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Changing Identities of the Baltic States: Three Memories in Stone

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Abstract

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (commonly referred to as Baltic States) since the restoration of their independence in 1990-1991, have been redefining their place on the political scene. Together with the other newly emerged countries in the post-Soviet space, the three countries needed to undergo the process of the nation-building, to find their *self* in their new reality which was no longer created and manipulated by the Soviets. Despite some superficial similarities in the self-depiction of these countries since the beginning of the nineties (resistance to anything “Soviet”-related, general pro-Western attitudes etc.), a lot of the problems each of the countries faced were unique (e.g. the problem with the minorities in Lithuania is much less grave than in Estonia and Latvia). In this context, the question that seems necessary to raise is how do these states claim their identity, how these processes differ in the three countries and to which extent are they similar?

This paper, therefore, is aimed as an inquiry of the nation-building processes in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since their breakaway from the USSR. To do so, I will use the analysis of one of the important components of the identity - the *sense of place* or, more specifically, the role of the statues and monuments in its construction. Disputes around the removal of the ‘Bronze Soldier’ can be seen as one of the many examples of the ability of monuments (and statues) to evoke particular kinds of feelings in people when only few remained *indifferent* to the whole matter. Since there is no *inherent* identity of the place and the only thing that matters is the *meaning* and *sense* people are giving to it, the study of the monuments and their changing *biographies and narratives* could help to better understand the processes in the society. Moreover, it can provide a valuable insight on the possibilities and challenges of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia to develop communities of shared values and to finally stop living in the shade of their “post-Sovietness”.

Keywords: Monuments, national identity, Soviet Union, “Monument Wars”, Baltic States

“Man must have the strength to break up the past”

– Nietzsche

When in September 2012 the authorities of the Latvian town of Bauska unveiled the monument commemorating "Bauska's Defenders Against the Second Soviet Occupation", the emotional political debates followed. Bauska's defenders were the three battalions of the Latvian legion of Waffen SS punitive police. Contrary to the absolute absence of reaction to the event from the European Union, the reaction of Russia and Belarus was immediate and fierce. Belarusian representatives pointed on to the fact that on the hands of the Bauska's defenders was blood of the hundreds of Belarusian partisans and civilians who were fighting against Germans. Belarusian government added that the fact that Bauska's officials not only accepted the construction but also attended the opening ceremony is “particularly concerning”.¹ Russian government condemned Bauska's officials and also urged European Union to respond to this event. Last not least was the reaction of Israel which stated that the unveiling is an “insulting both to the victims of Nazism and to those still alive.” The discontent of the Jewish community in Latvia was even bigger, considering the unsuccessful attempts to get the approval for establishing a memorial for the Holocaust victims in Bauska that has been on hold for almost ten years.

In Estonia, during the night of 27th of April, 2007 the “Bronze Soldier” was removed from the Tõnismägi hill in the centre of Tallinn to the Military Cemetery. It is hard to find a person in Estonia who remained indifferent to the event. Moreover, the “small” dismantle in the “small” country immediately appeared in the newspapers all over the world raising a wave of debates and discussions on what has caused it and if it can be justified. The dismantling of the monument that glorifies the Soviet liberators of Estonia from the Fascists became yet another apple of discord in the already complicated Russo-Estonian relations. Reaction of Russian authorities was furious: members of the Russian Federation Council unanimously signed a note addressed to Vladimir Putin suggesting to react in the fiercest way possible and, if necessary, to sever diplomatic relations with Estonia.² The dispute resulted in an economic boycott starting with the refusal to sell Estonian goods in the Russian supermarkets up to the suspension of the investment projects and the cessation of some oil supplies to Estonia. According to some estimates, the “Bronze affair” cost Estonia around EUR 450 million which stand for around 3% of the country's GDP.³

Moving further back in time, in April 2001, Lithuanian Grutas Park was welcoming its first visitors. Located only about fifty miles away from Vilnius, in the small resort of Druskininkai, this park imitates the Soviet realities with the main roles played by the main leaders and heroes of the Soviet Union (Lenin, Stalin, Dzerzhinsky etc.). Around 90 statues that have been removed from their public sites in the beginning of the nineties were bought by one of the

Lithuanian entrepreneurs, Viliumas Malinauskas, who won the government competition for the best ideas on what to do with all those reminders of the Soviet past. Despite a massive criticism towards the so-called “Stalin World” which brings up unpleasant memories of the Soviet repressions in the vast number of Lithuanian population, Mr. Malinauskas claimed that remembering past is crucial for the Lithuanians to move forward. According to him, “If it [past] is brushed under the carpet, it will be unhealthy for the next generation”.⁴ Despite being quite remote from the usual “touristic routes” in Lithuania the park soon became one of the major touristic destinations and receives around 100,000 visitors per year.⁵

These three different cases signalize that the remaining from the Soviet era monuments definitely were becoming a matter of concern and played central role in many debates in the three post-Soviet states. They were also often politicized and were leading to the escalation of conflict. Nevertheless, as been shown, the context of each of these three stories is quite different. It appears fascinating, especially since these three countries are geographically close, have to a great extent common past and share a lot of social, economic and political similarities. Therefore, this article aims to investigate the question of what these monuments and the stories behind them signalize about the political identities of these Baltic States. Moreover, it also aims to inquire the differences of the nation-building processes there. Therefore, firstly, important considerations and identification of choices with regard to the theory of national identity will be presented. Secondly, the analysis of the identity’s formation in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania after the dissolution of the Soviet Union will follow. It will be shown how in each of the focus countries the historical development during the way for independence has been reflected in the attitude towards the “stone”, and what it says about the identity politics. Ultimately, the conclusions with regard to the posed questions will be drawn.

Monuments’ role in the “identity politics”

Since the central theme of this paper is the concept of national identity, an excessively vague term which is itself a subject of numerous research and analysis, and since the analysis will focus on the importance of monuments and statues in its creation, it seems important to make some clarifications. Using the four-fold classification of the national identities’ theories given by Anthony D. Smith, this paper chooses to focus on the constructivist view of the national identity. Namely, as an “elusive socially constructed and negotiated reality, something that essentially has a different meaning for each individual”.⁶ It will also be assumed that the governments and the elites play a significant role in the process of shaping (and re-shaping) of the national identity. By this it is implied that each country tries to establish a degree of national solidarity and unity among its peoples. States do so through a variety of mediums: high art and literature; mass communications and kitsch; architecture and monuments; ceremonies, rituals, and myths.⁷ There are cases when specific historical moments (e.g. wars, military defeats, coup d’états etc.) can undermine peoples’ ever deeply held beliefs. These crises to which scholars often refer as “critical junctures” lead to rapid transformations of the political identity of the states and trigger the memory politics.⁸ Osborne notes a particular importance of specific, “meaning-full places” in this respect. According to him, some “places” are crucially important for peoples’ self-identification as they reinforce collective memory and “establish spatial and temporal reference points for society”.⁹

Pierre Nora was one of the first pioneers in the analysis of the importance of such *lieux de mémoire* (places of memory) for the national identity of France.¹⁰ Since then, a number of historians and researchers extended his inquiry of how monuments and memorials have a symbolic significance for the nation-building. For example Maurice Halbwachs in his work “On Collective Memory” stresses the particular importance of monuments and other topographical features in the formation of the collective identity.¹¹ Conducting the analysis of the monuments is also important as the decision of their erection/dismantling usually lies with the government and clearly shows with which heroes and events the state officials want their nation to identify with. Nevertheless, such decisions sometimes lead to the strong opposition of some parts of the community. This article will lie on the premise that the decisions made by governments regarding the monuments matter as they reveal the nature of the collective identity/identities of the nation. The way in which the state leads its identity politics can either open up new horizons for the unification of the national identity but it can also lead to the conflict, which will become a serious obstacle to the formation of an integrated identity in the long-run.

On their “Baltic Way” to Independence

The last three decades were significantly important for the three Baltic countries. Having been “Sovietized” for almost seventy years, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania together succeeded to break away from Kremlin and gain their independence in the course of the Singing Revolutions. The peoples of these countries showed a tremendous strength and unity. Around a million people then joined hands and created a human chain of 600 km long, starting from the foot of Toompea in Tallinn through Riga up to the foot of the Gediminas Tower in Vilnius, demanding independence and recognition of the secret Ribbentrop-Molotov protocol that determined the economic, political and social development of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians for years.

It also pre-supposed the problems the three countries have to deal with after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, mainly, the problems of their identities and the nation-building. After years of the Communist propaganda, when the nation-states and national identities had no importance in the supranational state of the Soviet Union, it was particularly hard for the states that experienced only brief periods of independence in the end of the first decade of the

20th century¹² to launch their identity politics campaign. Therefore, we can see the dissolution of the Soviet Union as a “critical juncture” for three Baltic States (according to the terminology this article uses). The situation was even more challenging considering the vast number of the Russian-speakers who remained at their territories and did not necessarily share the general negative feeling towards their Soviet past. What the countries without any doubt shared – and had to deal with – were the hundreds of the monuments that were built according to the Lenin’s “Monument Propaganda” plan and the necessity to find monuments that would play an important role in strengthening of the collective identity. And that is when the “Monument Wars” began.

Latvia

Latvian feelings towards stones are particularly strong and have roots in the pre-Christian times. According to these traditions, stones are “receptacles of solar powers and the forefathers’ knowledge” with own personalities and souls.¹³ This idea materialized in France in 2005 in a Latvian design project “Talking Stones” during the Latvian Cultural festival “Surprising Latvia”. The nine stones have people faces projected on them and each stone has a unique character and leads its own life: telling their stories about Latvian culture, traditions and history, laughing, singing, sleeping etc. Despite the fact that the reaction of the general public to the installation was ambiguous, the Latvian government spent on the installation around 485 000 lats already and is eager to spend another 150 000 to permanently place it in the centre of Riga so that it becomes a touristic destination.¹⁴ Nevertheless, as we will see below, the Latvian government’s “love” for stones is quite selective.

Although in the early 1990s around 80 monuments to Soviet leaders were dismantled by the Latvian government, there are still a few that remained. There are a number of reasons for that: firstly, the demolition often requires significant investments; secondly, it is technically complicated. Last but not least, Latvian government always needs to take into account the public reaction to these dismantles.

A good example is a dismantling of the monument to the Soviet soldiers-liberators in the Latvian town of Bauska. In August 2007 the monument was transferred from the Korfa Park to the military cemetery. Even though local officials stated that the action has no political context, in fact, it surely does. The problem with this Soviet monument, as well as with a number of others, lies in history or, to say it more correctly, in its interpretation.

For Latvia, the establishment of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1940 was an illegal occupation on the provisions of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Sponsoring coup d’état and implementing the Soviet leadership in a matter of only couple of months time, the Soviets imposed a regime of terror and arrested and deported hundreds of people. A lot of Latvians, who managed to run away from NKVD, were hiding in the forests forming anti-Soviet resistance groups and joined the Nazis when Germany attacked Soviet Union. To a vast number of Latvians there was no liberation but 3 occupations in less than ten years: the 1940 Soviet annexation, the 1941 Nazi occupation and then yet another Soviet occupation in 1944. Russian government regards this incorporation as legitimate and stresses the liberation of Latvia from the Nazis. This position is generally shared by a Latvian Russian-speaking minority which represents almost a third of the total Latvia’s population. As the anti-Russian sentiment in the country is quite strong already, the event like the dismantling in Bauska only complicates the strained relationships between the sides and only undermines the possibilities to form a coherent collective identity in this country.

So far the main Monument to the soldiers of the Soviet Army (the “Monument to the Liberators of Soviet Latvia and Riga from the German Fascist Invaders”) has not been dismantled and currently is a gathering place for all those who revere the Great Patriotic War and its important dates. Nevertheless, the monument has not been well maintained and the inscription that used to read in Latvian and then in Russian “For the liberators of Soviet Latvia and Riga” has been removed. Moreover, in 1997, the neo-Nazi groups attempted to blow up the central column (79 meters high) which is sometimes called by the Latvians “Moscow’s fingers”.¹⁵ It seems that the Latvian government is quite unsure what to do with the monument: a lot of Latvians constantly express their desire for the monument to be dismantled. So far the Latvian government has not called to pull down the monument, stating that even though “from the moral viewpoint this monument deserves being pulled down” it can also “cause too many dangerous consequences”.¹⁶

This article argues that the question around these monuments is not about the life during the Soviet Union, but about the role of the Soviet people in the fight against Fascism in the Baltic States. This question will always be a sensitive issue to all those for whom the Great Patriotic War can have no “additional” interpretation. Addressing this question via the monuments will never lead to any sort of compromise and, therefore, will always be of no help in integrating the Latvian community or building up a “past-free” national identity. The recent events in Bauska described in the introduction to this article (the erection of the monument to Waffen SS legion) shows that the government underestimates the gravity of the impact of such impact on the society. It only intensifies the gap of “misunderstanding” in the community.

There are some other ways in which the Latvian government conducts the memory politics. For example, the famous Monument of Red Latvian Riflemen located in the main square of Ratslaukums in Riga, survived the numerous debates about its Communist symbolism and was not torn down. Nonetheless, it also lost its “Redness” and was renamed to “Monument to Latvian Riflemen”. Moreover, the Museum of Red Latvian Riflemen that was built together with the monument in the Ratslaukums Square started serving as a Museum of Occupation with a declared mission to

“commemorate the wrongdoings committed by the foreign occupation powers against the state and the people of Latvia from 1940 to 1991”.¹⁷ In addition to that, there are the ongoing debates of erecting another monument in the same square with a non-communist meaning.¹⁸

A monument that undoubtedly plays a special symbolic role for Latvians is the Freedom Monument. Standing in the very heart of Riga, the monument is a column on which stands a Latvian woman, lifting three stars skyward. The monument was unveiled to honour soldiers killed during the Latvian War of Independence in 1935 in the short period when Latvia was free of a foreign rule (1920-1940). Miraculously having survived the years of the Soviet rule, the monument became particularly important for Latvia’s political identity since it links the modern period of Latvian independence with its independence in the interwar period. The nowadays common view of the monument as a symbol of independence from the Soviet regime is a successful example of identity politics when the government can invoke national spirit in people by linking to the time period which is not related to the Soviet regime.

Estonia

The problem of the interpretation of the Soviet period history refers as much to Estonia as to Latvia. The government also demands recognition of the fact of illegal incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union after its short period of independence (1918 -1940). It also condemns any positive representation of the Soviet rule and puts it together with Nazism as one of the biggest evils in history. In fact, the evils of Communism are seen by some groups being greater than those of Nazism. In 2004, in the western town of Lihula, approximately 2,000 people attended the unveiling ceremony of monument to those who fought together with the Nazis against Bolshevism.¹⁹ The unveiling immediately elicited strong international criticism, notably, by Russia, the European Union and the Jewish communities. The reaction inside Estonian was controversial itself. The negative reaction of the Russian minority in Estonia (about 25% of the total population) was backed by the Estonian Government that, possibly under the pressure of the EU, called the unveiling a ‘provocation’ and decided to remove the monument. The removal, nevertheless, caused massive protests in Lihula and the monument was successfully removed only with the help of police and use of the teargas.²⁰

The incident with the removal of the Bronze Soldier from Tõnismägi in central Tallinn provoked even more fierce reactions. As it was shown in the introduction, the event even resulted in the economic sanctions that were imposed on Estonia by Russia. Estonia was again criticized for the rise of the neo-Nazi movements and discrimination towards the Russophone minority. This case also shows that Estonia went yet another step forward from Latvia and it was the state’s decision to relocate the monument which is symbolic for a vast number of country’s population.

Another example of the identity politics is the story around the restoration of the “Swedish Lion” monument in the eastern border city of Narva. The monument filled the place where once Lenin’s monument stood but was then dismantled. The monument is a present from Sweden and commemorates Sweden’s victory over Russia in the Battle of Narva. Stuart Burch and David J. Smith in their article *Empty Spaces and the Value of Symbols: Estonia’s ‘War of Monuments’ from Another Angle*²¹ argue that despite common fears that such gesture will trigger off furious reaction in such a city as Narva where absolute majority (82%) of the population are Russian by ethnicity, the result was quite opposite. It showed that Estonia’s Russians, though “looking to the heritage of the tsarist Russian rule” also have seen Swedish Lion as legitimate symbol of their city. The idea of the importance of their town in the course of the Great Northern War - especially keeping in mind that in the end Sweden lost the war – is appealing to the Narvians. As for the government of Estonia, the notion of the Swedish past, the “Golden Age” of Estonian history, is also important with the respect to the growing engagement of Sweden in Estonia. Therefore, despite the dimensions of “Russian” and “Estonian” views on the Great Northern War might be different, it still can be seen as successful “discussion of the past”.²² There are of course limits to this success. The followed proposals of Narvians to erect a statue of Peter the Great in city stumbled across the rejection of the Estonian government. Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip stated his strong disapproval of the idea arguing that this erection will be as a “spit in the face” of Estonia’s inter-war leaders who spend a lot of effort to remove other Peter the Great monuments. Hence, the Estonian self-identification is strongly linked to that short period of Estonian self-rule and such a controversial act of going against the leaders of that period simply cannot be negotiated.

The urge to incorporate Estonian “Scandinavian-ness” can also be seen in the analysis of the War of Independence Victory Column. In 2005 the Riigikogu launched a design competition of a monument that will commemorate thousands of people who died during Estonia’s War of Independence 1918-1920. The glass monument incorporates Cross of Liberty – an Estonian special award established in 1919. The style of the award itself has been inspired by the Finland’s Order of the Cross of Liberty. Use of a cross is also important in term of the ongoing debates if the Estonian flag should be change from tricolour to the Scandinavian-cross design. The idea was proposed in 2001 by Estonian politician Kaarel Tarand and generally shows the importance of country’s links to the Nordic countries and its self-portraying rather as “Nordic” than “Baltic”.

Lithuania

If in the case with Estonia and Latvia, there were seen obvious attempts to get rid of everything in the public spaces that could bring up unpleasant Soviet memories, the story of Lithuania is somehow different. Of course, here, as in the

rest of the post-Soviet countries, a lot of monuments to Lenin and other Soviet figures were demolished right after the dissolution (with the majority of the monuments to Stalin torn off during the Khrushchev's policy of de-Stalinization). The country, making up to 50 years of political dependence, built some new and reconstructed monuments that the Soviets tried to get rid of. One of the first was the Three Crosses Monument that was built in 1916 but blown up under the order of Kremlin in 1950. The story of the Crosses goes back to the 17th century and until 1869 similar wooden crosses stood on the same place (Hill of Three Crosses in the Kalnų Park).

Rich history of Lithuania goes back to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, one of the largest countries in the 14th century Europe. The Grand Duchy covered the territories of the present day Belarus, some parts of Ukraine, Russia and Poland and formally existed until the end of the 18th century. Lithuania also formed a voluntary two-state union with Poland – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – that was established in 1569 and existed until the Third Partition of Poland in 1795. Therefore, Lithuania had a far richer independent history than her Baltic neighbors and did not have to reassert her identity only linking it to the interwar period of independence. History also explains strong ties with Poland that are extremely important to Lithuanians until today.

After the re-establishment of its independence, Lithuania erected a number of monuments to commemorate its history. The monument to the Grand Duke Gediminas who ruled from 1316 to 1341 was erected in 1996. Gediminas is known to be one of the most significant figures in Lithuanian history and is also called “the founder” as it was under his rule that the Lithuania tremendously expanded its territory. Lithuanians similarly erected monuments to Mindaugas (the first King of Lithuania) and Barbora Radvilaitė (the queen of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth).

The country also managed to preserve its language and successfully resisted Russification of both tsarist Russia and the Soviet occupation periods. The Russians who resided in Lithuania after the World War II are said to be successfully integrated into Lithuania. Russian minority here is not as numerous as in Latvia and Estonia and counts for less than 6%.

Lithuania's extensive history of freedom and independence, its language and culture - corroborated by its strong affiliation with Poland - all contribute to representation of Lithuania as Central European country with its role as a bridge between East and West. The country's aspirations were proven in 1989 by the estimations made by National France Geography institute according to which the unassailable geographic center of Europe is located in the Lithuanian village of Purnuškiai just 26 kilometers north from Vilnius. In 2004, symbolically, same year with its accession to the EU, Lithuania erected a monument with the white granite pillar with a crown of stars on the top. In this way country's European-ness obtained a monumental representation.

The Lithuanian support for the opening of an outdoor museum of Grutas park shows a unique manner in which Lithuania decided to deal with its controversial Communist past. Some Lithuanians criticized Grutas Park saying that its imitation of the Soviet gulag with an extensive collection of Soviet monuments and other attributes, brings up painful memories of the times of occupation. Nevertheless, according to the park's founder, Viliumas Malinauskas, the park is really important as it ridicules the Soviet Union and helps “understand what dictatorships are capable of and what tools they use to brainwash people”.²³ Rather than destroying or locking the monuments up in some warehouses, Lithuanians have chosen to rather acknowledge their past, to put it behind them, and to move forward.

Lithuania was the only Baltic country that created a monument commemorating the solidarity of the Baltic countries during the restoration of their independence in 1989. “The Road of Freedom” is a monument glorifying the live chain of people that joined their hands in a “Baltic Way”, therefore demanding the acknowledgment of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the end of the occupation. The sculpture is a collective creation – people could contribute to the Project and get a brick with his/her name stamped on it. Lithuania, hence, became the first country who monumentalized the recent past of its people and their non-violent resistance towards the Soviets.

Conclusion

Breaking away from the Soviet Union together with the long-awaited independence imposed a number of significant challenges on the former Soviet Baltic Republics. Being multiethnic, all the countries needed to undergo the process of the nation-building and, therefore, shape their identity politics.

This article is based on the assumption that visual representations play an important role in the process of a person's identification with a particular “lieu de mémoire”. Monuments can evoke specific feelings in people and therefore reveal a lot about the collective identity of some groups of people. Governments that face a problem of introduction of a successful identity policy often use the tool of destruction/erection of the monuments in order to shape the self-image and, more importantly, to deal with its past. In doing so, governments can face the problems when these acts can conflict with some fundamental beliefs, some postulates of the collective identities of some groups. The creation of the coherent identity is often doomed as it might only deepen the gap of misunderstanding between the groups.

Analysis of the development of Baltic States shows that despite some features that these countries share (geographic position, history of several occupations in the 20th century, re-establishment of the independence followed by

introduction of pro-Western foreign policies), the countries' similarity in respect to their political identities is not that obvious.

The similarity can be found between Estonia and Latvia, where the "Monument Wars" have been constantly revealing the high degree of misunderstanding and incoherence between the various collective identities. It has been shown that the reason for that lies in the interpretation of history, more specifically, in the question of the role of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War and the incorporation of the states into the Union. The ongoing "memory wars" result in the attempts of the governments to cross out everything from the public sites that links them to the Soviet years. In doing so, the countries lack the ability to put the past behind and move into the modern period of their policies.

In Lithuania, on the other hand, the "monument war" never broke out and even though the opening of the Grutas Park left a lot of people in Lithuania discontent, its placement (far from the city center, in the village) together with an argument that the main idea is to ridicule not to glorify the Soviet Union, promises no further conflicts around the park. Moreover, the Park symbolizes that a lot of Lithuanians are eager to acknowledge their controversial past and move on to the phase of reconciliation.

Regarding some other conclusions about their identity politics that we can derive from the analysis of their monuments, the article showed that Estonia pays a lot attention to its self-representation as a Nordic while Lithuania accentuates its Central European-ness and puts a special meaning to her relations with Poland. Both outcomes generally correlate with the directives of the foreign policies of these countries.

Therefore, analysis of monuments permits to reveal a lot about the processes inside the country. This article through the comparison of the attitude towards the post Soviet monuments in three Baltic States (Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania) showed and proven that even "stone" can bring us closer to understanding of such a complex concept as the national identity. The ways in which these seeming stationary items are treated in each country, are closely tied to the very core of their national identities.

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⁶ Enoch Wan and Mark Vanderwerf, "A review of the literature on "ethnicity" and "national identity" and related missiological studies", April 2009, accessed March 16, 2013, <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/194/544>.

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¹⁰ Pierre Nora, *Realms of memory: Rethinking the French past, Vol 1. - Conflicts and Divisions*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

¹¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 42-52.

¹² Except for Lithuania that already experienced a long period of independence during the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (12th century – 1795)

¹³ Sergei Kruk, "Wars of Statues: Ius imaginum and Damnatio memoriae in the 20th century Latvia" (presented at the Conference on the Historical Use of Images, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 10-11 March 2009)

¹⁴ "Говорящие камни вернутся к рижанам в 2012 году", Delfi, December 27, 2010. Accessed March 16, 2013, <http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/govoryaschie-kamni-vernutsya-k-rizhanam-v-2012-godu.d?id=35945663>.

¹⁵ Mark R. Hatlie, "Monument to the Soldiers of the Soviet Army in Riga", Sites of Memory Blog, accessed March 20, 2013, <http://sites-of-memory.de/main/rigasovietyvictory.html>.

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²² Stuart Burch and David J. Smith, "Empty Spaces and the Value of Symbols: Estonia's 'War of Monuments' from Another Angle", *Europe-Asia Studies* 59 (2007): 913-936.

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Biography

Anna Gromilova obtained her B.A. of Economics at Novosibirsk State University, Russia and her Master's Degree in International Politics and Diplomacy at the University of Economics in Prague (UEP). She combined her interests in international economic and political relations with that in culture and literature in her MA thesis which won her a scholarship as a PhD student to research "Identities of the Baltic states and their importance in the Russo-European relations" that she started in the autumn of 2012 at the Metropolitan University Prague (MUP). Her main field of interest include the development of the post-Communist states and their identities. In the mean time she has been working with the RAUN (Regional Academy on the UN) on a project launched by the ACUNS (The Academic Council on the United Nations System) Vienna Liaison Office and is a visiting fellow at the Leuven Centre for the Irish Studies, helping its research.

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