

GENDERED ASPECTS OF THE SOVIET DEPORTATIONS FROM LITHUANIA
WITH THE CASE STUDY OF THE OPERATION 'VESNA', MAY 22-23, 1948

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Abstract

In this work I analyze gendered aspects of the Soviet deportations from Lithuania to distant regions of the Soviet Union in the 1940s – early 1950s. I particularly focus on the biggest mass deportation from Lithuania under the code name ‘Vesna’ (‘Spring’) in May 22-23, 1948, when around 40,000 people were deported. I am presenting the ways in which the context of the deportations (Second World War, armed anti-Soviet resistance movement in Lithuania, *dekulakization* and collectivization policies) made deportations gendered, even though policies seemed to be gender-neutral. In order to answer my research questions I have analyzed official Soviet documents regarding deportations and Lithuanian deportees’ memoirs. I suggest that in many cases women were deported not as active individual anti-Soviet actors (guerilla warriors, heads of *kulak* households or collaborators with the Nazis) but as members of ‘culpable’ groups (*kulaks*, nationalists and/or anti-Soviet elements). My reading of Lithuanian deportees’ memoirs allows me to claim that in them women were often presented as more active than men during their life in exile: they were depicted as developing various strategies of survival, apart from compulsory work they continued to take care of their family members and sometimes other needy people, and in other ways strove to survive under harsh conditions in exile. However, it is necessary to read these narratives taking into account numbers of women and men in exile, and Lithuanian deportees’ assumptions about gender roles. I suggest that deportees’ gender made a significant difference in their experiences of exile.

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Introduction

Between 1930 and 1960 (the period when the Gulag officially existed) around 14 million people were imprisoned in the Gulag camps, out of whom around 1.5 million died. An additional 6 – 7 million experienced exile, which means that they were forcibly transferred from the places they resided at to the destinations appointed by the planners of the deportations, most frequently to the Far North and the Far East of the Soviet Union. Around 1 – 1.5 million deportees died as a result of the forced resettlement.¹ Among the deportees there were around 130 thousand Lithuanians.

The deportations were conducted by the same institution which supervised the Gulag – the NKVD (Rus. НКВД, Народный комиссариат внутренних дел, Narodnyy komissariat vnutrennikh del; Eng. The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) - and this is not the only link between the exile and the camps. First of all, they were related as parts of the same Soviet penal system: some people after serving their term in the camps were released not into freedom but into exile, and the opposite - some deportees, for various crimes committed during their life in exile, were sent to the camps. Also, as deportation was perceived as a milder penalty, in many cases those who were tried for political crimes were sentenced to prisons, camps, labor colonies or executed, while their remaining family members were sent into exile. In addition, those who were sentenced to camps and those who were deported to exile shared some similar experiences: their freedom was constricted, they were subjected to forced labor, often they had to work in the same industries - forestry, construction, mining, etc.; food both in exile and in the camps was scarce, medical help often difficult to access; both deportees and prisoners experienced

¹ Polian, Pavel, *Against Their Will. The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 4, 305-320; Naimark, Norman K., *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 131.

various forms of violence and humiliation by officers, guards, fellow prisoners/deportees and free citizens, etc. Also, some camps were situated in locations not far away from the special settlements (Russian: спецпоселение, spetsposelenie; sometimes referred to as exile settlements, in Russian ссыльное поселение, ssylnoye poselenie) where deportees were forced to live.

For those reasons (to a certain extent similar experiences of deportees and of the Gulag camps' inmates, and due to the fact that some of them subsequently served terms both as prisoners and as deportees) their narratives often share a number of the same characteristics and details. This, in turn, served (though it was certainly not the only reason) to create an image of the penalties in the Soviet Union (in collective memories, media and scholarship) in which the differentiation between the Gulag camps and exile is not always clear and is sometimes entirely indiscriminate, not to mention a homogenous image of deportees and political prisoners, disregarding their gender.²

To make the distinction more clear, I decided to dwell on deportees' memoirs only, though my initial idea for this work was to research the experiences and narratives of both Lithuanian political prisoners and deportees.

My work is to some extent different from both Lithuanian and Western scholars' existing research. In the Lithuanian case, in only a few researches Soviet deportations are the only primary object of analysis: except for Eugenijus Grunskis, whose work I will shortly present in the literature review, and several authors who published more or less brief articles in scholarly journals, other historians discuss the deportations as part of 'bigger' issues: the deportations' role in suppressing the anti-Soviet movement, deportations as part of genocidal policies, and etc. However, when

² See, for example, Norman K. Naimark *Stalin's Genocides*.

it comes to the analysis of memoirs, Lithuanian authors tend to analyze a memoir of a deportee rather than of a political prisoner, even if it is often the same one - Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea) which I also use in my work.

What concerns the Western scholarship, the preparatory phase of my research revealed that the Soviet deportations are also not often a topic as such – they are more often referred to as a part of Stalinist policies of terror, as an example of the Soviet policies in regard to various national and ethnic units or as a proof of the criminal nature of the Soviet regime. And when it comes to the analysis of memoirs, at least by scholars of Russian origins working in the West (for example, Leona Toker), researchers prefer to work with testimonies of the Gulag camps' inmates, rather than of deportees, which is probably due to the fact that political prisoners' memoirs (Evgenia Ginzburg's, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's, Varlam Shalamov's, Eduard Kuznetsov's, volume of women's memoirs "Till My Tale is Told" edited by Simeon Vilensky etc.) are better known to the Western public than those of deportees.

Meanwhile I have decided to analyze the deportations from Lithuania as such, concentrating on the concrete case of the mass deportation in May 1948, and to analyze ten deportees' memoirs, the majority of which has not before been discussed in any scholarly work. It has to be noted here that the 'Vesna' deportation was already to some extent analyzed by Grunskis, who has given overviews of almost every single deportation from Lithuania in 1940-1953, but he did not go deep into discussing the reasons of organizing such a massive deportation in 1948, nor he tried to look for ways in which the gender of the deportees played a role in deportation policies and processes.

In my work I am trying to analyze the relations between official and personal layers of deportations, which means that I am interested in how Soviet officials' assumptions about gender, class and nationality, and the contemporary historical situation influenced the policies of deportations, and how this had various consequences for actual people's lives. With the word 'assumptions' I am referring to assumed gender roles (assumed by the planners of the deportations, and by deportees), activity/passivity and other 'inherent characteristics' of men and women, and presupposed resistance of Lithuanians, especially wealthy peasants and intelligentsia to the Soviet regime. Such assumptions were informing deportation projects and policies, the organization of life in exile as well as the ways in which the deportees were later telling about it in their memoirs.

The first set of questions in my work is how the Soviet authorities and their supporters were invoking particular categories in their policies and public discourse, and what consequences it had for Lithuanians on political and private levels. Secondly, I am trying to look into deportees' lives in exile, as it is narrated in their memoirs, and I am using gender as the main category in my analysis.

In my work I use the concept *gender* as a "constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and [...] a primary way of signifying relationships of power", which people use in various ways in different historical situations in order to organize and conceptualize their own and 'other' societies.³

In short, my main questions are the following:

1) What assumptions about gender and class, and what historical situation influenced the deportation policies of the Soviet authorities, and into what categories

³ Scott, Joan Wallach, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 42.

those assumptions were translated in the contemporary documents? (Why women were deported, though men were assumed to be the “heads of *kulak* households”? What such categories as “bandit supporters – kulaks” reveals about the Soviet authorities’ assumptions about social classes in Lithuania? What historical situation led to the fact that more women than men were deported?)

2) What consequences did those assumptions about the social order which were shared by the Soviet authorities have for the lives of Lithuanians: who were targeted as the main ‘anti-Soviet elements’, who were deported?

3) In what ways did the Soviet authorities’ assumptions about gender and Lithuanians’ own perceptions of gender influenced deportees’ experiences in exile? (How, for example, did Lithuanian deportees react to gender-neutral forced labor division in exile?)

4) How did deportees narrate their gendered experiences in the memoirs? What aspects of life in exile did they see as contrary or corresponding to their understandings about gender roles and norms? What aspects they saw as worth of talking about? What topics and the ways to narrate them share women and men deportees?

As I explained, not only scholars in Lithuania and in the West have partly overlooked the Soviet deportations, but even when some research on the deportations was done, in most of the cases the factor of deportees’ gender was ignored. I believe that it is crucially important to look into deportees’ gender, because female and male deportees’ often experienced the deportations and life in exile differently. According to Pascale Rachel Bos, who was analyzing similar questions in regard to Holocaust experiences, this difference was often “due to gender socialization of the subjects, who

grew up and lived with specific discourses on gender”.⁴ Men and women also remembered and narrated their experiences in particular ways, which, as I hope to show in my work, were not always entirely different, but were undoubtedly influenced by deportees’ gender – their own and the societies’ assumptions and understandings about male and female.

I should emphasize here that I do not see gender as separate from the other categories, such as class, age, ethnicity, the sense of national belonging to particular state or religious creeds of the deportees, and I believe that in many cases some of the aforementioned categories shaped deportees’ lives more significantly than gender: for example, the deportation policies were not particularly different for men and women – they were rather targeted as Lithuanians and as belonging to the class of wealthy/wealthier peasants or intelligentsia.⁵ However, I believe that being one of several intersecting categories, gender is important to be analyzed. Though, as I mentioned, the Soviet deportation policies were often gender-neutral, the deportees experienced the implementation of those policies not only as Lithuanians, belonging to a certain class, but also as males and females of particular ages, having certain religious or philosophical creeds and features of character.⁶ In this work I decided to concentrate on the gender aspect, though a research on the other aforementioned categories (and some factors which were not mentioned here) and their intersection would be not less relevant.

In order to answer my research questions, I am analyzing documents which concern the ‘Vesna’ deportation. Most of them I found in Lithuanian Special

⁴ Bos, Pascale Rachel, “Women and the Holocaust: Analyzing Gender Difference“ in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust*, eds. Elizabeth R. Baer and Myrna Goldenberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 32.

⁵ Boris, Eileen; Janssens, Angélique, “Complicating Categories: An Introduction” in *Complicating Categories: Gender, Class, Race and Ethnicity*, eds. Eileen Boris, Angélique Janssens (International Review of Social History, Supplement 7, 44, 1999), 7, 10.

⁶ Bos, Pascale Rachel, “Women and the Holocaust: Analyzing Gender Difference“, 34-35

Archives, the Department of the Documents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Lithuanian: Lietuvos ypatingojo archyvo Vidaus reikalų ministerijos dokumentų skyrius; LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius), and some were published in original (Russian) language or translated to Lithuanian in various publications which I indicate in footnotes (chapter 3). Those documents were useful for my research in two ways. Firstly, they contain some information, which provides a general understanding about the deportations: who was initiating deportations, how deportations were organized, how files for deported families were compiled, what numbers of deported people were indicated in official documents, etc. Secondly, official Soviet documents concerning the deportations from Lithuania are important to be looked at as a part of general discourse of the Soviet officials' attitude to various groups of Lithuanians. In my reading of those documents, I am looking into the categories which the officials used to define anti-Soviet armed and non-armed fighters, peasants and other people who were targeted for deportations, and also to see to what extent those categories were gender-blind.

As I mentioned earlier, my other group of sources is deportees' memoirs, most of which were published in early 1990s in Lithuania (for the full list and descriptions please see appendix IV; in the majority of cases time when a particular memoir was written is not indicated, but I would guess that most of them were written around the time when they were published, i.e. during the first years after the collapse of the Soviet Union). Among them, six are written by female and four by male deportees. In my reading of those memoirs, I am attempting to see how deportees represented their experiences in exile: about what gender-specific experiences did they (not) talk and how they described their coping with various experiences. In my analysis of official documents and memoirs I am also attempting to reveal how the experiences in exile were related with the deportation policies due to which there were more

women than men in special settlements, and many women arrived to exile as the only family members able to work hard physical work (others were children and elderly).

In my reading of primary and secondary sources I am not attempting to reveal some 'historical truth'; I rather approach the Soviet documents, deportees' memoirs and historiography which I used for contextualizing the deportations as representations of "subjective attitudes [...] and consciousness of the individual and of the society" which appeared in certain circumstances and for particular reasons.⁷ I attempt to recognize and to apprehend the context in which those documents were created, and I am aware that none of the documents which I am analyzing is fully objective, nor is it directly representing 'the truth'.

I see my own contribution to the existing historical knowledge mainly as providing an alternative perspective for analyzing the deportations from Lithuania. My analysis offers an example of revealing gendered assumptions about the social order and the ways in which those assumptions have informed concrete Soviet deportation policies. Secondly, I am showing how particular assumptions have influenced the ways in which the deportees were conceptualizing their own experiences and narrating them. By introducing the category of gender into my analysis of deportees' experiences I expect to disclose a variety of experiences: to show various ways in which the Soviet policies of deportations affected people, diversity of the ways how the deportees were dealing with the exile experiences and later narrated them. I want to demonstrate that gender was one of the factors which have determined this diversity, though it was never detached from the other categories of social organization.

I start my work (chapter 1) with the literature review in which I briefly present some of the literature on deportations and on gendered experiences in exile and

⁷ Bukowski, Jacek, "Biographical Method in Polish Sociology" in *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1974): 28.

deportees' narratives, which I use for my work. In chapter 2 I am giving an overview of the historical context of Lithuania's history as independent state in 1918-1940, Lithuania's incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940, the situation in Lithuanian territory during the Second World War, the anti- Soviet guerilla war in 1944-1953, and the first mass deportation from Lithuania in 1941. In this chapter I also discuss in more detail the Soviet deportations in general. In regard to my work, and especially chapter 2, I have to state here that my representation of events does not claim to be 'the true' version of 'historical facts' – it is only one way of narrating the history of Lithuania and the Soviet Union in the first half of the 20th century, which I see as making the most sense for me. In chapter 3 I am analyzing documents which concern the 'Vesna' deportation in May 22-23, 1948, and try to answer to some of the questions mentioned earlier. Chapter 4 is dedicated for deportees' memoirs: I am looking into the main topics which most of those memoirs share, and try to filter gendered experiences of exile as they were narrated in the deportees' texts.

Literature review

In this chapter I will briefly present some literature which I use in my research. I will discuss here only the publications which directly and significantly shaped my theoretical framework and the methodology of my research. The literature which I will discuss here can be divided into two groups: 1) literature regarding the Soviet deportations in general, and 2) more specific literature, in which authors suggest the ways of applying gender as a category of analysis for discussing experiences of those who were subjected to deportations to/in the Soviet Union and for analyzing deportees' narratives.

1.1. Literature regarding the Soviet deportations

The body of scholarly literature concerning the deportations in and to Soviet Russia and the Soviet Union is not massive. In most cases the authors are writing about the deportations as about a part of the Stalinist policies of terror, such as imprisonment in the Gulag labor camps, terror-famine (the Holodomor) in Ukrainian SSR in 1932-1933, mass purges or mass killings. Only a few authors center their research around the Soviet deportations.⁸ Among them is Lynne Viola and Norman K. Naimark.

Lynne Viola's in her *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements* (2007) examines one of the first waves of the mass deportations in the Soviet Union in 1930-1931, and bases her research mostly on archival material (orders, various officers' correspondence, official reports, etc).⁹ To substantiate her findings about the conditions of deportees' lives in exile she also uses some personal deportees'

⁸ However, I did not analyze Russian scholars' works, and I acknowledge this as a drawback of my research; I assume that in Russian historiography there is more research focused on deportations.

⁹ Viola, Lynne, *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

documents – their memoirs and letters from exile. In her work Viola presents the general structure of the Soviet deportations (who were deported, for what reasons, what institutions were involved in organizing the mass deportations, how were the deportations carried out, how was the life of the deportees in exile organized) which was not much different in the 1940s - early 1950s – the period which I am researching. When talking about the driving forces of the mass deportations in the 1930s, Viola presents the ideological and the pragmatic aspects of sending several millions people to internal exile. Her findings show that though initially the planners of the deportations had concentrated on the ideological aspect, perceived deportations as one of the means to suppress the ‘class enemies’ of the Soviet state, and discussed the possibility to ‘re-forged’ the ‘enemies of the people’ through labor, very soon the practical aspect became more important.¹⁰ Viola quotes extensive parts of official orders, reports, and the correspondence among high-ranking Soviet officers to show that around 1931-1932 the ideological meaning of deportations became secondary, and the deportees’ were mainly seen as “an unfree labor force for colonization and the extraction of the Soviet Union’s vast natural resources”, i.e. it was not the punitive but the pragmatic aspect of the deportations which was the most important for the Soviet planners.¹¹ However, Viola here analyzes only deportations which targeted *kulaks* – supposedly wealthy farmers – but does not discuss the reasons to deport the other groups of people – ethnic, national or religious communities.

Partly contradicting Viola’s findings, other researcher of the Soviet deportations, Norman K. Naiman, emphasized the ideological aspect of deportations as prevailing over the pragmatic one.¹² In his book *Stalin’s Genocides* (2010) Naiman acknowledges, that in the initial stage the Soviet authorities saw deportations as the way to achieve two

¹⁰ Viola, Lynne, *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin’s Special Settlements*, 58-61.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 61.

¹² Naimark, Norman K., *Stalin’s Genocides* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 2010).

goals at the same time – to punish / to re-educate / to destroy (rhetoric varied) the class enemies (*kulaks* and others who were seen as opposing the Soviet regime), and to use their labor for colonization and industrialization of desolate areas of the Soviet Union.¹³ But, he claims, already in the very beginning of the deportations (1920s – 1930s) the idea of economical efficiency of deportees' labor was too far away from reality – given the absence or lack of tools, food, shelter which would be adequate for severe climatic conditions, medical care and other factors the mortality rates of deportees (also called special settlers, in Russian спецпоселенцы, spetsposelency) were gross.¹⁴ Gradually the importance of economic factor was decreasing even more: most of other groups which were deported were targeted on national/ethnic and political basis, and, from Naimark's point of view (and I subscribe to his opinion), the ideological aspect – repressing the real, potential or imagined enemies by exiling the 'punished peoples' (in Russian: наказанные народы, nakazannye narody) – very soon became the primary goal of deportations.¹⁵ As I will show in chapter 3, I perceive the deportations of Lithuanians in the same light as Naimark does: I do not think that the main reason to deport 130,000 people from Lithuania in 1940-1941 and 1944-1953 (and keeping in mind even bigger numbers of deportees from other countries and regions) was to provide a labor force to the distant parts of the Soviet Union. Lack of cheap labor force might have been one of the reasons for mass deportations, but as much more important I see the Soviet authorities' perception (not groundless, though) of Lithuanians as a national group causing problems for the regime – resisting collectivization and leading a protracted armed anti-Soviet partisan war (1944-1953).

Among the Lithuanian historians, who are writing about the Soviet deportations from Lithuania, only Eugenijus Grunskis did a comprehensive research of all waves of

¹³ Naimark, Norman K., *Stalin's Genocides*, 60.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 61-69; 95-96.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 94, 98, 120, 133, 135.

mass deportations. He is the author of the several times republished book *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940-1941, 1945-1953* [The Deportations of the Residents of Lithuania 1940-1941, 1945-1953], which includes a selection of various documents, as well as of a number of articles and chapters of other books.¹⁶ He bases his work on the archival material which concerns the mass deportations, and mainly concentrates on the numbers of the deportees during all the mass deportations from Lithuania: how many of the residents of Lithuania were planned to be deported and how many actually were sent into exile, what social classes they belonged to, where they were sent to, how many survived, etc. A lot of data which I use in chapter 3 of this work comes from Grunskis' research; many documents translated to Lithuanian which I refer to can be found in the volumes compiled and edited by him, which I indicate in the footnotes. Though Grunskis does not suggest any deeper analysis of the deportations as part of the Soviet political, social or economical system, nor talks about gendered aspects of the deportations and the deportees' lives, his work was still very useful for my own research, because he presents a huge amount of data, based on the archival sources in regard to the Soviet deportations from Lithuania. This was confirmed by my own research in the archives: there was difficult to find anything what Grunskis did not quote, refer to or analyze.

However, it seems that Grunskis' comprehensive work has made other Lithuanian scholars think that in regard to the Soviet deportations from Lithuania there is nothing more to be researched: after the last edition of Grunskis' aforementioned book was published in 1996, only few works on this subject have appeared. Among them probably the most important are Vytautas Tininis' (2003) *The Crimes of The Communist*

¹⁶ Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940-1941, 1945-1953 metais* [Deportations of the Residents of Lithuania, 1940-1941, 1945-1953] (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, Pasaulio lietuvių bendruomenė, 1996); Grunskis, Eugenijus, "Lietuvos gyventojų deportacijos 1940-1952" [Deportations of the Residents of Lithuania, 1940-1952] in *Terorizuojama ir naikinama Lietuva 1938-1991* [Destroyed and Terrorized Lithuania, 1938-1991], ed. Kedys, J.P. (Klaipėda: Ryto spaustuvė, 1994).

Regime in Lithuania in 1944-1953, where a separate comprehensive chapter is dedicated to the deportations, and Arvydas Anušauskas (2008) *Deportations of the Population in 1944-1953*.¹⁷ Both Tininis and Anušauskas present the deportations as part of the criminal Soviet policies, and use their extensive data to support the claim that the Soviet regime was criminal, violating humans' rights and dignity, and in some cases even genocidal.¹⁸ The issue of presenting the Soviet policies as genocidal I will discuss in more detail in chapter 3.

1.2. Analyzing memoirs from a gender perspective: literature

While in Lithuania most historians chose to research the official documents concerning the deportations and to concentrate on numbers, the scholarly work about Latvian and Estonian situation, where the Soviet deportations took place at the same time and with nearly the same intensity as from Lithuania, is more miscellaneous. The work of women historians Tiina Kirss and Mara Lazda is particularly inspiring for me. Those authors stepped further than analyzing the official Soviet documents: they analyzed some deportees' memoirs and oral stories, and introduced a gender dimension into their research of the exiles' experiences.

Mara Lazda (2005) in her article "Women, Nation, and Survival: Latvian Women in Siberia 1941-1957" analyzes the ways in which the Latvian women told (in both written and oral accounts) about the sources of strength which helped them to survive in

¹⁷ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Deportations of the Population in 1944-1953* (Tarptautinė komisija nacių ir sovietinio režimo nusikaltimams Lietuvoje įvertinti [The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupational Regimes in Lithuania], 2008); Tininis, Vytautas, *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje 1944-1953. Sovietų Sąjungos politinių struktūrų, vietinių jų padalinių bei kolaborantų vaidmuo vykdant nusikaltimus 1944-1953m.* II tomas [The Crimes of The Communist Regime in Lithuania in 1944-1953. The Role of the Political Bodies, their Local Subdivisions and Collaborationists of the Soviet Union in Committing Crimes in 1944-1953. Vol. 2]. (Vilnius: Tarptautinė Komisija Nacių ir Sovietinio okupacinių režimų nusikaltimams įvertinti, 2003).

¹⁸ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Deportations of the Population in 1944-1953*, 1-3, http://www.komisija.lt/Files/www.komisija.lt/File/Tyrimu_baze/II%20Sovietine%20okupacija%20I%20etapas/Nusikaltimai/Tremimai/ENG/A.%20Anusauskas.%20Galutinis%20variant.pdf, accessed March 15, 2012.

exile.¹⁹ According to Lazda, many women deportees' construct their stories in particular ways, presenting their daily experiences in exile as painfully challenging their identities as women: they tell about 'men's work' - as they understood it – which women were assigned to do, sexual harassment, the lost possibility to look 'womanly' by wearing clothes which they felt were appropriate for women and etc.²⁰ As I will show in chapter 4, those topics were also important for Lithuanian women deportees and for some men deportees. Lazda noticed one more aspect which many Latvian women deportees' share in their narratives, and which they, I could add, share with Lithuanian women deportees': in their stories they present prevailing assumptions women's roles in family and in society (even if those assumptions were different among fellow Latvian deportees and among those whom they met in exile - guards and other deportees) as something which helped them to survive in many cases.²¹ Lazda substantiates her finding with examples from women's narratives, where they narrated women's "innate strength", their physically and psychologically greater coping strategies in comparison with men's, which they found in themselves in the harsh conditions of Siberian exile, as well as the possibility to connect with other women, notwithstanding their different national or ethnic boundaries.²²

Analyzing female deportees' memoirs, as Lazda did, Tiina Kirss published several works on the Soviet deportations from Estonia and particular women's experiences in exile. My own work was informed by two of her publications: the article (2005) "Survivorship and the Eastern Exile: Estonian Women's Life Narratives of the 1941 and 1949 Siberian Deportations" and a volume she edited, called *She Who Remembers*

¹⁹ Lazda, Mara, "Women, Nation, and Survival: Latvian Women in Siberia 1941-1957" in *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 36, issue 1 (2005): 1-12.

²⁰ Lazda, Mara, "Women, Nation, and Survival: Latvian Women in Siberia 1941-1957", 4-5.

²¹ *Ibid*, 7.

²² *Ibid*, 7.

Survives (2004).²³ In the aforementioned article, which is in general the best example of analysis of the Soviet deportations from a gender perspective known to me, Kirss analyses several very important aspects, which I also try to cover in my work. First of all she talks about the statistic data regarding deportations Estonia to the Soviet Union (which is more or less similar to Lithuanian case, as I will discuss in chapters 3 and 4) and its implications – more women than men were deported to the special settlements, which led to several important issues: women were those who in many cases were making the most important decisions about their own and the people’s close to them lives, they were searching for and employing various strategies of survival, therefore they were active historical agents, and they tell about themselves as such.²⁴ On the other hand, though in both the Estonian and the Lithuanian cases more women survived to tell their stories, Kirss claims that the Estonian canonical narrative is dominated by men’s stories, which is not true for Lithuania.²⁵ I will talk about this more in chapter 4.

In Estonian women’s accounts of Siberian exile, Kirss distinguishes four main thematic foci which are very similar to Lazda’s findings, and at least some of which, as I will show, were also important for Lithuanian women deportees: 1) the body, sexuality, the threat of sexual violence; 2) shifts in gender roles, women doing “men’s work”; 3) gender solidarity and coping strategies, and 4) specific demands and models of motherhood.²⁶ In this same article Kirss emphasizes that when analyzing those topics in the deportees’ narratives one has to take into account not only the narrators’ gender, but also their age when the events took place and when they narrated stories, narrators’

²³ Kirss, Tiina, “Survivorship and the Eastern Exile: Estonian Women’s Life Narratives of the 1941 and 1949 Siberian Deportations” in *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 36, issue 1 (2005): 13-38; Kirss, Tiina. *She Who Remembers Survives: Interpreting Estonian Women’s Post-Soviet Life Stories* (Tartu: Tartu University Press, 2004).

²⁴ Kirss, Tiina, “Survivorship and the Eastern Exile: Estonian Women’s Life Narratives of the 1941 and 1949 Siberian Deportations” in *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 36, issue 1 (2005): 22-23, 27-29.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 22.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 22-23.

social background, the context in which the narrative was presented, its ideological implications and etc.²⁷

Though in this work I do not make any explicit comparison between the Nazi and the Soviet policies and the experiences of people who were subject to them, the literature concerning the Holocaust informed my research to a great extent. Among a vast body of literature in regard to the experiences of the Holocaust and theoretical issues of dealing with the survivors' memoirs and oral accounts, the work which I see as offering the most important insights and theoretical framework for my research is Pascale Rachel Bos's "Women and the Holocaust: Analyzing Gender Difference" in the volume *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust* (2003), which I already shortly presented in the introductory part.²⁸ In this essay Bos provides argument for using gender as an analytical tool in the analysis of Holocaust narratives, which might be also applied to the narratives of Baltic deportees. Basing her analysis on feminist scholarship she discusses the differences which gender as an analytical tool brings to the research: it challenges the dominant, often male-centered and universalized/universalizing discourses, it brings a researcher closer to particular cases and reveals the plurality of experiences. If the narrator's (in case of dealing with narratives) gender, together with her or his class, age, ethnic and national identity, education level and other factors are taken into account, one gets a more exhaustive view of the concrete case and a clearer understanding of miscellaneous experiences.²⁹ The other important issue Bos discusses is contemporary scholars' (including herself) perception of "reality [as] not only positional and subjective but also constructed in and through language", when researchers are not looking for 'truth' but for reconstructions

²⁷ Ibid, 18, 22.

²⁸ Bos, Pascale Rachel, "Women and the Holocaust: Analyzing Gender Difference" in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust*, eds. Elizabeth R. Baer and Myrna Goldenberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003): 23-50.

²⁹ Ibid, 24-25, 34-35.

and representations, i.e. for the ways in which particular individuals conceptualize and articulate their experiences.³⁰ As I already briefly explained in the introduction, in my work I am using an approach which is very similar to Bos's: rather than seeking to unearth the 'historical truth' I am concentrating on the ways in which men and women narrated their experiences in exile, and attempting to see how their narratives were influenced by their assumptions about gender norms and gender roles.

For me the exemplar text of dealing with deportees' narratives as discourses and of looking for the ways in which the deportees reconstructed their experiences and chose to present themselves, is Katherine Jolluck's (2002) *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet Union during World War II*.³¹ The author analyzes how the narratives of Polish deportees were shaped by the narrators' gender, social class, their feeling of national identity, which, she finds, had a direct link to creeds, prejudices, values and etc. Jolluck's research revealed that in the case of Polish women, who during the Second World War were deported to the Soviet Union, their national and gender identities were crucially important for them. According to the author, when telling about their exile experiences Polish women were striving to emphasize the significance and interrelation of their self- and group- identification as Polish women, and their feeling that they were suffering not as individuals but as parts of the Polish nation. She also found out that in their narratives Polish women tended to present their identities as women in opposition to that of women's of other nationalities, especially to 'criminals', 'prostitutes', 'child-murderers', 'animal-like' 'barbaric', 'Asiatic' Russians and Central Asians.³² Though my analysis of Lithuanian women's memoirs did not reveal such strategies of women's self-presentation, Jolluck's work informed my research in significant ways. Most importantly, she offers a comprehensive analysis of the ways in

³⁰ Ibid, 30.

³¹ Jolluck, Katherine, *Exile and Identity: Polish Women in the Soviet union during World War II* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002).

³² Ibid, 259, 268, 276-278.

which assumptions about gender norms (what does it mean to be a woman, how should she act in particular situations, etc.) can be inextricably related with a nationalist narrative.

This is certainly not a full list of the literature which I am directly or indirectly using in my work. Some other authors, whose findings and insights were significant for my research, will be introduced in the following chapters.

2. Historical context

2.1. The social and political situation of independent Lithuania 1918-1940; (non-) reaction to the first Soviet occupation in June 1940; the first mass deportation in June 1941

2.1.1. The political situation of independent Lithuania, 1918-1940

Since the end of the 18th century Lithuanian territories were under Russian tsar's rule. However, the processes of formation of nation-states which were going on in Europe in 19th century reached the borders of the Russian Empire as well. Though Lithuanian intellectuals were developing the ideas of re-establishment of an independent or at least autonomous Lithuanian state already in the end of the 19th century, only the political and social upheaval of the First World War brought their ideas closer to reality.

A Lithuanian National Council consisting of 20 persons was formed during the Vilnius Assembly, 18-22 September 1917. On 16 February 1918 the Council declared Lithuanian independence proclaiming Lithuania's separation from any state ties that existed with other nations.³³ At that moment the state was still under German occupation, therefore independent administrative actions became available only after Prince Max of Germany announced on 15 October 1918 that countries occupied by Germany had the right to self-government. In the beginning of November 1918 a provisional Lithuanian constitution was adopted, which announced the transformation of the Lithuanian National Council into the State Council holding legislative powers, and the establishment of the three-men presidency led by Antanas Smetona. A

³³ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward* (London: Routledge, 2001), 5.

Constituent Assembly was elected by universal suffrage in April 1920; it introduced a permanent constitution in 1922.³⁴ The majority members of the Assembly were of peasant origins and supposedly willing to work for the interests of their constituents, who were also predominantly peasants. A highly democratic form of government was established in the constitution of 1922, with the president of the state as more or less a figurehead. The legislative assembly (in Lithuanian: *Seimas*) had the power to dismiss the president by a two-thirds majority. The prime minister was appointed by the president but the cabinet was subordinate to the *Seimas*, and the president could not take any action without cabinet's approval.³⁵ This democratic constitution claimed to guarantee civil rights, individual freedoms and rights of minorities, and included a paragraph of equal rights for women, but there were some legal restraints on the freedom of press and assembly, which were mainly directed against communists.³⁶

Various scholars claim that such constitutional structure was adopted from western models and not always consistent with the local situation. One of the problems was that multi-party democracy resulted into the proliferation of parties which were not inclined to establish workable coalitions. This led to multifold cabinet crises and tended to discredit this form of democracy.³⁷ However, until 1926 there was some continuity, for example the domination of coalition of Christian Democrats and Populists, though they had some unsolvable disagreements, such as in regard to relations between the church and the state.³⁸ More radical parties, such as the Social Democratic Party, or the Nationalist Party, which emerged in 1924, for the time being remained a minority.

³⁴ Ibid, 5-7.

³⁵ Ibid,15; Eidintas, Alfonsas, Žalys; Vytautas, *Lithuania in European politics: The Years of the First Republic, 1918-1940* (London: Macmillan, 1997),122-123.

³⁶ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 19; Communists were proscribed in 1919 but reappeared in the 1920s underground and behind some front organizations.

³⁷ Ibid, 20-21.

³⁸ Between 1920 and 1926 four parliamentary elections took place.

However, by 1926 Christian Democrats were losing support, and the new ruling coalition consisting of Populists, Social Democrats, and Minorities parties was created. They formulated a programme which reflected various interests – Social Democrats were demanding removal of legal restraints which were aimed mainly at communists, and amnesty for those who were imprisoned under those laws; Populists suggested cutting the budgets for religious teaching in schools, reduce the size of ecclesiastic landholdings, and to introduce civil registration of births and marriages; the Polish minority raised the requirement to increase the number of Polish schools. This cluster of political intentions was already enough to arouse alarm in the Nationalist Party (which included some leading figures of the Lithuanian independence movement, such as Basanavičius and Smetona), but the decision to retire some senior army officers and to cut defense expenditure concurrent with the signing of Soviet-Lithuanian non-aggression treaty on 28 September 1926 briskly stirred military circles: they accused the government of betraying the nation, of ‘Bolshevization’ and ‘Polonization’ of the country.³⁹

At the same time, Poland was facing a similar instability of the parliamentary system, which culminated in its former Head of State Marshal Josef Piłsudski’s coup d’état in May 1926, after which he became the Prime Minister, General Inspector of the Armed Forces and the Minister of Military Affairs of Poland, which generally meant his authoritarian rule until his death in 1935.⁴⁰ Piłsudski’s coup d’état offered the Lithuanian army an example to follow. Lithuanian army officers organized a similar coup on 17 December 1926, under the pretext of saving the young state from a communist plot.⁴¹ The army leadership was close to Antanas Smetona, and the *Seimas* soon appointed him the head of state, though the major groups of assembly - Populists

³⁹ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 22-23.

⁴⁰ Rothschild, Joseph, “The Ideological, Political and Economical Background of Piłsudski’s Coup d’état of 1926” in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 2, June (1963): 224-244.

⁴¹ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 23.

and Social Democrats - boycotted the session. The *Seimas* dissolved itself in the beginning of 1927, and was not convened for the next nine years. The Christian Democrats supported the coup, but soon it became clear that this was not exactly what they were seeking for – instead of safe right-wing nationalist government Smetona with the Nationalists took the authoritarian route. They decreed a new constitution in 1928, though it was referred to as an amendment of the 1922 constitution. The activities of all political parties, apart from the Nationalist Union, were firmly restricted, and in 1936 forbidden altogether, which led to arrests and the imprisonment of many opposition leaders. Nevertheless, the 1928 constitution was not as radical as the one of 1938 - the latter did not determine the re-election of president, so he had perpetual reign and was granted almost absolute power: he could legislate without *Seimas* approval, dissolve *Seimas*, etc.⁴² In addition, during the convention of the Nationalist Union in 1933, Smetona was proclaimed the Leader of the People, in the style of totalitarian dictators. His ideology was highly nationalist: an individual was declared to be subordinate to the demands of the nation, discipline and conformity to the national will was declared superior to personal freedom, the leader's will supreme.⁴³

However, various historians concluded that though Smetona's regime was undoubtedly authoritarian, it was neither fascist nor totalitarian in general, as his ideology did not penetrate so deep into the public lives of citizens as in extreme cases.⁴⁴ Smetona himself was described as lacking temperament and personality requisite for a totalitarian leader: he was often accused of his reluctance to use excessive force; he also

⁴² Sužiedėlis, Saulius A., *Historical Dictionary of Lithuania* (Lanham and London: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 276-277.

⁴³ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija* [Lithuania 1940-1990: History of occupied Lithuania], ed. Anušauskas, Arvydas (Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, (2005) 2007), 30-32.; Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 24-26.

⁴⁴ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 27-28; Misiunas Romuald J., Taagepera Rein. *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940-1980* (London: C. Hurst, 1983), 13; *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 33.

did not have oratorical power. In addition, at least in the official discourse he seemingly did not discriminate against ethnic minorities.⁴⁵

Though the activities of political parties were constrained, most social and civic organizations were permitted. The court system remained independent, the market economy was dominated by co-operatives and private enterprises, state subsidies to religious denominations and schools of minorities were retained, and most of the sources indicate Smetona's strong support for the Jewish community in Lithuania, though it does not mean that anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism were absent from society.⁴⁶ One of the biggest organizations was the *Lietuvos šaulių sąjunga* (Lithuanian Riflemen's Union), a nationalistic voluntary paramilitary organization established in 1919. The main aim of the union was military training. Both women and men could become its members. In 1936 it became subordinate to the Chief of the Army, growing to more than 62 thousand members, among them around 15 thousand women, in 1939.⁴⁷ After the Soviet occupation in June 1940 Lithuanian Riflemen's Union was closed, its members were subjected to persecutions, many of them were arrested, deported, killed. A part of those who survived the first Soviet occupation voluntarily served to Germans during Nazi occupation and were involved in killing Lithuanian and Polish Jews, Poles, Russians.⁴⁸

In the Constituent Assembly (1920) there were eight women out of 150 members, in the first *Seimas* (1922) there were five women out of 90 members, in the second (1923) – three out of 78, in the third (1926)- four out of 92, but under Smetona's rule women's participation in the state's government became possible only on the local level.

⁴⁵ Sabaliūnas, Leonas, *Lithuania in Crisis: Nationalism to Communism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 33-35.

⁴⁶ Ibid; Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 27; Vareikis, Vygantas, *Preconditions of Holocaust. Anti-Semitism in Lithuania (19th century to mid-20th century (15 June 1940))* (International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, 2004), 22-45.

⁴⁷ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 63.

⁴⁸ Sužiedėlis, Saulius A., *Historical dictionary of Lithuania*, 255-256; Voren, Robert van, *Undigested Past: The Holocaust in Lithuania* (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2011), 89-90.

Among 49 members of the fourth *Seimas*, which was elected after nine years of non-existence and only from the candidates of the Nationalist Union, there were no women.⁴⁹ The only woman who was allowed to participate in the elections – Eugenija Klupšienė – got a considerably high number of votes, but less than the male candidates, though the sources indicate that there was some evidence that the poll was falsified and at least three thousand additional votes which she got were concealed.⁵⁰ In addition, in the period between the third and the fourth *Seimas* (1927-1936) most women again lost the right to vote in local elections, as having property was a precondition to suffrage.⁵¹

As mentioned before, in the second half of the 1930s Smetonas's regime was getting harsher: in 1936 all political parties apart from the Nationalist Union were banned, the military and the police had a right to arrest or fine without a trial whomever they perceived as participating in sedition, and the constitution of 1938 granted Smetona almost absolute power. These restrictions of human rights, disrespect of the will of citizens and difficult economic situation were hardening anti-governmental sentiments and the determination of underground parties and organizations to overthrow Smetona's rule. Leftist organizations were growing stronger, and by the end of the 1930's the Lithuanian Communist Party, existing in the underground from 1918, already had around 1,400 members in comparison with a few hundreds ten years earlier.⁵²

⁴⁹ Truska, Liudas, "Parlamentarizmo I Lietuvos Respublikoje (1918-1940) bruožai" [The Features of Parliamentary System in the First Lithuanian Republic (1918-1940)] in *Parlamento studijos*, vol. 2 (2004), http://www.parlamentostudijos.lt/Nr3/Istorija_Truska.htm, accessed March 23, 2012.

⁵⁰ Jurėnienė, Virginija, "Lietuvos moterų taryba ir jos veikla valstybėje XXa. 3-4 dešimtmečiuose" [Lithuanian Women's Council and its activities in the state in 1930s-1940s] in *Parlamento studijos*, vol. 4 (2005), http://www.parlamentostudijos.lt/Nr4/4_politika_Jureniene.htm, accessed March 22, 2012.

⁵¹ Karčiauskaitė, Indrė, "For Women's Rights, Church and Fatherland: The Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organization 1908-1940" in *Aspasia*, vol. 1 (2007): 141-142.

⁵² Around 54.4 percent of the members of Lithuanian Communist Party (LKP) in the beginning of 1940 subscribed as Lithuanians, 30.6 percent as Jewish, 14.2 percent as Russians. Since 1936 the chairman of LKP was Antanas Sniečkus, who later, from the summer 1940 until 1974, held the highest political positions in Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic: he was the First Secretary of the state and the First Secretary of the Central Committee of Lithuanian Communist Party- consequently, among the other things, he also signed most of the decrees regarding deportations from Lithuania. *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 32, 91-92; Grunskis, Eugenijus. *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940-1941, 1945-1953 metais*, 20, 22, 281.

Though in the face of growing international political tensions Smetona was ensuring Lithuanian citizens that he, his government and the military were capable of safeguarding Lithuanian independence and that they were able to manage every situation in the best possible way, several contemporaries testified that the President by that time had already lost the trust of the majority of people, and some of them initially accepted Soviet occupation in 1940 as the opportunity to overthrow the authoritarian leader, i.e. as a positive course of events.⁵³

2.1.2. The economic and social situation of independent Lithuania 1918-1940

In the interwar period Lithuania remained predominantly agricultural, with most of the citizens living in rural areas, engaged in farming. Industrialization was increasing, but in 1939 there were only about 40,000 industrial workers in Lithuania. Along with new factories the government was funding communication infrastructure - roads, railways, telecommunications - which was undeveloped during Russian reign. After establishing independence, Lithuania re-orientated international trade towards West: its main trading partners became United Kingdom and Germany, while with the former major partner Russia trading was of a low scale. After he seized power, Smetona was promoting export-based agriculture economy with an emphasis on meat, poultry and dairy products, which proved to be profitable even though the world economic depression was strongly detrimental to Lithuania's export economy.⁵⁴

One of the main modifications during the interwar period was a radical reform of landholding which started in 1919 and lasted for nearly twenty years. Many villages were dispersed into individual granges; various improvements allowed having more infields; professional agronomists took positions after finishing newly established

⁵³ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 35-36, 40.

⁵⁴ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 11-13.

schools; they were introducing new crops and more efficient species of plants and animals into private and industrial farms.⁵⁵ However, agriculture was not highly efficient and for several years of the economic depression became even loss-making. One of the reasons of inefficiency was the minuteness of farms: according to the data of the 1930 census 45 percent of all farms were smaller than 10 hectares and only 10 percent were bigger than 30 hectares. In addition to this, the abatement of mass emigration from Lithuania which was ongoing until the end of the First World War resulted into overpopulation of residents in the rural areas. These factors, together with comparatively high taxes and low payment for products were making peasants' lives difficult.⁵⁶ In 1939 73.8 percent of people were involved in agriculture and only 8.1 percent in industry and crafts. However, the change in the proportion of urban and rural dwellers changed more significantly: the share of the residents of towns increased from 13 percent in 1913 to 27 percent in 1940. Like in the previous period, city dwellers were predominantly of non-Lithuanian ethnic background. Overall (in cities and in rural areas), those who defined their ethnicity as Lithuanian constituted around 80 percent of the population in March 1939, Jewish - 7 percent, German - 4 percent, Polish - 3 percent, Russian - 2 percent.⁵⁷

The cultural achievements of independent Lithuania were significant. By the beginning of the Second World War only 5.9 percent of people were illiterate, in comparison with more than two thirds of the population in 1897. Around four thousand students were attending newly established institutions of higher education in 1939.⁵⁸ Around one third of all students in the institutions of higher education were women, and

⁵⁵ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 20-21.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 22.

⁵⁷ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 9. Such constitution of the population in regard to the ethnical background of citizens was calculated before the incorporation of Vilnius region (October 1939) and loss of Klaipėda (March 1939), after which the proportion of Jewish and Polish residents increased, and share of German residents decreased.

⁵⁸ There was no operative university in the territory of Lithuania from mid-nineteenth century until 1920. *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 26, 28.

in 1928 some of them established the Association of Lithuanian Women with University Education (*Lietuvos moterų, baigusių aukštąjį mokslą, sąjunga*).⁵⁹

As already mentioned, most of the political groups experienced strong restraints under Smetona's regime, but huge numbers of various social, educational, cultural organizations could operate more or less freely. Among them were many women's organizations. Secular and religious intelligentsia started to discuss the need to improve Lithuanian women's situation in the late 19th century. In many cases those issues were perceived not as separate but rather as a part of the nationalist project. Both men and women were searching for the ways to establish conditions for women's education, but not that much for women's wellbeing as such, but so that they would become more efficient members of society and nurturers of Lithuanian children and educated wives.⁶⁰ Such perception of the questions related with political, social, cultural women's situation was still prevailing in the interwar Lithuania. Women's organizations did not constitute a homogenous group, and their goals were changing throughout time.⁶¹ During the first women's congress in Lithuania in 1907 a clear clash between Catholic and secular women occurred and remained evident during the interwar period. Catholic women's organizations - the biggest of them was *Lietuvos katalikių moterų draugija* (LKMD, Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organization, established in 1908) which had 410 branches and around 42,000 members in 1940 - were to various extents dependent on the church and its male clergy, which gradually led them to diminish their initially strong claims for the equal rights of women and men, and to turn their focus on women as the members of the nation who should exercise their roles through social work,

⁵⁹ Jurėnienė, Virginija, *Lietuvos moterų draugijos ir jų veikla XX a. pirmoje pusėje* [The Organizations of Women and their activities in Lithuania in the first part of the 20th century] on www.lsc.su.lt, accessed March 13, 2012.

⁶⁰ Balkelis, Tomas, *The making of modern Lithuania* (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), 69-70.

⁶¹ Karčiauskaitė, Indrė, "For Women's Rights, Church and Fatherland: The Lithuanian Catholic Women's Organization 1908-1940", 129.

conscious religiousness and their responsibilities for family.⁶² More liberal women's organizations' agendas were also not separate from the nationalist project, and they were often presenting their demands for equal rights and the improvement of women's situation as first of all important for the wellbeing of the Lithuanian state.⁶³

The biggest umbrella organization at the time *Lietuvos moterų sąjunga* (LMS, The Lithuanian Women's League) established in 1922 and uniting both religious and secular organizations, but smaller than LKMD, in several cases fruitfully cooperated with the latter.⁶⁴ This proved that though the ways in which religiously affiliated and secular women were defining their aims slightly differed, those organizations still shared the common ground: women's rights. Nonetheless, LKMD joined neither LMS nor *Lietuvos moterų taryba* (LMT, Lithuanian Women's Council), which was established in 1928 in order to unite all women's organizations in Lithuania, to represent them internationally and to support women's participation in the state governance.⁶⁵ The latter organization was financially supported by the state, and this fact on the one hand allowed for the organization to develop its activities and to get involved in international women's movements by participating in congresses and conferences, but on the other hand through its financial support and close supervision the state was able to regulate organizations' activities and prevent them from radical actions.⁶⁶

⁶² Ibid, 140, 142, 144.

⁶³ Karčiauskaitė, Indrė, "Kitiems ir sau: moterų draugijų veikla Kaune" [For others and oneself : activities of women organizations in Kaunas] in *Kauno istorijos metraštis*, vol. 6 (2005): 144.

⁶⁴ For example, they cooperated in opposing the introduction of law restricting the employment of married women, which was issued by Smetona's government in November 1926, and their endeavour resulted into law's repeal. Jurėnienė, Virginija, *Lietuvos moterų draugijos ir jų veikla XX a. pirmoje pusėje*, 8.; Karčiauskaitė, Indrė, "For Women's Rights, Church and Fatherland...", 142.

⁶⁵ Jurėnienė, Virginija, *Lietuvos moterų draugijos ir jų veikla XX a. pirmoje pusėje*, 13.

⁶⁶ Jurėnienė, Virginija, "Lietuvos moterų taryba ir jos veikla valstybėje XXa. 3-4 dešimtmečiuose"; *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th centuries*, eds. Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova, Anna Loutfi (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2006), 73.

After the first Soviet occupation in summer 1940 all women's associations, like any other organizations, were closed, and many of their members either fled Lithuania or were deported. However, none of the authors whose memoirs I am analyzing in the subsequent chapters mentions participating in any women's organization during the interwar period.

2.1.3. Lithuania's international relations in the interwar period

The twenty-two years' period of Lithuanian independence and particularly the first few years were not without complications. Though Germany acknowledged the independent Lithuanian state in 1918, other countries were more reluctant to do so. Western countries recognized it *de facto* only in 1922. The borders of Lithuania were not clearly defined, and did not stay stable during those years. Though the Lithuanian political leaders expressed the determination to have Lithuania with the port city of Klaipėda (Memel) and the capital city Vilnius, the former was still under German rule, and the League of Nations was considering the possibility to grant it the status of free city, and Vilnius, though declared a Lithuanian capital, was under the threat of Polish intentions.⁶⁷

The relationship with Poland was one of Lithuania's biggest concerns in the interwar period. In October 1920 the Polish army led by general Lucjan Żeligowski seized and occupied the Vilnius region, regardless of the precedent agreements to leave this area for Lithuania, which were mainly based on the fact that this city used to be the capital of Lithuania from the fourteenth century. Lithuania's temporary capital became Kaunas, but Lithuanians did not abandon the intentions to retrieve Vilnius, which happened only in October 1939 when the Soviets 'gave it back' to Lithuania. From autumn 1920 until spring 1938 Poland and Lithuania were not in diplomatic relationship.

⁶⁷ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 71-77.

What concerns Klaipėda (Memel), Lithuania was more successful in getting it than in retaining Vilnius: in January 1923 the Lithuanian force of irregulars attacked the town and in 1924 it was affirmed a part of Lithuania, which lasted until March 1939 when under the Nazi threat it was returned to Germany.⁶⁸

During the first year of independence Lithuania was invaded by several armies: in 1919 firstly the Soviet Russian army, then Poles attempted to occupy Lithuania. After Bolshevik military units invaded Lithuania in the end of December 1918, they proclaimed establishing a Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania and Belorussia (in Russian: Литовско–Белорусская ССР, Litovsko-Byelorusskaya SSR, or Litbel, LBSSR) which existed for only a few months, and was repudiated by the majority of Lithuanians and Byelorussians. However, twenty years later this short episode served for the communists in Lithuania to legitimize the Communist regime, referring to the events of 1940 as a ‘restoration’ of the Soviet rule.⁶⁹

Noteworthy is Alfred Senn’s and Thomas Lane’s insight that the Bolsheviks’ efforts to establish a Soviet Republic in Lithuania in 1919 were unsuccessful not so much because of military defeat but because at that point there was no way to convince Lithuanians to ‘convert’ to communism – the euphoria of newly established independence and nationalist ideas was overwhelming. Furthermore, the collectivization of farms sounded senseless for the peasants who had only recently been granted the awaited private ownership, just like the atheist doctrines seemed revolting for the predominantly Roman Catholic population; the industrial working class was too small to provide Bolsheviks with potential support. So the potency of the freshly established state, heavily loaded with nationalist ideas, under favorable auspices worked to drive

⁶⁸ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 31-32.

⁶⁹ Sužiedėlis, Saulius A., *Historical Dictionary of Lithuania*, 169-170.

out Bolsheviks, which did not happen twenty years later, when the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania in 1940.⁷⁰

After the unsuccessful invasion of Bolsheviks, Lithuania and Soviet Russia had signed several treaties: the Treaty of Moscow in 1920 (Soviet-Lithuanian peace treaty), the Soviet-Lithuanian Non-Aggression Treaty in 1926 and its renewal in 1934. However, those treaties not only did not protect Lithuania from the Soviet occupation in 1940 but even accelerated it because the Soviets could legitimize their invasion to Lithuania by blaming Lithuanians for acting against the agreements.⁷¹

Lithuania's political relationship with Estonia and Latvia during the interwar period was not very fruitful. The plans about establishing a Baltic Entente were constantly disturbed by Lithuania's problematic situation with Poland (because of Vilnius) and Germany (because of Klaipėda/Memel) and distinct indications of potential major aggressors: while Lithuania was concerned about Poland and Germany, but did not have a border with USSR, the other two Baltic countries were more worried about Russia. However, in 1934 Lithuania was accepted to join the Estonian-Latvian defense alliance, but it, like Soviet-Lithuanian treaties, was not only ineffective in the face of the Soviet occupation but also provided the USSR with some additional accusations of the Baltic states.⁷²

2.1.4. (Non-) Reaction to the first soviet occupation in June 1940

In the context of growing tensions in Europe in the late 1930s, Lithuania declared its neutrality in January 1939. The USSR was not satisfied with Lithuania's non-alignment policy, as it needed to have its western frontier reliable, especially after

⁷⁰ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 7-8.

⁷¹ It will be discussed in chapter 2.1.4.

⁷² Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 35; Misiunas Romuald J., Taagepera Rein, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940-1980*, 14-15.

Germany reclaimed Klaipėda (Memel), which Lithuanians seized from Germans in 1923, in March 1939.

After the Great Britain and France disagreed to cooperate with the Soviet Union in the summer 1939, the Soviet Union signed the so-called Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with the Nazi Germany on 23 August 1939. The pact was supplemented by a secret protocol in which the two countries agreed on their spheres of influence. According to the secret protocol, Russia got Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Bessarabia, and eastern Poland, while Lithuania was assigned to Germany together with western Poland. However, after the war started with the occupation of Poland, the second secret Molotov-Ribbentrop protocol was signed on 28 September 1939, in which Lithuania was transferred into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union in return for some Polish territories. Later the Soviet Union and Germany were denying the existence of such protocols until December 1989.⁷³ It is not clear how much Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian governments knew about those secret protocols when the Second World War started, but even if they understood the magnitude of these agreements, they did not provide the citizens with this information. President Antanas Smetona was assuring the nation that there was nothing to worry about, and ‘the wheelman of the state’, as he liked to refer to himself, would handle the situation in the most adequate way.⁷⁴

Some historians summarize the Lithuanian political line of 1939-1940 more as a policy of passivity than neutrality.⁷⁵ In the strained situation of being in between two aggressive powers it was impossible to remain officially neutral - the Baltic countries had to choose with which power to link up, but for a long time the Lithuanian government was reluctant to make any strict decision. Finally, after the Germans seized

⁷³ Naimark, Norman K., *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 2010), 88.

⁷⁴ Misiunas Romuald J., Taagepera Rein, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940-1980*, 16; *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 36.

⁷⁵ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 43.

Klaipėda/Memel, Lithuania government rejected Germany's proposal to become its satellite state and to be assisted in retrieving Vilnius. Some part of society accepted this as a mistaken decision and saw it as Smetona's premature capitulation to Stalin, because non-alignment with Germany was obviously leading to collaboration with the Soviet Union.⁷⁶ And certainly, Russian blandishments and threats soon induced the Lithuanian government to sign the Pact of Defence and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union on 10 October 1939. This pact provided for the establishment of Soviet military bases and the stationing of some 20,000 troops on Lithuanian territory. Soviets were justifying the need for this by indicating the hazardousness of Lithuania's considerably long land frontier with Germany and the need to provide Lithuania with Soviet military forces in order to assure its independence. Moreover, in this agreement the Soviet Union, in addition to warranting the immunity of Lithuanian internal affairs, also offered Lithuania Vilnius, which the Red Army occupied during the defeat of Poland.⁷⁷

It can be questioned whether Lithuanian authorities (together with Latvia and Estonia, who had similar agreements with Russia and later went through a more or less identical course of events) acted in the way which was the best for their states, signing this Defense and Mutual Assistance Treaty with the Soviet Union: on the one hand, the presence of the Soviet military troops in Lithuania's territory made the subsequent occupation in June 1940 almost effortless, and, what is even more important, the existence of this and of the aforementioned earlier agreements allowed the Soviets to claim that the events of 1940 were not occupation but the acts of assurance of the proper fulfillment of the treaty.⁷⁸ On the other hand, many analysts in Lithuania and elsewhere agree that with or without this treaty Lithuania's fate would unlikely be different, and

⁷⁶ Ibid, 41-43.

⁷⁷ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 37.

⁷⁸ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 55.

refusal to sign it could only give an additional pretext for an attack on Lithuania, accusing it of pro-Nazi attitudes.⁷⁹

Therefore after the agreement of 10 October 1939 the Soviet Union could structure its pre-planned occupation under the pretext of Lithuania's violations of the treaty. In May 1940 the Soviets accused Lithuanians of abducting two Soviet soldiers stationed in Lithuania. Lithuanian jurists led an investigation and concluded that there was no evidence to justify Soviet charges, and most Lithuanian historians now agree that this accusation truly was a pure Soviet charade, but at that time this was one of the main covers for the subsequent actions. The second accusation was introduced shortly afterwards, when Lithuanian Prime Minister Antanas Merkys was summoned to Moscow to be accused of creating an anti-Soviet military alliance with Estonia and Latvia, which the Soviet authorities saw in the existence of the Baltic Entente (established in 1934) and some suspicious publications in an international journal *Revue Baltique*.⁸⁰ The Soviet government's decision to invoke some false accusations and subsequent staging of Lithuania's 'willingness' to join the USSR, instead of directly attacking and occupying Lithuania, can be interpreted as a result of Stalin's regard for public opinion: he, more than Hitler, was concerned with creating an illusion of legal actions.⁸¹ As David Lane puts it, "the bear could not be seen simply to swallow the mouse, the mouse had to be shown to be threatening the bear, and then to be persuaded to ask to be swallowed for its own good".⁸²

After the threats Lithuanian government decided to establish a standby service out of Lithuania in case a home government ceased to exist, but not many other efficient actions were undertaken in order to prepare for a forthcoming occupation. The situation

⁷⁹ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 38; Misiunas Romuald J., Taagepera Rein, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940-1980*, 16-17.

⁸⁰ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 54-55; Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 39, 47.

⁸¹ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 54.

⁸² Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 38.

of the Winter War in Finland (November 1939 – March 1940) dashed hopes that the Western allies would come to the rescue in case of a Soviet attack, and the situation was aggravated by the Soviet Union's pretence of acting legitimately and under treaty.⁸³ So while Nazis were approaching Paris on 14 June 1940, and, as Lithuanian historians like to put it, “all the world had their eyes on the events in France”, the Lithuanian government got the ultimatum from the Soviet Union requiring “by 10 a.m. on the following day to form a government capable of ensuring the proper fulfillment of the Pact”, to accept additional units of the Red Army and to arrest two officials which the Soviets accused of “provocative anti-Soviet actions”.⁸⁴ Estonia and Latvia soon got similar demands.

The Lithuanian government accepted the ultimatum, and the next day (15 July 1940) Soviet troops, which were dislocated in Belorussian territory in advance, entered Lithuania. As mentioned, around twenty thousand troops were already stationed in the main strategic points of Lithuania from October 1939. Therefore, given the overwhelming Soviet force, the Lithuanian cabinet decided that engaging in physical actions would not have any use, though Smetona and several other members of the government were proposing at least a short symbolic armed opposition.⁸⁵ However, the Red Army did not meet any resistance. President Smetona immediately left the country, claiming that he did not want Soviets to make him sign any documents which would lead to the *bolshevization* of Lithuania.⁸⁶ He granted the presidential authorities to the Prime Minister, Antanas Merkys. Soviet representatives, who arrived straightaway after the entrance of the army, regulated the subsequent course of actions which led to the incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union on 3 August 1940.

⁸³ Misiunas Romuald J., Taagepera Rein, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940-1980*, 17.

⁸⁴ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 39.

⁸⁵ Kedys, J.P., “Sovietų sąjungos ultimatumas Lietuvai ir jos okupacija” [The Ultimatum of the Soviet Union to Lithuania] in *Terorizuojama ir naikinama Lietuva 1938-1991* [Destructively Terrorized Lithuania 1938-1991], ed. J.P. Kedys (Klaipėda: Ryto spaustuvė, 1994), 59-61.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

The question of the appropriateness of Lithuania's inaction in the face of occupation is complicated and is similar to the problem of signing the October 1939 treaty. But many historians agree that even if it was almost impossible for Lithuania to push out the Soviet army in 1940, its noncompliance with the occupation should have been expressed, and because it was not done until 1944 it was easy for the Soviet Union to insist that this was not an occupation and that there was no need for the Western Allies to interfere.⁸⁷ Some historians also add that given the fact that during the years of the Lithuanian independence a considerable budget was given to the military, it was almost ridiculous not to invoke the military force in the case of occupation, and that with the army of 26 thousand plus 62 thousand military trained members of "Riflemen's Union" and all armaments which were purchased during the twenty-two years of independence Lithuanian soldiers could carry on military operations for at least two weeks.⁸⁸ It is also noteworthy that the major part of Lithuanian society was left in the dark about the ongoing events and the Soviet Union's threat due to strict censorship of media, in which Smetona and his representatives until the last minute had been claiming that Lithuania and the USSR were in friendly relationship therefore there were no reasons to worry.⁸⁹ The new government after 15 June 1940 was continuing with the same tropes.⁹⁰

After the initial fluster and shock, many Lithuanians became more determined to express their opposition to the Soviet occupation, and did it in the ways which they found relevant: collaborating with the Nazis who occupied the Lithuanian territory in June 1941, fleeing to the West and trying to inform the Western governments about the situation in Lithuania, and getting engaged into the armed resistance against the second Soviet occupation which started in July 1944.

⁸⁷ David Kirby, quoted in Lane, Thomas. *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 35-36.

⁸⁸ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 65.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 51.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 68.

2.1.5. First mass deportation in June 1941

The introduction of the communist rule in Lithuania on the surface could seem to be carried out in accordance with the existing legislation. Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Dekanozov, managed to compel Antanas Merkys, Smetona's deputy, to nominate a left wing representative Justas Paleckis as acting president and Prime Minister of Lithuania. A puppet cabinet was formed of ministers who were familiar and respectable for most Lithuanians and favorable for the Communist authority.⁹¹ The main resolutions were officially made by two persons - Chairman of the Supreme Council of the LSSR, Justas Paleckis and the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mečys Gedvilas, who soon became the Prime Minister, though, as already mentioned before, the real power was in the hands of General Secretary of Lithuanian Communist Party, Antanas Sniečkus, and the leaders in Moscow.⁹²

Within the first several weeks after the occupation the Communist party was legalized, while all other political, cultural, social organizations and non-communist press were banned and the parliament (*Seimas*) was dismissed. Lithuania officially became a part of the Soviet Union, or, as it was put then, its resolution to seek for the membership in the Soviet Union was granted on 3 August 1940.⁹³

Simultaneous processes of the neutralization of Lithuanian army and preparations for the parliamentary election involved physical repressions which gradually were reaching a mass scale. Around 2,000 prominent opposition figures were arrested just before the election and given 8-year terms in labor camps in the Far North of the Soviet Union.⁹⁴ The election was deceptive from the very beginning: only the parties which

⁹¹ Ibid, 70.

⁹² Lane, Thomas. *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 51.

⁹³ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 51; *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 66-67.

⁹⁴ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 51-52.

had government's approval could participate in the election, and such was only the Communist party. The main party, *Lietuvos darbo liaudies sąjunga* [LDLS, Lithuanian Proletarians' Union], which was the same Lithuanian Communist Party supplemented by some smaller left-wing groupings, was stating among its goals "Lithuania's and the Soviet Union's unbreakable friendship" without mentioning a word about Lithuania's incorporation into USSR, and in various occasions guaranteed the continuity of Lithuanian independence.⁹⁵ Official data indicated that 95.5 percent of all citizens participated in election, and 99.19 percent of them voted for the LDLS, which, obviously, is similar to every other official result of elections to the Communist parliaments.⁹⁶

Though it is highly doubtful that 95.5 percent of Lithuanian citizens came to vote, many really did - some of them were hoping for the social and political revolution, but probably even more were driven by fear. As mentioned, a few thousands members of oppositional groups were arrested a few days before the election, and the terror did not end with the elections. An estimated number of 6,606 were imprisoned during the first one year after the annexation, some of them were tortured and executed.⁹⁷ The other sources indicate around 35,000 people arrested, killed and deported in/from Lithuania, counting those 17,500 who were deported in June 1941. Not all of them were Lithuanian citizens - among them were a number of refugees from Poland.⁹⁸

One of the strategies of removing the so-called anti- Soviet or 'counter-revolutionary' element and implementing fear within society was mass deportations. The first mass deportation from Lithuania was organized just before the German invasion in June 1941. Around 17,500 people were captured on 13-14 of June to be

⁹⁵ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 78-79.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 85.

⁹⁷ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 139.

⁹⁸ Čekutis, Ričardas; Žygelis, Dalius, *Laisvės kryžkelės. Birželio trėmimai* [The Crossroads of Freedom. The June Deportations], 2006. <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2006-06-12-laisves-kryzkeles-xx-birzelio-tremimai/5255> , accessed March 14, 2012.

deported to Altai and Novosibirsk regions, Kazakhstan and Komi ASSR.⁹⁹ In most cases able-bodied men were separated from their families and sent to labor camps, while their relatives were deported to places of exile in the remote areas of the Soviet Union: such separation is more or less exceptional in comparison with the later mass deportations from Lithuania. Among those deported in June 1941 there were people of various ethnic origins: 12,000 of Lithuanian, 2,000 of Jewish, 1,600 Polish and others.¹⁰⁰ Unlike during the later deportations, men constituted a slightly bigger part than women.¹⁰¹ The majority of the deportees were members of various organizations and intelligentsia of the interwar period - teachers, priests, students, bankers, lawyers, shopkeepers, etc - and their family members.¹⁰² More than 5,000 deportees were under the age of 16.¹⁰³

2.2. Lithuania during the Nazi occupation (June 1941-July 1944); the return of the Soviets in July 1944; the re-start of deportations from the Baltic countries; beginning of the guerilla movement

2.2.1. Lithuania during the Nazi occupation (June 1941 - July 1944)

Barbarosa – the German attack of the Soviet Union – was launched on 22 June 1941, and Lithuanian territory was among the first ones to be invaded by the Nazi army. Short after the first mass deportation from Lithuania carried out by the Soviet

⁹⁹ Grunskis, Eugenijus, “Lietuvos gyventojų deportacijos 1940-1952“ [Deportations of the Residents of Lithuania 1940-1952] in *Terorizuojama ir naikinama Lietuva 1938-1991* [Destructively Terrorized Lithuania 1938-1991], ed. J.P. Kedys (Klaipėda: Ryto spaustuvė, 1994),154.

¹⁰⁰ Comparatively Jewish community experienced bigger loss than Lithuanian community: around 1 percent of all Lithuanian Jews were deported in June 1941 in comparison with 0.5 percent of all Lithuanians who lived in Lithuania. Čekutis, Ričardas; Žygelis, Dalius, *Laisvės kryžkelės (XX). Birželio trėmimai*.

¹⁰¹ Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940-1941, 1945-1953 metais*, 42.

¹⁰² Ibid, 190.

¹⁰³ Tarptautinė komisija nacių ir sovietinio okupacinių režimų nusikaltimams Lietuvoje įvertinti [The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania]. <http://www.komisija.lt/lt/body.php?&m=1176284239>, accessed March 14, 2012.

government, Germans entered Kaunas and joined the so-called June uprising, organized by the LAF. Lithuanian Activist Front (LAF, *Lietuvos aktyvistų frontas*) was founded in the end of 1940 and had an important unit in Berlin, founded by a group of Lithuanian exiles and lead by colonel Kazys Škirpa, the former Lithuanian ambassador in Berlin.¹⁰⁴ The Front was proclaiming its aims to re-establish Lithuanian independence and strong anti-Semitic, anti-Polish and anti-Communist views.¹⁰⁵ By the spring 1941 the LAF already had around 36,000 members who, supported by an additional few thousands of resistance fighters, have started the uprising in Kaunas, Vilnius and other towns the same day when Germany attacked the Soviet Union, and ‘occupied’ those cities before the arrival of Wehrmacht. Members of the LAF announced Lithuanian independence and the ‘de-sovietization’ campaign on 23 June 1941, and the next day the provisional government started issuing laws concerning the de-nationalization of land, enterprises and real estate, formation of police and other issues.¹⁰⁶

Though the activities of the LAF were controversial, especially because of its members’ involvement in the Holocaust, the June uprising has later served in the Lithuanian nationalist discourse as a proof that Lithuanians did not voluntarily join the

¹⁰⁴ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 54, 56.

¹⁰⁵ The program of the LAF is published in *Lietuvos laisvės kovų archyvas* [The Archive of Lithuanian Freedom Fights], Vol. 11 (Kaunas: LGGRTC, 1994), 152-160.

In Lithuanian case anti-Semitism and anti-Communism was strongly coinciding, as Lithuanians were blaming Jews for collaborating with the Soviet authorities. It is true that a considerable number of the Lithuanian Communist Party members in 1939-1940 were of Jewish origins (35 percent of LKP members in 1939, 16.2 percent in the beginning of 1941), so Nazi and Lithuanian Nationalist propaganda has made use of it, presenting Jews as unexceptionally supporting Communism. “The stereotype of “Jew-the-communist” [...] played an especially important role pertaining to the Holocaust in Lithuania [...] This stereotype was reinforced by the left-wing activities of Jewish youth in Kaunas city, their participation in the Young Comsomol League organisation, demonstrations organised by Communists, distribution of proclamations, leaflets etc.” Vareikis, Vygantas, *Preconditions of Holocaust. Anti-Semitism in Lithuania (19th century to mid-20th century (15 June 1940))* (International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, 2004), 45 and number 1 annex to conclusions.

¹⁰⁶ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 55; *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 173-177.

Soviet Union in 1940 and were willing to reconstitute the independence of their state by all means (which was not strongly expressed in 1940).¹⁰⁷

The LAF and the provisional government was collaborating with the Nazi authorities, the representatives of which arrived several days later (LAF and their supporters explained the need to collaborate as the only way to be helped by the Nazis to drive away the Soviets). The most prominent aspect of their collaboration was the joint extermination of Jews in Lithuania. Lithuanian Security Police (*Lietuvos saugumo policija*), established on 24 June 1941, Lithuanian Sonderkommando Squad (*Ypatingasis būrys*) and other groups, collaborating with German killing squads (the *Einsatzgruppen*) murdered around 190,000 Lithuanian Jews (around 85 percent of Lithuanian Jewry), 8,000-10,000 Jewish refugees from Poland, 5,000 Jews from Austria and Germany, and 878 French Jews, and most of this was done by the end of 1941.¹⁰⁸

Though Lithuanians have greeted Germans as liberators from the Soviet occupation, who would help to reconstitute Lithuanian independence, it soon turned out that the LAF and the Nazi authorities had different plans for Lithuania's future. While Lithuanians expected that Germans will help them to reestablish independence, the latter envisioned Lithuania as a mere colony of Germany, and were only supporting the June uprising as an additional force for defeating the Soviets.¹⁰⁹ Lithuania's proclaimed independence had only existed six weeks until in August 1941 the Nazi authorities demised Lithuanian provisional government and soon banned the LAF, deporting some

¹⁰⁷ Čekutis, Ričardas; Žygelis, Dalius, *Laivės kryžkelės. Lietuvos laikinoji vyriausybė* [The Crossroads of Freedom. Lithuanian Provisional Government], 2007, <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2007-07-09-laisves-kryzkeles-lietuvos-laikinoji-vyriausybe/4451>, accessed on March 17, 2012; Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 55.

¹⁰⁸ *The Persecution and Mass Murder of Lithuanian Jews during Summer and Fall of 1941: Conclusions, approved on 20 April 2005*. Tarptautinė komisija nacių ir sovietinio okupacinių režimų nusikaltimams Lietuvoje įvertinti [The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania], http://www.komisija.lt/Files/www.komisija.lt/File/Tyrimu_baze/Naciu%20okupacija/Zydu%20naikinimas%201941%20m.%20vasara/ENG/Approved%20Conclusions_Persecution%20and%20Mass%20Murder%20of%20Lithuanian%20Jews.pdf, accessed on March 17, 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 54.

of its leaders to the concentration camps. Lithuania became a part of the German province of Ostland, but the local administration was allowed to continue its work.¹¹⁰

In the spring of 1943 German authorities issued an appeal for Lithuanian men to register to the Lithuanian S.S. Legion, but this turned to be a fiasco - only several hundreds of volunteers subscribed. By that time the Nazis had lost the initial support of Lithuanians: the latter were disappointed by suppression of the plans to reconstitute Lithuanian independence, outraged by arrests and killings of Lithuanian citizens.¹¹¹ Many Lithuanians found out about the so-called *Generalplan Ost* (Master Plan East) - the Nazis' plan of colonizing Eastern Europe, according to which at least two thirds of Lithuanians were to be deported to the East (mostly to Siberia) and replaced with the German colonizers: knowing about such plan certainly could not add to Lithuanian compliance with the Nazi authorities.¹¹² Lithuanians started to organize anti-Nazi resistance groups, which claimed to be anti-Soviet at the same time. Those groups' accomplishments in regard to the disruption of the Nazi regime were not considerably significant, except of opposing to serve in the military units which Germans were organizing, and encouraging others to oppose, but during 1943-1944 important preparations for the resistance war were done: activists were establishing nets of illegal press and radio and trying to reach out to the West and armed men were establishing groups. *Vyriausiasis Lietuvos išlaisvinimo komitetas* (VLIK, The Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania) was established in November 1943 in order to integrate

¹¹⁰ Šlavėnas, Julius P., "Nazi Ideology and Policy in the Baltic States" in *Lituanus*, vol. 11, no. 1 (Spring 1965), http://www.lituanus.org/1965/65_1_03_Slavenas.html, accessed March 18, 2012 .

¹¹¹ Misiunas Romuald J., Taagepera Rein, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940-1980*, 64-65. After Gestapo arrested some of the main figures of VLIK in May-June 1944, the organization lost its initial capacity; VLIK existed until 1992, most of the time in exile in US and Germany, attempting to draw Western countries' attention to the illegitimate incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union.

¹¹² Stankeras, Petras, "Planas, kurio neįgyvendino vienas galvažudys, bet įdiegė kitas" [A plan that was not implemented by one killer was completed by the other] in *Kutūros barai*, no. 5, issue 557 (2011): 74-81.

all groups of the so-called “freedom fighters”.¹¹³ By mid-1944, armed underground resistance groups were more ready to skirmish the returning Red Army than in 1940.¹¹⁴

During the Nazi occupation of Lithuania which lasted till the summer of 1944, in addition to almost 200,000 Jewish victims, the Nazi authorities in Lithuania imprisoned around 45,000 other residents of Lithuania in concentration camps and prisons in Lithuania, deported 36,000 to concentration and forced labor camps in Germany or territories occupied by Germans.¹¹⁵ Around 70,000 people used the opportunity to flee to the West, some of whom later tried to support the Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance movement at a distance.¹¹⁶

2.2.2. The return of the Soviets in July 1944

After the Nazi Germany experienced setbacks in the battles of Stalingrad and Kursk, the East front started moving westward. The Red Army reached the Baltic territories in July 1944. Following one week of bombarding, the Red Army occupied Vilnius on 13 July 1944, and soon the major part of Lithuania was taken over by the Soviets. Only the occupation of Klaipėda (Memel) and the Curonian Spit (westernmost part of today's Lithuania) took longer, but after vigorous attacks and massive

¹¹³ Misiunas Romuald J., Taagepera Rein, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940-1980*, 64.

¹¹⁴ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 58.

¹¹⁵ During Nazi occupation around 50,000 people were imprisoned in the forced labor camps and prisons in Lithuania. Around 10 percent of them were of Jewish ethnic origins, not less than 50 percent – of Lithuanian, the others - of Polish, Russian, Byelorussian, Roma/Sinti ethnic origins. Bubnys, Arūnas, *Nežydu tautybės gyventojų kalinimas nacistiniuose kalėjimuose ir priverčiamojo darbo stovyklose Lietuvos generalinėje srityje (1941-1944)* [The Confinement of the Non-Jewish Citizens of *Generalbezirk Litauen* in Prisons and Forced Labor Camps (1941-1944)]. The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, http://www.komisija.lt/Files/www.komisija.lt/File/Tyrimu_baze/Naciu%20okupacija/Nezydu%20kilmes%20pili%20persekiojimas/Koncentracijos%20stovyklos/Kalejimai%202.pdf, accessed March 15, 2012.

¹¹⁶ Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 58; Rupšienė, Alina, *Iš archyvų: Išėivijos organizacijų vaduojamoji veikla. Šaltinių publikacijos* [From Archives: The Emancipating Activities of the Emigration Organizations. Publication of Sources], 2004, <http://www.genocid.lt/Leidyba/6/archyvai6.htm>, accessed March 18, 2012.

demolitions it was seized at the end of January 1945. The Soviets reoccupied Lithuania for the next 46 years.¹¹⁷

During the three years of the Nazi occupation, the Lithuanian Communist Party did not cease to exist. When the Germans were approaching in June 1941, the majority of higher-rank Lithuania's Communists fled to the East, and the main institutions of Soviet Lithuania – the Central Committee, Council of Peoples Commissars and others - continued their activities in Moscow. In addition, some new bureaucrats were trained during the years of the war.¹¹⁸ Therefore, it did not take long to reconstitute the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic after the re-occupation of its territories. The Presidium started its work on 14 July 1944, and soon all other institutions were also restored. Justas Paleckis continued to hold the office of Chairman of the Supreme Council of the LSSR, Antanas Sniečkus returned to the post of First Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party, Mečys Gedvilas - to the post of Prime Minister. The latter was coordinating the work of 27 ministries, most of which were directly subordinate to Moscow, so their self-sufficiency, as well as the autonomy of the head figures of the state, was limited in various ways.¹¹⁹

During the first years of the second Soviet occupation, the Lithuanian Communist Party grew rapidly: in the beginning of 1945 it had around 3,500 members, in 1948 - 22,200, in 1953 - 36,200.¹²⁰ Lithuanians (I refer here to the people who were citizens of Lithuania before the first Soviet Occupation in June 1940) constituted a minor part of the Party members (18 percent in 1947, 38 percent in 1953) while the majority were newcomers from Russian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian and other USSR territories.¹²¹ At

¹¹⁷ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 273, 276.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 277.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 279.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 279.

¹²¹ *The Criminal System of Occupational Policy - The Role of Occupational (Repressive) Structures and Collaboration with them in 1944-1945. Conclusions, approved by Commission on 17 December 2003.*

least half of the ‘nomenklatura’ (elite) positions in the first ten years of the Soviet regime were held by people coming from other Soviet Socialist republics. However, a considerable number of Lithuania’s citizens collaborated with the authorities sent from Moscow, and it was mainly their activities which made the reconstitution of the Soviet regime in Lithuania in 1944 comparatively easy.¹²²

In 1944-1945 the Lithuanian Communist Party expresses determination to hunt for ‘national and class enemies’ and organize their repression as one of its most important tasks. They defined four main social groups of ‘enemies’: 1) partisans and members of underground organizations, and their supporters (“bourgeois nationalists”); 2) farmers (*kulaks*, wealthy peasants); 3) former politicians, officials, soldiers, other representatives of independent Lithuania (“socially unreliable elements”) and 4) Catholic clergymen (“reactionary Catholic clergy”). At the end of the 1940s, people of the Jewish ethnic origins were added to this list, officially indicating this as the “fight against ‘Zionism’, ‘Cosmopolitanism’ and ‘Freemasonry’”. People belonging to all those categories were subjected to arrest, imprisonment (including torture), deportation and/or execution.¹²³ During the first year of the second Soviet occupation around 200,000 people in Lithuania were imprisoned, mobilized, forced to hide or exterminated.¹²⁴

The Lithuanian Communist Party was directly dependent on the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and on the decisions made in Moscow. However, this does not mean that the authorities in Lithuania did not have their own agency. It would be too complicated to analyze here the operating of every institution in the state apparatus, therefore I will only touch upon the structures involved in the repression of the aforementioned ‘enemies of the people’. The general scheme of actions was that the

International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania (<http://www.komisija.lt/en/>), 1.

¹²² Ibid, 3-5.

¹²³ Ibid, 1-3.

¹²⁴ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Deportations of the population in 1944-1953* (The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and and Soviet Occupational Regimes in Lithuania), 28.

Communist Party of the USSR issued decrees, requirements and demands such as “to liquidate *banditism* as soon as possible” (1945), and then the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party adopted various resolutions and directives in which more concrete actions were determined.¹²⁵ The action, then, was taken by various institutions, and among the main ones were the NKVD, NKGB, MGB, KGB, the ‘punitive detachments’ and ‘party-Soviet activists’. All of these structures, among their other responsibilities, were the main organizers of mass and small-scale deportations.

The NKVD (Rus. НКВД, Народный комиссариат внутренних дел, Narodnyy komissariat vnutrennikh del; Eng. The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs; Lit. Vidaus reikalų liaudies komisariatas) – public and secret police organization during Stalin’s regime, was formed in the Soviet Union in 1934 from already existing institutions of internal affairs and state security. It was the main instrument of mass political repressions in the Soviet Union, whose responsibilities included supervising the GULAG (Rus. ГУЛаг, Главное управление исправительно-трудовых лагерей и колоний, Glavnoye upravlyeniye ispravityel'no-trudovih lagyeryey i koloniy; Eng. Chief Administration of Corrective Labor Camps and Colonies). Most heads of the NKVD units in Lithuania came from Russia and other parts of the Soviet Union.¹²⁶

The NKGB (Rus. НКГБ, Народный комиссариат государственной безопасности, Narodnyj Komissariat Gosudarstvenoj Bezopasnosti; Eng. The People’s Commissariat for State Security; Lit. Valstybės saugumo liaudies komisariatas) was part of the NKVD, and existed under the name of NKGB in 1941 and in 1943-1946. Then it was renamed to MGB (Rus. МГБ, Министерство государственной безопасности,

¹²⁵ Tininis, Vytautas, *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje 1944-1953. Sovietų Sąjungos politinių struktūrų, vietinių jų padalinių bei kolaborantų vaidmuo vykdamas nusikaltimus 1944-1953m.* II tomas [The Crimes of The Communist Regime in Lithuania in 1944-1953. The Role of the Political Bodies, their Local Subdivisions and Collaborationists of the Soviet Union in Committing Crimes in 1944-1953. Vol. 2] (Vilnius: Tarptautinė Komisija Nacių ir Sovietinio okupacinių režimų nusikaltimams įvertinti, 2003), 40.

¹²⁶ Lane, Thomas. *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 60.

Министерство Государственной Безопасности; Eng. Ministry of State Security; Lit. Valstybės saugumo ministerija), and in 1954 renamed to KGB (Рус. КГБ, Комитет государственной безопасности, Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti; Eng. Committee for State Security; Lit. Valstybės saugumo komitetas). The activities of the NKVD, NKGB, MGB and KGB were intrinsically related, and some of them were successors and predecessors of each other, therefore some historians, writing about the repressive politics of the Soviet Union, tend to connect those structures into NKVD-NKGB-MGB, NKVD-MGB or MGB-KGB.¹²⁷

The punitive detachments (Рус. истребительные батальоны, *istrebitelnyje bataliony*, often referred to as ‘*istrebiteli*’; Eng. destroyers; in Lithuanian slang ‘*stribai*’, ‘*skrebai*’, in the official Soviet Lithuanian discourse: both *liaudies gynėjai* – the Guards of the People, and *naikintojų batalionai* – the Extermination Battalions) – were militarized semi-professional groups which were firstly established during the Second World War in order to fight against anti-Soviet partisans and to guard military important objects. In Lithuania they were active in 1944-1954 in assisting the NKVD to fight against anti-Soviet guerilla movement, guarding Soviet offices in rural areas from the anti-Soviet partisans’ attacks (in Soviet terms ‘fighting against *banditism*’), conducting deportations and other tasks the Communist Party appointed for them.¹²⁸ On the hierarchy of organizations participating in repressions the higher ranking officials considered *istrebiteli* to be less important and less reliable than party-Soviet activists; Soviet officers had many problems with their tendency for indiscipline, and the NKDV military were inclined to cooperate with the Red Army units rather than with the ‘Extermination Battalions’.¹²⁹ On the other hand, the majority of *istrebiteli* were locals,

¹²⁷ Ibid, 39-40.

¹²⁸ Starkauskas, Juozas, “Ginkluotas sovietinis partinis aktyvas ir kiti sukarinti daliniai“ [Armed Soviet and Party Activists and Other Paramilitary Units] in *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, issue 1, no. 5 (1999): 41-65 (<http://www.genocid.lt/Leidyba/5/juozas1.htm>), accessed on April 2, 2012)

¹²⁹ Ibid, 50-53; there were 200 garrisons (units) of internal army in Lithuania in 1946.

were acquainted with the residents of the area, knew territory well, spoke Lithuanian, and therefore they were very useful in the NKVD activities.

Party-Soviet activists (Lit. Sovietinis partinis aktyvas, aktyvistai) were the active supporters of the Communist regime, including local Chiefs of Committees, the administration of local Party units and etc. In September 1945, because of active attacks by anti-Soviet guerillas, the Central Committee of the Party initiated Party-Soviet activists' arming. In 1950 there were around 7,245 armed Party-Soviet activists, but on special occasions, such as the mass deportations, their numbers increased to 12,000-14,000.¹³⁰ In some cases Party-Soviet activists could be at the same time members of the 'Extermination Battalion', but more often activists were engaged in bureaucratic work, endeavoring to disclose the nets of anti- Soviet guerilla fighters, while *istrebiteli* were sent to do active armed attacks.¹³¹

The primary task of the people belonging to the aforementioned groups during the first decade of the second Soviet occupation was to suppress the anti- Soviet movement, and, from 1948, also to help the authorities in pursuing and accelerating collectivization. They were certainly not the only important cells of the repressive structures of the Soviet regime - there were also the prosecution service, the prosecutor's office (Rus. Прокуратура, Prokuratura; Lit. Prokuratūra) and the so-called 'threes'/'fours'/'fives' (Rus. тройки/ четвёрки/ пятёрки, troiki/ chetviorki/ piatiorki) – secret conferences of the heads of local Party units and the NKVD officers who made decisions within local administrative units – and others.¹³²

¹³⁰ Tininis, Vytautas, *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje 1944-1953*, 40-41.

¹³¹ Starkauskas, Juozas, "Ginkluotas sovietinis partinis aktyvas ir kiti sukarinti daliniai", 50.

¹³² Tininis, Vytautas, *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje 1944-1953*, 41.

2.2.3. Beginning of the guerilla movement

As mentioned in section 2.2.1., the armed guerilla groups started clustering during the years of the Nazi occupation. Some had guns which they collected from the battlefields during the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1941, some managed to save some guns from the period of Lithuanian independence. Others got weapons from the Nazi authorities, which were hoping to use Lithuanians' force to fight against the returning Red Army.¹³³

Although the VLIK (Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania) almost collapsed after the Nazi authorities arrested the leading VLIK figures and many of its members in May and June 1944, the remaining ones affiliated with other organizations, mainly the *Lietuvos Laivės Armija* (LLA, the Army of Lithuanian Freedom), and became the forefront of the movement for Lithuanian independence. Army officers who had acquired their ranks during the period of Lithuanian independence and some other young professionals (lawyers, engineers, etc.) established the LLA in December 1941 in the underground. During the years of the Nazi occupation the LLA was engaged in establishing organizational networks, gathering weapons, publishing and distributing illegal press, in which its members proclaimed their unwillingness to cooperate with either Germany or the Soviet Union, and their aim to seek for help from the Western Allies in order to reconstitute full Lithuanian independence.¹³⁴

The hope to attain help from the West was one of the strongest driving forces during the years of the Second World War and in the beginning of the anti- Soviet

¹³³ Most of those who got arms and from the Nazi authorities soon deserted to forests opposing to collaborate with Germans. They re-appeared only when Red Army entered Lithuania in July 1944, and started fighting against the Soviets independently from the Nazi army. Lane, Thomas, *Lithuania: Stepping Westward*, 65.

¹³⁴ Gaškaitė, Nijolė, *Pasipriešinimo istorija. 1944-1953 metai* [History of Resistance. 1944-1953] (Vilnius: Aidai, 1997), 18.

guerilla movement.¹³⁵ The participants of the movement were setting their hopes on the Atlantic Charter (14 August 1941) in which the President of the United States, Roosevelt, and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Churchill, proclaimed their support for the right “of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live”, to get “sovereign rights and self government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them”, the right of all nations to dwell “in their own boundaries”.¹³⁶ However, during the years following the end of the Second World War those who were waiting and seeking for any significant help from the West gradually abandoned their hopes.

The *Lietuvos Laisvės Armija* was planned to be like a state army, with local divisions, leading army officers, etc. It had two main sectors: organizational and functional (armed fighting). The latter started operating in summer 1944, and was soon supplemented by those who switched from the organizational sector, many Lithuanian deserters from the conscriptions to the Red Army, and other people who felt the need to oppose re-constitution of the Soviet regime. However, this is not to say that the LLA was definitely the primary source of the guerilla movement. Lithuanian historians who have been massively researching this topic during the last 22 years still do not agree whether it was possible for the anti- Soviet partisan movement to start without the LLA initiative. Some Lithuanian historians suggest that the LLA just offered the framework of action for some people, while other Lithuanians started organizing into groups independently from the LLA.¹³⁷

Historian Mindaugas Pocius defined five main reasons for the guerilla movement to start in 1944:

¹³⁵ Ibid, 18-19. ,

¹³⁶ Atlantic Charter: <http://usinfo.org/docs/democracy/53.htm> , accessed March 18, 2012.

¹³⁷ *Lietuva 1944-1990. Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 313-314.

- 1) Forced mobilization to the Red Army: as already mentioned before, men who fled to forests avoiding to serve in the RA while the Second World War was still going on were among the first ones to start grouping into armed anti-Soviet resistance units;
- 2) Terror of the repressive structures: on the one hand avoiding to be arrested, tortured, deported, killed, and on the other hand moral opposition to the ongoing cruelties and feeling the need to do something to stop them made people to leave home and organize resistance groups;
- 3) Patriotism: nationalistic ideals and patriotic feelings were grounded in the twenty-two years of Lithuanian independence, and the need to express them was reinforced by remorse because of the passivity during the first Soviet occupation in 1940 which led to Soviet claims that Lithuania voluntarily joined the Soviet Union;
- 4) Belief in Western countries' help, hoping for war between the West and the USSR: due to the lack of information Lithuanians for a long time did not know that at the conference of Teheran the Soviet Union was allowed to keep the Baltic states in its sphere of influence, so except for war the Western countries could not do much; Lithuanians were also waiting for the Cold War to turn into 'real' war during which West would assist them in ousting the Soviets from Lithuania;
- 5) Experience of the first Soviet occupation: almost 30,000 people imprisoned, deported, killed and the other brutalities experienced during one year of the first Soviet occupation made people more aware of the atrocities of the Soviet regime than they were before, it strengthened the feeling of the necessity to fight against the Soviet occupation.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Pocius, Mindaugas, *Ginkluotojo pasipriešinimo slopinimas 1944-1953 m. (I dalis)* [The Suppression of the Armed Resistance in 1944-1953. (Part 1)]. (International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, 2008), 8-9.

In 1944-1945 around 30,000 of armed people, predominantly men, organized themselves into units of various sizes, most of them residing in small groups in bunkers in woods and in hiding-places in barns, cellars and etc. They called themselves *partizanai* (partisans), *miško broliai* (Forest Brethren), *laisvės kovotojai* (Freedom Fighters) and alike. Comparative analyses show that the Lithuanian guerilla war was the longest and probably one of the most intense among the movements in all territories occupied by the Soviet Union.¹³⁹ Armed partisan war went on for around nine years (1944-1953), during which the number of armed guerillas was decreasing very rapidly – out of around 30,000 in 1945, in 1946 there were already only 4,500 people left, in 1948- 2,300, in 1950- 1,500, in 1952 around 550, in 1953- around 250.¹⁴⁰ All in all not less than 50,000 people were involved in armed anti-Soviet resistance in 1944-1953, around 20,000 of them perished in battles; in addition around 100,000 people participated in active unarmed resistance and supportive activities during those years.¹⁴¹

Though in the beginning it was predominantly young men and some older men with some experience in the military who started and joined the guerilla movement, gradually some women also joined the armed action. There are no definite numbers available, but apparently the proportion of women in the armed guerilla movement was not big. Nevertheless, stories about their activities constitute a part of Lithuanian nationalist discourse and some of women partisans' names are well known to those interested in the Lithuanian partisan war.¹⁴² However, only a few scholarly articles about women in the Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance were published.¹⁴³ Along with the

¹³⁹ Ibid, 7.

¹⁴⁰ Gaškaitė, N., Kuodytė, D., Kašėta, A., Ulevičius, B., *Lietuvos partizanai 1944-1953* [Partisans of Lithuania 1944-1953] (Kaunas: Lietuvos politinių kalinių ir tremtinių sąjunga, 1996), 366-367.

¹⁴¹ *Antisovietinis pasipriešinimas 1944-1953* [Anti-Soviet Resistance 1944-1953], <http://www.genocid.lt/centras/lt/1486/a/>, accessed March 16, 2012.

¹⁴² *Lietuvos partizanai 1944-1953*, 93-99; documentary movie "Partizanės" [Women Partisans] (director Edmundas Zubavičius, LRT, 1995, available online at <http://fondas.lrt.lt/Media/ItemReview.aspx?ItemId=6916>, accessed April 9, 2012).

¹⁴³ Smolskutė, Žaneta, "Moterų dalyvavimo ginkluotame pasipriešime 1944-1953m. ypatumai" [Features of Women's Participation in Armed Resistance] in *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 2006, 2(20): 53-61;

armed anti- Soviet resistance, women from the very beginning were actively involved in communication and sustaining activities - as signalwomen between groups and units, as informers about the NKVD, *istrebiteli* and Party representatives' activities in the surrounding areas, as editors and distributors of underground press, as doctors and nurses, as food and dwelling providers, as ideological supporters through their poetry, songs, work at schools and in other ways.¹⁴⁴ Many of them were arrested, tortured, tried and sent to labor and prison camps (GULAG). Meanwhile women and men, whose direct involvement in the resistance movement the Soviet authorities could not ascertain, but who were mothers, sisters, fathers, in-laws of any active member of the movement (also after his or her death) were subject to persecution and deportation, especially when the mass deportations were in action. In these cases they were more often deported to the places of exile / special settlements in distant parts of the Soviet Union rather than to the GULAG camps.¹⁴⁵

Therefore, the anti- Soviet resistance movement in Lithuania (in its armed and unarmed forms) is intrinsically related with the deportations: on the one hand, members of the movement were fighting against such policies of the Soviet regime as deportations; on the other hand, Soviet authorities saw deportations as one of the means to fight against the anti- Soviet resistance.

Smolskutė, Žaneta, "Pietų Lietuvos moterų veikla rezistencijoje 1944-1953" [The Activities of the Southern Lithuania's Women in the Resistance Movement 1944-1953] in *Šiaurės Atėnai*, 2005, issue 742, http://www.culture.lt/satenai/?leid_id=742&kas=spaudai&st_id=3874, accessed March 19, 2012.

¹⁴⁴ Čekutis, R., Žygelis, D., *Laisvės kryžkelės. Moterys partizaniniame kare* [The Crossroads of Freedom. Women in the Partisan War], 2006, <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2006-05-01-laisves-kryzkeles-xiv-moterys-partizaniniame-kare/5343>, accessed March 19, 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

2.3. *The Soviet deportations: broader context*

The Russian Tsars already used deportations as a punitive and repressive measure, as well as one of the means to colonize distant territories in Siberia, but the deportations reached a massive scale only under the Communist regime. As I already discussed in the literature review, historians are analyzing pragmatic/economic reasons (cheap labor force for colonization of desolate areas and natural resources) and ideological forces which drove the mass deportations in 1919-1953 such as the *dekulakization* campaign and exiling the ‘punished peoples’ (see literature review, Norman K. Naimark). The *Dekulakization* (‘getting rid of *kulaks*’; *kulak* in the Soviet terminology - wealthy farmer) was a campaign of massive repressive policies which reached its peak in 1929-1932 in the territories which were by then part of the Soviet Union, and was repeated in the territories occupied later. Though deportation was not the only repressive mean which the supposed *kulaks* were subjected to, as a result until the mid-1930s at least 2,5 million of them were forcibly resettled from Ukrainian SSR, Russian SSR and some Soviet Socialist Republics to distant regions in the North and East of the USSR.¹⁴⁶

The ‘punished peoples’, to put it simply, were ethnic and national groups that the Soviet authorities accused of various threats against the Soviet Union – their alleged ties with the Nazi Germany, their ‘counterrevolutionary’ stances and activities, and so on.¹⁴⁷ Such groups were deported en masse, which is why various scholars, such as Norman K. Naimark and R. J. Rummel, define the policies of the Stalinist regime as ‘genocidal’.¹⁴⁸ In 1919-1920 the Soviet authorities deported around 45,000 Cossacks from the Northern Caucasus to Siberia and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and this was

¹⁴⁶ Naimark, Norman K., *Stalin's Genocides*, 58-69.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 80-88, 98.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*; Rummel, R. J., *Lethal Politics: Soviet Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1917* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990).

the beginning the massive exiling of national and ethnic groups as well as certain social classes. To mention only several national/ethnic groups that were subjected to deportations in extremely high numbers: around 200,000 Nomadic Kazakhs deported in 1933 to China, Mongolia, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey; around 457,000 Germans and Poles who lived in the territory of Ukrainian SSR deported Eastwards in 1935; around 172,000 Koreans deported to Middle Asia in 1937; around 276,000 Poles deported to Siberia and Middle Asia in the first half of 1940; around 800,000 (according to other sources 400,000) Germans (also known as Volga Germans) deported to the Far North in 1941-1942; around 123,000 Kalmyks deported to Siberia and other regions in 1943-1944; around 200,000 Ukrainians deported in 1947, but it was not the only wave of deportations they experienced; around 575,000 Japanese and Koreans deported from Sakhalin and Kuril Islands in 1951. Those are only the highest numbers, but there were many other smaller-scale deportations ongoing literally every year from 1929 until 1952. During all the deportations around 6-7 million of people subjected to forced resettlement, out of whom around 1,5 million died. Among them were around 130,000 Lithuanians, 58,000 Latvians and 30,000 Estonians.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Polian, Pavel, *Against Their Will. The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest: CEU Press), 4, 305-320; Naimark, Norman K., *Stalin's Genocides*, 131.

3. Deportations from Lithuania in 1945-1948, and the operation of the mass deportation 'Vesna', May 22-23, 1948

3.1. Background to the deportations in 1945-1948

The Red Army returned to the territory of Lithuania in July 1944, and over the next few days the Soviet regime was re-established. The Soviet authorities started mobilizing Lithuanian men to the Red Army. In order to avoid serving in the Russian army, and hoping that it would still be possible to re-establish Lithuanian independence, many men retreated to forests, organized military-based squads calling themselves partisans or Forest Brethren, and managed to stay in action till around 1953. They were attacking Soviet offices and officers in towns and villages, intimidating newcomers who moved to the houses and lands which were earlier confiscated from imprisoned or deported Lithuanians, and trying to make contact with Western countries and inform them about ongoing atrocities asking for help. Though partisans did not manage to force the Soviets to withdraw from Lithuania, they were still threatening the Soviet rule. The representatives of the latter issued multiple decrees calling for more backup and means to fight against Lithuanian partisans, who in communist terminology were called 'bandits', 'anti-Soviet elements', 'bourgeois-nationalist groups' and the like.¹⁵⁰ One of the means of fighting anti-Soviet partisans - or rather of terrorizing them - was deportations of their family members and supporters.¹⁵¹

There are different ways to approach deportations: asking why the authorities saw the need for deportations, who they targeted or what assumptions were at work when the deportations were planned. However, one of the most interesting approaches comes

¹⁵⁰ Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940-1941, 1945-1953 metais* [Deportations of the Residents of Lithuania, 1940-1941, 1945-1953] (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, Pasaulio lietuvių bendruomenė, 1996), 66.

¹⁵¹ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Deportations of the Population in 1944-1953*. (The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupational Regimes in Lithuania), 3-4.

from Orlando Patterson's work *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*.¹⁵² He, and later the authors who absorbed his theory (Claudia Card, Robin May Schott), were contemplating the concept of the *social death*: the attack on the group, focusing not on its physical destruction, but rather harming "the 'social vitality' of the group, the relations of family, community, and intergenerational relations that give meaning to one's identity and links one to both past and future", executing the "soul murder".¹⁵³ Card maintains that *soul murder* is one of the ways in which genocide functions. Some Lithuanian historians, with support from the scholars of the other Baltic countries, are claiming that the Soviet policies of deportations should be treated as genocidal – and actually in Lithuanian discourse they in many instances are treated like that – but I would not go so far as to call them genocidal.¹⁵⁴ However, the deportees experienced the destruction of their family and community relations; many of those who were deported in their childhood or were born in exile gradually acquired other types of identities than they would have acquired in the previous conditions in Lithuania - and these are the issues which Patterson and Card see as the constitutive elements of *social death*.¹⁵⁵ Thus, I see the term the *social death* as very useful in trying to explain the aims of the deportation policies and the intentions of the organizers of the deportations.

In 1945 eight operations of deportation from Lithuania to distant parts of the Soviet Union were organized, this being the largest number of deportations from

¹⁵² Patterson, Orlando, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

¹⁵³ Schott, Robin M., "War Rape, Natality and Genocide" in *Journal of Genocide Research* 13, 1-2 (2011): 10; Card, Claudia, "Genocide and Social Death" in *Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil*, ed. Robin May Schott (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

¹⁵⁴ One of the instances of the using of term to talk about the crimes of the Soviet regime in Lithuanian context is the Museum of the Victims of Genocide in Vilnius, in which the vast majority of the exposition is dedicated to the victims of the Communist regime: partisans, deportees, political prisoners, dissidents, etc. Comprehensive discussion about using the term 'genocide' in Lithuanian historical and political discourse: Anušauskas, Arvydas. *Deportations of the Population in 1944-1953*, 1-2.

¹⁵⁵ Schott, Robin M., "War Rape, Natality and Genocide", 10; Balkelis, Tomas, "Lithuanian Children in the Gulag. Deportations, Ethnicity and Identity. Memoirs of Children Deportees, 1941-1952" in *Lituanus*, vol. 51, issue 3 (Fall 2005), http://www.lituanus.org/2005/05_3_2Balkelis.htm, accessed May 3, 2012.

Lithuania in one year, though it was not biggest in terms of the number of deportees.¹⁵⁶ But the ongoing armed anti- Soviet resistance movement and the communists' determination to purge society of the so-called bourgeois class and other 'enemies of the people' stimulated Soviet authorities to apply more severe means. At the end of September 1945, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Lithuania (LKP), Antanas Sniečkus, and the head of Central Committee Bureau for Lithuanian Affairs, Mikhail Suslov, were appealing to the chief of the Soviet security and secret police (NKVD - The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), Lavrentiy Beria, and the head of NKGB (People's Commissariat for State Security), Vsevolod Merkulov, informing them that there remained a large number of members of families of the activists of underground anti- Soviet movement on the territory of Lithuania, who still had not been deported, and asking for permission to organize their deportation. Beria and Merkulov affirmed this application, and asked Stalin for the supreme confirmation, which was soon given.¹⁵⁷ The next step was to revise and supplement the lists and files of the family members of Lithuanian partisans; a committee of five NKVD members was appointed to accomplish this.¹⁵⁸ Already within a few months, on February 15, 1946, the People's Commissar of the Internal Affairs of LSSR (Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic), Juozas Bartašiūnas, signed the order 'In regard to the liquidation of bourgeois-nationalist underground organizations'. The fifth article of this order mandated the deportation of "the families of bandits and participants of bourgeois-nationalist organizations who had not yielded to the offices of the People's

¹⁵⁶ Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940-1941, 1945-1953 metais*, 72, 189.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai...*, 73.

¹⁵⁸ LSSR [Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic] People's Commissar's for Internal Affairs J. Bartašiūnas October 12th, 1945 order nr. 81 'In regard to establishing a commission for revision of the files of the families of bandits'. LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius [Lithuanian Special Archives, The Department of the Documents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs]. Fund 141, inventory number 1, file 40, page 58.

Commissariat of Internal Affairs”.¹⁵⁹ The responsible officers started fulfilling this order on February 18-21, 1946, when they deported around 501 families (2,082 people)¹⁶⁰ from four Lithuanian counties (at the time Lithuania was divided into twenty-five counties).¹⁶¹

It seems that in 1946 there were no more deportations carried out (though it might be that some documents, especially concerning the deportations of a smaller scope, are missing), but meanwhile the authorities were preparing for new actions. Together with ongoing armed encounters with partisan groups and succeeding imprisonments, some public notifications were announced, calling the participants of the armed resistance organizations and their supporters to surrender. Those who did not agree to participate in ‘legalization’, and those who were going to continue supporting partisans were threatened with punishment, and deportation of their family members was one of the penalties.¹⁶² It was clear from many examples that ‘legalization’ was only a propaganda trick, and that those who ‘legalized’ themselves were not allowed to live a peaceful life as had been earlier promised by the authorities.¹⁶³ Thus, initially only a few partisans ‘legalized’ themselves. However within the next few years,

¹⁵⁹ Grunskis, Eugenijus, “Lietuvos gyventojų deportacijos 1940-1952” [Deportations of the Residents of Lithuania, 1940-1952] in *Terorizuojama ir naikinama Lietuva 1938-1991* [Destroyed and Terrorized Lithuania, 1938-1991], ed. Kedys, J.P. (Klaipėda: Ryto spaustuvė, 1994), 159.

¹⁶⁰ LSSR KGB [Committee for State Security] May 12th, 1988 certificate concerning residents of Lithuania deported in 1941-1952; issued at the request of LKP CK [Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania]. LYA. Fund 1771, inventory number 58, file 916, pages 10-16. (Published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys* [Deportations of the residents of Lithuania, 1941, 1945-1952: A Collection of Documents] (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1994), 423-425.

¹⁶¹ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija* [Lithuania in 1940-1990: The History of Occupied Lithuania], ed. Anušauskas, Arvydas (Vilnius: Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo centras, (2005) 2007), 277.

¹⁶² ‘Legalization’ - the Soviet term which meant ceasing to participate in anti-Soviet resistance movement, turning in all weapons, informing the authorities about the other participants of resistance movements and their plans, and registering in the local offices as a Soviet citizen.

Article in the official Soviet Lithuanian press motivating partisans to surrender: Grunskis, Eugenijus. *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai...*, 74; quoted from the article in the main LSSR newspaper *Tiesa* [*The Truth*; the equivalent of *Pravda* in the other parts of the Soviet Union], March 12th, 1946.

¹⁶³ In many cases those who ‘legalized’ themselves were blackmailed or in the other ways forced into spying on the members or assumed members of the anti-Soviet movement; in some cases they were forced to join the killing-squads (*stribai*, see chapter 2.2.2. of my work). Grunskis, Eugenijus, “Lietuvos gyventojų deportacijos 1940-1952”, 64-65.

simultaneously with the diminishing belief in the success of the armed resistance movement among Lithuanians, and with the decrease in material support from the people, the numbers of ‘legalized’ ex-partisans grew bigger.¹⁶⁴

Partisans were not the only ‘enemies of the state’. Article 58.1a of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic), which was in effect in LSSR from 1940 to 1961, defined treason to the motherland as “acts done by citizens of the USSR that damaged the military power of the USSR, its national sovereignty, or the inviolability of its territory, such as: espionage, betrayal of military or state secrets, crossing to the side of the enemy, flight (by surface or air) abroad”.¹⁶⁵ In the Lithuanian case this article was generally applied to those who did civil or military service during the Nazi occupation or were assumed in any other way to have collaborated with the Nazis or the Western states. Those who were found guilty under this article were sentenced either to death or, in case of mitigating circumstances, “to deprivation of liberty for a term of 10 years with confiscation of all property”, while “remaining adult members of the family of the traitor, living with him or as his dependents at the moment of the perpetration of the crime, shall be deprived of voting rights and exiled to remote districts of Siberia for 5 years”.¹⁶⁶ Later the determined period of the life in exile varied, developing into the sentence of eternal exile in 1949.

Though only adult members are mentioned in this article, in many cases children were also deported. The members of the armed anti- Soviet resistance movement were

¹⁶⁴ Many former supporters of the partisans (supporting them with food, shelter, medicine, allowing for the partisans to build/dig a bunker on their land, etc.) were deported, killed or in other ways terrorized; many others stopped believing in the success of the partisan war or that the Western powers would come to rescue, and ceased to provide partisans with help, without which the latter could not act. Gaškaitė, Nijolė, *Pasipriešinimo istorija. 1944-1953 metai* [History of Resistance. 1944-1953] (Vilnius: Aidai, 1997), 249-267.

¹⁶⁵ Extracts from RSFSR Criminal Code in English online: <http://www.cyberussr.com/rus/uk58-e.html#58-1a>, accessed January 6, 2012.

¹⁶⁶ Extracts from RSFSR Criminal Code;

The death penalty in the Soviet Union was legal most of the time, though there were some short interruptions; the longest period during which the death penalty was outlawed was from May 1947 till January 1952. Van den Berg, Ger P., “The Soviet Union and the Death Penalty” in *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (April 1983): 154-174.

also subject to the main part of Article 58.1 which defines ‘Counterrevolutionary Crimes’ as “any action directed toward the overthrow, subversion, or weakening of the power of worker-peasant councils or of their chosen (according to the Constitution of the USSR and constitutions of union republics) worker-peasant government of the USSR, union and autonomous republics, or toward the subversion or weakening of the external security of the USSR and the fundamental economic, political, and national gains of the proletarian revolution”.¹⁶⁷

At the end of 1946, the partisan movement in Lithuania was continuing, and there were still tens of thousands of family members of the Forest Brethren and true or supposed collaborators with the Nazis during WWII who had not been deported. Therefore the Soviet authorities issued new orders to organize deportations. On December 10, 1946, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union, Sergei Kruglov, signed Directive 5672/K “In regard to detection and deportation of the family members of active bandits and other anti-soviet elements from Lithuania to distant parts of the Soviet Union”.¹⁶⁸ Several weeks later the acting Minister of Internal Affairs of LSSR, Piotr Kapralov, issued the successive Directive Number 00123, in which he charged chief officers of all counties of Lithuania with the assignment to prepare documents and files concerning the forthcoming deportations of the relatives of members of anti- Soviet organizations, which had to be delivered to the Special Council of the Ministry of State Security in Moscow. This directive concerned not only family members of active partisans but also relatives of those already imprisoned or killed who were still in touch with underground organizations, providing their members with food and shelter.¹⁶⁹ In the supplement of this document - the order given by the Minister of Internal Affairs of LSSR, Bartašiūnas - it was specified who were to be considered

¹⁶⁷ Extracts from RSFSR Criminal Code.

¹⁶⁸ Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 75.

¹⁶⁹ Directive nr. 00123 of the acting Minister of Internal Affairs P. Kapralov, December 24th, 1946. LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius. Fund 141, inventory number 1, file 71, pages 284-285.

relatives: the partisan's wife, father, mother, brothers, sisters, and also others who were living together (in-laws, grandparents, aunts, etc.) if they were dependent on the family of the partisan and their dependence was stated by the Executive Committee of the respective district.¹⁷⁰ Though children are not referred to in this order, in most cases they were deported together with a family.

Apart from ongoing armed battles with anti-Soviet partisans, in 1947 the Lithuanian Soviet authorities were mostly concerned with compiling files of the anti-Soviet 'elements' and detecting members of the partisan movement and their supporters. In the autumn the supreme authorities issued several new orders: a decree of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union on September 29, 1947, "In regard to the means of the struggle against 'banditry' on the territory of LSSR", and the decree of the Minister of State Security (MGB), Viktor Abakumov, on October 16, 1947, "In regard to the resettlement of the families of bandits and bandit supporters – kulaks".¹⁷¹ Various officers later used the new term 'bandit supporters – kulaks' in many cases, especially when compiling files for the operation 'Vesna'.¹⁷² It served to greatly expand the number of subjects destined for prosecution and deportation. Lithuanian historians guess that this strengthening of the actions against *kulaks* – wealthy (in the Soviet understanding of this word) farmers – was preparation for the intended collectivization.¹⁷³ The Soviet authorities started arranging plans of the collectivization of the Baltic region in May 1947, and started implementing them in 1948.¹⁷⁴ However, the collectivization in Lithuania became more wide-ranging only in 1950-1953.¹⁷⁵ In November 1947, the Lithuanian Soviet authorities renewed deportations. In the

¹⁷⁰ Directive nr. 006 of the Minister of Internal Affairs J. Bartašiūnas, January 18th, 1947. LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius. Fund 141, inventory number 1, file 71, pages 28-29.

¹⁷¹ Grunskis, Eugenijus, "Lietuvos gyventojų deportacijos 1940-1952", 162.

¹⁷² In Russian: бандпособники кулаки, бандпособники кулаки.

¹⁷³ Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 79

¹⁷⁴ Decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union "In regard to organizing collective farms in Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Soviet Socialist Republics", May 21, 1947; reference in Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 79.

¹⁷⁵ *Lietuva 1940-1990: okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 287.

following six months (up to the beginning of May 1948) around 1,025 families (3,938 people) were sent to exile; most of them to the Tyumen, Tomsk and Omsk regions.¹⁷⁶

In 1945-1948 most of the Lithuanian residents who were deported were charged with being family members of the participants of the anti- Soviet resistance movement, or with collaborating with the Nazi authorities during the Second World War. In some cases the officers issued documents stating the charges before the deportation, and in some cases only after several years, when deportees were already living and working in distant parts of the Soviet Union.¹⁷⁷ The Soviets had already deported many of those belonging to the other possibly suspect groups - politicians, intelligentsia and organized youth of the interwar period of independent Lithuania - in 1941, some of those who evaded this first deportation later managed to flee to the West in the course of the war. The Soviet authorities, basing themselves on the Communist ideology, were inclined to assume that in the rural areas only *kulaks* could be against the Soviet rule, so the participants of the anti- Soviet resistance movement were supposed to be wealthy peasants; but the numbers given by the same authorities show that middle-rate and poor peasants were also often deported as family members of partisans and their supporters.¹⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the fear of the anti- Soviet attitudes of wealthier peasants, and their presumed opposition to the creation of collective farms called for even larger scale deportations, such as operations code-named ‘Vesna’ [‘Spring’] in 1948 (40,000 people deported), ‘Priboj’ [‘Surf’] in 1949 (29-32,000) and ‘Osenj’ [‘Autumn’] in 1951 (16,000).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ LSSR KGB [Committee for State Security] May 12th, 1988 certificate concerning residents of Lithuania deported in 1941-1952; Certificate about the destinations of resettlement issued by the head of the department “A” of LSSR MGB [The Ministry of the State Security] P. Grishin, January 10th, 1948. LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius. Fund V-135, inventory number 7, file 60, pages 22-24. (Both documents published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys*, 423-425; 143-145.

¹⁷⁷ Grunskis, Eugenijus, “Lietuvos gyventojų deportacijos 1940-1952”, 169.

¹⁷⁸ Grunskis Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 81.

¹⁷⁹ Grunskis, Eugenijus, “Lietuvos gyventojų deportacijos 1940-1952”, 171, 173, 175.

3.2. *Planning and executing the operation 'Vesna'*

Like in the cases of the preceding and successive deportations, the principal orders for the operation of the mass deportation 'Vesna' were given by the supreme Soviet authorities in Moscow, based on the initiative and requests of the representatives of the Communist Party of Lithuania. The order for the mass deportation in May 1948 was given on February 21 of the same year.¹⁸⁰ It was issued by the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union chaired by Joseph Stalin. The order stated that in response to the proposal of the Council of Ministers of LSSR, the decision had been made to deport 12,000 families from the Lithuanian territory as special settlers to Yakut ASSR and the region of Krasnoyarsk (6,000 families to the first destination, and 6,000 to the second) to work there in the industrial enterprises subordinate to the Ministry of Forest Industry of the USSR.¹⁸¹ Among the other orders concerning organization and documentation, this document also provided deportees with the right to take up to 1000 kilograms of their belongings (per family) with them. However, the exiles in their later testimonies indicated that this was only an ostensible right: there were no technical possibilities of transporting such an amount of belongings, as there was hardly enough place for the people themselves in the lorries which took them to train stations, and later in the trains.¹⁸² Similarly to earlier deportations, exiles were transported crammed into cattle cars which were partly adjusted for transporting people. In the preparatory plans it was calculated that around 7-8 families would be carried in one train car (58 cars per 400 families); the figure was later specified as 28-30 people in a smaller car and 56-60 in a

¹⁸⁰ Resolution of the Council of Ministers of USSR "In regard to the special resettlement of 12,000 families of those living illegally, killed during armed encounters or sentenced bandits and nationalists; also kulaks- supporters of bandits with their families from the territory of Lithuanian SSR". February 21, 1948. Lithuanian translation of the document in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys*, 155-156.

¹⁸¹ Ibid; later the destination of Yakut ASSR was changed to the region of Krasnoyarsk and Buryat-Mongolian ASSR.

¹⁸² Garmutė, Antanina, "Ešelonai" [Echelons] in *Amžino išalo žemėje* [In the Land of Permafrost], compiled by Žemaitytė, Aldona (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1989), 47, 49.

bigger one.¹⁸³ In their memoirs the exiles indicate that people were so squashed inside the cars that there was not enough fresh air to breathe, so the transportation was certainly not calculated for one tone of belongings per family.¹⁸⁴

After this initial order to organize the deportation of 12,000 families, which was supposed to constitute around 36,000- 48,000 people, more specific orders were issued, concerning the finely detailed logistics of the deportation: the required number of train cars and other vehicles, routes, nutrition during the trip, assigning responsible officers and attendant personnel.¹⁸⁵ It was calculated that 30 echelons of trains were required, each consisting of 62 rail cars (58 for the deportees, the others for the convoy and attending staff; in some of the orders it was required to reserve one car for those who might get ill during the trip, or two cars for the deportees' belongings).¹⁸⁶ The officers calculated that the trip by railway would take around 18-23 days plus 1–9 days by other means of transportation, until every group reached its destination.¹⁸⁷ The organizers of the deportation appointed 102 officers of the USSR, LSSR and BSSR [Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic] Ministries of Internal Affairs to escort the deportees, together

¹⁸³ Plan of the transportation of deportees by railways, The Ministry of Internal Affairs of USSR, April 30th, 1948. GARF [State Archives of the Russian Federation] Fund 9479, inventory number 1, file 427, pages 16-17; Plan of the transportation of deportees from Lithuania, The Ministry of Internal Affairs of USSR, May 4th, 1948. GARF, fund 9479, inventory number 1, file 427, pages 12-14. Both documents (translated to Lithuanian) published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys*, 159-161; 163-166.

¹⁸⁴ Garmutė, Antanina, "Ešelonai", 54-57.

¹⁸⁵ In some documents officers were counting that one family consists of around three members, in other documents - of four members.

Calculations of the required railway vehicles for the special resettlement, April 1948 [day not indicated], certified by the Deputy Minister of the State Security of USSR Ogolcov. The photocopy of the document published in *1941-1952 metų Lietuvos tremtiniai* [Lithuanian deportees of the years 1941-1952], (Vilnius:Vidaus Reikalų Ministerija, 1993), 36;

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of USSR, Department of Transportation: The plan of carrying deportees by water transport. April 30th, 1948. Lithuanian translation of the document published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys*, 162-163.

¹⁸⁶ Calculations of the required railway vehicles;

The Chief of the convoy army of the Ministry of Internal Affairs V. Bochkov: Instruction for the heads of the convoy of the echelons of deportees. May 4th, 1948. GARF, fund 9479, inventory number 1, file 427, pages 7-11. Lithuanian translation of the document published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys*, 166-170.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid; The Ministry of Internal Affairs of USSR, Department of Transportation: The plan of carrying deportees by rail. 30 April, 1948. GARF, fund 9479, inventory number 1, file 427, pages 16-17. Lithuanian translation of the document published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys*, 159-161.

with 32 groups of military, each of them consisting of 25 people (officers and men), accompanied by one doctor and two nurses per echelon.¹⁸⁸ The appointed heads of the convoy of every echelon were required to give orders and to supervise the security, to receive the deportees and their documents brought by the officers, and to allow the deportees to freight up to 1000 kilograms of baggage per family. Additionally, they were to make three copies of the list of passengers of every train wagon (indicating family name, first name, patronymic name, the year of the birth, nationality, the kind of kinship with the head of the family, home address until the deportation, indication whether there was a personal file), to supervise nutrition (getting food from the canteens in the stations) and to seek the highest possible pace of the trip. Furthermore, they were instructed to transfer those who got severely ill to the nearest hospitals, to bury the dead; to deliver the deportees to the designated destinations, and to supervise the documentation of this process.¹⁸⁹

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent these orders were accomplished but undoubtedly many things were not mentioned in the instructions, and one would get a partial understanding of the deportees' trip to the places of exile relying only on the decrees and instructions: neither the walls of the cars covered by muck, nor the harassments by the officers in the so-called bathhouses (there were several longer stops during the trip), the thefts committed by the convoying soldiers, or the inedible food are mentioned in such documents.¹⁹⁰ The actual presence of medical staff in every echelon might be doubtful, as ex-deportees frequently mention their fellow travelers helping the sick or assisting those giving birth, but not escorting doctors or nurses.¹⁹¹ They also tend

¹⁸⁸ The Ministry of Internal Affairs of USSR: The plan of the transportation of the deportees from Lithuania. 4 May, 1948. GARF, fund 9479, inventory number 1, file 427, pages 12-14. Lithuanian translation of the document published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys*, 163-166.

¹⁸⁹ The Chief of the convoy army of the Ministry of Internal Affairs V. Bochkov: The instruction for the heads of the convoy of the echelons of deportees, 4 May, 1948.

¹⁹⁰ Garmutė, Antanina, "Ešelonai", 56, 58.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 56-57.

to claim that the dead were simply thrown out of the carriages by the escorting soldiers, and not buried, this claim being one of the most prevalent motifs in the memoirs of ex-deportees when they talk about the brutality and ferocity of the Soviet officers.¹⁹² Certainly, none of those documents are more plausible than another if we want to know how the deportations were carried out: the official documents, analyzed here, are the orders which were not necessarily carried out, while personal documents are more “the sense which individual gives to objects and situations when interpreting the social reality” than some ‘objective truth’.¹⁹³

The orders in regard to the organization of transportation of the deportees to their designated places of exile were not the only instructions issued during the preparation for the deportation of May 22-23, 1948. There were many instructions sent to the local administrative units concerning the initial actions of deportation: the capture of those to be deported, the ways to deal with their property, the ideological explanation of the deportation for other citizens and etc. First of all, local authorities were prompted to keep the forthcoming deportation a secret in order to avoid panic and the escape of those to be deported.¹⁹⁴ It was not so easy to maintain this precept - many people knew in advance about the forthcoming mass deportation (they were warned by relatives and acquaintances working or having connections in the local Soviet officers) and managed to flee. In some cases out of four intended family members only one or even none was deported because they had been warned about the deportation in advance.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, this did not stop the Soviet authorities from fulfilling the plan: from the beginning of 1948 regional departments of the Ministry of State Security of LSSR in addition to the main list of ‘anti-Soviet elements’ were preparing reserve lists, so in the

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Jacek Leociak, “STUDIES: Literature of the Personal Document as a Source in Holocaust Research (a Methodological Reconnaissance)” in *Holocaust. Studies and Materials*, issue 1 (2008): 32.

¹⁹⁴ Grunskis Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 94.

¹⁹⁵ The record file of Mykolas Liubauskas. LYA. Fund V-135, inventory number 1, file 11627, page 17.

case of the escape of several intended deportees, the officers turned to the families on the standby list.¹⁹⁶

While the Soviet authorities planned to deport 12,000 families during the operation 'Vesna', almost 15,000 families (56,178 people) were enlisted in both the main and reserve lists of potential deportees.¹⁹⁷ Thus the fact that 8,679 people from those who were on the main list avoided deportation was not a setback for the organizers of this operation: in their place people from the reserve lists were seized as well as those who were found at home together with those who were on the deportation lists. The number of deportees was also enlarged by those who were added to the list the same day as a matter of urgency, and also by the order allowing voluntarily deportation for those who were willing to be resettled together with their relatives.¹⁹⁸ Although it might seem that no one would volunteer for deportation, we know of at least one documented case when a mother, who was not present when her children were taken to the train, volunteered for deportation in order to stay with her children.¹⁹⁹ When the trains started moving, there were already 40,002 or, according to the account of the Minister of State Security of LSSR and the deputy Minister of State Security of USSR, 39,766 people (11,345 families) on them - a number that was not significantly lower than planned.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ Grunskis Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 99.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 118.

¹⁹⁸ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1944-1953* [The deportations of the residents of Lithuania 1944 1953] (Tarptautinė komisija nacių ir sovietinio režimo nusikaltimams Lietuvoje įvertinti [The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupational Regimes in Lithuania]), 9 ;

Account of the Minister of Internal Affairs of LSSR J. Bartašiūnas and the chief of the convoy army V. Bochkov to the Minister of Internal Affairs of USSR S. Kruglov about the preparations for the operation of deportation 'Vesna', May 18, 1948. Lithuanian translation of the document published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys*, 178-179.

¹⁹⁹ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1944-1953*, 9.

²⁰⁰ Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 118. Author proposes this number of deportees as the result of summation of all accounts of the chiefs of every county of LSSR; accounts available at LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius, fund V-135, inventory number 7, file 64, pages 1-135; Account of the deputy Minister of State Security of USSR S. Ogolcov and the Minister of State Security of LSSR D. Jefimov to the Minister of State Security of USSR V. Abakumov about the

The official reports provide some technical and statistical data, informing us that the operation in the major part of LSSR took place from 4 am on May 22 until 6 pm of May 23, with the exception of bigger towns (Vilnius, Kaunas), where it was rapidly carried out during the night of May 22 (from midnight till 5 am). It is stated that of those who were deported 12,370 were men, 16,499 women and 10,897 children under the age of 15, which is 31.1 %, 41.5 % and 27.4 % respectively ; these proportions were probably more or less the same even if 236 more people were deported, as historian Grunskis indicates. The document also provides the statistical data in regard to the charges: 1,442 (12.7 %) families were deported as ‘family members of bandits and nationalists who have illegal status’ (who did not ‘legalize’ themselves), 2,423 (21.4 %) families as ‘family members of sentenced bandits and nationalists’, 1,234 (10.9 %) families as ‘family members of bandits and nationalists who were killed during armed encounters’, and 6,246 (55 %) families as ‘supporters of bandits kulaks’. It also provides information about the officers who took part in this operation: 2,050 officers of the Ministry of State Security of LSSR, 2,500 officers from other parts of the Soviet Union, 13,452 officers and soldiers of the army of the Ministry of State Security, 11,446 Soviet and Communist Party activists and a few thousands of others. In total, more than 41,500 people participated in the execution of the operation of mass deportation ‘Vesna’ - the number that is almost equal to the number of deportees.²⁰¹

An important step in the preparation for the deportation was updating the lists of those who should be deported and compiling compromising material.²⁰² The county department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs usually made one file per family unit, which was constructed as a personal file of the ‘head of the family’ – usually a man of

deportation of the residents of Lithuania. Around May 28, 1948. LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius. Fund V-135, inventory number 7, file 61, pages 230^a-236.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² The Soviet authorities started making the lists of the citizens who were suspected of anti-Soviet attitude in 1940, and carried on this work from 1944 onward. New names were constantly added to the lists, especially before the mass deportations. Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1944-1953*, 3, 8.

working age, but in the case of his absence it could also be a woman.²⁰³ Firstly the accounts of so-called ‘agents’ – local petty Soviet officers and informers - were collected, and a certificate about the social and the economic status of a certain family during the interwar period and at present was ordered at the regional office. Then, if ‘agents’ could announce any minor detail which might be interpreted as particular person’s or family’s acting against the Soviet regime, and if the certificate indicated a family as *kulak* (and in most cases it did, not necessarily because of land ownership), the interrogatory protocol of ‘agents’ were added to the file. Then the file was supplemented with the available information about any of the family member serving in the Red Army, having any medals or distinctions for serving the Soviet Union, having any relatives among Soviet authorities or, by contrast, having any relatives who were imprisoned, deported, sentenced to death or in any other way repressed, or who had served in the German army.

If the family had no significant connections with the Soviet authorities and no distinctions for serving the Soviet Union, the chief of the county department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs signed off the conclusion of the file, stating that the respective family had to be deported.²⁰⁴ This document was delivered together with the file to Vilnius, to the Second Department of the Bureau of Struggle against Banditry of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of LSSR, where the chief officers had to sign it. During the preparatory stage of the preceding deportations (1941, 1944-1947) Lithuanian Soviet officers sent some of the files to Moscow to be considered by the OSO (the Special Council of the Ministry of State Security), but in the case of ‘Vesna’ this was not necessary - there was no order to send files for reconsideration by the OSO.²⁰⁵ On

²⁰³ Grunskis Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 76.

²⁰⁴ The record files of Mykolas Liubauskas and Antanas Kazilionis. LYA. Fund V-135, inventory number 1, files 11627 and 10118.

²⁰⁵ Resolution of the Council of Ministers of USSR “In regard to the special resettlement of 12,000 families.

the day of the deportation all family members had to answer the same questions about connections with the Soviet authorities and ‘enemies of the state’ and then, if they did not die on the way, some new documents supplemented their file upon their arrival to the designated place of exile.²⁰⁶

3.3. Gendered implications of the policies of the deportation ‘Vesna’

None of the documents concerning the post-1944 deportations from Lithuania known to me include any explicit reference to the deportees’ gender.²⁰⁷ However, this does not mean that the deportation policies were gender-neutral. As Cynthia Cockburn puts it in her text on gendered aspects of militarization, gender is not always a primary aspect of a particular system of power:

economic class and ethnic differentiation can also be important relational hierarchies, structuring a regime and shaping its mode of ruling. But these other differentiations are always also gendered, and in turn they help to construct what is a man or a woman in any given circumstance.²⁰⁸

Therefore, in this subchapter I will try to analyze in what ways the Soviet policies of deporting family members of the anti- Soviet guerilla fighters and *kulaks* were gendered; in the next chapter I will talk about the gendered realities of life in exile, which were influenced by those policies.

²⁰⁶ The record files of Mykolas Liubauskas, Antanas Kazilionis. LYA. Fund V-135, inventory number 1, files 11627 and 10118, respectively.

²⁰⁷ However, in some documents it is stated how many women and how many men were deported; in such documents people under the age of 15 are referred to as ‘children’, not identifying their gender. During pre-1944 deportations, especially the ‘Black June’ in 1941, men were sent to the camps, while women, elderly and children were deported to the special settlements: this is a clearer distinction of policies and fates than during the later deportations.

²⁰⁸ Cockburn, Cynthia, “The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace” in *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, eds. Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 28.

To begin with, the historical context of the operation of the mass deportation ‘Vesna’ in 1948 was particularly important. As I described earlier, the anti-Soviet guerilla war, which started in 1944, was still ongoing in 1948 though the number of partisans and their power was rapidly decreasing. This made the deportations gendered in at least two significant ways. Firstly, in those families which were subjected to deportation because of the participation of one or several of their members in the partisan movement, rarely had middle-aged or able-bodied men left: these men were among the partisans, had gone into hiding, were already imprisoned, deported to the labor camps, or had been killed. This meant that women had to become or stay the heads of the households and to search for ways to provide for the other family members - children, the elderly, and the sick; they took these responsibilities prior to the deportation, during the trip to the places of exile, in the exile, and in some cases after the return. Even if for some of them this was not a new role, providing for the family during the years of postwar/guerilla war, while being perceived by the authorities as ‘the enemies of the people’, could not be an easy task.

The second way in which the partisan movement influenced the gendering of the deportation was the fact that the deportation ‘Vesna’ was one of the means of the Soviet authorities to suppress the anti-Soviet resistance.²⁰⁹ This meant that among those who were deported were many family members of the partisans, other members of the partisan movement such as editors and distributors of the underground press, signalmen

²⁰⁹ Some Lithuanian historians see ‘Vesna’ as one of turning points in the aims of the deportations from Lithuania: 1944-1948 deportations were mostly aimed at repressing the partisan movement; 1948-1953 deportations were planned as a part of the collectivization process, as the elimination of the true and assumed opponents of the collectivization, *kulaks*. ‘Vesna’, as well as ‘Priboi’ in 1949 was explicitly targeting those both groups. Certainly, families of the partisans and *kulaks*, along with other ‘enemies of the people’, were subjected to deportations during both periods, and this turning point refers to the re-definition or rather the enlargement of the primary goals. Pocius, Midaugas. *Ginkluotojo pasipriešinimo slopinimas 1944-1953 m. (I dalis)* [The Suppression of the Armed Resistance in 1944-1953. (Part 1)] (International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, 2008), 9-11; Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai*, 115.

and signalwomen, etc.²¹⁰ Due to the reasons discussed in the previous paragraph there were more women than men in all those groups subjected to the deportation. If not for the deportation of the additional groups (*kulaks*, collaborators with the Nazis), among whom there were more men, the numbers of women and men deported during ‘Vesna’ would have been way more disproportionate than 41.5% and 31.1% (the rest – children under the age of fifteen, whose sex was not specified in the documents).

Though in the Lithuanian nationalist historiography this is rarely discussed, some of the deportees were not (or were not always) supporting their family members’ involvement in the partisan war, and this might have had some gendered aspects as well. The wife of the high-ranking partisan Danielius Vaitelis (codename Briedis), Aleksandra Vaitelienė, recalled how in a moment of unbearable physical and spiritual pain in Siberia she, in her mind, told her husband who had died prior to their family’s deportation: “Danielius, I wish you to suffer eternally in hell the same kind of torments which I am suffering here”.²¹¹ It was difficult for her to endure the knowledge that her husband, whose involvement in the guerilla movement brought all the family to Siberia, was dead, though she could not allow herself to die: she had to provide for her two children and her mother, notwithstanding her illnesses and suffering.²¹²

This example shows that some women, subjected to deportations and other Soviet

²¹⁰ Partisans were rarely deported; they were subjected to harsher punishment (in the hierarchy of the Soviet law) - imprisonment, torturing, death or labor camps. Penalties for the other members of the anti-Soviet resistance movement were varying- some were sentenced to prison, labor camps, were tortured to death. Those, whose involvement in the anti-Soviet resistance movement was harder to prove, were deported to the special settlements or stayed in Lithuanian SSR under the supervision of the Soviet officers and agents. Many signalmen and signalwomen were deported; there were mostly young boys and girls/women of various ages who worked as signalmen/signalwomen between various groups of partisans- carrying their messages, helping them to find connections with various people, etc.

²¹¹ Čekutis, Ričardas; Žygelis, Dalius, *Laisvės kryžkelės. Moterys partizaniniame kare* [The Crossroads of Freedom. Women in the Partisan War], 2006, <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2006-05-01-laisves-kryzkeles-xiv-moterys-partizaniniame-kare/5343> , accessed April 6, 2012.

²¹² Ibid; Aleksandra Vaitelienė with her two children and mother was deported during the mass deportation ‘Vesna’. Her husband Danielius Vaitelis- Briedis shot himself ten days earlier, on May 13, 1948, after he and two other partisans had been surrounded by MVD soldiers and his leg was wounded. It was a common practice among partisans, signalmen and signalwomen to commit a suicide by shooting or exploding themselves with a grenade if they were hopelessly surrounded by the soldiers or *stribai*, or if they were seriously wounded.

anti-resistance strategies, in addition to the general feeling of unfairness of the occupational regime's policies, also felt indignant at their husbands, brothers and sons, whose involvement in the partisan war resulted in the deportation and sufferings of those who did not necessarily support the guerilla war materially or ideologically. Cynthia Enloe, basing herself on Virginia Woolf's contemplation of militarism, refers to these issues as the 'militarization of women's lives': women's involuntary and voluntary involvement in militarized processes during the years of war and peace, which some of the women tried to oppose.²¹³ However, it seems unlikely that there was a lot of resentment against the Lithuanian partisans among Lithuanian deportees. Therefore, both Lithuanian nationalist and Soviet discourses were probably right when claiming that many deported Lithuanians held patriotic-Lithuanian/nationalist/anti-Soviet sentiments and supported the partisan war.

The decrees regulating the deportation might be read as gender-neutral. During the post-1944 mass deportations people were deported as family units: everyone who belonged to a certain family, irrespective of one's gender, had to be deported. But not only, as discussed above, did the recent World War and the ongoing guerilla war affect those family units, leaving more women than men in most of them; the policies were also gendered in the way that they implicated certain assumptions about women and men.

The first question one might raise is why the Soviets had to deport women and children if their main antagonists were partisans, heads of wealthy households, and active collaborators with the Nazis in 1941-1944, which were all predominantly male? The answer is more complex than the legal system of a family's accountability for its members' crimes, which was in effect in the Soviet Union for some time, or the class-

²¹³ Enloe, Cynthia, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2000), 245-249; 288-289.

based ideology according to which *kulaks*' children are also *kulaks*. It is also related to the Soviet ideologists' and authorities' efforts to purge the society from 'anti-Soviet' and 'anti-revolutionary' 'elements'. To prevent the 'anti-Soviet' group from renewal, one of its core elements – women - along with the others, had to be destroyed. Rhonda Copelon, discussing women's particular vulnerability during wars, argues:

Women are targets not simply because they 'belong to' the enemy but precisely because they keep the civilian population functioning and are essential to its continuity. They are targets because they too *are* the enemy, because of their power as well as vulnerability as women, including their sexual and reproductive power. They are targets because of *hatred* of their power as women [italics in original text].²¹⁴

Although the Soviet ideology did not include such explicit plans of eugenics as the Nazi theories did, nor talked openly about the plans to eliminate certain national groups, some Lithuanian historians claim that the Soviet policies in Lithuania and in most of the countries and regions, which became the part of the Soviet Union, were genocidal. Historians base themselves on the meanings of 'genocide' established by various international commissions, mainly - the United Nations' Convention on Genocide, signed on the December 9, 1948.²¹⁵

According to this 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:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

²¹⁴ Copelon, Rhonda, "Surfacing Gender: Reconceptualizing Crimes Against Women in Time of War" in *The Women and War Reader*, eds. Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 71.

²¹⁵ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Deportations of the population in 1944-1953*, 1.

- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.²¹⁶

The first three articles of the Convention fit to describe the Soviet policies in Lithuania, as well as in the other occupied regions. But the historical and political discussion is more than only about the articles of the Convention - it is also about the general plans of the authorities of the Soviet Union, especially Stalin, for the regions which were incorporated into the USSR: whether those were the plans of colonization, of genocide of the nations living there, of building socialism, or else.²¹⁷

The relevance of the term 'genocide' for describing the crimes of the Soviet regime in the Baltic territories might be questioned, but the terrorizing of the Lithuanians as a national group, particularly by mass deportations, is evident. The Soviet authorities proclaimed Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians and Ukrainians to be 'extremely dangerous' national groups, even after Stalin's death authorities were reluctant to release people belonging to those nationalities from exile, and even in the deportees' documents their nationality turned out to be more important than their social class, which is not fully compatible with the official Soviet ideology.²¹⁸ Therefore Lithuanian historians maintain that many people were deported from the occupied countries not as representatives of certain classes but as having certain nationalities, and

²¹⁶ Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948. <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html>, accessed March 18, 2012.

²¹⁷ Agarin, Timofei, "Demographic and Cultural Policies of the Soviet Union in Lithuania from 1944 to 1956. A post-Colonial perspective" in *The Sovietization of the Baltic states*, ed. Olaf Mertelsmann (Tartu: KLEIO ajalookirjanduse sihtasutus, 2003).

²¹⁸ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Deportations of the population in 1944-1953*, 1-3.

that this, together with other crimes committed by the representatives of the Soviet regime, has to be called genocide or genocidal policies.²¹⁹

In addition, the link between the genocidal policies and attacks on families, noted by some researchers, is very relevant here. Elisa von Joden-Forgey claims that there is an evident link between violence done to *families*, and genocide:

As many feminist researchers have noted, families stand in between the individual and the group and are crucial for both biological and cultural reproduction. Since families are central for the on-going life of societies, they also become targets for attacks on this life. [...] Targeting of families in genocidal violence has typically been overlooked by researchers, who focus either on harms to individuals or on harms to groups.²²⁰

This approach calls for connecting it with the concept of *social death*, and for thinking about policies of terror which were targeting families as one of the methods to provoke the social death of a certain group, which is a part of the genocide of that group.

A perception of the Soviet deportation policies as genocidal strategies or as the strategies aiming to eliminate certain groups of the society helps to understand the gendered aspect of the deportations in two ways. On the one hand, it accounts for the seemingly gender-neutral policies: nationality, social class, and anti-Soviet views and actions were of primary importance in the schemes of deportation, while gender was of secondary importance. On the other hand, those who were neither involved in any anti-Soviet actions, nor belonged to the *kulak* or *bourgeois* class, still had to be necessarily deported because of their reproductive possibilities: they could reproduce the unwanted nation and its 'wrong' social and cultural values. Thus because of their nationality,

²¹⁹ Ibid, 28-29.

²²⁰ Quoted in Schott, Robin M., "War Rape, Natality and Genocide" in *Journal of Genocide Research* 13, 1-2 (2011): 14.

women were deported together with men, though their involvement in the resistance movement or their role as the heads of the *kulak* households might have been assumed to be weaker.

Obviously, the Soviet authorities planned and carried out deportations from the occupied regions not merely in order to purge the society from the ‘anti- Soviet elements’ and to weaken and/or eliminate certain national groups, but also because of the need of a cheap labor force, especially in the forestry. In regard to compulsory labor, the policies also were seemingly gender-neutral, but affected women and men in particular ways. This I will discuss in the next chapter, which is dedicated to the deportees’ experiences in exile.

4. The life of Lithuanian deportees in exile as narrated in memoirs

The memoirs of Lithuanian deportees and political prisoners who served their sentences in the Gulag labor camps started appearing in Lithuania in 1988-1989. The first one - Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea) - was published in the literary journal *Pergalė* in 1988.²²¹ This publication not only showed that Mikhail Gorbachev's announced *glasnost* was opening up possibilities to discuss previously forbidden topics, but also served to establish the grand narrative of the Soviet deportations from Lithuania, and the canonical way of telling about the Lithuanian deportees' experiences in Siberian exile. This is not to say that without Grinkevičiūtė's memoir the later testimonies of the Lithuanian deportees would have been absolutely different from what they were. For example, already in 1961 Barbara Armonas' memoir *Leave Your Tears in Moscow* was published in the United States, which in its form and style is not much different from Grinkevičiūtė's, except for the latter's more elegant language.²²² However, Armonas' memoir was not available in Lithuania until 1993.

After Grinkevičiūtė's memoir was published and she was not arrested (which would have happened ten years earlier) for openly discussing deportees' experiences and the criminal aspects of the Soviet regime, a flood of deportees' and political prisoners' testimonies unleashed, and reached its peak in 1991-1992. According to Grinskas' list of publications, in those years 24 and 23 separate memoirs and volumes of memoirs respectively were published, in comparison with 11 in 1989; 16 in 1990; 17 in 1993, 16 in 1994, and 4 in 1995. On this list there are memoirs which were published in

²²¹ She wrote the first version of her memoir in 1950, during her and her mother's illegal escape from Siberia to Lithuania, after which she was sentenced to labor camps and additional years of exile. The memoir of 1988 is in some ways slightly different from the earlier version. For a comprehensive analysis of this case see Davoliūtė, Violeta, "Deportee Memoirs and Lithuanian History: The Double Testimony of Dalia Grinkevičiūtė" in *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 36, issue 1 (Spring 2005): 51-68.

²²² Armonas, Barbara, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1961).

the 1960s-1970s in the United States, therefore the number of memoirs which were published until 1996 is around 116.²²³ However, publications in journals and newspapers are not included here; the given numbers include both political prisoners' and deportees' memoirs. The number of memoirs published in 1996-2012 is unknown, but it is definitely smaller than in the previous period, because after the peak of sharing memories in 1991-1992, there was no such process of similar intensity later.²²⁴

Almost all Lithuanian deportees' memoirs which I have read (not only those which I analyze in this work) can be seen as representative of the same literary genre or, namely, of the grand Lithuanian narrative of the Soviet deportations from the Baltic countries.²²⁵ In the subsequent chapter I will discuss one part of this grand narrative – the topics prevailing in the memoirs. Among the memoirs which served for the establishment of the grand narrative of the Soviet deportations from Lithuania were many women's stories. Though men deportees' and political prisoners' memoirs were also published, it seems that the majority of the 'model' narratives, which became well-known, were often quoted or referred to, re-published several times, made their way into school books and were translated to the other languages, were women's: Grinkevičiūtė, Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Garmutė and others.

As I got access to only a few memoirs written by deportees of the 'Vesna' deportation, I decided not to confine my analysis to them. In this chapter I explore memoirs of people deported in 1941, 1945, 1947 and 1948 (for short descriptions of

²²³ Grunskis, Eugenijus, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940-1941, 1945-1953 metais* [Deportations of the Residents of Lithuania, 1940-1941, 1945-1953] (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, Pasaulio lietuvių bendruomenė, 1996), 357-359.

²²⁴ Avižienis, Jūra, "Mediated and Unmediated Access to the Past: Assessing the Memoir as Literary Genre" in *Journal of Baltic studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (Spring 2005): 41.

²²⁵ Exceptional is Zenonas Skrickus memoir *Igarkoje kaštonai nežydi* [The Chestnuts Do Not Bloom in Igarka], 2002 (parts of it I am using in this work). His memoir is not written as a story consisting of successive events, as in most of Lithuanian deportees' memoirs, but more as a collage of separate anecdotic short stories; it is also written in totally different style, tone and language than a 'typical' memoir of Lithuanian deportee: Skrickus is sarcastic, tells about issues which are rarely discussed in deportees' memoirs, such as brutal murders, sexual life, alcoholism; to write about them he uses the style and words of informal language, such as Russian swear-words.

every memoir please check appendix III). My research revealed that though the historical and political circumstances for the ‘Vesna’ deportation were in a way particular (the ongoing partisan war plus preparation for the establishment of collective farms), the ‘Vesna’ deportees’ experiences and the gendered aspects of those experiences - at least as they were narrated in the memoirs - were in many cases similar to the other Lithuanian deportees’ lives in exile. However, one has to take into account that the survivors of the 1941 deportation in most cases spent more years in exile than those who were deported, let’s say, in 1948 or 1951, and this had various consequences. The destinations of various deportations varied, and this also influenced deportees’ lives. It is also true that there were class differences among the deportees who were subject to one or another deportation, but I do not go into those issues in this work as they require a separate analysis. On the other hand, in regard to the prevailing topics and ways of narrating exile experiences, I did not notice any significant differences related to the time of authors’ deportation, therefore I am analyzing the memoirs of people who were deported during the various deportations interchangeably. I decided focus on ten memoirs, from 16 to 222 pages long.

It was mostly for practical reasons why I analyzed these ten memoirs - I had to have them within touch during my research period, most of which I spent in Central European University, and it was a limited number of memoirs which I could get. Some memoirs I had as my personal copies (Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė’s, Staugaitis’s, volumes *Amžino išalo žemėje* (In the land of permafrost) and *Leiskit į tėvynę* (Let Us Go to the Homeland)), some I found in the Central European University library (Armonas’) and some were lent to me during my research by deportees or their relatives (Skrickus’s, Baltrušienė’s). Two things, important for me, were that there had to be both women’s and men’s memoirs among those that I would analyze – I analyzed six women’s memoirs and four men’s – and, because of the topic of my research, that the authors of

memoirs would be those who were deported from Lithuania (the aforementioned volumes include several memoirs of deportees from Latvia).

I believe that due to the fact that my choice of memoirs was mostly based on practical reasons, my work gained more than it lost. For example, what concerns gendered aspects of exile experiences, I did not analyze only those memoirs in which some outstanding cases were mentioned but, due to limited amount of memoirs which I had with me, I tried to see what every author wrote about one or another issue, or whether she or he wrote about it at all. Therefore in my work I present an analysis of the gendered aspects in memoirs of various Lithuanian deportees, some of whom went through such experiences as gender-based violence, pregnancy in the conditions of exile and alike, and some whose gendered experiences were less vivid or less articulated.

As I already noted in the introductory part, I analyze memoirs not only as historical sources which contain information about particular events, but also as personal documents – texts in which authors are in particular ways narrating and presenting reality, and constructing themselves. Therefore I look not only into *what* authors wrote about their experiences in exile, but also *how* they wrote it and what this might tell us about their assumptions, beliefs and the context in which they produced those texts.²²⁶ Though the *what* and the *how* are two different levels, I do not see them as separate but rather as intrinsically related, therefore I do not base the structure of my text on this division between the contents and the form of deportees' narratives, but discuss them in conjunction.

²²⁶ Caine, Barbara, *Biography and History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 75.

4. 1. Dominant topics in the memoirs

As the title of this subchapter indicates, certain themes seemed to be crucially important for most authors of the memoirs that I analyze. Though there are at least a dozen of them, I decided to concentrate on three topics which are chronologically strung parts of the deportation process – arrest, the journey to the place of exile and the life in exile. The third period continued longer than the others for those deportees who reached the places of exile (as I noted earlier some deportees died on the way, while a small number managed to escape) therefore here I will only delineate the basic features of writing about the years in exile, and I will go into more detail in the following section where I will discuss in what ways deportees' experiences in exile were gendered, and what ways they chose to talk about their gendered experiences.

4.1.1. Arrest

Many memoirs of Lithuanian deportees start either with a short prehistory of the deportation or with the moment of the Soviet officers' arrival – usually at night – to announce that the family was given half an hour or so to get ready for leaving home. From the memoirs it appears that not all deportees were told that they were going to be deported, especially during the first mass deportation in 1941. Jūratė Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, who was deported with her family in June 14, 1941, at the age of seventeen, writes:

Everyone was waving hands and crying. But I was in a cheerful mood, I, an oaf, didn't understand anything. I thought that the war started and we were being evacuated.²²⁷

In regard to the arrests and the beginning of deportation, the situation of the 1941 deportees was slightly different than of those who were deported later. For most the deportation of June 14, 1941 came as a shock: they only had heard about deportations which happened in the Soviet Russia or Ukraine, but there had not been any mass deportations from Lithuania before, and many did not know what was going to happen with them. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the deportations were treated as top-secret operations and few civilians knew *when* and *who* were going to be deported. Those who had heard some rumors about cattle cars prepared for deportation standing in train stations wrote in their memoirs that they did not believe that this could concern them, because they felt they had not committed any crime. For example, her husband, who had been hiding since 1940, and his friends warned Antanina Baltrušienė about possible deportations, but she decided not to go into hiding: “[I] did not believe that we could be arrested because we didn't commit any crime”.²²⁸

However, even though at the time of the later deportations most people in Lithuania knew about the already deported tens of thousands of people and about the Soviet authorities' threats to apply such measures to everyone else who would be acting against the Soviet regime, and although some people had been told that they could be the target because of their relatives' involvement in the anti-Soviet resistance movement or other reasons, they were nevertheless shocked when officers announced that their families were to be deported. Therefore the memoirs of 1941, 1945, 1947, 1948 and the other deportations usually start with a detailed description of an unsuspected knock on their doors, aggressive Soviet officers entering, the subsequent search and order to pack

²²⁷ Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros* [Young Days by the Laptev Sea] (Vilnius: Mintis, 1990), 12.

²²⁸ Baltrušienė, Antanina, *Kelionė į niekur ir atgal* [A Trip to Nowhere and Back] (Kaunas, 2009 [first publication in 1993]), 8.

a certain amount of belongings and food: up to 25 kilos, up to 30 kilos, up to 100 kilos (as discussed in the previous chapter, the allowance of baggage probably depended more on particular officers' decision than on official orders, therefore many deportees indicate different numbers).

The very fact that deportations always started late at night is significant. The Soviet officers woke people from their sleep, in some cases acted and spoke aggressively, sometimes did not allow light to be turned on, in many cases did not give any explanation for such invasion, and then ordered to pack in a very short time. The authors describe those moments as particularly stressful and chaotic.²²⁹ They often dedicated a significant part of their text to those traumatizing minutes of the late night arrests. The deportees also indicate that those first minutes and hours of the deportation process were so stressful that often they did not manage to act adequately, i.e. to pack the necessary things, to take enough food, to choose suitable clothes. Jūratė Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė told how she got prepared for deportation (which she thought was evacuation):

I started dressing. I put on four calico dresses, [school] uniform, a white summer coat on them, put on white ice-skate shoes, drew on blue gaiters, put on a hat. "Put on a fur coat!" - commanded Mom. [...] Being dressed up like this in the midsummer I looked ridiculous, or, as I imagine it now - pathetic. [...] Into a small suitcase I packed two pairs of shoes, two pairs of slingbacks, national costume [...], a diary, red handbag [...] from Paris, beautiful mother's painted parasol...²³⁰

Though Jūratė's mother seemed to be more aware of the situation, from the description of the things which they later traded for food in Siberia one can guess that in the chaos of arrest she was not packing the most practical things either: fish-skin shoes

²²⁹ Baltrušienė, Antanina, *Kelionė į niekur ir atgal*, 8; Garmutė, Antanina, "Ešelonai" [Echelons] in *Amžino įšalo žemėje* [In the Land of Permafrost] (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1989), 47.

²³⁰ Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 12.

with very high heels, a black party dress, an embroidered night gown, a yellow silk nightdress, and a piece of cream-colored guipure “about which the Russian women used to say that it could be used as a mosquito net, but the holes are too big”.²³¹ If the Bičiūnai family had known what was awaiting them in Siberia in the next fifteen years or if they had been given more time for packing, they probably would have taken sweaters, winter-coats, warm boots, blankets, etc. However, some of those luxurious things which Jūratė and her mother took later served as goods for bartering.

Barbara Armonas, who was deported during the ‘Vesna’ mass deportation in May 1948, wrote in her memoir that though initially she could not understand what was going on when the Soviet officers woke her up at night, feeling the duty to take care of her son she “plucked up a little spirit and started packing like mad”.²³² As a counterexample she told about her neighbor Petrauskienė, whose

...husband was in prison for political activities leaving her alone with an eight year old daughter and five year old son. When the deportation came she tried to commit suicide by jumping into their well but she was fished out with only minor scratches. Still wet she was sent still wet to the barn with us [where people were locked in to wait for transport], her children crying and no goods in her hands because she had wasted her time when she should have been preparing to leave.²³³

Such a normative tone (“had wasted her time”, “should have been preparing”) and the bitter irony (trying to commit suicide presented as wasting one’s time) tells us about Barbara Armonas’ understanding of a person’s, and particularly a mother’s, duty when facing deportation: to pull oneself together and to do one’s best for the children and other relatives. She shares this notion of the responsibility for the lives of those close to her with many other deportees, which I will show in the subsequent sections.

²³¹ Ibid, 43.

²³² Armonas, Barbara, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*, 40.

²³³ Ibid, 43.

4.1.2. A journey to the place of exile

Travelling to exile is narrated in a considerably comprehensive manner in most of the memoirs that I analyzed. The subsequent parts of the story – life in exile, moving from one special settlement to another, the process of being released from exile – in most cases were told in a more rapid pace than the arrest and journey to exile.

The trip to exile usually lasted no less than several weeks; Dalia Grinkevičiūtė indicates that the journey of the first Lithuanian deportees of 1941 to the places far beyond the polar circle where they were taken in 1942 took three months.²³⁴ The deportees often start telling about it by describing the trip by a lorry or a horse-drawn carriage to the train station. For them those were the moments of fright and uncertainty about the following destiny. Antanina Garmutė, who was deported during the ‘Vesna’ deportation in 1948 at the age of thirteen without any relatives, was told that she was to be shot soon; therefore the minutes in the truck, in which she was actually being taken to a train station, were the moments of farewell to her life:

My heart twinged: I won't ever see either my Mom or my Dad. And I will never play near my beloved Nemunas [river] anymore... I wonder where will they bury me?²³⁵

For many the travel to the train station was also a moment of a painful farewell to home. Barbara Armonas, Antanas Abromaitis and many others mention the last view of their native village which they kept in their minds during the subsequent years of severe experiences in exile.²³⁶ This can be read in several ways, but probably the most important is that the deportees' feeling of the lost home and idealized image of the place they felt they belonged to was one of the reasons which later prevented them from

²³⁴ Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia, “Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros” [Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea] in *Amžino išalo žemėje* [In the Land of Permafrost] (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1989), 21-22.

²³⁵ Garmutė, Antanina, “Ešelonai” [Echelons] in *Amžino išalo žemėje*, 49.

²³⁶ Armonas, Barbara, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*, 42; Abromaitis, Antanas, “Užpoliarės ‘Amerikos’” [The Polar ‘Americas’] in *Amžino išalo žemėje*, 104.

adapting in Siberia and other destinations of exile.²³⁷ Certainly, there were other and probably even more important factors which prevented them from adjusting to the exile – the severe conditions, the constant shortage of food and clothing, feelings of inferiority and illegitimacy, humiliation and others. But even when the conditions started to improve in the mid-1950s and some of the deportees had a comparatively better life than in the first years of exile – by then they had homes, were allowed to study and had paid jobs, were living with their families - many of them were still dreaming about their native country, and set off to Lithuania as soon as the possibility appeared. My reading of the memoirs allows me to assume that the last image of the deportees' native villages or towns which they fixed in their mind on the way to the train stations played a certain role in their inability to adapt to the places to which they had been exiled, and reinforced their willingness to return to their homeland regardless of difficulties.

For the sake of justice it has to be noted here that not all Lithuanian deportees came back when some of them were given the possibility in the second half of 1950s-1960s. As I already mentioned in chapter 2, historians estimate that around 40,000 Lithuanians (which makes around 31 percent of all deportees from Lithuania, or 39 percent of those who stayed alive until they were released from exile) stayed in the places where they had been exiled or in other places in the Soviet Union.²³⁸ Some stayed due to insurmountable bureaucratic obstacles, some others came back to Lithuania but due to various restrictions for the ex-deportees or ex-political prisoners decided or were compelled to leave again.²³⁹ However, some stayed in the destinations of their exile not because of restrictions but out of their own will. Unfortunately, there is

²³⁷ Merkienė, O., “Pasaulis ne be dorų žmonių” [There are some kind people in the World] in *Leiskit į Tėvynę* [Let Us Go to the Homeland] (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), 298.

²³⁸ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Lietuvių tautos sovietinis naikinimas 1940–1958 metais* [The Soviet Destruction of the Lithuanian Nation in 1940-1958] (Vilnius: Mintis, 1996), 395.

²³⁹ Ibid; Gleith, J.M., Jolluck, K. R., *Gulag Voices: Oral Histories of Soviet Incarceration and Exile* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 6.

no study done in regard to those who decided not to go back to Lithuania from exile, nor any of their memoirs are known to me.

The other important part of the exile narratives is the travel by train and later by various boats, which is part of nearly every memoir of Lithuanian deportees. They describe the overcrowded cattle cars in which they travelled for several weeks. The cars had only small windows on the top, and many authors describe how people were taking turns to breathe in some fresh air and to try to see what was going on outside. Garmutė describes a situation in her train wagon:

I managed to squeeze in among sweaty and moaning bodies just below the ceiling. [...] There was no air to breathe. We were suffocating. The sick were wheezing in their mortal agony.²⁴⁰

In such conditions some women were giving birth, others were travelling with young infants, with physically and mentally ill relatives; people were dying.²⁴¹ Barbara Armonas, who was travelling in the same wagon as some families with babies, recalled how mothers used to hurry to wash the diapers in the puddles next to the railway tracks during the rare and short stops, and how fathers tied those wet diapers around their waists trying to dry them more quickly.²⁴²

Some people had some food from home with them, but others were taken to the trains without it, or were robbed off their food during the trip.²⁴³ In some train stations the deportees were given some food (watery porridge, soup, liver sausage, etc.) which

²⁴⁰ Garmutė, Antanina, “Ešelonai”, 54.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 57.

²⁴² Armonas, Barbara, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*, 51.

²⁴³ Garmutė, Antanina, “Ešelonai”, 58.

most of them describe as inedible for them at that point.²⁴⁴ However, later in exile many of them were compelled to eat even worse and scarcer food.

The other detail which appears fairly often in the deportees' memoirs is the lavatory problem. In most wagons a hole in the ground was made to serve as a toilet, or a bucket was used for that reason, and the deportees tried to cover the space of the 'toilet' with sheets to make it at least a bit more private. But this was not what they imagined as a decent place for one to take care of his or her needs.²⁴⁵ Sometimes during the stops of the train the escorting officers allowed the deportees to take care of their natural needs in front of the train, squatting in a row. Only a few of them describe this with humor or irony; most authors write about the urination and defecation in front of other people as a humiliating, shameful and inhuman experience.²⁴⁶ The situation was even more complicated by the fact that many people, due to bad food, illnesses, heat and stress were having diarrhea and were vomiting.²⁴⁷ However, almost none of them mention possible gendered aspects of perceiving such setting as shameful and humiliating. None of the authors confessed being disgusted by the other people taking care of their natural needs close to them, except for mentioning sickening odors - they rather concentrated on their personal feelings of humiliation and de-humanization.²⁴⁸

During the journey to the places of destination, people met some of their acquaintances, relatives, and also made new friends. Many authors of the memoirs note that during the trip people, acquainted with each other or not, were taking care of each other – helping the sick, feeding the starving, raising the spirits of those who fell into

²⁴⁴ Though 'soup', 'porridge', 'sausage' might sound as decent food, some deportees give detailed descriptions of what kind of food it was: porridge was top-dressed with rancid oil, soup was made from rotten vegetables, served in dirty buckets; the liver sausage was even officially sold under the title "Собачья радость" (Sobachiya radost') - "Dog's Delight", which implies that it was not meant to be served for people. Vičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 16.

²⁴⁵ Abromaitis, Antanas, "Užpoliarės 'Amerikos' ", 105.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 105-106.

²⁴⁷ Motiečienė, Paulina, "Kaiburėliai ant Pečioros kranto" [The Hillocks on the Shores of Pechiora] in *Amžino įšalo žemėje*, 124-125.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 123.

despair. Antanina Baltrušienė, who was deported alone, told about one of such situations:

I felt dizzy, I got up and tried to reach some fresh air. On my way I fell down in a faint. One woman heard, she called her neighbor and tried to wake me, some men who were still not separated from the families hurried to help, someone started rubbing my legs, hands [...]. I recovered. Good people gave me a tea-spoon of condensed milk, water, a bite of bread. A little food and human compassion fortified me.²⁴⁹

During the mass deportations many trains were moving towards the same destinations following each other. This led to traffic jams and a slow pace of movement of the trains, which many authors note in their memoirs. However, constant deceleration of the trains' speed and frequent stopping resulted not only in prolonged suffering and deaths of the passengers due to uncured illnesses, lack of fresh air and water, but sometimes allowed passengers of different trains to exchange information about their relatives, about the directions of the deportees' trains and other news. One rumor which came from a passing train brought back life for Antanina Garmutė, even if pretty paradoxically. As mentioned before, she was deported alone, at the age of thirteen. She told how, seeing the suffering and the death of some of her fellow deportees in the train, and being ostracized by the only family she knew in her wagon, she decided to kill herself by banging her head repeatedly to the wall.

Oh dear!- after several hits I understood that the walls are soft. They were covered with a thick layer of animal ordure, to which you could neither hit your head nor to lean on it. So I resolved not to eat (anyways there was nothing to eat!) until I die and not to drink. [...] Indifferent to everything I was sitting by the wall and waiting for

²⁴⁹ Baltrušienė, Antanina, *Kelionė į niekur ir atgal*, 9-10.

death. I don't know how long it lasted, maybe a week, because days and nights, consciousness and dreams intermingled. Nothing ached. Legs and hands bloated.²⁵⁰

After her fellow deportees took her to the fresh air in one of the stops and she regained consciousness, she heard that “all Lithuania” was being deported.

... if “all Lithuania”, then maybe my parents also? If Lithuania [is being] deported, then trains will be full of relatives! [...] This means, that it is worth living! Even being shot is not horrible with the close people!²⁵¹

For Antanina the idea that her relatives might join her in exile was her strongest inspiration to live. Though it was not true that *all* Lithuanian citizens were being deported, and Antanina's parents actually were not among the deportees, soon she met many relatives and acquaintances with whom she shared the tough experiences of the Siberian exile.

4.1.3. The years of life in exile

The beginning of life in exile was stressful for the deportees in many ways. They experienced humiliation, verbal and physical assault by various officers and locals, they suffered from a constant shortage of food and heavy loads of assigned physical work. Not everyone could understand and speak Russian; there was no adequate medical care. In addition, the climatic conditions were harsh and unusual for them: those who were deported to various regions in Siberia (the majority of deportees from Lithuania) had to survive in extremely low temperatures - up to -50°C, to endure deadly snowstorms when people got lost in the distance of a few meters and froze to death, to work in the icy water. Those who were deported to the Southern regions of the Soviet Union –

²⁵⁰ Garmutė, Antanina, “Ešelonai”, 56.

²⁵¹ Garmutė, Antanina, “Ešelonai”, 57.

Tadzhikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan – were subjected to extremely hot temperatures, to the attacks of wild animals and other ordeals.

One of the first things which many authors noticed was the poverty in which locals (Russian, Finnish, German, Ukrainian and other deportees, but also ordinary Soviet citizens) lived.

We were terrified – it was only few days after the war started [June 1941], here it is still calm, but free local citizens are already begging...

... all women here were wearing grey skirts, peasant sandals [in Lithuanian: vyžos] and white cambric muslin blouses. [...] Therefore when kids saw us wearing colorful dresses and wearing slingbacks they thought that we arrived with a circus.²⁵²

Though one might define deportees' feelings toward needy locals as arrogance or disdain, the authors of the memoirs analyzed here present their attitude more as compassion and pity – not only for other deportees but also for the free Soviet citizens.²⁵³ However, at least one critical remark about them was made in several texts - Armonas' and Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė's. Armonas harshly critiqued locals, mainly Russians, for what she called "intrinsic Russian laziness" – their unwillingness to get engaged into farming, given the fertility of the soil in the Krasnoyarsk region to which she was deported, and living in half-starvation instead.²⁵⁴ Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė noted the same characteristic of the locals in the far-Eastern-North of Siberia, but she presented her attitude as one of astonishment rather than indignation:

The shores of the Obe river were overgrown with the bushes of currant and buckthorn.

We were amazed that the locals were going by boat to gather berries, instead of bringing some sprouts of currents and planting them next to their houses. We were

²⁵² Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 17, 21.

²⁵³ Ibid, 17; Baltrušienė, Antanina, *Kelionė į niekur ir atgal*, 14.

²⁵⁴ Armonas, Barbara, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*, 57, 67-68.

also surprised that they were wading through mud and did not pave the streets, at least everyone next to his house, when they had so many stones around.²⁵⁵

However, most of the time, at least during the most difficult first years, the deportees were compelled to care about themselves rather than to comment on the locals' way of living. The deportees of the late 1940s - 1950s often found some temporary dwelling places when they arrived: some public buildings or barracks built by the earlier deportees or prisoners. Lithuanian deportees deported in 1941 reported that they often had to build dwellings by themselves, in many cases more than once because the authorities were transferring them from one place to another. As the responsible authorities seldom gave them enough construction materials, they built primitive buildings from pieces of frozen turfs, moss, sand, timber and sometimes boards or bricks.²⁵⁶

It did not take long for people to lose all their energy, to fall ill and die due to malnutrition, exhaustion, freezing, uncured illnesses and injuries. The food rations might have slightly differed, depending on the authorities of the certain special settlement and on the period; gradually the deportees were given/allowed to buy bigger quantities of food, but this process, according to the memoirs, was very slow.²⁵⁷ The norms were almost inconceivably low: 300gr of flour per day for a worker and 200gr for a child, or in the other settlement 600gr of bread for an adult and 400gr for a child per day plus 400gr of butter and 600gr of sugar per month in 1942; 250-300gr of bread per day in 1945, and so on.²⁵⁸ Those who had some things to barter traded them for food, some others, especially those who were appointed to work in the fish industry, managed

²⁵⁵ Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 30.

²⁵⁶ Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia, "Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros", 23.

²⁵⁷ 'Norm' (Rus. норма, norma, Lith. norma) is one of the terms which the Soviet authorities and the deportees themselves used to define the daily quantity of food which the deportees were given. The deportees often used this term in their memoirs, therefore I also use it in my text interchangeably with term 'rations'.

²⁵⁸ Staugaitis, Romualdas, *Lietuviai šiaurėje* [Lithuanians in the North] (Vilnius: Raštija, 1991), 11, 16; Motiečienė, Paulina, "Kaiburėliai ant Pečioros kranto", 128.

to steal some food, but, as one might imagine, this was not enough to gain energy or simply to stay alive. During the short Siberian summers people were eating various wild herbs, berries, nuts and mushrooms, but in most cases no one, except for children, had time to pick them due to the long hours of compulsory work.²⁵⁹

People were falling sick with ague, scurvy and other deceases, their extremities were bloating due to starvation and gangrening due to frostbites, they had high fever and for many of them the day came when they could not get up from the bunks. Some authors of the memoirs present the mortality rates which they knew (which does not mean that those are accurate numbers): according to Grinkevičiūtė, every second deportee at the Trofimovsk island died during the 1942-1943 winter, while in the barrack where she lived only a couple of women out of around thirty inhabitants were able to get up from their bunks and go to work; according to Skrickus more than 1,000 deportees out of 5,000 who had been deported to Irkutsk died during the first winter (1948-1949).²⁶⁰ Due to the permafrost in many places of exile and the lack of people able to dig graves, often the dead were not buried but piled a few hundred meters away from barracks. Gradually those bodies were partly or fully devoured by wild animals. Several deportees note in their memoirs that the image of those piles of rundown corpses stayed on their mind forever.²⁶¹

In their memoirs many deportees emphasize that the first few years of exile were the hardest. However, those who survived gradually managed to improve their lives. In the territories where farming was possible they asked the authorities to allow them to have at least small gardens, where they started growing vegetables. The harvests of

²⁵⁹ Armonas, Barbara, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*, 57; Mednis, Ojaras, “Trys sąsiuviniai” [Three Notebooks] in *Amžino įšalo žemėje*, 251.

²⁶⁰ Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia, “Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros”, 23, 31; Skrickus, Zenonas, *Igarkoje kaštonai nežydi* [The Chestnuts Do Not Bloom in Igarka“] (Kaunas, 2002), 41.

²⁶¹ Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia, “Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros”, 29; Abromaitis, Antanas, “Užpoliarės ‘Amerikos’ ”, 112-113.

those gardens improved their lives significantly.²⁶² Some deportees in the later years of their life in exile managed to buy a cow, some hens or other animals. Such purchases became possible mainly because in the mid-1940s the deportees were allowed to get parcels from their relatives in Lithuania or elsewhere, and because of the growing salaries for their compulsory work.²⁶³ Also, acquiring some experience, the deportees learned that Soviet officers could be bribed when one wanted to be appointed to better-paid work places or to get permission to move to some other settlements where the deportees had their relatives or where they knew that better-paid jobs were available.²⁶⁴ Those who were good at some handicraft, especially women who could sew and knit, found ways to get acquainted with wealthier free citizens, work for them and earn some additional money.²⁶⁵

Many authors indicate that how to get food was the biggest concern in exile. However, the other important part of their lives was work. Work was compulsory, and without the permission of the local Soviet authorities the deportees not only were restricted from leaving the special settlement which they were appointed to, but also they could not easily change their workplace in the same settlement. Most of the deportees' settlements were established as parts of various Soviet enterprises- regional subdivisions of forestry, fishery, mining and other industries, and all able-bodied adult deportees, male and female, had to work in the places assigned to them.²⁶⁶ Work is one of themes in deportees' memoirs which can be seen from a gender perspective, which I will discuss in the next section.

²⁶² Armonas, Barbara, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*, 67-68.

²⁶³ *Ibid*, 66-67.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 59; Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 157.

²⁶⁵ Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 66.

²⁶⁶ Skrickus, Zenonas, *Igarkoje kaštonai nežydi*, 43.

4.2. Narrating the gendered experiences of exile

As I already showed in chapter 3, the Soviet policies of deportation from Lithuania might have seemed to be gender-neutral, except for most adult men's separation from their families during the deportation in June 1941, but there were some ways in which the deportations were gender-specific. In this sub-chapter I will explore some of them: the consequences of the fact that more women than men were deported, the deportees' own assumptions about men's and women's work, women's sexual vulnerability, gender-specific strategies of survival that women invoked, and gendered responses to the complicated life conditions in exile.

When we look into deportees' lives in exile and into the ways people narrated them in their memoirs, there are several issues to be considered. As explained above, there were more adult Lithuanian women than men deported, and during the years in exile this disproportion became even more marked. Given the absence of their fathers, husbands and brothers, many women, at least until their children, if any, reached the age of 16-17, were the only bread-winners in the family in exile. Due to the policies regarding deportees' work, all adult people were assigned compulsory jobs. However, as the memoirs show, in many cases elderly people (parents, in-laws) very soon became unable to work due to malnutrition, severe climatic conditions, illnesses, stress and other reasons, or were unable to do physical work already upon their arrival. Therefore many women were compelled to take care of all their family members and sometimes some other needy people, which meant heavy work loads and other responsibilities: before and after work taking care of the sick, the old, children; striving to get food, medicine and firewood by bartering, stealing, doing tasks additional to their compulsory chores, travelling long distances to gather wood, mushrooms, berries; getting into relationships, including sexual, with officers and free citizens in order to acquire

protection and material support. In the subsequent paragraphs I will present examples from the memoirs in which the deportees tell about such experiences.

A few deportees in their memoirs indicated their indignation with compulsory women's work in the industries which required great physical strength and skills which most Lithuanian women did not have.²⁶⁷ To describe his attitude to women's work in exile, deportee Bojarskas invoked the rhetoric of the 'natural' division of men's and women's work:

The view of women's work is painful: women with scythes, women carrying manure, digging pits, hauling fishing nets [...], carrying trees [he probably means logs, but uses the word 'trees', in Lithuanian: *neša medžius*], bricks, clay, grit, planks, sacks of sugar and flour [...]. Men also do those jobs. But this [men doing such work] does not surprise us, because it is natural. But when women do it, and when you see their clothes, shoes, climatic conditions... [suspension points in the original text].²⁶⁸

Depending on the location to which they were deported, both women and men were assigned to forestry, fishery, mining and other industries. The jobs in those sectors were not easy either for men or for women because of their lack of skills needed for particular jobs, lack of adequate tools and clothing, and other already discussed conditions: malnutrition, a severe climate, exhaustion, etc. Therefore not all authors of the memoirs defined women's situation as more demanding than men's, as, for example, Bojarskas did. Grinkevičiūtė wrote about the conditions in which the deportees, including herself, were fishing in the Lena river above the polar circle without even mentioning deportees' gender:

²⁶⁷ Armonas, Barbara, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*, 52; Bojarskas, L., "Sekmadienio reportažai nuo Laptevų jūros" [Sundays' Reports from the Laptev Sea] in *Leiskit į Tėvynę* [Let Us Go to the Homeland] (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), 222.

²⁶⁸ Bojarskas, L., "Sekmadienio reportažai...", 222.

[The deportees] stood in the icy water knee-deep or waist-deep, and with all their strength pulled [the fishing nets] to the shore. [They] used to work 10-12 hours [per day]. Drenched to the bone, exhausted and freezing, they were running to the tents, throwing off their clothes. Slept a bit. Then they were putting on the same wet clothes - there was neither time nor point in drying them - and were fishing again.[...] [They had to] pull the fishing nets with their bare hands and to take away the fish. The cold was horrible. [...] When hands, after arduously beating them together, were starting to recover, the pain was terrible.²⁶⁹

When describing the hard labor to which she and other deportees were assigned, Grinkevičiūtė did not ruminate over women's lack of physical strength or some adequate skills, about which some other authors wrote.²⁷⁰ She only once mentioned her sense of powerlessness, which was more psychological/ emotional than physical – she felt unable to take her dead mother to the grave pit which she (Grinkevičiūtė) dug in the cellar of their house in Lithuania, after they had fled Siberia.²⁷¹

In several existing studies of gendered experiences of the survivors of the Nazi camps and of the victims of war rapes, authors often mention bodily issues which are intrinsic only for women, and which shape women's lives in certain ways: monthly periods, the possibility to become pregnant, pregnancy and giving birth.²⁷² However, in the case of the memoirs of Lithuanian deportees (at least those which I analyzed) these topics were almost not touched upon. The women authors did not describe how they dealt with their periods, or if they had them at all, and did not mention their fears

²⁶⁹ Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia, "Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros", 34-35.

²⁷⁰ Puodžiuvienė, K., "Vargai vargeliai" [Hardships and Miseries] in *Leiskit į tėvynę*, 247.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 40.

²⁷² Reading, Anna, *The Social Inheritance of Holocaust: Gender, Culture and Memory* (Palgrave, 2002), 43-46; Horowitz, Sara R., "Gender, Genocide, and Jewish Memory" in *Prooftexts*, issue 20, vol. 1 (2000): 177-178; Copelon, Rhonda, "Surfacing Gender: Reconceptualizing Crimes against Women in Times of War" in *The Women and War reader*, eds. Lois Ann Lorentzen, Jennifer Turpin (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 63-79.

aroused by amenorrhea, if this was the case, as in the Jewish women's stories.²⁷³ Pregnancy and birth were only vaguely noted in the Lithuanian memoirs, and more often they were mentioned when an author was describing people other than herself. Some authors mentioned women giving birth in a train on the way to exile, but rarely mentioned new-born children or someone being pregnant during the years in exile.²⁷⁴ This might have been due to the rarity of such occasions - for example, Barbara Armonas indicated in her memoirs that in the community consisting of around 550 Lithuanians only two children were born in three years: "the material and mental harshness was too great; our small community was dying off".²⁷⁵

Her comment suggests that people's feelings about the low birthrates in exile were probably ambiguous: on the one hand, having a child was a great burden for parent(s) in the given conditions, and the chances for a new-born to survive were small; on the other hand, the ideological context of the situation - Lithuanians' perception of the deportations as the Soviets' efforts to destroy the Lithuanian nation - tempted deportees to see the small numbers of newly born children as part of the criminal Soviet policies. However, for the same ideological reasons the children who were born with couples of mixed ethnic origins probably were not always welcomed. No such cases were documented in the memoirs I analyzed, but examples such as Jūratė Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė's, whose mother and other relatives categorically forbade her to date a Russian-Polish guy Slavka, whom she was ready to marry (she surrendered to her family's pressure, and stopped seeing him), shows that in some cases the Lithuanian deportees' attitude towards familial relationship with non-Lithuanians was highly

²⁷³ Reading, Anna, *The Social Inheritance of Holocaust*, 46.

²⁷⁴ Baltrušienė, Antanina, *Kelionė į niekur ir atgal*, 12.

²⁷⁵ Armonas, Barbara, *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*, 70.

negative.²⁷⁶ But I should also note here that we do not have any memoirs of Lithuanian deportees who stayed in the places of exile or other locations in the Soviet Union after they were released from exile in the mid-1950s-1960s. Their testimonies might offer examples of other, more positive attitudes towards close relationship with non-Lithuanians, as one of the reasons for some of them to stay were their newly established families with non-Lithuanian partners.²⁷⁷

Women's sexual vulnerability and attempted or actual sexual assault to which they were subjected in exile are better documented in the memoirs than the topics of pregnancy, birth, or monthly periods. Certainly, in their memoirs Lithuanian women did not use such terms as 'sexual assault', 'sexual vulnerability' or 'rape'. Rather, they described the events to which we would assign the aforementioned terms by giving the general events in the story:

He came closer to me and started unbuttoning my fur coat.

- Undress, it is warm here in my flat, we will play! - He grabbed me and tried to kiss.

- I will scream! – I was squirming and pushing him away from me.

[...] I pulled him away and leaped to the door.²⁷⁸

Most cases of attempted or actual sexual assault were mentioned briefly, in the same manner as in the example quoted here, especially when the event did not involve the author or people close to him or her.²⁷⁹ Among the most frequently told stories are those of Soviet officers' demand for women to 'pay' in sexual intercourse for various favors which they could do for deportees. The cited part also concerns such a situation:

²⁷⁶ Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 126. I should emphasize that I talk here about **close** relationships with non-Lithuanians which some Lithuanian deportees despised. In general, most authors did not express any preconceived negative attitudes to the people of other ethnic or racial origins.

²⁷⁷ Documentary movie *Lietuvių tremtiniai Sajanoose* [Lithuanian deportees in the Sayan Mountains], 1998. Available online at <http://fondas.lrt.lt/Media/ItemReview.aspx?ItemId=4570>, accessed May 15, 2012.

²⁷⁸ Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 78.

²⁷⁹ Garmutė, Antanina, "Ešelonai", 58.

a Soviet officer promised the narrator of the story, Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, to give her a pair of buckskin shoes, and she was told to come in the evening to his apartment to get them. She came, but soon understood what reward the officer was expecting from her. When the officer tried to undress her, she managed to escape.²⁸⁰

Paulina Motiečienė also wrote how she escaped from an impending sexual assault, but her story left some clues which might be more important than they seem at first glance.²⁸¹ While travelling by boat to visit her brother she was attacked by a shipmaster. There were only two of them on the boat, and though in the beginning the shipmaster appeared to be friendly, during the trip he was constantly verbally harassing her. He did not agree to stop and to allow Paulina to leave the boat; he got drunk and tried to attack her. She then jumped out of the boat, and was pulled from the water by a fisherman who appeared to be nearby. However, the fisherman could not take Paulina to the shore, so he talked with the shipmaster, commanded him to take Paulina safely to the place where she was travelling to, and persuaded her to go back to the boat. She did, but was afraid of the shipmaster, and, as she claims in her memoir, in case of a second attack she was ready to jump to the water again and thought it was to die rather than to be “polluted” - to be raped. Soon the shipmaster got drunk again, and told her about his plans to rape her. Only his inebriation saved Paulina – the shipmaster fell asleep, and she fled.²⁸²

From the way Paulina narrated this story one might get the impression that she was not actually raped: she described the shipmaster’s attempted attack very concisely: “he started to approach”. Then, she said, she jumped to the water.²⁸³ She, as I mentioned, also talked about her determination to die rather than be raped. But from the subsequent story, though it is highly fragmentized, it becomes clear that some time after

²⁸⁰ Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 78.

²⁸¹ Motiečienė, Paulina, “Kaiburėliai ant Pečioros kranto“, 134-136.

²⁸² Motiečienė, Paulina, “Kaiburėliai ant Pečioros kranto“, 135-136.

²⁸³ Ibid, 134-136.

this event she gave birth to a girl. About the period which followed the events on the boat, she wrote, among other things, that the next nine months she was financially supported by a girl whom she barely knew. However, in the text following the part about the attempted sexual assault, Motiečienė did not mention any other important events than her studies and graduation. She also did not discuss how or when she gave birth to her child, nor did she mention being in close relationship with any man. A brief mention of her small daughter's illness in the subsequent pages came, seemingly, out of nowhere. Until the end of her narrative she mentioned her firstborn daughter only once more, saying that she was born "in the North".²⁸⁴

Though Motiečienė detailed other events which happened at the time, she did not mention her pregnancy, the delivery or nursing her daughter, and we can only speculate *why*. Though my version contradicts her own story (that she evaded actual sexual assault in the boat), it seems possible that she was raped. Indicating the subsequent nine months, during which she was in need of financial support, she might have been hinting at this. But it also might be that she avoided issues related with her daughter's birth for other reasons. It seems highly possible that due to the aforementioned ideological sentiments in Lithuanian deportees' communities, she was not willing to identify her child's father if he was not Lithuanian, or if the child was born out of wedlock. What makes this case even more complex, is that a subtitle under the photography of Motiečienė and her several months old daughter is "Siberian Madonna", which, as one might feel, is a heavy ideologically loaded term.²⁸⁵ It echoes the Lithuanian nationalist grand narrative of the Soviet deportations, in which Lithuanians are pictured as suffering unmerited miseries in Siberian snowfields, with mothers with children suffering in particular. The image of the Madonna is not surprising given the strong

²⁸⁴ Ibid, 138.

²⁸⁵ Photography is published in the same book as Motiečienė's memoir, *Amžino išalo žemeje* [In the Land of Permafrost] (photography is not given any page number). Caption "Siberian Madona" was probably ascribed to the photo by the editor of the book, Aldona Žemaitytė - Petrauskienė.

Catholic feelings among many deportees and in the anti- Soviet armed and non-armed resistance in general. There is one more way to approach Motiečienė's story's connection with the Madonna's. Though I am sure that those who applied the title "Siberian Madonna" to Motiečienė's photo did not think about it, one could also say that what brings her story closer to the one of Christ's mother's is her child's birth without any man involved in the story, as if her daughter had originated, like Jesus, from the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, Motiečienė's true story was probably more dismal.

In the narratives of Lithuanians' exile in many cases women are presented as active, strong, ingenious members of the deportees' communities. They are shown as developing various strategies of survival, managing to endure great sufferings and to support their fellow deportees. For example, though Antanas Abromaitis' family was deported in 1941, and as a rule adult men were separated from their relatives during this mass deportation, his father was among those few who, probably due to some bureaucratic error, stayed with the family (the narrator Antanas was ten years old at that time). However, in Antanas' memoir his father hardly appears. Mother and children are described as doing all what was essential for survival: mother spotted a field where some green peas were not harvested, and Antanas repeatedly went there to collect peas though he was often severely beaten by guards for this; mother was stealing potatoes from the farm where she worked, and those peas with potatoes was the only food family had at the time; mother was buying seeds when the family was allowed to have a garden, and worked in the garden with her children; mother was picking blueberries and begging for bread; mother took care of an orphan girl, etc.²⁸⁶ Throughout the text the father is mentioned only a few times – as looking to the map trying to figure out where

²⁸⁶ Amromaitis, Antanas, "Užpoliarės 'Amerikos' ", 106-107, 110.

they were, as drawing cards for the Soviet officers, and only once as working: for a short period but in a comparatively well-paid job.²⁸⁷ Antanas says:

For the fact that we survived during that terrible winter [1941-1942] we all have to be grateful to our dear Mommy. She was from a big family of poor peasants [...]. From her young age she was used to hard farm work, and, having a robust health, she was carrying the heaviest load.²⁸⁸

Some other deportees mention that even while living in poverty and half-starving, women sometimes managed to send parcels to their husbands who were in prisons or in labor camps. Barkauskas noted two events related with men getting parcels from their wives:

When we were [in the labor camp] in Krasnoyarsk, some of us started to get parcels from their wives, though for the latter it was not always easy to send one. For example, one [of us] was informed that his wife got into a snowstorm when she was on her way to a post office to send him a parcel. After the snowstorm ended, she was found frozen to death. This man almost went crazy. The other one was getting good parcels [from his wife], but he found himself a lover. One day he received a box with a brick, covered with some hay. And there was a note: “As long as you were a human being I was sending you human food, now that you have become an animal I am sending you some hay”. All the camp had a good laugh.

The deportees note in their memoirs that women in exile often took on their shoulders (or were compelled to take) a heavier burden than men.²⁸⁹ One might think of various explanations for this, such as:

- a) women’s ability to deal with stressful and difficult situations – not as inherent characteristic, but as something that historically many women turned out to be capable

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 105-106, 108, 116.

²⁸⁸ Ibid, 112.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, 112.

of - which, in the case of the deportations in the second half of the 1940s and in the 1950s, was probably strengthened by their experience in taking care of themselves, their family and relatives in the complicated conditions of the Second World War and the guerilla war, without support from their husbands or brothers, due to the latter's participation in war, their death, being imprisoned or having died;

- b) feeling responsibility for the people close to them: as already described, in many cases women arrived at the places of exile without any men able to work, therefore the survival of the whole family depended entirely on them, and women had to develop operative strategies to acquire food, clothing, place for dwelling;
- c) prevailing gender assumptions among Lithuanian deportees: though men and women generally regarded men as having the responsibility to be the breadwinners, men could not sufficiently fulfill these roles in exile. However, they also did not fully engage in tasks regarded as women's work and were not directly related to earning money (taking care of the elderly, sick, children, abandoned people; gathering berries, mushrooms and herbs; doing needlework or knitting, etc.). Yet, it was exactly the latter tasks that appeared to be crucial for the deportees' survival in exile therefore women involved in them are presented in many memoirs as more active than men.²⁹⁰ However, one should not forget that among the Lithuanian deportees there were more women and children than adult men; therefore in the memories of deportees the former's activities and efforts could be overshadowed by the latter's deeds.

Life in exile was not impervious to the changes in the Soviet economic and political life. In the early 1950s the situation was at least slightly different than ten years

²⁹⁰ For similar observations about the situation in Nazi concentration camps, see Goldberg, Myrna, "Food Talk: Gendered Responses to Hunger in the Concentration Camps" in *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis and the Holocaust*, eds. E. R. Baer and M. Goldberg (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 161-175.

earlier – people were given bigger rations of food and allowed to buy additional products (which during the years of war was almost impossible), medical care was better, in some places more adequate dwelling places were constructed.²⁹¹ Work was still compulsory but the wages were gradually increasing, and people started getting not only tickets to purchase food but also some money and other goods.²⁹² However, my analysis of the memoirs shows that in the deportees' perception their situation improved in the most significant ways due to their own and their relatives' efforts: as described earlier, people were allowed to get parcels, and already knew how and with whom to barter the things sent to them for food, or how to use those items and money for bribing officers; they established useful nets of relations and got at least partly adjusted to the conditions. Therefore some deportees who lived in near-starvation and total poverty during the first years in exile, in the late the 1950s or 1960s already had acquired some property (farm animals, tools or even a house) which they could sell when they were allowed to leave the special settlements.²⁹³

But even though the improvement of the economic situation meant that some women deportees' lives became at least slightly easier than in the first years in exile, the difference between women's and men's sexual vulnerability did not disappear.²⁹⁴ A very good example are the two narratives of a woman and a man deportee in regard to their trips from Siberia to Lithuania. Both Antanina Garmutė and Zenonas Skrickus were deported during the 'Vesna' deportation in May 1948, at the ages of 13 and 11, respectively. They both were released from exile and travelled to Lithuania alone, Garmutė in 1951, and Skrickus in 1958. Garmutė in her memoir narrated her feeling of insecurity during the whole trip – a feeling which was not without grounds: among other things, she saw how a girl who just stepped out of the train station was

²⁹¹ Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė, Jūratė, *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros*, 158-159.

²⁹² Ibid, 158-161; Staugaitis, Romualdas, *Lietuviai šiaurėje*, 70-71.

²⁹³ Staugaitis, Romualdas, *Lietuviai šiaurėje*, 71.

²⁹⁴ Most likely, men were also sexually harassed and raped, but for women it used to happen more frequently.

immediately “hit on her side, and pulled to the darkness”.²⁹⁵ In the train in which Garmutė was supposed to reach Novosibirsk she was travelling among drunken sailors and others. At night she overheard a row and understood that they were planning to attack her. She left her things and jumped off the train, and travelled further without food and money.²⁹⁶ Meanwhile, Skrickus did not mention any feeling of insecurity: the most important detail of his trip home for him was that a “damned beautiful” woman travelled with him in the train, and he thought he would have sex with her. However, he had diarrhea, and had to postpone those plans.²⁹⁷ Garmutė’s and Skrickus’ stories were not only told in different tones but also were gendered in fairly obvious ways: Garmutė was feeling insecure as a young girl who could be easily attacked by someone, and Skrickus was feeling safe as a young man who not only did not have to be concerned about his life but could even think about seducing his fellow passenger, or at least they presented themselves in these ways in their memoirs.

Lithuanian deportees went through – to use Myrna Goldenberg’s term - different horrors of the same hell.²⁹⁸ Their experiences were different due to various circumstances – the time when they were deported, the places of exile and different workplaces assigned to them, the different people among whom they had to live, and etc. But the personal backgrounds were not less significant: deportees’ gender, social class, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs, creeds, familial situation and other characteristics led to different experiences of exile, and influenced the ways of narrating them. Here I was analyzing only a single axis of difference – gender – but even this one factor, as I showed, made some significant differences in the deportees’ experiences of exile: it influenced various strategies of survival, various activities in which women and men

²⁹⁵ Garmutė, Antanina, “Ešelonai”, 86.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 86-88.

²⁹⁷ Skrickus, Zenonas, *Igarkoje kaštonai nežydi*, 52.

²⁹⁸ Goldenberg, Myrna, “Different Horrors, Same Hell: Women Remembering the Holocaust” in *Thinking the Unthinkable: Meanings of the Holocaust*, ed. Roger Gottlieb (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 150-166.

deportees were involved in order to make a living, it affected deportees' sexual vulnerability and in other ways shaped people's lives. Those differences are not always clearly expressed in the deportees' memoirs, which might be due to the authors' "lack of (political) awareness about [...] the potential importance of those differences [...], and/or the impression that under the threat of [...] political persecution and death sexual differences and sexual discrimination seemed less important" or for other reasons, but through a thorough analysis of their memoirs I believe I found ways to show that gender made a significant difference in deportees' experiences of exile.²⁹⁹

All in all around 130,000 people were deported from Lithuania between 1941 and 1953 which was around 4,3 percent of Lithuania's population prior to the first deportation.³⁰⁰ An estimated number of 28,000 (21,5 percent of all deportees) died in exile. Around 40,000 (31 percent of all deportees, or 39 percent of those who stayed alive until they were released) deportees did not come back to live to Lithuania after they were released from exile, which was often due to various restrictions which they encountered.³⁰¹ First of all, people of Lithuanian nationality were among the last ones to be released from exile: though discharge of deportees, as a part of the de-Stalinization campaign, started in 1954, there were still 75,185 Lithuanians in exile in 1955; 72,777 in 1956; 59,663 in 1957; 35,741 in 1958, and almost 5,000 as late as 1959. The last deportees, most of whom had been deported as partisans and as family members of partisans, were released only in 1963.³⁰² It was not only the late release which prevented Lithuanian deportees from coming back to the places they were exiled from – many were forbidden to return to live to Lithuania: though they were officially free citizens of

²⁹⁹ Bos, Pascale Rachel, "Women and the Holocaust: Analyzing Gender Difference, 28.

³⁰⁰ *Lietuva 1940-1990: Okupuotos Lietuvos istorija*, 401.

³⁰¹ Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Lietuvių tautos sovietinis naikinimas 1940–1958 metais* [The Soviet Destruction of the Lithuanian Nation in 1940-1958] (Vilnius: Mintis, 1996), 395; Adler, Nanci, *The Gulag Survivor: Beyond the Soviet System* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 78.

³⁰² Anušauskas, Arvydas, *Lietuvių tautos sovietinis naikinimas 1940–1958 metais*, 395.

the Soviet Union, they were not allowed to settle down in Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. Some of them circumvented this restriction by bribing officers, using personal connections and in other ways, that Soviet citizens employed in order to solve various issues, but most of the deportees released after 1958 and some of those who were released earlier did not find ways to come back to live in Lithuania, did not try to do it, or were not willing to.³⁰³ Strangely enough – given the number of ex-deportees who did not come back to live to Lithuania – there is no memoirs written by any of them and published in Lithuania(n), or at least I do not know about the existence of any of such testimonies. As I already mentioned in several cases, the memoirs of those deportees who did not come back to live to Lithuania might offer some different strategies of Lithuanian deportees' self-representation and narration of their experiences.

³⁰³ Ibid, 394-396.

Conclusions

In this thesis I analyzed the mass deportation from Lithuania in May 22-23, 1948 under the code name 'Vesna', when the Soviet authorities in Moscow and in Lithuania organized forced resettlement of around 40,000 Lithuanians to Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk and the Buryat-Mongolian regions. I looked into the context of the Soviet deportations from the Baltic countries during and after the Second World War, i.e. the political climate and historical events related with those deportations. I also analyzed ten Lithuanian deportees' memoirs in which they narrated their lives in exile. I attempted to integrate all primary and secondary sources which I had gathered in order to acquire an understanding how the official/political and the personal levels of deportations were interrelated in various forms, such as deportation policies, deportees' exile experiences and their post-exile narratives.

My research concentrated on one of the possible axes of analysis – that is, gender. I asked, how Soviet officials' assumptions about gender and class, and the contemporary historical context influenced the policies of deportations and how those assumptions and historical situation had various consequences for actual people's lives: who were targeted as the main 'anti-Soviet elements', who were deported, and why more women than men were deported. I also raised questions about the ways in which deportees narrated their gendered experiences in memoirs, and I attempted to reveal how the experiences in exile were related with the deportation policies, due to which there were more women than men in special settlements. Here I summarize the main conclusions which I arrived at:

Though most of the Soviet deportation policies seemed to be gender-neutral, their implications were slightly different for men and for women, which was first of all due to the context in which the deportations were carried out. As I showed,

deportations from Lithuania were not only carried out at the same time when the armed anti-Soviet resistance movement was going on (1944-1953) but the deportations and the armed resistance were inextricably related. Anti-Soviet partisans' family members were subjected to deportations, and those families which were subjected to deportation because of the participation of one or several of their members in the partisan movement, rarely had middle-aged or able-bodied men left: these men were among the partisans, had gone into hiding, were already imprisoned, deported to the labor camps, or had been killed. This meant that women had to become or stay the heads of the households and to search for ways to provide for the other family members - children, the elderly, and the sick; they took these responsibilities prior to the deportation, during the trip to the places of exile, in the exile, and in some cases after the return. I also suggested that some women, subjected to deportations and other Soviet anti-resistance strategies, in addition to the general feeling of unfairness of the occupational regime's policies, might have also felt indignant at their husbands, brothers and sons, whose involvement in the partisan war resulted in the deportation and sufferings of those who did not necessarily support the guerilla war materially or ideologically.

In many cases women were deported not as individual 'active' anti-Soviet actors (guerilla warriors, heads of *kulak* households or collaborators with the Nazis) but as members of 'culpable' groups (*kulaks*, nationalists, anti-Soviet elements). It is also important to spotlight that deportations were aimed at family units rather than individuals. Therefore, building upon Elisa von Joden-Forgey's claim about the interrelation of violence done to families and genocide, and on Orlando Patterson's concept of *social death*, I argue that Soviet authorities saw families as biological and cultural reproducers of society. In this perspective, families having or assumedly

having anti-Soviet attitudes had to be destroyed in their full composition, rather than particular family members being punished for personal culpability to the regime.

People were deported not only due to ideological but also for more down-to-earth reasons – as cheap labor force. In this regard, Soviet policies were also gender-neutral – women and men were assigned to do the same types of jobs. In some cases, Lithuanian deportees saw this - especially forcing women to do hard physical work - as an attack on the gender norms and roles which they were used to, but not all of them had such perception: most authors of the memoirs I read did not present women's hardships in exile as bigger than men's.

The dominant structure of Lithuanian deportees' memoirs is linear: arrest, deportation, life in exile and returning. Though arrest and journey to the places of exile lasted shorter than life in exile, in many cases those initial stages of deportation were narrated more exhaustively than the subsequent phases. I suggest this reflected the shock which deportees experienced during the first hours and days of their deportation.

My analysis of Lithuanian deportees' memoirs allows me to claim that in many cases women are represented there as more active than men. In order to better understand women's roles during their life in exile, I suggested taking into account several issues:

- 1) women's ability to deal with stressful and difficult situations – not as inherent characteristic, but as something that historically many women turned out to be capable of - which, in the case of the deportations in the second half of the 1940s and in the 1950s, was probably strengthened by their experience of taking care of themselves, their family and relatives in the complicated conditions of the Second

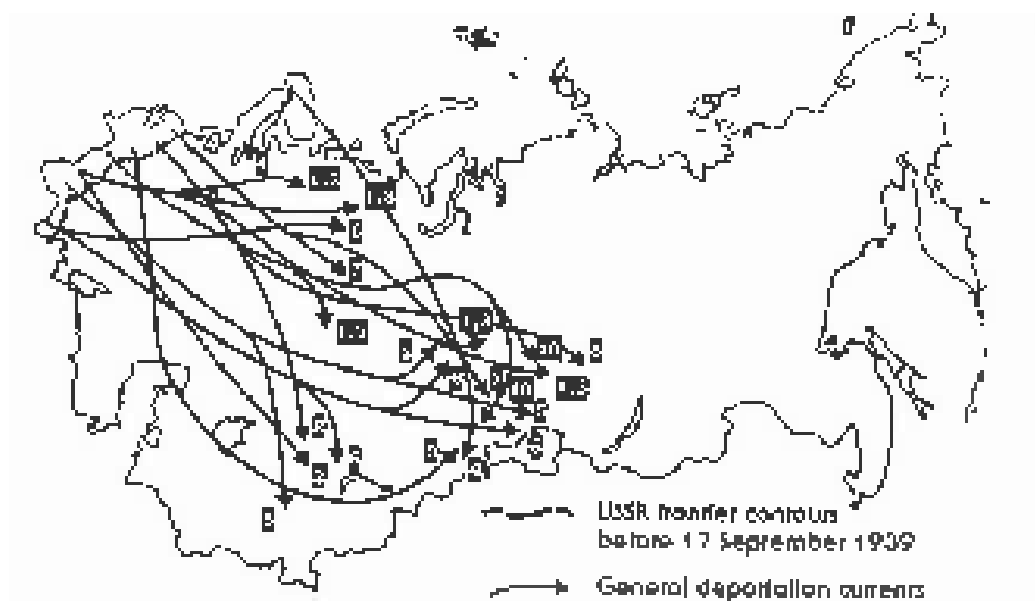
World War and the guerilla war, without support from their husbands or brothers due to the latter's participation in war, their death, being imprisoned or having died;

- 2) feeling responsibility for the people close to them: in many cases women arrived at the places of exile without any men able to work; therefore the survival of the whole family depended entirely on them, and women had to develop operative strategies to acquire food, clothing, place for dwelling;
- 3) prevailing gender assumptions among Lithuanian deportees: though men and women generally regarded men as having the responsibility to be the breadwinners, men could not sufficiently fulfill these roles in exile. However, they also did not fully engage in tasks regarded as women's work and were not directly related to earning money (taking care of the elderly, sick, children, abandoned people; gathering berries, mushrooms and herbs; doing needlework or knitting, etc.). Yet, it was exactly the latter tasks that appeared to be crucial for the deportees' survival in exile therefore women involved in them are presented in many memoirs as more active than men.

My analysis mainly focuses on just one axis of the deportees' lives and experiences – their gender – but even this one factor, as I showed, made some significant differences in deportees' experiences of exile: it generated difference in strategies of survival, in the activities women and men deportees undertook in order to make a living, in deportees' sexual vulnerability, and in other ways shaped people's lives.

Future research on how class, nationality, ethnicity, race, age, creeds and other factors operated in the Soviet deportations could lead to further insights about the intersectionality of deportees' gender with other categories which shaped – and for some of them are still shaping – their lives.

Appendix II. Map: Forced migrations from the regions annexed by the USSR, 1940 – 1941.

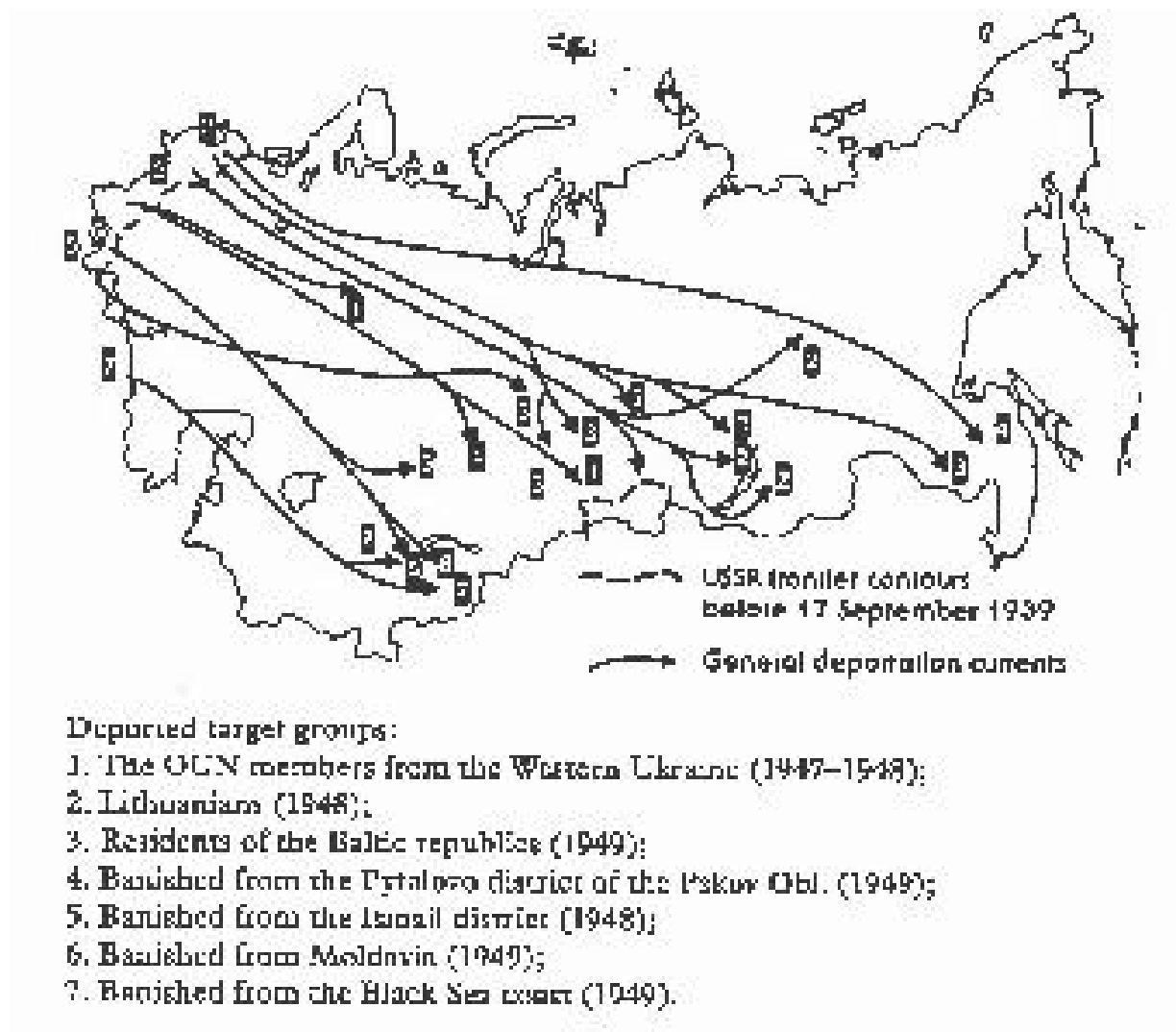


Deported target groups:

1. Special resettlers—*osetniki* from former Eastern Poland (10 February 1940);
2. Administrative deportees from former Eastern Poland (9–13 April 1940);
3. Special resettlers—refugees from former Eastern Poland (29 June 1940);
4. Citizens of foreign nationalities from the Murmansk Obl. (5–10 July 1940);
5. Exiled settlers from Western Ukraine (22 May 1941);
6. Exiled settlers from Moldavia, and the Chernovtsy and Ismail Obls. (12–19 June 1941);
7. Exiled settlers from Estonia (14 June 1941);
8. Exiled settlers from Latvia (14 June 1941);
9. Exiled settlers from Lithuania (14 June 1941);
10. Exiled settlers from West Belorussia (19–20 June 1941);

Taken from Polian, Pavel, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), 122.

Appendix III. Map: Forced migrations in the Soviet Union in 1947-1952.



Taken from Polian, Pavel, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), 170.

Appendix IV. Short description of the analyzed memoirs

Abromaitis, Antanas. Male. Deported in 1941, during the ‘Black June’ deportation, at the age of 10, with his father, mother and sister. They were probably deported because of his father’s occupation – he was an elementary school teacher in a village. Antanas got married in exile with a Lithuanian, came back to Lithuania in 1961. Title of the memoir *Užpoliarės Amerikos* (The Polar ‘Americas’), published in a volume of memoirs *Amžino išalo žemėje* (In the Land of the Permafrost) in 1989, 16 pages.

Armonas (Armonienė) Barbara. Female. Deported in 1948, during the ‘Vesna’ mass deportation, as head of a ‘kulak’ household. At the time her husband and their teenager daughter were in the United States, while she was repeatedly denied a permission to leave to the US. She was deported with their elementary school age son. She was released from exile in late 1950’s, and eventually was allowed to join her family in the U.S. Title of the memoir *Leave Your Tears in Moscow*; published in English in the US in 1961, and in Lithuanian in Lithuania in 1993; English version is 222 pages long.

Baltrušienė, Antanina. Female. Deported in 1941, during the ‘Black June’ deportation, at the age of 29; most probably because of her and her husband’s intellectual professions, and her own engagement in various youth organizations, especially Esperanto community. Her husband was already hiding for around a year in June 1941, so he and their two sons (2,5 years and 3 months old) stayed in Lithuania. Antanina illegally came back to Lithuania in 1948 but was arrested and deported again, spent terms in various prisons. Came back to Lithuania in 1956. Title of the memoir *Kelionė į niekur ir atgal* (A Trip to Nowhere and Back), first published in 1993, second edition in 2009; 178 pages.

Bičiūnaitė - Masiulienė, Jūratė. Female. Deported in 1941, during the 'Black June' deportation at the age of 17, with her mother and two brothers. Father was sent to a labor camp and soon died there. Deported probably because of parents' intellectual/artist professions and elite positions. In exile got married with a Lithuanian, they were allowed to return to Lithuania in 1956. Title of the memoir *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros* (Young Days by the Laptev Sea), published in 1990; 167 pages.

Bojarskas, L. Male. Deported in 1941, during the 'Black June' deportation with his family; he was in his teenage years. Title of the memoir *Sekmadienio reportažai nuo Laptevų jūros* (Sundays' reportages from the Laptev Sea), published in a volume of memoirs *Leiskit į tėvynę* (Let Us Go to the Homeland), published in 1989; 21 pages.

Garmutė, Antanina. Female. Deported in 1948, during the 'Vesna' mass deportation at the age of 13. Her parents were hiding during the deportation, so they were not deported, and later supported her by sending parcels to Siberia. She was deported probably due to some administrative mistake, because already four months after the deportation there was issued a document reinstating her citizen rights and granting her the right to come back to Lithuania, but she only found out about that document two years later, and came back to Lithuania in 1951. Title of the memoir *Ešelonai* (Echelons), published in a volume of memoirs *Amžinoji žemė* (In the Land of the Permafrost) in 1989; 56 pages.

Grinkevičiūtė, Dalia. Female. Deported in 1941, during the 'Black June' deportation at the age of 14, with her father, mother and brother. Father was sent to a labor/prison camp and soon died there. They were deported probably because of father's high position in the main

Lithuania's bank. Title of her memoir *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* (Lithuanians by the Laptev Sea), published first in 1988 in a literary journal; later another version of her memoir was published as a separate book. In my work I use a version published in a volume of memoirs *Amžino išalo žemėje* (In the Land of the Permafrost) in 1989; 26 pages.

Motiečienė, Paulina. Female. Deported in 1945, at the age of nine with her mother, brother and sister. Came back to Lithuania in 1960 with her daughter who was born in exile. Title of the memoir *Kauburėliai ant Pečioros kranto* (The Hillocks on the Shores of Pechora), published in a volume of memoirs *Amžino išalo žemėje* (In the Land of the Permafrost) in 1989; 19 pages.

Skrickus, Zenonas. Male. Deported in 1948, during the 'Vesna' mass deportation at the age of 10 with his family (brother, grandmother, ?), came back to Lithuania in 1958. Title of the memoir *Igarkoj kaštonai nežydi* (Chestnuts Do Not Bloom in Igarka), published in 2002; 54 pages.

Staugaitis, Romualdas. Male. Deported in 1941, during the 'Black June' deportation as a child (age not indicated) with father, mother, and two brothers (one of them several months old). Deported probably because of father's intellectual occupation in the small town where they lived (worked in a regional office, knew several languages, was a member of election committee during parliamentary elections). Staugaitis married a Lithuanian in exile; came back to Lithuania together in 1959. Title of the memoir *Lietuviai šiaurėje* (Lithuanians in the North), published in 1991; 96 pages.

Primary sources

1. Archival material

The majority of material indicated here is now stored in the Lithuanian Special Archives, the Department of the Documents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Lithuanian: Lietuvos ypatingojo archyvo Vidaus reikalų ministerijos dokumentų skyrius; LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius) in Vilnius, Lithuania. Parts of various documents were translated to Lithuanian and published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys* [Deportations of the residents of Lithuania, 1941, 1945-1952: A Collection of Documents] (Vilnius: Lietuvos istorijos institutas, 1994). I worked with originals and with translations, therefore in some cases I give references to both versions.

Account of the deputy Minister of State Security of USSR S. Ogolcov and the Minister of State Security of LSSR D. Jefimov to the Minister of State Security of USSR V. Abakumov about the deportation of the residents of Lithuania. Issued around May 28, 1948. LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius [Lithuanian Special Archives, The Department of the Documents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs]. Fund V-135, inventory number 7, file 61, pages 230^a-236.

Account of the Minister of Internal Affairs of LSSR J. Bartašiūnas and the chief of the convoy army V. Bochkov to the Minister of Internal Affairs of USSR S. Kruglov about the preparations for the operation of deportation 'Vesna', May 18, 1948. Lithuanian translation

of the document published in *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1941, 1945-1952: dokumentų rinkinys*, 178-179.

Calculations of the required railway vehicles for the special resettlement, April 1948 [day not indicated], certified by the Deputy Minister of the State Security of USSR Ogolcov. The photocopy of the document published in *1941-1952 metų Lietuvos tremtiniai* [Lithuanian deportees of the years 1941-1952], (Vilnius:Vidaus Reikalų Ministerija, 1993), 36.

Certificate about the destinations of resettlement issued by the head of the department “A” of LSSR MGB [The Ministry of the State Security] P. Grishin, January 10th, 1948. LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius. Fund V-135, inventory number 7, file 60, pages 22-24.

Directive nr. 00123 of the acting Minister of Internal Affairs P. Kapralov, December 24th, 1946. LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius. Fund 141, inventory number 1, file 71, pages 284-285.

Directive nr. 006 of the Minister of Internal Affairs J. Bartašiūnas, January 18th, 1947. LYA VRM dokumentų skyrius. Fund 141, inventory number 1, file 71, pages 28-29.

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