

# 11 The Baltic Movement to Obfuscate the Holocaust

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THE THREE BALTIC States, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia (in descending order of population, land mass, and size of prewar Jewish minorities) share a painful statistic.<sup>1</sup> Their percentages of Jews murdered in the Holocaust are the highest in Europe, hovering around 95 percent. But the numbers of Jews actually on site, when the Nazis arrived in the last week of June 1941 (the point of departure for derivative figures) varied significantly. Estimates range from 210,000 to 220,000 in Lithuania; 70,000 to 75,000 in Latvia; and 1,000 to 1,500 in Estonia.<sup>2</sup> In a number of localities, the murder, humiliation, and pillage of Jewish civilians, by local nationalists, was underway shortly after war broke out and the occupying Soviet Army was rapidly fleeing eastward, before the Germans arrived or had set up administrative control.<sup>3</sup> Once the invading Nazi forces had taken over, they swiftly found large numbers of enthusiastic volunteer killers. These operations were so productive for the Nazis that they would go on to deport Jews from various parts of Europe (as far away as France) to these states for murder, and to export local murderers and accessories to other parts of occupied Europe. It has been noted more than once that the courage and determination of the local rescuers—the Righteous Among the Nations, *Khsídey úmes ho-óylem* in Yiddish—in the Baltics was an extraordinary and inspiring chapter in the annals of humanism. Rescuers were treated as traitors against their own nationals rather than resisters against an occupying power.<sup>4</sup>

There is, moreover, a range of historic circumstances before and after the war that the three states—and they alone—have in common beyond the gruesome Holocaust statistics. During the interwar period they were largely successful, independent states with records of nonviolence toward Jews and other minorities, and levels of interethnic coexistence impressive for Eastern Europe of the day.<sup>5</sup> The three states were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union as republics via rigged elections in the summer of 1940, followed by nearly a year of occupation that was characterized by loss of liberty, deportations, and forced communization. Their peoples suffered considerably. With the Soviet rout of German forces



in 1944 and until the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, they remained actual USSR republics, not merely Warsaw Pact satellite states. On de facto independence in 1991, all three rapidly became successful democracies. Since 2004, they have been members of the European Union and NATO. In our own time, they share a justified fear of Putinist revanchism and mischief.

That is part of the backdrop for a need felt by some Baltic (ultra)nationalists, like their brethren elsewhere in Eastern Europe, underpinned by elites in politics, academia, media, and the arts, to somehow fix the Holocaust. Straight Holocaust Denial would not play in a part of the world where the Jewish population was mostly shot and buried in seemingly innumerable mass grave sites that lurk in perpetuity not far from many a town. The climate was conducive to the evolution of a convoluted politics that included a need to "satisfy" both domestic far-right nationalist establishments and the opposite pressures emanating from Western and Jewish circles.<sup>6</sup>

One common denominator is the desire to have a national history of pure victimhood without stains (no nation-state has that). In the matter at hand, it has led some to embark on an inversion exercise that would sully the victims while salvaging the local perpetrators as some kind of heroes. Another is a lingering specific antisemitism that accuses *local* (not Western or other) Jews of communism. Most local Jews do indeed carry (an, objectively speaking, accurate) collective memory, first of massive local Baltic collaboration with the Nazis, and second, of the survival of the few being ultimately thanks to the Soviet Union of the years 1941–1944 (in no way a stamp of approval, even remotely, of twenty-first century Putinism, a charge increasingly hurled at those who take issue with the Holocaust revisionism underway). That supernarrative includes a number of individual survivor histories including most often an escape eastward to uninvaded parts of the USSR in the days following June 22, 1941, and, in other cases, escape from ghettos to join up with the Soviet anti-Nazi partisans, or rescue by local Righteous followed (when successful) by liberation by the Soviets in 1944.

The special relationship of post-Soviet Holocaust revisionism with East European antisemitism has been demonstrated.<sup>7</sup> There is, moreover, a line after which nationalist positions on history cannot be disentangled from unseemly bias. This line is the point at which states use taxpayers' money to heap honors, commemoration, and glorification on Holocaust collaborators or the actual local murderers. As the Lithuanian philosopher Leonidas Donskis has put it: "We cannot sympathize with both victims and perpetrators."<sup>8</sup> The fact of the matter is that the vast majority of the many Eastern European killers were anti-Soviet and yearned for Hitler's victory. If that makes them heroes, then virtually all who carried out the Holocaust in Eastern Europe would ipso facto be heroes. That is a sample of the absurdity to which the debate is liable to sink.



## Holocaust Obfuscation

Holocaust Obfuscation refers to a specifically post-Soviet, East European brand of revisionism that seeks to downgrade the Holocaust internationally, not just locally, by means of a number of mutually interacting mechanisms.<sup>9</sup> Variants of the model have included claims of overwhelming Jewish complicity in communism; claims that the murder of the Jewish populations in Eastern Europe was a reaction to alleged Jewish communist atrocities; claims that the miniscule percentage of Jews who survived by escaping to Soviet-supported partisan groups in the forests are a priori guilty of “war crimes” (hence they may be defamed by prosecutors, for their lifetimes and for posterity, with neither evidence nor charges as, after all, the partisans in the forests verily did not adhere to the Geneva Conventions).<sup>10</sup> But these elements on their own are details. It is their metamorphosis into components of a coherent and sophisticated new historical model, underwritten by state budgets, and at times by the European Union, that has brought about a significant twenty-first century Holocaust revisionism that continues to be passed over largely in silence by major Jewish organizations, western governments, and the academic world.<sup>11</sup>

Various of the individual elements reemerge as supposedly logical components of the revisionism underway, including: (1) inflation of the word genocide to include such Soviet crimes as deportation; (2) the demand for a declared equality of Nazi and Soviet regimes and crimes; (3) the leveling of perpetrators and victims; (4) the notion that European unity depends on having a common history agreed on by all (or else), in this case the revisionist easterners’ history. Finally, there is an untoward state-sponsored element that is kept far from public events and publications in the field: (5) suspension or reversal of democratic guarantees of free speech on these matters by criminalizing the opinion that the classic narrative (recognizing but one genocide in the Baltics) is correct, and by criminalizing criticism of Nazi collaborators whom the state has declared to be national heroes.

There are, moreover, numerous smaller details of history that are repeatedly challenged in the same spirit. They include downward revision of percentages of victims (sometimes just far enough to be in the around-90-percent range of other countries);<sup>12</sup> (usually major) revisions downward of massive local voluntary enthusiastic collaboration;<sup>13</sup> and Holocaust history downplaying smaller towns and emphasizing the Nazi ghettos in larger cities where German cruelty was much more visible for much longer, and where attempts are made to deflect guilt to the Jewish police or the Jewish Council (*Judenrat*).<sup>14</sup>

In the more than a quarter century that has elapsed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new paradigm has acquired a host of names including post-Soviet historiography, symmetry, equivalence, and, in that Brussels style of European Union discourse known as Eurospeak: the equal evaluation of totalitarian



regimes. The name that has gained predominance is Double Genocide, of which Holocaust Obfuscation is a pronounced and ubiquitous element.

### Redefinition of Genocide

To make it stick, the vernacular definition of genocide had to undergo modification. But truth to tell, the standard UN definition, adopted in Resolution 260 (III), Chapter 2, on December 9, 1948 itself opened potential floodgates for the future: "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such, followed by the acts so considered: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."<sup>15</sup>

The basis was the coinage by Raphael Lemkin in the preface to his 1944 book *Axis Rule* (the preface is itself dated November 15, 1943). In his section "Genocide—A New Term and New Conception for Destruction of Nations" there is, to start with, a succinct and precise formulation: "New conceptions require new terms. By 'genocide' we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group," a definition that is clear as daylight. In subsequent passages, however, lesser bars come into an increasingly casual discussion, for example: "Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups."<sup>16</sup>

Fast forward to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The three Baltic States lost little time in setting the stage for Holocaust Obfuscation within the Double Genocide paradigm via legally redefining genocide to ensure it includes, by law, Soviet crimes against the Baltic countries. Lithuania's 1992 law has the language: "The killing and torturing and deportation of Lithuanian inhabitants committed during the occupation and annexation of Lithuania by Nazi Germany and the USSR correspond to the crime of genocide as contemplated by international law."<sup>17</sup>

The critical additives here are torturing, deportation, occupation, and annexation, which are declared to correspond to the crime of genocide by international law by virtue of it being so stipulated. The Soviet deportation of a minority of the Lithuanian population is equated with the Nazi-led massacre of virtually the entirety of the country's Jewish population. When the Soviet Union collapsed, there were more Baltic citizens than when it first came. Dovilė Budrytė is among the scholars who suggest that this use of the word genocide originates not in Lithuania, but from the (nationalist) diaspora, particularly in the United States, and came into vogue in the home country during the years of glasnost, rebellion



against Soviet rule and early independence (1986–1992, corresponding to the Lithuanian *Atgimimas* or “Revival” or national rebirth). She traces the rise of the phenomenon of “remembering two genocides.”<sup>18</sup>

Analogously, Latvian law likewise further adapted the United Nations’ Genocide Convention:

For a person who commits genocide, that is, commits intentional acts for purposes of the destruction in whole or in part of any group of persons identifiable as such by nationality, ethnic origin, race, social class or a defined collective belief or faith, by killing members of the group, inflicting upon them physical injuries hazardous to life or health or causing them to become mentally ill, intentionally causing conditions of life for such people as result in their physical destruction in whole or in part, utilizing measures the purpose of which is to prevent the birth of children in such group, or transferring children on a compulsory basis from one group of persons into another.<sup>19</sup>

The critical phrases here include “social class or a defined collective belief or faith,” “causing them to become mentally ill,” “physical destruction in whole or in part.” In other words, if the Soviet Union set about to bring an end to the class of religious leaders or capitalists or dissidents by a variety of means, this automatically becomes genocide. Spiritual anguish (mental illness) and destruction of even a small percentage of the population (physical destruction in part) is joined here to the genocide family.

With respect to Estonia, Doyle Stevick has outlined the parallel efforts to expand genocide and to equalize the Holocaust with Soviet crimes. He traces the typical Baltic trajectory from reluctance to institute a day to commemorate the Holocaust at all, to doing so under US and western pressure, to then combining Nazi and Soviet crimes in a single category.<sup>20</sup> Stevick cites Estonian responses that effectively reject a supposed uniqueness of the Holocaust. Among them is the claim by David Nersessian that the grievous damage caused by Soviet policies, including resettlement, deportation, russification, and more, is indeed cultural genocide. Nersessian is not happy with applying a physical condition to the notion of genocide: “By limiting genocide to its physical and biological manifestations, a group can be kept physically and biologically intact even as its collective identity suffers in a fundamental and irremediable manner. Put another way, the present understanding of genocide preserves the body of the group but allows its very soul to be destroyed.”<sup>21</sup>

The wording of the Estonian law, dating from 1994, follows its Baltic neighbors in the discrete expansion of the notion genocide to include deprivation of political rights, among others.

Perpetration of crimes against humanity, including genocide as defined by the norms of international law, entailing deliberate actions whose aim was fully or partly to destroy ethnic, national, racial, religious, resisters to occupation or other social groups or their members by killing or causing major injury or



causing mental illness or other punishment, for taking of children by force, for armed attack, in the case of occupation or annexation or deporting of civilians, or depriving them of economic, political or social rights or restricting these essential rights, will be punishable by prison for eight to fifteen years or lifetime imprisonment.<sup>22</sup>

The late Leonidas Donskis's essay, "The Inflation of Genocide" remains a potent rejoinder, not least because of the author's status as a proudly patriotic Lithuanian citizen himself. Among its arguments:

In recent decades, the concept of genocide has undergone a perilous devaluation.... A genocide is the annihilation en bloc of a people or of a race, irrespective of class divisions, dominant ideology and internal social and cultural differences.... Genocide is annihilation without pre-selection, where the victims are utterly unable to save themselves—in theory or in practice—by an ideological change of heart, by religious apostasy or, ultimately, by betraying the group and going over to the other side.... You are guilty at birth, and this fatal error of having been born—this original sin—can be corrected only by your extermination. Such is the metaphysics of genocide and absolute hatred. The only way of resolving the "problem" is by the complete and utter annihilation of bodies, lives, blood and skin pigment.<sup>23</sup>

## Research Centers and Museums

In the immediate wake of independence from Soviet rule, the three Baltic States set up research institutes to deal with both Soviet and Nazi crimes, each controlling one or more major state museums. Lithuania's Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania (LGGRIC), known as the Genocide Center, in Vilnius, was formally established in 1992. Its associated Museum of Genocide Victims was set up the same year. It also provided the historical texts for the popular (now privatized) tourist site featuring the nationally collected statues of Lenin and other Soviet leaders at Gruto Park (Grūto parkas, colloquially known as The Lenin Park), near Druskininkai in southeastern Lithuania. Latvia's Center for Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism was set up in 1992. The associated museum, which recently underwent a major overhaul, is the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 1940–1991. Estonia's national research center is named in a different spirit, openly as part of the ongoing memory wars in Europe. It is the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory. In a spirit analogous to the naming of Latvia's museum, it is called the Museum of Occupations.

The three research institutes, with their elite state-remunerated scholars, often figures of high academic, political, and societal stature, are in a sense the engines of the Baltic movement for a revision of World War II and Holocaust history to a narrative of two equal totalitarian regimes. The museums play their



role too, being on the tourist lists of large numbers of Western visitors. Until 2011, the word “Holocaust” could not be found in Vilnius’s Museum of Genocide Victims.<sup>24</sup> In other words, the one genocide that actually occurred in Lithuania was omitted, while the series of odious crimes that nevertheless left a vibrant and successful country with an increased population, ready, after the collapse of the USSR, for near-term EU and NATO accession, were here being defined as “the genocide.”<sup>25</sup>

An entire hall was (and as of writing, still is) devoted to the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) fascists who carried out the early murders before German occupation in the week of June 22, 1941, treating them as national heroes with no mention of their part in the genocide of Lithuanian Jewry. Another room, dedicated to the postwar Forest Brothers contained until 2015 three antisemitic images implying that Stalinist rule was carried out by Jews portrayed in the caricatures; one had Lenin, Stalin and “the Jew Yánkele” (in the original: Jenkelké) driving an ominous Soviet jeep. After repeated protests, these caricatures were removed, at least temporarily, in 2015.<sup>26</sup> The Lenin Park historical texts provided by the Genocide Center go rather further, including a description of the anti-Nazi partisan resistance: “Soviet activists, Red Army men, escaped prisoners of war and some inhabitants of Lithuania (mostly of Jewish nationality) formed groups of saboteurs.” One of the placards dedicated to the prewar communists has this about a certain Icikas Meskupas-Adomas: “After LCP [Lithuanian Communist Party] became the support [*sic*] of occupational regime during the occupation of Lithuania, he worked as the Second Secretary of LCP CC. In 1940–1941 he guided the cleansing of Lithuanian officials, sought to keep the traditional Jewish communists’ influence upon LCP.”<sup>27</sup>

For years, the Genocide Center in Vilnius had on its website a statement that is a classic example of the strange phenomenon of Holocaust Envy: “One may cut off all four of a person’s limbs and he or she will still be alive, but it is enough to cut off the one and only head to send him or her to another dimension. The Jewish example clearly indicates that this is also true about genocide. Although an impressive percentage of the Jews were killed by the Nazis, their ethnic group survived, established its own extremely national state and continuously grew stronger.”<sup>28</sup>

Like other Baltic research institutions on Nazi and Soviet crimes, the Genocide Center contained practical researchers interested in uncovering evidence for prosecutable crimes (from the Soviet side only, to be sure), and hosts actual parts of the state’s prosecutorial apparatus including a Special Investigation Department, a name unceremoniously taken from the American agency responsible for hunting Nazi war criminals.<sup>29</sup> The dismal record of Lithuanian prosecutors in taking seriously suspected Nazi war criminals, including some fifteen deported from the United States, has been repeatedly documented by Efraim



Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, who has stressed repeatedly that early fair trials before local judges, in the local language and under the national flag, would have been to the nation's great benefit.<sup>30</sup>

### National Days of Remembrance

The major effort to codify a commemoration day that is at least in the direction of Double Genocide is the joint day of commemoration of Nazi and Soviet crimes, August 23, commemorating the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. The Baltics have been regarded as the primary engine of the movement, but its genesis is to be found in the 1980s in the North American diaspora communities of the Baltics, Ukraine, and other East European nations. Packaged in the west as Black Ribbon Day, it gained currency particularly in 1986 when the proposal, initiated by these East European diaspora communities, led to observances in twenty-one North American cities. The idea was rapidly exported back home and culminated in the famous 1989 Baltic Way demonstration that was a potent, peaceful, and effective democratic demonstration against brutal Soviet domination and occupation.

As a choice of day to demonstrate against Soviet repression, domination, and occupation, August 23 is a priori unassailable. Stalin had divided Poland and other countries with Hitler, and had proceeded within weeks to take "his" eastern part of the divided Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union incorporated some of these lands in 1939 and the remainder in 1940, robbing them all of their freedom. The domination was to resume after the defeat of Hitler, mostly in 1944 on the Eastern Front, right up until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The movement of the 1980s, the Baltic Way of 1989, and the subsequent years of celebration of the day started out and could have remained as an honest, straightforward day of commemoration of the individual and national victims of Soviet communism and its many crimes.

But over the course of the past quarter century, the observance of August 23 grew into a symbol of the new Double Genocide inspired revised history of World War II, in which Nazism and Communism are to be equally commemorated on a single day. A monograph would be needed to establish the evolution in each country. But it is clear that by the time the Baltic States joined NATO and the European Union in 2004, the day had somehow shifted to symbolize a radical reassignment of the elements of history in the post-Soviet East European and, particularly, in the Baltic spirit. But it was in 2009, as the Double Genocide movement was at its peak following the Prague Declaration (see Export), that the three Baltic States re-legislated the day. On June 18, 2009, the Estonian parliament adopted August 23 as the Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism while naming the statute itself "23 August: The Europe-Wide Remembrance Day for the Victims of All Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes." On July 17, 2009, Latvia named the day the Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism.



Lithuania followed on July 22 with a wider scope, renaming Black Ribbon Day as the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, and Day of the Baltic Way. Lithuania alone added in the name a reference to its actual anti-Soviet origin within Eastern Europe.

### State “Red Brown” Commissions

Under pressure from the West, and particularly the United States, as well as Holocaust survivors’ groups, the three Baltic States had been warned through much of the 1990s that they would need to confront their Holocaust histories at a state level if they were to win acceptance to the European Union, NATO, and other western institutions. That pressure was a grave error. Bold indigenous individuals and NGOs from a variety of walks of life were rising to tell the painful truth in all three Baltic countries and were making visible progress. The Jewish organizations and western grant-giving bodies should have identified and supported them. By pressuring the state authorities of these proud nations, a Pandora’s box of mirrors and ruses was inadvertently opened. The Baltic States naturally colluded, and all came up with “red-brown commissions,” as they have become informally known. These are state-sponsored commissions set up in 1998 to provide research and education on *both* Nazi and Soviet crimes. They have at the same time been at a high level politically and close to each nation’s leaders. They all sought to involve western (and Jewish) scholars who would add legitimacy. All had access to plentiful state funding for staging well-organized and enjoyable events.

In the case of Latvia and Estonia, the commissions in point of fact had limited life spans devoted to producing a series of books on the crimes of both totalitarian regimes. Latvia’s History Commission was established, it explains, on the initiative of the president, Guntis Ulmanis in November 1998. Listed under the government’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was divided into four sub-commissions and produced a number of volumes.<sup>31</sup> The president’s website explains that “the main task of the Commission during its initial working period was to study the issue ‘Crimes against Humanity Committed in the Territory of Latvia under Two Occupations, 1940–1956,’ as well as to organize the production of the final report on the theme.”<sup>32</sup> The National Director of the Anti-Defamation League, Abraham H. Foxman, famously resigned from the Latvian Commission in 1999. In a letter to the President of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, Foxman explained that his decision was due to the “intermingling and confusion of the Holocaust and the Soviet occupation of Latvia.”

“While I acknowledge the suffering of many Latvians at the hands of the Soviets and Latvia’s desire to investigate this history, as a Jew and a Holocaust survivor, I am deeply offended by the intermingling and confusion of these two very different experiences,” said Mr. Foxman. “Therefore, I am resigning from the Latvian Commission of Historians. I am deeply concerned that Latvia is not



yet ready to truly examine and confront the experience of Latvian Jews during the Holocaust.”<sup>33</sup>

Analogously, the Estonian International Commission for Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity was founded in October 1998, and announced by the president himself. In the spirit of many “tasked commissions,” it published a number of reports and books before putting itself to bed in December 2008.<sup>34</sup> Anton Weiss-Wendt’s critique of the Estonian Commission’s record merits being cited at length precisely because it can in principle shed light on all the East European “red-brown commissions.”

The larger question is whether the Commission has achieved its objectives and if its work has furthered Holocaust awareness among the Estonian population. The main goal has definitely been attained—to show the Western European and American political establishment that the Baltic governments are ready to submit even the most complex aspects of recent history to critical examination. Ironically, the Reports were published after Estonia officially joined the NATO and the EU. After all, setting the historical record straight was not the most important criterion for admission.... The way the Commission treated the Holocaust does not open new vistas but rather reinforces old misconceptions. Estonian scholars compartmentalized the history of the Holocaust by dealing separately with the Estonian, Czech/German, Polish/Lithuanian and French Jews. As we know all too well, the Nazis were exterminating the Jewish people not as Estonian, Lithuanian, French, etc. nationals but as Jews. Finally there is a question of accessibility: how many Estonian readers would be willing to spend 750 Estonian crowns (around one-fifth of the [monthly] minimum wage) for an encyclopaedic volume in English that contains information on both Soviet and Nazi occupations?<sup>35</sup>

When the Lithuanian commission was announced in 1998, it drew protests from the association of Lithuanian Holocaust survivors in Israel and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, precisely because of its equal—and mixed—dedication to Nazi and Soviet crimes.<sup>36</sup> The survivors’ letter, signed by Holocaust survivor Joseph Melamed, then chairman of the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel, included the text: “The linking of the histories of the Nazi and Soviet occupations is the heart of the problem. More than any other factor, this false symmetry has been a major obstacle to any serious soul-searching by Lithuanian society in regard to the extensive collaboration of Lithuanians with the Nazis in the murder of Lithuanian Jewry. Even worse, false accusations and patent exaggerations regarding Jewish participation in Communist crimes against Lithuanians have been adduced time and again to explain, and in some cases even justify, the participation of Lithuanians in the murder of Jews during the Holocaust.”<sup>37</sup>

Melamed’s words would come to be seen as uncannily prophetic, as fate would have it, not only about the wider mood in the Baltics, but in an international sensation about the commission itself. Given the Lithuanian state



investment in legitimizing Holocaust revisionism via participation of prominent Jewish personalities, it was perhaps natural that Lithuania's new commission, which bears an unwieldy name, The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, would seek legitimacy by foreign Jewish participation. Lithuanian leaders persuaded Dr. Yitzhak Arad, a Holocaust survivor from Lithuania and scholar who had been the director of Yad Vashem for over two decades, to join the commission. He did, and participated successfully in deliberations leading to a number of publications.

But then in 2006, a period during which Dr. Arad was assisting the American government on a certain Lithuanian Nazi war criminal, the daily newspaper *Respublika* published a broadside against him, accusing him—a member of the same state's official historical “red-brown” commission—of himself being a war criminal.<sup>38</sup> The basis of the accusation was an out-of-context passage from Arad's own memoir published in English over a quarter of a century earlier and widely known.<sup>39</sup> A then leading figure at the Genocide Center (who has since been named a member of Lithuania's red-brown commission), is quoted in the chapter as lamenting that “There is no statute of limitation for the Jewish genocide, because this is approved at the international level. The genocide of Lithuanians has no such status, and for the physical extermination of our nation essentially nobody is accountable.”<sup>40</sup> In September 2007, the Prosecution Service of the Republic of Lithuania issued a comprehensive statement confirming that a pretrial investigation of Dr. Arad on suspicion of crimes against humanity had begun in May 2006, and that a request had been sent to Israeli authorities for his appearance for questioning.<sup>41</sup> In the wake of an international uproar, the investigations against Arad were partly discontinued in September 2008, but with a defamatory statement from prosecutors calling on the public to come forward with more evidence.<sup>42</sup>

The macabre plotline, of a NATO-EU state pursuing a Holocaust survivor for war crimes without any charges, on the basis of survivors' (in his case his own) memoirs, repeated itself in 2008. A January 29 newspaper chapter called on prosecutors to pursue two Holocaust survivors, women who had also been Soviet partisans, Fania Yocheles Brantsovsky (Brancovskaja, b. 1922) and Rachel Margolis (1921–2015), on the basis of a passage in Margolis's memoirs.<sup>43</sup> Dr. Margolis, one of the creators of Vilnius's modest post-Soviet Holocaust museum, popularly known as The Green House, was long despised by the ultranationalist establishment for having rediscovered, deciphered, and published, in the 1990s, the eye-witness diary of a Christian Polish journalist who had seen tens of thousands of killings by local volunteer shooters at the mass murder site Ponár (Polish Ponary, now Paneriai, outside Vilnius).<sup>44</sup> On May 5, 2008, two armed plainclothes police came looking for the two women.<sup>45</sup> For the first time since the demise of the Soviet Union, Western ambassadors found themselves honoring people being



criminally pursued by prosecutors. The Irish ambassador Dónal Denham took the initiative, and was rapidly followed by the ambassadors of Austria, Britain, Norway, and the United States, among others.<sup>46</sup> Among the figures who provided rapid responses to the first state campaign against Jewish heroes of the anti-Nazi resistance was then UK MP Denis MacShane in his book *Globalizing Hatred*:

The rise of nationalist antisemitic politics can be seen in Lithuania. Jews who escaped to join the anti-Nazi partisans in Lithuania in the Second World War are now being accused by Lithuanian antisemites of taking part in war crimes. Ninety-five percent of Lithuania's 200,000 Jews ... were killed by Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators. Lithuanian Jews who survived the Holocaust are now in their eighties, but such is the antisemitism coming back to life in some quarters of nationalist politics in the Baltic state, it has been possible to open investigations that put Jews on the same level as their executioners.<sup>47</sup>

The joint formal letter of protest from the Jewish Community of Lithuania and the Union of Former Ghetto and Concentration Camp Prisoners noted with some irony in 2008 that "the Prosecution Service's claims that 'hundreds of witnesses are being questioned' are belied by the fact that only Jewish names are being heard in the media."<sup>48</sup>

Of the remaining instances, the best known is of a former partisan wanted for questioning not for alleged war crimes while in the partisans but for allegedly defaming Lithuanian heroes. It came as a shock to Holocaust survivor communities that Interpol was sent to interview Joseph Melamed in Tel Aviv in August 2011, over his book of a dozen years earlier, *Crime and Punishment*, which listed potential Holocaust perpetrators whom he had asked Lithuanian prosecutors to investigate.<sup>49</sup> The situation elicited an Early Day Motion in the British Parliament on September 8, 2011:

That this House condemns attempts by the Lithuanian government to investigate 86 year-old Kovno Ghetto Holocaust survivor Joseph Melamed for slander; welcomes attempts by Mr. Melamed to bring his document listing eyewitness accounts of thousands of wartime Lithuanian Nazi collaborators to the attention of the Lithuanian prosecutor general in 1999; notes that of the nine Lithuanians executed by the Soviet government for Nazi collaboration, whom Mr. Melamed is accused of slandering, one ... in 1941 used his sword to saw off the head of Rabbi Zalman Osovsky and then put it on public display; further condemns repeated attempts of the Lithuanian government to extradite Holocaust survivors such as 90 year-old Lithuanian war hero, Rachel Margolis, from their homes to face war crimes charges.<sup>50</sup>

Earlier, in 2009, the Lithuanian media stormed against the Association of Lithuanian Jews' website for containing a list of local perpetrators. Then, and during the 2011 Interpol saga, Melamed received no support from the Israeli Foreign Ministry or other state authorities, who in fact pressured him to remove the list



from the website. With the exception of one remarkable Israeli ambassador, Chen Ivri Apter (1958–2012),<sup>51</sup> Israel's legendary support for its citizens was largely suspended in the case of its three Holocaust-survivor citizens who were persecuted by a foreign state: Yitzhak Arad, Rachel Margolis, and Joseph Melamed.<sup>52</sup> One of the most academically creative results of the saga is Arad's 2012 paper, "The Holocaust in Lithuania, and Its Obfuscation in Lithuanian Sources," which goes a long way toward unraveling and making clear the nationalistic, political, and historical motivations of a state commission of which he was for many years a member.<sup>53</sup>

### State Glorification of Nazi Collaborators and Perpetrators

As noted near the outset, making heroes of the local killers or their collaborators is not compatible with sincere Holocaust commemoration or sincere regret over the fate of the annihilated minority. This topic has in recent times attracted much attention in Hungary, Ukraine, and elsewhere.<sup>54</sup>

Latvia and Estonia differ markedly from Lithuania, ultimately going back to differences in the wartime history *per se*. They have invested a lot of political capital to honor their respective Waffen-SS legions, which were set up in Estonia in 1942 and Latvia in 1943, in both cases after nearly all those countries' Jews had been killed. The legions themselves were not directly involved in the killing, though views vary on the numbers in each who were, or may have been recycled killers of 1941. There is less mystery about what their role would have been in instances when a Jew in hiding was encountered, about their allegiance to Hitler to whom each swore an oath, and about their wartime activities having served to delay the liberation of the camps further west by the approaching Soviet Army. In Estonia, a long series of events, either financed by the state or supported by major political features, has honored the Waffen-SS.<sup>55</sup> Over the years, there have been numerous Estonia-specific incidents, including celebrations in 2011 of the seventieth anniversary of Hitler's invasion, which drew a pained response from the nation's small Jewish community.<sup>56</sup> In 2014, the last Estonian SS veteran to have been awarded the Nazis' Knight's Cross, received a funeral with full state military honors.<sup>57</sup> In the case of Latvia, the recurring issue has been the allocation of the center of the nation's capital, Riga, for a parade and ceremony glorifying the Waffen-SS on March 16 each year and frequently supported and attended by some mainstream politicians.<sup>58</sup>

Lithuania had no Waffen-SS division, and its militias served the Nazis via other categories of units.<sup>59</sup> For reasons that need to be studied, parts of the academic, political, and intellectual elite of nationalist circles are determined to have as national heroes the leaders, members, and allies of the Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF) and the short-lived Provisional Government (PG), which was active for under two months, from June 23, 1941, a day after Operation Barbarossa was launched, until early August of that year. Before the invasion, when the LAF was based in Berlin, it issued leaflets that expressed the need for ethnic cleansing of



the nation's Jewish minority.<sup>60</sup> In the days from June 23 onward, before the arrival of German forces or before their establishment of control, the LAF and other nationalist groups were responsible for thousands of murders of civilian Jews.

Still, much of modern Lithuanian historiography regards the Lithuanian Activist Front as rebels who drove out the Soviets. That is an ahistorical contention. The Soviet army's retreat and flight eastward on June 22 and 23, 1941, was obviously a result of the Nazis' invasion and more than 3 million German soldiers—the largest invasion in human history—driving eastward. They were not running from the white-arm-banded LAF nationalists who were busy killing local Jews. It is therefore an issue of pain for many, and indeed many Lithuanians, that there are street names, statues, school names, and plaques both for LAF leaders of the early days of the war, many of whom morphed into parts of the Germans' killing machine once it was set up in July 1941.<sup>61</sup> In 2011, on the seventieth anniversary of the events of June and July 1941, a series of events was organized by state-funded bodies to commemorate the LAF and the Provisional Government.<sup>62</sup> The small but vibrant Jewish community protested.<sup>63</sup> For some months, the Lithuanian Parliament's website listed it as a year of remembrance for victims of the Holocaust on its English website, while stating, on its Lithuanian website, that the same year was one of remembrance for the "freedom fighters" of the LAF.<sup>64</sup>

A modest international uproar ensued in 2012 when it was announced that the state was financing the repatriation of the remains of the provisional government's Nazi-puppet Prime Minister, Juozas Ambrazevičius (later Brazaitis) from Putnam, Connecticut for reburial with full honors in Lithuania.<sup>65</sup> Hard as it may be to fathom, the politics of the day kept the event out of mainstream western media. During his brief tenure as prime minister, Ambrazevičius signed orders confirming German demands, *inter alia*, for Jews to be sent to a concentration camp (it was actually the Seventh Fort murder site outside Kaunas), and for the remainder to be incarcerated in a ghetto within one month.<sup>66</sup> The reburial led to a passionate debate in which a number of Lithuanians protested their government's decision. The most dramatic confrontation was on the floor of the Lithuanian parliament, where MP Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis challenged the prime minister and foreign minister on May 17, 2012.

I do not know whether all MPs got it, but I found a booklet that is being distributed for the Brazaitis commemoration. The information published in the booklet has very serious omissions. I have in my hands the protocols of the [1941] Provisional Government of Lithuania relating to the establishment of a concentration camp for Jews, to the nationalization of Jewish property, and to organizing a Jewish ghetto in Kaunas. Unfortunately, this information is not contained in the booklet. Do tell us, is it true that the government financed it and allocated 30,000 litas for the commemoration and moving the mortal remains and for organizing the events?<sup>67</sup>



In 2016, a British-born member of the Vilnius city council initiated an attempt to change the name of a central Vilnius street named for a vocal supporter of ethnic cleansing and expulsion of Lithuanian Jews in 1941. The proposal was for the street to be renamed to honor rescuers. By mid-2017 the issue had died down with no changes.<sup>68</sup>

### *Legislation of Historic “Truth” and Criminalization of Dissent*

The three Baltic States (among others in Eastern Europe) have passed de facto legislation of historical truth of the Baltic nationalist narrative via laws that criminalize the western (and Jewish) narratives, generally speaking indirectly. In the case of Estonia, the Valentine’s Day Law (so dubbed by its critics) of February 14, 2012, enshrines in a parliamentary declaration the heroic status of the Estonian Waffen-SS, thereby in effect criminalizing those who might dare to disagree and consider them Nazi collaborators of which the nation should not be particularly proud.<sup>69</sup> As in other regional laws on the subject, there is enough vagueness (and local complexity) to avert serious European Union scrutiny, but enough force to deter any young historian from compromising his or her career prospects by standing up against this supposed national consensus. The law was sponsored by the defense minister, underlying the ongoing effort to hitch revisionism of the past to current national security.

The Latvian and Lithuanian laws follow a model of a law passed in Hungary in 2010, shortly after the right-wing Fidesz party came to power, where the strategy is to criminalize a trivialization of either genocidal regime by holding to the view that only one was genocidal. Latvia was the last of the Baltics to legislate in this vein. On May 15, 2014, the Latvian parliament (*Saeima*) passed legislation that includes the crime of gross derogation of genocide. Its text includes “genocide” among the crimes “perpetrated by the Soviet Union or Nazi Germany.”<sup>70</sup> Two months later, the Constitutional Court turned down challenges to the law put forward by the “Harmony Centre,” a largely Russian-speaking party.<sup>71</sup> The maximum sentence for violating the law is five years’ imprisonment.

The major and most widely illustrative paradigm emanates from Lithuania. For years there had been talk in parliamentary circles about a law to criminalize the diminution of—as it is seen in these circles—either of the two genocides. The bill’s originators made no attempt to hide the intended legislation’s purpose: “Meanwhile, in the Lithuanian legal system, acts regarding the crimes of Soviet genocide, i.e., their denial or justification, are not criminalized, and, experts say, this is an obstacle in attempting to equate the crimes of Soviet genocide with the Nazi genocide.”<sup>72</sup>

However, the law’s wording was eventually made more ambiguous by phraseology such as “anyone who publicly approves of aggression carried out by the USSR or Nazi Germany against the Republic of Lithuania, the crime of genocide



or other crimes against humanity or war crimes committed by the USSR or Nazi Germany against Lithuanian residents or on Lithuanian territory ... is punishable by limitation of freedom, arrest or loss of freedom for up to two years.”<sup>73</sup>

Analyzing the law’s dismal performance after its first few years, legal scholar Justinas Žilinskas concedes as point of fact its purpose: “The EU Member States with different historic experience (including Lithuania) availed of this opportunity for another step in the desired equal legal treatment of totalitarian regime crimes, by including crimes committed by the USSR in the scope of the crime of denial.”<sup>74</sup>

What was outside the scope of Žilinskas’s inquiry is the lurking intimidation of budding scholars, researchers, and human rights activists. Anyone thinking of disagreeing with Double Genocide would think again, particularly if they were interested in an academic, political, or media career in Lithuania.

Serious objections to the law were put forward by Milan Chersonski, then editor of the Lithuanian Jewish Community’s quadrilingual publication, who was among the very few to openly challenge it. He began an extended signed editorial, called “Criminal Code Now as History Guide,” as follows: “Why did the debates about Lithuania’s history suddenly, as if by agreement, stop? Can it be that once again, as in Soviet times, one cannot freely discuss questions of history or express one’s own opinion? Why? For fear of the historical truth? A wish to ignore failures and defeats? A declared taboo to research them? Can it be that time in Lithuania has reverted to when only one opinion—the official one—was permitted? In those days any other opinion was ‘false’ and punishable: ‘the disobedient ones’ were accused of slander against Soviet authority, and imprisoned.”<sup>75</sup>

But something else was changing in Lithuania around the time of the rise, passage, and implementation of this “red-brown law.” Police and prosecutors began harassing a handful of intellectuals who disagreed with the official Holocaust narrative, in all cases with no charges that ever led to any convictions, and without using even the threat of *this* particular law. The law that was most often invoked was that against slandering heroes of the state, the one that had been used against Joseph Melamed.<sup>76</sup> In 2014, police disturbed the Lithuanian documentary filmmaker (and acclaimed Holocaust truth-teller) Saulius Beržinis with a demand for facts about certain alleged Nazi war criminals he or his circle had presumably berated.<sup>77</sup> But the primary victim of repeated frivolous cases has been Evaldas Balčiūnas for his series of chapters calling on his country to just stop glorifying Holocaust murderers, perpetrators, and collaborators. There has never been a substantive charge against him, and in July 2016 he was found not guilty in the most recent frivolous case, after a dozen 450 kilometer round trips from his home to attend hearings in Vilnius.<sup>78</sup> Such cases seem to be a message to others to avoid disagreeing with state-sponsored commemorations for Holocaust collaborators.



## *Export*

The successor states of Nazi-occupied Europe are littered with local forms of Holocaust obfuscation. It is not comfortable for communities to have in their collective heritage the notion that in living or near-living memory, local people, much less family, and church members, dignitaries or presumed heroes collaborated with an occupying power in the deportation or murder of most or all of their own neighbors of a certain ethnicity or religion, with no opportunity even for those neighbors to change or recant any of their beliefs to save themselves.

What is singularly significant about the case of the Baltics is, first, that collaboration often entailed massive participation in the actual nearby massacres (not deportation), exponentially impacting on the desire for history-repair; and second, that the attempted repair has taken the form of an intricately sophisticated, state-financed, fellow-traveler mobilizing model of revisionism that is linked to supposed current patriotism. It has been the purpose of this paper to outline that model and some aspects of its goals, its mechanics, and its progress.

Third, and outside the scope of this paper, has been the massive campaign to export Double Genocide to the West, most famously by the Prague Declaration of 2008. It is a document that boasts the word “same” five times in referring to Nazi and Soviet crimes, and one that includes the rather Orwellian demand that “all European minds” agree to the text proposed.<sup>79</sup> The export campaign has included a substantial investment in conferences internationally, and in awards and medals for acquiescent western personalities.<sup>80</sup> In 2012, Prof. Danny Ben-Moshe and the present author partnered to produce the Euro-parliamentary rejoinder, the Seventy Years Declaration.<sup>81</sup> These matters are explored elsewhere.<sup>82</sup>

The rapid growth and international dissemination of the Double Genocide movement has been significantly enabled by the geopolitical environment of our century’s second decade. In the more than a quarter century that has elapsed since the collapse of the USSR there has been a seismic shift in the status of Russia, from friendly new democracy in the 1990s to a contemporary Putinist, authoritarian, revanchist, unpredictable behemoth. Its policies encompass gross mistreatment of citizens as well as the posing of threats to neighboring states.<sup>83</sup>

Strangely enough, the US State Department’s response has included a policy shift toward unmitigated acceptance of Holocaust revisionism, as if negating the history of the Anglo-American-Soviet alliance of 1941–1945 is a current geopolitical issue because some of our eastern New Europe allies say so. Checked for some years by the emergence of a second opinion, centered around the Seventy Years Declaration in the European Parliament and beyond, these policies have taken on dramatic new life following the Maidan revolution in Ukraine in 2014. At the same time, Western leaders largely continue to fail to express significant opposition to Ukraine enacting Europe’s harshest Holocaust-obfuscating



free-speech-stifling law yet. This law places dissenters at risk of ten years' imprisonment (in 2015), while a boulevard in the capital was renamed (in 2016) for the fascist leader Stepan Bandera, whose loyal organization butchered hundreds of thousands of Jews and Poles.<sup>84</sup> This was followed in 2017 by the naming of another thoroughfare in the Ukrainian capital for Roman Shukhevych, a fascist wartime leader likewise responsible for the mass murder of civilians.<sup>85</sup>

During the same years, Israeli foreign policy has shifted radically toward indulging the Baltic and other regional states on matters of Holocaust history.<sup>86</sup> The late Barry Rubin was among those advocating accommodations on history issues in Eastern European countries whose votes in the EU, UN, and other international bodies are important to Israel.<sup>87</sup> There has been spirited debate on the subject.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, Israeli foreign policy has so far abandoned to permanent defamation in history three Israeli citizens, all wartime heroes (as anti-Nazi partisans, participants in Israel's 1948 War of Independence, or both). In the absence of written state apologies, they remain defamed for posterity as a result of a Baltic state policy of looking for equal war criminals on both sides.

Hopefully, Western—and Israeli—policymakers will come to see that saying No to gross distortions of history, distortions that incidentally belittle the Allied war effort that brought down Nazism in Europe, is in no way a contradiction to building permanent new ties of friendship with allies and supporting NATO members against aggression. Genuine friendship entails license to disagree on such matters as the last century's history.

It would be a regrettable and tragic irony if the last century's classic Holocaust Denial, defeated in the west by concerted efforts of states, and of scholars, writers, activists, and diverse people of goodwill, would find itself reincarnated by a cunning new paradigm claiming academic status. The discourse, and the growing willingness of the West—and the Jews—to acquiesce, just when the last witnesses are leaving this world is progressing with a momentum that is cause for concern. Lurking in the debate are such timeless issues as racism, antisemitism, equal rights, and free speech (which includes discourse on history). By glorifying those who strove for ethnic purity via mass murder, and protecting them posthumously, by law, from contemporary criticism and historical scrutiny, certain states send a worrying message in our own times about essential values.

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## Notes

1. Sincere thanks to Alex J. Kay and David Stahel for their invitation to contribute this paper, their generosity of spirit in assisting at each stage, and their important suggestions and improvements. They are of course not responsible for the views or faults herein.

2. See, for example, Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 521–522; Dina Porat, “The Holocaust in Lithuania. Some Unique Aspects,” in *The Final Solution: Origins and Implementation*, ed. David Cesarani (London/New York: Routledge, 1994, 159–174), 160; Bernhard Press, *The Murder of the Jews in Latvia, 1941–1945* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2000), x; Gertrude Schneider, “The Two Ghettos in Riga, Latvia, 1941–1943,” in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Studies and Sources on the Destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-Occupied Territories of the USSR, 1941–1945*, ed. Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey S. Gurock (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 181–193, here 183; Efraim Zuroff, *Operation Last Chance. One Man’s Quest to Bring Nazi Criminals to Justice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 113–122.

3. On Lithuania see Dov Levin, “Lithuania,” in *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, vol. 3, ed. Israel Gutman (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 895–899, here 898. On Latvia see Meir Meller [Mejers Melers], interview (2011), <https://youtu.be/17AatLsaDFQ> (last accessed on April 23, 2018).

4. Efraim Zuroff, “The Memory of Murder and the Murder of Memory,” in *Atminties dienos: The Days of Memory*, ed. Emanuelis Zingeris (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1995), 391–405, here 396.

5. See Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 212–254.

6. One of the first to formulate this political double game was N. N. Shneidman in his *Jerusalem of Lithuania: The Rise and Fall of Jewish Vilnius* (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1998), 168.

7. Papers on the subject include Efraim Zuroff, “Eastern Europe: Antisemitism in the Wake of Holocaust Related Issues,” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 17, nos. 1–2 (spring 2005): 63–79; Leonidas Donskis, “Another Word for Uncertainty: Antisemitism in Modern Lithuania,” in *NORDEUROPAForum* 1 (2006): 7–26, <http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/nordeuropaforum/2006-1/donskis-leonidas-7/PDF/donskis.pdf> (last accessed on January 22, 2018); the late Robert Wistrich’s chapter “Lying about the Holocaust,” in his *A Lethal Obsession: Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (New York: Random House, 2010), 631–661 and 1065–1070.

8. Leonidas Donskis, “Text of the Letter from MEP Leonidas Donskis on the Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis Festivities,” in *Defending History*, May 15, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/text-of-the-letter-from-mep-leonidas-donskis-on-the-ambrazevicius-brazaitis-festivities/35485> (last accessed on January 22, 2018). See also his “A Heroic Narrative in Violation of Good Conscience,” in *Defending History*, June 12, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/a-heroic-narrative-in-violation-of-good-conscience/36939> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

9. The term Holocaust Obfuscation was formally proposed by the author in “On Three Definitions: Genocide; Holocaust Denial; Holocaust Obfuscation,” in *A Litmus Test Case of Modernity: Examining Modern Sensibilities and the Public Domain in the Baltic States at the Turn of the Century*, ed. Leonidas Donskis (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 259–277. It was first introduced in the author’s February 28, 2008 presentation at the Rothschild Foundation Europe Talk Series in London. On the subsequent fate of the term and concept for Eastern



Europe more widely, see Michael Shafir, "Conceptualizing Hungarian Negationism in Comparative Perspective: Deflection and Obfuscation," in *L'Europe à contre-pied: idéologie populiste et extrémisme de droite en Europe centrale et orientale*, ed. Traian Sandu (dir.) and Judit Maár (*Cahiers d'Études Hongroises et Finlandaises*, 2014), 265–310, 266, <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/MICHAEL-SHAFIR-ON-NEGATIONISM-IN-HUNGARY3.pdf> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

10. For a chronological monitoring of events to date see the page "Blaming the Victims," in *Defending History*, <http://defendinghistory.com/blaming-the-victims> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

11. While the actual, organized, political, and academic movements for Double Genocide and Holocaust Obfuscation remain understudied, there have been many significant studies on the issues surrounding post-Soviet states' policies on the Holocaust. Among the important academic collections: Jay Hančič and Michael Chase, eds., *Anti-semitism in Post-Totalitarian Europe* (Prague: Franz Kafka Publishers, 1993); Randolph L. Braham, *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press and the Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, 1994); John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic, eds., *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), where, however, the write-up for one state, Lithuania, is by two members of the very state-sponsored commission that is the heart of the problem (see below). See also Michael Shafir's important review of the last-cited volume in *Yad Vashem Studies* 42, no. 2 (2015).

12. The Lithuanian media, for example, regularly uses around 90 percent instead of 95 percent, for example, "About 90% of Lithuania's prewar Jewish population of over 200,000 perished during the Holocaust" (a formulation that also avoids mention of massive local collaboration) in Baltic News Service (hereafter BNS), "Lithuania to Mark Jewish Genocide Day," September 22, 2014, <http://en.delfi.lt/lithuania/society/lithuania-to-mark-jewish-genocide-memorial-day.d?id=65911048> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

13. For example, "Efraim Zuroff Critiques Vilnius Genocide Centre's Latest Attempt to Massage Figures (and Ethics) of Local Holocaust Perpetrators," *Defending History's* October 30, 2013 report, <http://defendinghistory.com/60277/60277> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

14. See, for example, Dovid Katz, "Vilnius Genocide Centre Releases a New Graywash on the Vilna Ghetto" (review of A. Bubnys, *Vilnius Ghetto 1941–1943*), in *Defending History*, November 19, 2013, <http://defendinghistory.com/genocide-center-releases-a-new-graywash-on-the-vilna-ghetto/60925> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

15. United Nations' 1948 Genocide Convention. Chapter 3 proceeds to enumerate the punishable crimes under Chapter 2: "(a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide." In *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly*, December 9, 1948, <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html>; <http://www.un.org/millennium/law/iv-1.htm> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

16. Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation. Analysis of Government. Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.

17. Parliament of Lithuania. *Įstatymas: Dėl atsakomybės už Lietuvos gyventojų genocidą (Law on Responsibility for the Genocide of Lithuanian Inhabitants)*, *Valstybės žinios* (Official



Gazette) 1992, no. 13–342 (1992). See discussion in Justinas Žilinskas, “Broadening the Concept of Genocide in Lithuania’s Criminal Law and the Principle of *Nullum crimen sine lege*,” *Jurisprudencija / Jurisprudence* 4, no. 118 (2009): 333–348, which is rich in facts, but concludes with a nationalist defense of de facto Holocaust revisionism.

18. Dovilė Budrytė, “We Call it Genocide: Soviet Deportations and Repression in the Memory of Lithuanians,” in *The Genocidal Temptation: Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Rwanda, and Beyond*, ed. Robert S. Frey (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004), 79–101, here 83 and 86.

19. Parliament of Latvia, “Chapter IX. Crimes against Humanity and Peace, War Crimes and Genocide. Section 71. Genocide,” in *The Criminal Law. Special Part*, 1998, <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/untc/unpan018405.pdf> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

20. Doyle Stevick, “The Politics of the Holocaust in Estonia: Historical Memory and Social Divisions in Estonian Education,” in *Reimagining Civic Education: How Diverse Societies Form Democratic Citizens*, ed. E. Doyle Stevick and Bradley A. U. Levinson (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 223–230.

21. David Nersessian, “Rethinking Cultural Genocide Under International Law,” in *Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs*, [http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/archive/dialogue/2\\_12/section\\_1/5139.html](http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/archive/dialogue/2_12/section_1/5139.html) (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

22. Parliament of Estonia, “Specific Part PP11. Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes,” in *The Criminal Code. Chapter 611*, 1994, <http://www.preventgenocide.org/law/domestic/estonia.htm> (last accessed on January 22, 2018). Thanks to Reiu Tüür (Vilnius) for translation of Estonian text.

23. Leonidas Donskis, “The Inflation of Genocide,” in *EuropeanVoice.com*, 2009, [http://www.donskis.lt/p/en/1/1\\_/39](http://www.donskis.lt/p/en/1/1_/39) (last accessed January 22, 2018).

24. See Defending History, “The Museum of Genocide Victims,” August 1, 2010, <http://defendinghistory.com/genocide-museum-in-vilnius/45534> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

25. Over the years, many visitors have noticed something wrong, for example, journalist Jonathan Steele: “In the Jerusalem of the North, the Jewish Story is Forgotten,” *The Guardian*, June 20, 2008.

26. Details and images of these features of the museum see Steele: “In the Jerusalem of the North, the Jewish Story is Forgotten.” After years of protest, a Holocaust exhibit cubicle was added in the basement in October 2011, and in late winter or early spring 2015 the three offending images were removed. On the basement cubicle added, see Defending History, “The New Holocaust Room in the Basement of the Genocide Museum in Vilnius,” November 21, 2011, <http://defendinghistory.com/genocide-museum-new-holocaust-room-in-the-basement> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

27. Images of these and related placards at Gruto Park are in Defending History, “Gruto Parkas, the Fun Park near Druskininkai” (2010). English has been corrected in the citation.

28. Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, “Lithuanian Experience of the Soviet Genocide Investigation,” January 13, 2005, <http://www.genocid.lt/Spec/gailius.htm>; removed sometime before June 2015 and preserved by Defending History, <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Holocaust-Envy-page-from-Genocide-Centers-website.pdf> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

29. Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, “Organization Chart,” 2015, <http://genocid.lt/centras/en/296/c/> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).



30. For example, Zuroff, *Operation Last Chance*, 95–111. See also the “Lithuania” section of the Operation Last Chance website: [http://www.operationlastchance.org/LITHUANIA\\_Holocaust.htm](http://www.operationlastchance.org/LITHUANIA_Holocaust.htm) (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

31. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, “Latvia’s History Commission (update of 2002),” <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/society-integration/history/latvia-s-history-commission> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

32. President of Latvia. “Commission of Historians” established November 13, 1998, [http://www.president.lv/pk/content/?cat\\_id=7&lng=en](http://www.president.lv/pk/content/?cat_id=7&lng=en) (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

33. Anti-Defamation League, “ADL National Director Resigns from Latvian Commission of Historians Due to Latvia’s Treatment of the Holocaust,” press release of October 29, 1999, [http://archive.adl.org/presrele/holna\\_52/3498\\_52.html](http://archive.adl.org/presrele/holna_52/3498_52.html) (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

34. Estonian International Commission for Investigation of Crimes Against Humanity. (Undated statement at conclusion of commission’s work), <http://historycommission.ee/> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

35. Anton Weiss-Wendt, “Why the Holocaust Does Not Matter to Estonians,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39, no. 4 (December 2008), 475–497, here 481.

36. Letter from Joseph Melamed, chairman of the Association of Lithuanian Jews, November 6, 1999, to Valdas Adamkus, president of Lithuania, in Joseph Melamed, ed., *Crime and Punishment* (no. 6, Tel Aviv: Association of Lithuanian Jews, 1999), 5, <http://www.defendinghistory.com/1998Nov6ALJ.pdf> (last accessed on January 22, 2018). See also letter from Dr. Efraim Zuroff to President Adamkus, in Simon Wiesenthal Center, Israel Office, press release of November 19, 1998, <http://defendinghistory.com/SWC%20statement%20on%20the%20Commission%20%281998%29.jpg> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

37. Melamed, *Crime and Punishment*.

38. Julius Girdvainis, “The Expert with Blood on his Hands,” *Respublika*, April 22, 2006 (original in Lithuanian), English translation: <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Original-attack-on-Arad-April-2006-inc.-ANUSAUSKAS.pdf> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

39. Yitzhak Arad, *The Partisan: From the Valley of Death to Mount Zion* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979).

40. Girdvainis, “The Expert with Blood on his Hands.”

41. Prosecution Service of the Republic of Lithuania. Prosecution Service of the Republic of Lithuania, “Information on Suspicions Against Yizhak [sic] Arad,” September 10, 2007, <http://www.prokuraturos.lt/News/YizhakArad/tabid/252/Default.aspx> (last accessed on January 22, 2018).

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# MASS VIOLENCE IN NAZI-OCCUPIED EUROPE

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Indiana University Press



This book is a publication of

Indiana University Press  
Office of Scholarly Publishing  
Herman B Wells Library 350  
1320 East 10th Street  
Bloomington, Indiana 47405 USA

iupress.indiana.edu

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The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Kay, Alex J., editor. | Stahel, David, editor.

Title: Mass violence in Nazi-occupied Europe / Alex J. Kay and David Stahel.

Description: Bloomington : Indiana University Press, [2018] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018015120 (print) | LCCN 2018019404 (ebook) | ISBN 9780253036841 (e-book) | ISBN 9780253036803 (hardback : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780253036810 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: World War, 1939–1945—Atrocities. |

Violence—Europe—History—20th century. | Europe—History—20th century.

Classification: LCC D804.G4 (ebook) | LCC D804.G4 M354 2018 (print) | DDC 940.53/37—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018015120>

1 2 3 4 5 22 21 20 19 18



August 2018

SCAN OF PROOF ONLY

OF

# Dovid Katz: “The Baltic Movement to Obfuscate the Holocaust”

in *Mass Violence in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, edited by Alex J.  
Kay and David Stahel. Indiana University Press:  
Bloomington 2018, pp. 235-261

**The version of record is available from the publishers at:**

[http://www.iupress.indiana.edu/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=809233](http://www.iupress.indiana.edu/product_info.php?products_id=809233)