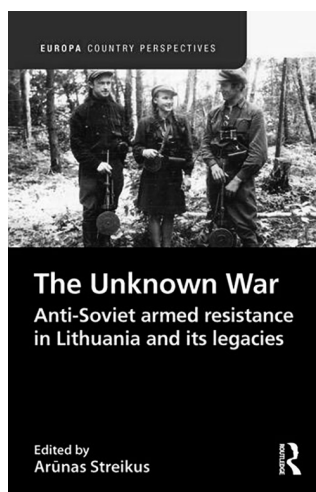


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## EXCELLENT SUMMARY ON HISTORY, RESEARCH AND COMMEMORATION OF LITHUANIAN FOREST BROTHERS / IZCILS KOPSAVILKUMS PAR LIETUVAS MEŽABRĀĻU VĒSTURI, PĒTNIECĪBU UN PIEMIŅU



Arūnas Streikus (ed.). *The Unknown War: Anti-Soviet armed resistance in Lithuania and its legacies*. London and New York: Routledge, 2022. 174 pp. ISBN 9781032185088

*Lietuvas vēsturnieki ir izdevuši rakstu krājumu, kas veltīts mežabrāļu cīņai pret padomju okupāciju Lietuvā pēc Otrā pasaules kara. Krājuma redaktors un ievadraksta autors ir prof. Arūns Streikus. Prof. Ķēstuta K. Girņus raksts sniedz pārskatu par mežabrāļu kustību. Savukārt Dr. Gintauts Vēļus iepazīstina ar jaunākajām arheoloģiskajām ekspedīcijām, kas tikušas rīkotas ar mērķi atrast slepeni aprakto partizānu mirstīgās atliekas un izpētīt kādreizējās kauju vietas un bunkurus. Pārējo četru rakstu autori ir jauni, nesen savas PhD disertācijas aizstāvējuši pētnieki. Mingaile Jurkute aplūko Aukstā kara laikā notikušās pretpadomju bruņotās pretošanās piemiņu; Enrika Kripiene pievēršas mežabrāļu atbalstītājiem lauku iedzīvotāju vidū, kuri bieži vien palikuši nezināmi; Daiņus Noreika uz 1000 personu biogrāfisko datu pamata analizē Lietuvas partizānu kara dalībnieku sociālo izcelsmi; Aiste Petrauskiene pēta partizānu kara vietu Lietuvas atmiņas kultūrā pēc 1990. gada.*

*Grāmata ir vērtīga, īpaši citu valstu lasītājiem. Tā labi apkopo Lietuvas mežabrāļu kustības vēsturi, kā arī tās izpēti un piemiņu. Lietuvā mežabrāļu skaits bija ievērojami lielāks nekā pārējās Baltijas valstīs un viņu cīņas radīja lielus zaudējumus NKVD/NKGB/MVD/MGB spēkiem un vietējiem kolaboracionistiem. Partizāniem neizdevās novērst Lietuvas sovetizāciju, taču viņu drosmīgā cīņa parādīja okupantiem, ka lietuvieši nav gatavi pieņemt padomju varu. Grāmata ir labs paraugs Igaunijai un, domājams, arī Latvijai, kā šo vēstures periodu un ar to saistītos jautājumus pasniegt plašākai starptautiskai auditorijai.*

This book summarises the status of research of Lithuanian forest brothers by Lithuanian historians. Historians of other countries should be grateful to authors, editors, and the publishing house for issuing the book in English. The research on anti-Soviet resistance in the Baltic countries as well as in Ukraine began soon after the Second World War, but more comprehensive studies have naturally been published in the respective native languages. Broader international audience has had to accept the general overviews that until recently were still often under strong spiritual influence of the Cold War confrontation.

Professor Arūnas Streikus (1973) has put together six articles. Four of them are written by young historians basing on their PhD theses. In addition to them, Dr. Gintautas Vėlius writes on search and archaeological excavations of hidden graves of fallen partisans as well as their bunkers and battle sites. And last but not least, Dr. Kęstutis K. Girnius gives an overview on Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance in the context of partisan wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Partisan war or forest brother movement in Lithuania was much more powerful than it was in the two other Baltic countries. Estonian and, I guess, also Latvian historians could envy our Lithuanian colleagues for their academically high-level research of this subject.

Professor Streikus introduces the book by establishing the framework of the history and research of Lithuanian partisan movement. Historians use to divide the partisan movement in Lithuania into three phases. In 1944–1946, large groups of armed fighters exercised *de facto* control over a number of rural areas and battles were fought against large units of the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) troops. A lot of people went into hiding in forests and remote villages to avoid the Soviet repressions. The men were threatened by the mobilisation to the Red Army that was begun in all Baltic countries immediately after they were captured by the Soviets. However, after the Second World War, the hope to return to normal life as well as the beginning of the so-called legalisation had their impact and many people who were hiding returned to their

homes. Eerik Kross, an Estonian researcher of the forest brother movement, argues that the use of the Soviet term ‘legalisaton’ is not correct due to the fact that occupation itself was not legal. But there is no other suitable term found yet.<sup>1</sup> Partisan formations were divided into smaller groups at the end of the first period. During the second phase, in 1946–1949, partisans tried to counterbalance the Soviet propaganda. Over 100 different underground periodical publications are known from this period. Meanwhile, the actions of the partisans against the Soviet institutions, state security officials, and local collaborators continued. At the end of this period, in February 1949, leaders of the Lithuanian partisan detachments held a secret gathering and founded the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters (Lithuanian abbreviation *LLKS*). The last phase (1949–1953) began with deportations of the rural population to Siberia. A view prevails that the main objective of the deportation of 1949 in the Baltic countries was acceleration of the collectivisation of agriculture and resettlement of those (*kulaks*) who opposed the creation of *kolkhozes* “to the distant regions of the Soviet Union”. It is true in part, but an even more important objective was the punishing of the family members of the forest brothers and cutting off their support base in villages and remote farms. Unlike in Latvia and Estonia, where the deportation took place only in March 1949, in Lithuania a larger number of people was deported already in 1948. Altogether more than 77,000 individuals were deported from Lithuania in 1948 and 1949, according to A. Streikus. It is much more than in Estonia (more than 20,000)<sup>2</sup> and Latvia (more than 40,000). The third phase of the partisan movement is the period of gradual abating of the partisan movement in Lithuania as well as in Latvia and Estonia. Usually, the year of the death of Joseph Stalin (1953) is used as the date of the end of active fight. However, single groups and individual partisans continued their activity until the 1960s and even 1970s. It is estimated that 15,000–20,000 Lithuanian partisans and their supporters were killed in the battles and/or by the Soviet security troops and destruction battalions (*stribai* in Lithuanian). The latter consisted of volunteers or were conscripted from among the Party and Komsomol members or the so-called ‘Soviet

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- 1 Kross, Eerik (2023). Metsavendluse uurimisest [On the research of forest brother movement]. Presentation at the conference of Estonian Academic Society of Military History “Metsavendlus Eestis ja Baltimaades” [Forest Brothers in Estonia and other Baltic Countries], 23 September 2023, in Estonian War Museum – General Laidoner Museum.
  - 2 See Saueauk, Meelis and Maripuu, Meelis (2020). *Toimik "Priboi": artikleid ja dokumente 1949. aasta märtsiküüditamisest* [File Priboi: articles and documents on the deportation of March 1949]. Tallinn: Tartu Ülikooli kirjastus (Eesti Mälu Instituudi toimetised, 2).

activists'. About 30,000 partisans and their supporters were arrested and sent to *Gulag* (in addition to those who were deported in 1948 and 1949). This number is comparable to the number of ca 36,000 persons who were arrested in Estonia by political indictments from 1942 (including people arrested in the Soviet rear and the Red Army) until the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> Professor Streikus writes that, according to the Soviet data, the state security offices, internal troops, and destruction battalions lost about five thousand men. About 9300 civilians (Soviet officials, collaborators but sometimes their family members as well) fell victim to the actions of the forest brothers. These figures are much higher than the respective numbers in Latvia and Estonia. Professor Streikus concludes that "the central cause of all this killing was the initial Soviet aggression against Lithuania and the country's subsequent brutal Sovietisation, during which the society became embroiled in a never-ending carousel of denunciations and betrayals, blood and revenge".

Arūnas Streikus gives a short insight into the current state of the research as well. Two authors are worth of remembering from the period before the collapse of the Soviet Union. One of the leaders of the Lithuanian partisans Juozas Lukša (pseudonym Daumantas, also Lukša-Daumantas, 1921–1951), succeeded in fleeing to the West in 1947. In France he published his account *Partizanai už geležinės uždangos* [Fighters for Freedom] on partisan movement in 1944–1947. Lukša was parachuted back to Lithuania in 1949 or 1950 and fell next year in a battle. Kęstutis K. Girnius (born 1946 in Germany) published in 1987, in Chicago a monograph on Lithuanian partisans, *Partizanų kovos lietuvoje* [Partisan Fighting in Lithuania], a pioneering study in academic research on Lithuanian forest brothers. Kęstutis K. Girnius is among the authors of the current collection, too.

Professor Girnius analyses in his article the position of Lithuanian partisans in comparison with other resistance, guerilla, insurgent, and partisan wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century like French *maquis*, Yugoslavian partisans commanded by Josip Broz Tito, Greek communist partisans, Ukrainian Insurgent Army, Taleban, a.o. In his classification of internal wars there are two main features: firstly, the means and methods of the resistance and secondly, the relationship between the parties. Concerning the means and methods, the fight could take the form of individual or small-scale attacks, asymmetrical guerilla

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3 See Sauaeuk, Meelis (2009). Data about the persons arrested in Estonia during the Soviet Political Repressions in 1942–1990. In: *Estonia since 1944 – Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity*. Tallinn: IKUES, pp. 307–310.

warfare, and conventional war. Basing on the relationship between the parties, the insurgents can fight against their own (legal) government, against colonial power, or against the occupying army. Lithuanians fought small-scale guerilla war against the occupiers. There were not only Lithuanian forest brothers fighting in Lithuania during the 1940s. The detachments of Polish Armia Krajowa fought in some parts of Lithuania and, last but not least, there were Soviet partisans. The Soviet partisans were, according to Professor Girnius, trained by and subordinated to the Soviet commands and their only purpose was supporting the Red Army in conquering Lithuania by subversive activities in the rear of the Germans. The conditions in Lithuania were not favourable for the forest brothers: no mountains, no inviolable jungles and big swamps, the neighbouring countries were under the control of the Soviets or their allies and the opponent was strong enough and sufficiently armed to defeat the partisans. The only advantages of the partisans were the support by the population, at least before the deportations of 1948 and 1949, and better knowledge of locations and the terrain. The situation was similar in Estonia and Latvia. In Estonia, in this period, there were twice fewer forests than today, but before the land amelioration works during the 1960s and 1970s, there were presumably relatively more swamps and marshes there than in Lithuania.

One can mention here that the history of the Second World War of the Baltic states was different. Lithuania and Latvia were occupied by the Germans in less than two weeks in June and beginning of July 1941. On the contrary, in Estonia mainland battles between the Germans and the Soviets were fought from the beginning of July to the end of August and on West Estonian islands – up to the end of October. The Soviets had enough time in North Estonia for evacuation and furthermore, about 30,000 Estonian men were mobilised to the Red Army. In Latvia and Estonia relatively more men went to the German armed forces, voluntarily or mobilised, than in Lithuania. (K. Girnius writes according to some estimates that there were 60,000 Estonians in the German armed forces throughout 1944 and 15,000 of them were killed. The number of soldiers together with auxiliaries is perhaps even underestimated, but the number of deaths is certainly an overestimate.) No Lithuanian SS-units were formed, but there was one Estonian and two Latvian Waffen-SS divisions. Estonian Rifle Corps of the Red Army with two infantry divisions was formed in 1942. The bulk of manpower constituted the men mobilised a year before from Estonia. The composition of Lithuanian and Latvian national units of the Red Army was somewhat different. Ethnic Lithuanians constituted only one-third of the personnel of the 16<sup>th</sup> Lithuanian Rifle Division in 1943. In 1944–1945, the majority of Latvian and Estonian men of suitable age and health were in

one or another army fighting in Courland or Germany or already imprisoned in the POW-camps.<sup>4</sup>

In the middle of the 1940s, the population of Lithuania was about 2.5 million. Latvia had less than two million, and Estonia – about one million inhabitants in this period. Possibly, the fact that in Lithuania the partisan movement was more powerful than in other Baltic countries was partly caused by a larger population and the presence of many combat-capable Lithuanian men in Lithuania.

Professor Girnius shows that the Soviets deployed in Lithuania much more NKVD troops than they did in the other Baltic states. When the Soviet internal security regiments were reorganised as internal security detachments in 1951 there were nine of the latter in Ukraine, five in Lithuania, and one in each Estonia and Latvia. The overall number of the forest brothers is a long-disputed issue. Only the Soviet state security service was in possession of the exact figures, but the actual number was much higher, as it was stated in a collective work on Estonian history.<sup>5</sup> No consensus exists even in defining who is a forest brother. How to make the difference between the fighters and men and women who simply were hiding? How to categorise the partisan supporters who lived legally? All in all, Professor Girnius is using the figure of 30,000–40,000 Estonian forest brothers, published by Mart Laar in 2006, and 20,000 forest brothers together with 100,000 supporters in Latvia, published by Heinrihs Strods in the same year. More recent Estonian research has decreased the number of forest brothers to around 15,000 including the fighters and people who had gone into hiding. K. Girnius writes that 20,000 Lithuanian partisans perished. According to H. Strods the number of killed Latvian partisans is about 3000. The number of the Estonians who were killed in the battles and ambushes in the forests, were captured and shot or perished in Gulag is similar to that of the Latvians.

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4 On Estonia see Kaasik, Peeter (2012). *Eesti rahvusväeosade formeerimisest Nõukogude armee koosseisus aastatel 1940–1956* [Ethnic Estonian Units in the Soviet Army During the Period 1940–1956]. In: *Eesti sõjaajaloo aastaraamat* [Estonian Yearbook of Military History], 1 (7), 2011. Tallinn-Viimsi: Eesti sõjamuuseum – kindral Laidoneri muuseum, pp. 102–157; and Hiio, Toomas (2012). *Eesti üksustest Wehrmacht'i, SSi ja politsei ning Relva-SSi alluvuses Teise maailmasõja ajal. Komplekteerimisest ja formeerimisest.* [Estonian Units in the Wehrmacht, SS and the Police System during the Second World War]. In: *Eesti sõjaajaloo aastaraamat* [Estonian Yearbook of Military History], 1 (7), 2011. Tallinn-Viimsi: Eesti sõjamuuseum – kindral Laidoneri muuseum, pp. 158–273.

5 Pajur, Ago, Tannberg, Tõnu, Vahtre, Sulev (ed.) (2005). *Eesti ajalugu*. VI, *Vabadussõjast taasiseseisvumiseni* [History of Estonia. Vol. 6. From the War of Independence to the regaining of independence]. Tartu: Ilmamaa, p. 325.

The difference between these three categories is not always clear when speaking about numbers.

The motivation of the fighters is one of the most important issues. Forest brothers wanted to fight the Soviets who had caused unprecedented sufferings to Lithuanian people, had annihilated the Lithuanian statehood and destroyed almost everything that was important for Lithuanians. Professor Girnius shows that Lithuanian partisans believed in and laid hope on the promises of the Atlantic Charter signed by the British Prime Minister and the President of the United States in 1941; and they were almost sure that the Third World War between the Western powers and the Soviet Union would begin soon and the independence of Lithuania would be restored after the victory of the former. The motives of the forest brothers in Latvia and Estonia were identical. The forest brothers intended to hinder the Sovietisation of the rural areas as well and they were quite successful in it.

Dainius Noreika has studied the personal composition of the Lithuanian partisan force. Who they were? He has analysed the biographies of 1000 partisans. According to his analysis, 99% of them were born between 1900 and 1932, i.e., they had spent most if not the whole of their lives in independent Lithuania. An absolute majority of them had attended primary school and only about 10% had continued their education in secondary schools and higher educational establishments. This reflects the general trends of Lithuanian population in this period. Most of the partisans were farmers by background, the average size of their farms was 18 hectares. Partisans represented the average Lithuanian population. Most of them were members of the partisan detachments that were active in their home communities. Most of the partisans knew each other from earlier times or were even relatives. It cemented trust between them. Soviet propaganda accused the partisans for being the agents of the CIA or other Western intelligence agencies. In reality, only a tiny minority of partisans were parachuted to Lithuania after training in the West. They fought for the Lithuanian cause with foreign support and not for foreign cause in Lithuania.

As already mentioned, no Lithuanian Waffen-SS units were created by the Germans. However, in 1944 when the Red Army approached the Lithuanian borders, the Lithuanian Territorial Defence Force was formed. There were also several volunteer Lithuanian *Schutzmannschaft*-Battalions (self-defence battalions) formed in 1941/1942 and other auxiliary units. Dainius Noreika has established that from 1000 partisans whose biographies were included in the analysis at least 14.4% had served in police or auxiliary police during the German occupation, 4.3% had been in the Lithuanian Territorial Defence Force and 6.2% in self-defence battalions. Lithuanian partisans were accused by some authors of

participation in the Holocaust, the above mentioned Juozas Lukša among them. It is a fact that there were Lithuanians and Lithuanian battalions who participated in the Holocaust in Lithuania and other regions and it is impossible that no one of those men stayed in Lithuania after the war. However, D. Noreika shows that many facts used in the publications and even in some more recent studies, accusing the partisans of participation in the Holocaust, are falsifications that originated from a few sources created by the Soviet propaganda. Therefore, it is not a surprise that the accusations are directed against well-known figureheads of Lithuanian partisan movement mainly. However, D. Noreika presents some examples of former policemen and commanders from the *Schutzmannschaft-Battalions*, who really participated in actions against the Jews and later became forest brothers.

The subject of the study of Enrika Kripienė are the supporters of the partisans. They are usually forgotten at commemorations and they are not included in the general number of resistance fighters mostly due to the fact that their names are not known. Enrika Kripienė writes that, according to the data published by the Genocide and Research Centre of Lithuania, approximately 50,000 armed individuals may have participated in anti-Soviet resistance between 1944 and 1953 and the number of sympathisers and supporters, who demonstrated their unarmed opposition, is roughly the same. She describes the supporting elements of the largest partisan formations through a case-study of the Lithuanian Freedom Army which was active in Dzūkija and Suvalkija (historical regions in southern Lithuania) and the above mentioned Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters (*LLKS*), founded in 1949. In her case study on Grand Duke Kęstutis Company that existed under several names from 1945 to 1952 with 200 to 300 members over the entire course of the resistance period there were at least 144 supporters of this group identified. Dr. Kripienė argues that the identified supporters constituted roughly a half of the total number and the total number of supporters could have been even bigger than the number of fighters. Among the supporters there were couriers, reserve partisans, and partisan supporters (i.e. people who supported partisans without any clearly defined function) as the largest group. The large number of supporters demonstrates the all-nation character of the anti-Soviet resistance in Lithuania.

The article by Mingailė Jurkutė considers the place of armed anti-Soviet resistance in the collective memory of Lithuanians during the Cold War. She presents at first an overview of the Soviet narrative on the Lithuanian partisans. Although it was initially prohibited, according to the censorship regulations, to mention the partisans and the fight against them, it was not always followed in some publications. The author shows that already in 1949, the Lithuanian



Catholic clergy was publicly accused of “supporting the bandits”. After Stalin’s death, the second phase of anti-partisan propaganda began. Beginning with 1957, books describing the fights of the state security officers and the people of Soviet Lithuania against “the bandits” were published on the initiative and under the supervision of the *KGB*. They represented mostly the style of “documentary fiction”<sup>6</sup> describing the actions of smart state security officers, real or fictional, against the bandits. “Bandits”, i.e. the forest brothers, were directed and supported by Western intelligence agencies and corrupt leaders of the exile communities, who, in their turn, during the German occupation had participated in “fascist crimes against innocent Soviet citizens”. According to Dr. Jurkutė, a special agency, the Editorial Board for the Publication of Archival Documents, was established within the Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR under the leadership of a retired *KGB* officer, Boleslavas Baranauskas. From 1960 to 1966, this agency published eight collections of archival documents. Mingailė Jurkutė writes that the materials on Lithuanian partisans, published by this agency, were based on excerpts from the files of their state security investigation files and described the partisans as cruel and barbarous criminals who were in the service of imperialist forces and during the German occupation had been in the service of the Gestapo.

Similar books were published in other Baltic states and Ukraine, too, with slight differences, depending on the historical events in the respective country. To this picture there belonged also a number of show trials that were organised beginning with the late 1950s from Estonia to Ukraine and in Russia against the “henchmen of fascist murderers”. Among the accused there often was at least one member of the exile community, who was sentenced in absence. Unlike secret political trials of war tribunals of the *NKVD* troops in the 1940s and 1950s, the show trials were public with pre-trained witnesses and defence attorneys and took place in the presence of Soviet and sometimes even foreign media. Overviews of a couple of show trials were published in English and distributed by the Soviet embassies with the main purpose of discrediting the leaders of the exile communities.<sup>7</sup> It was a new approach of the *KGB* and the propaganda agencies of the Communist Party in “battles in the propaganda front” of the Cold War, but also an attempt to win hearts and minds at least among the younger

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6 The Russian term used in Soviet era was *dokumental'nyj ocherk*.

7 See Maripuu, Meelis (2015). Külma sõja aegsed näidiskohtuprotsessid Eesti NSV-s: õigus ja propaganda kaalukaasil [Cold War show trials in Estonia: Justice and propaganda in the balance]. In: Tannberg, Tõnu (ed.). *Nõukogude Eesti külma sõja ajal*. Tartu, Eesti Ajalooarhiiv, pp. 88–140. (Eesti Ajalooarhiivi toimetised = Acta et commentationes Archivi Historici Estoniae, 23 (30).)

generation. A revival of this type of literature took place in the beginning of this century, when some of them were reprinted with a new title and slightly edited.<sup>8</sup>

During the third phase that began in the 1960s, also writers, artists, and filmmakers were involved in designing a collective memory on the recent past and particularly of partisan war. In Lithuania, during this decade, 12 short stories, two plays, and four novels were published on the “post-war banditism”. Dr. Jurkutė elaborates the means and styles that were used in creating an image of the era for the audience in Soviet Lithuania. The internationally best-known creation of this period is perhaps the film *Nobody Wanted to Die* directed by Vytautas Žalakevičius (1965). In the last part of her article Mingailė Jurkutė analyses the narrative of the Lithuanian exile communities on Lithuanian partisans. Somehow even surprisingly she concludes that “from the very start of the creation of collective narrative [on Lithuanian partisans], a Soviet component played a role in both Lithuania and in diaspora community”. The article by Dr. Jurkutė is introduced by a well-done theoretical overview. The article itself is very informative and the analysis is concluded by an excellent summary.

The article of Dr. Aistė Petrauskienė describes the place of the partisan war in Lithuanian memory culture beginning with the 1990s. She continues from the point where the former article has arrived. Before the end of the Soviet regime, the commemoration of the fallen or killed partisans was possible only in a form of conspiratorial endeavour. In addition to that, the Soviet authorities deliberately destroyed the partisan war heritage. After the Lithuanian independence was re-established, the commemoration of the victims of the Soviet terror and particularly of the partisans became a government-supported activity. The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (GRRCL) was founded already in 1992. (Also, some authors of the book under review are employees or collaborators of this institution.) There were certain differences between the policies of the left-wing and right-wing governments in respect to the commemoration of the victims and preservation of the partisan heritage. The left-wing government (before 1996) sought to regulate the procedures for

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8 Эстония. Кровавый след нацизма. 1941–1944 годы. сборник архивных документов о преступлениях эстонских коллаборационистов в годы Второй мировой войны (2006) [*Estonia. The bloody trace of Nazism: 1941–1944* (2007)]; Трагедия Литвы: 1941–1944 годы: сборник архивных документов о преступлениях литовских коллаборационистов в годы Второй мировой войны (2006) [*The Tragedy of Lithuania: 1941–1944. New documents on crimes of Lithuanian collaborators during the Second World War* (2008)]; Латвия под игом нацизма: сборник архивных документов (2006) [*Latvia under the yoke of Nazism. collection of archival documents*]. Russian originals were published by Европа in Moscow.

the reburial of persons killed under foreign occupation. Several legislative acts were adopted regarding the long-term commemoration of the victims of foreign occupations. Under the right-wing government (1996–2000), the year 1999 was declared the Year of Freedom Struggle. The declaration of the *LLKS* (see above) was recognised as a legal act of the Republic of Lithuania, as a part of the Lithuanian legal continuity. In 2000–2008, the majority in the parliament belonged to left-wing parties and there were no new initiatives of commemoration of partisans. In 2009, the new Seimas (Lithuanian parliament) declared the year 2009 the Year of Lithuanian Freedom Movement.

There are many monuments and other sites of commemoration in Lithuania. In 1996–2018, almost 3000 of them were recorded in official inventory. During the same time, the GRRCL has placed ca 400 commemorative markers and 230 commemorative plaques in different locations and buildings. A large part of commemoration activities are carried out by the civic society. This process was begun by the NGOs of former partisans and their supporters, as well as by other former political prisoners and deportees. There was even a so-called “monument mania” – hundreds of monuments were erected and ceremonially opened, largely basing on the peoples’ own initiative. Today quite a few of them have already collapsed. While the next generation was somehow indifferent towards the memory of their parents’ generation, today the new revival of commemoration is carried out already by the next generation. Dr. Petrauskienė emphasises the influence of the Lithuanian school system, where the history of the Soviet terror and the fight of Lithuanians against it belong to the curricula.

In retrospect, one can mention similar trends during the last 30 years also in Estonia, and I am sure that in Latvia as well. The unknown graves of the forest brothers were and are searched and found, and their remains are reburied in all Baltic countries, but astonishing is the number of reburials in Lithuania, approximately 2000 as Aistė Petrauskienė writes. This is also an evidence of the magnitude of the forest brother movement in Lithuania. A sign of certain “normalisation” of the commemoration of the partisan movement in Lithuania are the organised rallies in the actual or alleged sites of the battles between the partisans and Soviet state security squads, as well as the reconstruction of bunkers for touristic purposes.

The last article of the collection is written by archaeologist Dr. Gintautas Vėlius. He describes the search of the gravesites of the partisans and the exhumation and reburial of their remains. The Act “On reburial and commemoration of members of the resistance and other people killed under occupying regimes” was adopted in Lithuania already in 1992. The locations where the executed political prisoners had been buried were kept secret by the state security authorities

everywhere and the remains of the executed were not given to the relatives. The main purpose of such policy was avoiding of public commemorations of the killed heroes. However, there were always some information available, among others in the *KGB* files that remained in Lithuania after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Dr. Vēlius offers a highly interesting account on the search of the remains of the partisans, who were secretly buried in Vilnius Našlaičiai Cemetery, and on how they were finally found. Among them was the leader of the resistance Defence Forces, Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas (1918–1957), who was shot in Vilnius Internal Prison. Another part of “partisan archaeology” is bunker archaeology. The bunkers of the forest brothers were of different types, some of them subterranean, but some were built into ordinary farms under a barn for example. They were destroyed during battles or simply abandoned. Dr. Vēlius concludes that in the research of partisan movement one cannot rely exclusively on the memory of individual eyewitnesses. Only archaeological study ensures precise reconstruction of partisan-era sites.

I do hope that in the nearest future similar comprehensive studies in English will be published also on Latvian and Estonian forest brother movements.

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