often consisting of hundreds of pages of interrogations, in which the investigators seek not so much to prove the guilt or find evidence of armed actions, but to broaden the scope of the suspects, by constructing relationships with people already arrested or soon to be arrested.

Unlike during a deportation, one was sent to camp by a court decision (except in 1941, when the prisoners of war camps were evacuated to the labor camps of Gulag) which does not mean, of course, that the decisions were any less arbitrary.

That said, the special settlements and the camps were not completely sealed off from one another. Those who tried to escape from the special settlements after 1948 were subject to long terms of confinement in camps. Other deportees, closely monitored in the special settlements, were arrested and convicted for alleged anti-Soviet activities. Conversely, those who were released from the camps were often sent directly to special settlements where their families lived, and became "special displaced persons" (or

[15] In addition to the literature of such well known authors as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn or Varlaam Shalamov, one could mention the historical work of Oleg Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

"special settlers"). Other released inmates, whether their families were deported or not, were sent to special settlements for the sole reason that they were considered dangerous, following a decree published in 1948.

A "People on Paper"[16]

How many were deported in this way? The Soviet repressive apparatus was surprisingly prolific in the production of statistical data, which became more refined and precise over time. In 1932, two years after the start of the first major campaign of forced displacement, the OGPU created a department responsible for keeping track of the number of deportees. Each regional department of the GPU/NKVD scrupulously counted those who "entered" or those who "exited" this special population. Even at the height of World War II the NKVD administration continued to provide accounts of the deported population throughout the entire territory of the USSR.

This statistic fascination (Lynne Viola refers to the "aesthetic of planning" relating to collectivization and the deportation of kulaks[17]) led to the compilation of tables, much like in an annual census, tracing the population dynamics of all deportees, dividing them into groups called "contingents." These contingents structured the deportee population like generations in a census, since they corresponded to populations that fell victim to the same deportation decree. Thus, the statistics count "former kulaks" alongside "Germans," people "from Crimea" classified according to ethnic origin ("*natsional'nost'*" in Russian), people "from the Baltics" ("*iz Pribaltiki*"), etc. This classification was crucial: each family belonged to one of these contingents and this ascribed their identity determined by the length of deportation, the level of distrust of the authorities vis-à-vis these families, the conditions of their release and their distribution across the territory.

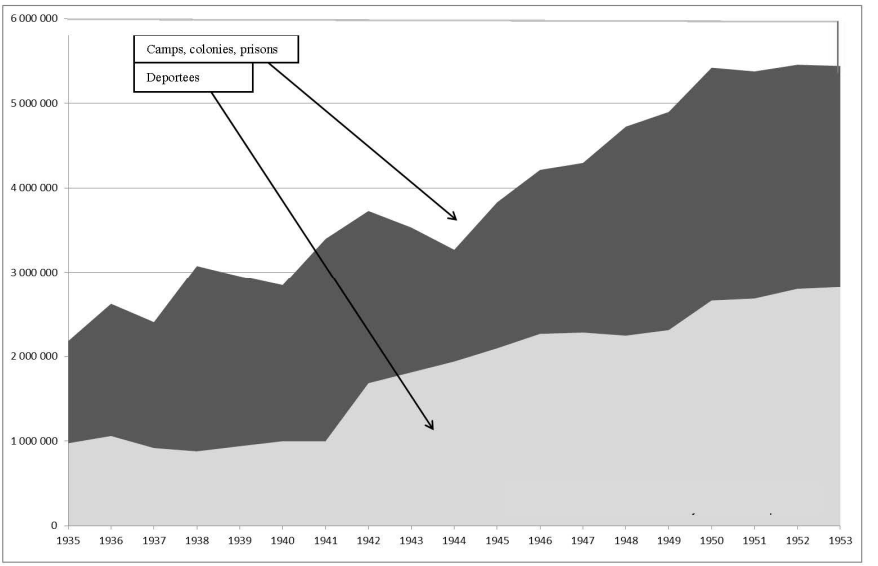
This structured population had, on paper, its own dynamics within the Soviet population. It became distinct, almost isolated by a simple statistical construction, although some bridges to the outside world existed thanks to the releases (which remained very rare, apart from the case of former kulaks released before the Second World War) or the rare marriages that could be described as "mixed" between forcibly displaced persons and the free population. The deportee population was subject to the laws of partly reformulated demography. Statistical tables constructed the dynamics, combining what

[16] This expression was coined by H. Mondon, see her "Les premiers 'déplacés spéciaux'."

[17] Lynne Viola, "The Aesthetic of Stalinist Planning and the World of the Special Villages," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 1 (2002): 101–28.

emerged from natural increase and net migration: births were counted as inputs and so were arrivals; deaths were counted as outputs, as were escapes and releases. The children born to couples of deportees were first inserted only into family records—they did not have, strictly speaking, the special status of displaced persons, but at the same time they could not move freely. At the age of sixteen, however, they became special displaced persons in their own right and were included on the lists. At the beginning of deportation, deportees died faster than the civilian population because of the violence of their departure and the harsh conditions during transport and arrival.

Figure 1. Number of deportees and people in prisons, camps and labor colonies (1935–53).



Source: Based on various documents from GARF, F. R9479. Some are reproduced in Vladimir N. Zemskov, *Spetsposelentsy v SSSR, 1930–1960* (Moscow: Nauka, 2003).

This population was subjected to flows, "inputs and outputs" similar to immigration and emigration, but the flows were composite. The deportee population was constituted mostly in large waves, but also one by one, when a man, for example, was released from camps and joined his deported family, or when a person managed initially to evade one of the deportation operations but was later caught. The population decreased when there were releases, or some people escaped.

Finally, this population was inscribed in territorial terms. The administration regularly produced long lists of places where the deportees resided.

This space did not cover the entire Soviet territory, and its center of gravity moved eastwards after the war.

Thus, between 1930 and 1953, more than six million people were deported within the USSR. This number would grow until the death of Stalin. The population trapped in the colonies, camps, or prisons followed a similar but less pronounced trend. This inexorable growth was due to the logic of Stalinist rule. By the time of Stalin's death, 2.8 million people had the status of special displaced persons; 2.6 million were trapped in camps, colonies, and prisons, which meant that 5.4 million people were thus subject to confinement or deportation.

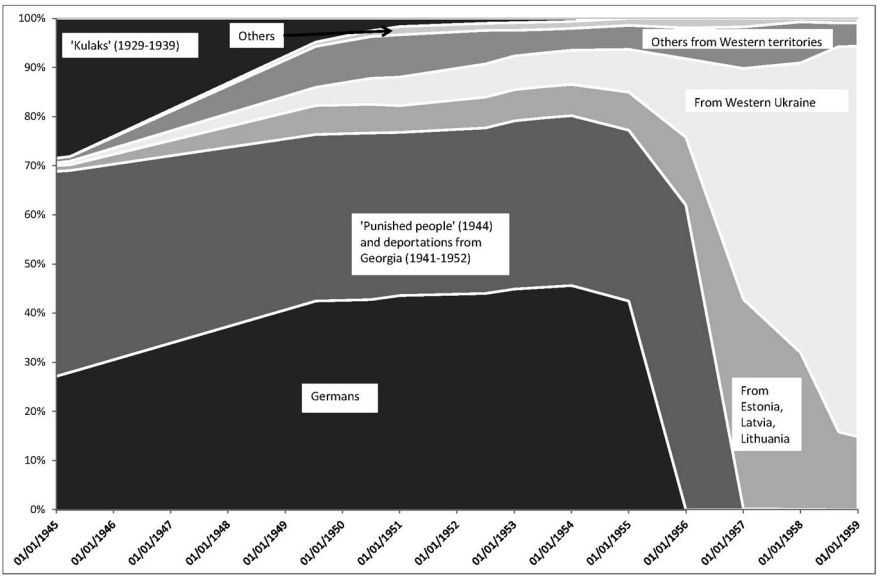
Deportations from the western territories in 1941 affected about 106,000 persons.[18] Among them, 17,500 were deported from Lithuania, of which about 4,700 were sent to camps, and 12,800 family members were moved to special settlements. In 1948, 49,000 people were deported from Lithuania, 32,000 in 1949. The same year, 72,000 were deported from other western territories and 35,000 in 1951. In 1952, a final set of convoys from Western Belarus had 6,000 exiles aboard. In all, there were 220,000 persons deported after the war from these territories, in addition to the 106,000 prewar deportees.

A more general assessment can help to understand these different waves. We propose their reconstruction in Figure 2 that describes the respective share of three aggregate groups among the total population of deportees: "former kulaks," those deported as "punished peoples" during the Second World War, and the population displaced from the western territories of the USSR annexed on the eve of the conflict. We also kept some subdivisions within these groups, based on the categories used by the Soviet authorities. Providing a partial list of such categories, the table indicates how we have grouped them together.

As we can see, the deported population changed in nature over a quarter-century of Stalinist rule. Made up exclusively of peasants (mostly Russian and Ukrainian) in the 1930s, it would become very heterogeneous, a conglomerate of the "punished peoples" (ethnic Germans, Chechens, Crimean Tatars and others), and people from the western territories. Then, after the death of Stalin, the releases would transform its composition once again. The deported population from Western territories became almost the only ones to keep this status.

[18] A. Gurjanovas in "Gyventojų trėmimo į SSRS gilumą mastas (1941 m. gegužės–birželio mėn)," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 2 (1997): 56–65, compares the composite statistics provided by the NKVD and the statistics calculated on the basis of the list of convoys and the number of people per convoy.

Figure 2. Annual distribution of deportees according to contingent of origin (1945–1959).



Source: Reconstitution of various "contingents" (Cumulative percent; 1945–1959) from various documents of GARF, F. R9479, inventory 1; Some are reproduced in Zemskov, *Spetsposelentsy v SSSR, 1930–1960.*

The camp population partly reflected these shifts, but to a lesser extent. For instance, the "Balts" (who included, in the NKVD's language, the people from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) constituted 0.7 percent of the population in camps and settlements in 1939, 1.2 percent in early 1942, but 5.4 percent at the beginning of 1946 and 3.8 percent at the beginning of year 1951. As for the people from Western Ukraine, they made up 12.7 percent of the population at the beginning of 1942, 17.9 percent at the beginning of 1946 and 20 percent in early 1951. Russians, meanwhile, counted 59 percent in 1942, and 55.6 percent in 1951. Note that in 1959, Russians constituted 54.6 percent of the population of the USSR, the Baltic peoples 2.3 percent and the Ukrainians 17.8 percent.

Table 1.1. Deported population groups based on Soviet categories.

I. "Former kulaks" Essentially the peasant deportations of 1929–1932
II. Deportations of 1941–1944, except western territories **II.a Soviet Germans** **II.b "Punished peoples" and others:** Peoples of the North Caucasus (Chechens, Ingush, Karachai, Balkars); Kalmyks; some categories of populations of Crimea, the Black Sea coast and Caucasus (Crimean Tatars, Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, Turks, Kurds, Khemshils; "kulak" deportations from Georgia in 1951–1952)
III. Deportations from the western territories **III.a Populations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia:** Deportations of 1941; Deportations of 1945–1952; "kulaks" from Lithuania in 1951; Jehovah's Witnesses from Lithuania and Estonia; members of the Anders Army from Lithuania, etc. **III.b Populations of Western Ukraine:** Deportations of 1941; deportations of "OUNovtsy"; deportations of 1945–1951 **III.c Other western territories:** Deportations from Moldova and Western Belarus in 1941; deportation from Western Belarus and Moldova in 1945–1951; the Izmail region; the Pskov region; (Soviet) Poles in 1936; "osadniki" and refugees from Poland in 1940–1941, etc.
IV. Others: Members of religious movements (True Orthodox Church, etc.); "Basmachis," Iranians in 1950–1951; deported by the decree of June 2, 1948 for "parasitism in the countryside," etc.

Releases and (non-)Returns

With Stalin's death on March 5, 1953, his successors were left with the cumbersome legacy of millions of prisoners and special displaced persons. The first steps of the new Soviet government reflected its willingness to review the repressive policies as well as the profound difficulty of this undertaking, not only because of the magnitude of the changes to be made, but also because the leaders who succeeded Stalin remained prisoners of the Stalinist mindset, having participated fully in the implementation of these policies. Indeed, the first decisions taken by Lavrentiy

Beria[19] in March 1953 and, after his arrest, the measures which followed under the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev, aimed at reducing the size of the "Gulag Archipelago" (which is more akin to a continent), without condemning Stalinist policies and without questioning the foundations of the repressive logic at work over the previous decades. This explains the slow, partial and inconsistent releases of prisoners and special displaced persons. The first mass releases, presented in the form of amnesty, came only two weeks after the death of Stalin.[20] The number of inmates in the camps, colonies, and prisons declined from 2.6 million to 1.5 million in one year, and to a little more than 900,000 in early 1956. However, the amnesty decreed in March 1953 concerned mainly those with sentences of less than five years. The main beneficiaries were, therefore, not the "political prisoners" (condemned by the famous article 58 of the Penal Code), although a number of them nonetheless benefited from this amnesty.[21] The amnesty awakened hopes among prisoners as well as among the deportees. However the latter would have to wait, sometimes for many years, including some who had been deported because of the arrest of a family member who had since been released.

Shortly after the amnesty law was passed in 1953, Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs Kruglov proposed to Beria a mass release of special displaced persons. However, it was not implemented before Beria was himself arrested, which delayed the release. And then, rather than launching a wave of releases, the Soviet authorities began by relaxing the regime for special displaced persons. In May 1954, control became less strict and the deportees received permission to travel throughout the region (oblast') of their exile. Young people got a chance—at least theoretically—to study outside their region of exile. The release of all children under the age of sixteen, which took place under the same decree, led to a reduction by about one-third of the total number of special displaced persons. This "release," of

[19] People's Commissar for internal affairs between 1938 and 1945, he became a member of the Politburo (Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) in 1946. After the death of Stalin, Beria initiated important reforms, especially the liberation of many Gulag prisoners. He was arrested in June 1953 and executed in December 1953 after a secret trial.

[20] On liberation, see Marc Elie, "Les anciens détenus du Goulag: Libérations massives, réinsertion et réhabilitation dans l'URSS poststalinienne 1953–1964," (PhD Dissertation, Paris, EHESS), http://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00593664; Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009) and Nanci Adler, *The Gulag Survivor: Beyond the Soviet System* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002); Alain Blum and Emilia Koustova, "Negotiating lives, redefining repressive policies: managing the legacies of Stalinist deportations," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 19, forthcoming in 2018.

[21] Elie, "Les Anciens détenus du Goulag," 32–33.

course, was partially an illusion, since the vast majority of the children continued to live with their parents, who were not released. Meanwhile, in 1954, the police de facto abandoned—yet, without formalizing it—the practice of searching for "fugitives" who escaped from their special settlements.[22] This reflects the hesitation of the Soviet authorities, who did not make an effort to find the fugitives, but did not provide any exoneration.

However, those deported from the western territories under these decrees were largely distinguished from the rest of the special displaced population and treated with a greater distrust. They were excluded from the initial steps (except for the release of children) and therefore continued to be subject to the previous regime, a legacy of the years of Stalinism. The particularly strong suspicion against them, already present in Kruglov's report, which proposed mass releases in 1953, would continue to contribute to delays and complicate the process of their liberation. Thus deportees from the western territories would be among the last to be released.

Indeed, after the relaxation of the regime of special settlements, displaced groups began to be released, starting with what was left of the first "kulak exile" (released on July 13, 1954),[23] followed by Soviet Germans (December 1955) then throughout 1956 virtually all of the "punished peoples" (Kalmyks, Greeks, Crimean Tatars, Chechens, etc.). The deportees of the western territories would thus form a majority among the remaining special displaced persons. Those deportees from Western Ukraine accounted in 1957 for almost half of the entire population, followed closely by the Balts whose share exceeded 40 percent. However, in absolute numbers the latter had started to decline in 1954, from about 170,000 to just over 130,000 at the end of this year. There were 48,000 Baltic deportees in 1956, 41,000 in 1957 and 34,000 in 1958. On January 1, 1959, the number of special displaced persons from the Baltics was just over 7,000 people.[24]

These figures deserve comment, as the annual decline does not strictly correspond to "contingents" released each year. If the sharp decline in 1954 reflected the liberation of minors, and that of 1958 was due to the decrees collectively releasing the main categories of Baltic displaced persons, such as "former kulaks," "accomplices of bandits," and "nationalists," the decline recorded in 1957 corresponds to no particular decree.

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[22] We are not aware of any official orders to this effect. However, the Soviet authorities quickly repealed the decree of 1948 that condemned escapees to very long sentences.

[23] The bulk of the peasants deported at the beginning of the 1930s benefited from a series of liberations before WWII.

[24] Various files of the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), fond R9479, opis' 1.

The explanation lies in the complexity of the process of liberation that obeys both collective legal acts adopted in Moscow, and individual decisions from various central and republican committees and institutions.

The releases were in effect operated through two channels—one collective, the other individual. Collective releases were issued by the decrees of the central authorities (Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and Council of Ministers of the USSR). Some of these decisions mix deportees from the western territories with other categories of forcibly displaced populations; others are exclusively dedicated to them. Unlike the "punished peoples" who were always referred to by their ethnicity, the deportees from the western regions, with the exception of the Poles, were defined by categories referring to their presumed (former) social or political situation. Thus, a major decree in 1958 that allowed the collective release of many people from the Baltic republics spoke of "former kulaks," "accomplices of clandestine nationalist groups," "families of former landowners, industrialists, merchants, leaders and members of the bourgeois political parties, anti-Soviet organizations, and former bourgeois government leaders." These decisions recycled the labels used in several decrees that led to the deportations of 1941, 1948, and 1949 in particular. The releases thus reactivated the sociopolitical categories used to determine the criteria of deportation ("kulaks," etc.) without questioning their adequacy or the appropriateness of the repression meted against those who were grouped under these labels. The principle of the initial repression was thus replicated, including the logic that made an entire family guilty of the real or presumed acts of one of its members. The families of Lithuanian, Ukrainian, or Belarusian "nationalists" were thus liberated when the latter was freed.

The preservation of the logic which formed the very basis of repression explains the absence of collective rehabilitation, which would have implied recognition of the unjustified nature of the deportation in the first place. This absence in turn determined the limited nature of the release, which was usually accompanied by a ban on those deported from the western territories to recover confiscated property and return to their region or republic of origin, unless otherwise decided by the competent authorities of Soviet republics from where they had been deported.

The latter case referred to the second, individual, channel of releases, which could be initiated by a family or individual through a request for revision of repressive or discriminatory measures of which they were the victim. Throughout the 1950s, sometimes even to the middle of the next decade, such requests were made *en masse* to various central and republican bodies. They dealt with all types of situations: first, in the absence of collective liberation (i.e., essentially until 1958 in the Lithuanian case), the petitioners asked to be released individually. Those who had already been released (due to a collective order or an individual decision) solicited permission to return to their home republic. They could also argue for a return of their property

and seek for recognition of their deportation as unjustified. The latter amounted to rehabilitation and opened (presumably automatically) the way back to the native region, as well as the restitution of confiscated property.

It would be difficult to find a special displaced family from Lithuania who had not tried this or that opportunity to obtain a review of the situation following this "individual channel." Sometimes the first request to reconsider the deportation decision was sent immediately after the family or individual had been displaced. Such early applications were often presented by relatives in Lithuania, who addressed different republican bodies to argue, for instance, for elderly or unaccompanied minors deported alone to Siberia, for separated families or victims of gross administrative error (confusion due to homonymy, etc.). Faced with an exponential increase in the number of such requests in 1953, the Soviet authorities sought to establish specific procedures and to create ad hoc bodies responsible for their treatment. During the three decades of their operation, between 1953 and 1988,[25] these procedures would go through some changes, including the transfer of authority from Moscow to republican bodies, or some reorganization of the commissions. However, the principles and logic that underlie their operation would remain the same. The processing of individual applications followed a legalistic and bureaucratic approach. It rejected any break with the political and ideological logic which founded the Stalinist repression, thereby keeping continuity with the categories and the legal framework of deportation, to review the legality of the application of this framework in each individual case, and in some cases, to adopt a logic of amnesty or exception.

This legalistic approach dictated a fundamental dissociation between the special displaced persons condemned to exile by the famous "Special Council" of the NKVD/MGB,[26] a repressive Stalinist extra-judicial body with considerable powers, and others, deported by administrative decisions of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR. In the first case, applications in Lithuania were reviewed first by the Special Council itself, and then, once it was disbanded in September 1953, by the Supreme Court of the USSR (until August 1955) and later by the Supreme Court and prosecutor's office of the Lithuanian SSR. Finally, in 1957 the examination of this type of case was transferred to an ad hoc commission created to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR. [27]

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[25] The bulk of the work of these commissions was completed during the first ten years of their existence, after which the number of files they handled dropped significantly. See Blum and Koustova, "Negotiating lives, redefining repressive policies."

[26] An analogous commission worked between 1922 and 1953 under different names, with expansive punitive powers.

[27] We examined the situation in Lithuania, and while the procedures varied slightly from one western republic of the USSR to another, the principles were the same.

By the same logic, the processing of applications for those deported by a decision of the Council of Ministers was first examined internally, relying on the Ministry for Internal Affairs. Very quickly, however, in 1953, the work was entrusted to a newly created institution, the "Commission to Review Citizens' Petitions and the Requests from Competent Services to Annul the Administrative Exile of Citizens Expelled from the Lithuanian SSR," working for the Council of Ministers. A number of reorganizations brought it closer to the commission dealing with issues of deportees forced into exile by the Special Council of the NKVD/MGB. Thus, from 1957 there were officially two separate commissions, each responsible for a specific type of deportee, with the first reporting to the Council of Ministers and the other to the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR. In fact, they were the same, because they met the same day and were composed of the same people, the leaders of republican bodies such as Ministry for Internal Affairs, the KGB, the prosecutor's office and the Supreme Court.

These commissions would decide the fate of applications for release as well as the restitution of property or the right to return after a release had been granted. Their work was strongly influenced by a general reluctance to enact a total rehabilitation of special displaced persons, but also by fear of having to return property confiscated during deportation. Such economic reasoning manifested itself at different times and levels, starting with the responses of local Soviets, whose opinion was systematically sought in the cases of "former kulaks," and ending with the decisions of the commissions themselves. They often preferred to grant some applications (especially for release or return) "as an exception" (*v vide iskliuchenia*) without undermining the logic of repression. The deportation was thus regarded as "justified," except that for one or another reason, the person was released and/or allowed to return to Lithuania.

In reviewing the applications, the commission still used a Stalinist type of stigma. Thus, to meet the demands of the peasants deported as kulaks, these commissions asked local rural authorities for a complementary survey to check whether or not the family was kulak, that is to say whether it had more than twenty hectares of land and/or had used farm workers. Thus the commissions did not question the principle justifying the deportation of "wealthy" peasants, but limited to review some past decisions that led to the inclusion of a particular family in this category. Sometimes they agreed to release "as an exception" some of those who, after verification, remained kulaks in their eyes.

The unfinished and muddled character of such reasoning, which left open the possibility of releasing persons "as an exception" without explicitly defining conditions of such liberations, was also manifest in a denial to pursue those who returned home without having the right to do so after their release. Thus, in 1957 in Lithuania most requests for return were

from people who already lived in Lithuania. Even though they were clearly only rarely prosecuted for an illegal return, their situation was not easy, since they could not get a *propiska*, the famous right of residence that was required to obtain a job.

Conclusion: From Collective Experience to Individual Biographies

The Stalinist way of thinking, founded on social and territorial determinism and collective responsibility, created an imagined community of population groups to be deported. The deportations turned this imagined construct into reality, establishing a common social experience of arrest, transportation under extremely difficult conditions to distant and hostile regions, and submission to a unique system of rules and constraints. The memoirs of survivors frequently testify to the reality of this community of experience, which joined many people from all corners of the USSR. One can also find its traces in the reports of the NKVD, and of regional and local administrations. At the same time, the existence of such community of experience does not in itself create a community of destiny.

Indeed, when several testimonies of survivors are brought together in a collection, it is the singularity of each life story that makes the greatest impression.[28] For as much as the story of arrest, transport to railway stations, the long and painful journey and arrival in distant lands is repeated, with few differences among the stories, the later trajectory of each individual is unique, reflecting a great variety of factors such as age, location, and social and familial environment.

The life trajectories of survivors are also affected by the processes that underlie and accompany the deportations. These processes result from the relationship between the political logic that led to the deportations, the bureaucratic process that followed, and the factors that influenced the adaptation of deportees in their places of exile.[29] The hesitation and timidity of the policy of liberation after Stalin's death are other factors that led to the diversity of personal trajectories. On the one hand, the Soviet authorities remained enclosed in a Stalinist mindset, especially in terms of the slow

[28] The authors of this chapter have participated in the creation of an audio archive, "European Memories of the Gulag," which includes about two hundred interviews with deportees from Central and Eastern Europe. This project led to the publication of an edited volume (Blum, Craveri and Nivelon, *Déportés en URSS: Récits d'Européens au Goulag* [Paris: Autrement, 2012]) and the development of a virtual museum (museum.gulagmemories.eu), which juxtaposes the community of the experience of deportation and the singularity of destiny.

[29] Emilia Koustova, "(Un)Returned from the Gulag Life Trajectories and Integration of Postwar Special Settlers," *Kritika* 16, no. 3 (2015): 589–620.

dismantling of the "archipelago" of special settlements. They continued to think in terms of categories and groups, rather than individuals, and continued to view these groups as guilty and dangerous. They would remain particularly suspicious toward the populations of the western territories. On the other hand, the authorities allowed various options for individual liberation. These complex individual procedures were overlaid to the policies of collective release, introduced over the course of a decade.

The category of "special displaced persons" disappeared only in 1965, when the Jehovah's Witnesses, deported by Stalin from the western territories in 1951, were finally released. It would take twelve years after the death of Stalin before the special settlers status would completely disappear. But the long process of rehabilitation, restitution of property, or simply return home continued until 1988, when the deportation decisions were collectively annulled during perestroika. Then began, on the one hand, the legislative process of rehabilitation and compensation, which followed a different path in each of independent states and, on the other hand, the transformation of the deportation experience in the memory of all those who now could talk openly about this tragedy.

Tomas Balkelis

Ethnicity and Identity in the Memoirs of Lithuanian Children Deported to the Gulag*

> In exile, my friends from the deportation train and I are sitting not on class benches—we are digging salt in Siberian Usol. The salt melts in the water, but not in our memory. It will never melt in the memory. . . . The memory is stronger than a stone. Our memory is made of diamonds.
>
> *From the memoirs of Antanina Garmutė*[1]

Introduction

The displacement of children is a theme rarely examined in scholarly works on Soviet deportations. This can be partly explained by the fact that children, other than the homeless and those considered inveterately delinquent, were seldom a discrete target group for the Soviet repressive apparatus.[2] Most often they were deported just because they were members of the families of "enemies of the socialist state." Yet one key premise of this chapter is that deported children should not be viewed as "secondary" victims of a totalitarian regime, nor merely as another voiceless sub-group, but as active and articulate social agents in their own right. My principal aim in this chapter, which investigates the fate of Lithuanian children in Soviet deportations, is not to present a "children's martyrology," but to try to understand the complex specificities of children's perceptions, experiences, and actions by paying attention to their own voices.

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[1] Published in Aldona Žemaitytė, ed., *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje* (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1989), 73–74.

[2] Rosaria Franco, "Social Order and Social Policies towards Displaced Children: the Soviet Case, 1917–1953." (PhD Dissertation: University of Manchester, 2006).

But why study the forcibly displaced children separately from the parents with whom they were dispatched into exile? Can we understand the Soviet deportations in some different way by focusing on the experiences, actions, and testimonies of children instead of those of adults? For one thing, the experiences of children in exile were often different from those of their parents. While adults were subject to brutal collective labor obligations, their children—while most were also required to undertake forced labor—were sometimes afforded access to schools where they were to receive basic education and to undergo re-socialization as future citizens. The Soviet regime's treatment of deported children throws light on its perceptions of the collective "other" and the capacities of individuals at different life-stages to undergo reform and rehabilitation. Stalinist attitudes and policies toward deported children also starkly highlight points of confrontation between the regime's pro-family discourse and its practices of social intervention, as well as between its welfare and penal policies.

In reality, when adult exiles became debilitated by the deportation transports and harsh conditions of exile, their children were often obliged to provide and care for them. In such circumstances, as many sources demonstrate, the children assumed "grown-up" roles in the family. Secondly, therefore, the study of displaced children focuses attention on these subjects' specific responses to deportation and the disciplinary structures of life in exile. Wittingly or not, children often tested the limits of the Soviet system by adopting behavioral strategies that circumvented, subverted and exposed its ideological fallacies and administrative contradictions. Children's accounts of life in exile show complex processes of identity-building that need to be studied alongside experiences of other marginal groups. To paraphrase Katherine Jolluck, who wrote about women in Soviet exile, the testimonies of children can be read as stories of how they strove to create their private and familiar worlds under conditions of displacement.[3] Significantly, unlike their adult relatives, displaced children had little or no experience of normal sedentary life. Their experience is made unique by the fact that their notions of themselves, their homeland, and society were formed in exile. Examining how the Soviet repressive system treated child deportees, as well as investigating their responses, can be an informative means of shedding light generally on the political system.

In the interwar period, Lithuania had developed a strong political and ethnic identity of its own as an independent state. After the Soviet Union's invasion and occupation of the Baltic states in 1940, Moscow expended much energy trying to integrate the western non-Russian areas into its territory. Mass deportations were central to this policy of borderland integra-

[3] Katherine R. Jolluck, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002), 20.

tion. According to one estimate, the arrests and deportations that took place in the Baltic states, eastern regions of Poland, Moldova, and Bukovina, from April 1940 to June 1941, swept about 438,000 individuals into the Soviet interior.[4] The second wave of displacement that continued between 1945 and 1953 forced into exile and camps another 256,000 people from the Baltics alone.[5] In Lithuania, about 17,500 people were deported in 1941 and about 132,000 during 1945–53.[6] Among them there were about 39,000 children.[7]

With reference to the Lithuanian children in exile, this study is particularly concerned with exploring the relationship between displacement and ethnicity. If ethnic identity, as many social scientists claim, is socially constructed and culturally transmitted through the interaction between the individual and the wider co-ethnic community, how then does displacement affect the construction of identity?[8] Uprooted from their ethnic social environment early in their lives, how did the Lithuanian children interpret the motives and experiences of their exile? How did displacement shape their perceptions of homeland? What role did ethnicity play in their strategies of survival and the formation of their identities in exile?

This chapter is also concerned with examining children's subjective experiences of displacement as represented in their exile diaries and memoirs. In 1989, the Lithuanian Archive of Exile (*Lietuvių tremties archyvas*) published a collection of memoirs by seven people who as children or teenagers had been deported between 1941 and 1953 from Lithuania to Soviet Rus-

[4] Terry Martin, "Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies: Patterns, Causes, Consequences" in *Demography and National Security,* ed. Myron Weiner and Sharon Stanton Russel (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 323.

[5] Vladimir N. Zemskov, "Prinuditelnye migratsii iz Pribaltiki v 1940–1950-kh godakh," *Otechestvennyye arkhivy,* no. 1 (1993): 4–19. Also quoted in Martin, "Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies," 324.

[6] Arvydas Anušauskas, *Lietuvių tautos sovietinis naikinimas, 1940–1958 metais* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1996), 403.

[7] This figure is based on the estimates of V. N. Zemskov (data for 1945–1951) and L. Kerulis (data for 1941). See Vladimir N. Zemskov, "Masovoe osvobozhdenie spetsposelentsev i ssilnykh, 1954–1960," *Sociologicheskie issledovania* 1 (1991), 5–26; Leonardas Kerulis, *A Registry of Deported Lithuanians* (Chicago: Pasaulio lietuvių archyvas, 1981), 518. See also most recent data provided in Arvydas Anušauskas, *Teroras: 1940–1958* (Vilnius: Versus Aureus, 2012), 279.

[8] Arash Abizadeh, "Ethnicity, Race, and a Possible Humanity," *World Order* 33, no. 1 (2001): 23–34; Joan Ferrante, Prince Browne, eds., *The Social Construction of Race and Ethnicity in the United States* (New York: Longman, 1998); Franke Wilmer, "Identity, Culture and Historicity: the Social Construction of Ethnicity in the Balkans," *World Affairs* 160, no. 1 (Summer 1997): 3–14; Fredrick Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1969).

sia.[9] This anthology, as well as writings by other former Lithuanian child deportees published during the 1990s and more recently, served as principal sources for this study. To be sure, most of these testimonies were written from the perspective of adulthood, composed in the decades following return from exile, although some contain entries in diary style, suggesting that their authors referred to, or directly incorporated, material from their own childhood journals. The retrospective adult standpoint naturally imposes specific narrative tropes on the representation of early experiences, in particular, an emphasis on the collective suffering of the ethnic community, which imparts a wider meaning to the child's more inchoate, more personalized impressions. I discuss this later in this chapter, with reference to Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs, which exist in two versions: one written immediately during her displacement, the other from the perspective of mature adulthood.

In addition, the reader should be aware that most of these exile accounts were written in the post-1990 political context of independent Lithuania, which imposed on them certain generic features. Principal among these is an emphasis on ethnicity and on collective above individual suffering. In their accounts, the personal injustices suffered by Lithuanian deportees are greatly reinforced, and sometimes overshadowed, by the communal hostility they felt toward the Soviet regime and their loyalty toward independent Lithuania. At the same time the new Lithuanian political elite used these narratives as political tools in their struggle to reestablish and consolidate national independence.

Nevertheless, my contention here is that all these works, which recount childhood perceptions and experiences in often minute detail, are able to convey an intense immediacy to described events, as well as to communicate vividly the psychological, emotional, and material dislocations, dilemmas, and challenges that their subjects faced during the years of deportation. Reading them as a corpus, it is also possible, to some extent, to identify the principal elements of the retrospective framework, and to "see through" the adult apparatus into the child's own cognition of their world of displacement. It would be a great misconception to treat these accounts purely as a product of the political context of the 1990s when they were written.

The first part of this essay briefly examines the scale, motives, and character of the two major Soviet deportations from Lithuania in 1941 and 1945–53, and the place of children in them. The next two sections discuss children's experiences in the Gulag with an emphasis on their survival strategies and the meanings of ethnicity for their identities.[10]

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[9] Žemaitytė, ed., *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*.

[10] In this chapter the use of the term "Gulag" does not follow the narrow definition of the GULAG as a Soviet system of labor camps and prisons (*Gosudarstvenoe*

Children in Soviet Deportations from Lithuania, 1941–53

In Lithuania, the first Soviet mass deportation that started in the early hours of Saturday, June 14, 1941, and continued until June 17, swept about 17,500 people into exile.[11] Among the deported, 70 percent were Lithuanians, 17.7 percent Poles, 9.2 percent Jews and 2 percent Russians. Social groups targeted most severely were farmers (29%), former state officials (16.8%), workers (14.2%), housewives (10.7%), and teachers (8.7%).[12]

There were about 5,500 children among the first contingent of Lithuanian deportees (see Table 2.1). According to Leonardas Kerulis, these included 965 children under four years of age, 1,918 between five and ten, and 2,276 between eleven and eighteen. Almost all of them were deported as family members of "enemies of the Soviet state," as defined by Soviet juridical and administrative classifications of the new borderland populations. The Soviet regime was in fact principally concerned with integrating the newly acquired East European territories into state territory by cleansing them of all population groups potentially harmful to the Soviet regime: security and Sovietization were the primary motives for the forced resettlements.[13] Criteria for selecting those to be deported were loose—social status and political views were obviously important, but many were expelled on the basis of their ethnicity alone, their religious affiliation, or simply family ties.[14] The sweeping, pre-emptive nature of this borderlands purge dictated the logic of including minors among the so-called "dangerous elements."

Upravlenie Lagerei). It follows the modern usage of the "Gulag" as the whole Soviet system of forced labor including all types of camps, prisons, and special exile settlements for men, women, and children (*spetsposeleniia*). The majority of the Lithuanian child deportees found themselves in these special settlements. Political prisoners were kept mostly in camps and prisons, while deportees were placed in special settlements.

[11] Arvydas Anušauskas, "1998 m. duomenys," in *Lietuvos naikinimas ir tautos kova,* ed. I. Ignatavičius (Vilnius: Vaga, 1999), 577; Kerulis, *A Registry of Deported Lithuanians*, 517; Eugenijus Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai, 1940–1941 ir 1945–1953 metais* (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1996), 141; Anušauskas, *Teroras, 1940–1958*, 65.

[12] Birutė Burauskaitė, ed., *Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas,* vol. 1 (Vilnius: Spauda, 1992), 782–84.

[13] Martin, "Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies," 322; Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 421–22; Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 22–30.

[14] Terry Martin claimed that after 1941 "there was not only a trend towards ethnic deportations, but also an increasing *ethnicization* of the existing special settler population." See Martin, "Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies," 329.

Table 2.1. Children Deported from Lithuania, 1940–1941.

Age	Boys	Girls	TOTAL
younger than 1	166	150	316
1–4	506	443	949
5–10	1,003	915	1,918
11–18	1,159	1,117	2,276
TOTAL	2,834	2,625	5,459

Source: Kerulis, Leonardas, *A Registry of Deported Lithuanians* (Chicago: Lithuanian World Archives, 1981), 518. According to Kerulis, the total number deported from Lithuania in 1940–1941 was 19,285 (Ibid., 517).

The second wave of Soviet deportations from Lithuania started in 1945 and continued until 1953. According to Eugenijus Grunskis, there were thirty-four separate deportations in Lithuania between 1945 and 1953, which forced into exile about 111,400 people.[15] Data of the Soviet Ministry of the Interior of January 1, 1953, shows that there were 80,189 registered "special exiles" from Lithuania who had been deported between 1945 and 1949, including 20,074 children. In addition, there were 5,167 children among the 18,097 Lithuanians deported in a further operation in 1951.[16]

Although many victims described the 1941 deportation as the most brutal, the post-1945 deportations were larger in scale and more selective in targeted groups. Children again figured as "members of families" of deportees, although the two main categories of Soviet "state enemies" to be deported now became "Lithuanian bandits" and the so-called "traitors of the fatherland."[17] The armed resistance of Lithuanian forest partisans, which continued from 1944 until the early fifties, provided a continuous fresh intake of deportees for the Soviet forced labor system. The authorities comfortably stretched the "traitor" category to include all other potentially unreliable groups as well as their family members. This postwar pattern of deportations was briefly interrupted by collectivization and the ensuing 1947 mass deportation of Lithuanian kulaks to Siberia, when about 33,000 farmers and their family members were deported.[18]

One of the most striking features of the Soviet deportations in Lithuania was the Soviet authorities' deliberate policy of targeting entire family

[15] Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 189.

[16] Vladimir N. Zemskov, "Massovoe osvobozhdenie spetsposelentsev i ssylnykh, 1954–1960," *Sotsiologicheskie issledovania,* no. 1 (1991), 6–7.

[17] Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 74.

[18] Martin, "Stalinist Forced Relocation Policies," 324. These numbers are included in the total figures for deportees given earlier.

groups. A 1941 order issued by the Soviet People's Commissariat of the Interior (NKVD, the political police) set out detailed instructions for detaining the families of selected individuals, and providing for their transportation, distribution, and employment in the Soviet interior. The underlying motive was to ensure that families of victims were no longer able to remain cohesive social units presenting a potential risk to the new structures of political power. These instructions, signed by NKVD Chief Ivan Serov "with regard to the Baltic deportations," included a paragraph "How to separate the deportee's family from a head of the family."[19]

Although according to these instructions the deportee's family was meant to be given "no longer than two hours for preparation" and each member was allowed to take up to 100 kg of food, clothing, and personal belongings, in reality the NKVD and local militia who conducted the arrests rarely followed these directives. Looting, drinking, intimidation, and beating were common as entire families were arrested and deported as they were found, without adequate clothing and provisions. One former Lithuanian child deportee recalled the arrival of soldiers at her family house after her father was sentenced as the former head of a regional government in independent Lithuania (the memoir writer was four at the time):

> Our entire family was deported in the early morning of June, 13, 1941. Seven soldiers came, forced us from our sleep; they seated father on a stool, ordered him to raise his hands and pointed a pistol at him. They seated us four children at the table, we were crying and screaming, afraid for father. . . . After they finished the search, they piled all our books in the yard and set them on fire telling us that they were bourgeois literature. My youngest sister was only two years old.[20]

The Kitkauskai family were deported for their sixteen-year-old son's alleged involvement in an anti-Soviet organization. He and his classmates were arrested in their school classroom and taken to a local NKVD headquarters for interrogation.[21] In Kaunas, eight-year-old Jokūbas Baronas was shot through his shoulder during his arrest—shooting into the ceiling was a common practice among the security forces to intimidate the victims.[22] Thirteen-year-old Antanina Garmutė was seized separately from her family since her

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[19] "Peoples' Commisar I. Serov's instructions regarding a deportation of the dangerous population from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, May 19, 1941," in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940–1941, 1944–1953 metais sovietinės okupacinės valdžios dokumentuose: Dokumentų rinkinys,* ed. Antanas Tyla (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1995), 152–58.

[20] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 188–89. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are author's own.

[21] Ibid., 154.

[22] Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai,* 132.

parents were not at home at the time of the arrest; she was ordered to gather her belongings in five minutes. After an attempted escape, she was beaten into unconsciousness. Later she was offered the chance to buy herself out of deportation with money or gold:

> I had nothing and could not buy myself out. But there were some means to do that: Radzevičius [one of the militiamen] started rummaging in our things, emptied the bags made from bed covers, and then started putting in them everything that seemed to him of value: my mother's home made linens and threads of linen. . . . He put inside the bags different small things, even a bunch of long wax candles. I was horrified.[23]

After the seizure of their belongings, Antanina and her family were still deported.

There were also cases of mistaken arrest. In one instance, the Širkos family (wife and four children) were mistakenly deported instead of the Šurkos family. After Mr. Širka was released on July 18, 1941, he tried to stop the deportation of his wife and children. Unfortunately his efforts came too late: his entire family was already in Trofimov, Iakutia (in the Russian Far North), where all except one sixteen-year-old daughter starved to death in 1943.[24]

The arrest of a deportee's family generally occurred in their home. The first encounter with the state's repressive power shattered conceptions of private comfort and domestic security. Further encounters escalated in brutality and intensified their alienation from habitual places and norms. After their arrest, families were loaded into cattle carriages (on average 30–40 people per carriage) together with their personal belongings and transported to the Soviet interior.[25] As a rule, women, children, and the elderly were deported separately from heads of households.[26] This amplified their suffering: the deportees' diaries are full of references to the early deaths of small children, pregnant women, and elderly people from suffocation, congestion, heat, and dehydration inside the train carriages. In one set of memoirs, a former child deportee recalls the death of woman named Žeglienė, who died after giving birth in a train carriage near Omsk:

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[23] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 48–49.

[24] "Bolševikų klaidų aukos," *Lietuvos Raudonojo kryžiaus žinios* 9 (October 16, 1941), 1.

[25] Also there were numerous cases when 70 to 80 people were crammed into one carriage. See, Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai,* 36.

[26] There were some deportations, for example in 1948, when all members of the family were deported together. See Vladimir Bashkuev, "Lithuanian Deportees in Buryat-Mongolia, 1948–1950," in *Russia and the Baltic States: Political relations, National identity and Social Thought in the XVIIIth–XXth centuries,* ed. R. Büttner (Samara: Parus, 2001), 252.

> Žeglienė was lifted from the train and laid on the ground. But she had lost blood and died, and the baby was screaming next to her. We don't know whether anyone took him because our train moved ahead after letting a military transport pass by. The dead mother and her newborn remained on the ground.[27]

Armed convoys were given responsibility for clearing deportees' corpses from the rail carriages; often the bodies were simply dumped on the track or in a nearby forest.[28] Despite the cruelties, the rate of children's death during transportation was relatively low; in many instances the deportees were provided with medical care.[29]

How did the deported children try to make sense of their arrest and the ensuing journey to the East? It is impossible to offer a generalized answer to this question. Most shared confusion, fear, and shock of the experience, but different individuals explained their ordeal in different ways. The fact that most of them described their exile experiences when they were adults, however, did impose a specific narrative framework on their accounts, most commonly that of the collective suffering of their entire ethnic group. Antanina Garmutė, deported at the age of thirteen without her parents, described her journey into exile as a collective experience:

> Our transport was again and again passed by other deportation trains that had left after ours. "People," someone said, "the whole of Lithuania is traveling!" My fading consciousness was suddenly penetrated by a thought: If the whole of Lithuania, then all the trains will be full of my relatives! . . . It is then worth living. I'm not afraid even being shot with my people![30]

If the suffering was understood as an ordeal that had befallen the entire community, it could give some individuals a meaning and the motivation to survive. For some, personal misery became less significant in the context of the suffering of their entire people.

The deportations represented a break in childhood time, while physical displacement also meant forced abandonment of traditional places of comfort—home and the native social and cultural milieu. Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, deported at the age of fourteen, eight years later wrote an account in which she vividly characterized her journey to Siberia as the end of her childhood:

> I can feel that one stage of my life is over. Period. From now on there will start a new one, unclear and frightening. . . . The struggle for life is starting, Dalia.

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[27] A. Andriukaitis, "Pasmerktieji" in *Kryžius šiaurėje,* ed. Eugenijus Ignatavičius (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1992), 252.

[28] Juzefa Lupeikytė, *Karlagas* (Vilnius: Valstybinis leidybos centras, 1993), 17.

[29] Bashkuev, "Lithuanian Deportees,"253.

[30] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 57.

> Gymnasium, childhood, fun, jokes, theater and girlfriends—all are the past. You are already an adult. You are already fourteen. . . . The first act of my life struggle is on.[31]

For Grinkevičiūtė and others who chose to interpret this ordeal from an individual rather than collective perspective, their journey into exile served as a "right of passage" into adulthood. But the transition had to take place swiftly, those who were still too young had to grow up or perish. Nevertheless, the abandonment of childhood space and time did not by itself provide the children with a basis for developing new identities. Their exile identity, in other words, was not only formed by loss, but shaped, hardened, and tested by their everyday life in the Gulag.

Strategies of Survival

What do the children's memoirs tell about their survival strategies in exile? How did they manage to adjust to forced labor and the Soviet administrative system in the Gulag? After her arrest in 1941 at the age of fourteen, Dalia Grinkevičiūtė was deported to a forced labor settlement in eastern Siberia. In 1949 she managed to escape to Lithuania and wrote a memoir of her displacement. She was caught in 1951 and sent back to Siberia again. Before her second arrest, she buried the manuscript of her memoir in a garden. Thinking it lost, she wrote a second version thirty years later. However in 1991, three years after Grinkevičiūtė's death, the early memoir was fortuitously unearthed. This find, which coincided with the nationalist revival that led to Lithuania's independence the previous year, produced a shock in society and opened a public debate on the Gulag's victims. As a result, numerous other deportees' memoirs came to light. Vytautas Landsbergis, a political leader of the Lithuanian national movement, described Grinkevičiūtė's memoir as fulfilling "a duty . . . to testify in the court of humanity, a court to judge Communism."[32] Extracts of her writings were included in educational programs for Lithuanian secondary schools.

At the same time some former deportees asserted publicly that Grinkevičiūtė's memoir did not accurately reflect their own experiences. Arvydas Vilkaitis, who was interned at the same Gulag camp, claimed that her narrative was inaccurate and even unethical. He stated that "her early memoir was written hurriedly" and that "her teen imagination processed secondary

[31] Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 1997), 37.

[32] Vytautas Landsbergis, "A Piercing Light" in Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, *A Stolen Youth, a Stolen Homeland* (Vilnius: Vilspa, 2002), 5.

things in a peculiar way."[33] He was most upset by her critical judgment of other Lithuanian deportees, her depictions of their moral degradation, corruption, and egoism. He claimed that her perspective was egotistical and failed to convey the shared experience of the deportees. Other former deportees, however, defended Grinkevičiūtė's memoir, arguing that it was precisely the subjective and self-expressive nature of her work that made it uniquely capable of communicating what they had undergone and how they had survived in the Gulag.[34]

Indeed, Grinkevičiūtė's testimony is exceptional because she vividly and without patriotic pathos describes the dehumanizing effect that the Gulag had both on the perpetrators and its victims. In her youth Grinkevičiūtė evidently did not feel constrained by the need to tell her personal story from the perspective of collective suffering of the entire ethnic community of deportees. Instead, she described it from a perspective of a displaced teenage girl with a strong individual voice, a child whose childhood has been stolen.

Ethnicity in her early memoir serves as a unifying bond among the deportees mostly in situations where at least some semblance of normal social life was still possible. For example, Dalia is deeply moved by the collective singing of Lithuanian deportees on the shores of the River Angara: "A song would unite us, would make us stronger, as if telling us that we will have to suffer much, but Lithuania's children must endure."[35] But she discovers that the ethnic, cultural, and even religious bonds that unite the Lithuanians may dissolve under the extreme conditions of the Gulag's inferno. Thus she is ironic about those Lithuanian women deportees who try to save themselves from starvation by entering into sexual relations with Soviet administrators, guards, and workers:

> I pretend that I sleep as I watch how Štarienė is flirting with a soldier. She is a very pious woman, or at least wants to make such an impression, a true patriot. If she hears anywhere how a child sings a Russian song, she smiles contemptuously and reproaches the parents. Meanwhile, she is making out with NKVD men and Russians. . . . She is beautiful, but absolutely mischievous. She smiles at a Russian, and he is touching her and laying her down. When she talks about her husband Bronius who is in camps, it seems real tears are running from her blue eyes. She is a Jesuit.[36]

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[33] Arvydas Vilkaitis, *Gyvensim* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 1999), 412–13.

[34] Violeta Davoliūtė, "Testimony: from the Poetics of Place to the Politics of Memory." (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Toronto, 2005), 45–65; Marius Ivaškevičius, "Meno Pauzė," *Šiaurės Atėnai,* no. 643 (March 8, 2003), 37.

[35] Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, 43.

[36] Ibid., 51.

Grinkevičiūtė ridicules deportees' hypocrisy and their attempts to moralize others. At the same time she is aware that their unethical behavior is produced by the extreme circumstances ("they could not be accused of depravity, because all instincts had been already atrophied by hunger."[37]). The plight of women forces her to rethink her childhood notions of ethical behavior in the middle of the complex social network of the adults' world of the camps. In the face of this ordeal, collective notions of suffering are being replaced by the individual's will to survive and to preserve ethical integrity. This ethical dimension is strongly present in the first, youthful, and most immediate version of Grinkevičiūtė's memoir, which she wrote in her early twenties. It is less apparent in the second memoir, which she wrote in her early fifties.[38]

According to her first memoir, Grinkevičiūtė is already aware in her early teens that it is the camp system that is primarily responsible for this dehumanization of deportees. She is appalled that her name is replaced by a number in a camp. In this anonymity, camp rules and orders of behavior deserve no respect and must be circumvented and subverted in every situation, as long as it does not threaten her survival. Grinkevičiūtė is proud of the fact that she is sentenced in a camp trial for stealing wood for her dying mother. Standing in front of the camp prosecutor, she observes how four other detainees are lying to defend themselves: "The whole brigade lies. The Soviet Union lied and will lie forever. They stole, they steal and they will steal."[39] She refuses to lie herself and openly confesses that she stole deliberately and with no shame, to save the life of her sick mother. The scene reaches its culmination as the four accused who denied their guilt are sentenced to two years, while Grinkevičiūtė is absolved on the basis of her young age and confession.

Memoirs of other Lithuanian child deportees are also full of references to their ability to survive the Gulag by finding holes in a system built on the notion of collective property. Jūratė Bičiūnaitė, deported at the age of seventeen, steals wood from a local Soviet collective farm and aluminum plates from her camp's canteen.[40] A younger brother of Paulina Motiečienė, deported in her early teens, steals raw dough from a camp bakery for his family. Child prisoners in Trovimosk steal fresh fish from a local fish factory. In the evening in their barrack, they laugh at each other's stories about how they smuggled out still-wriggling fish by squeezing them into their jacket sleeves and sneaking them out under the careful gaze of the camp guard. This enables their families to withstand scurvy through the

[37] Ibid., 99.
[38] Both versions of her memoirs can be compared in Grinkevičiūtė, *A Stolen Youth*.
[39] Grinkevičiūtė, *A Stolen Youth*, 74.
[40] Jūratė Bičiūnaitė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1990), 34–35.

harsh Russian winter. Thanks to their childish ingenuity and skills, children in exile often replace their parents as principle guardians for their younger brothers and sisters, as well as looking after their parents. Grinkevičiūtė nurtures her dying mother for several months ("you have to take care of your mother, to replace your father"[41]). She is even able to escape with her to Lithuania where her mother dies and has to be buried in secret. Seventeen year-old Bičiūnaitė takes care of her paralyzed brother who is unable to walk.[42] This early entrance into adulthood toughens children's identities and earns them the respect and even admiration of adults in their common pursuit of survival.

The Soviet Gulag was built as a system of forced labor, and the large numbers of deported children were an integral part of it. Occasionally, the children were organized in special "children brigades," but more often they were forced to work alongside adult deportees. Fifteen-year-old Grinkevičiūtė worked along adult prisoners for eighteen hour days in a collective farm.[43] Thirteen-year-old Garmutė, as a member of the children's brigade, was assigned to the task of filling sacks with salt in a salt factory.[44] Antanas Abromaitis, deported at the age of ten, was sent to fish with nets in the Lena River and the Laptev Sea. Bičiūnaitė had to work in a stone quarry.[45] These children were often expected to fulfill the same work quotas as adults. Those who failed received only a small portion of their daily amount of bread, which was the usual means of punishing ineffective workers. Grinkevičiūtė describes her experience of being forced to carry flour sacks and food boxes together with adult male deportees:

> Men are carrying two sacks at a time. They load one sack on my shoulders. One step, and it becomes dark in my eyes. . . . I feel how I'm swinging to both sides. I wake up on the deck. The falling sack has dislocated my shoulder. "How old are you?" "Fifteen." "Strange, fifteen and you cannot lift a sack. In our places twelve year olds are already loading. What a rotten people!"—a brigadier says . . .[46]

Eventually, Grinkevičiūtė feels pride when she is able to fulfill the daily workload of an adult deportee; this earns her camp's respect.

In Garmutė's exile settlement, children were asked to produce 500 bags of salt per day: "we would not make it; there would be only about 200 at the end of the day. Then all of us who were still able to hold a spade would

[41] Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, 37.
[42] Ibid., 37.
[43] Ibid., 40.
[44] Žemaitytė, ed., *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 63.
[45] Bičiūnaitė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 33.
[46] Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, 57.

be sent out to dig salt."[47] In such circumstances, only the toughest of them, or those who had adult guardians or protectors, were able to survive. In her memoir, Garmutė recalls how on Trovimovsk Island (on the Arctic shore of Iakutia), after the death of the family head Baranauskas, the man's wife and five children died of starvation:

> Their eight-year-old daughter Birutė was still around people. She was asking everyone to take her into their family promising, "I'm not going to eat much" . . . After several days she was found dead on her bed.[48]

Some children fared better by taking advantage of limited opportunities to obtain physically less demanding jobs and positions in exile settlements. Some, such as Motiečienė, found employment as babysitters or house cleaners with local party functionaries.[49] Seven-year-old Laima Viburytė was able to improve her food ration by cleaning the houses of Russian officers.[50] Others, such as Garmutė, who later found work as a trainee geologist, were lucky to find employment outside their exile settlements. This type of work strengthened their human dignity and provided them with at least a temporary illusion of "normal life." Garmutė writes, "An exile who works among free and cultured people gradually starts to think about themselves as a human being."[51]

Those who managed to establish at least minimal social contacts with local people outside also faired better than those whose social world remained isolated within a deportee community. In this respect the so-called "special deportees" who had some freedom of movement, were in a more advantageous position than camp prisoners. Seventeen year-old Bičiūnaitė, for example, was able to establish some business contacts with a local Russian peasant family, trading her handmade tools for milk products. This helped her relatives to survive a harsh Siberian winter.

Despite the extraordinarily ruthless character of the Gulag system, deported children were able to benefit from its educational and welfare provisions. In Buryatia, Lithuanian children who had lost their parents were placed in special shelters and orphanages.[52] Grinkevičiūtė, deported to Trofimovsk, one of the most brutal Far Northern camps on the shore of the Laptev Sea, where the annual mortality rate of the deportees was about 30 percent, recalled how happy she was to attend camp school; it shortened

[47] Žemaitytė, ed., *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 53.
[48] Ibid., 110.
[49] Ibid., 132.
[50] Stanislovas Abromavičius, *Tremties vaikai* (Kaunas: Lietuvos politinių kalinių ir tremtinių sąjunga, 2012), 151.
[51] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 77.
[52] Bashkuev, "Lithuanian Deportees," 260.

her long workday by four hours.[53] A few years after her deportation, Motiečienė was allowed to study at a medical school in Syktyvkar, the only Lithuanian student in the entire school. Bičiūnaitė was able to attend art and music lessons in a local art studio.[54] Algirdas Marcinkevičius, deported at the age of six, wrote that classes in his camp school contained 25–30 pupils. Since there was no paper, they used newspapers and wrote between the printed lines. Teachers in camp schools often did not have any pedagogical education and experience, and physical punishment was common. Sometimes this took extreme forms. One child deportee described how:

> Once they shut me in a special room with a small baby bear. And the angry beast started fighting and raving. I was able to beat him back with frozen fish that filled the room. . . . As long as the bear ate his fish, he would not touch me, but when he finished, he would tumble onto me again.[55]

Often children were able to adapt to the repressive Soviet system more effectively than adult deportees. Despite heavy labor requirements, they still had limited access to the educational system, while their abilities to develop private social networks outside deportee communities helped them, and their families, to survive in the most adverse circumstances. Although ethnic communities of deportees offered some protection to these children, they also demanded the children's rapid integration as laborers and providers. Children's strategies of survival, their learned or instinctive autonomy, took them outside and beyond the ethnic communities to which they "belonged." Survival was also a function of their ability to circumvent the rules of the Gulag system. As a result, the repressive Soviet system created an entire generation of young people who harbored no illusions about life in the Soviet state. One former child deportee chose to describe her entire deportation experience as "the Golgotha of my life":

> Oh Golgotha! . . . You were the first that shaped my character. This is where my determination was born. . . . This Golgotha was my first life teacher, brutal and uncompassionate. It taught me to fight and to win. And here . . . I started to feel a silent hatred and [need for] revenge against all who humiliate human beings and make them into animals.[56]

[53] Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros,* 63.
[54] Bičiūnaitė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros,* 33.
[55] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 192.
[56] Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros,* 116.

Ethnicity and Perspectives on Homeland

If children's life stories reveal their personal strategies of survival in Soviet exile, they also speak about the significance of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds for their evolving identities. Did their ethnicity solidify their identities by shielding them from the brutality of the Gulag? Or was it something that created problems for integration and, consequently, for their survival? To what extent could children rely on their pre-exile links with homeland, and to what extent did this homeland have to be reimagined?

There is no doubt that the ethnicity of the deportees (including the children among them) played a key role in shaping their personal and collective identities during exile. This holds true for most of the deported Soviet nationalities in the Gulag system, and is vindicated by their own testimonies. Anne Applebaum has noted how, starting from 1939, the repressive Soviet system was flooded by a huge wave of so-called "foreigners"—deportees and prisoners from recently occupied ethnic borderlands of the Soviet Union.[57] As a result, entire ethnic communities were literally embedded into the Gulag's social structure. The new exiles were drawn to each other not only by their common cultural, social, religious, political or kinship links, as entire families were deported together, but also by a shared feeling of hostility to the Soviet state that occupied their homelands.

The Lithuanian deportees were no exception. Their memoirs often drew a sharp distinction between the freedom and hopes of "normal" life before the Soviet occupation and the oppression and fear afterwards. The majority of the Lithuanian population regarded the Soviet occupation of their country in the summer of 1940 with anger and resentment. A few days after Stalinist authorities in Lithuania commenced the mass deportation of June 14–17, 1941, Lithuanian nationalist activists launched an armed rebellion against the occupiers with the aim of re-establishing an independent state.[58] Five days after the Lithuanian deportation ended, the Soviet Union found itself at war with Hitler's invading army. These factors contributed to the particular suspicion and hostility which Lithuanian deportees encountered from the very start of their exile.

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[57] One of the Russian camp prisoners, Lev Razgon, described them as "having been swept from their own country to the far north of Russia by an alien and hostile historical force which they could not comprehend, they were instantly recognizable by the quality of their possessions. We were always alerted by to their arrival in Ustvymlag by the appearance of exotic items of clothing among our criminal inmates." Razgon quoted in Applebaum, *Gulag*, 421.

[58] For an account of the rebellion see, Valentinas Brandišauskas, ed., *1941 metų birželio sukilimas: dokumentų rinkinys* (Kaunas: Aušra, 2000).

The first encounters of the Lithuanian child deportees with local populations in the Soviet interior reveal the hostility and anger that the locals felt toward these "fascist prisoners," as they were most commonly labeled. This is how one of them, deported at the age of eighteen in 1941, describes a deportees" train stop in Russia:

> Once we stopped in a big city station. Nearby there was a military transport with wounded soldiers. There were crowds of people everywhere. At that moment our train doors were opened to give us food. The people . . . started questioning the guards who we were and where we were from. [The guards] told them that we were fascists from the Baltics. The crowd attacked us with stones and demanded the guards hand us over to be tried, to allow us to be killed. After displaying us for a while like beasts, the guards closed the train doors.[59]

Another child deportee notes that "local people mocked the deported 'fascists' who deserved no mercy and had to be beaten up." He recalls that "teenagers used to surround our clubhouse and break the windows and doors; they would not let anybody out. Once young Lithuanians had to defend themselves with bricks taken from an oven."[60]

Other deportees did not show any compassion to the ethnic deportees either. The latter's ethnicity was a sufficient reason to consider them political enemies. In one case, a group of Lithuanian children, having spent a full night queuing for bread, were kicked out of the line by other deportees ("But you are *banditka* [bandits]! You are fascists; even your children are killing people! You don't deserve the bread, get out of the line!"[61]). Some Lithuanian exiles later recalled how after Stalin's death some of the Russians among the deported populations mourned for the Soviet leader, while the Balts, Poles, and Ukrainians rejoiced at the fact.

In such an adverse setting, besides their immediate relatives, children were forced to rely largely on deportees of the same ethnic group. In one of the Soviet camps in Central Asia, a Lithuanian deportee, Antanas Skučas, attacked two local men who tried to rape two Lithuanian teenage female prisoners. He was shut up in a special jail for two weeks, but "earn[ed] the respect of all the camp women of all nationalities."[62] In another camp, Lithuanian women prisoners expressed their solidarity with and compassion for a group of Lithuanian men who had been stripped naked by camp guards and walked around the women's quarters as a form of humiliation and punishment. [63] Yet there were remarkable cases when civic ties and the

[59] Lupeikytė, *Karlagas*, 18.
[60] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 190.
[61] Ibid., 67.
[62] Ibid., 66.
[63] Bičiūnaitė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 55.

experience of a shared past became as important as ethnic belonging. Eight-year-old Algirdas Laskevičius recalled how in Karasiuk, Jewish deportees from Lithuania gave food to starving Lithuanian families during wartime.[64]

Often deportees' survival also depended on their ability to organize themselves in tight ethnic exile communities who would not only fend for their weaker members (children, elderly, young women), secure better jobs and food rations, but also resist attacks by the most powerful and organized group of prisoners, the mainly Russian criminals (*urki*). In response to these attacks, different ethnic groups of deportees were also forced to cooperate with each other. Napalys Kitkauskas, arrested at the age of sixteen, notes that in his camp "Baltic prisoners (Lithuanians and Estonians) would usually try to sit at the same table or close to each other."[65] According to Applebaum, the Balts were well organized but because of their smaller numbers had difficulties establishing themselves as a collective force in the brutal hierarchy of the camps.[66] Consequently, the Balts often combined forces with the second largest group of deportees, the Ukrainians, to fend off the attacks of the *urki*.[67] Among the Lithuanian and Ukrainian deportees there were a large number of hardened anti-Soviet activists and former underground fighters who eagerly assumed leadership of the ethnic camp communities. The criminals, who were unchallenged leaders in the Soviet camps before the Second World War, looked at these groups of "foreigners" with hatred, suspicion, but also fear. Sometimes the ethnic deportees were together able to seize the dominant position in a camp's power hierarchy due to their superior discipline, organization, and self-support. The criminals labeled them *zlye frajera* (evil persons) and *zapadniki* (Westerners). Camp administrations, which customarily maintained a network of criminal informers among prisoners, at times felt helpless in the face of these ethnic politicals. In Gorlag, after the arrival of 1,200 Baltic and Ukrainian prisoners, four camp informers were murdered within a few days.[68]

The hostility with which the "strangers" were treated in the repressive Soviet system and their resulting social isolation and need for self-reliance in exile were one dimension of the forces shaping the deportee children's identities. Deportees' shared ethnicity functioned as a unifying focus in the face of these pressures, and their common culture, religion, and language strengthened their spirits and provided moral support. One child deportee

[64] Memoir of Algirdas Laskevičius, in Irena Kurtinaitytė, ed., *Sibiro vaikai: Lietuvos vaikų tremtinių atsiminimai* (Kaunas: Naujasis Lankas, 2011), 49.
[65] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 166.
[66] Applebaum, *Gulag*, 485.
[67] Ibid., 487.
[68] Ibid., 487.

describes his personal motivation to survive the Gulag, which arose from the ethnic community of exiles: "and still I had hope! . . . For me, who entered the Gulag very young, the example of the older deportees was extremely important. Especially, the example of the more educated ones among them."[69] Another child deportee recalls how a prayer in Lithuanian ("God, save all Lithuanians who suffer in Siberia and Lithuania . . .") became a daily ritual that kept her spirit.[70]

In many exile settlements, Lithuanian deportees managed to organize cultural and social activities and even religious festivals. According to one former child deportee, he was saved from losing his Lithuanian identity by attending Sunday meetings of Lithuanian young people who used to gather from all the special settlements in and around the city of Iakutsk.[71] In these meetings, Lithuanians socialized and entertained each other by singing and dancing. Those who had sewn national costumes for themselves were especially prominent. Making new acquaintances and flirting were common: in fact, many young families were started as a result of these community activities.[72] Garmutė remembers that at such gatherings many experienced nostalgia for their homeland, which often found voice in poetry and songs.[73]

Many of the child survivors' memoirs contain verses that romanticize their struggle for survival in exile. Soviet writer V. Azhaev's patriotic novel *Far From Moscow* inspired Kitkauskas to write patriotic poetry: "I was trying to relate Azhaev's pathos to my own homeland that remained on the Baltic sea shore," he later wrote, "to my duty to help it, to take care of it." Paradoxically, Kitkauskas' youthful poems transform Azhaev's Soviet patriotism into Lithuanian nationalism:

> But you [Lithuania] remained alive in your children's breasts,
> You shined like the sun in their hardships,
> Who can forget the first lullabies?
> Who does not feel worried with your fate and misery?
>
> You are a princess of my dreams.
> You are the only mother that I have today.
> I carry to you as a gift my youth,
> And the steel of my hands, and new songs of my heart.[74]

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[69] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 171.

[70] Memoir of Marija Beleckaitė-Rimkevičienė, in Kurtinaitytė, *Sibiro vaikai,* 62.

[71] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 194.

[72] Ibid., 194.

[73] "When are they going to release us to Lithuania? We have nothing more sacred and dear than homeland. . . . We have our own homeland. Like birds ejected from their nests, we cannot live without it." See, ibid., 69.

[74] Ibid., 183.

Lithuanian child deportees' memoirs also reveal their attempts to imagine their "homeland." Their "homeland" was utopian not only because they had had only brief physical contact with Lithuania—or in the case of the very young and those born in exile, none at all—so that memories or imaginings of home were often kept alive only by their parents' narratives, but also because this contact stood in such sharp contrast to their life in exile. As Grinkevičiūtė noted in her memoir, in her first rainy summer on the shore of the Laptev Sea: "It was difficult to imagine that in Lithuania people walked without coats, that there was sunshine, summer, and warmth, that there were no stormy waves of the Arctic Ocean . . . that somewhere was the life."[75]

The "homeland" was associated with freedom and the normality of a civilian life. Grinkevičiūtė also recalls how the Lithuanian girls entertained each other in Trofimovsk by recounting over and over again recipes for meals that they used to enjoy back in Lithuania. In a letter to her sister, ten-year-old Petrutė Bliūdžiūtė wished her sister would spend Easter in homeland while having a good meal, even if only in dreams.[76] Although considering the deportees' physical hardship, these stories conjured a time of wasteful abundance and abnormality, from an emotional standpoint they served as a collective framework through which their feelings of belonging and nostalgia could be expressed. The "homeland" was utopian not only because it became a certain state of mind or a mental therapy, but also because through the years spent in exile it was stripped of specific details and drifted into the realm of imagination and fantasy.

In the end, it was not the only utopia in which the deportees believed. Some thought that the only way to escape exile was to flee to America across icy waters.[77] The dream of escape and foreign refuge helped to keep alive their spirits. Yet the "homeland" vision was the key element in their exile identities. As collective utopias often originate from social dilemmas, so the deportees' vision of "homeland" was born as a result of their displacement from their native social, ethnic, and cultural environment and the resulting crisis of communal identity.[78]

The constant references to graves and burial in the testimonies of former Lithuanian child deportees represent a pervasive and powerful evocation of their sense of kinship, nationhood, and territorial belonging. Most of the memoirs are highly commemorative, elegiac, and replete with the

[75] Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, 135.

[76] Elena Stulgienė, ed., *Tremties dienoraščiai. Bliūdžių šeimos tragedija* (Vilnius: LGGRTC, 2011), 388.

[77] Ibid., 146–47.

[78] Luisa Del Giudice, ed., *Imagined States, Utopia and Longing in Oral Cultures* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2001), 4.

names of Lithuanians who perished. They articulate an explicit need to witness and preserve the memory of those who died in exile. Garmutė, deported at the age of thirteen, writes in her memoir:

> In exile, my friends from the deportation train and I are sitting not on class benches—we are digging salt in Siberian Usol [location of major salt mines]. The salt melts in the water, but not in our memory. It will never melt in the memory . . . The memory is stronger than a stone. Our memory is made of diamonds.[79]

Children's ethnic identities were also kept alive by communal celebrations of different Christian holidays. On Easter day in Trovimovsk, Lithuanians and Finns all refused to go to work against the orders of Soviet administration.[80] One child deportee recalls how all ten Lithuanians in his exile settlement celebrated Easter together by sharing one egg that one of them was lucky to receive from his relatives in Lithuania.[81] The parcels and packages from their families, which those deportees who resided in exile settlements were entitled to receive regularly, served as another important bridge between them and their homeland. Political prisoners in special camps, however, were allowed to receive only one package per year. After Stalin's death, there was a general relaxation of camp discipline, permitting an expansion of the ethnic deportees' cultural activities. Algis Geniušas, deported in his teens, remembered that in his exile settlement Lithuanians organized several basketball teams for a competition.[82]

The fact that Lithuanian child deportees continued to hold to some forms of national consciousness did not mean that their individual ethnic identities remained unchallenged by their exile experience. Marcinkevičius recalled in his memoir that those Lithuanian youngsters who refused to attend Sunday community meetings lost their ethnic identities very quickly.[83] After ten or more years in exile, many felt more comfortable speaking and writing in Russian than in Lithuanian. Five-year-old Aušra Juškaitė, deported in 1941, was only able to learn to read and write in Lithuanian during her 1947–49 escape to Lithuania.[84] Even Grinkevičiūtė, who after her release maintained a position of opposition to Soviet power in her homeland, wrote the second version of her memoir in Russian. Although she felt herself part of the Lithuanian ethnic community, her education in exile made her self-identify at this time with Soviet Russian histori-

[79] Žemaitytė, *Amžinojo įšalo žemėje*, 73–74.
[80] Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros*, 120.
[81] Ibid., 184.
[82] Ibid., 200.
[83] Ibid., 194.
[84] Memoir of Aušra Juškaitė, in Kurtinaitytė, *Sibiro vaikai,* 27.

cal rebel archetypes such as the Decembrists and *Narodnaia Volia* (People's Will) rather than the Lithuanian heroes of the anti-Soviet resistance. A friend of Grinkevičiūtė noted that among her favorite books was a well-known Soviet anthology of Russian juridical oratory *Sudebye rechi izvestnykh russkikh iuristov* (The Pleadings of Famous Russian Lawyers).[85] Perhaps Grinkevičiūtė's case illustrates the specificity of individual identity, and her particular personal search for freedom, but, as we have seen, her exile experience had already demonstrated the fragility of collective ethnic identities in the Gulag. Additionally, an unknown number of Lithuanian deportees who had lost their relatives in exile chose to remain in their places of displacement in the Soviet interior and never came back to Lithuania.

Conclusions

On March 27, 1953, three weeks after Stalin's burial, the Chief of the Soviet political police Lavrentii Beria, who had been involved in the mass deportations for more than two decades, issued an amnesty to non-political prisoners and all prisoners with sentences of five years or less.[86] Of about 2.5 million Gulag inmates at this time, more than a million people were now liberated.[87] Yet the large-scale return of Baltic deportees was a long-term process that intensified only as late as 1956–57 with an order of MVD Nr. 00597 dated on July 16, 1954.[88] By 1970 about 80,000 people returned to Lithuania (20,000 from prisons and camps and about 60,000 from special settlements).[89] For thousands of the deported Lithuanian children it meant that now they could enact their exile utopia—to return to their homeland.

Although the amnesty signified an official end of exile, their displacement continued in other forms. Even after their release many felt unable to integrate into normal life due to Soviet society's continuing demonstration of suspicion and fear toward the former deportees. For instance, Grinkevičiūtė was forced out of her medical jobs several times and was con-

[85] Aldona Šulskytė, "Daktarė Dalytė," *Metai* (May 5, 1995), 125. Referring to M. M. Vydria, E. M. Vorozheikin, eds., *Sudebnye rechi izvestnykh russkikh iuristov: sbornik* (Moscow: Gos. izd-vo iuridicheskoi literatury, 1956).

[86] Amy Knight, *Beria: Stalin's First Lieutenant* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 185.

[87] Applebaum, *Gulag*, 479.

[88] Iveta Skinke, "Latvijos piliečių trėmimas 1949 m. kovo 25 d. Struktūrinė analizė," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 24 (2008): 143.

[89] Kristina Burinskaitė, "KGB prieš buvusius politinius kalinius ir tremtinius," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 24 (2008): 121.

demned by local party organizations.[90] Former exiles found it extremely difficult to register in the places of their former residence, to enter universities, and to find good jobs, new homes, or social security. They were discriminated not only by the state authorities, but also often by local population who viewed them with mistrust because they could claim back their properties. The psychological consequences of displacement and their manifestations (the inability to integrate into "normal" civilian life, feelings of guilt, attempts to forget what happened, mistrust toward all state institutions, political radicalism) were much more serious and perhaps cannot be adequately measured.

The experience of displacement of an entire generation of Lithuanian youth, indeed the fate of all Lithuanian deportees, only fully came to light after the reestablishment in 1990 of an independent state. It is now inscribed in the collective memory of Lithuanian society and as such is one of the core elements shaping Lithuanian national identity today. If the narratives of survival of the former deportee children testify to the brutality of Soviet crimes, they also reveal that their ethnicity, early social and cultural links with ethnic communities of exiles, and their memories and imaginings of homeland played a key role in the formation of their identities. Yet the memoirs of children also show that their ethnicity was not something "organic," taken for granted, simply inherited from their adult relatives or native environment. Their ethnic identities were also inscribed on them as a result of displacement.

The children's sense of ethnic belonging was generally reinforced by the social world of the Gulag where the line between "us" and "them" was sharply drawn. Despite its defects, and the need for children often to operate outside its bounds, the ethnic community was a key guarantor of the children's survival. For the many who lost their relatives, the community served as a social safety net that could provide at least minimal protection in the ruthless Gulag hierarchy. But perhaps more importantly the community could also offer a certain common goal and motivation to survive "spiritually" until the dreamed-of return to the homeland. It could become a venue and medium through which to satisfy their personal needs of rootedness and belonging. In the ethnic community they could relive and share a common nostalgia for their homeland. Yet, in the extreme circumstances of deprivation, the isolated community could also become a trap that would decrease their chances of physical survival.

As utopias typically involve a displacement in both space and time, so the Lithuanian exiles' "homeland" became a temporal symbol of their early childhood and an ideal space of harmonious social and political order.[91]

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[90] Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros,* 45.

[91] Del Giudice, *Imagined States,* 4.

Many have interpreted their displacement from the child's normative places of comfort—home, family, and childhood itself, as an initiation into the adult world. Although in these narratives the "homeland" is often devoid of any specific details, their personal stories provide the conceptual framework in which they were able to interpret their experience of displacement. Perhaps it was this homeland nostalgia, not the reality of displacement, which lent to their exile identities a degree of "rootedness," otherwise hardly conceivable in the Gulag. Their refusal to accept various identities of homeless refugees or Soviet citizens, stripped of ethnic background, is indeed remarkable.

Aigi Rahi-Tamm

Homeless Forever: Home and Homelessness among Deportees from Estonia

The issue of land has always been a central question in Estonian national history. The struggle for land and farmstead lasted for centuries before Estonians gained sovereignty in 1918, when land reform brought compensation for historical injustice.[1] Getting rid of the legacy of the Russian Empire and Baltic-German dominance corresponded to people's long-term aspiration for owning their own land and house.[2] The rapid and successful development of Estonian agriculture during the independent interwar years strongly influenced the self-image of the Estonians and strengthened their national identity.[3]

Land, in turn, is closely connected with the concept of home. In the Estonian rural tradition, the hereditary farm handed down from generation to generation is considered the epitome of home. Moreover, the notion of the childhood home stands out as an essential ethical cornerstone of local society. In other words, home is the place where cultural traditions are passed

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[1] Anu Mai Kõll, "Economy and Ethnicity in the Hands of the State: Economic Change and the National Question in Twentieth-century Estonia," in *Economic Change and the National Question in Twentieth-century Europe*, ed. Alice Teichova, Herbert Matis, Jaroslav Pátek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 357–81.

[2] Anna Veronika Wendland, "The Russian Empire and its Western Borderlands: National Historiographies and their 'Others' in Russia, the Baltics and the Ukraine," in *The Contested Nation: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, ed. Stefan Berger, Chris Lorenz (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 405–41.

[3] Ly Bennich-Björkman, *Political Culture under Institutional Pressure: How Institutional Change Transforms Early Socialization* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 28–35. Bennich-Björkman has emphasized that strong individualism is one of the significant features of Estonians' mentality and formed an important part of their early socialization.

down to a child.[4] Many writers of life stories portrayed a farmstead in the Republic of Estonia as a miniature model of national statehood.[5] Thus the privation of land and farms as well as the nationalization of private property that accompanied the Soviet regime dealt a crushing blow to local social-psychological values and cultural environment. It was the diligence of Estonians, acquired through farm labor, which has proved to be one of the pillars of the nation's self-image.[6] Thus an analysis of the changes that destroyed earlier traditions and lifestyles in the village is a key issue that needs to be studied to understand the Soviet period in Estonia.[7]

This article analyzes the life stories of those Estonians who were deprived of their land and home; deportees of the 1940s who, regardless of all their hardships in Siberia, tried to set up their private households and continue their pre-deportation life. In the second half of the 1950s when they began to return from Soviet exile, their long-awaited homecoming became a new painful loss. Many returnees were restricted from settling down in their former places of residence. In the 1960s, attempts were made to rehabilitate former deportees but, being subject to these restrictions, most of them were destined to remain homeless. Only the dissolution of the USSR and the reestablishment of independence eventually allowed them to return to their former homes, but the majority of the older generation of deportees never saw this moment.

This chapter is based on three types of sources. First, personal and family files such as those of "kulaks" and "enemies of the people" at the township level were used, including files on deported persons and the investigation files of arrested persons (materials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) that are retained in the Estonian National Archives. They reveal various mechanisms of stigmatization and the exertion of pressure on people, while at the same time describing their survival strategies, including means of self-protection and the accusations made between individuals. Second, this chapter is based on reports compiled by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and kept in Moscow (*Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Rossiyskoy Federatsii*, GARF), and Siberian archives that describe deportees' lives and their surveillance in places of exile, expressing the position of local Soviets and party organizations on the deportees.

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[4] Kalev Katus, Allan Puur, Asta Põldma, eds., *Eesti põlvkondlik rahvastikuareng* (Talinn: Eesti Kõrgkoolidevaheline Demouuringute Keskus, 2002), 76.

[5] Ene Kõresaar, *Elu ideoloogiad: Kollektiivne mälu ja autobiograafiline minevikutõlgendus eestlaste elulugudes* (Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseumi, 2005), 46–52.

[6] Bennich-Björkman, *Political Culture under Institutional Pressure,* 35–38.

[7] Tõnu Tannberg, ed., *Eesti NSV aastatel 1940–1953: Sovetiseerimise mehhanismid ja tagajärjed Nõukogude Liidu ja Ida-Euroopa arengute kontekstis,* Eesti Ajalooarhiivi Toimetised: Acta et commentationes archivi historici Estoniae, no. 15 (Tartu: Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, 2007).

The third type of sources comprises memoirs that have been collected and published in various forms. The best known among them is the material gathered through several life story contests conducted by the Estonian Life Stories Association.[8] This chapter, in particular, uses the large collection of memoirs and responses to questionnaires sent out by the Estonian Folk Museum (ERM). In 1998 the museum sent out two questionnaires on deportations (Nr. 200 and 201). Responses to these are retained in the ERM archives (ERM KV 867-883).[9]

Driven Out of Home

The subordination of the Baltic population to foreign rule began with the Soviet annexation in June 1940 and lasted for half a century. In August 1940, the Politburo of the USSR passed a decree "On the political and economic development of the Lithuanian SSR, Latvian SSR and Estonian SSR," which envisaged several measures to establish the Soviet regime.[10] These included the nationalization of real estate and enterprises and the abolition of private ownership of land. On July 23, 1940, the Estonian State Council adopted "The declaration on proclamation of land as public property," which expropriated and redistributed land, setting the maximum size of farmsteads at thirty hectares. The quota of living space per person was restricted to 9m².[11] A resolution of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party on September 26 launched the eviction of the unemployed from Tallinn and the expulsion of former homeowners beyond the city limits. Based on Soviet data, by March 1, 1941, 11,164 houses had been nationalized, equivalent to about half of the entire residential floor space in Estonian towns.[12] Former owners could only stand by and watch how new residents moved in and vandalized their properties, or how soldiers of the Red Army were accommodated in their apartments. Without responsible owners, houses soon began to fall apart.

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[8] Estonian Life Stories Association. http://www2.kirmus.ee/elulood/en/eng.html. Accessed January 28, 2016.

[9] In 1996 this author compiled a questionnaire for persons who were on the list of the 1949 March deportation from the county of Tartu, the largest of the Estonian counties. The responses were analyzed in detail in the monograph by Aigi Rahi, *1949. aasta märtsiküüditamine: Tartu linnas ja maakonnas* (Tartu, 1998).

[10] Jelena Zubkova, *Baltimaad ja Kreml 1940–53* (Tallinn, Varrak, 2009), 79.

[11] Peeter Kaasik and Toomas Hiio, "Beginning of Sovietization of the economy, agriculture and social policy," in *Estonia 1940–45: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*, ed. Toomas Hiio, Meelis Maripuu, Indrek Paavle (Tallinn, 2006), 168.

[12] Leen Lõhmus, "Natsionaliseerimine Eesti NSVs 1940–1941" (BA Thesis, University of Tartu, Department of History, 2002).

However, not all measures of Sovietization were fully and drastically introduced at once. For instance, nationalization and the collectivization of agriculture were not executed during the first year of occupation, but in the postwar years. On the other hand, the police actions of the NKVD were implemented immediately. Thus all possible campaigns for constructing, repressing, and eliminating enemies were launched in order to consolidate Soviet power in the Baltic countries. According to communist ideology, the development of an ideal human society was to take place through class struggle, and therefore violence was supposed to help the population regain its health.[13] The ideology of "class struggle" was used to stir up negative attitudes toward "people of the past" and to destroy traditions and symbols of the "old world."

One of the largest deportation operations conducted against the "people of the past" including landowners and homeowners, took place immediately before the war. In the course of the operation of June 14, 1941, carried out simultaneously in all three Baltic states, a total of 45,000 persons were deported to Siberia.[14]

Repressions also continued after the war, the immediate postwar period that locals remember as a "war after the war." The years 1944 to 1953 were marked by various Soviet campaigns. The implementation of land reform and the creation of collective farms took place at the same time as deportation and hit the population most severely. Likewise, there were arrests to suppress any resistance movement. Here it is important to emphasize that the activity of the Forest Brothers (members of the armed anti-Soviet resistance movement) was possible only thanks to the aid provided by people in the countryside who fed them, helped to maintain contacts and offered shelter. The move to liquidate individual farmsteads destroyed the economic support of farmers to the Forest Brothers. The farmers, driven to indigence by 1950–51, were not able to meet even the needs of their own families.

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[13] Peter Holquist, "State Violence as Technique. The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism," in *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework*, ed. Amir Weiner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 25–32.

[14] In the course of the operation 10,016 persons were deported from Estonia, close to 16,108 persons from Latvia and 17,501 persons from Lithuania. A. Gurianov, "Masshtaby deportatsii naseleniya v glub' SSSR v maye-iyune. 1941 g.," in *Repressii protiv poliakov i polskikh grazhdan* (Moscow: Zvenja, 1997), 149–53. Based on the data of the Association of Estonian Repressed Persons "Memento," 10,861 persons were deported from Estonia. Of them 7,049 persons were sent to exile, 3,344 persons were sent to prison camps. The figures include also 476 children who were born during the repressions in 1941–1959. *Küüditamine Eestist Venemaale*, no. 6 (Tallinn, 2001), 318.

Launched in 1947, the campaign to "liquidate the kulaks" was introduced, first of all, through a draconian taxation policy.[15] Although propaganda in support of collectivization became more and more intense after 1947, it did not have much influence on the population. By 1949 only 10 percent of farmsteads had merged into collective farms. Full collectivization was achieved only after the mass deportation that took place between March 25 and 30, 1949.

In early 1948, Andrei Zhdanov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU CC), received a report from functionaries who had inspected the situation in the Baltic republics, noting that the formation of collective farms was "hindered by bourgeois nationalists and their armed gangs," as well as the old farm system in general.[16] A year later, on January 29, 1949, the USSR Council of Ministers passed a decree to carry out Resolution No 390-139ss: "On the deportation of kulaks and their families, illegal persons, families of bandits and nationalists killed in armed conflicts or convicted in court, legalized bandits who continued resistance activities, and their families, as well as persons assisting the families of repressed bandits, from the territories of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia." In the course of the secret operation *Priboi,* 87,000 persons were to be deported from the Baltic republics: 25,500 from Lithuania, 39,000 from Latvia and 22,500 from Estonia. Approximately 40 percent of the names on the lists of Estonian deportees were designated as "kulaks" and 60 percent were "enemies of the people."[17]

In their memoirs, many people who witnessed those events looked back at the deportation as a historical breaking point. It was a destructive wave, just as the name of the operation *Priboi* ("breaker," or "surf") suggested. How people were taken out from their homes or how others secretly tried to hide them are common topics of the narrators whose families were not directly concerned. People were in shock and in fear of subsequent deportations. There were rumors that up to 90 percent of Estonians would be deported.[18]

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[15] Explanations about the criteria of "kulaks" were thoroughly treated by Anu Mai Kõll, *The Village and the Class War: Anti-kulak Campaign in Estonia* (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2013).

[16] Meelis Saueauk, "O roli Kommunisticheskoy partiy Estonii v provedenii martovskoy deportatsii 1949 goda." *Tuna. Ajalookultuuri ajakiri* (2010): 154–63.

[17] Aigi Rahi-Tamm, and Andres Kahar, "Deportation Operation *Priboy* in 1949," in *Estonia since 1944: Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*, ed.Toomas Hiio, Meelis Maripuu, and Indrek Paavle (Tallinn, 2009), 429–60. The text of this resolution has been published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai: 1941, 1945–1952 m.: Dokumentų rinkinys*, vol. 1 (Vilnius: LGGTC, 1994), 303–5.

[18] Eesti Riigiarhiivi Filiaal [Branch of the Estonian State Archives], ERAF, f. 17/1, op. 1, d. 139, l. 220. Hiljar Tammela, "Kuulujutud eelseisvast küüditamisest kui

The popular resistance to collectivization was broken practically overnight. Along with it, everything that had remained from the peasantry's economic independence was eliminated.[19] Within ten days around half of all farmsteads had submitted applications to join a collective farm; 92 percent of all Estonian farmsteads were collectivized by 1951. Under the pressure of taxation, the last persisting farmsteads were forced to join collective farms. The whole process was announced to have been victoriously completed by 1953.[20]

In those years, descriptions of country life show that people were dejected and depressed from losing their farms and livestock which, in general, meant giving up their future expectations. Work on the collective farm seemed to be without any perspective; there was decline of work morale; the collective farmer became a nickname, an abusive word, while recklessness became the norm of everyday life.[21] These circumstances forced more and more people to leave the countryside. Thus, while before 1945 only one-third of the populace lived in towns, by 1953 more than a half of the population of the republic had settled down in towns.

Coping with Life in Siberia

Deportation shook the whole of Estonian society. The properties of the deportees were confiscated and it was up to the village executive committees and village councils to arrange the sales of them. People taken into custody were loaded onto trucks and taken to railway stations where they were crammed into boxcars. The main destinations of deportation for Estonians were Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Omsk, Irkutsk, Perm oblasts and Krasnoyarsk kray.

The ultimate fate of the deportees largely depended on the places they were sent, the living conditions, and the people to whom they had to adapt. Siberian village life was a real shock: the poverty, living, and working conditions were so different to those in Estonia that some were overcome with despair. The period between autumn and winter of 1941 was extraordinarily harsh.[22] The exiles lived in summer barracks, huts, sodhuts, barns, or

mentaliteediajalooline nähtus," in *Uuemaid aspekte märtsiküüditamise uurimisest. Varia historica IV* (Tallinn: Eesti Ajaloomuuseum, 2009), 117–29.

[19] David Feest, *Zwangskollektivierung im Baltikum: Die Sowjetisierung des estnischen Dorfes 1944–1953*, Beiträge zur Geschichte Osteuropas 40 (Cologne: Böhlau, 2007).

[20] Zubkova, *Baltimaad ja Kreml 1940–53*, 138.

[21] Reet Ruusmann, "Kolhooside rajamine ja algusaastad kui ajaloopilt eestlaste elulugudes" (BA Thesis, University of Tartu, Department of History, 2002).

[22] See more on the 1941 deportation in Aigi Rahi-Tamm, and Olaf Mertelsmann, "Gebrandmarkt für immer und ewig: Die Deportierten von 1941 (am Beispiel Estlands)," *Nordost-Archiv: Zeitschrift für Regionalgeschichte* 21 (2013): 182–203.

club rooms in miserable conditions. Although each person was supposed to have three square meters of living space, in practice it was often reduced to one square meter.[23] In 1942–43 there was a crop failure in Siberia, followed by a year of terrible starvation. The deportees were the last to get food, which made their suffering all the more painful.

After 1946 conditions started to improve to some extent. The list of jobs and occupations open to deportees increased.[24] In some places deportees were resettled to regions with better employment opportunities. As long as people did not have their own household and vegetable patches, it was impossible to get additional food from other places.[25] Deportees' memoirs from after 1951 show some improvement in their circumstances. This was a time which actually witnessed a drop in mortality rates. 60 percent of those deported in 1941 died; by 1949 the mortality rate had fallen to approximately 15 percent.[26] Statistics certainly reflect the fact that before the war, heads of families were separated and placed in camps where mortality was exceptionally high. When family members who lived apart were allowed to be reunited and when living and working conditions, diet, and medical care were improved, the birth rate started rising toward normal levels.

Starting from the second half of 1949, Moscow placed more and more responsibility for the working and living conditions of deportees on the local *oblast* authorities. The management of the more backward collective and state farms were told that unless they improved conditions for the deportees, they would be resettled elsewhere, depriving these farms of their labor.[27] Better performing management were promised new contingents; thus, in the winter of 1949–50, the Omsk *oblast* authorities were promised new deportees from Latvia.[28]

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[23] Viktor Brul, "Deportirovannye narody v Sibiri (1935–1965 gg.). Sravnitel'nyj analiz," in *Nakazannyi narod: Repressii protiv rossiiskikh nemtsev,* ed. I. L. Scherbakova (Moscow: Zvenja, 1999), 106.

[24] Ibid., 109.

[25] Gosudarstvennyy arkhiv Rossiyskoy Federatsii, GARF, f. R-9479, op. 1, d. 370, l. 11–12. The Council of Ministers of the USSR directive Nr. 3229-1341s, dated July 24, 1949, made it compulsory to grant garden plots to exiled families who worked in kolkhozy.

[26] Aigi Rahi-Tamm, "Deportations in Estonia, 1941–1951," in *Soviet Deportations in Estonia: Impact and Legacy. Articles and Life Histories*, ed. Kristi Kukk, and Toivo Raun (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2007), 46.

[27] Tsentr dokumentov novejšej istorii Omskoj oblasti, TSDNIOO, f. 955, op. 9, d. 5, l. 9–10.

[28] GARF, f. R-9479, op. 1, d. 464, l. 91–92. No new deportation was carried out in Latvia. However, deportees from Lithuania were constantly arriving up until 1952.

While conditions were generally improving, the survival of certain groups—the elderly, the sick, and mothers with young children—remained in doubt even at the later stages of exile.[29] Nonetheless, a significant number of deportees lived in more or less habitable conditions, even in the prison camps: "the runaway girl writes and seems to be quite pleased with herself in the camp over there. There's no shortage of food and clothing is not so bad, they even get money for work. She worries more about us here in exile."[30] Those in exile had to take care of their work and shelter, hoping to earn enough for food, while in the camps food was given according to the completed work quotas. Reading the memoirs of deported persons one cannot help coming to the conclusion that although all the exiles shared common difficulties, the circumstances and opportunities varied for each person.

Survival also depended on the individual's adaptability; this can clearly be seen thought the comparative analysis of various source materials of the 1949 deportees. Recovering from the shock of deportation took time. Despite constant assertions by the authorities that their exile in Siberia was permanent, many never lost hope that they might still return home.[31] Even before they got to Siberia, the 1949 deportees sincerely believed that the Western countries would not allow a new injustice to happen:

> By hearsay it was believed that America would never let us be sent to Siberia, soon the carriages would change direction and turn back home. At one of the stations in the flat freight-cars on parallel rails there were tanks and machine guns. Everyone got so excited. The war was believed to have begun already. The "white ship" from America was trusted to appear and rescue us.[32]

Hope never faded and stories like—"we will not stay long in Siberia, probably America and the West will demand that Russia stop the occupation of Estonia and the other Baltic countries and re-establish our independence"—were widespread until as late as the 1950s.[33] Likewise, surveillance reports of the deportees provide evidence of a particular expectation

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[29] Mara Lazda, "Women, Nation and Survival: Latvian Women in Siberia," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 1–12; Tiina Kirss, "Survivorship and the Eastern Exile: Estonian Women's Life Narratives of the 1941 and 1949 Siberian Deportations." *Journal of Baltic Studies* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 13–38.

[30] ERAF, f. 3-N, op. 1, d. 1601.

[31] The hope to return home appears most vividly in the letters sent home. Due to the lack of writing paper peeled birch bark was used. See the collection of letters on birch bark at: https://www.wdl.org/en/item/7412/#q=letters+written+on+birch+bark+&qla=en. Accessed January 28, 2016.

[32] Estonian Folk Museum, ERM KV, Ilmar Paunmaa (born 1929).

[33] ERM KV, Arne Välja (born 1932).

by the Balts of an outbreak of war between the USSR, and the UK and the USA, together with plans on how to act under conditions of war, including fleeing to the taiga to organize resistance.[34] Imaginary support was sought from compatriots who had escaped to the West, in the hope that they could do something to protect the deportees. As utopian as it may seem today, such ideas played a role in strengthening the inner resistance of the deportees.

Their hopes could be viewed as an element of their survival strategies, but on the other hand, they also inhibited certain courses of action. Blind faith in imminent release was so strong in the initial years that it prevented many from settling down, resolving household problems, and acquiring livestock. Many adopted a "wait and see" strategy for a longer time than was reasonable, leading to periods of cold and hunger. Over time it became obvious to everyone that, in Siberia, one could only rely on oneself.

The report of General Zhukov, the Head of the Department of Internal Affairs of the Novosibirsk oblast, communicated the following about exiled Estonians as of January 16, 1950, to the Party and Executive Committee of the Novosibirsk oblast: nearly 10,000 Estonians sent to the Novosibirsk oblast in April 1949 were located in twenty-one *rayons*, 6,576 were placed on collective farms, 2,898 on state farms, 456 in forestry enterprises and 104 in gold mines. Only a fraction of the deportees set up their own households during the year; the majority was still waiting for further developments. Former "kulaks" were seen as the most active settlers; they set up households and bought livestock. There were complaints that an anti-Soviet resentment, including resistance to collectivization, was widespread. Often it was caused by others, as evidenced by correspondence and socialization, including direct contact with those previously sentenced.[35] The Estonians were also reproached for not availing themselves of state loans for building houses or repairing them. Loans were sought only when they wanted to buy a vacant house.[36] To revive their will of activity it was important to overcome the apathy following the shock, find support, help and possibilities to improve their economic situation which was quite varied across the families.

Individual dwellings were more actively set up in the years 1951 and 1952. By that time relations with local residents had improved, including with various functionaries on whom deportees depended for getting jobs. On the other hand, relationships at the official level could remain hostile for the whole period of exile. One of the directors of the Omsk plant

[34] Aigi Rahi-Tamm, "Deportations in Estonia, 1941–1951," 47–48.

[35] Partijnij arhiv Novosibirskovo oblastnogo komiteta KPSS, PANOK, f. 4, op. 34, d. 371, l. 178–79.

[36] GARF, f. R-9479, op. 1, d. 464, l. 122.

Tepljakov, who had been reprimanded in 1950 for not repairing the barracks of the plant, wrote the following as a response to the report of inspection: "I agree that the families are in very uncomfortable conditions when living in such dwellings but the fascists as they are, they caused many more inconveniences for Soviet people."[37] Hostile propaganda that stirred up such prejudices was difficult to deal with; it took years before the deportees became seen just as unhappy people, rather than "criminals."

Leaving the mud and earth huts, barracks, or household buildings, where they had to live, for their "own rooms" looked like salvation to the deportees. Families whose members could go out to work would soon start building their own apartments or houses. Initially those houses were not comparable to their houses in Estonia. Often one's own house was a hut, dug through the earth for a meter and a half and covered with clods on the outside:

> Estonian grit and tenacity did not leave them in Siberia, either. More enterprising people began to build huts. Those who had money could buy them from local people. A couple of years before leaving Dubrava we managed to move from the barracks into our own tiny hut. . . . Just think, after miserable years of life in common barracks we were on our own! It did not matter that it was a small kitchen-bedroom, the important thing was—it was our own. Mother used to say how she had dreamed about living on our own when working at a baling machine.[38]

Gradually, huts holding several families were replaced with single-family units with more living space. In regions where there was no shortage of lumber, larger log houses with designs based on Estonian building traditions were erected alongside other outbuildings, cowsheds, and saunas. These Siberian dwelling houses can be seen on photos in family albums.[39] A deportee remembers:

> In the second year together with another Estonian we built a house from an old stable in the village of Bolshaya-Yerba. The house had two separate entrances and so we had a separate dwelling area. At the time I already worked as a tractor driver and construction worker. . . . Then we were paid money wages and were getting on our feet, so to speak.[40]

Deported to the same region of Krasnoyarsk, Arne Välja (b.1932) recalls:

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[37] GARF, f. R-9479, op. 1, d. 464, l. 114.
[38] ERM KV, Ele Tapper (Teras) (born 1939), Novosibirsk oblast.
[39] *Siber – vangistuses ja asumisel: Fotoalbum* (Tallinn: Grenader, 2016).
[40] ERM KV, August Jakobson (born 1916), Krasnoyarskij kray.

> It was probably in the winter of 1953 or somewhat earlier when my mother and brother could buy a small round-wood house. The building consisted of one room with a cooking stove. It had been built by women during the war when men were at the front. The house was squalid. My brother began to construct outbuildings—the cowshed and barn, later to be turned into a sauna. He began building an extension so that when it was ready we could move there and tear down the old part and build a proper part of the house. So he did it.[41]

Thus fighting hardships, taking losses, and putting up with the situation, Estonians nurtured their wish to get a house with a vegetable plot and a garden. "The local people looked in disbelief how the deported women gathered natural flowers, arranged them in their rooms or planted along the walls of the houses they lived in."[42] Although farming in Siberia was very different from in Estonia (e.g., it seemed strange for the deportees to use oxen to plow fields or to use spades when planting potatoes, etc.), the soil was nevertheless fertile, yielding good crops when proper cultivation methods were used. Private vegetable plots helped to alleviate hunger and ensured survival. Contrary to the local people who put up with poverty as something inevitable, the Baltic deportees, using their home-learned skills of soil cultivation, cattle raising, building and handicraft, tried to struggle out of the forced deprivation. The work habits and initiative, obtained in their homeland, spoke for the deportees as valuable workers. One of them wrote:

> In the years of exile we helped to build up Siberia—the most backward part of the Soviet Union. We taught them [the local people] that the building of a house should begin from the foundation, not from windows and that a soil hut was damper and colder than a log house, etc.[43]

The deportees' memoirs often point to diligence as a strategy of survival. "To overcome hardship, work was the only way out, the only way to survive. Although the tractor driver's work was too hard for a young girl, I did it," recalls Meida Karell (b.1932).[44] The same thought is repeated in numerous other reminiscences: "According to our way of thinking, you can live anywhere and under rather hard living conditions, if only you are able to adapt to new conditions, able and willing to work."[45] The improvement in living conditions strengthened the will to action, while the building of houses, earning the respect of others, and regaining faith in oneself compensated to a certain extent for the longing for homeland.

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[41] ERM KV, Arne Välja (born 1932), Krasnoyarskij kray.
[42] ERM KV, stories gathered by Aino Kütt.
[43] ERM KV, Ella Tursk (born 1933), Novosibirskaja oblast.
[44] ERM KV, Meida Karell (born 1932), Novosibirskaja oblast.
[45] ERM KV, stories gathered by Aino Kütt.

Although "Siberia" first of all meant suffering and pain, a place where deportees were forced to forget their native land and culture,[46] they were nonetheless able to preserve fragments of their culture and maintain their old cultural habits and values. Yet the factors that shaped people's life in exile were numerous, thus the real lived experience of Siberia was rather diverse. The reminiscences of the deportees offer long descriptions of Siberian nature, of coping with difficulties, as well as adventures and how critical situations taught them to understand important values. The tone of deportees' stories sometimes lingers on the border between laughter and tears.[47] One of the factors that determined the meaning of "Siberia" in retrospect undoubtedly involved successive events of release and re-adaptation to the native land.

Back to the Native Land!

After the death of Stalin, the first amnesty and release did not extend to deportees from the Baltics, except for those who were underage when deported and whose movement was no longer restricted as of 1954.[48] This allowed them to study in an educational institution of their choice and return to their native land. Some, who were under sixteen years old and who had relatives prepared to take them into their care, took advantage of this option, but others waited for the further course of events.

The mass release of the deportees took place from 1956–58. Although the hope of going back home was a key motivator in exile, the decision to leave Siberia was not always taken without any hesitation. The young Vaike Kibur (b.1941) remembers the mood in her family upon their release:

> At the beginning it was hard to start the journey back, as life had improved and the necessities of life had been earned through hard work. But the joy of getting back home was so overwhelming that we decided to leave everything. We sold the house and corn, so we had money when we went back.[49]

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[46] Norman Naimark, "Ethnic Cleansing Between War and Peace," in *Landscaping the Human Garden. Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework*, ed. Amir Weiner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 233–35.

[47] Aigi Rahi-Tamm, "On the Borderline between Tears and Laughter: Changes of Tonality in the Life Histories of Estonian Deportees," in *Life Writing and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe*, ed. Simona Mitroiu (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 144–63.

[48] Based on the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR, at that time there were 1,591 underage persons, deported in 1941 and 6,607 deported in 1949. Rahi-Tamm, *1949. aasta märtsiküüditamine*, 119.

[49] ERM KV, Vaike Kibur (born 1941).

For others, the decision to return was complicated by their adaptation to Siberian conditions. Hilda Sits (b.1920) assessed the situation, first of all, from the position of her children's future:

> I was thinking, at the time, what awaits us at home? Here we are firmly on our feet, we have work and food. Back there we will all have to start from scratch. . . . But in spite of all hesitations, our love for Estonia and for being Estonian won. It would have been hard to bear if our children grew up as Russians and forgot the Estonian language. And they would ultimately have lived here, on the edge of the world. No. Away from here! Isn't it the hope we have nourished for so long?[50]

Local functionaries tried to persuade the deportees to remain in places of their deportation. Another deportee notes:

> We got our permit to return to Estonia in 1958. . . . After that we were cajoled and enticed to staying in Russia. They promised to build us a house and give us a cow, but our answer was "no." At that the commander got angry and said, "You may place Estonians and Lithuanians even on a heap of gold but you would not hear from them anything but "no and no."[51]

Similar cases are also remembered by other people:

> By the spring of 1960 I have got my papers ready. . . . When I went to the director to get his consent and signature to my application of leave, and to get my termination pay, he looked surprised and said, "Why are you so anxious to get back there? If you were not wanted then, who will want you now?" He was right, in a way. I told him that my mother was old and sick (she was sixty-seven then) and she doesn't want to be buried in Siberia. . . . One's own native land is the dearest place.[52]

The wish to be buried in one's native land is a pervasive motif in the stories of the older generation of deportees.

However, different choices were also made. "No one from our farm stayed to live in Siberia, but I know a family which was deported in 1941, which returned to Estonia, and was then deported again in 1949. A daughter from this family did not return, she said she would not be deported for the third time."[53] The fact that all did not necessarily go smoothly at home and that along with escaping from Siberia a new whirlpool of troubles

[50] ERM KV, Hilda Sits (born 1920).
[51] ERM KV, Hilda Vähi (born 1928).
[52] ERM KV, Ellen Arula-Utt (born 1925).
[53] ERM KV, Helene Pikhoff (born 1916). After the war, there were about 1,000 persons, who returned either illegally or with permits and were deported for the second time in 1948–1951.

awaited them was seen only through various private contacts and correspondence. There were also cases when deportees who came back to the homeland returned to their former places of exile.

Release from exile occurred in stages, and varied according to the original "conviction" against the deportee.[54] Those charged with "nationalism" could apply for release from exile based on an application made through the judicial authorities, while "kulaks" were able to file an application through the Estonian SSR Council of Ministers from April 1956. These announcements were accompanied by a great wave of letter writing.[55] The release of "kulaks" turned out to be more complicated as the procedure of their applications included the ESSR functionaries at the local level, who interfered with the process to slow down the release of unwelcome persons. The involvement in the decision of the Council of Ministers local party and executive organs revived earlier interpersonal problems, in a village community, in particular. Release from exile, permission or prohibition to return to the former place of residence as well as the removal of the name of the farmstead from the list of "kulak" households (the last was necessary to rehabilitate a person) depended also on the relationship between the punished person and the authorities.

The regulation of the ESSR Council of Ministers of October 1, 1957, established that those released from special exile could live anywhere in Estonia except Tallinn, frontier zones, and the towns-regions from where they had been deported. It was accompanied by a regulation making sure that they would not be compensated for confiscated property. In reality, the regulation prevented the return of people to their homes, thus substantially lengthening their punishment and making them homeless. Concessions could be made to the returnees whose conduct was positive in the opinion of local functionaries. Thus a number of returnees were allowed to go back to their places of residence.[56]

Homecoming was easier for those whose family members had remained in Estonia and who had at least a place to return to temporarily. Homes of many returnees were often ravaged, destroyed, or turned into collective farm offices. Often they were taken over by new settlers. A returnee writes:

> Our home was in the house that had been completed only in 1938, we moved in by Christmas. My father could live there only for six years— he was arrested in 1944—we lived four years more. As rumor has it, our house had been used both

[54] Aivar Niglas, "Release ahead of Time of Estonian Citizens and Residents repressed for Political Reasons by the Soviet Authorities and their Rehabilitation from 1953 to the 1960s," in Hiio et al, *Estonia since 1944,* 461–89.

[55] Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 50–78.

[56] Rahi-Tamm, *1949. aasta märtsiküüditamine*, 122–24.

> as an office and a dwelling house, it was also said to have housed both a club and even a hen house.[57]

The Suurtee family could not return to their own home, it was simply not possible:

> Our home had been pulled down in 1955. Thus there was no way we could go home. We settled down in the same village in the house of a deported family who did not come back but went to live in Elva. Someone had sent a complaint to the Mustvee executive committee: Why was the "kulak" family allowed to return? My father was summoned to have a talk.[58]

This family was quite lucky, since it was not forced to leave the native village after the talk.

Having arrived in their homeland with great hopes, the former deportees faced new painful problems. On the one hand, they were impeded by government restrictions; on the other, they were confronted with the reluctant attitude of their fellow countrymen and their prevailing fears.

> After our return to Estonia we were not allowed to reside in our own region. We went elsewhere, to Mõisaküla. The local atmosphere was not friendly: "Why did you come here?" It was a moral blow which reflected the truth. . . . Many of our things could be seen here and there around the village: cupboards, chests and drawers. . . . The feeling could be alleviated only by the words of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "Oh my God, you are there—may your patience be long but hard be your fist." No-one wished to employ us, there were employers who just did not dare to.[59]

Among the returnees from Siberia there was a separate category of people who were forbidden to settle in Estonian territory altogether. The restriction is known to have applied at least to 2,627 persons in special exile.[60] They themselves called it their second deportation:

> Immediately, troubles began. The Chairman of the Executive Committee initially gave us a temporary residence permit. A few days later, we were summoned to the militia and informed that we had to leave, since we were "kulaks". They recommended that we go to Latvia.[61] The same is known to have happened to many returnees. We received the release permit on June 21, 1958. The document was cancelled after our arrival to Estonia and we were ordered to

[57] ERM KV, Uudo Suurtee (born 1932).
[58] ERM KV, Luule-Ludmilla Porkanen (Karu) (born 1940).
[59] ERM KV, Aadu Tomson (born 1936).
[60] Niglas, "Release ahead of Time of Estonian Citizens," 481.
[61] ERM KV, Elfride Tamm (born 1932).

> leave within twenty-four hours. We chose Latvia as our place of residence so as to be closer to Estonia.[62]

Those who were forbidden to settle in Estonia moved to the Valka region of the Latvian SSR, bordering with Estonia, or to the Pskov oblast of the Russian Federation. The feeling of being outcasts, however, stayed with these returnees for years. Some lived a parallel life, officially at the suggested place of residence outside the ESSR, but actually staying with their relatives in Estonia. Most of them were only allowed to return to Estonia in the 1960s, while others were subjected to the restriction until the end of the Soviet period.

Thus thousands of ex-deportees were bitterly disappointed with their homecoming. Inevitably, they had to admit the truth of the warnings they heard in Siberia: "you will be a nobody at home." By the second half of the 1950s, Estonian society as a whole had begun to accommodate itself to Soviet rule. People were tired of longstanding worries and the returnees were seen by some as a potential source of new problems that could put the recently-achieved stability at risk.[63] Returnees were often shunned and had problems securing employment. However, such attitudes were certainly not universal, and one can find many examples of returnees been greeted with flowers and celebrations, of people helping them to find places to live, to find a job and collecting funds for their support:

> When my parents got back home, the families of their village as well as the neighboring village began to bring them presents, coming on foot or on horse-carts. All kinds of things were brought: potatoes, meat, linen, and dishes. Some of our things were still in the neighbor's barn: bedclothes, blankets, and dishes, even our bicycle.[64]

At the same time many returnees admitted that local people had greatly changed during their absence: "Upon our return to Estonia the attitude to us was quite normal and kind. What struck us most deeply was the loss of the joyful and merry Estonian. What had remained was a self-serving, vicious, cold, and calculating subject of the Soviet state whose criteria and principles were quite different than before."[65]

Being evicted from their farmstead was particularly hard for people from the countryside. Only very few were lucky to return to their confiscated homes. To achieve this one had to develop non-confrontational relation-

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[62] ERM KV, Laine Lang (Kindel) (born 1929).

[63] Aigi Rahi-Tamm, and Irēna Saleniece, "Re-educating Teachers: Ways and Consequences of Sovietization in Estonia and Latvia (1940–1960) from the Biographical Perspective," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 47, no. 4 (2016): 451–72

[64] ERM KV, Vilma Jürisson (Süld) (born 1932).

[65] ERM KV, Maie Kuusik (Kaldvee) (born 1932).

ships both with the Soviet executives and villagers, and to find appropriate supporters who knew how to help them to reclaim their property.

In the 1960s, government restrictions on the returnees were revised to a certain extent.[66] The number of people who could return to their former places of residence was gradually increased, though it did not mean that they would be getting back their homes. Only about 10 percent of returnees were rehabilitated.[67] Rehabilitation did not bring about the acquittal of deportees for unjustified repressions or compensation for damages. As a rule, it was limited only to a confirmation that the conviction was unjustified, which made it easier for the person to get work, to study or apply for some benefits. Applications for compensations for farmsteads or other confiscated property were granted only with very few exceptions. Those who had been made "kulaks," from the perspective of the government of the ESSR remained "kulaks".[68]

Therefore, people tried to reclaim their farmsteads in other ways:

> The last resident left our house in the spring of 1967. A year later we bought the house back from the collective farm for 500 roubles. It took a year to buy it back, not because of any opposition; quite the opposite. The Chairman simply recommended waiting a little, until they would reduce the price for the house. That's how it was done. . . . There was no talk though about any expenses for repair works.[69]

Or another example: "My Mom and Dad applied to get our home back in March 1967. The house was not returned but a large farmhouse was sold to us for firewood for 600 roubles. Certainly, they did not pull it down but began to repair it at once."[70] People tried to keep farmsteads that had been handed down from one generation to the next at any price.

Since there was practically no hope of getting their former homes back, those with the opportunity and means started building new homes. They thought, if they could cope in Siberia, why should they not succeed in their native land? "We pre-ordered house-building materials in Abja and built a third home. . . . So we built a house, farm buildings, and planted a garden with apple trees, plum trees, cherries, and various bushes and flowers. We also kept bees."[71]

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[66] Nikolai Bugai, *Narody stran Baltii v usloviiakh stalinizma (1940-1950-e gody): Dokumentirovannaia istoriia* (Stuttgart, Ibidem, 2005), 241–73.

[67] Niglas, "Release ahead of Time of Estonian Citizens," 489.

[68] ERAF, f. R-1, op. 5, d. 101, l 1–6. The minutes of the session of the ECP CC bureau of May 29, 1967.

[69] ERM KV, Udo Suurtee (born 1932).

[70] ERM KV, Meida Karell (Maripuu) (born 1932).

[71] ERM KV, Linda Tõnts (born 1932).

Conclusion

The Soviet deportations of the 1940s had consequences that lasted for decades. The crushing imprint of the Stalinist era appears most distinctly among the people who returned from exile. They experienced difficult re-adaptation in their native country. Although numerous treatments of Soviet arrests and deportations have already been published, there has been relatively few on the re-adaptation of returnees in their native countries, where the joy of homecoming so often turned to disappointment. Having rebuilt their life in Siberia and having restored their self-respect (some even built decent houses there), they faced new restrictions once they returned home. Moreover, they had to put up with scornful attitudes of local people, who still marked them as guilty. To get rid of this stigma, they began applying for rehabilitation, but only few succeeded in receiving it.

In their memoirs and recollections, returnees, especially those from the countryside, place a strong emphasis on everything related to their home.[72] It was their hope of return to their own farmstead that inspired their return from Siberia.[73] As Heino Kiik wrote about the deportees' hopes in Siberia in his autobiographical novel *Maria in Siberia*:

> Hope for home is so fragile and dear that you shouldn't believe in its fulfillment too much, but you also shouldn't do anything at all to show your disbelief in it. You shouldn't even speak about it, and, if you do, then only rarely, at some fine quiet moments.[74]

A farmstead was a symbol of the continuity, stability, and positive memories for generations of Estonians. It helped them to orient themselves in the world.[75] The fact that after their return from Siberia people were forbidden to go back to their former homes was devastating, especially for the older generation of deportees. For years many of them had to wander from one place to another, looking for a new home and trying to adapt to new ways of life.

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[72] Rahi-Tamm, "On the Borderline between Tears and Laughter," 150–52.

[73] Maruta Pranka, "Migratsioon *versus* kodu: vaateid ühele uurimisprojektile," in *Mäetagused*, no. 43 (2009): 98–101. Pranka describes a similar case among Latvian deportees. See her "Migration as Loss of Home" in *Oral History: Migration and Local Identities: Online proceedings of papers presented at the Conference at the University of Latvia in Riga, 27–29 June 2008*, ed. Ieva Garda Rozenberga, and Mara Zirnite (National Oral History, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia, Latvian Oral History Association *Dzivesstasts*, 2011), 222–31.

[74] Heino Kiik, *Maria Siberimaal* (Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1988), 224.

[75] Tiiu Jaago, "Perepärimus ajaloo peegeldajana," in *Pärimuslik ajalugu*, ed. Tiiu Jaago, and Mare Kõiva (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2001), 264–80.

The homestead was often the last place where, despite external pressures, earlier traditions and values were maintained. The consequences of the "class struggle" in the countryside included the disintegration of agriculture and the loss of the sense of ownership and home.[76] Yet the need to remember and to keep their values and traditions alive helped people to cope with their life in Siberia by developing certain practices of survival in the conditions of late socialism.[77]

Only the return of private property and homesteads after the reestablishment of independence eventually ended their struggle. However, the replacement of the Soviet landscape of collective farms with the earlier landscape of private farmsteads was clearly a mission impossible. Nevertheless, longing for one's place and space, despite repressive Soviet measures, helped to preserve the national identity of Estonians. The return to one's roots became a symbol for the new generation. Even now in the twenty-first century urban families are moving into the countryside to realize nostalgic dreams of their families and to build their new homes.[78]

[76] Kõresaar, *Elu ideoloogiad*, 63–71.

[77] Political violence and danger of Russification united Estonians and helped preserve a strong identity under the Soviet rule. Meike Wulff, "Locating Estonia: Perspectives from Exile and the Homeland," in *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet-East European Borderlands, 1945–50*, ed. Peter Gatrell, and Nick Baron (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 231–54.

[78] Anu Kannike, "Aja kodustamine: nostalgia privaatsfääris," in *Nullindate kultuur I: teise laine tulemine*, ed. Aili Aarelaid-Tart (Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, 2012), 128–30; Anu Kannike, *Kodukujundus kui kultuuriloomine: etnoloogiline Tartu-uurimus*, (Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseumi, 2002), 21.

Aldis Purs

Official and Individual Perceptions: Squaring the History of Soviet Deportations with the Circle of Testimony in Latvia

From the morning after the mass deportation of June 14, 1941, Latvians tried to make sense of the event. Questions of who was deported; why were they deported; what was their fate; and whether there would be more deportations, strongly influenced the Latvian response to the Nazi invasion less than a fortnight later. The Nazi propaganda machine deftly exploited the deportations to craft a narrative of Soviet occupation and repression that falsely identified the bulk of the Jewish population of Latvia with the Soviet perpetrators. For Nazi policy, this approach encouraged and justified the Holocaust of Latvia's Jews and was one of many reasons why some Latvians actively participated in these state sanctioned mass murders. The hallmark of this approach was the publication of *Baigais Gads* in 1942,[1] which unfortunately continues to set some of the canonical framework of general Latvian memory of the first year of Soviet occupation (this canon includes the term *Baigais gads* [horrible year], sadistic tortures such as nail pulling, gruesome photographs of corpses in states of decay, and supposed Jewish involvement). Interestingly, the more academic and thorough approach to the study of Soviet occupation outlined in *Latvijas boļševizācija* by Alfreds Ceichners published in 1943 has faded from public memory. Ceichners' work included its share of spurious conclusions supporting the propaganda aims of the Nazi regime, but it also provided a thorough discussion of how Latvia's society was "sovietized," and was not simply a yellow journalistic account of repression.[2] The Sovietization of society, how-

[1] *Baigais gads* written by Pauls Kovalevskis, a pseudonym of Pāvils Klāns (Riga: Zelta Abele, 1942).

[2] Ceichners' account is enigmatic. The study is too clinical and academic for a popular audience, yet its compromised provenance too frequently discounts it

ever, was too complex a process to fit easily into the nation's developing narrative of its recent past; instead, deportations and repression became visceral totems of Soviet rule in 1940–41. The deportations of June 1941 came to define Soviet rule in Latvian memory. The fate of the deportees was an open and painful question in 1941 and remained so for nearly five decades.

Latvian officials within the German Self-Administration and Latvians in non-governmental organizations almost immediately attempted to draw up a list of victims of Soviet terror. This effort continued in displaced persons camps in the British, French, and American zones of occupied Germany after the war's end. Latvian activists compiled information sheets on known and suspected deportees from surviving family members, friends, and associates. The files display a great amount of effort, care, and concern on the part of the compilers, but also a great deal of uncertainty. With no access to Soviet files and little concrete data on the mass deportations, the compilers could never be absolutely sure that people included in their lists had actually been deported. Nor could they be sure that all possible victims were accounted for. Generally, the compilers erred on the side of exaggeration and assumed that people for whom they had little information had been deported. Still, considering the difficult circumstances of displaced persons camps in Germany, the Latvian activists arrived at a surprisingly accurate estimate of between fifteen and twenty thousand people deported in June of 1941.[3] This early work would become the basis for the lists of the names of the deported in such publications as *These Names Accuse: Nominal List of Latvians Deported to Soviet Russia in 1940–1941*.[4] These publications were written in English, and were intended first and foremost to marshal Western outrage against the Soviet occupation of Latvia, and only then to serve as definitive sources on the victims of Soviet mass deportations in occupied Latvia. Even less information was available on the deportations of March of 1949, and there were no similar attempts to catalog the victims of this atrocity by the Latvian émigré communities in the West. Even more glar-

from academic attention as well. Alfreds Ceichners, *Latvijas boļševizācija* (Riga: A. Ceichnera apgads, 1944).

[3] The documents are housed at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. The archival collection is titled Preliminary Inventory of the Latviesu Centrala Komiteja Records, Box/Folders 3, 4; 4, 1–4; 5, 1–3; Box/Folders 10–29. The same collection also includes similar attempts to track and record the 1949 deportations, and the return of Latvians to Soviet Latvia from the USSR and from displaced persons camps.

[4] A second edition was published in 1982. *These Names Accuse: Nominal List of Latvians Deported to Soviet Russia in 1940–1941.* Second edition (Stockholm: Latvian National Foundation in Cooperation with the World Federation of Free Latvians, 1982).

ingly absent was any attempt by émigré Latvians to record the fate of Latvian Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Latvian émigré communities in the West also attempted to supplement the catalogs of deported citizens with more detailed, personal accounts of Soviet deportations either in memoirs that contained hearsay accounts or observations from witnesses or through memoirs of survivors themselves. Kārlis Strazds' *Es nāku no dzimtenes: Latvijā 1945–1952 (I Come from the Homeland: In Latvia from 1945–1952)*, Jānis Simsons' *Vorkutas Gūstekņa Stāsts (The Story of a Vorkuta Prisoner)*, Rasma Aizupe's *Sešpadsmit gadi Sibirijā (Sixteen Years in Siberia)*, and Rūta Ūpīte's *Vēl tā gribējās dzīvot: Pārdzīvojumu stāsts (I Still Wanted to Live: Story of Experiences)* are all examples of such survivors' memoirs. Each memoir came with a background story that was equally exceptional. Kārlis Strazds' story, for example, was about life in a repressive society in general and less about any particular repression directed specifically against him. In the denouement, Strazds, who was part of a fishing crew on a boat on the Baltic Sea, steered to a Swedish island and defected.[5] Simsons also emigrated to the West after serving almost ten years at the Vorkuta labor camp.[6] His was one of those exceptional cases that blended relentless family appeals (his wife and son emigrated to the US as Displaced Persons) with moments of Cold War détente-style politics (Vice President Richard Nixon played a role in his release from the USSR). Simsons' memoir, published in 1965, was an early source in the West (albeit in Latvian) on the Gulag revolts of 1953.[7] His memoir shaped much of the Latvian émigrés' understanding of conditions within the Gulag. Rasma Aizupe's life story had a similar concluding trajectory. Aizupe was administratively exiled to Siberia in the mass deportation of June 14, 1941. She returned to Latvia in 1957 and wrote directly to Khrushchev for permission to emigrate from the USSR to join her daughter in the USA. Her memoir was published in Canada, also in Latvian, in 1974.

Rūta Ūpīte's posthumous autobiography broke from this pattern of memoirs written in the West. *Vēl tā gribējās dzīvot: Pārdzīvojumu stāsts*

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[5] Kārlis Strazds, *Es nāku no dzimtenes: Latvijā 1945–1952* (Rīga: Daugava, 2008 [1953]).

[6] Simsons and Strazds briefly discuss filtration camps in the immediate postwar period. These camps, which detained prisoners of war and catalogued political reliability, are the least understood episode in the Soviet incarceration and imprisonment of Latvians during World War II. Standard émigré accounts initially believed all prisoners of war were immediately deported to Siberia, but many were released from filtration camps to return to Soviet Latvia. This process is still relatively poorly understood or studied. Jānis Simsons, *Vorkutas Gūstekņa Stāsts* (Lincoln, NE: Vaidava, 1965).

[7] Len Latkovskis, "Baltic Prisoners in the Gulag Revolts of 1953," *Lituanus* 51, no. 3 (Fall 2005).

chronicled the life of a girl sent into administrative exile following the mass deportation of June 14, 1941. Like Simsons and Aizupe, Ūpīte returned to Latvia following the general amnesties of the mid- to late-1950s. Unlike Simsons and Aizupe, Ūpīte passed away in 1957 from tuberculosis. Ūpīte's father eventually smuggled his daughter's notes to the West in 1967 where they were readied for publication. Fearing additional political reprisals against Ūpīte's father, publication was delayed until 1977 and then under the pen name Rūtiņa U. Ūpīte's account differs from the other two in its more simple, straightforward descriptive tone. Ūpīte's account is more clearly a diary of lived experiences (including the mundane, trivial, and commonplace) rather than a political autobiography intent on making an exposé. Although it was translated into English, neither Ūpīte's account, nor Simsons' nor Aizupe's autobiographies reached a wide Western audience. Latvian émigrés embraced all three accounts as proof of the Soviet Union's genocidal intent toward the "captive" Latvian nation, even if Ūpīte's account in particular was more nuanced. To the larger Western audience of Sovietologists, these accounts reinforced the existing polarity of views on the academic landscape: they were taken either as additional proof of the Soviet Union's totalitarian quality or as the tendentious products of an émigré community with a political ax to grind.

Within Soviet Latvia, however, the fate and experience of the deportees was not discussed in public spaces. Some people were successfully rehabilitated in the late 1950s, but the episode was largely "forgotten" by the public. Many returned deportees continued to suffer the "stain" of previous arrest and displacement in terms of limited career opportunities, but for others this discrimination was less pronounced. In Soviet Latvia, repression and deportation played almost no role in cultural production, as it did, fitfully, in Soviet Russia. There was little to no cultural thaw and Soviet Latvia did not have its version of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. In the mid-1980s, however, as Latvian dissidents pressed the limits of the Gorbachev-inspired glasnost campaign, the fate and lived experience of the deportees returned front and center to public space. The anniversaries of mass deportations became seminal moments in the opposition to Soviet rule, and Soviet Latvian literary journals began to publish on the deportee experience. Historians played an active part in dismantling official Soviet myths about the dismantling of the Republic of Latvia and its incorporation into the Soviet Union. Political events rushed ahead and by the summer of 1991, Latvia regained its independence from the rapidly collapsing central Soviet state.

Historians of independent Latvia, freed from any remaining shackles of censorship or forbidden topics, moved quickly to re-examine the nature of Soviet repression and the fate of the repressed. The process continues to this day, largely within a formalized structure of research under the aus-

pices of the Latvian State Historical Archive, the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 1940–1991, and the Presidential Commission of the Historians of Latvia. Through the tireless work of all those involved in these institutions, many of the great mysteries of Soviet repression have been resolved. The fate of Kārlis Ulmanis, for example, was thoroughly investigated by the historian Indulis Ronis, and his seminal *Kārlis Ulmanis trimdā un cietumā* documents Ulmanis' time under house arrest, his NKVD interrogations, and resolves the question of his death.[8] Ronis also provides masterful essays about the historiographical theme of traitors to the state of Latvia, and the fate of other prominent state figures. Ronis concluded that additional vital details and information remain hidden from academic research by the continued denial of access to files housed in the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation.

Historians, particularly in conjunction with the Latvian State Historical Archive, tackled the massive task of identifying the citizens of Latvia who were deported and administratively exiled by the Soviet state. Ultimately, this project produced the massive catalogs of those deported in June of 1941 (*Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* edited by Elmārs Pelkaus[9]) and March of 1949 (*Aizvestie: 1949. gada 25. marts* edited by Guna Pence[10]). Each of these tomes consists of an accounting of all of the individuals deported and administratively exiled in alphabetical order by geographical district. Each entry includes the person's name, their birth date, place of residence, arrest date, their place of resettlement, their place and date of death (if applicable) or their date of release. The entry also includes the archival location of the specific file for the deported. According to these massive volumes, 15,424 people were deported from Latvia on June 14, 1941, of which nearly 40 percent died while incarcerated,[11] while another 42,125 were administratively exiled on March 25, 1949 (211 were born en route to exile and 513 more were deported soon after March 25). Of those deported in 1949, 5,231 died while incarcerated, 38,902 were eventually released, and data is missing for 138.[12] An additional project by the Latvian Historical Institute produced a similar catalog of Latvia's inhabitants con-

[8] Indulis Ronis, *Kārlis Ulmanis trimdā un cietumā: Dokumenti un materiāli* (Riga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 1994). Ulmanis died of dysentery on September 20, 1942, in Krasnovodsk (Türkmenbaşy), Turkmenistan.

[9] Elmārs Pelkaus, ed., *Aizvestie: 1941. gada 14. jūnijs* (Riga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2001).

[10] Guna Pence, ed., *Aizvestie: 1949. gada 25. marts* (Riga: Latvijas valsts arhīvs, 2007) 2 volumes.

[11] Indulis Zālīte and Sindija Eglīte, "1941. gada 14. jūnija deportācijas struktūranalīze," in Pelkaus, *Aizvestie: 1941*, 688.

[12] A. Āboliņa, "1949. gada 25. marta deportācijas struktūranalīze," in Pence, *Aizvestie: 1949*, 191.

victed of crimes against the Soviet state from 1940 to 1986.[13] This tome adds another "49,231 persons who, as individuals or in groups, were tried by occupation courts."[14] According to these volumes, the Soviet state deported or arrested 107,486 inhabitants of Latvia for political crimes. Although these volumes have an air of finality to them, and provide a final hallowed number, they also have addenda and corrections inserted at the end. Ultimately, this "devotion to finding a final tally" is as much an attempt to bear witness and to memorialize as it is a search for "historical truth . . . they are grand efforts of intent inherently incapable of final completion; there may always be one more (or less) name."[15]

Latvian historians have progressed from this grand effort to the no less important journeyman work of fleshing out the details of repression and deportation. The annual book of the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 1940–1991 is a particularly strong indicator of the most current research and work. Over the past two decades, historians have provided detailed structural analyses of deportations and repression, have created breakdowns of victims by age, profession, ethnicity, gender, and geographical location, and have examined the security agencies involved in repression and deportations down to the finest of details. Elsewhere, I have detailed how this growing body of historical work in Latvia on Soviet repressions and deportations differs from the emerging consensus of Soviet specialists elsewhere. Essentially, Latvian historians and much of the public understand Soviet repression and deportations as part of a genocidal project against the Latvian nation. Soviet specialists disagree. They draw attention to the differences between Gulag sentences and administrative exile, and place Baltic deportations into the larger framework of Soviet terror and the forced displacement of populations that include similar actions in the USSR in the 1920s and 1930s.[16] This debate among historians, often expressed in the language of academic discourse in conferences and articles, has fostered many distortions in academic research and its popular reception. The comparatively better-funded institutions for research into the occupation (and primarily into the Stalinist era) has unsurprisingly favored and rewarded more research into occupations, repression, and deportation. Following the money, fewer historians have researched and worked on the

[13] Rudīte Vīksne and Kārlis Kangeris, eds., *No NKVD līdz KGB: Politiskās prāvas Latvijā 1940–1986: Noziegumos prēt padomju valsti apsūdzēto Latvijas iedzīvotāju rādītājs* (Riga: Latvijas vēstures institūta apgāds, 1999).

[14] Ibid., 973.

[15] Aldis Purs, "Soviet in form, local in content: elite repression and mass terror in the Baltic States, 1940–1953," in *Stalinist Terror in Eastern Europe: Elite purges and mass repression*, ed. Kevin McDermott and Matthew Stibbe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 27.

[16] Ibid.

interwar period, the nineteenth century or earlier periods. Similarly, although notable efforts have focused on the Holocaust, it is still underrepresented in the research of Latvia's historians over the past two decades. Moreover, little of the research that has been made on the Holocaust attempts to incorporate it into the larger framework of violence and death in the region. Academic research, however, has also not sated the appetite of the general public (and of the occassional politician) for conclusiveness and the need to give a human face to the historical experiences of Latvians in deportation. Into this void, a growing list of memoirs and oral history projects have attempted to add faces to the lists of names and dates. These more personal accounts attempt to return an emotional dimension to descriptions of terror and deportation that are often missing in more scholarly work.

The personal details of the accounts of survivors are also particularly important due to popular concerns about time sensitivity and political need. There is a fear that, as survivors grow old and pass away, their stories will be lost. The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia includes a testimonial project that records survivors' stories specifically for this reason. The placing of real human faces on the historical experience of repression and deportation is considered essential to counter the denials, made by some political parties and politicians, of the very fact of Soviet occupation. Periodic media accounts of the relative historical ignorance of the younger generation further fuels the surge in memoirs and oral histories that center on the most traumatic periods of Latvia's occupation by the USSR. Although almost all such accounts include considerable amounts of trauma, brutality, and arbitrary power, they do not always stay completely within the popular narrative of trauma as the decisive symbol of the Soviet experience for deportees. If academic historical accounts sketch a proverbial forest of Soviet repression, deportations and occupation, memoirs and oral histories detail the individual trees within that forest. The uniqueness of each tree, at times, threatens to undermine the more general sketch of the forest.

The early trendsetter in recording the individual's experience of deportation was the ongoing, multi-volume collection *Via Dolorosa* edited by Anda Līce. The first volume was published in 1990 and the most recent, the sixth, in 2008. The series is subtitled the "testimony of Stalinist victims" and includes autobiographies, photographs, historical essays, and poetry. Initially, as evident in the series' title, direct and indirect parallels were made or implied between the Biblical suffering of Jesus as he approached crucifixion and the experience of the Latvian nation. This theme, however, has receded somewhat in the most recent volumes. Similarly, the earliest volumes actively engaged with the collapse of the Soviet state; they discussed what had not been allowed before and documented the moving compass of press freedoms. As historical sources for academics, however, they are flawed. Most of the autobiographies are fragments of larger un-

published works or are episodic. The reader gets a sense of the deportation experience, and certain common themes and stories of exceptional individuality emerge, but academic rigor is incomplete. This, however, is the point—*Via Dolorosa* is meant to preserve testimonies, and to encourage people to read them. For historians, it is a starting point for further work. Other books and journalistic stories mimic the style and approach of *Via Dolorosa*. The volume *Rētas*, for example, is a published account of the testimonies of Stalinist victims who lived or live in the district of Bauska.[17]

If *Via Dolorosa* depicts the life stories of the victims of Stalinism, its size, great number of testimonies, and differentiation diminish its effectiveness. The memoir skirts this complexity by presenting the experience of deportation and repression through the vehicle of a single individual or family. The most well-known example of this kind of autobiography is Sandra Kalniete's *Ar balles kurpēm Sibīrijas sniegos*.[18] This book has been translated into at least eleven languages (the English translation is entitled *With Dance Shoes in Siberian Snows*) and is in the earliest stages of adaptation for the screen. Kalniete herself is a prominent politician in Latvia who was Minister of Foreign Affairs and is currently a member of the European Parliament. The book, however, is more an investigation into family history than autobiography—Kalniete was born in Siberia in 1952 and returned to Latvia in 1957. Her own recollections of this time period are the memories of a small child. Instead, Kalniete reconstructs the lives of family members (parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles) through family stories, letters, and archival documents. She intersperses the experience of her family with contemporary events in Latvia. Essentially Kalniete's book is similar to Modris Eksteins' *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of Our Century*, excerpted in this volume. Eksteins, whose family fled westward at the end of World War II and eventually emigrated to Canada, intersperses his and his family's history with contemporary events in Western history.[19] He draws parallels between the two and attempts to intertwine the personal story of a family with the larger history of the West. Kalniete attempts to do the same thing by positing her family's experience of deportation as a kind of archetype for the Latvian deportation experience. The cynic might conclude that this is politically motivated, but the emotional journey documented throughout the book seems sincere and authentic. As an eyewitness account, however, this journey consists largely of hearsay; Kalniete tells the story she has heard or that she uncovers

[17] Anita Rozentāle, ed., *Rētas: Staļinisma upuru liecības* (Bauska: SIA Bauskas Dzīve, 2001).

[18] Sandra Kalniete. *Ar balles kurpēm Sibīrijas sniegos* (Riga: Atēna, 2001).

[19] Modris Eksteins, *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of our Century* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1999).

through the archives, and not her own. Furthermore, she frequently indulges in a degree of creative, poetic license. She uses her most well-educated guess (often with the help of historians) to imagine the suffering, material conditions, and even thoughts of family members even when she has no direct evidence. As an emotive tool to overcome the limitations of scholarly discourse this may be effective, but it cannot be taken as a first-hand testimony of repression and deportation.

Where Kalniete's book is lacking, the memoirs of Ilmars Knaģis are not. Knaģis' remarkable autobiography, *Bij tādi laiki* is subtitled the "adventures of a successful person," and has its share of structural weaknesses, meandering narratives, and tangents into Latvia's prewar and contemporary politics. Still, Knaģis' description of deportation, repression, and life in Siberia has a rare, authentic timbre. Knaģis' account, translated into English as *There Was Such a Time*, is particularly descriptive and valuable because of his age at deportation; he was fifteen when he was deported on June 14, 1941. His relatively young age kept him with his mother when women and children were separated from adult males, but he was old enough to remember the time prior to his deportation as well as his experiences as a teenager and later, as a young adult. As such, his memory is vivid and alive with the minutiae of daily life as well as the trauma of transport. His story is very much a *bildungsroman* or coming of age story that blends the excitement and confidence of a young adult with the injustice and despair of a deportee. Despite occasional detours into debatable generalizations about prewar Latvia or contemporary affairs, Knaģis provides a remarkably fair and balanced account of life in Siberia. His restraint is all the more remarkable considering that Knaģis was one of the 3,750 children deported to Siberia on June 14, 1941. Some of those children, Knaģis included, were allowed to return to Latvia in a short-lived campaign to repatriate orphans in 1946 and 1947.[20] Many of them, Knaģis also included, were then deported a second time in 1949. As a result, Knaģis' autobiography includes details on a double return to Latvia and a double deportation as well.

The subject matter of deported children is the central focus of one of the larger and more polished oral history projects, *Sibīrijas bērni: mums bija tas jāizstāsta*, edited by Dzintra Geks. The two-volume tome is a labor of devotion and love and the result of tireless work. Geks and her co-editor, Aivars Lubānietis, traveled across Latvia, Russia, Israel, and the USA to interview 670 people who were minors when deported to Siberia on June 14, 1941 (an astonishing figure: nearly 18 percent of the total number of

[20] For more on this curious episode, see Alfrēds Staris, "1941 gadā okupantu izsūtīto Latvijas iedzīvotāju bērnu ērkšķainais atceļš uz dzimteni," *Latvijas vesture* 16, no. 1 (1995): 37–44.

deported minors).[21] Geks strove to record the individual stories before they were lost and her account is rich with photographic details from children's lives before deportation as well as during administrative exile.[22] The production value of the two volumes is considerable. The oral histories reinforce the trees and forest analogy in content and detail. Many of the interviews produce single-page recollections that are terse and sparse of detail and emotion. Others are long detailed accounts of lives lived before, during, and after deportation.

A much shorter, yet equally poignant child testimony of deportation is the small collection of drawings created by Benita Pleznere-Eglīte following her deportation as a young girl on March 25, 1949. She was one of 10,987 minors deported in the mass action against kulaks.[23] Pleznere-Eglīte sent drawings of Siberia to her relatives remaining in Latvia from the artistic eye of an eleven-year-old girl. Years later, in 1993, she donated these drawings to the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 1940–1991. The Museum recorded her recollections and published them and her drawings unedited as *Ar bērna acīm: vienpadsmitgadīgās Nitas zīmējumi, kas sūtīti no Sibīrijas uz Latviju*.[24] The simple yet expressive drawings and the matter of fact recollections mirror a similar short film, *Little Bird's Diary*, which also relays a part of Latvia's history through drawings and stories from an individual's life.[25]

The final oral history project to be considered in this short review of the literature is Irēna Saleniece's edited collection *1949. gada 25. martā izvesto balsis.* Saleniece, together with the Oral History Center of the University of Daugavpils, has produced an edited collection of oral histories taken from three families with supporting documents and supporting scholarly essays on oral histories (generally and specifically), as well as a historiography of the March 25, 1949, deportations.[26] Saleniece's work is crucially important

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[21] Dzintra Geks, ed., *Sibīrijas bērni: mums bija tas jāizstāsta…* 2 vols. (Talsi: Fonds Sibīrijas bērni, 2007).

[22] Dzintra Geks is by profession a film director where she has repeatedly returned to the topic of deportations and survivors' testimonies for the subject matter of several documentaries. The film documentary style in many ways also permeates the written volumes.

[23] Āboliņa, "1949 gada 25 marta," 186.

[24] Benita Pleznēre-Eglīte, *Ar Bērna Acīm: vienpadsmitgadīgās Nitas zīmējumi, kas sūtīti no Sibīrijas uz Latviju* (Riga: Museum Foundation in Co-operation with the National Oral History Project, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Latvian Academy of Sciences, 1996). The accompanying English translation is titled *Through the Eyes of a Child: Drawings of eleven-year old Nita mailed from Siberian exile to Latvia.*

[25] The sublime short film *Little Bird's Diary* (2007), directed by Edmunds Jansons, tells the life story of Irīna Piļķe through her diary of sketches.

[26] Irēna Saleniece, ed., *1949. gada 25. Martā izvesto balsis: Dažu Daugavpils un Ilūkstes apriņķa deportēto ģimeņu likteņi mutvārdu vēstures avotos un arhīva do-*

because it addresses the experience of deportation through the experience of people from Latgale (specifically Daugavpils district and the neighboring district of Ilukste). Latgale is enigmatic to most generalizations about Latvia. As I have argued elsewhere, "democratic Latvia was least democratic in Latgale, and authoritarian Latvia was most authoritarian in Latgale as well."[27] This tendency toward differentness in historical experience continued through the Soviet era and remains a part of contemporary Latvia (Latgale is the least ethnically Latvian portion of the country). Still, more than eight thousand people were deported from Latgale in the 1949 deportations, and almost three thousand were deported in the 1941 deportations.[28] If in many things Latgale is different from Latvia, it shared in Latvia's loss through deportation and repression. Saleniece's edited collection is an important addition to address whether the experience of deportation and repression was alike as well or dissimilar.

The memorial and oral history literature reviewed above includes the testimonies of nearly nine hundred people. How has it differed from, or reinforced, the extant and growing historiography of repression and population displacement in Soviet Latvia? In many of the essential episodes of deportation, particularly the opening acts of arrest and transport, memoirs and oral histories reiterate the work of historians that have examined how deportations were organized and executed. The descriptions of men at the door (and who those men were), of hurried packing of goods and supplies, of waiting at train depots, and long, tortuous two week journeys into Siberia, interrupted only by the separation of men from their families (in 1941), with little to eat and abysmal sanitary conditions is similar in both cases. Still, memoirs and oral histories provide a corrective to histories drawn from records taken from state-centric sources. As Irēna Saleniece insightfully points out:

> The historiography of this topic is dominated by research works based on sources drawn from the organs of repression and other power structures of the USSR. This provides a quiet objective judgment of the intentions and activities of the organs of power, but leaves in the shadow the individual experience of the people who were at a moment's notice deported from their place of residence to an alien land. The position of the deported people as the object of actions by the

kumentos (Daugavpils: Daugavpils Universitātes akadēmiskais apgāds Saule, 2008).

[27] Aldis Purs, "Creating the State from Above and Below: Local Government in Inter-war Latvia" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Toronto, 1998), 177.

[28] I have included the district of Ilūkste that is historically akin to Latgale within these estimates taken from Pelkaus, *Aizvestie: 1941*, 689; and Pence, *Aizvestie: 1949*, vol. 1, 193.

> authorities is mediated through the prism of power; hence sources of personal origin are indispensable for a more comprehensive study of this topic.[29]

What precisely do these sources of personal origin contribute or, more poetically, what emerges from the shadows when we examine individual experiences?

The testimonies of individuals offer a greater and more nuanced understanding from the very first moments of deportation. Sources from the organs of repression detail who was detained, who went to detain them, provide inventories of the detainee's possessions (taken and left behind), and can even provide the itineraries taken into administrative exile complete with convoy numbers, and the names of guards and fellow deportees alike. Memoirs and oral histories explain in visceral detail the emotion and shock of the moment, but also how vital those first moments potentially were. Many deportees recalled soldiers or guards helping them pack for transport or advising what to take, while others left almost empty-handed. The amount and quality of goods in one's possession helped determine chances of survival and general health. Food for transport kept some healthier, warm clothing meant better chances of survival in frigid weather, and any and all possessions meant the possibility of selling and bartering goods with Siberian locals for food in times of want and starvation. As a gross generalization, deportees in 1949 packed more and better material to take with them (they were also legally entitled to take more with them, although few were advised of these rights). Surprisingly, but understandably, deportees remember thankfully those very members of the repressive state organs arresting and transporting (and later guarding or supervising) them that gave them hints or even the faintest aid in surviving their ordeals. This experience, however, was far from universal; equally many deportees bemoaned the summer clothes on their backs or the supplies left behind that could have helped. Clearly this is also the case for many deportees who did not survive and therefore could not leave their testimonies of the experience.

Almost all of the testimonies have a great many common descriptive similarities. They all discuss the poor quality of food, the lack of food, periods of extreme want and starvation, and the great lengths taken to find food (including a long list of foods eaten out of desperation). Similarly, cold weather, inadequate living conditions (even the lack of any housing), infestations of lice and other bugs, debilitating illnesses and disease, and the completely arbitrary dispensation of justice are found in almost all testimonies (with each stressing one or the other more depending on their own experiences). One aspect of this arbitrariness was the frequent and

[29] Saleniece, *1949. gada 25. Martā izvesto balsis*, 351.

seemingly counterproductive movement of deportees from one location to the next (this seems more pronounced for deportees from 1941). One survivor even titled his testimony "I have been in seven prisons and six camps."[30] This number was likely not a record nor even particularly exceptional. For those deportees that were charged with political crimes, a common vein through the testimonies was navigating the difficult and adversarial (usually predatory) relationship between political criminals, non-political criminals, and jailors. And as with the abovementioned maladies, a broad spectrum of experiences with common criminals emerged. Some deportees remembered with bitterness how common criminals would strip political prisoners of anything of value and keep them in a constant state of fear, while others remembered victories over common criminals. Similarly, most testimonies included commentary on relations with earlier deportees (either relations between 1941 and 1949 deportees or with deportees from the 1930s). Generally speaking, each new wave of deportees encountered conditions slightly better (but still barbarous) than the previous wave, as earlier groups had built some structures or had begun kolkhoz construction.

Just as crucial differences in how each individual was detained and transported can only be understood through memoirs and oral histories, each individual's experience of the abovementioned challenges varied in important and consequential ways. Four of the most important factors for survival were the location of exile, the time of year of arrival, the ability to survive the first year, and the differences between political imprisonment and administrative exile. Some deportees were deposited near established communities or kolkhozy that were relatively receptive to new people and/or specifically needed the skill sets that deportees had (often literacy, bookkeeping, farming, general mechanics). These deportees were the most fortunate, were the most likely to survive deportation, and in many cases even thrive and succeed in their new homes. This was most apparent during the 1949 deportations when trains filled with deportees would stop at kolkhozy along the route and local officials would comb through the deportees as though participating in a modern slave fair, choosing the strong and able. Siberian kolkhozy following World War II were desperate for manpower, and in some cases, deportees quickly prospered in exile.[31]

Just as easily, however, the location and the timing of arrival could result in insurmountable challenges. The most infamous case is likely the so-

[30] Jānis Dauksts, "Esmu bijis septiņos cietumos, sešos lēģeros," in *Via Dolorosa: Staļinisma upura liecības*, vol. 5, ed. Anda Līce (Riga: Latvijas Okupācijas muzejs, 2007).

[31] See for example the Kalvāns and Redzobs family experience in Saleniece, *1949. gada 25. Martā izvesto balsis*, 185–302.

called island of death at Agapitova. In the fall of 1942, seven hundred people were deposited in an area completely unprepared for habitation. The deportees struggled to build shelter and find food in the midst of a crippling winter. By springtime, only seventy had survived, including only six Latvian children.[32] Outside of these extremes, if deportees were able to survive transport and their first year or two in exile, their conditions improved considerably, particularly if they were not directly incarcerated in a prison or prison camp. By this time most deportees became members of local kolkhozy, worked in fisheries or even in industry. For those deported in 1949, better conditions accelerated rapidly as mail with relatives in Latvia brought packages of supplies and emotional comfort.

There is still a great deal to be researched and written about experiences in Latvia under Soviet occupation, including within the theme of repression and population displacement. Most work, to this point, has focused on the Stalinist years of occupation, on periods of mass trauma. At its most simple, this period of Latvia's history has been a story of trauma with either state agents inflicting trauma or Latvians as victims. As the use of mass state terror receded following Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign, the subject matter for historians becomes far more complex and nuanced. Future topics for historians will include how returning deportees were received when they returned from administrative exile, the development of ethnic relations in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, and how Soviet Latvian citizens interacted with a state built on terror and mass repression, but that no longer employed those tools. I suspect that in many of these realms, official documents will prove ambiguous and unsatisfactory. The role of oral history and sources of personal origin may be far better suited for a reappraisal of this time period. We are, however, not yet ready for this reexamination. Memoirs from the 1970s and later that discuss exile are few and far apart.[33] Still, a greater reliance on oral history and individual experience will reintroduce the age-old dilemma of perspective, of the forest and the trees. As we turn more to the experiences of individuals, will we still be able to offer an overarching narrative of Latvia's experience? Likewise, just as state sources are problematic and need to be thoroughly vetted, so does oral history.

The interweaving of histories written from state sources (or from the perspective of politicians) and oral histories and memoirs is still new and

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[32] Geks, *Sibīrijas bērni*, 6. All of the Latvian survivors are interviewed in Geks' volume *Sibīrijas bērni,* and are also the subject matter of one of her film documentaries. The story of Agapitova also features prominently in Ilmārs Knaģis' *Bij Tādi Laiki*, 80–88.

[33] See, for example, Helēna Celmiņa, *Tuvumā un Tālumā* (Riga: Treji Deviņi, 2004).

novel to Latvian historiography. Saleniece's *Izvesto balsis* is the most accomplished to date with strong and compelling oral history cases, a theoretical understanding of oral histories, grounding in associated archival documents, and a sense of the larger historiographical debate. As such, it is a beacon for future work. But even Saleniece's edited collection, however, could push the envelope farther. The volume includes the life story of a woman who gives up her infant daughter at the moment of deportation. Later they are reunited and the story is told from the daughter's perspective; the mother is unable to talk about this episode. This would be a perfect point to discuss the psychological approach of Vieda Skultans, who in *The Testimony of Lives*, discusses how being able to discuss past traumas suggests a degree of healing and incorporation. The inability to discuss trauma suggests the person is still traumatized.[34] Saleniece has incorporated oral history and official history; the example of Skultans would suggest that there is room for the anthropologist and psychologist as well. Likewise, the introduction of a comparative historical approach would only strengthen academic discourse about oral histories and deportations alike. The experience of Lithuanians, Estonians, Volga Germans, Poles, and many other victims of Stalinism are but one common vein for a comparative approach. Most crucially, the integration of the Holocaust into the discussion of terror, repression, population displacement, and murder is an overwhelming necessity. Weaving the Holocaust with Soviet terror may produce complex accounts where perpetrators and collaborators become, in turn, victims. Still, such a step would help correct a historical wrong. The Holocaust violently removed the Jewish community from Latvia's ethnic collage. This same community and its destruction cannot be removed from historical discussions of terror, displacement and repression more generally in the region. In other words, the Holocaust was not a phenomenon in a vacuum. It was the most extreme and final of many acts of displacement, terror, and murder that began with the repatriation of Baltic Germans in 1939 and extended on through the mass deportations of 1949.

[34] Vieda Skultans, *The Testimony of Lives: Narrative and Memory in Post-Soviet Latvia* (London: Routledge, 1997).

Part II: Commemoration and Transference of the Memory of Deportation

Dovilė Budrytė

Gendering "History of Fighting and Suffering": War and Deportation in the Narratives of Women Resistance Fighters in Lithuania

In the late eighties, as the Soviet Union started to disintegrate, a new memory regime began to emerge in Lithuania, with Stalin-era deportations and repressions at its centre. Entrepreneurs of memory demonized the Soviet occupation and portrayed ethnic Lithuanians as its main victims. Also known as "a history of fighting and suffering" ("*Lietuvos kovų ir kančių istorija*"), this way of remembering later received support from the independent Lithuanian state, which allocated funds for the creation of a research center and museums. In addition, relevant legislation was passed that forbade questioning the main tenets of this regime, or diminishing the crimes of the Stalinist occupation in Lithuania, which has been described as genocide.

As time went on, the emotional power of the "fighting and suffering" memory regime has declined. There are fewer and fewer witnesses to these events, and the official memory of Stalinist deportations and the war of resistance, as perpetuated by state-supported institutions, does not have the same intensity as the stories told by the survivors. In addition, narratives about other traumas and other historical events have entered the public sphere, challenging the monumentalism of the traumas associated with Stalinist deportations, repression and the war of resistance in Lithuania. Public debates about the national heroes, who were active participants of the anti-Soviet resistance, but also were participants in the Holocaust, have further challenged this memory regime.

These observations raise several important and painful questions, such as: how to remember the deportations under Stalin and the war of resistance without competition in victimhood, and without creating new lines of exclusion and marginalization? How to make sure that the experiences of minorities and other groups are not marginalized? Is it possible to develop commemorative and remembrance strategies that go beyond the nation-state and become a bridge to understand the pain of others, without erasing the significant historical differences among various traumas?

To gain insight into these questions, this essay will draw on the literature on trauma and decolonization. As described by Irene Visser, for almost a decade now in postcolonial studies there have been repeated attempts to think about the ways to "decolonize trauma theory;" that is, to find ways to include the experiences of postcolonial communities into depictions of trauma.[1] This would imply that traumas of groups who are often excluded from memory landscapes, should matter as well, and these traumas should be depicted with power structures in mind.

Following this line of thinking, this chapter consists of the following sections. First, I briefly describe the current memory landscape in Lithuania, paying attention to the transformations of the "fighting and suffering" memory regime. Second, I present several alternatives to this regime that attempt to go beyond the nation-state and imagine other ways of commemorating deportations and war of resistance in Lithuania.

One such way is to focus on the experiences of ethnic minorities that were part of the events associated with monumental national traumas. Another way, drawing on feminist literature, is to ask questions about gender and women when analyzing traumatic events and their commemoration. Drawing on narratives of women who were participants in the anti-Soviet war of resistance, this essay develops the second alternative in more detail. I will conclude by outlining the main contours of a gender perspective on the anti-Soviet war of resistance in Lithuania.

The "Fighting and Suffering" Memory Regime in Lithuania: Landscape, Actors and Strategies

It is well established that Lithuania was the site of some of the worst atrocities of the twentieth century. It was an independent state during the interwar period, and it was occupied three times during the Second World War, twice by the Soviet Union (1940–41 and 1944–45) and once by Nazi Germany (1941–44). In 1940 and then after World War II, the Soviet occupations came with the political repression and mass deportation of the so-called "enemies of the state." The German occupation was the bloodiest, with approximately 200,000 Lithuanian Jews (out of 208,000 who lived in Lithuania before the war) and approximately 40,000 other individuals being murdered by the Germans and local collaborators.[2] Political repression

[1] Irene Visser, "Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects," *Humanities* 4, no. 2 (2015): 250–65.

[2] These losses were calculated by the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania. According to their data, 118,000 individuals were deported in 1944–53, and there were approximately 53,000 deaths resulting from the deportations and repressions during this period.

and mass deportations were resumed during the second Soviet occupation and continued until well after the war in 1953. During the same period, Lithuania was the site of armed anti-Soviet resistance, which peaked in between 1944 and 1949.

Valorizing the Soviet partisans who had fought against the Germans became the backbone of the official memory regime about the Great Patriotic War (as the Second World War was known in the Soviet Union) in Soviet Lithuania. However, the situation changed dramatically during the early stages of democratization in the mid-eighties and early nineties.

After Lithuania regained its independence in 1991, a new memory regime based on the anti-Soviet resistance was created. The collective traumas experienced during the first Soviet occupation and the Stalinist period (1944–53), not the German occupation, became the backbone of this new memory regime.

One tenet of this new memory regime was adoration of the anti-Soviet resistance fighters. It is estimated that from 1944 to 1953 there were at least 50,000 active anti-Soviet resistance fighters in Lithuania. If one includes those who provided them with various kinds of assistance (messengers and reserve fighters) this number increases to 100,000. Approximately 20,000 partisans were killed during the anti-Soviet partisan war.[3] Following the mass deportations of 1949 and the successful collectivization of agriculture the partisan movement lost many of its supporters. This movement ended in the early 1950s.

Soviet authorities in Lithuania vilified resistance fighters as "bandits" and "enemies of the state." Some of them had cooperated with the Germans before joining the anti-Soviet resistance, and in Soviet Lithuania such cases were highlighted in the public sphere to discredit the whole anti-Soviet partisan movement. In the late 1980s, however, the tide reversed, and the anti-Soviet resistance fighters became heroes. The national revival movement in Soviet Lithuania even used the same name as the anti-Soviet armed resistance in 1949, *Sąjūdis*. In 1999, the Lithuanian parliament voted to recognize a declaration to defend the sovereignty of Lithuania that was signed by anti-Soviet resistance fighters in 1949 as a "legal document," thus emphasizing the importance of the anti-Soviet resistance for post-Soviet Lithuanian identity.

Deportations and repressions by the Soviet Union became another tenet of the "fighting and suffering" regime. According to the website of the

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' Lietuvos gyventojų netektys okupacijų metais', Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (2016), <http://genocid.lt/centras/lt/147/c/>.

[3] This information is from the website of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania. 'The Armed Anti-Soviet Resistance in Lithuania in 1944–1953', Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania (2016), <http://genocid.lt/centras/en/2390/a/>.

Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (a state institution), approximately 156,000 individuals were imprisoned in the USSR during the period of 1941–58, and 131,600 were deported to approximately 2,500 places in the former USSR during 1940–53.[4] These losses became part of a narrative that used the term "genocide" to describe the suffering. Similar phenomena (the use of "genocide" to describe the losses under the occupation by the USSR) were observed in other former Soviet republics as well.[5]

Starting in the late eighties, the "fighting and suffering" narrative elicited strong counter-narratives, both in Lithuania and abroad. Even during the times of *Atgimimas* ("national revival" which took place in the late eighties) some historians and journalists started to write about the attacks of anti-Soviet resistance fighters against the civilians and other sensitive issues, such as betrayal and the collaboration of some of the anti-Soviet resistance fighters with Nazi Germany during World War II. However, until recently, these counter-narratives did not present a powerful challenge to the "fighting and suffering" memory regime.

Recently, in 2015 and 2016 the fighting and suffering narrative experienced several major challenges. In 2015, the journalist Rimvydas Valatka published an article titled "Ką pagerbė Lietuva—partizanų vadą Generolą Vėtrą ar žydų žudiką" [Whom Has Lithuania Honored: The Partisan Commander General Vėtra or a Jew Killer?].[6] This article prompted a vigorous debate about who should be considered a "national hero" and whether the anti-Soviet partisans who were commemorated as national heroes in the late eighties and early nineties should continue to be venerated. In 2016, Rūta Vanagaitė published the book *Mūsiškiai* [Our People], which discusses the participation of some Lithuanians who later became anti-Soviet partisans in the Holocaust.[7] This book, which became a bestseller, prompted more questions about the memory regime based on the veneration of the anti-Soviet resistance and deportations carried out under Stalin.

In both cases, soul searching public debates were prompted by stories about individuals and the difficult choices that they had to make. These public debates were polarizing. At the same time, they revealed the need to find a language to discuss this complicated past outside of simplifying dichotomies and divisions. The following sections of this essay analyses al-

[4] http://genocid.lt/centras/lt/1491/a/.

[5] Evgeny Finkel, "In Search of Lost Genocide: Historical Policy and International Politics in Post-1989 Eastern Europe," *Global Society* 24, no. 1 (2010): 51–70.

[6] http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/lit/r-valatka-ka-pagerbe-lietuva-partizanu-vada-generola-vetra-ar-zydu-zudika.d?id=68576988.

[7] Rūta Vanagaitė, *Mūsiškiai* (Vilnius: Alma littera, 2016).

ternative ways to think about and write about the issues related to World War II and its aftermath in Lithuania and beyond.

Exploring Alternatives to the "Fighting and Suffering" Memory Regime

The use of the term "genocide" to describe deportations and repression under Stalin became polarizing not only in international relations, but also in the domestic politics of post-Soviet states.[8] In the context of post-Soviet Lithuania, this term implies that there was a plan to eradicate the Lithuanian nation by the power structures of the Soviet Union. This narrative tends to portray ethnic Lithuanians as victims of history and obscures the fate of Lithuania's minorities who also were subject to deportations and repressions. Yet this collective victimization is at the core of the "fighting and suffering" regime.

Violeta Davoliūtė's work, highlighting the experiences of Lithuania's Jews who were deported in 1941, presents a powerful challenge to the monumentalism of trauma associated with the "fighting and suffering" memory regime. In June 1941, approximately 17,500 citizens of Lithuania were deported to Siberia, and, as Davoliūtė argues, very often this trauma is "perceived as the 'property' of ethnic Lithuanians."[9] In an attempt to go beyond the competition of memories, Davoliūtė set out to record the memories of Lithuania's Jews about their experiences of deportation in June 1941. According to the research she cites, approximately 8.9 percent (or 1,700) of those deported in 1941 were Jewish.

Davoliūtė describes memories of Lithuanian Jews in deportation as a "belated memory," as something that goes beyond the monumentalism of Gulag memories. The term "belatedness" refers to the marginal status of these memories (or even their absence) in the Lithuanian "fighting and suffering" narrative, even during the times of *Atgimimas*. According to Davoliūtė, another feature of these memories is their "cosmopolitanism," as her interviewees consciously attempt to transcend ethnic and national boundaries, thus challenging the "fighting and suffering" narrative about the Stalinist deportations in Lithuania.

Applying a gender perspective to the study of traumas associated with the "fighting and suffering" memory can help to challenge the monumentalism of these traumas and make the experiences of women visible. But despite the preoccupation with the traumas of the anti-Soviet war of resis-

[8] Finkel, "In Search of Lost Genocide," 54.

[9] Violeta Davoliūtė, "Multidirectional memory and the deportation of Lithuanian Jews," *Ethnicity Studies*, no. 2 (2015): 131–50.

tance and deportations in Lithuania after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, gender perspectives on the war of anti-Soviet resistance and deportations are scarce. Exceptions include a study of women who participated in the war of resistance conducted by Žaneta Smolskutė, and a comparative study of Lithuanian and Jewish women partisans conducted by Ruth Leiserowitz.[10] Gender-sensitive perspectives compel researchers of Soviet-era repression to pay attention to women's bodies and women's issues, such as infertility, single motherhood, and the death of children—issues that tend to be omitted from mainstream historical perspectives.[11]

Applying a gender perspective to the study of traumatic memories and focusing on stories told by women can also help to develop a more individual, moving and personal narrative, thus decentering traumatic history and moving away from imagining the nation as a fighting and suffering hero. For example, according to Violeta Davoliūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea), the famous memoir by Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, is a heroic narrative of individual resistance and as such, it departs from "the irredentist, ethnocentric historical consciousness" usually associated with deportee memoirs in Lithuania.[12]

Gender perspectives have been applied in Baltic Studies, by and large, to interpret the memoirs of deportees. Yet there is a shortage of accounts analyzing the lives, experiences and memoirs of women who were (and viewed themselves as) active participants in war. How do women who were resistance fighters remember their roles as related to violence as well as the traumatic experiences of torture and deportation? How are these memories related to national metanarratives about traumatic events? How do they cope with traumatic memories? Are those memories transformed into empowerment through political activities? With these questions in mind, I analyze the stories of two former resistance fighters, Natalija Gudonytė and Vitalija Kraujelytė.[13]

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[10] Žaneta Smolskutė, "Moterų dalyvavimo ginkluotame pasipriešinime 1944–1953 m. ypatumai," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 20 (2006): 53–61. Ruth Leiserowitz, "In the Lithuanian Woods: Jewish and Lithuanian Female Partisans," in *Women and Men at War: A Gender Perspective on World War II and Its Aftermath in Central and Eastern Europe,* ed. Maren Röger, and Ruth Leiserowitz (Osnabrück: Fibre Verlag, 2012), 199–218.

[11] Rutt Hinrikus, and Ene Kõresaar, "A Brief Overview of Life History Collection and Research in Estonia," in *She Who Remembers Survives: Interpreting Estonian Women's Post-Soviet Life Stories*, ed. Tiina Kirss, Ene Kõresaar, and Marju Lauristin (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2007), 20–23.

[12] Violeta Davoliūtė, "Deportee Memoirs and Lithuanian History: The Double Testimony of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 36, no. 1 (2005): 52.

[13] I was introduced to my interlocutors by a journalist who works for Tremtinys, a newspaper for former political prisoners and deportees. The interview with Vi-

War and Displacement in the Narratives of Women Former Resistance Fighters

The lives of the two women share the same general contour. Both were active members of the anti-Soviet resistance movement and were deported to labor camps. They both experienced discrimination upon their return to Lithuania. On the other hand, there are significant differences as well. Natalija was born and raised in Vilnius; she had an upper-class upbringing and later pursued a career as a university professor. Vitalija was born and raised in a peasant family in Kaniūkai village (close to Utena). They were active in the Union of Political Prisoners and both acted as "agents of memory"—they were actively involved in trying to establish the truth about the past, honoring the victims (in the case of Vitalija, her brother Antanas; in the case of Natalija, her fellow deportees) and identifying the individuals whom they considered to be perpetrators. Their stories share similar silences as well. They are by and large silent about the Holocaust and World War II and do not mention violent acts committed by "their" partisans. Such silences are common in the memoirs of the former resistance fighters and deportees.

Natalija Gudonytė and Vitalija Kraujelytė were deeply involved throughout the conflict (anti-Soviet war of resistance). Vitalija served as a partisan messenger in eastern Lithuania, close to Utena, from shortly after World War II until 1951, when she was deported to Inginsk in Cheremkhov district, Irkutsk region. Her nom de guerre was Saulutė, "Little Sun." In 1960, Vitalija was deported to Maklakov village (now Lesosibirsk) in Yeniseyski district, Krasnoyarsk region. She and her family helped Jonas Kimštas-Žalgiris, the commander in chief of resistance fighters in Eastern Aukštaitija's Vytautas district.

Natalija served as a partisan messenger in central Lithuania (Suvalkija), from shortly after World War II until 1950, when she was arrested in Vilnius and tortured by the KGB. Her nom de guerre was Vosilka, "Cornflower," at first and later Laima. She helped Adolfas Valenta-Ožys until he was killed in 1947, and later Vytautas Matulevičius-Pempė, the commander in chief of resistance fighters in Tauras district, Vytautas division. In 1952, as a political prisoner, she was deported to Taishet lager, a top security camp close to Irkutsk.

According to Žaneta Smolskutė, women resistance fighters in Lithuania were unlikely to challenge gender roles by trying to establish themselves as

talija Kraujelytė took place in her home on July 9. 2009. The interview with Natalija Gudonytė took place in her home on July 23, 2010. Extended versions of these interviews were analyzed in Dovilė Budrytė, "'We Didn't Keep Diaries, You Know': Memories of Trauma and Violence in the Narratives of Two Former Women Resistance Fighters," *Lituanus* 57, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 59–71.

leaders of partisan units or political organizations.[14] The stories of Vitalija and Natalija support this finding—both women saw themselves as performing supporting roles in the resistance movement. Their duties included delivering messages, packages, publishing underground newspapers (Natalija) and making counterfeit documents (Natalija). Serving as messengers was not easy. Sometimes the tasks were very dangerous, such as transporting and hiding weapons, even machine guns. However, it was not fear that became the most lasting traumatic memory. It was betrayal.

By dwelling on the trauma of betrayal, the stories of Vitalija and Natalija complicate the state-centric account of the war of resistance that portrays the war as a heroic, relentless fight involving the forces of good (the Lithuanian nation, primarily represented by the resistance fighters) against evil (the Soviet occupiers). Some of those who fought on the "good" side betrayed other resistance fighters. During the war of resistance, there was no full "national unity."

Betrayal by acquaintances, neighbors and even people who were considered friends was especially painful to the two women. The shock of betrayal by an acquaintance, also a messenger, is featured in Natalija's account of her involvement in the resistance. She thinks that another messenger, a woman named Butkevičiūtė, betrayed her for "dirty" money promised by the occupiers. Natalija finds it difficult to explain the acts of betrayal that were committed by other resistance fighters: "I still do not know why there were so many traitors among us . . ." She recounts that under enormous pressure many fighters did betray their friends; however, the traitors later became unwanted even by "their new masters" and ended up in prison themselves.

In her written memoir Natalija elaborates on the various techniques that the KGB used to obtain information. For example, she explains how, after three sleepless nights, she found another woman, named Budreikienė, in her cell. She pretended to be a fellow prisoner, but she was in fact a prison spy. Natalija suggests that she shared some sensitive information with Budreikienė: "At that time I did not know that she was a prison spy. When a human being loses faith in another human being, then there is a terrible darkness. One day, coming back from an interrogation, I did not find her [in the cell]. She did her dirty job and left."[15]

Parts of Vitalija's story also show that resistance was a complex societal phenomenon, and its participants often struggled with internal tensions, fears, anxieties, and traumas. She confided that on one occasion, when she was taken for questioning by *stribai* who found a notebook with partisan songs in her house, the resistance fighters were "really afraid that I would

[14] Smolskutė, "Moterų dalyvavimo ginkluotame pasipriešinime."

[15] "Natalija Gudonytė," in *Naikintos, bet nenugalėtos kartos kelias: prisiminimai,* ed. Natalija Gudonytė, (Vilnius: Vyzdys, 2006), 56.

be a traitor." Vitalija did not hide the fact that she was in pain and distress—"my mittens were wet . . . when I tried to wipe my face, I found out that my lips were bloody . . ." Like Natalija, she remembers someone whom she trusted completely and who violated her trust. Vitalija has difficulty forgiving him: "He lived in Jonava and died recently; I found out from reading our newspaper [*Tremtinys* (Deportee)]. It is a pity that I did not visit him before he died . . ."

In both stories, narratives about betrayal include critiques of the current political order. Natalija echoes Vitalija's discontent with the lack of transitional justice in post-Soviet Lithuania: "There were so many traitors. You would sit, talk with a person and you would never know . . . some traitors today are respected more than victims in Lithuania. [It is important] to know the truth; know what's black and what's white. It is a pity that our current government does not see it and does not want to talk about it." As this quote suggests, paradoxically, Natalija and Vitalija plea for a clear-cut evaluation of the past; however, their own accounts about this past reveal the complexities and tensions associated with the memorialization of the past and its evaluation.

Remembering Trauma, Creating Political Discourse

In her groundbreaking book *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, Jenny Edkins points out the ways in which nation-states and societies attempt to silence the survivors of traumas: "In contemporary culture victimhood offers sympathy and pity in return for the surrender of any political voice."[16] She raises a crucial question—"Is there any way in which survivors can or do resist these processes of medicalization and depolitization?"[17]

The stories of Vitalija and Natalija and political activities provide useful insights into this question. Both women belonged to the Lietuvos Politinių Kalinių ir Tremtinių Sąjunga (Union of Lithuanian Political Prisoners and Deportees, LPKTS), which represents the political interests of former political prisoners and deportees. This organization is often ridiculed by its political opponents for its militancy. Its female members, for example, are sometimes referred to as the *megztosios beretės*, "knitted berets." The members of this organization are visible during commemorations of mass traumatic events, such as mass deportations conducted under Stalin, and they demand a full condemnation of Soviet crimes and trials for the perpetrators.

[16] Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 9.

[17] Ibid., 52.

Allied with Tėvynės Sąjunga-Lietuvos Krikščionys Demokratai (Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats), the main nationalist party, the LPKTS was able to achieve some of its major political goals, such as restitution for losses experienced during Soviet times and a prohibition against denying the Soviet genocide (i.e., the mass deportations and political repression carried out under Stalin). Lithuania's conservative political parties, including the LPKTS, have also tried, along with other conservative parties in postcommunist Europe, to get various European institutions to condemn the crimes that were committed by totalitarian Communist regimes. In 2006, for example, politicians from the Baltic states and Poland were able to get the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) to pass a resolution condemning such crimes; however, their goal to equate the crimes of Communism with those of Nazism did not materialize.

The nationalist motifs that permeated the stories of Vitalija and Natalija represented the political discourse of the political organization to which they belonged. Their individual narratives of suffering represent a condemnation of the previous regime. Thus, as narratives created by active memory entrepreneurs, their narratives could be interpreted as political acts and even expressions of non-negotiable political agendas.

Natalija describes the ways in which she was tortured in the prison cells of the KGB, which were below ground level:

> I never could imagine such methods of torture and such ways of treating people. We were traitors, enemies. . . . I heard everything . . . such nasty words. . . . It was difficult to survive in those cellars without any sleep. . . . And those nasty words. They called me a prostitute and so on . . . it was cruel and it was disgusting . . . and . . . those investigators, speaking Russian. But then the Lithuanians were not much better. Sometimes I would spend the whole night without being asked anything. I was forced to sit in one place without moving; just sit, period. I had to put my hands on my thighs; you couldn't cross your legs nor anything . . . you couldn't lean against anything, not even against the wall . . . the chair was fixed to the floor. If you fell, they would pour water on your head and so it went . . . the same thing over and over again.

Vitalija's story of abuse by a male supervisor in Siberia exhibits similar strong emotions and documentation of human rights abuses. She recalls being told to undress, then severely beaten. Vitalija condemns the regime's suppression of religious rights by remembering that her torture became even worse when the perpetrator saw a rosary that she wore around her neck. Vitalija suggests the impossibility of being able to fully describe the experience of life as a political prisoner and deportee. She says: "I was beaten severely, deported to Siberia . . . my head was hit so many times it is amazing that I still remember anything. . . . But my memory is not perfect. We did not keep diaries, you know."

Both women's stories highlight the inhumanity and cruelty of their male captors. They do not mention rape, nor do they dwell on the other types of humiliation that women who were tortured for their political activities experienced, such as being denied items necessary for personal hygiene during menstruation. The cultural norms that impose silence when it comes to discussing issues such as menstruation may have affected their narratives.

The ways in which stories are told—what is remembered and what is forgotten—are influenced not only by cultural values, but other variables as well, including current political and social structures. Vitalija and Natalija condemn not only the crimes committed under Stalin, but also life in Soviet Lithuania after Stalin's death. They denounce the lack of freedom and the social and political discrimination that former deportees experienced in Soviet Lithuania, thus contradicting those who argue that Soviet Lithuania provided a stable and somewhat comfortable life for Soviet citizens. An ongoing debate about how to remember Soviet Lithuania, especially after Stalin's death, may have shaped their narratives.

The stories by Vitalija and Natalija about their return to Soviet Lithuania are similar to the stories of other former deportees and political prisoners. Their social interactions in Soviet Lithuania were poisoned by an awareness of "otherness." They, former deportees and political prisoners, were different. The two women's stories about Siberia also suggest that it was somewhat easier to be a "patriot" in Siberia than in Soviet Lithuania. It was easier to express feelings and beliefs in Siberia without fear of reprisal. In Soviet Lithuania, freedom of expression was limited.

Although their narratives mention disenchantment with their lives in Soviet Lithuania, neither Natalija nor Vitalija expressed a desire to go back to Siberia. (Some former deportees, disillusioned with Soviet Lithuania, actually wanted to go back.) According to Vitalija, "we lived in Kairėnai, in a small room, close to a psychiatric hospital. It was rough, but it was still Lithuania. Well . . . all of my life was rough."

According to Natalija, she had three herrings and twenty-five rubles when she began the journey back to Soviet Lithuania. "I had no parents, nobody, only distant relatives. There were eight of us in a small room. . . . Then I tried to find a job . . . through acquaintances." She tells how her former classmate and good friend, Petrė, refused to help her find a job: "When I was looking for a job [in education], Petrė told me, 'Stop looking, those like you will never find a job' See, she was a Communist already then. I told Petrė that I was not there to see her, but I wanted to see the Minister of Education. And then I left and started to cry. Once I ran into her, but I looked the other way. I thought to myself, 'what a pig' . . . Eventually, my Jewish friend Kašmanaitė finally found me a job because she knew what it was like to be deported."

Natalija thus summarizes her experiences in Soviet Lithuania: "It is better not to remember the first five years in my homeland, and it is better not to talk about them. This is a dark page with one bloody entry—[I was treated as] a traitor, a criminal."[18]

Remembering Deportation, Creating a Gendered Account

The stories of Vitalija and Natalija about their experiences in labor camps in Siberia focus on food preparation and bonding with other women and children—economic and social roles traditionally associated with women. Food preparation is especially prominent in Natalija's story, as the routine of food preparation acquires a new meaning and importance in a labor camp: "We tried to celebrate all holidays. Oh, we have some bread—this will be for Christmas. Every day, I would put a piece of bread aside. Sometimes I hid it in the snow to make sure that no one would eat it. . . . And then later we would gather all these pieces of bread together, warm them up, mix them up, and make a 'cake' (*tortas*). We would think of different ways to celebrate."

Natalija's story is punctuated with memories about the lack of food in Siberia: "We got some water for tea in the morning and then many little fish . . . the fish were so incredibly salty. We were so hungry, but there was no water. . . . You want to eat, and that's it. So many women ate those little salty fish, and their bodies became incredibly hairy. . . . See, if you were working and did not fulfill the required quota, you did not get any bread. [If you fulfilled the required quota,] then you would get 250 grams of bread. The bread looked like a cube. I remember taking that bread into my hand, smelling it—somehow this bread would disappear—and I would lose all memory of eating it."

Survival was possible because women of different nationalities, from different parts of the world cooperated in completing "manly" tasks, such as cutting wood, pulling up stumps or working in a mica factory. (Mica is a type of stone.) According to Natalija, "there was a special relationship [among women], a certain kind of love. . . . Everyone tried to survive. If someone was ill, we tried to help them. . . . Then there was unexpected laughter, a song—and somehow that pain would go away."

The sense of nationalism, often exclusive, which is so present at the beginning of women's stories when they talk about the war of resistance, is mostly absent from their stories about their lives in deportation. There is one common goal—survival, and it appears that it helped to erase other lines of division.

[18] "Natalija Gudonytė," 73.

Vitalija remembers cooperation and singing as ways of survival in the labor camp:

> I remember one Christmas Eve. It was morning; we were transported to work—Poles, Ukrainians, and Lithuanians in the morning. And one of us, Balys, started to sing. And the Poles and the Ukrainians started to sing as well. The local Russians took off their hats to show respect. . . . The local Russians were good people. We women had to cut wood. We had to turn pieces of wood around. . . . I recall one little Russian coming over and telling me, *Vika, chto ty delayesh, ne budyesh rozhat*, "Vika, what are you doing, you'll be infertile." Yes, the local Russians were superb people . . .

Later Vitalija describes a job that she had in a boarding preschool in Siberia. There she discovered a love for children, in spite of ethnicity: "it did not matter to me whether they were Russians or not."

In her story about her experiences in the labor camp and her interaction with other women, Natalija highlights her urban origins, which set her apart from the other women: "Our [Lithuanian] girls were wonderful; nice, girls from villages, you know. . . . They were different [from me]. But we became very close there. They read very little. Having graduated from high school, I had read a lot. I used to tell them stories from novels; they loved that! Later they wrote to me in their letters: when they were listening to my stories, I forgot their pain. I gave them lessons in geography. . ." However, having to complete "manly" and challenging tasks helped to overcome not only ethnic, but also class divisions: "We laughed together, and thus we were able to complete hard tasks [such as pulling out stumps]. So that's why you see that we are laughing in photographs taken in Siberia."[19]

The Duties of Memory

According to Lenz and Bjerg, there is a clear division of roles in the process of constructing national metanarratives about the past. Men are assigned what appears to be a more important role in narrating, interpreting, and collecting factual evidence about the past; they serve as "theme-givers." Women, on the other hand, are likely to focus on family stories and to act as "theme-takers." Men tend to serve as the creators of a "collective encyclopedia" about the national past, while women are likely to focus on their family albums. In this gendered system, men are seen as brave warriors and resistance fighters, while women are likely to play the supporting role of helpers.[20]

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Claudia Lenz, and Helle Berg, "'To be Honest I don't Think She Has Much to Say…': Gender and Authority in Memoirs of the Second World War in Denmark

As with the stories of other women acting as agents of memory, the stories of Natalija and Vitalija demonstrate the interdependent relationship between creating a "collective encyclopedia" and gathering pictures for family albums. Vitalija likes talking about her brother Antanas, a well-known partisan who killed himself to avoid capture by the Soviets in 1965. In fact, her identity as a woman resistance fighter is inseparable from that of being Antanas' helper. Given the status of her brother as a famous resistance fighter, Vitalija's stories enter the public realm and become part of "collective encyclopedic" knowledge about the war of resistance. Not surprisingly, Vitalija did not address the more controversial aspects of her brother's partisan activities (e.g., there are stories about how Antanas, together with a fellow resistance fighter, killed an entire Lithuanian family in 1949);[21] her story is affected by and is part of the so-called "fighting and suffering narrative" about the Lithuanian war of resistance and mass deportations.

In contrast, brave male warriors are curiously absent in Natalija's story. Her narrative focuses on her traumatic experiences of being imprisoned and deported. Natalija showed me an extensive collection of memory objects well-known to anyone familiar with the traumatic history of deportations—rosaries made of bread, letters and poems written on birch bark, objects knitted using fish bones, and photographs, many photographs. "All this will be given to an archive," Natalija promises. "I gathered all this, she says, and I do not want to lose it. What you see here is tears, pain, love—whatever you can imagine, you will find it here. . . . My drawers are full of memories."

Conclusions

Despite their involvement in different types of resistance, the two women described in this chapter had some things in common—their experiences of torture, betrayal, and exile, the trauma of coming back from Siberia to Soviet Lithuania, and their dissatisfaction with the lack of transitional justice in post-Soviet Lithuania. Neither Vitalija nor Natalija played leading roles in the resistance movement; however, they shared the ideology of the groups with whom they were fighting and identified strongly with the "fighting and suffering" narrative.

Including women's stories in the discourse about resistance helps to broaden the discourse about resistance, and (hopefully) deconstructs the

and Norway," *Suomen Antropologi: Journal of Finnish Anthropological Society* 32, no. 4 (2007): 34–44.

[21] Jurgis Jurgelis, "Pagerbtas smurtas—pažemintos aukos," www.delfi.lt. Accessed November 9, 2010.

image of the nation as a fighting and suffering hero (i.e., the male narrative). Women's stories raise numerous other questions, such as: what were the relations between the resistance fighters and their families? How did they cope with the trauma of betrayal? Which stories are still not heard?

According to Judith Greenberg, who has studied women in the French resistance during World War II, one of the most important functions of including women in the study of resistance is to make sure that "a fixed idea of resistance" is resisted.[22] Resistance is a very complex, multilayered phenomenon; its participants were often tortured by betrayal and trauma. This insight can be applied to the Lithuanian war of resistance and to the discourses surrounding it as well. In her written memoir Natalija describes an interrogation session in which she tried to explain to the interrogator the effect World War II and the anti-Soviet war of resistance had had on Lithuanians: "I explained to him that the wars that took place in our lands confused people in such a way that it was difficult to understand who wanted what."[23] Raising more questions about the war of resistance and complicating the national metanarrative are probably the most important contributions of the stories of the two women.

[22] Judith Greenberg, "Paths of Resistance: French Women Working from the Inside," in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis and the Holocaust*, ed. Elizabeth Baer and Myrna Goldenberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 157.

[23] "Natalija Gudonytė," 73.

Violeta Davoliūtė

"We Are All Deportees." The Trauma of Displacement and the Consolidation of National Identity during the Popular Movement in Lithuania

> "We were deported not only from our homeland but from our language, customs, religion, respect for ourselves and our earth." Vytautas Landsbergis, 1990[1]

The popular movements that emerged throughout Central and Eastern Europe during the late 1980s continue to fascinate and perplex. It was an era of iconoclasm, marked by massive rallies, the burning of flags, and the toppling of statues, broadcast to the astonishment of the entire world. And behind these sensational images political transformation was driven by a deeper cultural process that scholars describe as the "return of memory," manifest in the lifting of censorship, the opening of sealed archives, and the telling of traumatic life stories long suppressed.[2]

Alfred Senn's firsthand account of the period singles out the publication of Dalia Ginkevičiūtė's memoirs in 1987 as an event that "stunned the reading public and immediately took an important place in the collective memory of Lithuanians as an oppressed nation."[3] Dovilė Budrytė writes that the "political thaw . . . instantly awakened memories of the displacement" and higlights the role of ceremonies commemorating the mass deportations.[4] According to Tomas Venclova, the return of memory "brushed

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[1] Vytautas Landsbergis, "Speech Delivered at a Public Meeting in Support of the Political Leadership of Vytautas Landsbergis," *Tremtinys* 21, no. 6 (May 1990).

[2] See Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolf Starn, "Introduction," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 1–6.

[3] Alfred Senn, *The Lithuania Awakening* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 45.

[4] Dovile Budrytė, "Coming to Terms with the Past: Memories of Displacement and Resistance in the Baltic States," in *Historical Injustice and Democratic Transition in Eastern Asia and Northern Europe: Ghosts at the Table of Democracy*, ed. Kenneth Christie and Robert Cribb (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), 126.

aside all social and individual distinctions and ensured a dramatic national consolidation that led Lithuania into independent existence."[5]

The idea that the return of deportee memory contributed to the consolidation of national identity is now taken for granted, a standard paragraph in school history books,[6] but the actual process by which this took place has not been closely researched. This chapter takes a closer look at when and how the memoirs of individual deportees were published and received by the community, analyzes the presentation and interpretation of the deportee texts, and seeks to demonstrate how they were assimilated into a discourse of trauma based on a myth of universal deportation, that is, the notion that all Lithuanians were deported in one way or another, and that they were deported not only from their homeland but from their language, their culture and deracinated from the land.

The enduring significance of Grinkevičiūtė's work is confirmed by the large number of academic studies devoted to her testimony produced over the last decade, including a number of contributions to this volume.[7] But while these have by and large sought to provide original interpretations of the text, demonstrating the depth and range of potential readings, this chapter will seek to reconstruct the interpretations that were actually made of it by readers and critics in "real time" during the popular movement against Soviet rule. In this respect, Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs played an operative role in the return of deportee memory because they were the first to be published, causing a sensation that established a pattern for the reception of other deportee memoirs and the social construction of deportee memory in Lithuania.

In particular, I argue that the shape of this memory during the critical years of 1988–91 derived not only from the texts written by the deportees themselves, but also and more directly from the metanarratives about the deportations crafted by leading members of the Lithuanian Writers' Union. The pattern for the interaction between deportees and professional writers as agents of memory was encapsulated in the personal encounter of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė (1927–1987) with Justinas Marcinkevičius (1930–2011), a poet and writer widely considered the most popular and influential respresentative of the Soviet Lithuanian creative *intelligentsia* formed after World

[5] Tomas Venclova, "A Fifth Year of Independence: Lithuania, 1922 and 1994," *East European Politics and Society* 9, no. 2 (1995): 349.

[6] Viktorija Daujotytė, in her entry on Grinkevičiūtė in a history of Lithuanian literature for high-school students, underscores how much Grinkevičiūtė's testimony contributed to the spread of the popular movement. Viktorija Daujotytė and Elena Bukelienė, *Lietuvių literatūra (1940–1997)* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1997), 27.

[7] See the contributions to this volume by Balkelis and Sambrooke. Violeta Davoliūtė, "Deportee Memoirs and Lithuanian History: The Double Testimony of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 36, no. 1 (2005): 51–68

War II. Marcinkevičius helped to publish the text in the official press, thereby introducing it to a wide readership, while promoting and framing its reception through his own analysis and commentary.

By weaving the deportee narratives into the background discourse of trauma and loss that was already strongly encoded in Soviet Lithuanian culture, the Soviet Lithuanian intelligentsia established a parallel between the trauma of deportation and the trauma of the various forms of physical and cultural displacements that characterized Soviet modernity in Lithuania: from collectivization to industrialization and from urbanization to Russification.

The notion that Lithuanians were all deportees, deported from their land, language, and culture—a myth of "universal" deportation—came to be accepted as a self-evident basis for collective identification and political action. The social transformation and sense of solidarity that brought hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets was powerfully reinforced by mass rituals of return (*sugrįžimas*) and reburial of deportees who perished in the camps. The myth of universal deportation and the discourse of cultural genocide were key to transcending the social divisions of Soviet Lithuanian society and to welding the people together in the heat of the popular movement, but only for a short time. The slow unraveling of the myth in the post-Soviet era is gradually creating space for a more comprehensive approach to the social history of Soviet Lithuania that takes the real experience of deportation in all of its diversity and force into account.

The Return of Memory and Role of Testimony

Milan Kundera's aphorism that the "struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting" came to life throughout the Soviet bloc in the late eighties as previously suppressed materials about the past were published in large circulation newspapers, pamphlets, and books.[8] In Lithuania the lifting of censorship and the first open criticism of official history unleashed an enormous wave of interest in documentary materials about the past (i.e., "authentic" materials that were not "tainted" by Soviet ideology or censorship), especially concerning Lithuania's incorporation into the USSR, postwar resistance and the deportations.[9]

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[8] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1980); Geoffrey Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

[9] Saulė Matulevičienė, "Dokumentinė literatūra: pokario ir tremties atsiminimai," in *Naujausioji lietuvių literatūra*, ed. Giedrius Viliūnas (Vilnius: Alma Littera, 2003), 319–45.

Starting in 1987, Lithuanians began to queue early in the morning to buy the latest issue of *Komjaunimo tiesa*, the leading reformist newspaper that printed a lot of materials on history, and reached a phenomenal daily circulation of a half million issues in 1988.[10] History books and memoirs published at the time had circulations of 50,000–75,000 with the more popular reaching 100,000. For example, 90,000 copies of the memoirs of Juozas Urbšys, *Lithuania During the Fateful Years 1939–1940*, were published in 1989, followed by serial publication in the journal *Nemunas*. Adolfas Šapoka's *History of Lithuania*, written in the interwar period, was first serialized in *Kultūros Barai* and then printed in book form with a circulation of 100,000.[11]

The memoirs of deportees played a critical role in fulfilling this need for "documentary" materials about the past. For example, the memoirs of Valentinas Gustainis, *Be kaltės*, sold out almost immediately upon publication in 1989 with a print-run of 100,000 copies.[12] However, the return of deportee memory cannot be measured by the number of copies of books put into circulation; it needs to be understood in terms of how these texts were received by Lithuanian readers within the cultural codes of the time. Studies of textual reception start from the assumption that textuality is not fixed at a single moment in time, and that the ontology of the text is historically dynamic. The meaning of a text does not inhere in itself alone, but comes to life through its interaction with the background of knowledge, experience, and the other texts, the culturally-specific intertext that the reader brings to the act of interpretation.[13]

As a result, the text of testimony needs to be understood as a process where the reader assumes an active role in the completion of the text's meaning. Reception theory is of particular importance to the interpretation of testimonies to historical trauma and political violence, where the author's intention to intervene in history and to see justice done is so strongly marked. In the highly contested environment in which such testimonies are

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[10] *Lietuvos rytas*, the successor of *Komjaunimo tiesa*, now has a circulation of about 60,000 and still is a very popular daily.

[11] Liudas Truska, "Origins of the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*," in *13 January 1991 in Lithuania in the Context of the Recent Research* (Vilnius, Vilnius Pedagogical University, 2006), 158. By way of comparison, the average history book published during the late Soviet period before *Sąjūdis* would have a circulation of about 20,000 copies, while history books published in the post-Soviet period rarely surpass 10,000 copies and are most printed in runs of one or two thousand.

[12] Ibid.

[13] See Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) and *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

made, there is often a political struggle to determine their meaning, raising important questions about the gathering, editing, framing, and delivery of testimony, that is, parties in addition to the writer and reader.

The conventions of genre are also critical to framing the reception of a text, and the analysis of this chapter draws on the insights of three major theories of testimony that have elaborated the mechanisms by which the experience of an individual becomes appropriated by a collective as part of the shared, public memory. The first and probably best known is the trauma theory of testimony as applied to the memoirs of Holocaust survivors. The second is the theory of Latin American *testimonio,* and the third is the modern hermeneutical theory of religious testimony as developed by Paul Ricoeur. Taken together, these three schools of criticism offer considerable insights that can help to develp a framework for the understanding of the return of deportee memory as a part of the communicative cycle of testimony.[14]

For trauma theory, the truth of the historical event is internalized as the experience of trauma, and it is to this trauma that the witness testifies. The word "trauma" means "wound" in ancient Greek, and originally it referred to a physical injury inflicted on the body. In medical and psychiatric literature it came to be understood as an injury inflicted upon the psyche, and refers not just to the original injury, but to its aftereffects. Trauma is now understood in the clinical context as a delayed response to an overwhelming event, a response which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, and particular patterns of behavior stemming from the event.

In their highly influential application of trauma theory to Holocaust testimony, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub emphasize that the experience of trauma is represented through indirect, non-referential means, and that this mode of communication entails a special mode of reception, which they call "sympathetic listening." Because Holocaust survivors are often unable to tell their story in a coherent narrative, the listener is required to look "behind" what is being said to understand the original trauma.[15]

The understanding of trauma as mode of communication, as the transmission of an experience that is prior to thought and language, is fundamental to this approach to testimony, where the notion of "secondary wit-

[14] Ana Douglass and Thomas A. Vogler, *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma* (London: Routledge, 2003); Georg Gugleberger, ed., *The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America* (Durham: Duke UP, 1996); Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976); Lewis S. Mudge, ed., *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980). For more recent critiques of the Eurocentrism of trauma theory, see Stef Craps, et al. "Decolonizing Trauma Studies Round-Table Discussion," *Humanities* 4, no. 4 (2015): 905–23.

[15] Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (London: Routledge, 1992), 75–92.

nessing" takes on a key role in the receiving and passing on the message that inheres in the original event to an increasingly broad circle of witnesses. For Cathy Caruth, trauma is transmitted from speaker to listener, and from that listener/speaker to another listener as a sort of "contagion." Projecting the model of traumatic communication from the clinical to the cultural sphere, she suggests that testimony can play a role in post-conflict situations in reconciling individuals and communities that have been alienated from one another: "This speaking and this listening do not rely on what we simply know of each other, but on what we don't yet know of our traumatic pasts."[16]

The "contagious" nature of trauma and the idea of secondary witnessing has led theorists to underscore the universal or at least transnational nature of Holocaust memory. Caruth posits the experience of historical trauma, or "history as Holocaust," as an existential common denominator among all peoples living in the postwar era, and proposes "sympathetic listening" as the new *lingua franca* among peoples. Living as we do in a "catastrophic age," she suggests that "trauma may itself provide the very link between cultures." And while the universalist ambitions of trauma theory have been subject to frequent criticism, the broad acceptance of Holocaust remembrance as a universal obligation in Europe and North America speaks for itself.

Meanwhile, theorists of Latin American *testimonio* have by and large rejected the universalist pretensions of trauma theory, which they describe as rooted in the culture of the metropolis and having little to do with the political realities in the periphery.[17] Emphasizing the cultural specificity of every historical trauma, they nonetheless place a strong emphasis on the collective nature of the testimonial enterprise. Indeed, Latin American *testimonio* is rarely the product of a single author, but the result of a creative partnership of an editor, who assumes the role of a *maieusis* or midwife of meaning, with a member of the subaltern community, that is, the indigenous victim of oppression who does not speak the langauge of the colonizer and urban society, to together produce a written text.[18]

In this manner, *testimonio* not only occasions the transformation of the former object of oppression into the subject of a narrative of liberation, but it transforms the very nature of the subject from individual to collective:

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[16] Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 11, 156.

[17] George Yudice, "Testimony and Postmodernism," *Latin American Perspectives* 18, no. 3 (1991): 15–31.

[18] Georg Gugelberger and Michael Kearney, "Voices for the Voiceless: Testimonial Literature in Latin America," *Latin American Perspectives* 18, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 8.

"the protagonist who gives *testimonio* is a speaker who does not conceive of him/herself as extraordinary, but instead as an allegory of the many, the people." Collective traditions and memories are valorized and offered as a resource for transformative politics: "testimonial writing also emphasizes a re-reading of culture as lived history and a profession of faith in the struggles of the oppressed."[19]

The idea of testimony as implying the intention of the author to bring about a political or ethical transformation of the reader is developed most fully in Paul Ricoeur's theory of religious testimony, which serves as a useful reminder of the ancient provenance of many notions advanced in the theories of trauma and *testimonio*. For example, the idea of secondary witnessing is central the Christian tradition, where the witness attests not only to events seen but also to beliefs held, as in the saying, "we bear witness to the faith." Moreover, the word for martyr, a person who "voluntarily undergoes the penalty of death for refusing to renounce the Christian faith" (OED), derives from the ancient Greek word for witness—*martur*.

Moreover, the proces of collective transformation at the heart of *testimonio* echoes ancient conceptions that link the revelation delivered by testimony to the notion of the apocalypse—a catastrophe which occurs within history, but which transcends history by bringing one era to a close and inaugurating the new. As with trauma theory, the fact that one "witnesses" not just events but other people's testimony to events means that witnessing and testimony are points in a cycle of communication, conceived as the transmission of knowledge, experience, or revelation. For Christians, the text of Scripture is "produced" as testimony and "received" as revelation by the reader, who as a believer goes on to live the revealed truth as testimony, for others to witness and believe, building the community of faith.

The Emergence of Testimony

The practical thrust of these three theories of testimony is to decenter traditional notions of authorship and text, pointing to the range of additional factors that make up the social significance of testimony as a process: the practice of multiple authorship, the distinction of the physical text and the "text" of testimony, the modalities of transmission and the transformation of identity as an inherent part of the act of reading and writing, of listening and speaking. Indeed, a close examination of the emergence of Grinkevičiūtė's testimony into the public sphere of late Soviet Lithuania shows the limits of the traditional, linear model of communication from the author to the reader through the transparent medium of the text.

[19] Ibid., 26.

Quite apart from these considerations, preliminary care needs to be taken when considering which text to analyze, in view of this chapter's aim of discerning the actual, historically operative interpretations of the testimony opposed to its potential meanings. Grinkevičiūtė wrote the first version of her memoirs in 1949–50, after she had escaped to Lithuania from exile with her sick mother. She was arrested in 1950 and sent back into exile, but not before she buried the manuscript of her first memoirs in the yard of their house. This version of her text was discovered only in 1991, the year Lithuania regained its independence and several years after Grinkevičiūtė's death in December 1987. While the discovery of this text served as a moving metaphor of the return of deportee memory, *Sąjūdis* had already achieved its chief political aim, and the peak of interest in the deportation had passed. For all of its inherent value, Grinkevičiūtė's childhood memoir played no significant role in the popular movement against Soviet rule, if only because it appeared too late.

After Grinkevičiūtė finally returned to Lithuania in 1956, she was unable to find the text she buried in 1950, and so she wrote a second version. This text, written in Russian and entitled *"Litovskie ssylnye v Yakutie"* ("Lithuanian exiles in Yakutsk"), was published in 1979 by the underground Moscow-based journal *Pamiat.* It was circulated through samizdat, and underwent continual mutation as it was manually copied and recopied. It was eventually smuggled abroad and published in French and English. However, within Soviet Lithuania, this text was read by a very small number of people and had a negligible social impact.

Some time in the early eighties, Grinkevičiūtė rewrote the 1979 version in Lithuanian. Her roommate and friend, Aldona Šulskytė, a Russian-language teacher and a member of a repressed family herself, assisted in the writing process, not only with editing and recopying but also by carrying the manuscript on her person or by hiding it when Grinkevičiūtė was being interrogated or when the apartment was searched by the police. Grinkevičiūtė called this last text the basic or fundamental version of her testimony. It was this version of her memoirs that would emerge into open discourse and exercise such a powerful effect on Soviet Lithuanian society.

Unlike the other versions of her testimony, none of which has a title, this last manuscript has what appears to be the beginning of a title. The word "Our" is followed by ten dots, suggesting that she may have intended to call it *Mūsų mažoji žemė* (*Our Small Land*), as an ironic reference to the title of Leonid Brezhnev's memoirs *Nasha malaya zemlya*. But while the reference to Brezhnev is speculative, the epigraph just below the title: "Their Innocence Was Their Guilt," was taken from the poem "Blood and Ashes" by Justinas Marcinkevičius.

Like most Lithuanians living in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic at the time, Grinkevičiūtė was a great admirer of his work, especially *Min-*

daugas, *Mažvydas*, and *Katedra*, the trilogy of historical dramas that had gained national epic status, and positioned him as the national bard.[20] She had never met him before but trusted him implicitly, hoping that he would help bring her own writing to Lithuanians. However, the gap between the two in terms of social standing was immense, and so Grinkevičiūtė prepared a special pretext to justify a meeting. She called him several times, proposing to give him some precious artifacts of Bishop Motiejus Valančius, one of the leaders of the first Lithuanian national awakening of the late nineteenth century.[21]

This ruse was necessary because Grinkevičiūtė's status as a dissident and a former deportee meant that she still lived on the margins of society. And even though the deportees would soon be elevated to the status of national heroes themselves, the largest part of the establishment intelligentsia continued to look upon them and upon dissidents with considerable irony and even derision.[22] Gender and professional status also raised barriers in what was still a highly parochial society. The great prestige accorded to professional writers in Soviet Lithuania had a negative side in the derision shown to amateur writers who were not part of the club and jeered as "graphomaniacs." Amateur female writers were the subject of special scorn, and were most often referred to as "scribbling women."[23]

Nevertheless, by 16 July, 1987, Grinkevičiūtė had secured her appointment and traveled from the small provincial town where she resided to

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[20] Justinas, Marcinkevičius, *Mindaugas; Mažvydas; Katedra: Dramine˙ Trilogija* (Vilnius: Vaga, 1978).

[21] Viktorija Daujotytė-Pakerienė, "Ugnies maiše nepaslėpsi," in *Lietuviai prie Laptevujūros: Atsiminimai, miniatiūros, laiškai*, ed. A. Šulskytė: (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytoju sajungos leidykla, 1997), 22.

[22] Tomas Venclova said in 1990 that "dissidents were considered unessential by the Lithuanian intelligentsia. They were considered fanatics, hollow or even mentally ill since they had a different opinion." See, "Sakau karčią tiesą," *Atgimimas* 24 (1990). Liudas Truska offers a more moderate assessment: "From my personal experience I can state that intellectuals disdained dissidents and looked upon them with a slight irony." Truska, "Origins of the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*," 158.

[23] The more typical place of women was to be listeners of literature read by men in literary evenings, poetry and prose readings, and lectures. Judita Vaičiūnaitė, a well-known Lithuanian poet, was told straightforwardly by her editor Albinas Žukauskas that she was too beautiful to be a good poet. "Mūsų giminės moterys viską susikūrė pačios," *Moteris*, October 10, 2008. Vytautė Žilinskaitė, a writer of humoresques during the Soviet period, stated that although she was treated "gallantly" by the male leaders of the Soviet Lithuanian writer's union, she was regularly advised to give up humorous writing because it is "male and not female sphere" and "woman writer cannot really make good humor" (conversation with Vytautė Žilinskaitė, audio recording, Vilnius, October 11, 2011).

Vilnius.[24] She died shortly thereafter, in December 1987, just a few months before the first installment of her memoirs was published in the August 1988 issue of the monthly journal *Pergalė*.

Her testimony had a strong impact on the reading public. "Until now we have read nothing so horrifying on this subject," stated writer Vytautas Martinkus. Saulius Žukas described the text as the source of the "moral rejuvenation" of the Lithuanian nation.[25] Professional writers like Juozas Aputis called on their peers to "put down their pen" and "give their place to deportee literature and memoirs."[26]

However, the mass publication of other deportee memoirs that came in 1989 did not dislodge professional writers from their positions of social influence. In fact, the encounter of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė and Justinas Marcinkevičius shows how the social and moral role of Soviet-Lithuanian writers was only enhanced by the free publication of formerly repressed works. Drawing an analogy with the history of *testimonio,* the transmission of memory from Grinkevičiūtė through Marcinkevičius to the Lithuanian nation recalls the autochthonous tradition of the Maya-Quiche peoples, in which a dying person recounts his or her life and advises a relative or friend on how to resist the imposed culture of the colonizer.[27]

Marcinkevičius received the testimony of a critically ill deportee who died shortly after their meeting. By entrusting her manuscript to Marcinkevičius, Grinkevičiūtė secured the transmission of her memory to the Lithuanian nation and symbolically bridged the gap between those who cooperated with the regime and those who were brutally repressed. "I know that you will understand me," read a little note attached to the notebook which Marcinkevičius took into his hands.[28] This exchange enacted the testimonial process by which the individual ceases to exist in order to give birth to the collective through discursive self-representation.

Moreover, in a manner that recalls the *testimonio* relationship between the autochthonous subaltern who tells a tale of oppression and the editor who serves as the translator and midwife of its meaning, the Soviet Lithuanian reading public was first exposed to Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs in the form of an article written by Marcinkevčius about his encounter with her

[24] During the same trip, she also visited Kazys Saja, a well-known playwright along with his wife Zita Mažeikaitė. The couple agreed to retype Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs and they later distributed the manuscript informally as they prepared it for publication.

[25] Saulius Žukas, "Nepasitikėk vieškeliais," *Literatūra ir menas*, October 1, 1988, 5.

[26] Juozas Aputis, "Tautos gedulo diena," *Pergalė,* no. 6 (1989): 7.

[27] Gareth Williams, "Translation and Mourning: The Cultural Challenge of Latin American Testimonial Autobiography," *Latin American Literary Review* 21, no. 41 (June 1993): 80.

[28] Daujotytė and Bukelienė, *Lietuvių literatūra.*

and about his own experience of reading her text.[29] Although glasnost was gaining speed, deportee memoirs were still subject to censorship. Yet, the time was already ripe for Marcinkevičius to cite from Grinkevičiūtė's manuscript on his own authority. His interpretation, presented to the broadest of audiences, served to link her personal experience with that of the increasingly assertive society of Lithuanians.

The article, entitled "Rehabilitated—in 1970" was published in May 1988, and was structured in such a way so as to introduce Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs to the reading public. Cutting through official and social barriers, it broke the taboo against deportee memoirs and cleared the way for the publication of the full text a few months later. In effect, Marcinkevičius built up his status as a secondary witness to confer legitimacy on Grinkevičiūtė as an ex-deportee as well as a female writer. At the same time, he also confirmed his own status as the custodian and voice of the nation's collective memory, which now embraced the experience of the deportees as evidence of historical injustice and collective martyrdom.

Marcinkevičius begins by telling the story of how they met, how she presented her writings to him and how he expected that she was one of "those" women writers who approached him so often. He notes how he was preparing some polite words of dismissal that would send her off to one or another editor, when the first lines of her piece alerted him that this was a special case: "Our family—my father, mother, brother and I—were deported at 3am on June 14, 1941." With the shock of recognition thus established, the article continues with an account of his own childhood memory of that fateful day, or rather night, when he woke up because he "felt some kind of anxiety in our hut," and received the disturbing message that the teacher from the neighboring village had been deported. [30]

Having established his own personal connection to the deportation, Marcinkevičius proceeds to widen the scope of the represented experience from the individual to the collective. The figure of the teacher, the carrier of national knowledge, language, and traditions to the next generation, is amplified when the narrative returns to the present, and is invested in Grinkevičiūtė: "and in front of me there sat a woman whose father was the teacher of a Kaunas gymnasium."[31] The murder of Grinkevičiūtė's father is given collective significance because of his status as a teacher. With the same motion, her text is presented as a testament to the timeless suffering of the nation.

Marcinkevičius then alludes to the anecdotes that used to circulate about how some deportees did quite well for themselves in Siberia as farm-

[29] Justinas Marcinkevičius, "Reabilituota–1970 metais," *Literatūra ir Menas* 22 (May 18, 1988), 2–3.
[30] Ibid., 2.
[31] Ibid., 3.

ers and had to be forced to return to Lithuania, an ironic and repeat "dekulakization." By contextualizing the reception of Grinkevičiūtė's testimony against the background of social stereotypes, the article pre-emptively addresses potential sources of skepticism, before asking how such an injustice could have been allowed to happen, and by extension how it could be allowed to pass without remorse or repentance, thus turning the ethical gaze squarely on contemporary Lithuanian society.

The text then turns to the testimony itself, reproducing the following fragment from Grinkevičiūtė's manuscript that represents the experience of displacement as a defining aspect of Lithuanian identity:

> Trofimovsk Island now is empty and uninhabited again. During storms the waves of the Laptev Sea with enormous force are beating against its shore and are persistently destroying it. When in 1949 the last deportees were transported for fishing to other places the waves already started destroying the end of the joint grave and it started disintegrating. There is no doubt that all the corpses are long ago already washed away. In what seas and oceans are they still traveling and searching for the path to their far away homeland?

He closes by articulating a path for social redemption. Although society has up to now neglected the memory of the deportees, and did not do enough to make amends to the survivors, Lithuanians could now, at least "take in their souls, which is their memory." As a postscript he calls for the construction of a monument to the victims of Stalinism. By recounting the steps of his own coming to terms with the person of Grinkevičiūtė and with her testimony, Marcinkevičius set the pattern for the popular reception of her work, and launched the process of appropriating deportee memory as the experience of the entire nation.

The Tragic Symmetry of Two Lives

The political significance and consequences of Grinkevičiūtė's decision to approach Marcinkevičius to assist with the publication of her work becomes apparent in the context of the social history of postwar Lithuania. The tragic symmetry of their two life stories dramatically illustrates the deep social divide between the deportees and mainstream Soviet Lithuanian society. The two were born less than three years apart and belonged to the same generation, but their social origins were starkly different. She was born in Kaunas, the provisional capital city, into the *intelligentsia* family of a high government official. She went to one of the best schools in the country, the Aušra Girl's Gymnasium, where her father was a teacher. The household was cultured, and Dalia was constantly exposed to music, books, and the theater. Marcinkevičius, on the other hand, was born to a

poor farmer in a small village, and the Bible was practically the only book to which he was exposed in his early childhood.

The arrival of Soviet power would change their fate irrevocably. Grinkevičiūtė lost everything and was sent as a child to probable death. Marcinkevičius witnessed the trauma of war and the brutal guerrilla struggle in the countryside. But with the help of good grades in school and Soviet educational policies that promoted the entry of workers and poor farmers to institutions of higher education, he was able to enter Vilnius University to study literature. In 1949, the year Grinkevičiūtė escaped from the Gulag and was hiding in Kaunas, forced secretly to dig the earth with her own hands to bury her mother in the basement of their former family home, Marcinkevičius and his cohort were living a reality beyond his most daring dreams.

Algimantas Baltakis, a classmate of Marcinkevičius at Vilnius University, describes their feelings at the time as follows: "We were young, we were happy that the war was over, that we could go to university. We bought hats, we rubbed our cloth shoes with chalk until they were shining white, and walked up and down the streets singing Lithuanian folk songs. Some Poles passed by us on the street and I heard them whisper: "*Litwiny spivajon*, the Lithuanians are singing'."[32]

Marcinkevičius also recalls the joyful mood in 1949, at the very peak of Stalinism, the same singing on the streets, though he notes that it was a feeling of exhilaration mixed with terror, a kind of historical sublime that swept them along:

> When I think about it, I cannot understand or explain why we were singing so much. But we were. . . . Perhaps it had to do with sense of relief that we had escaped from the village, and that we were in Vilnius. That Vilnius was ours, and that it was Lithuanian. . . . We gave to Stalin what was Stalin's and took for ourselves what was ours. People would disappear. I was in a choir, and one day two boys simply didn't show up. Nobody asked any questions, where they were, whether they were sick. . .[33]

When Stalin died in 1953, Marcinkevičius and his cohort were graduating from university and taking up jobs. They came to be called the Generation of 1930 (like the *shestidesiatniki* in Soviet Russia at the time) and were seen as a lucky cohort of charmed youth. Having largely escaped the violence of war, they came of age just as the postwar reconstruction created opportunities for upward social mobility. They quickly assumed leading positions as members of the new Soviet Lithuanian cultural elite, and came to be revered as popular and respected writers, leaders of the controlled cultural

[32] Interview with the author, conducted September 2010.

[33] Interview with the author, conducted January 2010.

renaissance made possible by the Soviet state's extremely generous, though politically instrumental, patronage of the arts.

Meanwhile, Grinkevičiūtė was released from prison after Stalin's death but was still forbidden to travel west of the Ural Mountains. In 1954 she started her medical education in Omsk, and after Khrushchev's amnesty of 1956 was finally allowed to return to Lithuania. She obtained a medical degree from Kaunas University in 1960 and took up a job in the hospital of the small provincial townlet of Laukuva. Grinkevičiūtė was bitter but not broken by the experience of exile and was outspoken in her criticism of the regime. She became an active participant in the Soviet dissident movement, which meant that she was subject to regular police surveillance and harassment by the authorities for the rest of her life, which ended shortly after she entrusted her testimony into his hands. The tragic symmetry between the life stories of Grinkevičiūtė and Marcinkevičius—two lives in which everything was opposite except for the common experience of displacement—provides a dramatic illustration of the deep divide in Soviet Lithuanian society between those who suffered direct repression and the those who one way or another accommodated themselves to Soviet rule.

Displacement and the Two Nations of Soviet Lithuania

Peter Gatrell has done much to disclose the critical role of displacement in the shaping of individual and collective identities in Eastern Europe.[34] Jan Gross was another to argue that the mass killing and displacement that took place during World War II under the successive Nazi and Soviet regimes had a cumulative effect on the societies of East Central Europe.[35] With specific reference to the Baltic states, Gatrell argued that the pronounced local preoccupation with deportations should be expanded to include other forms of displacement in order to produce a more comprehensive narrative of the contemporary history of the region. [36]

Indeed, the need to historicize the commonplace distinction between "free" and "forced" migration seems particularly apt in the case of the Soviet Union, where one or another form of compulsory displacement was

[34] Peter Gatrell and Nick Baron, eds., *Warlands: Population Resettlement and State Reconstruction in the Soviet–East European Borderlands, 1945–50* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009).

[35] Jan Gross, "Social Consequences of War: Preliminaries to the Study of Imposition of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe," *East European Politics and Societies* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 198–214.

[36] Peter Gatrell, "Population Displacement in the Baltic Region in the Twentieth Century: From 'Refugee Studies' to 'Refugee History'," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 38, no. 1 (2007): 43–60.

common even after the end of the mass deportations. While approximately one in twenty Lithuanians were deported, the vast majority were displaced in other ways.

To begin with, considering about 85 percent of the population in 1945 lived in the countryside, collectivization clearly affected the bulk of the population through displacement, either by relocating them from single-family households to the kolkhoz or by forcing them to migrate to the cities. In subsequent years, the consolidation of rural population into larger settlements (a process known as melioration), military service and other forms of assigned employment, mobilization campaigns to drive the rural population into the cities, or to work for extended periods in the far northern and eastern reaches of the Soviet Union, were all life-changing events that served to define the Soviet experience for the majority of Lithuanians.

In Soviet Lithuania, urbanization after World War II proceeded at a rate unmatched anywhere in the USSR aside from Moldova and Belarus. In quantitative terms, the exodus of Lithuanians from the country to the city far exceeds any estimate of the numbers of those deported to prison camps or settlements in the East or who emigrated to the West. By one count, over 700,000 Lithuanians picked up and left their homesteads and small villages between 1951 and 1976 to resettle in towns and cities.[37] The overall level of urbanization in Lithuania grew from an all-time low of 15 percent in 1945 (down from the 23 percent before the outbreak of hostilities) to reach 50 percent in 1970 and a peak of 68.1 percent in 1989. From 1949 to 1965, urbanization affected the lives of some 105,000 to 115,000 individuals per year. Net migration to Lithuania from other parts of the USSR between 1959 and 1979 was only 115,200 persons, or 16.8 percent of the overall population increase.[38]

This speed of urbanization in Lithuania knows no parallel in Western Europe. Soviet urbanization processes were overall more rapid than in the West, reflecting the brutality of forced modernization, particularly under Stalin. Russia, for example, went from 13 percent urbanization just before World War I to about 70 percent in 1989. In Lithuania, the same transformation occurred in just half the time. The process caused an enormous, traumatic level of social dislocation, but for many thousands of young Lithuanians, the opportunity to move to the city was also an unprecedented opportunity for upward social mobility.

The question of accommodation is a highly-contested issue among experts and for a long time was virtually a taboo for the broader public.

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[37] Vytautas Rupas and Stasys Vaitekūnas, *Lietuvos kaimo gyventojai ir gyvenvietės* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1980), 99.

[38] Augustine Izdelis, "Industrialization and Population Change in the Baltics," *Lituanus* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1984).

Indeed, the universality of the armed resistance has been reinforced as a key element of Lithuanian national identity since the popular movement. In 1999, the Lithuanian parliament recognized a document issued by the leaders of the resistance movement in 1949, the *Declaration of the Council of the Movement of the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania*, as a legal act of the State of Lithuania, proof of its continuity on the grounds that a universal, organized, and armed resistance was active in Lithuania from 1944–53.[39]

However, 1949 could be seen as the turning point after which Soviet power in Lithuania was consolidated. Collectivization, which stood at just 4 percent at the beginning of 1949, went up to 60 percent by the end of the year. In 1948 and 1949, the Soviets conducted the two largest deportation operations called *Vesna* (Spring) and *Priboi* (Surf) in the country.[40] After 1949, the armed resistance was hardly universal and organized, but increasingly desperate and disintegrating. As more and more Lithuanians came to accept the inevitability of Soviet rule, the cause of armed resistance became increasingly hopeless.[41] As argued by Aleksandras Shtromas, a noted Lithuanian émigré political scientist, the postwar resistance involved the clash of "two forms of Lithuanian political consciousness," that is, those who decided to resist at all costs, and those who sought to preserve what they could in the face of an unavoidable fate.[42] Indeed, by 1949 most Lithuanians had come to accept Soviet power as a given, and they sought above all just to get on with their lives.

Shtromas notes that even during the Stalinist period, the regime could co-opt what he calls "a certain segment of Lithuanian society":

> There was, however, a certain segment of Lithuanian society, especially among the youth, who went over to the Soviets with completely sincere motives. Some of them, especially among the lower classes (mostly, but not exclusively young people), were offered by the Soviet regime opportunities for higher education, active participation in the life of society, and a more significant role in society—

[39] Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, *Law of the February 16, 1949 Declaration by the Council of the Movement of the Struggle for Freedom of Lithuania*, Law Nr. VIII-1021 (Vilnius, January 12, 1999).

[40] See Alain Blum, Emilia Koustova, "A Soviet Story: Mass Deportation, Isolation, Return," in this volume.

[41] Stanley Vardys, "The Partisan Movement in Post-war Lithuania," *Lituanus* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1969). For more on the anti-Soviet partisan struggle in Lithuania see Mindaugas Pocius, *Kita mėnulio pusė: Lietuvs partizanų kova us kolaboravimu 1944–1953 metais* (Vilnius: LII, 2009).

[42] Aleksandras Shtromas, "Official Soviet Ideology and the Lithuanian People," in *Mind Against the Wall: Essays on Lithuanian Culture Under Soviet Occupation*, ed. Rimvydas Šilbajoris (Chicago: Institute of Lithuanian Studies Press, 1983), 64.

> in other words, they were given a chance for upward mobility that they had not even dreamed of in the traditional Lithuanian social structure.[43]

Shtromas is highly critical of this layer of society, which he describes as completely compromised by its dependence on the regime. "By recruiting a fraction of the lowest classes in the population to form the new establishment—a "praetorian guard" fully devoted to the regime and easily manipulated by it."[44]

However, the process of accommodation cannot be reduced to the calculation and manipulation of interests. The notion of interest need not be jettisoned, but it must be recognized that accommodation to Soviet rule was driven by the widespread transformation of individual and social identities during a historical period of unprecedented displacement and change.

The recollections of those who lived through these times frequently invoke the terror and thrill of the sublime transformation of the self in the face of overwhelming historical forces. Marcelijus Martinaitis, a popular poet and writer who was just a few years younger than Marcinkevičius and who was associated with the "non-conformist" group of intellectuals, describes the ambiguous and tortuous process by which he gradually became accommodated to Soviet life, admitting that he was indeed the product of the system in spite of his consistent efforts to remain separate from it:

> I could even put it like this: that horrible, repressive regime took me where I would not have gone myself. . . . Sometimes, jokingly or after a drink, we would repeat "the prayer": I thank Soviet power for providing me, a son (daughter) of a peasant with little land, with food and clothes, for opening paths to education and a bright future.[45]

Despite the irony of the "prayer," the fact is that Martinaitis, Marcinkevičius, and the bulk of the creative *intelligentsia* formed during the postwar period really were drawn from the sons and daughters of peasants with little land. They were created as a class by the system and its incentives, by the displacement from the country to the city, and their integration into a new way of life.

Meanwhile, just as the deportees were created and defined as a persecuted group by being subjected to forced displacement, their subsequent identity and place in society was shaped by their experience of return. During the five-year period after Stalin's death, about four million prisoners were released from the Gulag, shrinking the imprisoned population

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[43] Ibid., 61.

[44] Ibid., 61.

[45] Marcelijus Martinaitis, *Mes gyvenome: biografiniai užrašai* (Vilnius, Rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2009), 30–31.

throughout the USSR by five times. The problem of social reintegration for so large a population was felt throughout the USSR, as local communities generally treated the Gulag returnees as criminals and pariahs, devising a multitude of measures to ensure their continued marginalization, in spite of directives from Moscow stating that they were to be given housing and employment within two weeks of their return.[46]

Former deportees started to return to Lithuania in 1956, with the initial release of about 17,000 people. These numbers would grow starting in 1958, to reach 80,000 by 1970.[47] The Communist Lithuanian leadership and the local security services were strongly against Khrushchev's decision to provide amnesty and to allow their return. The First Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party Antanas Sniečkus was livid at what he described as the careless experimentation of Khrushchev. A declassified report of the local KGB made it clear that the deportees were "erroneously and prematurely released from incarceration." The security services believed they "had not renounced their hostile views of Soviet power" and "exerted negative influence on unstable segments of the population," and who would resume "their efforts to form an anti-Soviet nationalist underground."[48]

As a result, the returnees were subject to continuing surveillance, they were allowed to travel abroad only in exceptional cases, and their movements within the LSSR were often watched. If there was any suspicion of involvement in subversive activities, the deportee was often subjected to public denunciation and compromise in the local press, reinforcing their exclusion from society.[49]

It should be emphasized that the exclusion faced by returnees was very much a Lithuanian affair, not only imposed from above.[50] This reflected

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[46] Marc Elie, *Les Anciens Détenus Du Goulag: Libérations Massives, Réinsertion et Réhabilitation dans L'URSS Poststalinienne, 1953–1964* (Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 2007).

[47] Kristina Burinskaitė, "KGB prieš buvusius politinius kalinius ir tremtinius," *Genocidas ir rezistencija,* no. 24 (2008): 121–26.

[48] Cited in Amir Weiner, "The Empires Pay a Visit: Gulag Returnees, East European Rebellions, and Soviet Frontier Politics," *The Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 2 (2006): 333.

[49] In Grinkevičiūtė's case the authorities published an article harshly criticizing her character and work as a doctor in the regional newspaper *Artojas*. Marija Vitkevičienė, "Dėmės baltame chalate," *Artojas* (Šilalė regional newspaper), Nr. 67, June 11, 1974, 3–4.

[50] The one does not exclude the other. The social vulnerability of the deportees increased their vulnerability to manipulation and coercion by the security services. In exchange for an offer to erase the stigma of deportation from their official documents, a number of deportees, and even the children of deportees who had never been imprisoned, agreed to serve as KGB informants.

the radically altered values and historical perspective of Lithuanian society subject to decades of Soviet-style reconstruction and development. When the deportees began to come back after the death of Stalin, the communities to which they returned were not the same as before. Already in 1946, Algimantas Indriūnas, who returned illegally to Lithuania even before the death of Stalin, wrote: "Having returned to Lithuania I felt that life moved a couple decades ahead while I stayed in the same spot, or even moved some decades back."[51] Indeed, both groups had undergone a profound transformation, and one could almost speak of the emergence of two distinct communities of Soviet Lithuanians, each created by displacement.

Those who returned in the fifties or later felt the schism in even stronger terms. The deportees were met with broad suspicion and were generally looked upon by the regional authorities, labor unions, and most members of society as a source of unnecessary trouble. People were afraid that they would lay claims to their former property, and that they would disrupt their lives and the new stability that had recently been established. Some deportees who did not have relatives to support them and who could not find employment were left in dire conditions. For example, the prominent Lithuania writer Kazys Saja tells of his personal encounter with a woman deportee who was terminally ill and left to fend for herself. Aside from offering her some money for immediate sustenance, he said there was nothing that he could do to help her.[52] There was also widespread suspicion of the criminal ways that the deportees had allegedly adopted during their incarceration; they were seen as no better than the criminals whose company they had kept.

The stigma of criminality extended to the deportees, and even to their children. Joana Jakštaitė-Kurmelavičienė, who was deported with her family and returned in 1958, recalls how many parents would complain at meetings that the school "took in all sorts of bandits, and now they will harm our children." Algirdas Janulevičius describes how the *propiska* system of registering one's place of registration was abused to keep returnees marginalized: "I could not register for half a year. I did not register because I was not employed. Nobody wanted to employ a deportee because he is not registered. . . . We were lepers although we were not told so directly."[53] Some were forced to move or were recruited to work outside of the LSSR, like the family of Birute Mickevičiūtė-Bičkauskienė, deported in 1947 as a teenager. After an unsuccessful attempt to integrate in Lithuania after her return in 1952, she had to settle with her family in Kaliningrad.[54]

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[51] Algimantas Indriūnas, *Nelegalios karjeros metai* (Vilnius, 2005), 133.

[52] Interview with Kazys Saja, November 2012, Vilnius (audio record).

[53] *Atmintis: tremtinių atsiminimų rinkinys* (Kaišiadorys: Kaišiadorių muziejus, 2003), 105, 81.

[54] Ibid., 52.

Indeed, a report of a commission sent by the USSR Council of Ministers to investigate the integration of returnees took note of the extent to which Lithuanian municipalities created artificial administrative barriers to the reintegration of Gulag returnees. Similar measures were noted in Gorky, Baku, and Yerevan, but the Lithuanian municipalities were singled out for the range of measures they deployed. Duplicating the function of the existing police passport bureau, special municipal commissions were created to review requests for registration; the minimum "sanitary norm," or minimal living space per person, was arbitrarily raised, and returnees were issued only temporary registration instead of permanent cards that were necessary to secure employment, etc.[55]

Paradoxically, the incredible receptivity of Lithuanians to the testimony of deportees during the popular movement seems to have erased the memory of popular indifference and even hostility that was shown to them throughout the Soviet period by a large segment of society. Šulskytė emphasizes that Grinkevičiūtė's travails did not end with her return from exile. Indeed, she was persecuted in her homeland for her determination to openly testify of her experience and speak out against the regime. She lost her job, was accused of forging her credentials, loitering, and was slandered in newspaper articles. Šulskytė describes the collective outpouring of sympathy for Grinkevičiūtė after her death with irony: "Now all of Lithuania is writing and talking about poor Dalytė. Finally people understand. When America and Europe wept eleven years ago [over the publication of her late testimony abroad], Dalia herself was being kicked around and tortured in her native land. . . Now, Lithuania is shocked."[56]

The Authority of the Author

In the Soviet context, Foucault's insight that discourse is power and power is discourse seemed too obvious to be of any analytical value.[57] In the ideal form of totalitarianism, knowledge, discourse, and power are held to be

[55] Report dated March 25, 1958. State Archive of Russian Federation (GARF) R-8131/32/5600/11, cited in Marc Elie, *Les anciens détenus du Goulag: Libérations massives, réinsertion et réhabilitation dans l'urss poststalinienne, 1953–1964* (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales EHESS, 2007), 269.

[56] "Rašo ir kalba dabar apie vargšę Dalytę visa Lietuva. Pagaliau susigaudė. Kai prieš vienuolika metų pravirko Amerika ir Europa – ją pačią spardė kojomis ir kankino visokiausiais būdais gimtojoje žemėje . . . Dabar Lietuva sukrėsta." Aldona Šulskytė in Dalia Grinkevičiūtė, *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 1997), 140.

[57] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991).

virtually identical. Only that which was permitted was written, and everything that was written carried the authority of truth. And with the advent of the popular movement, the disintegration of totalitarianism implied a revolutionary hiatus where power and discourse were somehow separate, a time when speech was free not only from the blatant censorship of the authorities, but from the pervasive power that inheres in and shapes human interaction.

But like the "return of memory," the "power of the powerless" is a myth that reflected the revolutionary, utopian mindset of the late eighties. In reality, power never left the stage. With the collapse of the regime's legitimacy, real power came to be accumulated in the establishment intelligentsia of Soviet Lithuania—especially among the leading members of the Writers' Union, whose status as the voice of the oppressed nation had been developing gradually since the mid-sixties. At that time, when Khrushchev pushed forward with the meliorization of the countryside throughout the Baltics, the discourse of traumatic lament over the separation from the land was rapidly gaining ground. By the early 1980s, well before the onset of glasnost, this discourse of physical and cultural displacement, expressed most strongly in literature, had sensitized Lithuanians to the trauma of deracination as a basic condition of Soviet modernity, priming them for a ready identification with fate of the deportees.

Marcinkevičius was by far the most prominent of writers who gave expression to this cultural mode. Poems like *Blood and Ashes,* the triptych called *1946*, which portrays the trauma of the youth who witnessed the postwar upheavals without becoming their direct victim, as well as other more nationally-minded literary works, were more than just popular and memorized by schoolchildren, but enjoyed a truly cult status. These works influenced other artists (like Geda, Aputis, Martinaitis, Kutavičius, Granauskas, and others) who worked with the same motifs in literature, music, and the visual arts.

In 1986, Romualdas Granauskas wrote *The Homestead under the Maple Tree*, perhaps the culminating work of the discourse of traumatic uprooting. Serialized in *Pergalė* two years before the publication of Grinkevičiūtė's memoirs, it evoked the same existential concern with questions of ethics and repentance, collective identity and ecology that was erupting throughout Soviet literature at the time, such as Chingiz Aitmatov's *Plakha* (*The Executioner's Bloc*) published in *Novy Mir* that same year. It also echoes the classics of Russian village prose like Rasputin's *Farewell to Matyora* or Solzhenitsyn's *Matryona's House* by portraying an old woman, the last resident of an abandoned village, as the sole survivor of a vanished world, with a deep sense of attachment to the land, an idealized ethical commitment to communal relations, and centuries-old traditions surrounded by social destruction and degradation.

But in contrast to the literature of the sixties and seventies, Granauskas crossed the line toward open social and political critique, and focused on the tragedy of collectivization, of urbanization, and what was called the "melioration" or consolidation of agricultural settlements in the late 1970s, which dealt the final blow to the last remaining traditional villages.

> We have seen many wars and upheavals, fires, floods and plagues. Our lives and destinies are in flux, but one thing never changes. Come what may, your patch of land will not burn. It cannot be arrested or deported, or blown to pieces. Come what may, you can rest yourself upon it, it may be small and infertile, but still you wrap your arms around your children, pressing their small heads to your chest, and calmly watch how the world is thundering and trembling all around you.[58]

Granauskas wrote the book over the course of a month, almost in a single draft. Somewhat raw as a literary text, it was highly effective in capturing and transmitting the cultural mood of the time. The apocalyptic sensibility of this work, together with an autochthonous sense of national identity based on a post-traumatic attachment to and identification with the land, became a core element of Lithuanian cultural and political discourse in the late 1980s. Arvydas Juozaitis, one of the founding members of the popular movement, told Granauskas that he wrote the speech for the founding session of Sąjūdis "in a single breath," the moment he had finished reading *The Homestead Under the Maple Tree*.[59]

As Gorbachev's policy of glasnost enabled a more open and public discussion of previously forbidden topics, the public role of writers grew in strength and expanded in scope, encompassing non-literary areas such as environmentalism, social issues, and politics through essays, opinion pieces, and public speaking engagements.

Marcinkevičius, Martinaitis, Sigitas Geda and many other leading members of the official intelligentsia were active leaders of the popular movement, making key speeches at mass rallies and mobilizing the populace. In late-Soviet Lithuanian society, ruled by secretive bureaucrats, the cultural intelligentsia served as a surrogate for public politicians. They alone enjoyed the public visibility and trust that could mobilize the population toward any political goal.

Moreover, the establishment writers were a cohesive group with significant organizational resources. In 1986, the Writers' Union had 216 members, of whom 45 percent (97) were members of the Communist Party of

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[58] Romualdas Granauskas, *Gyvenimas po klevu* (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 1989).

[59] Interview with Granauskas, July 2011, Vilnius (audio record).

Lithuania.[60] The Communist Party organization of the Writers' Union used its authority to hold open meetings which were the vanguard of glasnost in the republic, radically expanding the envelope of acceptable political discussions.

In the political discourse of the time, a threshold was passed on April 4, 1988 at one of the meetings organized in the Palace of Artists (one of the most prestigious buildings in Vilnius, which now serves as the Presidential Palace). The delegates passed a number of resolutions on strengthening the role of the Lithuanian language and limiting that of Russian in public life and education, which would have been unthinkable just a year or two before.[61]

On May 5, 1988, Alfonsas Maldonis, a classmate of Marcinkevičius and Baltakis at Vilnius University in 1949, addressed the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party in his capacity as Writers' Union board chairman. Copies of his speech that criticized the falsification of history and Moscow`s control over cultural issues in Lithuania were widely circulated in manuscript form, copied by hand and passed around. The popular movement was initiated and driven by many members of the creative and technical intelligentsia, but the leading role of the writers was recognized.

For example, geographer Česlovas Kudaba (1934–1993), a leading member of Sąjūdis whose own writings on ecology and nature were extremely influential at the time and who would be one of the signatories of the act of independence, asserted that the writers proved to be "the most courageous and ahead of the rest. We all trusted them."[62]

That said, not all agreed with this sentiment. In 1986, Algirdas Patackas (1943–2015), a geologist working for the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, was imprisoned for editing a samizdat journal. He lost his job and upon his release in 1987 he had to work as a laborer, though he soon entered politics as part of Sąjūdis and would later become a signatory of the act of independence. For people like Patackas, who risked his career to engage in active opposition to the Soviet regime, the Soviet Lithuanian writers were seen as conformists: "Marcinkevičius was never our man. Nobody in my circle either admired or respected him."[63]

Vytautas Ališauskas, a Catholic philosopher who also became active in the politics of Sąjūdis, was even more outspoken in his criticism: "All those lines about goodness, spirituality and nature made my stomach turn," he

[60] Truska, "Origins of the Lithuanian Reform Movement *Sąjūdis*," 171.

[61] Vytautas Bubnys (b. 1932) read out a report entitled "Who Can Revive National Dignity?" The meeting passed resolutions calling for Lithuanian to be given the status of an official language.

[62] Česlovas Kudaba, "Pokalbis apie Sąjūdį," *Akiračiai* 10 (1988): 4.

[63] Saulius Šaltenis, "Pokalbis su K. Saja ir A. Patacku," *Šiaurės Atėnai* (3 July 1991): 1.

recalls, referring to the sublime pastoralism of Marcinkevičius" late poetry. "The regime was doing what it needed to do, and all that was fully incorporated in it. To use the Soviet expression, it was opium for the masses."[64]

For people like Ališauskas or Patackas the true face of moral resistance and authority was not the writer who gave expression to the sorrows of the nation in the Soviet press, but the anti-Soviet fighter and martyr. This flank looked for role models beyond the establishment circle, such as in the tragic but talkative figure of Justinas Mikutis (1922–1988), a vagrant, eccentric former deportee who frequented informal soirees in Vilnius, giving impromptu lectures about philosophy, Christianity, and art—and who was highly critical of Marcinkevičius.[65]

However, by entrusting her testimony to Marcinkevičius, Grinkevičiūtė bridged the social divide that separated them and took a step toward the mending of the division between the "two nations" of Soviet Lithuania. Subsequently, Marcinkevičius and other leading members of the Writers' Union took it upon themselves to bridge this social gap in discourse. They assumed the role of editors, presenting her memoirs and those of other deportees, representing the process of reception that would be followed by their readers.

Thus, when the deportee memoirs began to be published in 1988, their narratives were read against the background of the pre-existing discourse of traumatic displacement, which had already drawn an explicit equivalence between the minority experience of deportation with the other forms of displacement that were experienced by the many. The very idea of deportation was subject to metaphorical expansion synchronically and diachronically to include all living Lithunanians and Lithuanians throughout history, and not only to individual Lithuanians but to all aspects of Lithuanian identity. Even Lithuanians who emigrated to the West were identified as deportees. For example, in the opening article for the literary "Deportee Archive" in *Pergalė*, Liudvikas Gadeikis encouraged members of the émigré community to contribute their testimonies.[66]

Viktorija Daujotytė, one of Lithuania's leading critics, extends the memory of deportation beyond the beginnings of recorded history. Referring to the work of the historian Antanas Tyla, she says that deportation was "the method of our extermination, perhaps, for the past seven and a half thousand years."[67] Approaching the more recent past, she notes that

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[64] Ibid., 159.

[65] Vaidotas Žukas, "Justinas Mikutis – laisvas žmogus nelaisvoje aplinkoje," www.15min.lt April 25, 2011. http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/kultura/asmenybe/justinas-mikutis-laisvas-zmogus-nelaisvoje-aplinkoje-285-213674. Accessed October 1, 2012.

[66] Liudvikas Gadeikis, "Tremties archyvas," *Pergalė*, no. 1 (1989): 185.

[67] Viktorija Daujotytė, "Paskutinis laisvės prieglobstis," *Pergalė*, no. 12 (1989): 178–83.

Lithuanians were driven from their homeland during the Crusades, and deported again during the partitions of Poland. Deportation was systematized as a means to defeat the rebellions of 1794, 1831, and especially 1863, peaking in the unprecedented Soviet deportations of 1940–41 and 1945–53, with the twenty-year episode of independence between the wars, and the two hundred years following the Battle of Grunewald as the only periods of reprieve.

And in the trope that was by this time almost a cliché of the discourse of Sąjūdis, Lithuanian culture and identity are seen in the light of deportation: "Together with people, many words which were dear to Lithuanians were deported: God, God's mother, Homeland Lithuania, Cross, Crucifix, prayer, Easter, Christmas, holy hymns were deported."[68] Following Marcinkevičius" reading of Grinkevičiūtė, Daujotytė constructs the moment of return as offering the possibility of redemption: "The poems of the deportees are approaching us as the ice mountain of pain from the Laptev Sea which has not fully emerged yet. Deportee poems are emerging from oblivion and desecration like white bones from the land of eternal frost.[69]

Marcinkevičius would continue the process of abstracting the experience of deportation into the more general concept of displacement in the political speeches he made as a leading member of Sąjūdis. For example, at a session of the Supreme Council of the LSSR, he made a call to declare Lithuanian the state language and to restore other key symbols of Lithuanian statehood. Characteristically, the title of the speech references the moment of return from deportation, and the text of his address extends the experience of deportation to aspects of Lithuanian culture and identity: "Our language has experienced much abuse, discrimination and injustice, now it is like returning from deportation and is returning to itself what was taken away from her, what belongs to her by the natural and constitutional law."[70]

The immersion of Lithuanians into the cultural discourse of displacement was reinforced and channeled into rituals of personal transformation through mass rallies and ceremonies of commemoration. Starting in 1986, Lithuanians took advantage of the lifting of restrictions to visit to the distant sites of the Gulag system. Thousands of families organized expeditions to visit the camps where their relatives once lived, and in many cases to recollect the remains of the deceased, for reburial in Lithuanian soil. The reburial ceremonies were often made into elaborate, mass rituals in city

[68] Ibid., 180.

[69] Ibid., 178.

[70] Justinas Marcinkevičius, "Tartum grįžtumėm iš tremties." Speech delivered at a session of the Supreme Council of the LSSR on November 18, 1988. See, *Pažadėtoji žemė* (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2009), 40–45.

centers, with tens of thousands of people in attendance, and broadcast on television to the entire nation.[71]

Films like *Lithuania Between Past and Future* and *The Return* (Petras Abukevičius, 1990) document the commemorative rituals of Gulag deportees and their descendants during the twilight of the USSR.[72] The cinematic representation of pilgrimages to Siberia to recover the remains of ancestors for reburial in the homeland of Lithuania explores the denaturing effects of displacement on identity even while it reinforces ties of kinship and an ethos of autochthony. *Lithuania between Past and Future* puts some of the central political rituals of the era on the screen, like the consecration of the remains of deportees brought back from Siberia to Lithuania.

Scenes of people digging up graves in Siberia and the return of coffins draped in Lithuanian flags and met at the airport in Vilnius by huge crowds are framed by an extended discussion by ethnographer Norbertas Vėlius on the mythology and culture of the ancient Lithuanians.[73] Vėlius notes that "our ancestors" have lived on the same territory for over four thousand years. The scene of reburial is juxtaposed with the image of Vėlius pointing to a fresco on Baltic mythology, explaining how the symbol of the world as a tree symbolizes the autochthonous connection of the Lithuanian nation to the earth. Shifting back to images of the crowds of people watching a procession of coffins for re-consecration in the main Cathedral of Vilnius where the nation's ancient rulers were buried, Vėlius comments that: "Lithuanians are inseparable from their land. Even after death they return to their homeland. . . . And they could never understand a person who voluntarily chooses to live outside of their home country." These rituals of return were thus made to build upon the most ancient and deeply rooted Baltic myths and beliefs to signify the living memory of the nation.

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[71] Such pilgrimages since 2006 have become institutionalized as an annual event for youth. Originally initiated by the former minister of foreign affairs Vygaudas Ušackas, it was described as "a search for historical truth" and on opportunity for young people who tend to migrate out of their native country to strengthen the core values. See https://misijasibiras.squarespace.com.

[72] During the time of popular movement, filming and chronicling was virtually an obsession. Amateurs as well as documentary film gurus like Robertas Verba took thousands of meters of footage of various commemoratives public rituals and events. Paradoxically, these materials today are rather poorly documented and organized. For example, the National Library of Martynas Mažvydas does not contain a comprehensive and systematized collection of these materials that would allow the researcher to thoroughly familiarize herself with them.

[73] Norbertas Vėlius was a university professor and one of the key figures of the ethnocultural movement that promoted the preservation and revival of folk culture that started in the mid-sixties and rapidly spread across Lithuania.

These representations and widely circulated narratives instilled a deep sense of identification among Lithuanians at large with the trauma of deportation. Despite the potential for a clash between the "two nations" of Soviet Lithuania, the cohesion of the popular movement was maintained through the progressive identification of all Lithuanians with the trauma of displacement. This association built on the discourse of displacement that was such a significant part of Soviet Lithuanian culture for two decades before glasnost. At the peak of the popular movement, parallels between collectivization and migration to the city and the deportations of the Stalinist years were no longer simply implied. The trauma of collectivization, urbanization, Russification, and other forms of physical and cultural displacement were identified as one with the trauma of deportation in a discourse of collective victimhood.[74]

Conclusion

Sąjūdis capitalized on the publication of deportee memoirs by cultivating a collective sense of Lithuanian selfhood based on a sacred and inseparable relationship between the people and their territory. The individual works of Gulag survivors were essential, but not sufficient to articulate the experience of trauma in a manner that could be appropriated by the majority of Lithuanians who had more or less accomodated themselves to the Soviet regime.

The return of memory based on historical trauma and the charting of a new future for the nation involved a repudiation of the past. But this repudiation raised a host of difficult questions: who was to blame for what happened? Beyond the police and security forces responsible for political re-

[74] In a public speech at the *Seimas* in 2008 on the 60th anniversary of the Great Deportation, a politician and former member of the popular movement *Sąjūdis* Algis Čaplikas stated: "One can say that all of Lithuania was deported. Not only those thousands of unfortunate ones who were deported to the unknown during all the waves of deportations but also all those who remained in their country. Why do I claim that? Because the relatives of those deported drowning in grief and fear that they can experience the same fate were in spiritual deportation. Those who denounced, reported, helped to organize deportations deported themselves with their own hands because they suffered not only the reproaches of consciousness and control of the regime they served but also the crushing condemnation of society. . . . And those remaining, who by force were brought to the kolkhoz, which resembled concentration camps? Why should those Lithuanians who so sincerely loved their land be forced to become completely indifferent to it? The knowledge killing the respect towards work and land, the knowledge that you do not have anything of your own–that is the fate of deportee serf."

pressions, should the list include government officials, party members, members of Komsomol, the establishment intelligentsia? And who precisely were the victims of the regime? Was it only those who were deported, imprisoned, or killed? Those mobilized into the army, those forced to work in a specific location, those prevented from working in their chosen profession?

The collectivization of deportee memory played a critical role in resolving such intractable problems by raising the question to a higher level of abstraction, allowing for almost all Lithuanians to free themselves from any association with the regime. The social transformation and sense of solidarity that brought hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets was cemented by the myth of universal deportation and inculcated by rituals of return that were filmed and broadcast to the entire population, accompanied by a highly emotive discourse of trauma and appeals to an indigenous sense of national identity.

The euphoria that accompanied the Soviet collapse was short lived. The consolidation of the nation unraveled quickly upon the achievement of independence, as internal social divisions resurfaced in the pluralist atmosphere of democratic politics. Debates over collaboration and accomodation gained ground, and the myth of universal deportation and return began to unravel, although slowly. The sense of national history as a history of suffering is deeply entrenched, but it is ill-adapted to the demands of building a democratic polity in an independent state. It obstructs social reflection on the experience of other groups, namely Poles and Jews, and it leaves many blank spots in the memory of the Soviet period, notably where Lithuanians were not so much the victims, as the agents of history.[75]

The affective reception of the deportation testimonies played a role in the reestablishment of Lithuanian independence. But at the same time it obscured the plurality of experience and any differentiation among the historical actors within the category of the nation. To this day, the notion of memory's "return" implies a non-comparative, totalizing approach to history as the history of either heroism of victimhood. Perhaps because of this reason there is still relatively little academic, comparative, and analytical studies into the body of deportee testimonies. With the unraveling of the myth of universal deportation, this rich literature continues to beckon intensive study.

[75] For a recent survey of memory politics in Lithuania, featuring the rise of popular recognition of Lithuanian participation in the Holocaust, see Violeta Davoliūtė, "Two Speed Memory and Ownership of the Past," *Transitions Online* (September 1, 2016).

Eglė Rindzevičiūtė

Hegemony or Grassroots Movement? The Musealization of Soviet Deportations

Knowledge about the Soviet deportations of people from Lithuania was, to use the expression of Bruno Latour, produced in public and used to shape a new public around it.[1] In 1987, former political prisoners and deportees from Lithuania organized the first public meetings to commemorate the victims of deportations. To be sure, this was not the first time that knowledge about the deportations and the labor camps had entered Soviet public discourse. Originally published in Russian in 1962, Aleksander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was translated and published in Lithuanian in 1963.[2] A story about the return of Latvian deportees, dramatized by Latvian television in the popular television drama series *A Long Journey through the Dunes* (1980), also had a broad appeal.

However, these were just cracks in the wall of censorship that would crumble under the flood of information released in the late 1980s. In 1988, the last political prisoners from the Baltic states were released from Soviet prison camps and Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's memoir, entitled *Lithuanians at the Laptev Sea* was published in Lithuanian.[3] Several events in 1989 signaled

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[1] Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, ed. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Boston: MIT Press, 2005).

[2] By way of contrast, Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (written 1958–1967, published in 1973) was translated and published in Lithuanian only in 2009. An illegal publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* in Russian was printed and circulated in Lithuania in 1989.

[3] Andres Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 161. Grinkevičiūtė's story *Lithuanian Deportees in Yakutia* was originally printed in Russian and circulated by Moscow samizdat in 1979. A small memorial museum for Grinkevičiūtė was organised by enthusiasts in her temporary workplace in Laukuva. "Laptev Sea Exiles Indict," in *Lithuanians in the Arctic* (Vilnius: The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre in Lithuania, 2010), 13. See also Violeta Davoliūtė, "Deportee Memoirs and Lithuanian History: The Double Testimony of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 36, no. 1 (2005): 51–68.

the end of the era when the deportations were confined to private conversation. July 14 was declared a day of mourning and hope, to commemorate the beginning of mass deportations on that date in 1941. A conference about deportations and a public rally "Lithuania Deported" were organized in Vilnius. The Lithuanian Historical and Ethnographic Museum arranged an exhibition about deportations which displayed some secret documents.[4]

In addition to the publication of memoirs, histories, and documents, numerous events were organized to commemorate those who were tortured and killed in Soviet prisons, concentration camps, and deportation settlements. Some of these events assumed a highly theatrical form: coffins with the remains of those who died in the deportation were brought back to Lithuania and paraded down the main city streets. One such procession, for example, took place on Pilies street in Vilnius on July 29, 1989. The Deportee club (renamed the Union of Lithuania's Political Prisoners and Deportees [ULPPD] in 1990) organized twelve expeditions to the sites of deportations. The ULPPD alone brought back the remains of about 1,500 individuals to Lithuania; others were brought back by private individuals. Since then, expeditions to Yakutia, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Tomsk, Komi, Altai, Norilsk and other places have been organized regularly with the aim of returning the remains of those who died in deportation, to collect and record information, and to maintain cemeteries.

Pilgrimages to deportation sites continued into the 2000s. Such trips gained a new impetus when "The Siberia Mission" was launched in 2006 by the Lithuanian Youth Organization.[5] The year 2011 was designated as the "The Year of Commemoration of the Defense of Freedom and the Great Losses," with numerous public presentations on the history of deportations and the commemoration of deportees, ranging from the screenings of documentaries on "The Siberia Mission" in London, to the exhibition "The Return" at the Lithuanian National Museum in Vilnius.

Since the 1970s, the Soviet Gulag has been rather widely known in Western countries thanks to the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). The Baltic case was advocated by émigrés in the West, calling for greater awareness about Soviet crimes against humanity. Indeed, the first list of deported Lithuanians was produced by the Lithuanian Bureau of Mutual Aid as early as 1942. However, some Western scholars maintained a skeptical or critical attitude toward commemoration ceremonies that expressed, in their view, an exclusionist, ethnocentric sense of national identity.[6]

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[4] Vanda Kašauskienė, "Sąjūdis – tautos istorinės atminties versmė," in *Lietuvos Sąjūdis ir valstybės idealų įgyvendinimas* (Vilnius: Lietuvos Istorijos Institutas, 2005), 240–54.

[5] *Sugrįžimas* (Vilnius: Lietuvos nacionalinis muziejus, 2011).

[6] The emphasis on the suffering of Lithuanian deportees was described as a competitive "martyrology" and a dangerous phenomenon that implicitly and often ex-

Although some scholars and commentators such as Anne Applebaum and Timothy Snyder made efforts to overcome the bias of overlooking the crimes of Communism,[7] others continued to search and find evidence of "a hegemonic ethnic-Lithuanian nationalist discourse."[8] For instance, James Mark described both the Museum of Genocide Victims and the Royal Palace as examples of a "broader attempt to build a new Lithuanian identity, based on national victimization," in which there was "little room for the appreciation of the sufferings of other groups."[9] Furthermore, Mark, as well as others, tend to refer to "Eastern European elites," "national elites," and "nationalists" as museum builders. It is this methodological overgeneralization that this chapter calls into question. On the basis of a specially conducted study, this chapter suggests that it is important to consider the museum builders as belonging to a different social, political and professional group. A more sociologically grounded approach would help to capture the complex social and political dynamics that contribute to the placement of ethnocentric historical narratives into the material settings of the museum. Furthermore, many scholars interpret state cultural organizations, such as museums, as instruments of a direct dissemination of the government's official version of the history, while assuming that these museums somehow embody the "attitudes" of the entire ethnic majority. As a result, it

plicitly competed with other historical disasters that took place in Lithuania, particularly the Holocaust. See Eva-Clarita Pettai, "The Convergence of Two Worlds: Historians and Emerging Histories in the Baltic States," in *Forgotten Pages in Baltic History: Diversity and Inclusion*, ed. Martyn Housden and David J. Smith (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 263–80. The real situation is more complex. Even in his controversial comparisons of the Soviet deportations and Nazi crimes, Member of the European Parliament Vytautas Landsbergis stresses that it was "Lithuanians, Jews and Poles" who were deported from Lithuania to the Soviet Union. This statement was made during the International Congress for the Evaluation of Communist Crimes in 2000. Vytautas Landsbergis, "Condemned to No Return," in *Lithuanians in the Arctic* (Vilnius: The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre in Lithuania, 2010), 9.

[7] Perhaps the most outspoken critic of Western ignorance of Communist crimes is Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (London: Penguin, 2004); and more recently Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books 2010).

[8] See, for example, James Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), xv–xvii, 109.

[9] I argue elsewhere that Lithuanians are presented as both victims and perpetrators in the Lithuanian museums of the Holocaust and communist crimes. Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, "Institutional Entrepreneurs of a Difficult Past: The Organisation of Knowledge Regimes in Post-Soviet Lithuanian Museums," *European Studies* 30, no. 1 (2013): 63–95.

has become habitual to interpret ethnocentric narratives about the deportations as "hegemonic" expressions of officially sanctioned ethnic nationalism, in the studies of what is understood as a Lithuanian cultural memory.

In this chapter I criticize this tendency to interpret narratives about the past as presented in Lithuanian state museums as an expression of both a hegemonic ideology and coherent state policy. Here I want to make my position clear: I do not suggest that the narrative of national suffering, which tends to focus on ethnic Lithuanians, is entirely absent from Lithuanian historiography and history museums. My point is that there are indeed many manifestations of this narrative, but I doubt if it is used to impose a hegemonic order on public history discourses. In Lithuania, the ethnocentric narrative of suffering did not actively suppress and expel different or contrasting narratives, such as, for instance, stories about ethnic Lithuanians as perpetrators, or stories about the suffering of other ethnic groups, such as the Jews.[10] This is evident, I will argue, even in the displays of the Museum of Genocide Victims.

Furthermore, this article furthers my argument that there is a special epistemology of history museums that requires a particular methodological sensitivity from a researcher. Museums are not books. Museums are highly heterogeneous sites, in which plural and even contradictory meanings may coexist in one institutional framework. A researcher should resist the temptation to make generalizing arguments on the basis of one, or even several museums. This article is, therefore, an argument against "-isms." It warns against the stereotypical pre-packaging of Eastern European developments in misleading categories of state-sponsored ethnic nationalism.

The exhibitions on Soviet deportations could only be understood as a manifestation of hegemony if they were produced by actors who occupy considerably powerful positions and have both a desire and ability to suppress other narratives and "naturalize" themselves as the bearers of truth discourse.[11] Drawing on the data collected during fieldwork visits to the museums, I show that the history of the production of public knowledge about the Soviet deportations undermines the thesis of the narratives of

[10] For an elaboration of this argument see Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, "The Overflow of Secrets: Disclosing Repression in the Museums," *Current Anthropology* 56, Supplement 12 (2015): 276–85.

[11] I have argued this point in a series of articles: Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, Jenny Svensson, and Klara Tomson, "The International Transfer of Creative Industries as a Policy Idea," *The International Journal of Cultural Policy* 22, no. 4 (2016): 594–610; Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, "From Authoritarian to Democratic Cultural Policy: Making Sense of De-Sovietisation in Lithuania after 1990," *Nordisk kulturpolitisk tidskrift* 12, no. 1 (2009): 191–221; Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, "Soviet Lithuanians, Amber and the 'The New Balts': Historical Narratives of National and Regional Identities in Lithuanian Museums, 1940–2009," *Culture Unbound* 2 (2010): 665–94.

deportations as a hegemonic, top-down process driven by the Lithuanian government in pursuit of the naturalization of an ethnonationalist narrative of the country's past. A closer look at the organization process reveals that this was incredibly messy and heterogeneous. The organization of museum exhibitions on deportations involved many types of different actors who played different roles at different stages, were guided by different rationales, and were considerably restricted by material affordances.[12]

Second, I would like to introduce an analytical distinction between legitimate and hegemonic narratives of publicly distributed versions of history. The narratives featured in Presidential speeches, government programs and museum mission statements could certainly be understood as legitimate in Pierre Bourdieu's sense: although these official narratives can be questioned, they do not cause major controversies. However, it is important to note that legitimate narratives can be quite insignificant when it comes to practices. Although language is certainly performative, some statements, just like some theatre actors, perform quite poorly: when it comes to political discourse, it is quite obvious that words often tend to be "just words," which are not always backed up by action.

Hence, a look at the production of museum exhibitions of Soviet deportations reveals a counterintuitive institutoional reality where the discourse of victimization is not directly translated into state-funded cultural organizations, systematic academic research, and popular dissemination. Stories about the Soviet deportations of Lithuania's population are precisely this kind of legitimate discourse that is manifest in written texts, but which struggles to command the material resources necessary to for canonization in museums. Stories about the Soviet deportations are legitimate, but are they really hegemonic in the public regimes of history?

This discrepancy between hegemonic and legitimate derives in part from the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by state cultural sector organizations. The public, or state-financed cultural sector is not a homogeneous unit that blindly conveys the government's attitude towards the past. Furthermore, the Lithuanian state museum sector is neither unitary nor homogeneous. Probably the only features common to all Lithuanian state museums are a low degree of professionalization, a chronic lack of both funding, and a systematic practice of research-based collection. The historical narratives presented in state museums were materially assembled and verbally articulated by many different groups and individuals associated with state and non-state organizations. Collections pertaining to recent history were

[12] Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, "National Museums in Lithuania: A Story of State Building (1855–2010)". In *Building National Museums in Europe 1750–2010,* EuNaMus Report No. 1, ed. P. Aronsson and G. Elgenius (Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2011), 521–52.

assembled on the basis of donations—not purposive acquisitions. The Lithuanian museums, therefore, are better understood as constituents in a particular economy of gift-giving, and not as the broadcasters of some coherent "state ethnonationalist ideology."

Whither Memory in the Museums?

Expositions on the theme of Soviet deportations in Lithuanian museums grew from a set of complex practices: a combination of personal disclosures of traumatic experiences by individuals, and gift-giving as a way to perpetuate the existence of a particular community in the future. This contention requires a revision of some recent studies about how "collective memory" is constructed by museums. During the last two decades, a large volume of literature has discerned a great variety of entities such as "collective memory," "mass memory," "ethnic memory," "cultural memory," "social memory," and "public memory," to mention just a few examples.[13]

In this literature, "memory" has come to signify a particular mode of knowledge production. Drawing on the etymology of the Latin "memoria," which means reminding or bringing to mind, memory was taken to connote a general capacity to stabilize and bring forth, to activate.[14] Just like in electronic engineering, memory is conceived not as a passive, but as an active and structuring material. Memory was opposed to other types of knowledge production and came to be used in a politicized manner, reflecting the

[13] Historians have recently approached memory as having an independent ontology, the status of which is rarely examined. See Jan-Werner Müller, ed., *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); or James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust, Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), xi. Young insightfully argued against the naïve use of psychoanalytical categories in studies of public commemoration. He also proposed the notion of "collected memories" as more useful than "collective memory," a proposition that hints at the danger of using nouns that contribute to the reification of the phenomenon in question. For example, nouns can acquire verbs and adjectives and in this way "collective memory" as a noun becomes a world unto itself. The outcomes of this semiotic process are evident in the studies published in Müller's edited volume, which give hardly any information about the sources from which the postulated "collective memories" are discerned. For a good and brief overview of the proliferation of taxonomies of "really existing memories," see Andreas Kitzmann, Conny Mithander, and John Sundholm, "Introduction," in *Memory Work: The Theory and Practice of Memory*, ed. Andreas Kitzmann, Conny Mithander, and John Sundholm (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2005), 9–23.

[14] Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com.

convergence of developments in history and social science, and a growing political populism that relied on public knowledge regimes about the past.

"Memory" was initially introduced as a category for sociological research by Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945). In *On Collective Memory*, he sought to bridge the gap between sociology, which focused on large formations like groups and societies, and psychology, which studied memory processes on the individual level.[15] According to Halbwachs, individual memories depend upon the groups to which the individual belongs at that time, and which give individuals the very means to shape their memories: "what makes recent memories hang together," he writes, is "that they are part of the totality of thoughts common to a group."[16] Through the work of Jan Assman and John Czaplicka, Halbwachs's ontology of collective memory as an observable phenomenon with which individual memories "interact" was channeled into a fast-expanding historical and cultural research agenda on collective memory.[17]

The distinction between the individual and society as separate entities that are yet connected in various ways was further reinforced by the emergent discipline of oral history, keen to introduce non-expert verbal accounts as a valid primary source for historical research.[18] "Memory" as a non-expert verbal account was eventually reified into a world unto itself: epistemology became ontology and soon it was possible to venture into "a realm of memory" and explore "the universe of memory." In its extreme version, any seemingly consistent discourse could be labeled as "a collective memory."

It is against this background that one should understand the rise of a realist notion of collective memory that exists "out there," and that can be scientifically researched and politically acted upon. Perhaps the best example of such an approach is collective memory studies that focus on heritage and museums. For instance, Pierre Nora and Jacques Le Goff held that state museums somehow by themselves effortlessly constitute "collective memory."[19] However, museums dwell on the boundaries of many different worlds: social, economic, natural scientific, and political.[20] The historical

[15] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.

[16] Ibid., 52.

[17] Jan Assman and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995), 125–33.

[18] Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, eds., *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009).

[19] See Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 88.

[20] Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, "'Institutional Ecology,' 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum

origins of a museum can be extremely diverse.[21] The very existence of a museum hardly proves anything: examples of museums established thanks to the quirk of a moment and museums with highly regarded official status that have little influence on society abound.[22] What does a branch of the Museum of Devils, part of the Čiurlionis Art Museum, the highly canonical national institution in Lithuania, prove just "by itself"? My approach, consequently, is closer to the one articulated by Ian Hacking who warned scholars to be more sensitive about grouping diverse interests under the term "memory."[23]

A particular museum, or, to be more precise, a certain part of a particular museum may or may not be framed via a verbal discourse as an attempt to construct "a collective memory." This is especially evident in the case of new history museums in Lithuania dealing with the twentieth century. Often newly established, emergent organizations, these new museums are expected to formulate consistent rationales and deploy coherent and premeditated tactics of collecting and exhibiting objects. However, in reality the museums are often organized in an ad hoc way. Struggling to survive economically, not all of those running museums have any energy or resources left to engage in research-based, proactive collecting. Some of them bear the clear stamp of being mere depositories, accepting objects from generous, but not scientifically systematic donors. The new museums and expositions analyzed below are better understood as assemblages in progress.

This material and conceptual assembling of the recent past takes place through complex and messy attempts at stabilizing knowledge and social relations. Exhibitions about deportations in Lithuanian museums could best be understood as material performances of gift-giving, which, according to Lizette Gradén, is "a plea for a presence in the future." In her studies of the

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of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907–39," *Social Studies of Science* 19, no. 3 (1989): 387–420; Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, "When Formal Organisations Meet Informal Relations in Soviet Lithuania: Action Nets, Networks and Boundary Objects in the Construction of the Lithuanian Sea Museum," *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 15 (2011): 107–34.

[21] Simon J. Knell, Peter Aronsson, Arne Bugge Amundsen, et al., *National Museums: New Studies from Around the World* (London: Routledge, 2011).

[22] Hence Stuart Burch and Ulf Zander are not quite correct to assume that "the very existence" of the museums of occupation in the Baltic States testifies to a "preoccupation with the past." The very existence of many of these museums in question is a much more complex phenomenon and in no way an indication of effortless consensus. See Stuart Burch and Ulf Zander, "Preoccupied by the Past: The Case of Estonia's Museum of Occupations," *Scandia* 74, no. 2 (2008): 53–54.

[23] Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3.

assembling of Swedish heritage in the United States, Gradén emphasizes that in certain contexts gift-giving practices are especially powerful as a material performance, which cements the community of donors and asks for furthering a relationship between donors and future generations.[24] Gift-giving is not a neutral action of benevolence, but a strong force that structures museum displays as a materialization of the gift-givers' community. The Lithuanian museums of deportations demonstrate that gift-giving is especially significant when other ways of obtaining exhibits are limited.

In Lithuania, gift-giving not only played an important role in materially sustaining particular communities of former deportees and political prisoners, but also contributed to the placement of certain stories in the museums. I propose that gift-giving as a mode of production of museum collections and exhibitions explains the discrepancy between the rather coherent verbal discourse on the Soviet deportations, formulated in government documents and parliamentary speeches, and the fragmented stories assembled in the museums.

Assembling Deportations in the Museums

Since 1990, many history museums in Lithuania have installed expositions dedicated to the deportations.[25] Three museums in particular feature the biggest and most developed expositions about the Soviet deportations: the Open Air Museum of Lithuania in Rumšiškės, the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius, and the Ninth Fort Museum in Kaunas. In 1992, the Museum of Genocide Victims was established in Vilnius, but permanent expositions about the Gulag (1944–1956) and deportations (1944–1953) were only installed in 2006. In 1992, a yurt representing a type of dwelling in which deportees lived near the Laptev Sea was erected at the Open Air Museum. Between 1990 and 1992, the exposition was reorganized to display the deportations at the Ninth Fort Museum.

The museums are generally well attended. In 2011, the Museum of Genocide Victims attracted 56,485 visitors, the Open Air Museum—78,294 visitors (although there is no data about the number of visitors to

[24] Lizette Gradén, "Dressed in a Present from the Past: The Transfers and Transformations of a Swedish Bridal Crown in the United States," *Culture Unbound* 2 (2010), 698. See also Lizette Gradén, "Performing Nordic Spaces in American Museums: Gift-exchange, Volunteerism, and Curatorial Practice," in *Performing Nordic Heritage*, ed. Lizette Gradén and Peter Aronsson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 189–220.

[25] Significant collections were accumulated and exhibitions about deportations were installed in Kaunas City Museum and "Aušra" Museum in Šiauliai. In the 2000s, Grūtas Soviet Statue Park also installed a section dedicated to deportations.

the Sector for Deportations and Resistance), and the Ninth Fort Museum received 89,682 visitors. School students constituted a large share of the visitors (the Museum of Genocide Victims 13,480, the Open Air Museum 6,684 and the Ninth Fort Museum 40,036).[26]

High attendance numbers, of course, tell us nothing about the dissemination of the stories presented in the museum displays: it must be remembered that these stories and objects are open to different interpretations. However, attendance numbers suggest that these museums are important sites that can potentially have an impact on public knowledge.

The Deportees' Yurt at the Open Air Museum

My first case study is a yurt, a mud dwelling used by exiles to the Laptev Sea. This yurt can be treated as a gift from the deportees to the Open Air Museum: it was not commissioned from above. The building was designed and its construction was initiated not by the museum staff but by former deportee Rymantas Putvis. The yurt as a heritage site was physically maintained by members of the Laptev Sea society, who also provided explanatory narratives. Being a gift, the yurt was not subject to standards of authenticity and the precision of traditional museum practices.

The idea of donating the yurt to the Open Air Museum emerged during an informal conversation among former deportees. In his memoirs, Jonas Markauskas, one of the initiators of the yurt, recalls the spring of 1991 as "a happy time, full of hope, when well-meaning people found quick solutions to problems." He visited the museum department at the Ministry of Culture and Education to discuss possible establishment of an exposition dedicated to the Soviet deportations at the Open Air Museum. Although the Ministry did not offer any official commitment, Markauskas traveled to the Open Air Museum and proposed to build the yurt. The Museum's scientific board, however, rejected the proposal, arguing that the Museum was dedicated only to the period up to 1940, to which the deportees remarked that "it was then a shame that we were deported in 1941 and not 1940." The museum board was eventually convinced and works started on a site allocated in the summer of 1991.[27]

In this way the yurt was added to the Open Air Museum (est. 1968), a skansen-type open air museum, dedicated to traditional architecture, agricultural techniques, and the folk culture of Lithuania's ethnic regions. Opened to the public on August 23, 1992, the yurt was situated in a small

[26] The data is from the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture.

[27] Jonas Markauskas, "Tremties sektoriaus ekspozicija: dienoraščio puslapiai," in *Gimtasai kraštas* (2009). www.ziemgala.lt/lt/metrastis-gimtasai-krastas. Accessed June 18, 2012.

meadow surrounded by a peaceful grove. The site also contained a small memorial cemetery with crosses, meant to recall the cemeteries in Siberia, but also a copy of a monument from a Jewish burial place in Bykov, Yakutiia, which was added in June 2011. A train car, used to transport deportees, was added in 1996. Since its opening, the yurt has been guarded by former deportees who also served as guides. These deportees, mainly elderly, retired women based in Kaunas, were not, however, either employed or in any other way compensated by the museum administration for a long time (1992–1997). Markauskas recalls that the museum administration was so unwilling to pay the yurt guide, that there was a risk that the yurt could not be open to visitors. To make sure that the deportees' memorial is accessible to public, the guide was financed by donations from émigré Lithuanians for a number of years.[28]

This, I suggest, is an important moment to consider if we want to understand the role of the Lithuanian government in the construction of the material heritage of the Soviet deportations. Consider that even in 2011, the year officially designated by the Lithuanian parliament as the Year of the Great Losses, the image of the yurt did not feature prominently in public relations materials of the Open Air Museum. The museum indeed publicized itself as a sunny and cheerful site of folk culture, set snugly in the idyllic pre-industrial countryside. Thus, in the museum's website displacement and suffering, which were part of the everyday life of deportees, were presented as being at odds with the Museum's *raison d'être*:

> In contrast to the cozy farmsteads, away from the ring road, separated by a grove, there stands an unusual structure covered with grass: a yurt and a cattle car with tiny windows, meshed with barbed wire. Having nothing to do with Lithuanian culture, these objects recall the painful period of deportations in 1941–1953, described in one sentence by the journalist Laima Kanopkienė: "Men, who spoke a foreign language, crushed the crystal silence of the Lithuanian village with rifle butts."[29]

It is also interesting to note the tension between the rationale of the yurt and the rationale of the Museum. The Museum does not use the term "memory" either in its website or mission statement; the rationale of this institution is to offer a direct transportation to the past: "we are a live time machine, which will help you to stop the present, to move to the past and

[28] Markauskas, "Tremties sektoriaus ekspozicija." The opening of the yurt, interestingly, stirred interest back in Yakutia: local Yakut television visited the Open Air Museum, donated some objects and produced a documentary film about deportations of 1941. *Laptevičiai* (Vilnius: VDA, 2000), 24.

[29] See the Museum website: www.llbm.lt/lt/ekspozicijos/jurta. Accessed June 18, 2012.

experience stories of objects, buildings and people."[30] The deportees' yurt, however, is meant only to "remind" rather than to "transport." For example, upon my visit the guide welcomed visitors to the yurt by warning us "not to even think" that the original yurts were like this one and narrated in detail how the present yurt differed from the ones at the Laptev Sea. The interior of the museum's yurt was built from small tree logs, making an impression of a sauna or a Nordic summer chalet. The interiors of the original yurts at the Laptev Sea, however, were not lined with wood: the walls were made with mud. It was, the guide emphasized, only Russian teachers and NKVD officials who lived in wooden houses.[31] To build the support structures of the original yurts irregular pieces of driftwood were used; driftwood which was collected by deportees under severe circumstances. However, the yurt at the Open Air Museum was built with ordinary, straight and regular logs and planks. To illustrate this discrepancy between the exposition and the lived reality of deportees, a small piece of crooked wood, polished by the sea, is presented on display.

The story that the yurt and exhibited objects tell, in this way, is critically dependent on the presence of the guide. The yurt displays many objects, the origins and stories of which would be obscure without the guide's oral explanation, especially in the absence of comprehensive written commentaries. Another example is a large dog sled leaning against the wall; I could not help noticing that the sledge was surprisingly new and in very good condition. The guide explained to me that the sled was made in Kaunas not long ago. There is, however, a small stack of authentic weathered wooden parts of similar sleds displayed in a corner. There is an oil lamp on display, which caused protests by survivors who insisted that no yurt had any such lamps, prompting the guide to speculate that this lamp perhaps belonged to the supervisor of the labor camp. Next to this lamp there are several wooden instruments for processing fur: these instruments were donated by documentary filmmaker Petras Abukevičius (1928–1997). The creator of two films about the deportations (1993 and 1994), Abukevičius sadly died not long after he made this donation and for this reason the museum could not obtain any information about the origin of these objects. Nevertheless, out of respect for the film director, these wooden tools, which are certainly not from the Laptev Sea area, are kept on display. Some other objects, such as fishnets, are authentic, but from the "wrong" area. Although Laptev Sea deportees used fishnets to fish on ice (and to produce their own clothes), the exhibited nets came from other, unidentified places in Siberia. Several other objects were not authentic, but made

[30] www.llbm.lt/lt. Accessed June 18, 2012.

[31] Conversation with a guide to the yurt, the Open Air Museum, Rumšiškės (July 17, 2011).

from original designs, drawn and sometimes produced by former deportees themselves, such as a metal stove that was produced in Kaunas according to a survivor's design, and a shiny new mug made from tin. The guide herself ordered this new mug, because the authentic one, which she had brought with her from the Laptev Sea, was stolen after someone broke into the yurt. The exposition, in this way, is a combination of authentic relics, newly made objects and not entirely relevant things, forming an assemblage which is less a faithful presentation of deportees' experience at the Laptev Sea and more of a materialization of efforts by the deportees' community.

The site also contains a wagon car from a train used to carry out the deportations, installed in 1996. The car was placed on authentic rails from 1905 with fifteen sleepers to symbolize the fifteen Soviet republics.[32] In the car there are photographic displays with images from expeditions to the Laptev Sea islands and an installation with portraits and personal information of those who were deported to Trofimovsk Island, although Laptev Sea deportees also lived on many other islands. A few years later a bunker that was used by anti-Soviet partisans was erected in the vicinity of the yurt. With the addition of the bunker, the site came to signify the trope of "deportations and resistance," in this way using the widespread and legitimate master narrative of Lithuania's postwar history. Legitimate, it should be stressed, but not hegemonic. At the moment of my visit in 2011, I was told that the bunker for the most time was closed, because the museum administration did not allocate a member of staff to supervise it, while the members of ex-partisan community, according to Markauskas, were no longer fit enough to act as voluntary guides.[33] Indeed, the bunker is hidden so well that visitors often struggle to find it at all. Given all this bureaucratic quagmire but also physical location, it is hard, therefore, to see just how this site could be interpreted as an expression of some hegemonic, state-supported narrative of history.

I propose that the yurt performs, in the words of Latour, as an assembly but not as a representation. Never intended to be a precise reconstruction of the yurts used by deportees, it is rather an ad hoc assemblage that only loosely relates to the life of deportees on the Laptev Sea. The stories that are told at the yurt are fragmentary: not all sites where Lithuanians were settled are represented. Deportees of other ethnicities from the Laptev Sea area are not even mentioned: Finns, for example, were only mentioned by the guide. The deportations of Poles and Russians were not acknowledged at all in the exposition.[34] Furthermore, such a site could in principle in-

[32] Markauskas, "Tremties sektoriaus ekspozicija."

[33] Ibid.

[34] Which could also be a legacy of this particular community of heritage activists. Some of the survivors held strongly anti-Polish views. For example, in 2010, the

clude a farmstead belonging to some luckier deportees who managed to build their own houses, breed cattle, and farm land in the Far East.

However, the yurt's builders did not intend to create a comprehensive representation of the deportations. The yurt emerged as a result and as a monument to the collaboration of a particular group of survivors. As a gift, the yurt was meant to stabilize the existing community of the deportees to the Laptev Sea, and to further their presence into the future. As Markauskas put it:

> At the Open Air Museum, the yurt was built with love, built well and meant to last. It is only the shape of the yurt which resembles the miserable yurts built in haste from accidental planks and sticks by Lithuanians in the North. But this does not prevent one from feeling a pervasive horror when listening to the stories told by Irena Špakauskienė and other deportees.[35]

Deportations at the Museum of Genocide Victims

If the yurt is a good example of a gift to an already existing museum exposition (which creates its own community of givers), the exposition about deportations at the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius demonstrates that gift-giving can also be an important structuring force within the professional organization of a new museum. The name and nature of the exhibition at the Museum of Genocide Victims (MGV) are closely connected to the building in which the museum is situated: a former prison used by the Gestapo and the NKVD/MGB/KGB. The founding of the museum was also initiated by the Lithuanian Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees. The MGV was first established under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Education, and in 1996 was transferred to the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania (GRRC).The name and the contents of this museum have been at a center of ongoing debate, which I have analyzed elsewhere.[36] Here it should be noted that from 2011 the website of the museum no longer describes the Soviet deportations as genocide.

It is also interesting to note that the term "memory" is used in the general mission statements of the museum and research center, but "memory" is absent in the particular descriptions of the exhibitions. The GRRC mission statement says that the center conducts research, initiates juridical evaluation and "eternalizes the memory of victims of Soviet genocide and fighters for freedom." However, the main goal is to "recreate historical truth and jus-

UPPD protested against a memorial plate for Józef Piłsudski in Druskininkai. "Politinių kalinių ir tremtinių sąjunga piktinasi idėja įamžinti J.Pilsudskio atminimą Druskininkuose," Bernardinai.lt (August 19, 2010).

[35] Markauskas, "Tremties sektoriaus ekspozicija."

[36] Rindzevičiūtė, "The Owerflow of Secrets."

tice."[37] The Museum of Genocide Victims is part of the Centre's Memorial Department and its building is meant to "remind the contemporary generation" about the "difficult and tragic years that Lithuania's people endured in 1940–1990." [38] The museum's self-presentation features words like "eternalize" (*įamžinti*) and "remind" (*priminti*). Other verbs hint rather at academic, reflexive relation to the past as the museum seeks to "familiarize with," "to present," "to throw light on," as well as "research," "study," and "record" the past. This vocabulary, but also interviews with the museum staff suggest that the museum seeks to perform both as a societal, political, and academic institution, leaning more toward academic study than commemoration. For instance, I was told by a museum employee that the principal goal of the Museum of Genocide Victims is to be "an academic museum," which presents "only facts" and does not appeal excessively to emotions. This respondent stressed that the MGV consciously seeks to represent an alternative to the ironic and entertaining Grūtas Park of Soviet Statues.[39] The objective and neutral production of historical knowledge is thus an explicit aim of the MGV. Yet there is a strong tension between memorial and research goals of the museum which has been registered by several scholars. I propose a hypothesis that MGV's memorial function could be attributed to a residual influence of a particularly active participation of the deportees and resistance communities in the museum's work.

Although MGV is a state funded museum, the presence of the survivors community is strong and, indeed, indispensable for the work of this organization. In an interview, a member of the museum staff told me that the Museum of Genocide Victims accumulated its collection relating to the deportations almost exclusively through donations from private individuals.[40] This led to an interesting path dependency with regards to accumulation of types of objects but also stories. It is obvious that lacking the funding for proactive collecting, the museum curators had little control over the themes and types of objects that came to form its material core. The nar-

[37] The Memorial Department performed a study on psychological traumas of several generations of victims. The program "Live Memory" is an oral history program that collects data from witnesses. There is also a program to create an inventory of places and objects which relate with the difficult history. A program, "Places of Imprisonment and Deportations" also records personal memories through interviews and collects diaries and photographs. Another program, "Signs, Symbols and Monuments of Memory" proactively commissions production of various works of art and plaques to mark places and events.

[38] www.genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/562/c/. Accessed June 18, 2012.

[39] Interview with Vytas, an employee of the Museum of Genocide Victims, Vilnius (July 11, 2011). The full identity of all informants has been kept anonymous.

[40] Interview with Rima, a curator at the Museum of Genocide Victims, Vilnius (July 11, 2011).

row range of artifacts that landed in the museum's storage rooms imposed restrictions on the assembling of exhibitions. For example, photographs that feature prominently in the exhibitions constitute the biggest proportion of donated objects. However, because of the ban on deportees and prisoners keeping photographic equipment or photographs, the majority of the photographs are dated after 1953 and photographs from the first wave of deportations in 1941 are extremely rare. Artifacts and original documents are not numerous. The museum itself calls the artifacts "relics" (*relikvijos*), which has the same religious connotation in Lithuanian as in English.

In 1997 the Center for Genocide Research developed a conceptual outline for the permanent expositions.[41] This planning stage included not only professional historians and museum workers, but also former deportees: the Museum of Genocide Victims arranged consultations and informed the Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees about its work in progress. Some of the ideas suggested by deportees were implemented: for example, an exhibit of portraits of deportees near the prison cells in which they were kept. It was decided to focus on the period 1940–1990, although Lithuanians were already being deported by Russian tsarist authorities as far back as the nineteenth century.

It took about seven years for the Museum of Genocide Victims to install its expositions (1999–2006), which were only completed after Lithuania joined the European Union and experienced quick economic growth. The three halls, dedicated to the deportations, were the last ones to be opened to visitors in 2006. How is memory constructed discursively in the texts accompanying these expositions? The website presentation of the exposition "Inhabitants of Lithuania in the Gulag 1944–1956" does not claim to present an academic version of the history, nor does it refer to a "memorial" mission. In a somewhat positivist and humble way, the website text states that the "exhibited historical-documentary materials" will "reveal the scale and motives of repressions, the incredibly difficult conditions of the prisoners[']" work and everyday life, and introduce the Soviet penal system." This text also emphasizes the universal significance of the experience of deportees from Lithuania: "It is also a story about the people and their endless efforts not to give up in the face of crushing reality and not to lose their human dignity, faith and hope."[42] The description of the next exposition "Deportations: 1944–1953" categorizes deportees not in ethnic terms but through other social categories, such as "family," "elderly," "children," "the newborn," and "ill people."[43] However, there are some clear assump-

[41] Hence the rationale of the Museum of Genocide Victims predated the House of Terror in Budapest (est. 2002).

[42] www.genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/146/a/. Accessed June 18, 2012.

[43] www.genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/279/a/. Accessed June 18, 2012.

tions about the character of the deportee community that is represented. For instance, the third hall is dedicated to the exposition entitled "Life continues," the description of which contains some references to ethnic group identities. It describes prisoners and deportees as "the Lithuanians" and specifies that in trying to survive, prisoners and deportees tried to "raise children, keep their customs, language, historical conscience and to be guided by Christian values in their everyday life," thus excluding non-Christian deportees.[44] It seems that from the mid-2000s, the Museum of Genocide Victims adopted a more universalizing approach to deportations: the accompanying texts emphasize the trauma of forced displacement, the breaking up of families and the terror of death.[45] A final note testifies to a recent broadening of the approach to deportations, as themes of "normal" everyday life have been introduced to the agenda of the museum. For example, in relation to the European basketball championship, Eurobasket 2011, the museum organized a temporary exhibition about basketball in the deportations. This choice is less surprising than one might think, because basketball has traditionally occupied a strong position as a social expression of Lithuanian nationalism.

The Museum of Genocide Victims assembled its exhibition about the deportations by using several types of knowledge production. First, although the narratives of the exhibition rely mainly on the facts established by academic historians, the architectural design of the exhibition settings seeks to appeal to the visitors' emotions. The exhibition design is sleek and stylish, but also rather traditional: objects are placed in glass stands alongside the walls, thus separating the visitor from the aura of a unique object, a relic. Although there are quite a few objects exhibited, it is the printed images, enlarged, original and copied photographs, that dominate the displays. The museum positions itself as a place to study and read, and in this way a visitor's experience is different from that of the dark and cramped yurt, where the objects are silent. The Museum of Genocide Victims seeks to provide the visitor with a more full-fledged story about the deportations, but its departure point is texts produced by professional historians, rather than a purposive collecting of objects.[46] How these professional history

[44] www.genocid.lt/muziejus/lt/280/a/. Accessed June 18, 2012.

[45] A good example is the travelling poster exhibition "Under the Foreign Skies," produced by the Museum of Genocide and exhibited at the European Parliament, Brussels, June 20–24, 2011. Previous traveling exhibitions included "The Chronicles of Violence: Lithuania in 1939–1941" to commemorate the sixty-fifth anniversary of the beginning of the deportations. This exhibition was shown in Brussels, Lithuanian towns, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Chicago in 2006–2011.

[46] The Museum of Genocide Victims has an extensive educational program for children and youth that includes four themes related to the deportations ("The geography of deportations and imprisonment in the Soviet Union," "Soviet pris-

narratives were combined into one whole with a contingent flow of objects, donated by the survivors, could be an interesting object of another study.

Deportations at the Ninth Fort Museum

The last case study concerns the largest exposition dedicated to the deportations of Lithuania's inhabitants, located at the Museum of the Ninth Fort in Kaunas. The Ninth Fort has a ghastly history associated with the killings of Kaunas Jews in 1941, the mass murder that marked the beginning of the Holocaust in Lithuania. After the Second World War, the Ninth Fort was incorporated by Soviet cultural policy to commemorate victory against the Nazis. The Fort's territory was excavated by forensic archaeologists, and a museum was established in 1958. To house the permanent exposition a rather spectacular modernist pavilion was erected in 1984. Designed by the famous modernist architects Vytautas Vielius and Gediminas Baravykas, this building still looks strikingly original in 2011, although in need of repairs. From the outside the museum resembles a giant sculpture cast in gray concrete. Inside, similar to Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, the new buildings of the Museum of the Ninth Fort constitute a monumental space which unfolds as a visitor walks through the site: one can walk around, through and even on top of the building. In addition to the new museum building an imposing monument was erected on the site of the mass graves. The whole complex was meant to pay homage to the Soviet citizens who died during the Second World War. Soviet historiography notoriously did not distinguish Jews as a group that suffered the greatest losses and, obviously, the Soviet deportations were not mentioned at all. The Soviet museum of the Ninth Fort was created as a museum of the suffering and victory of the Soviet people only in regards to Nazi oppression.

This message became more complex during the late socialist period and the first years of Lithuania's independence. Between 1988 and 1992 the museum was reorganized and the memorial pavilion was named the Museum of Occupations.[47] During my visit in 2011 the modern pavilion contained an exhibition about Lithuania's occupations: Soviet, Nazi, and So-

ons, camps and deportation: their distinctive features," "Lithuanian priests in Soviet camps and deportation," "Children in deportation"). In addition, six documentary films are available for screening on demand.

[47] Although well-visited, the Museum of Occupations at the Ninth Fort has been little studied. For example, a recent comparative study of the museums of occupations in the Baltic States analyzed the Grūtas Park as a Lithuanian case, but did not mention the Ninth Fort. See Aro Velmet, "Occupied Identities: National Narratives in Baltic Museums of Occupations," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42, no. 2 (2011): 189–211.

viet again. The Ninth Fort itself was used by the Communists to house prisoners before deporting them and, because of this, information on Soviet deportations take up most of the displays. A display dedicated to the Holocaust is also included in this building, but much larger and detailed displays about the fate of European, Lithuanian, and particularly Kaunas's Jews were recently installed in the newly renovated halls of the Fortress itself. The ex-Soviet modernist building, therefore, seems to be mainly dedicated to the exhibition about Soviet deportations.

It is a peculiar experience to visit this museum as it is a genuinely hybrid place, assembled ad hoc from material remnants linking a visitor to different aspects of the Soviet past. Upon entering the exposition of the Museum of Occupations the visitor is dazzled by deep colors of the backlit stained-glass composition "Undefeated Lithuania" by Kazys Morkūnas. The first hall resembles a modern stained-glass church chapel and gives the impression of a religious space. Although the stained-glass composition features realistic scenes of fighting and grieving, it comes across first of all as a purely abstract play of colors. Installed in 1984, this work of art carefully modified socialist realist dogmas and the prescribed content, namely the suffering and heroism of Soviet citizens. It appears that since the portrayed figures did not bear any obvious attributes to communist iconography, they survived de-Sovietization and was adopted as an homage to the general suffering of Lithuania's inhabitants. In addition to this stained-glass composition, the Museum of Occupations kept several other sculptures made by Soviet Lithuanian artists in the 1960s and 1980s.[48] At a later stage, more works of art were added: a series of paintings on the theme of laments by Virginijus Kašinskas and sculptures dedicated to deportees by Tamara Janova.

The Museum of Occupations places a much stronger emphasis on emotional affect than the Museum of Genocide Victims. Just like in the Museum of Genocide Victims, the building itself dramatizes the visitor's experience from the inside and outside. The difference is that the MGV building influences emotions through its history, whereas the building of the Museum of Occupations speaks to aesthetic perception through its dramatic forms and spaces. The exhibits of the Museum of Occupations also combine academic study with an appeal to the emotions. Textual and

[48] These sculptures are done in a quite refined neoclassical style that is close to art deco. For example, "Pain" is a graceful white sculpture of a mourning woman that is twisted into an abstract shape by A. Vertulienė (1982), and "Mother" by Gediminas Jokūbonis (1960) is a model of a large monument for the Pirčiupiai village, which was burned by the Nazis. These illustrations of pain are complemented with a sculpture dedicated to hope, "The First Swallows" by Juozas Mikėnas (1960), a model of a larger monument that was originally commissioned to celebrate Soviet space exploration.

visual information and objects are displayed in an old-fashioned way, placed in stands and drawers that are lined against the walls and protected by glass. The exhibit stands are dominated by labeled photographs and short texts that give some historical background in Lithuanian and (incorrect) English. While these displays are meant to be carefully examined, they are punctuated with paintings of laments and poetic quotes (without identifying the source), which suggest the intent to produce an emotional effect on the visitor. Unlike the yurt, which used enlarged reproductions of amateur deportee drawings, the Museum of Occupations is opulently decorated with works by professional artists.[49]

A visit to the Museum of Occupations, quite typical of museums dedicated to the second half of the twentieth century in the Baltic states, can be compared to reading a photo album. I was confronted by hundreds of photographs, labeled with names and places, but explicit narratives were lacking. There was no catalog for sale, nor were any printed sheets with narratives available. A rudimentary narrative can be reconstructed from the captions of the exposition stands, the chronology and themes of which suggest that the key story is the political history of Lithuania's sovereignty. The first stand, "The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Annexation of Lithuania 1940–1941," is dedicated to the Soviet occupation and the first killings and deportations conducted by the NKVD. This is followed by the Nazi occupation and the extermination of Lithuania's Jews. The second Soviet occupation opens a large section, "Soviet Terror and Deportations," which occupies about half of the entire exposition space. In this way, the museum identifies foreign occupations with population losses through executions and deportations.

The museum website states that the exposition seeks to "familiarize" visitors with the "pain, losses, and bereavement brought to Lithuania by Nazi and Soviet occupations." The exhibit about deportations is described carefully not to limit the victims to ethnic Lithuanians, but refers to them as "Lithuania's inhabitants" and explicitly states that "not only Lithuanians," but also Poles and Jews "and people of other ethnicities" were deported. The website says that deportations constituted a "physical and spiritual genocide that the Soviet government performed on Lithuania's inhabitants."[50] Jewish names abound throughout the exhibition, but there is no special section for Jews or any of Lithuania's other ethnic minorities (a short text does mention that non-Lithuanian ethnic groups like Jews and Poles were also deported from Lithuania).

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[49] The yurt and the train wagon featured drawings by Martinaitis, who was deported to the Laptev Sea area. These drawings were used to illustrate several publications produced by the Laptev Society.

[50] www.9fortomuziejus.lt/ekspozicijos/. Accessed June 18, 2012.

Furthermore, the story of deportations is the story of the Lithuanian social and political elites. Just like in the yurt, there is a lack of a wider context concerning forced population displacements and terror. Even the geography of the deportations is not used as a possible structuring theme. Instead, the focus is on several groups who are clearly perceived as crucial to Lithuanian sovereignty: government members, army officers, priests and journalists, are each allocated separate stands. The only more or less comprehensive story of an individual deportee concerns Konstantinas Šakenis (1881–1959) who was the Minister of Education of the Lithuanian Republic and later a political prisoner. Resistance is another theme that is implicitly addressed by the selection of areas of focus, such as the uprisings of the imprisoned Lithuanian army officers in the Norilsk and Vorkuta camps in 1953. In this way, the Museum of Occupations seems to tap into the widely used argument that "the very best of Lithuania were deported."[51]

As is often the case, the objects on display could potentially tell a lot of different stories. In addition to photographs, the exhibition stands contain a wide variety of objects that were either donated by survivors or excavated by archaeologists. Some objects bear a very obvious relation to the story of deportation as one of enduring inhumane hardships: worn clothes, rusted mugs, spoons made from flattened aluminum, and pages from letters and diaries. Other objects hint at cultural practices that deportees and prisoners managed to engage in under impossible hardships: religious items, such as crucifixes and bibles, decorative items, such as painted and carved boxes, and artifacts made by the deportees themselves, most often embroidery, but also drawings and even sports shirts. These objects of everyday life are described on the museum website as expressions of "love and loyalty to the motherland." These objects, according to the description, were the product of ingenious creativity: "rosaries were made from bread crumbs or plant seeds, crosses were made from toothbrushes, combs, and parts of aluminum spoons."[52]

However, the meaning of the great many other objects on display, such as music instruments, chess sets, artfully bounded books, mineral collections, reading glasses, pens, even colorful and flashy ties, remains obscure. One display shows a pretty porcelain plate, used in the deportation settlement and brought back home by a political prisoner. It remains unclear, however, what were the reasons for the apparently extreme differences in the standards of living for deportees and political prisoners. It is also unclear if ornate objects, self-made or just preserved, were typical or exceptional. For example, a set of reindeer fur boots on display look new and hardly worn at all. Here I recalled that one deportee told me that at ex-

[51] Conversation with "Mission Siberia" participant, Vilnius (July 12, 2011).
[52] www.9fortomuziejus.lt/ekspozicijos/. Accessed June 18, 2012.

tremely low temperatures reindeer boots were useless as they quickly fell apart.[53] Due to this shortage of textual narratives that could embed the rich variety of objects into stories and attribute them to a particular world, the visitor is left to sort out herself the multiple boundaries that these objects inhabit.

Exhibitions of Deportations as Gifts

New museums were established and new exhibitions installed as ways to make public statements about the importance of deportations in the history of Lithuania's statehood. However, in the context of repeated economic declines (hyperinflation in 1990–93, the economic crisis in Russia in 1998, and the world economic recession that started in 2008) the state provided only minimal economic support to these institutions. The museums which I analyzed in this essay, as a rule, were very small organizations: although located in large buildings (the sites of the Museum of Genocide Victims and the Ninth Fort are impressive), they employed surprisingly small staff, often one employee per department. Museums received hardly any funding for research expeditions to study labor and concentration camps and deportee settlements in the Russian North and Far East. They relied heavily on donations from survivors to shape their collections, a process which arguably contributed to placing survivors' own stories in these museums.

One such influence of the survivors' community in these three museums can be seen in the recurring theme of Catholic Christianity, often embedded in the historical narrative of Lithuania's political statehood. To be sure, Catholic priests suffered Soviet repressions and figured prominently in the anti-Soviet resistance.[54] Furthermore, it has been traditional in Western culture to depict modern suffering through the forms and iconography of Christian tradition. However, the high visibility of Catholic overtones in the expositions of deportations could also be due to the informal influence of the members of the Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees, whose regulations proclaim the importance of the Christian faith in their activities.

As I noted earlier, explicit narratives are scarce in the museums analyzed here. The most accessible are those truncated stories that can be reconstructed from the exhibit titles. The titles of the expositions of the Ninth Fort and the Museum of Genocide Victims place the heaviest emphasis on the political narrative of the sovereignty of the Lithuanian state.

[53] Conversation with a guide to the yurt at the Open Air Museum, Rumšiškės (July 17, 2011).

[54] Arūnas Streikus, *Sovietų valdžios antibažnytinė politika Lietuvoje, 1944-1990* (Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, 2002).

First and foremost it is the chronological structure of Lithuania's political statehood that is used to structure the exhibitions: the first and second Soviet occupation (1940/1944) and deportations (1940/1944–1956). In the expositions, the armed resistance to the Communist regime in Lithuania was either spatially integrated in the displays about the deportations (the Ninth Fort) or situated in separate halls (the Museum of Genocide).

Second, the fates of Lithuanian military, government, and cultural elites are prominently represented. As a rule, the deportations are narrated as a unique event: little space is dedicated to the contextual history of the concentration and labor camps, the forced population displacements, or even to the fate of the neighboring Latvian, Estonian, and Polish nations. The story of deportation tends to overlook the ethnic dimension of deported groups, embracing them under the broader category of "Lithuania's inhabitants" or "Lithuanian citizens." For instance, no separate space is dedicated to depict the particular stories of deported Jews, Roma, or Russian peoples. True, a discerning visitor can read the displays along ethnic lines: many photograph labels bear the Jewish names of persons depicted, but the overall absence of the acknowledgment of this plurality remains quite remarkable. Finally, some life stories of deported families or individuals, usually of the Lithuanian elite, are sometimes exhibited, but the stories of individuals never dominate displays.

A third salient feature of exhibitions about the deportations is their material dimension. Most of the displayed objects are not easy to interpret: it is difficult to see how their mundane appearance links with the terrifying stories of suffering and death. Most objects relate to basic necessities, such as eating, working, or keeping warm, while other objects serve as decoration. As it is widely reported in memoir literature of survivors in concentration and labor camps, such as Primo Levi, Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, and Balys Sruoga, the most mundane and humble things were vitally important for prisoners. Spoons, mugs, an extra piece of cloth were the most prized and often self-made possessions, which had high use and exchange value and on which the survival of a prisoner could depend. While it is probably for this reason so many deportees and political prisoners brought back with them rusty mugs or scratched aluminum spoons, the power of these objects to tell a story is underused. The Ninth Fort, for example, displays small piles of combs, spoons, and glasses. This manner of sorting related objects into piles is similar to that used in the Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau Nazi death camps in Poland, but it is not at all clear that such objects were actually sorted in this manner in Soviet concentration and labor camps. Furthermore, piled up together in this manner, the individual objects on display fail to communicate their unique value, which was so precious for each deportee. Their special role in preserving the prisoner's or deportee's life thus remains untold.

Is the lack of a clear articulation of the experience of diverse ethnic groups and social classes, the members of which were deported from Lithuania, a sign of ethnonationalist hegemonization of the history of deportations and suffering? There is no straightforward answer to this question. The narrative of the elite groups who suffered deportations and/or engaged in anti-Soviet resistance is, obviously, a legitimate one in Lithuanian historiography and public discourse. However, it would be premature to interpret these analyzed museum displays as a hegemonic account of the history of Lithuania in the 1940s and 1950s. One should not underestimate the provisional and incomplete nature of the analyzed expositions. As I mentioned earlier, there has been surprisingly little comprehensive research conducted at the sites of deportations. The objects used by museum workers to tell the story were most often donated by the survivors themselves. Given that all the museums in consideration are still evolving, and that they often modify their exhibitions in response to public debates, it is difficult to establish which issues have been actively and consciously excluded from the displays.

Indeed, a more fruitful way to understand the fragmented narratives of the displays is by turning to the explanation of museum-building as a form of gift-giving. It can certainly be assumed that museum workers have a public duty to present critical narratives of history in relation to ethnic and social groups. However, donors and survivors were also involved in the formation of the exhibitions, and often questioned and sometimes actively contested museum workers' choices of objects from the point of view of authenticity.[55] Some groups of survivors from particular social circles and geographical areas were more active than others in donating objects. Consequently, some stories became more visible than others in the museum displays. For instance, most widely presented are the deportees from the Laptev Sea area—a region characterized by some of the harshest conditions and the highest death rates. However, even the Laptev Sea area consisted of many islands and labor camps, but Trofimovsk and Tit-Ary are the ones mainly represented in the museums. Other areas that occupy large spaces in the museum exhibitions are Norilsk, to which Lithuanian military officers were deported, and Krasnoyarsk. The most active communities of survivors literally assembled the history of Lithuania as their own history, their present, and their future.

Furthermore, it is important to place the museums dedicated to the Soviet deportations in the wider context of the cultural sector. Indeed, the stories and objects of deportees remain outside, or at best on the margins of established cultural institutions in Lithuania. Established heritage profes-

[55] Conversation with a museum worker at the Resistance and Deportations Department, Kaunas City Museum, Kaunas (July 10, 2011).

sionals show little interest in the history of victims. The eye-wateringly low entry salaries of museum workers (about 400 Euro net per month in 2011) contribute to high staff volatility. This seriously jeopardizes the work of museums, as it takes more than a year for a new curator to become familiar with the existing collection and to start meaningful work. By that point, however, most staff tend to leave for better-paying jobs.[56] The stories of suffering, to be sure, are part of legitimate official discourse. However, this is most often little more than lip-service, confined to public speeches and red or black marks on the calendar.

Survivors continue to survive by taking care of themselves: the work of museums is underfunded and relies heavily on volunteer labor or unpaid work after hours by scarce museum staff. All these aspects contribute to the often fragmented, amateurish, and conceptually and historiographically inconsistent displays. These expositions undoubtedly stand as impressive monuments to the power of the survivor communities. However, a more comprehensive assembling of the painful Lithuanian past needs professional heritage entrepreneurs, economic investment, and a strong organizational framework to be capable of telling more diverse and fully-fledged stories about the people who were displaced, suffered, died, and survived.

Conclusion

Knowledge production involves processes of assembling and representing. Things need to be assembled in order to produce facts. These material assemblages are transformed into representations by accompanying narratives and other scripts. Both assembling and representing entail selections. It is certainly important to explore how selections were made: which things were invited to take part in the story and which narratives were articulated to give a sense of belonging. But how can a social historian studying such memory practices tell whether an intentional selection has taken place? The study of public knowledge regimes is therefore a minefield of unknowns: the historian depends on great many discourses in order to evaluate the work of representation. It is futile to try to arrive at any sense of closure in this kind of historical analysis: assembling and representing are ongoing processes in the public and private spheres.

That said, museums provide important material settings for stabilizing knowledge about the past through material objects and scripted narratives. It is important to note that the organization of a museum exhibition is a highly complex process: there is no simple and straightforward translation

[56] Interview with Vytas, an employee at the Museum of Genocide Victims, Vilnius (July 12, 2011).

of a verbal historical narrative into a material assemblage. Museum exhibition is a different way of articulating and stabilizing knowledge compared to, say, an essay published in a newspaper. Museum exhibitions are much more costly, materially heterogeneous, and demand ongoing collaboration between different institutional, individual, and corporate actors.

Claims that the key legitimate Lithuanian nationalist discourse stresses national suffering under Soviet rule as the foundational collective experience are quite right in relation to programs issued by the Lithuanian government, parliamentary speeches, and great many declarations. However, this official rhetoric did not translate into a material homage to the victims of the Soviet regime. Given the poverty of the cultural sector, I doubt if it makes sense to even consider this legitimate discourse on national suffering as hegemonic in the Lithuanian museum sector. Indeed, since 1990 the biggest state investments in culture have been channeled into projects relating to the more distant past, particularly, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. For instance, the government spent more than 100 million Euros to build the Palace of Sovereigns in Vilnius. The largest private donation to culture so far entailed the building of a Modern Art Center in the capital. Neither public nor private money, however, were directed to build a flagship monument to the victims of Soviet terror. Even the first major novel about the Soviet deportations of Lithuanians was written not by a native Lithuanian writer, but by the American novelist Ruta Sepetys (*Between Shades of Grey*, 2011). This, I suggest, leads us to ask a lot of questions about the role and status of "hegemonic ethnonationalist narratives" in the broad fields of Lithuanian cultural policy and the cultural sector.

My point is methodological as well as theoretical: the mere existence of a particular public museum display is proof of neither an underlying consensus nor a governmental strategy. Many of these museums, or parts of their expositions on deportations, can better be understood as semi-professional community museums of survivors, rather than components of a sophisticated state ideology. To be sure, narratives about the difficult past, such as the Soviet deportations, articulated in state museums can be understood as a legitimate story of the events. However, it is a methodological mistake to automatically infer the existence of a consensus view on the status of these narratives among workers at the museum in question, the public cultural sector or governmental agencies. A closer look into a wider variety of sources would reveal that the narratives often reflect only the story propagated by one particular group, for example, the museum workers or just some of these workers, while other museum employees might hold quite different views.

The reasons why these and not other narratives happen to be articulated in a given museum can only be found in the specific history of that mu-

seum, and particularly in its resource base and organization. With respect to the construction of museum exhibitions, the term "memory" is often used to justify the work of volunteers and non-specialists within the framework of the formal organization of the museum. The task of a researcher into this process is to elucidate the many actors and rationales of "collective memory work" and to tackle the highly messy and complex mechanisms of production.

Aro Velmet

Breaking the Silence? Contradiction and Consistency in Representing Victimhood in Baltic Museums of Occupations

Upon entering the small, transparent building of the Museum of Occupations on the hill of Toompea in Tallinn, Estonia, the visitor is greeted by two towering locomotives in the middle of the room, one bearing a swastika, the other a hammer-and-sickle. Situated in a room lined with a seemingly endless array of modest, worn-out suitcases, the locomotives drive home the central focus of the exposition—the forced deportations that pitted the humble Estonian population with their hurriedly packed suitcases against the Nazi and Soviet terror machines. In the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia in Riga, a similar framing device is used by lining the main exposition hall with excerpts from Latvian poetry written in Siberian exile. In Lithuania, the state-funded Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius is housed in the former KGB headquarters while the commercial Grūtas Park in Druskininkai is surrounded by a calm forest with mock guard towers and barbed-wire fences.

The museums of occupations in the three Baltic states underscore a point repeatedly made by scholars over the past decades: the predominant national narratives in the three countries are based on stories of collective tragedy in the form of forced deportations to the Soviet Gulag.[1] Such stories are important in fostering collective commemoration of tragic events as

[1] Dovilė Budrytė, "'We Call It Genocide': Soviet Deportations and Repressions in the Memory of Lithuanians," in *The Genocidal Temptation: Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Rwanda, and Beyond*, ed. R. S. Frey (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004); Dovilė Budrytė, *Taming Nationalism?: Political Community-Building in Post-Soviet Baltic States* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005); Vieda Skultans, "Looking for a Subject: Latvian Memory and Narrative," *History of the Human Sciences* 9, no. 4 (1996): 65–80.

well as in helping to create a sense of unity and stability, but they can just as well foster antagonism and create cleavages of historical memory by dividing the world into a Manichean opposition of "oppressors" and "victims," by sacralizing one perspective at the expense of others, and overlooking important historical details, sacrificing historical accuracy for social unity. However, as the mass riots on the streets of Tallinn following the removal of a Soviet-era memorial to the victory in World War II have all too clearly shown, attempts at institutionalizing a single narrative in a society with a plurality of emotionally affective narratives of the past is ultimately detrimental to both historical accuracy and social cohesion.[2]

This chapter looks at how four museums of occupation in the three Baltic states deal with writing the recent history of the Baltics. These museums of occupations—defined as museums dealing explicitly with the history of the recent past from the perspective of a national experience of foreign rule—are particularly important loci of investigation. They are academic institutions of critical inquiry, charged with a scholarly investigation of the past, and are discursive establishments, conduits of power, transmitting and shaping narratives of national identity through their scholarly and political authority. Museum expositions, particularly those dedicated to such high profile and politically charged issues as occupations, form a part of the "imagined community" of a nation-state.[3] There, history is collected, systematized, and transformed into a narrative that can animate a nation and mold the shape of civil society. Because of this dual role of scholarship and nation-building, we must investigate the narratives these museums convey to determine which stories are privileged, which are contested or underplayed, and which are completely ignored.

Of particular interest to us are the points of contradiction and consistency. The four museums in question share a commitment to portraying the history of a nation under duress, but they diverge in their funding schemes, scholarly aims, size, and strategies of representation. While the Estonian and Latvian museums are in the final account, in spite of their architectural dynamism, still scholarly and reserved, the Museum of Genocide Victims capitalizes on the powerful history of its building, and Grūtas Park straddles the difficult line between a museum and a theme park. All of the museums in question construct narratives of "collective victimhood" around the Soviet deportations. As a result, deeper complexities of the

[2] S. Kattago, "War Memorials and the Politics of Memory: the Soviet War Memorial in Tallinn," *Constellations* 16, no. 1 (2009): 150–66; David. J. Smith, "'Woe from Stones': Commemoration, Identity Politics, and Estonia's 'War of Monuments,' *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39, no. 4 (2008): 419–30.

[3] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 4–6.

occupations period, such as the role of native collaborators in perpetuating the Soviet regime, or the impact of the Holocaust on prewar minorities in the Baltics, are often left unexplored. However, curatorial choices, geographic location, the politics of space and experience, among others, shape these narratives in ways that sometimes reinforce, but often complicate the constructions of ethnicity and nationalism as presented in the expositions. Thus, the politics of representation in museums such as the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia or Grūtas Park also suggest ways in which the hegemonic narrative of national trauma can be adapted to coexist with other accounts of the recent past, pointing toward a more pluralist accounting of the past required of postmodern, multicultural states.

The Museum of Occupations in Estonia

Next to a majestic neo-Gothic cathedral and the remains of a seven-hundred-year-old city wall, and with the towers of Tallinn's Old City looming in the background, the Estonian Museum of Occupations looks rather small, almost tiny. It is one of two buildings in Estonia constructed explicitly as a museum—the other being the multimillion dollar Estonian National Art Museum, a giant limestone-and-steel complex constructed amid intense public debate next to the Presidential palace and the historic Catherine's Valley Park. The Museum of Occupations has more modest origins. It was established in 1998 by Olga Kistler, an Estonian expatriate who emigrated to the United States during the Second World War. In collaboration with Tunne Kelam, then Vice Speaker of the Parliament and Heiki Ahonen, a former political prisoner and historian, she decided to establish a foundation for the creation of a "museum of contemporary history" with a focus on the recent occupations.[4]

The goal of the museum is to "document the catastrophes and cataclysms, which took place during the last fifty years and to find detailed proof about the past based on facts and analysis. . . . [It is] interested in the life of Estonians, and also of Russians, Germans, Jews, Swedes and other minorities under the totalitarian regime of the second half of the XX century. . . . [It] must prevent the dreadful offenses from being forgotten."[5] The museum's day-to-day activities are run by Heiki Ahonen, its executive director since the very beginning, while the Kistler-Ritso Foundation keeps an eye on the museum's long-term objectives.[6]

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[4] Interview with Heiki Ahonen (Director of the Estonian Museum of Occupations), July 2009, Estonian Museum of Occupations.

[5] The Kistler-Ritso Estonian Foundation, *Goals and Objectives,* Tallinn, http://www.okupatsioon.ee/english/index.html. Accessed November 15, 2009.

[6] Interview with Heiki Ahonen.

Of the four museums of occupation, the Estonian institution is by far the smallest. It welcomes around 25,000 visitors yearly, one-fourth of the number at the Latvian museum and a seventh of the number at Grūtas Park. Yet Estonia welcomes almost twice as many tourists per year than either of the other Baltic states.[7] The museum employs seven people, four of them full-time. Though the museum operates as a private nonprofit, about two-thirds of its operating budget is financed by grants from the Ministry of Culture, with the rest coming from ticket sales.[8] The size of the government grant was about $250,000 in FY2009, making it the smallest enterprise in terms of funding as well.[9] Consequently, the museum also has smaller ambitions than its counterparts. There is no big outreach program, no elaborate educational activities and no army of trained tour guides. Instead, the museum focuses on expanding its complex exhibition consisting of audio-visual material and physical artifacts, continuing a research program on the history of the Estonian Communist Party (ECP) and publishing general overviews of Estonian history for foreign visitors.

The ground floor houses the main exhibition of the museum, with an afterthought-like supplement of Soviet era sculptures and posters in the basement. The exhibition space consists of a single giant room that can also function as a lecture hall and a cafeteria, with exhibition cases serving as the only lines of demarcation. The physical centerpiece of the museum is a massive mock-up of two trains forming a gateway into the back half of the museum, one bearing the Nazi swastika, the other the Soviet red star. The intellectual centerpiece, though less grandiose visually, is equally epic in scope: projected onto the back wall, seven documentary films with a total length of four hours narrate the past 70 years of Estonian history. Period artifacts, carefully chosen to symbolize the mentalities, everyday practices and overall atmosphere of various stages of the Nazi and Soviet occupations surround the video screens, adding a tangible component to the exhibition. Personal testimony, provided in the form of video interviews and artifacts of individual suffering complement the predominantly political narrative of the main exhibition.

The other major objective of the museum is research. Work on the history of the ECP has resulted in the three major monographs, as well as a

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[7] Iveta Druva Druvaskalne and Agita Slara, "Tourism Challenges in the Baltic States since EU Enlargement," (Paper presented at the European Regional Science Association Conference, 2006), http://ideas.repec.org/p/wiw/wiwrsa/ersa06p121.html. Accessed November 15, 2009.

[8] Interview with Heiki Ahonen.

[9] Eesti Vabariigi Kultuuriministeerium, *Kultuuriministeeriumi valitsemisala Eelarve* 2009, March 8, 2009, http://www.kul.ee/webeditor/files/erle/KUM_2009_eelarve_seis_03_08_2009.xls. Accessed November 15, 2009.

number of academic articles, conference presentations and other publications. However, only one major work has been translated into English and Russian: a 2004 collection of articles on the history of the occupations of Estonia.[10] Thus, most publications are inaccessible to visitors not fluent in Estonian, who make up half of the museum's audience.[11] The analysis presented here will focus on the large selection of English and Russian language booklets and introductory texts available at the museum store, including the collection of articles on the Soviet occupation, a government publication called *The White Book* on the "losses inflicted on the Estonian nation by occupation regimes" and a number of colorful introductions to Estonian history by historian and former prime minister, Mart Laar.[12]

The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia

Four hundred kilometers to the south, the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia is in some ways the mirror image of the small, transparent, and dynamic Estonian museum. The two institutions are similar in terms of their origin and funding: the Latvian museum was also founded by an expatriate, Pauls Lazda, and one-fourth of its budget comes from government grants. But in other aspects the Latvian museum stands in striking contrast to its Estonian counterpart. It is located in a dark, reinforced concrete edifice, originally built as the Latvian Red Riflemen museum in 1970.[13] Employing forty-two people, half of them full-time, the museum serves over 100,000 visitors per year.[14] About two-thirds of the visitors are tourists or non-resident Latvians, followed by schoolchildren and students as well as those with personal experience of the period.[15] The goal of the museum is summed up in three words: "Show, Remind, and Remember."[16] Though not formally defined, the political goal of the museum is at least as important. The museum, according to its chief administrators, tries to subvert

[10] The Kistler-Ritso Estonian Foundation, *Teadustegevuse Põhisuunad ja Prioriteedid,* http://www.okupatsioon.ee/tegevus/tegevus.html. Accessed January 12, 2009.

[11] Interview with Heiki Ahonen, July 2009.

[12] The publications include titles like *The Forgotten War: Armed Resistance Movement in Estonia 1944–1956* (Grenader: Tallinn, 2005) and *Birds-Eye View of Estonian History* (Grenader: Tallinn, 2005).

[13] Interview with Gundega Michel, Director of the Museum of the Occupations of Latvia), August 2009.

[14] Museum of the Occupations of Latvia, *Visitors*, http://www.omf.lv/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=142. Accessed January 12, 2009.

[15] Interview with Gundega Michel, August 2009.

[16] Museum of the Occupations of Latvia, *Museum Brochure, English*.

the deliberate or accidental misinformation that dominates nationalist Russian discourses about the occupations of Latvia.[17]

These objectives are transformed into reality in the main exhibition hall, on the windowless upper floor, where tall red pillars divide the exhibition area into sections detailing various aspects of the occupations. The exhibition presents two narratives, color-coded and spatially separate: The main narrative recounts the political, social, and cultural aspects of twentieth-century occupations in chronological sections. This chronological narrative crosses with a secondary narrative focused on Latvian experiences in the Soviet Gulag. Here, the collective memory of deportation is illustrated through the life stories of eight deportees and a selection of tools, memorabilia, diaries, and other personal items recovered from Siberia. Since the museum was built piecemeal, earlier sections of the exhibition are more comprehensive and larger in size, creating an unintentional focus on earlier periods of occupation and the deportations.

The Hitler–Stalin pact of 1939 frames the primary narrative of the exhibition. The tour starts with an illustrated history of its signing and ends with the Soviet Union's admission in 1989 of the existence of its secret protocols that allowed for the occupation of the Baltics. The story of the restoration of Latvia's independence is presented as a coda, in a separate room of the museum. In spite of the ongoing economic crisis, the museum is still planning to construct a new wing to the existing building, which would allow the curators to accommodate a larger, better-planned exhibition. The new exhibition is designed to be multifocal, more thematic, and with more coverage of the sociocultural aspects of the occupation, as the curators themselves admit that the current focus is "too political."[18] The extensive collection of artifacts accumulated over the years now provides the curators with more options than they previously had. As a result, the new exhibition will be more attentive to issues of balance and composition, while the current exhibition was constructed with expediency and availability of space in mind.[19]

Finally, the museum features an extensive set of publications in Latvian, English, Russian, French, and even Estonian and Lithuanian. The selection includes a large and colorful guide to the museum and translations of major research publications.[20] Next to thick overviews of the entire occupation period and collections of academic articles, one can easily find trans-

[17] Interview with Gundega Michel, and interview with Valters Nollendorfs (Director of External Relations of the Museum of the Occupations of Latvia), August 2009.

[18] Interview with Ieva Gundare (curator), August 2009.

[19] Interview with Valters Nollendorfs, August 2009.

[20] Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, *Publications*, http://www.omf.lv/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=28. Accessed January 12, 2009.

lated versions of novels written by former dissidents or case studies of, for example, the Nazi/Soviet disinformation campaign portraying the Holocaust in Eastern Europe as a spontaneous upsurge of anti-Semitism.[21] Like Estonian publications at the Estonian museum, books in Latvian dominate the bookstore, though the larger variety of publications and languages creates the impression of a greater focus on outreach.

The Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius

The irony of using the building of the Red Riflemen's Museum to highlight the crimes of Communism in Latvia is overshadowed by the stark message conveyed in Lithuania by the decision to turn the former headquarters of the KGB in Vilnius into a commemorative museum highlighting its crimes. The building, originally built to serve as a courthouse, housed the Lithuanian NKVD in 1940–41, the German Gestapo in 1941–44 and the KGB in 1944–91.

Established by the order of the Lithuanian minister of culture and education in 1992, the museum's task is to "to investigate the physical and spiritual genocide of Lithuanians carried out by the occupying regimes between 1939 and 1990."[22] Although it is by no means evident from the museum's name or mission statement, the actual focus of the museum is on the human rights abuses committed specifically by the Soviet regime. The crimes committed during the German occupation were not addressed on any of the three floors of the museum at the time of the viewing.

The ground floor and the first floor of the building narrate the story of Soviet Lithuania in much the same way as the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, focusing on the anti-Soviet resistance, the Gulag experience, the postwar activities of the KGB, and the subsequent fight for freedom. By contrast, the basement exposition stands out as an example of an "experiential museum," "foregrounding aspects of visitor experiences and legitimating them."[23] There, audiences are treated to an exposition of the pretrial holding cells of the KGB, which, according to the curators, look "the same as [they] did in August 1991, when the KGB vacated [them]."[24] Two

[21] Andrew Ezergailis, *Nazi/Soviet Disinformation about the Holocaust in Nazi-Occupied Latvia* (Riga: OMF, 2005).

[22] The Museum of Genocide Victims, http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/. Accessed September 19, 2011.

[23] Hilde H. Hein, *Public Art: Thinking Museums Differently* (Berkeley: Altamira Press, 2006), 1–23.

[24] Museum of Genocide Victims, http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/380/a/. Accessed September 19, 2011.

cells contain exhibitions displaying the use of the prison during the 1960s and the persecution of Lithuanian Catholics, while the rest remain empty with only small text plaques next to them describing their use and function in the past. The experience of walking through the run-down cells and the claustrophobic atmosphere—which, according to the exposition, "hardly resembles the prison in which in the postwar period members of the anti-Soviet resistance were tortured"[25] (implying that the reality was even worse)—provide a visceral experience similar to the one aimed at in many contemporary Holocaust museums.

Grūtas Park

Less than one hundred kilometers away, near the old spa town of Druskininkai, lies a giant estate, surrounded by a rustic village, a golf course, a resort, and last but not least, Grūtas Park. The institution, owned by mushroom tycoon Viliumas Malinauskas, is centered around ninety Soviet-era sculptures, ranging from the standard exemplars of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, to heroes of Socialist Lithuania and obscure leaders of the local Communist Party. These statues make up the bulk of the outdoor exhibition (along with the reconstruction of a Gulag camp tower, a few pieces of artillery, and a petting zoo), but equally important are the indoor exhibitions, located in two reconstructed examples of Soviet architecture. A "typical" 1960s style cultural house gives an overview of Soviet social life, and a "typical" Soviet art museum explains the intricacies of Soviet ideological propaganda through an exhibition of popular paintings in the socialist realist style. A number of "attractions" amplify the sense of nostalgia and "authenticity," or perhaps a consciously ironic pseudo-authenticity. A *kvass* machine with a distinctly 1970s look, a restaurant offering "themed food" such as smoked herring with boiled potatoes, and a souvenir shop prominently dominate the intersection of the three "main streets" of the park.[26] Visitors are welcome to purchase vodka in glasses with red stripes printed at 50, 100, and 200 gram marks along with toasts to Stalin, the Homeland, and Communism. The children's playground and the petting zoo serve no thematic aim, and are there simply for the entertainment for the kids while the parents are viewing the exhibition.[27]

Grūtas Park thus focuses on providing simulated reality, entertainment, and leisure. Characteristically, there is a complete absence of written material (the museum shop does not have a single book, not even an introduc-

[25] Ibid.

[26] *Kvass* is a popular drink in Russia and Eastern Europe, similar to root beer.

[27] Interview with Viliumas Malinauskas (Director of Grūtas Park), August 2009.

tory overview of the park) and no educational program. Were it not for the serious and analytical exhibitions in the cultural house and the art museum, one could call the establishment a "theme park" rather than a "museum."[28] Grūtas Park is privately run, and the sole instance of government involvement occurred when the founders of the museum acquired the statues at a public tender. Finally, in contrast to the amicable relations between the state, society, and the other museums described above, Grūtas Park has come under harsh criticism from the Lithuanian government, intellectuals, and parts of the public for ostensibly mocking the grim realities and tragic history of the Lithuanian people.

The Museums in Context: National Narratives and the Conflict of Memory

The Baltic museums of occupations aspire to establish national grand narratives. For instance, the Director of the Museum of Latvian Occupation has stated that a key goal of the museum is to show that "as a people and a nation, Latvians have survived and now continue to rebuild and prosper in spite of many difficulties."[29] The real question is rather what sort of national narratives do the museums construct, and how do seemingly innocuous factors such as aesthetic practices, narrative frameworks as well as financial and material constraints contribute to or disrupt these discourses? Are the resulting narratives supportive of overlapping identities, accepting of different cultural norms and values, or are they exclusive, polarizing or even hostile toward those constructed as the ontological Others?

These questions are particularly salient in post-Soviet societies with long histories of violence and repression. As Omer Bartov has noted, "victims produce enemies and enemies eventually make for more victims."[30] This does not mean that collective trauma should be ignored, but rather that commemorative practices should attempt to "work through" trauma, to "be able to distinguish between past and present . . . while realizing that one is living here and now with openings into the future."[31] Such practices would involve both mourning and a critical practice that resists the temptation to blindly identify with the victim, to keep on reproducing the dis-

[28] Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1992), 97–104.

[29] Michel Gundega, interviewed by Martin Evans, September 4, 2011.

[30] Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 137–38.

[31] Dominic LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma,* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2001), 24.

course of trauma in the present.[32] These tensions are highlighted particularly by the use of personal testimonies in the representation of traumatic events, a practice that is both indispensable from the perspective of mourning and commemoration, but also highly problematic, because in the context of limited time and space, individual narratives often end up subsumed under the rubric of "national tragedy."[33]

The results of collective victimizing can be easily seen in the Baltic context, where the mobilization of memory for political purposes by all major communities has contributed to continuing tensions between the ethnic majorities and minority populations. After the fall of the Soviet Union, all three Baltic states have made some progress toward constructing a civic identity that supports and integrates all of the ethnic groups inhabiting their respective countries, and it is noteworthy that violent ethnic conflict has not materialized in the Baltics like it has elsewhere. However, the divisions of memory between majority and minority groups are continuously politicized, and have led to political and social crises such as the Wars of Monuments in Estonia. In general, divisions of memory have prevented the Baltics from making major progress on the integration of minority populations, building inclusive civil societies, or fostering a deliberative democracy.[34] In such explosive environments, "truth creating" institutions, such as museums, must pay particularly strong attention to avoiding the unnecessary exacerbation of conflict.

This is not to suggest that the narratives offered by the museums are identical to the hegemonic narratives of local ethnic majorities in the society at large or that they are in some way explicitly subject to state control. Indeed, one of the goals of this essay is to suggest why this is not the case, and to draw attention to how specific constraints that particular museums face can either support or undermine hegemonic narratives. One must take note of the inevitable limitations posed by the finite amount of material resources that have forced museums to choose certain ways of exhibition over others. For instance, it is very hard to represent minority cultures at the same level as majority cultures, since material objects relating to the

[32] Ibid., 24–30.

[33] Tony Kushner, "Oral History at the Extremes of Human Experience: Holocaust Testimony in a Museum Setting," *Oral History* 29, no. 2 (Autumn, 2001): 92–93.

[34] Dovilė Budrytė, *Taming Nationalism?: Political Community-Building in Post-Soviet Baltic States* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 34–35; Piret Ehin and Eiki Berg, "Incompatible Identities? Baltic-Russian Relations and the EU as an area for Identity Conflict," in *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration,* ed. Piret Ehin and Eiki Berg (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2009), 1–15. Raivo Vetik, *Eesti Poliitika ja Valitsemine, 1991–2011* (Tallinn: Tallinn University Press, 2002), 135–36; M. Tamm, *Monumentaalne Ajalugu: Esseid Eesti ajalookultuurist* (Tallinn: Loomingu Raamatukogu, 2012), 118–20, 158–59.

dominant culture are almost always easier to obtain. Similarly, funding restrictions create concrete limits on what a museum can do, forcing curators to prioritize certain objectives (such as collecting artifacts) over others (such as educational outreach). In other cases, curators have chosen to consciously oppose exclusionary narratives, for instance through institutionalizing educational initiatives where children are encouraged to assume different roles (including deportees of different nationalities, the Red Army, and Nazi soldiers and so on). This essay thus suggests that even in the absence of direct state control, implicit discourses of gender, ethnicity, cultural status, and trauma shape the sorts of narratives that our museums represent, and produce stories that ultimately fit rather neatly under the rubric of "collective victimhood." At the same time, it also suggests that other considerations, while often weak and diluted, are also present, making the narratives in museums of occupations more complicated and contradictory than the hegemonic ethnonationalist narratives sometimes presented in political rhetoric.

The following analysis focuses on two models of representing difference: exclusion and subordination. Through exclusion, only subjects, events and practices that conform to the dominant discourse of national identity are allowed a place in the narrative. This practice clearly delineates who has the *right* to claim membership in a community and the grounds on which these claims can be made.[35] In the Baltic context, exclusionary practices are often used to create an impression of ethnic and linguistic homogeneity on the one hand, and to delineate a victim-oppressor binary, with the local ethnie in the victim role and the Soviet Union (often simply Russia) in the oppressor role. Subordination involves submitting intercultural relations to a power structure, where one party is portrayed as uniquely superior, positive, acceptable, and the other as inferior, negative, and deviant.[36] As we have already implied, such identities are inherently unstable, but these instabilities can be occluded, as well as deliberately or accidentally highlighted by particular practices and forms of representation. The following analysis must then involve a careful reading of the exhibitions and museum practices to see where such hierarchies are imposed and where they are subverted.

[35] Kath Woodward, ed., *Identity and Difference* (London: Sage, 1997), 26.

[36] This concept is central to Michel Foucault's analysis of power and representation, which has been adopted and elaborated by many scholars of cultural studies. A good starting point for a deeper discussion of representational politics can be found in Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power" in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 109–32.

Inclusion and Exclusion: "All These Weird Subjects . . ."

Two types of exclusion are at play in the museums of occupations to varying degrees. First, exhibitions can exclude, downplay, and ignore specific events or communities in order to homogenize the national narrative. Second, in selecting their thematic focus, museums inevitably privilege certain issues over others, marginalizing or completely excluding some social groups and historical events. A comparison of the four museums will allow us to discover and compare some of the differences in the choice of focus and depiction of specific events.

Depictions of the Holocaust in the Estonian and Latvian museums provide a lucid contrast in dealing with the first type of exclusion. It is an undisputed fact that Nazi Germany engaged in the mass extermination of Jews, Roma, and other groups in the Baltics. Scholars similarly agree that most of actual extermination was conducted by locals. The death toll reached 200,000 in Lithuania, 60,000 in Latvia and around 10,000 in Estonia. These numbers included virtually all of the local Jewish population, plus significant numbers of Roma and Soviet prisoners of war. Often, once local extermination had been completed, additional Jewish and Roma prisoners were brought to Baltic concentration camps from other Nazi occupied territories as well as from Germany itself.[37]

The Latvian museum treats the Holocaust with due attention. It occupies a central place in the part of the exposition dedicated to the German occupation. Visitors can find data on the actual killings, look at examples of anti-Jewish propaganda, observe a discussion on later Soviet attempts to portray the Latvians as Nazi sympathizers, and finally read a summary of Latvian collaborators and the few Jewish survivors. The exhibition also discusses historiographical controversies, specifically related to Holocaust research during the Soviet period, during which "victims of the Holocaust were conflated with 'peaceful Soviet citizens.'"[38] In addition to the physical exposition, the Holocaust is covered in an abridged, forty-minute version of the audioguide and the bookstore, which offers an entire volume on the history of Latvian Jews.[39]

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[37] Michael MacQueen, "The Context of Mass Destruction: Agents and Prerequisites of the Holocaust in Lithuania," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 12, no. 1 (1998): 27–48. For an overview of the Holocaust in Latvia, see Valters Nollendorfs and Uldis Neiburgs, *The Holocaust in German-Occupied Latvia* (Museum of the Latvian Occupation: Riga, 2006). For the Holocaust in Estonia, see Anton Weiss-Wendt, *On the Margins: Essays on the History of Jews in Estonia* (Budapest-New York: CEU Press, 2017).

[38] Michel Gundega, interviewed by Martin Evans, September 4, 2011.

[39] Frank Gordon, *Latvians and Jews: Between Germany and Russia* (Stockholm: Memento, 2001).

One might expect a similar treatment of the Holocaust in the Estonian Museum of Occupations. Although the Jewish population of Estonia was smaller, the thoroughness of the Nazi genocide was all the more apparent, as not a single Estonian Jew who was in the country in 1940 survived the German occupation.[40] But in reality, the Holocaust is almost completely absent in the physical exposition and completely marginal in the documentary focusing on the Nazi occupation. While the segment does include an eyewitness account describing the atrocities of the concentration camps, it is preceded by a lengthy meditation on the use of the term "extermination camp" at Klooga. "It has often been written that these were so-called 'extermination camps,' I would rather call them 'labor camps'—when the work day ended, then people were allowed to visit the local villages," narrates a local farmer.[41] Meanwhile, the actual events of the Holocaust are briefly skimmed over at best. Museum publications ignore the event as well: with the exception of the International Commission Report, introductory texts neglect the Holocaust completely. Former prime minister Mart Laar's seventy-page overview of "Estonia in World War II" covers the Holocaust in one paragraph on pages 23 and 25. Laar emphasizes "several cases of sheltering and rescuing Jewish-origin citizens of Estonia from the Nazis," noting only a few lines later, in a staggering feat of self-contradiction, that Jewish and Roma populations of Estonia were "entirely exterminated."[42]

Treatment of the Holocaust is similarly problematic in the Lithuanian Genocide Museum. The central feature of the exposition is the building itself, which has, in various times, housed the NKVD, the KGB, the Gestapo, and the SD (the Nazi Security Service).[43] Though this is acknowledged in the exhibition catalog and on the museum's website, the exhibition itself makes no reference to this, focusing instead on the Soviet occupations of 1939–41 and 1944–91. This omission is made more curious by the claims to universality expressed in the name and the mission statement of the museum. In international discourse, the term "genocide" is unequivocally associated with the Holocaust and the name of the museum has a seemingly universal connotation. However, the museum states that its objective is to "to collect, keep and present historic documents about forms

[40] T. Hiio, ed., *The German Occupation in Estonia 1941–1944* (Tallinn: Estonian International Commission for Investigating Crimes Against Humanity. 2006), xviii-xix.

[41] Museum of Occupations, "Sõda ja Saksa Aeg, 1941–1944," in *Eesti Lähiajaloo Okupatsioonid, 1940–1991,* Tallinn, http://www.okupatsioon.ee/english/index.html. Accessed November 17, 2009.

[42] Laar, *Birds-Eye View*, 23–25.

[43] Museum of Genocide Victims, www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/273/c/>. Accessed November 25, 2009.

of physical and spiritual genocide against the Lithuanian people, and the ways and the extent of the resistance against the Soviet regime."[44] At the same time, the museum is administrated by the Genocide and Research Center of Lithuania, which "investigates all manifestations of genocide and crimes against humanity, the persecution during the Soviet and Nazi occupations."[45] This linguistic ambiguity is telling, highlighting the tension in acknowledging the universal scope of crimes against humanity committed during World War II and reconciling that with a particular, exclusive narrative focusing on the suffering of a particular "people." This is made even more problematic by the experiential nature of the basement exhibition—the exclusive focus there is on representations of suffering during the Soviet occupations, although the connection of the prison cells with Nazi persecutions is equally immediate. If the purpose of experiential exhibitions is to create a sense of identification between the audience and the subjects of representation, what are we to make of the decision to grant this connection to certain groups and not to others?

Though both the Estonian and Lithuanian museums claim to strive for the "objective portrayal of history," the preferential treatment of Soviet crimes against humanity over those of the Nazi regime show how well narratives presented in the museums follow what Anthony D. Smith calls the "myth of descent," and specifically, the creation of a "special dignity."[46] For instance, by establishing the idea of the Estonian nation as the "victims" of World War II, the exhibition narrative endows the Estonian nation with a sense of entitlement and a special uniqueness. The victim-status of course excludes the possible presence of other victims, or worse yet, it excludes the possibility of seeing Estonians as perpetrators of oppression. Acknowledging the effects of the Holocaust in Estonia would put the Estonians on the same level with various (in fact most) other European communities who also collaborated in the Holocaust and would invalidate their claim to "special dignity." By the same token, to legitimate the experiences of those who suffered under the Nazi regime would universalize the narrative of suffering, thus invalidating the myth of "special dignity."

A more systematic method of exclusion is enacted by emphasizing certain themes in an exhibition over others. Given their finite space and resources, every museum has to make decisions on which narratives should be emphasized and which must be excluded. The Estonian museum claims

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[44] Museum of Genocide Victims, http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/, Accessed November 25, 2009.

[45] Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, http://www.genocid.lt/centras/en/. Accessed November 25, 2009.

[46] Anthony D. Smith, "National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent," *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change* 7, no. 1 (1984): 105–7.

to focus on the "perspective of the average Estonian."[47] The Latvian exhibition concentrates on the implications of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, thus privileging political history.[48] The Vilnius museum focuses on the experience of imprisonment, resistance, and Soviet persecution, thus falling under the category of social history. Grūtas Park purports to convey "a sense of how life was during the Soviet times."[49] However, a look at the actual exhibitions, publications, and guided tours reveals a very different impression: the Estonian museum deals overwhelmingly with political history, the Latvian museum and the Vilnius museum mix social and political aspects, and only the Grūtas Park museum stays true to its stated focus on social and cultural history.

The Estonian museum is by far the most political of the three. Out of seven documentaries, three focus on the years of the Second World War and the last one deals with the independence movement, leaving three films with the daunting task of covering the forty years in between. Even there, a substantial amount of screen time is given to political actors: Estonian partisans, dissidents, and deportees. The films' structure usually has the narrator lay out an interpretation of political events, followed by a brief, emotional commentary by an eyewitness, leaving little room for different assessments. The eyewitnesses are rarely true "everymen," but rather, in the words of the curator, "better than average" people.[50] With few exceptions, this means the Estonian elite: the first movie interviews a government official, an Estonian student in 1940 and a banker on their experiences in 1940. One interviewee, to be fair, was a Russian-Estonian student in 1940, yet her commentary was still specific to the perspective of the national majority. Were she replaced by a generic *Estonian* student, the text would not necessarily have changed. In the last movie, the interviewees are almost uniquely leaders of various popular movements, in some cases even the current President of Estonia, and the commander in chief of the Estonian Army.

One might argue, correctly, that these are entirely logical choices in discussions of political history. However, this is precisely the crux of my critique: By *choosing* to focus on the political history of the occupation, the museum is implicitly disenfranchizing population sectors who were not involved in running the country or not directly victims of Soviet repressions. This is even more evident in the publications, which deal almost exclusively with the political and military aspects of the occupations: As representatives of ethnic minorities, lower social classes, those living out-

[47] Interview with Heiki Ahonen, July 2009.
[48] Interview with Michel Gundega, August 2009.
[49] Interview with Viliumas Malinauskas, August 2009.
[50] Interview with Heiki Ahonen, July 2009.

side the center of government or the war zone are excluded from the "everyman perspective," the term "everyman" eventually means nothing more than "middle class ethnic Estonian."

The Latvian museum focuses on the experiences of individuals, without presenting them as metonyms for a particular social class or community. This is evident in the museum's treatment of mass deportation, which is illustrated by a number of "life stories," complemented with personal documents and photographs. Focusing on the personal instead of the political helps to universalize the suffering of the deportees beyond the confines of ethnicity and social class. The individualized Gulag experience is also clearly separated from the political narrative, both spatially and thematically. This distinction helps to establish a border between the necessarily subjective political interpretation of the occupation and the depiction of individual, universally tragic human suffering.

The Latvian museum also includes a wider variety of perspectives on the occupation. Panels on political history are complemented by panels dedicated to cultural and social history, such as the history of the Latvian church, newspapers, propaganda culture, and so on. The history of the Nazi occupation covers all aspects from book burning to the Holocaust. The postwar section contains extensive information on "culture," "propaganda," and "everyday life." The bookstore sells a series entitled "Art.Myth.Document," covering Soviet propaganda and art. By focusing on the social changes affecting large groups of people regardless of ethnicity, and emphasizing the repressive nature of Soviet culture, the museum does not excessively privilege the majority identity. At the same time, the museum remains true to its mission of celebrating Latvian culture, but depictions of sweeping social changes, individual experiences, and a focus on the repressors as well as the repressed provide points of commonality that transcend exclusive ethnic identities.

Grūtas Park takes a similar approach. Its focus on the "lifestyle" of the Soviet Union makes it difficult to find points of identification with particular national identities—the material culture, customs and propaganda were experienced by everyone in Soviet Lithuania, regardless of ethnicity. Moreover, the tone of the exhibition is decidedly ambiguous, conveying both ridicule and nostalgia at the same time. This makes binary opposites difficult to establish. On the one hand, visitors laugh at the ridiculousness of the pompous statues of Marxist leaders, but then step aside to buy a glass of *kvass* from the run-down Soviet restaurant, and perhaps drink a cup of vodka to the Party's health. The elaborate recreations of Soviet culture can function as points of identification for *anyone* who has some familiarity with life in Soviet Lithuania.

Questions of inclusion and exclusion apply to practices as well as representation. Here too, the Latvian and Estonian museums show two contrast-

ing approaches. The Latvian museum has made significant efforts to include communities outside of Riga, through their traveling exhibition, through teachers' education programs and through an educational outreach policy that encourages schools to plan field trips to the Museum. These activities help include a wider range of socioeconomic groups and ethnic minorities who tend to be less mobile and less centrally located. The Estonian museum, on the other hand, has no such programs, a fact explained by its significantly smaller scale and thinner wallet. Nevertheless, given the museum's location in one of the wealthiest neighborhoods of the center city, its visitors will be almost uniquely tourists, the upper-middle class, and schoolchildren of nearby neighborhoods. Conversely, ethnic minorities, almost half of whom live in Eastern Estonia, with less access to modern technologies and easy transportation, are inevitably less likely to participate in the museum's activities.

The websites of the two museums offer a reverse example of this exclusionary practice. The Estonian museum has translated all of its films, some major exhibition items and founding documents into both English *and* Russian. Furthermore, the web page includes targeted content, custom-designed *specifically* for audiences speaking English or Russian. The English website offers links to general overviews of Estonian and Baltic history, whereas the Russian website offers detailed content on historical topics that have proven controversial in recent political debates concerning the legacy of World War II in the Russian Federation. At the opposite end, the website of the Latvian museum, in a surprising reversal of their educational outreach policy, does not even have a Russian version. That said, physical outreach is likely to have both wider and deeper impact than a website that is hardly advertised anywhere and whose layout seems to be from the 1990s, but given the budgetary constraints, it can at least be considered a genuine effort.

This manner of coloring the tragedies of the Soviet occupation with a specifically nationalist hue politicizes the exposition spaces and restricts the scope of the narratives that make it into public display to a rather narrow selection of political and elite histories. Enn Tarvel, the author of the Estonian documentaries, has once, perhaps ironically, said: "There are also all sorts of weird topics [in history], women's history and the history of sports. Many fly high on feminist topics and gender history. I wish there were more old-fashioned historians . . ."[51] Perhaps these weird topics would make for a worthy addition to the museums' expositions.

[51] Quoted in I. Bärenklau, "Intervjuu Enn Tarveliga," *Postimees*, 30 July, 2007.

Hierarchies of Power: Privileging and Contesting National Narratives

Having looked at what is left unsaid in the museums, this chapter will now examine what is, in fact, said. This part is concerned with how the museums of occupations portray relationships between communities defined as belonging to the discourse of nationalism and communities defined as belonging to the "outside."[52] The binaries of differentiation are not simply opposed; they are in a relationship of subordination. The concept of the "self" is formed in relation to the concept of the "other," and the self is inevitably placed in a position of privilege. "We" are pure, uncorrupted, and valid, while "they" are impure, corrupt, and invalid.[53]

How are these oppositions built up in the exhibitions, tours, and publications of the museums of occupations? Do they perpetuate the power relationships of a nationalist discourse of history or do they attempt to undermine and subvert the traditional roles of power? What are the linguistic, rhetorical, and narrative tools used to establish these relationships? Are these techniques observable in the practices of the museum, the spatial relationships of the exhibition or in other, less obvious forms? Finally, whatever relationships and oppositions one might discover in the museums of occupations, they must always be situated in the context of broader social discourse on nationalism, the crisis of memory, and other historical controversies in the Baltics.

Sometimes the hierarchies of privilege and subordination are quite obvious. The Estonian museum, with its focus on documentary films, is fairly devoid of interpretive texts. Those that do exist, however, focus solely on the perspective of the ethnic majority. A large prominent glass plaque at the very entrance of the museum introduces the objectives of the museum as follows: "Estonia is the only home Estonians have. We want to learn what has taken place in this country and tell others about it. . . . While the suffering of Estonian victims was certainly a motivating factor in the [struggle for independence], we are where we are now thanks to the yearning for the freedom of the people and because the people never lost hope." Never mind that the occupations also affected the numerous (though, indeed, much smaller) populations of Baltic Germans, Russians, Jews, Armenians, and Finns living in Estonia, or that some Estonians worked in collaboration with the occupying forces (both the Communists and the Nazis). The text establishes the perspective of the entire museum as one of ethnic Estonians (who, unlike *others,* have been living on their lands since time immemorial*),* who have suffered (whereas *others* presumably did not), and collectively

[52] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London, Routledge: 2007), 76–77.

[53] Woodward, *Identity and Difference*, 36

won back their freedom (implying that *others* had a less significant role in this effort).

In other cases, museum narratives can undermine the implied "otherness" of ethnic minorities, ideological opponents, and anti-nationalists by recognizing the existence of these hierarchies and actively discussing and complicating these structures. The Latvian museum has established a number of educational exercizes for schoolchildren forcing them to step outside their established identity and step into the shoes of various actors during different points of the occupation. For instance, the museum organizes role-plays, where participants assume the roles of various people during the 1941 mass deportations: the deportees, the Soviet soldiers, the collaborators, and the refugees collectively discuss possible motivations that might have compelled these people to act in the ways they did.[54] This exercise attempts to subvert the victim/oppressor dichotomy by creating a situation in which the schoolchildren are guided to understand that the dynamics of mass deportations cannot be boiled down to a simple Manichean opposition. This approach, though not immune to criticism, is certainly a step away from the ethnocentrism of the Estonian museum, where the complexities of historical reality are reduced to a tale of the suffering majority.

The Estonian museum provides another example of exclusion through selective attention. Estonian soldiers are endowed with complex psychological profiles, their acts of violence are analyzed and situated in historical context. Such attention is rarely awarded to those combatants who committed violence against Estonians; on the contrary, their acts are left largely unexamined and summarily condemned. The documentary on the German occupation provides a lucid example of this process. First, the narrator explains at length why Estonians were likely to join the German or Soviet armies. "Of course you wanted to enlist, you would've been dead if you had continued living in the conditions they had us in," states an eyewitness. According to the documentary, Estonian sympathies toward the Germans were caused by the relative mildness of the German occupation compared to the Soviet "Year of Terror." For instance, the documentary explains, Germans recognized Estonian national symbols and traditions at least *pro forma.* These are all important considerations and potent historical arguments, but they become vehicles of justification when compared to uniquely pejorative language and lack of sophisticated argumentation in descriptions of the Soviets, who are presented as "vandals," "bolshevist murderers," and "torturers." The narrative is almost black-and-white—the Soviets were brutal murderers, who left the country burning everything in their way, tortured and killed their prisoners and finally returned with a vengeance. The Estonians, on the other hand, joined the German military

[54] Interview with Ieva Gundare.

because they did not have any choice. Of course, more complicated narratives exist, ones that take into account the role of volunteer Estonians in overseeing concentration camps.[55] Yet at the museum exposition, the *self* is defined as the positive and the neutral, whereas the *other* is "defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity."[56] While certainly comforting to Estonians who suffered through the World War and the occupation, this approach is unlikely to please individuals who identify with communities who may have suffered in the hands of say, Estonian police officers, or conversely, whose ancestors are described as inherently evil murderers, a term unfitting for both the Red Army and the Wehrmacht as a whole, and overly simplistic and antagonizing in any academic context.

Similarly, in the Vilnius Genocide Museum, the focus on Soviet-era suffering even though the building housed the repressive arms of *both* the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, empathizes with a particular set of victims. It could be argued that insofar as the building has become a part of the historical narratives of multiple communities, these communities also have a right to representation in this site of historical production. The narrative presented in the Genocide Museum fits the national narrative of Lithuanian suffering under the Soviet regime, but does so at the expense of those Lithuanians and others who suffered the crimes committed by Nazi Germany.

Personal testimony figures centrally in all three "official" museums, less so at Grūtas Park. This points us toward another point of tension: all three museums recognize that personal testimonies are integral to the representation of trauma, a point of consensus in recent scholarship on museum and trauma studies, but insensitive use of personal testimony can both contribute to the ossification of self–other binaries, as we saw in the case of the German occupation examples in the Lithuanian and Estonian museums, and undermine the process of mourning that personal testimony supposedly facilitates.[57]

One problem of using personal testimony in a setting dedicated to the telling of a national story is that eyewitnesses are reduced to the role of pawns in a larger story of national victimhood. The unique experience of individuals is generalized over the whole of society, such that even if multi-

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[55] Meelis Maripuu, "Eesti juutide holokaust ja eestlased," *Vikerkaar*, nos. 8–9 (2001): 135–47.

[56] Simone de Beauvoir "The Second Sex" *in Philosophy of Woman: An anthology of classic to current concepts*, ed. M. B. Mahowald (New York: Hackett Publishing, 1994), 206.

[57] Michael F. Bernard-Donals and Richard R. Glejzer, eds., *Witnessing the Disaster: Essays on Representation and the Holocaust* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Exploration in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Kushner, "Oral History at the Extremes of Human Experience," 83–94.

ple perspectives are presented within a single narrative, their uniqueness is secondary to their representativeness of a national trauma. This is the case in both the Estonian and Latvian museums, where personal narratives are used in the form of documentary interviews and "life story" panels, respectively, in depicting the first Soviet occupation and the experience of deportation to Siberia. In both cases, though the sample of testimonies presented is diverse—men, women, ethnic majorities, and minorities, the stories that emerge are so similar that one can easily lose track of the unique subject in question. Three different witnesses in the documentaries presented in the Estonian museum described the Soviet occupation forces of 1940 as comical, and borderline inept, their anecdotes appearing to illustrate a general point, rather than to exemplify the diversity of experiences: "The soldiers got off the tank, danced *kamarushka*, and drove on, once they were done with this joke," "When the Russians came, I remember they were so comical. They had these little hats with puffs on top," "they of course didn't know how to ride a bicycle, so they pushed each-other around on the fair ground, learning how to bike. Officers and majors. [laughs]."[58] Similarly, in describing the general atmosphere of the 1970s, writer and philosopher Jaan Kaplinski recounts his personal experience: "It all started with the suppression of the Prague Spring, then we really did feel like we were so done with all of it, we could just as well set ourselves on fire."[59] The impression is that Kaplinski's experience is representative of society at large, although it is more likely that it was representative of a certain group of well-connected, Western-minded intellectuals. Rather than illustrating the diversity of social experiences, personal narratives, even when they incorporate people of diverse backgrounds, underscore a specific narrative of unequivocal oppression.

In the Latvian museum, personal testimony sometimes functions as a literal illustration of large historical events such as mass deportations, the Holocaust, and so on. These events are illustrated by photos of specific people, who were deported, died in concentration camps, or conversely harbored Jews during World War II. Often, though not always, the context provided in the exhibition is limited to names and dates of birth and death. On the one hand, while the use of personal photos, artifacts, and life stories is more extensive and diverse in terms of both perspective and narrative, it raises questions about the commodification of trauma and of individual

[58] Museum of Occupations, "Esimene Punane Aasta, 1940–1941," in *Eesti Lähiajaloo Okuptasioonid, 1940–1991,* Tallinn, http://www.okupatsioon.ee/et/filmid. Accessed December 6, 2011.

[59] Museum of Occupations, "Stagnatsiooniaeg, 1968–1987," in *Eesti Lähiajaloo Okuptasioonid, 1940–1991,* Tallinn, http://www.okupatsioon.ee/et/filmid. Accessed December 6, 2011.

experience. Could the decision to have representations of individual tragedies speak in the name of the overall narrative presented in the museum be seen as both an impediment to the processing of trauma and as eliding the real challenge of representing violent historical processes: acknowledging the impossibility of placing them in easy, coherent historical narratives?[60] Thus, in thinking about the ways in which the emphasis on representing a national narrative excludes or downplays other aspects of the occupations era, we must keep in mind not just the *communities* who may be disempowered in the process, but also the interests of the individual actors who ended up as part of the exhibitions.

One way of avoiding the reproduction of privilege and power relations in museum narratives is by explicitly acknowledging their existence in the society at large. The final chapter of the Latvian museum's official publication candidly discusses both the ongoing integration debate and the conflict of memory surrounding interpretations of nationality and occupation. Instead of adopting the prevailing oppositions of the debate, such as "nationals" versus "foreigners" or "citizens" versus "non-citizens," the publication frames the debate in terms of "radicals" and "moderates," a distinction that crosses identity boundaries and directly undermines the ethnonationalist paradigm. "It does not help that small but vociferous radical groups on both sides oftentimes set the tone in public debates."[61] With this simple short sentence, the museum distances itself from the dominant discourse of nationalism, and diffuses suspicions of complicity with the ethnic majority.

Where the Estonian exhibition adopts the categories of difference and subordination ascribed by the nationalist discourse, the Latvian exhibition complicates these oppositions and provides alternative terms of discourse.

Grūtas Park treads a somewhat schizophrenic path, sometimes falling into the trap of reproducing prevalent ethnic oppositions, but in other cases problematizing and subverting these relationships in a variety of ways. Unfortunately, examples of the former far outweigh examples of the latter in both quantity and degree. By repeatedly conflating the terms "Soviet" and "Russian," the audio presentation constantly replicates a staple opposition.[62] The audio tour regularly describes the Other in broad generalizations, calling the Soviet repressive authorities "genocidal" and "criminal," often with no additional commentary. Meanwhile, ample explanation is provided for the com-

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[60] Dominic LaCapra, "An Interview with Professor Dominick LaCapra," in *Eclipse of Humanity* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1998), 5–6; Andrea Liss, *Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography and the Holocaust* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 118.

[61] Valters Nollendorfs, *Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 1940–1991* (Riga: Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, 2008), 211.

[62] Grūtas Park audioguide, items 55 and 57 are just two examples.

plicity of ordinary Lithuanians in the Soviet regime: "It was not worth it to oppose the Soviet regime—you would either suffer the same fate [as dissidents who were killed by the KGB] or be exiled to Siberia."[63]

Yet ironically, the park also contests the traditional categories of the Self and the Other in a variety of ways. A section of the exhibition dedicated to the genesis of the park itself provides a lucid illustration. The entire section seems motivated more by self-indulgence than self-reflection—most of the discussion consists of establishing Grūtas Park as the "first," "biggest," "most expensive," and "most popular" of commemorative museums in Eastern Europe.[64] However, one anecdote relayed in the process serves as a potent reminder of the ambiguity of the oppressor/victim paradigm. When the museum was opened as a private, commercial institution, it fell under substantial criticism in the Lithuanian media for ridiculing what many Lithuanians considered a delicate and almost sacred topic—the occupation. Indeed, Viliumas Malinauskas, the mushroom millionaire turned museum manager said that one of the primary goals of the exhibition is to help people "to stop fearing the times, and tell the story as it is—a story with some humor."[65] His response to public criticism certainly had a sense of humor—he had statues made of some of the most vociferous critics and put them next to Soviet statues making up the bulk of the exhibition. The irony was twofold—many of the critics, now prominent statesmen of the Lithuanian republic, were former members of the Communist Party.[66]

Whatever Malinauskas's intentions were in creating this little addition to the exhibition, the result was a persuasive complication of the traditional national narrative. First, it decouples the victim/oppressor dichotomy from the local/foreign opposition, by pointing out that many who are now waving the flag of Lithuanian nationalism stood behind the Red Flag with equal fervor only a few decades earlier. Second, contesting the authority of the nation-state, the museum subverts another key aspect of ethnonational discourse, according to which subscribing to a Lithuanian identity must entail subscribing to the institutions of the Lithuanian nation-state.

Still, one has to admit that calling Grūtas Park "irreverent" in its treatment of the Soviet Occupations is, in fact, a very precise characterization. After all, the park has put a petting zoo next to replicas of Soviet artillery, plays Lithuanian Communist Party numbers for laughs, serves kvass out of nostalgic food trucks, complete with the unhygienic reusable glasses, and sells vodka mugs with toasts to one of the twentieth century's greatest dictators. Critics of the museum saw this as a major problem, to the extent

[63] Grūtas Park audioguide, item 50.
[64] Grūtas Park audioguide, items 1–18.
[65] Interview with Malinauskas, August 2009.
[66] Grūtas Park audioguide, item 11.

that the museum has acquired a reputation for being a "Disneyfied representation of the occupation, StalinWorld, so to speak."[67] From the perspective of identity creation, however, this "irreverent" presentation can be seen as a form of subversion, particularly in contrast with the sacralizing occupation narratives in the Latvian and Estonian museums.

At first, the purpose of marking one identity as "sacred" and another as "ridiculous" or "profane" seems obvious. We mark ourselves as sacred, the other as profane and thus a power relationship is established. Yet in the case of Grūtas Park, one finds oneself facing the question: whose identity exactly is being marked? Critics seem to believe that the park undermines Lithuanian identity, it profanes what is meant to be sacred and corrupts what is meant to pure. The memory of the Soviet occupation has become a sacred part of Lithuanian identity, the horrors of mass deportations, the repression of free speech and loss of independence its key components; a depiction of these events in jest leaves a mark on the memory as a whole. However, another reading of the park, provided by its director, suggests that what is being ridiculed is the Soviet occupation in all of its absurdity and irrationality, as a counterpoint to the sacred and respected Lithuanian nationalism. In this interpretation, the "profane" is still the Other, the Soviet antagonist. In Malinauskas's view, the park strengthens the national narrative, instead of undermining it.

Perhaps the very existence of this confusion hints at the possibility of a Derridean reading of the park, in which the sacred/profane dichotomy is altogether deconstructed. If one is to believe Derrida, then the sacred/profane binary cannot be sustained, due to its very nature as a static binary. The problematization of that binary in the space of the park is just a manifestation of a fundamental contradiction. Instead of simply reproducing ethnonational oppositions, or substituting them with new, equally divisive oppositions (although both happen on numerous specific instances within the exposition), the park as a whole questions the very notion of identity as a discreetly defined binary of similarity and difference. The fundamental ambiguity of "sacredness" and "profanity" is revealed by providing a space in which the "sacred" is shown as containing elements of the profane, even we believe them to be absent (or, to follow Derrida more closely, precisely *because we believe them to be absent*).[68]

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[67] Interview with Malinauskas, August 2009.

[68] Grūtas Park as a deconstruction of Lithuanian identity is, of course, a topic well deserving its own essay, and the analysis provided above is only a very crude outline of Derrida's method. For a better understanding of this complication of what appears to be a rigid binary opposition, see Derrida's essay on "Plato's Pharmarcy," in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 114–42.

The Latvian and Estonian museums, along with the Vilnius Genocide Museum, show little of that ambiguity; instead, they appear tied to the mythology of the nation-state both physically and ideologically. Physically, in the sense that they are both located next to important institutions of state power: the parliament, town hall, and other important national landmarks are only a stone's throw away. The Genocide Museum in Vilnius also houses the Lithuanian Court of Appeals. Of course, state institutions are often centers of tourism, and any museum aspiring for any sort of popular recognition would want to place themselves in the center of attention. From a purely commercial perspective, the three museums have made excellent choices (though certainly not the only possible ones, given that Grūtas Park, by far the most popular of the three, is located in the middle of a forest, and a two-hour drive from Vilnius).

Yet the connection with the institutions of the nation-state goes deeper than just locations and funding schemes. The two museums seem to function as seemingly independent legitimizers of state authority and state ideology. Both museums display at their entrance photographs of and gifts from various heads of state who have passed through the premises on official visits and other ceremonial occasions. The museums of occupations are required stops for any cortege of foreign statesmen visiting the Baltics, alongside parliaments, national churches, famous battlegrounds, and other symbols of national identity. The museum contents thus becomes marked as sacred, stamped with a big red mark saying "contestation not permitted," and those disagreeing with the message of the exhibition (and as we have noted, there are many who would) are forced to reject not simply a subjective interpretation of a historical period, but an important national symbol with connections to state authority, civic identity and presumably democracy and liberty as well.

The Estonian museum, which purports to an "objective, and visually transparent recounting of history"[69] and presents a narrative well in accordance with the tropes of Estonian nationalism, is more unambiguously an extension of state power than its Latvian counterpart. The latter is housed in the building originally constructed as the museum of the Latvian Red Riflemen, Latvian soldiers with communist allegiances who took part in the attempt to establish a Latvian Socialist Republic in 1918. It is quite ironic that the building originally designed to commemorate the "fight against bourgeois nationalism" would now function to celebrate Latvian culture and remind of the atrocities committed by those who sought to destroy it. The museum stands as a reminder that through the opposition to Soviet occupation, Latvian identity has become fused with the Soviet one, providing traces of a deconstructive attitude similar to the one we saw in Grūtas Park.

[69] Interview with Heiki Ahonen, July 2009.

In both practices and representations, as we have seen, the Latvian museum is far less accepting of the Baltic nationalist dogma than its Estonian cousin. However, its friendly relationship with state institutions is far harder to deny. Herein lies the insidiousness of legitimizing power through a seemingly independent institution: by leaving the impression that the state has no official relation to the museum, the politicians are left with an opportunity to be "seen to be paying respect, while leaving any controversies or mistakes with the institution."[70]

Conclusions, Complications, and Consequences

The widely different relationships between the three museums of occupations and official national narratives seem to be closely tied to the presuppositions about the nature of history that underlie their exhibitions and practices. Museums that provide more complex accounts of recent history seem to recognize the museum's role as a discursive institution, or at least admit to a degree of subjectivity in their narratives. On the other hand, claims to "objectivity" and "telling things as they happened" go hand in hand with reproductions of dominant national narratives. The fundamental premise of the Estonian museum is to "let the objects speak for themselves," to avoid over-dramatization and to stay close to a "dispassionate, close-to-objective" representation of history. According to the museum's director, "contemporary history is a topic that needs to be dealt with objectively if possible, so to speak, and with visual transparency as well."[71] Of course, this premise turns out to be the museum's undoing: neither artifacts nor history can be portrayed "as-is," and pretending otherwise leads to the implicit acceptance of existing discourses, a dearth of critical attitude and a tendency to privilege the research of "facts" over the analysis of interpretations. It is worth quoting Spencer Crew and James Sims on the possibility of "transparent and objective" museology: "The problem with things is that they are dumb. They are not eloquent, as some thinkers in art museums claim. They are dumb. And if by some ventriloquism they seem to speak, they lie."[72]

The Latvian example shows that a more productive approach to interrogating issues of power and avoiding the perpetuation of existing imbal-

[70] Paul H. Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Berg: Oxford, 2007), 107.

[71] Interview with Heiki Ahonen.

[72] Spencer R. Crew and James E. Sims, "Locating Authenticity: Fragments of a Dialogue," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven Levine (Washington: Smithsonian, 2003), 159.

ances can be achieved by openly recognizing the issues framing the dissemination of identity in the museums. Acknowledging the subjectivity of the national narrative and the crisis of memory that pervades Latvian society allows the Latvian museum to fulfill its task of commemorating and celebrating Latvian culture and remembering the tragedies of the past, without allowing these stories to become contributors to discourses of power and domination.

Like the Latvian museum, the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius is a "hot museum," one that melds interpretation with a conscious attempt at eliciting an emotional response from the visitor, not by "showing things as they were," but by encouraging and anticipating emotional reactions.[73] On the one hand, this approach, present here more clearly than in the Latvian museum, is generally recognized as contributing to an understanding of both trauma and commemoration as cognitive experiences, where the impact of aesthetics, space, and wonder should be recognized and celebrated, rather than suppressed. However, such an approach should contribute to the "working through" trauma, not sacrificing critical distance and resistance to easy Manichean oppositions in favor of a powerful, yet ultimately misleading story. Though the Vilnius museum excels at representing the individual tragedy of a KGB prisoner, it makes too many concessions in support of the national narrative, particularly since the site of the museum itself, having functioned as the headquarters of the both the KGB and the Gestapo, is particularly loaded.

Grūtas Park, like an inexperienced puppy dog, provides the scholar, often unintentionally, with moments of intense satisfaction amid a sea of mishaps and bad decisions. Where it discredits the rigid binary oppositions of national mythology, it does so largely by accident, although with tremendous enthusiasm. And as much as you would like to congratulate it for the successful deconstruction of Lithuanian/Communist oppositions and the desacralization of national identity, you cannot but stare at the puddle of ethnocentric narratives it has produced with the same eager spontaneity. The scholarly value of the project is difficult to evaluate, largely because it is not intended to be a scholarly project, but rather a capitalist enterprise, with all the associated problems: it commodifies tragedy, simplifies complex events, and reproduces convenient mythologies of Communist absurdities instead of encouraging a critical perspective. It is quite unclear whether Grūtas Park functions primarily as a clever play on the received notions of identity and memory, or simply as a Disneyfication of tragedy,

[73] David L. Uzzell and Roy Ballantyne, "Heritage that Hurts: Interpretation in a Postmodern World," in *Contemporary Issues in Heritage and Environmental Interpretation: Problems and Prospects,* ed. D. L. Uzell and R. Bellantyne (London: The Stationery Office, 1998), 152.

leaving everyone with a feeling of emptiness and a strange allergy toward capitalism. Finally, of course, both could be true, and perhaps the intent, in this case, is not as important as the outcome, which is both provocative and complicated, challenging the very foundations of common understandings of nationalism.

Other studies of the Baltic Museums of Occupations have emphasized various aspects also explored here. Scholars have paid particular attention to the lack of attention to the German occupation and the Holocaust.[74] The prevalent argument here is that fascism, when it was represented at all, had to be framed so that it "confirmed the dominant anti-communist script, and its crimes were not invested with power ascribed to those of Communism."[75] This is certainly a valid argument, but as the present study has shown, a look at the specific practices of inclusion and exclusion, power and domination demonstrates that even the more dogmatic representations of national identity, such as those portrayed in Tallinn or Grūtas, are not without internal tensions. They reveal once again the tenuous, unstable nature of national narratives, as well as the problematic nature of many curatorial practices employed at the museums to seemingly virtuous ends, with the incorporation of personal testimonies being just one example.

The above evaluations of the museums are inevitably complicated by the fact that the material reality, established museum practices, the social context, the short history of pluralist and multicultural education in the Baltics color museum practices in the museums of occupations as well as elsewhere. As much as the curators of the memorial museums might like to break boundaries and deconstruct dominant narratives, they are faced with a number of challenges that steer them toward an ethnonationalist interpretation of occupation. Patrons who donate artifacts to the museums are more likely to be valiant nationalists, symbols of national heritage are more likely to have survived in private collections than everyday items that can be used to illustrate the stories of individuals and marginalized groups. The pressures of a market economy force museums to purchase guest exhibitions and emphasize narratives that invite wealthy and privileged audiences,

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[74] James Mark, "Containing Fascism: History in Post-Communist Baltic Occupation and Genocide Museums," in *Past for the Eyes: East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums after 1989,* ed. Oksana Sarkisova, and Péter Apor (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2008), 335–69; Stuart Burch and Ulf Zander, "Preoccupied by the Past: The Case of Estonian's Museum of Occupations," *Scandia* 74, no. 2 (2010), 53–73; Peter Apor, 'Eurocommunism: Commemorating Communism in Contemporary Eastern Europe' in *A European Memory?: Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance,* ed. Malgorzata Pakiehr and Bo Strath (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

[75] Mark, "Containing Fascism," 369.

with fat wallets and conservative nationalist mindsets. The lack of qualified specialists makes it difficult for museums to design exhibitions that transcend traditional museum practices. Fifty years of Soviet rule has created a situation where few Baltic historians have intimate knowledge of postwar developments in historical theory. Social history, not to mention gender history or subaltern history, has yet to become a popular field of research. The Estonian museum occasionally (often under the sponsorship of Jewish foundations) screens movies focusing on the Holocaust. The Latvian museum is currently hard at work on compiling a new, improved exhibition that pays more attention to the equal treatment of varied topics, prioritizes individual experience over broad generalizations, and embraces multiple perspectives and a plurality of voices. The Museum of Genocide Victims now includes a section on Jewish history. Grūtas Park faces its own share of problems due to its location in the middle of the Lithuanian countryside, almost unreachable without a car. We might be offended—or amused—by the petting zoo next to busts of Stalin, but would we solve the problem of catering to a large number of visiting families any differently?[76] Still, museums should ideally work toward becoming institutions of liberation, not of colonization. Or, as Foucault would put it, museums should embody a "critical limit-attitude," the positive aspect of the Enlightenment, and not the universalizing, homogenizing streak that all too often means subjugation under the guise of Truth and Freedom.[77]

Finally, this evaluation must consider the two important pivots that form the foundation of our value system: responsible museum practices on the micro level and the possible impact of the exhibitions on social cohesion, social justice, and identity formation on the macro level. Upon closer inspection, of course, it turns out that the two are, in fact, much the same, as both presuppose (correctly) an understanding of museums as discursive, fundamentally political institutions, thus imbuing them with the same responsibilities that we would expect in any political body, be it the government, the school system or the academia.

In order to understand what is really at stake, here is a brief summary of the consequences associated with reproducing ethnocentrist narratives of national identity. As Jeffrey Olick has noted, any official representation of memory contains a desire for the "normalization" of the past. The image of the past that forms the backbone of national narratives is an idealized past, a past as we would like to see it and thus also containing instructions for a

[76] Interview with Heiki Ahonen, July 2009, on the difficulties of acquiring artifacts and compiling the exhibition; Interview with Nollendorfs, on attracting specific audiences, and the new exhibition; Interview with Malinauskas, August 2009.

[77] Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment," in *The Foucault Reader*, Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 32–50.

future as we would like to construct it.[78] Thus the ethnonationalist mythology prescribes a society that is culturally and linguistically homogenous, shares ideals of unity and uniqueness, the membership of which is based on birth, rather than choice.[79] Research has shown that while the socioeconomic differences between majority and minority groups in the Baltics continue to decrease, conflicts of memory and identity are increasingly likely to occur and tolerance toward "out-groups" has decreased in recent years in all three countries.[80] The classical Eastern European model of the nation-state, based on the domination of an ethnic elite is quite simply not sustainable in a multi-ethnic, highly globalized environment, yet it is quite hard to see how the status quo could change without a profound change first in the underlying discourse that establishes modes of "permitted" thought. The role of discursive institutions, such as museums, is therefore critical in helping to bring about these changes. The "liberation" of the museums from the trappings of dominant ideologies, without destroying the heritage contained within, is an important challenge that the museums of occupation inevitably have to confront.

[78] Jeffrey Olick, ed., *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 17.

[79] Smith, "National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent," 39–41.

[80] Vello Pettai, "Explaining Ethnic Politics in the Baltic States: Reviewing the Triadic Nexus Model," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 37, no. 1 (2006): 124–36.

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