

The Holocaust and its Contexts

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Richards Plavnieks

Nazi Collaborators on Trial during the Cold War

Viktors Arājs and the Latvian Auxiliary Security
Police

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*For my namesake,
Vilis Ričhards Pļavnieks,
who wanted to be a history teacher, but was caught up in historic events and
never realized his dream. He survived a period in history the likes of which
humankind must never see again.*

PREFACE

This book touches a variety of historical topics: Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, Eastern European collaboration, the Cold War, post-1945 international criminal law, both the Soviet Union and East Germany, and Baltic studies.

Showing the intricate interrelationships of these seemingly disparate areas of inquiry, with Nazi crimes as their nexus, is one of my goals. Apart from the academic interest I hope it will draw, this book also has significance for Latvians' process of coming to terms with their country's encounter with Nazi Germany—a process analogous to Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—that was retarded and deformed by Latvia's domination by the USSR until 1991. The wide scope of the project provides, I hope, a uniquely constructive framework for historicizing the difficulties of this process.

The evidence gathered over decades of work by prosecutors across the world, which my work examines, first established the facts of Latvian collaboration. This book, then, is well-suited to advance this still developing process, as it deals both with Latvia's most notorious killers and their post-war fates on both sides of the Iron Curtain, as well as contemporary Latvians' responses to the investigations and trials in different political contexts. In that sense, this book is a record of the earliest phases of the process of coming to terms with Latvian collaboration—a process which must now continue and to which this book, I hope, will contribute.

Those Latvians living in the enclaves of the post-1945 Latvian diaspora the world over will, I believe, be interested in this book. I gave a

talk to the Washington, DC, Association of Latvian Fraternities and Sororities in January 2016 on the subject of the Arajs Kommando that drew a very large audience and many attendees inquired about when this book would be published. I also hope that the global Anglophone Latvian community will read it eagerly as well, particularly the increasingly broad and deep bench of Latvian scholars.

My grandparents came to the United States in 1949 and I myself grew up around the Latvian exile enclave in Rockville, Maryland. As a child and teenager, between 1992 and 1996, I lived in Moscow and Rīga, where my interest in my family's background and twentieth century European history was kindled. As a professionally trained historian and a descendent of political refugees, I hope my book will not be seen by Latvians as the work of an outsider clumsily seeking to intervene in a volatile and sensitive topic. On the question of Latvians' role in Hitler's Europe, I hope here to contribute something.

For this, I was fortunate to obtain funding for two full years of research in Hamburg, Ludwigsburg, Rīga, Jerusalem, and Washington, DC, with the support of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, and the German Academic Exchange Service. In Israel, I had the privilege of meeting and learning from Yehuda Bauer, David Caeserani, Konrad Kwiet, Wendy Lower, Dan Michman, Alexander Prusin, and David Silberklang. Later, as a Charles H. Revson Foundation Fellow at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, I had the honor of working alongside such scholars as Martin Dean, Jürgen Matthäus, and Mark Roseman at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies.

Besides long-term research in six different archives, I was also able to meet some of the people involved in the events about which I was writing. Dr. Steven Rogers, retired historian at the Office of Special Investigations, very generously met with me on a variety of occasions to talk about his experiences. I was also helped by the gracious and urbane Hauptregierungsdirektor JVA Kassel I, Georg-Uwe Meister, who allowed me to tour his facility, which once imprisoned Viktors Arājs. Likewise, the American Latvian defense attorney, Ivars Bērziņš, deserves much thanks for his courtesy and candor towards me. Professor Eduard Anders, a Latvian Jewish Holocaust survivor, offered invaluable advice on the final manuscript. Finally, I was also kindly welcomed into the home of Andrew Ezergailis from whom I have learned so much.

Tremendous gratitude I also owe to Christopher Browning, whose guidance, encouragement, knowledge, patience, insights, and example made my work possible. Eric Kurlander, who set me on my course to academia, also deserves many thanks. His impact on my life has been literally inestimable.

Finally, I wish to mention fondly my closest companions during this project: Andrew Haeberlin, Brandon Hunziker, Jen Lynn, Patrick Tobin, and Waitman Beorn.

Orlando, USA

Richards Plavnieks

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ABBREVIATIONS

ALA	American Latvian Association. Umbrella group constituted by the American Latvian community to represent their interests.
ATF	United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. Now the ATFE: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.
BaB	Bundesarchiv-Berlin, German Federal Archive in Berlin, Germany.
BaL	Bundesarchiv-Ludwigsburg, German Federal Archive in Ludwigsburg, Germany.
BaMa	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv. German Federal Military Archive in Freiburg, Germany.
BdO	Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei, or “Commander of the Order Police” for regions such as the Ostland.
BdS	Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei, or “Commander of the Security Police,” the stationary successor to the mobile Einsatzgruppen and commander of the Security Police for regions such as the Ostland.
BStU	Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutsche Demokratische Republik, or “The Federal Mandatory for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic.”
CFL	Committee for a Free Latvia. A fairly inconsequential post-war American Latvian lobbying group in the United States funded by the CIA.
CIA	United States Central Intelligence Agency
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DOJ	Department of Justice of the United States of America
DP	Displaced Person

DSF	Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft, or “Society for German-Soviet Friendship.”
DV	Daugavas Vanagi, or “Hawks of the Daugava.” Latvian welfare organization established for veterans of the Latvian Legion.
EG	Einsatzgruppe. Nazi mobile task force assigned to kill Jews and Communists behind the lines. Einsatzgruppe A was the northernmost unit and the one responsible for carrying out Nazi political and racial murders in the Baltic states.
EK	Einsatzkommando. Nazi rear-echelon task force assigned to kill Jews and Communists behind the lines. Einsatzkommando 2, a constituent of Einsatzgruppe A, was responsible for carrying out Nazi political and racial murders in Latvia.
FDGB	Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, or “Free German Trade Union Federation.” East German umbrella trade union federation. By the time of East Germany’s collapse, nearly all workers were members.
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany. Anglicization of the official German-language name of West Germany.
FSB	Federalnaya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii, or “Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation.” Post-Soviet Russian successor of the KGB.
GDR	German Democratic Republic. Anglicization of the official German-language name of East Germany.
Hiwi	Hilfswillige, or “Willing Helpers.” Non-German volunteers attached individually or in small groups to frontline Wehrmacht units or Luftwaffe air-defense batteries as well as rear area German occupation forces.
HRSP	Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section of the Criminal Division of the United States Department of Justice.
HSSPF	Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer, or “Higher SS and Police Leader” who commanded all regional forces of the SS (such as Friedrich Jeckeln for the Ostland).
INS	United States Immigration and Naturalization Services
IRR	Investigative Records Repository of the United States. National Archives and Records Administration.
JVA	Justizvollzugsanstalt, or, literally, “Justice Enforcement Institution,” meaning “prison” in Germany.
KdO	Kommandeur der Ordnungspolizei, or “Commander of the Order Police,” who commanded district forces (such as Latvia) of the Order Police.
KdS	Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei, or “Commander of the Security Police.” The stationary successor to the mobile

	Einsatzkommandos, who commanded district forces (such as Latvia) of the Security Police.
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti, or “Committee for State Security.” Over-arching Soviet police and security organization, successor of the NKVD.
KZ	Konzentrationslager, or “Concentration Camp.”
LS	Labor Service. Affiliated with the United States Army in post-war West Germany.
LSSR	Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic
LVVA	Latvijas Valsts Vēstures Arhīvs, or “Latvian State Historical Archives.”
MfS	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, or “Ministry for State Security.” Wide-ranging, all-encompassing East German police and security agency. See: Stasi.
MoD	Ministry of Defence of Great Britain
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration of the United States
NKVD	Narodniy Komissariat Vnutrenneekh Dyel, or “People’s Ministry of Internal Affairs.” Main police agency of the Soviet Union, encompassing both regular and secret police from 1934 to 1954.
Orpo	Ordnungspolizei, or “Order Police” of Nazi Germany.
OSI	Office of Special Investigations of the United States Justice Department’s Criminal Division.
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt, or “Reich Security Main Office” of Nazi Germany.
RuSHA	Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt, or “Race and Settlement Main Office” of Nazi Germany.
SD	Sicherheitsdienst, or “Security Service” of Nazi Germany.
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, or “Socialist Unity Party of Germany.” East Germany’s Communist Party.
Sipo	Sicherheitspolizei, or “Security Police” of Nazi Germany.
SMERSH	Smert Shpionam, or “Death to Spies,” the name for the Soviet Chief Directorate of Counter-Intelligence during the Second World War.
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
StaH	Staatsarchiv Hamburg, or “State Archive of Hamburg.”
Stasi	Staatssicherheit, or “State Security.” Unofficial name for East Germany’s Ministry for State Security. See: MfS.
StPO	Strafprozeß Ordnung, or “Code of Criminal Procedure.” The West German Code of Criminal Procedure.
USHMM	United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VEB	Volkseigener Betrieb, or “People’s Enterprise.” These concerns represented 75% of the East German industrial sector.

VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars, a private veterans association in the United States.
VĻKJS	Vissavienības Ļeņina Komunistiskās Jaunatnes Savienība, or “All Union Leninist Young Communist League” in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.
ZS	Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärungen nationalsozialistischer Gewaltverbrechen, or “Central Office of the State Ministries of Justice for the Investigation of National Socialist Violent Crimes.” West German counterpart to the East German ZUV.
ZUV	Zentraler Untersuchungsvorgang zur Untersuchung von NS- und Kriegsverbrechen, or “Central Investigative Body for the Investigation of National Socialist and War Crimes.” East German counterpart to the West German Zentrale Stelle.