



# BALTIC HERITAGE NETWORK

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*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

*Rõõmsaid jõule ja head uut aastat!  
Priecīgus Ziemassvētkus un laimīgu Jauno gadu!  
Džiaugsmingų Šventų Kalėdų ir Naujųjų Metų!*

*Baltic Heritage Network  
2014*

## REMEMBERING LITHUANIAN JEWISH WRITER ICCHOKAS MERAS

On October 8, Icchokas Meras, a Lithuanian Jewish writer, would have turned 80 years old. To commemorate the anniversary, the Lituania Department of the National Library of Lithuania created a virtual exhibition “Kelmė is my Lithuania and my Jerusalem” (<http://senas.lnb.lt/parodos/11/>), inviting visitors to become acquainted with the writer's life and works, and to leaf through the library archives where one can find interesting information about the writer.

Meras was a great friend of National Library of Lithuania. Thanks to the writer, the Lituania Department was able to replenish its funds with his newest books. The exhibition also talks about Meras' friendship with the Library.

Although Meras' interest in literature started in high school, after graduation he chose to study engineering. He made his literary debut in 1960 with the book “Geltonas lapas” [The Yellow Patch]. Meras' novel about the Holocaust, “Lygiosios trunka akimirka” [Stalemate] (1963), is his best-known work internationally.

In 1972, Meras immigrated to Israel, where he worked as a teacher and taught at the university. In Israel, with the help of Lithuanian emigrants, the writer received true recognition. For his novel “Striptizas, arba Paryžius-Roma-Paryžius” [Striptease or Paris-Rome-Paris] written in 1976, Meras was awarded the Lithuanian Writers Association Literary Prize (US).

The author's works have been translated into more than 20 languages. Prestigious literary magazines named Meras one of the most prominent Eastern European writers. In 1995, he

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### A Note from the Editor:

The submission deadline for the next issue is 15 February 2015. We welcome news articles, conference information, calls for papers, new publication information, and images. Please send articles in English with high quality images to:

Kristina Lupp  
[kriss.lupp@me.com](mailto:kriss.lupp@me.com)

The Non-Profit Association Baltic Heritage Network was founded in Tartu on January 11, 2008. NPA BaltHerNet was established to foster cooperation between national and private archives, museums, libraries, and institutions of research, public associations and organizations collecting and studying the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora. It aims to facilitate the preservation and research of the historically valuable cultural property of the Baltic diaspora, as well as to ensure accessibility of these materials to the public.

NPA BaltHerNet is also committed to the organising of conferences, seminars and workshops, and to developing and administering the electronic information website Baltic Heritage Network, a multilingual electronic gateway for information on the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora.

The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line. The newsletter is compiled and edited by Kristina Lupp. Please send all related enquiries and submissions to Kristina Lupp: [kriss.lupp@me.com](mailto:kriss.lupp@me.com)  
[www.balther.net](http://www.balther.net)  
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### 2015 BALTIC HERITAGE NETWORK CONFERENCE WILL TAKE PLACE IN RIGA

The next Baltic Heritage Network conference “Tracing the Baltic road to independence in diaspora archives” will take place next summer in Riga. Tentative dates are June 30- July 2. More information including the call for papers will be available in the next newsletter.

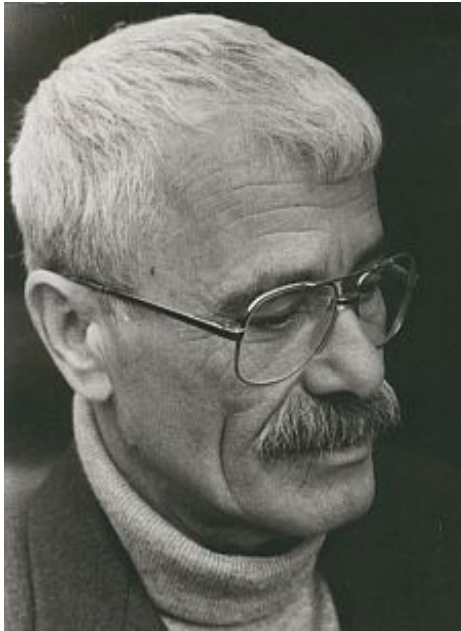


was awarded the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas Commander's Cross. The writer is also a recipient of the honourable Lithuanian National Prize.

■ Deimantė Bandzevičiūtė, National Library of Lithuania, Lituanica Department

## CELEBRATIONS TO MARK THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTONIAN ARCHIVES IN THE UNITED STATES

Celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the Estonian Archives in the United States, took place on October 25th at the Estonian church in Lakewood. Approximately 50 people were in attendance, coming from New York and around Lakewood, New Jersey, as well as some guests from afar.



The staff at the Lakewood Archives.  
Photo: P. Noorhani

Archive manager Enda-Mai Michelson Holland opened the festivities. Maria Belovas brought greetings from the Estonian consulate in Washington and Eda Treumuth from the Estonian Holy Spirit Church in Lakewood. Archivist Ave Maria Blithe read the best wishes that had arrived by mail.

Guests were invited to have coffee, kringel and blueberry cake. At the same time, one could view a very detailed display from the various collections of the Lakewood archives. The display was organized by archivist Ave Maria and the volunteer workers of the archives. The wealth of information and contributions by refugees of emotionally significant items, such as art and hand crafted items was very evident. One could examine or buy a copy of the English translation of Ferdinand Kool's "DP Chronicles," which was published just in time for the Archives' anniversary.

Then it was time for speeches. Piret Noorhani acknowledged the perseverance and productivity of the volunteers and passed on greetings from the people at VEMU and the Baltic Heritage Network. She spoke about the refugees and recognized the role they played in preserving Estonian cultural heritage. Liisi Esse, the Library Curator for the Baltic Collection at Stanford University, talked about the collecting being done on the West Coast. It is encouraging that in the US, another Estonian centre is collecting, studying and promoting Estonian materials. It has grown a great deal in the last two years. Enda-Mai Michelson-Holland spoke about the past, present and future of the Lakewood archives. As some may already know, portions of the archived documents have been given to the Immigration History

## BALTIC HISTORY CONFERENCE AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

A three day conference on Baltic history was held at Stanford University on October 9-10, 2014. Entitled "War, Revolution and Freedom: the Baltic Countries in the 20th Century", the conference brought together historians, archivists, and librarians from the Baltic States and the United States. The keynote speaker was the former Latvian president, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, who discussed the sometimes difficult path of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia to join the European Union and NATO.

The conference presentations covered a wide range of subjects. There were talks on the Latvian War of Independence, right wing extremism in Estonia between the wars, and the Holocaust in Lithuania. Papers were also presented on gender roles under the Ulmanis regime in Latvia, World War II in the memory of Estonians, and on the movements that led to the renewal of Baltic independence in 1991.

At the end of the conference, talks focused on the resources relating to Baltic history at Stanford University. These included a presentation by Elga Zālīte on the collection of Reverend Richard Zariņš at Stanford University Libraries; a paper by David Jacobs on collections of Baltic diplomats at the Hoover Institution Archives; and a talk by Lisa Esse on the Baltic Studies Program at Stanford University.

The conference concluded with a showing of the film "Obliging Collaborators" by Latvian director Pēteris Krilovs.

Stanford University The Hoover Institution Library & Archives

**War, Revolution and Freedom:  
The Baltic Countries in the 20th Century**

An International Conference  
October 8-10, 2014  
Stauffer Auditorium, Hoover Institution  
Featuring a Keynote Address by Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, President of the Club of Madrid,  
Former President of Latvia  
Keynote Reservations: email: [Lesser.Platach@stanford.edu](mailto:Lesser.Platach@stanford.edu)  
For more information: <http://ghn.stanford.edu>

Co-sponsored by Office of the Provost, School of the Humanities and Sciences; Office of the Dean; Stanford Global Studies Division; The Europe Center; Stanford University Libraries; Division of Literature, Culture, & Languages; Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures; Department of History; Taubman Center for Jewish Studies; Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies; Stanford Humanities Center.



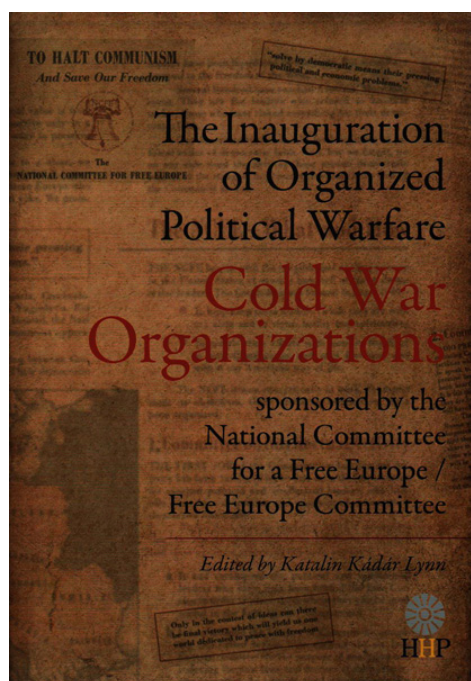
Research Center in Minneapolis. However, Lakewood still holds a large collection of documents, publications, photos, art and audio-visual material. An archivist was hired in the fall of 2013, after which the collection has developed well. The Lakewood archive volunteers have also worked on the Baltic Heritage Network ventures.

Those interested had the opportunity to tour the archives and to have access to the work being done with the collections. Many people enjoyed talking at length over a cup of coffee. One got the impression that the 50-year-old archives have reached the age of maturity, are making plans for the future and are hard at work. Let them always have clever and industrious workers as well as money to bring all their plans to life.

■ Piret Noorhani

## COLD WAR POLITICS IN EXILE BROUGHT TO LIGHT

Radio Free Europe has gained such a mythical reputation that it is surprising, how little actual scholarly literature there is on the broadcasts or the organizations arranging them. The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare. Cold War Organizations sponsored by the National Committee for a Free Europe/Free Europe Committee edited by Katalin Kádár Lynn and published by Helena History Press fills the gap.



The organization behind the radio station was Free Europe Committee. Even the name causes confusion, because it was founded as the Committee for Free Europe in May 1949, though a few weeks later the appendix 'National' came along. The name Free Europe Committee was adopted in 1954.

It pretended to be a private enterprise of freedom-loving Americans, but was covertly funded by the CIA. When this was revealed to the public in 1971, the public funding to the FEC ended. Radio Free Europe, however, was re-organized and their broadcast continues today.

Although RFE took the biggest share of FEC's activity, the anthology focuses on the organization behind it. The FEC was divided between nationalities, each composing their own committee. Most of the articles are constructed like this. The articles of Czechoslovakian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, and Romanian examples stand alone, but on the other hand, overlap each other. This overlapping proves similarities and the need for cooperation in the research.

Jonathan L'Hommedieu introduces the three Baltic committees together in the article. As the Baltic States were occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union, they were exceptions among the exile groups. Consequently they had active legations in the US, but lacked broadcasts by the RFE, mostly due to the small size of the populations. Overall, the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian committees were as independent as the others. Thus, there is little justification to study them together; or vice versa. There should be more transnational research on emigrant politics like this.

The book also contains articles on the Assembly of Captive European Nations or Free Europe University in Exile. Naturally, the Baltic emigrants took part in these forms of cooperation. Latvian Vilis Māsēns was the first chairman of the ACEN and shaped the organization. Many Baltic students continued their education in the FEC sponsored Collège de Europe Libre in Strasbourg. As the US foreign policy started to emphasize co-existence with the USSR, the funding of FEC was considerably diminished. Consequently, the actions of ACEN were severely damaged and the College closed once and for all in 1958.

Despite the thorough articles, the book is merely an introduction to the topic. The same group came together last September in Gdansk to discuss the main activity, Radio Free Europe, and the publication is expected soon. Plans were also made for the next conference on transnational networks. For anyone interested in the political activity of emigrants of the Cold War, this book is a definite companion.

■ Pauli Heikkilä

## CANADIAN LATVIAN ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM

For several years Andris Kesteris, President of the Latvian National Federation in Canada (LNAK) and Member of the Board of the World Federation of Free Latvians (PBLA) has urged the Latvian Community in Canada to increase activities towards preserving its rich cultural heritage.

A year ago, on 15 August 2013, a number of enthusiasts met to discuss the possibilities and formed a working group. This year, on 15 August, their efforts were formalized. The Latvian National Federation in Canada (LNAK) approved, under its auspices, the formation of the "Canadian Latvian Archives and Museum" (KLAM).

As a professional archivist and specialist, Andris Kesteris' many years of experience at the Library and Archives Canada (LAC), is irreplaceable. He is currently Chair of the Archives, Library and Museum task force of PBLA, and continues to develop cooperative initiatives with several international organizations, including those in Latvia and Canada. He is a life member of the Baltic Heritage Network (BaltHerNet), and one of the founding Board Members of the Baltic Audiovisual Archival Council (BAAC).

Aija Kārklīņa, Skaidrīte Tērauds and Ženija Vītola are the LNAK Canadian task force and can be considered founders of KLAM. Since its inception a year ago, they have spent hundreds of hours organizing the material acquired so far.

The goal of KLAM is to collect and, as much as possible, house under one roof, documents and artefacts of Latvians in Canada from the end of the 19th Century to the present day.

The KLAM depository contains documents from various organizations, active and inactive, personal documents, such as immigration certificates, marriage and



From left, Marianna Auliciema (LaPa - Latvians Abroad, Museum and Research Centre); Ženija Vītola (Canadian Latvian Archives and Museum); Antra Celmiņa (LaPa Board Member).

Location: KGB Building Riga- LaPa exhibition

birth certificates, photographs, etc. Very interesting is the correspondence with relatives and friends in Latvia during the 50 years of Soviet occupation. These letters, often indirectly, tell a great deal about their life.

The KLAM museum holds items people brought with them as they left their homeland: their Latvian passport, school diploma, a suitcase and a pair of mitts. Recently, in Latvia, an exhibition called "A Latvian's Suitcase" was opened to the public in the "Stūra māja" – KGB Building in Riga. We all carried such a suitcase going into exile. The exhibition was curated by LaPa (Latvians Abroad – Museum and Research Centre).

KLAM is not just a local archive. It operates and is governed by international rules and archival principles. In Latvia, KLAM cooperates with the Latvian National Library (LNB), Latvians Abroad – Museum and Research Centre (Latvieši pasaulē – LaPa) and the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia (LOM).

The original LNAK Archive was founded in 1975. Mr. Jānis Mežaks was the principal archivist responsible for the collection. The fonds are very well organized and go up to 2004. Active work was interrupted as Mr. Mežaks returned to live in Latvia. The Archives of Ontario in Toronto are the official depository of the records of the Federation.

Many of us, having lived in Canada the greater part of our lives, are an integral part of Canada, as also we have remained a part of Latvia, where we were born. Therefore, it is important to continue the work started by Mr. Mežaks.

It is essential to continue to collect information about Latvians in Canada as evidence of the great contribution to their country of refuge, and as evidence to future generations, about the struggle to free their homeland that was occupied by foreign forces for much too long.

KLAM will be grateful for support and contributions, both archival and financial. Further information is available at the LNAK office, 4 Credit Union Drive, Toronto, ON, M4A 2N8; Tel. 416-755-2353; e-mail lnak@lnak.org.

■ Ženija Vītols

## EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR AT THE LITUANICA DEPARTMENT

On October 6, the National Library of Lithuania hosted an educational seminar on how to use digital content in public libraries.



The seminar was well attended.

Photo: S. Charsika

The event brought together representatives from Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, and Vilnius municipal public libraries. NLL Lituanica Department staff gave the lectures.

J. Budriūnienė, the director of the Department, introduced participants to the Department's main activities, current databases, and talked about the digitalization of documents and their integration process on the Internet ([www.epaveldas.lt](http://www.epaveldas.lt)). Ms. Budriūnienė also presented the main tools that the Lituanica Department uses to disseminate the information about digitized documents.

Dr. Giedrė Milerytė in her presentation "Users of Documentary Heritage. Who Are They?" spoke about the systematizing of documentary heritage, the target groups of users seeking information, and the possibilities for researching digital resources. She presented the Lithuanian diaspora archival heritage database Sietynas administered by Vytautas Magnus University Lithuanian Emigration Institute.

Dr. Dalia Cidzikaitė talked about the oral history project carried out by Lithuanian American Community, Inc. and the book *Manėm, kad greit grįšim* [We Thought We'd Be Back Soon – 18 Stories of Lithuanian World War II Refugees] based on the above mentioned project and published in 2014. Dr. Cidzikaitė presented the genre of oral history and its main features, emphasized the importance of oral history projects and multiple possibilities of using them for regional libraries.



Dr. Dalia Cidzikaitė presented the genre of oral history.

Photo: S. Charsika



## NO HOME TO GO TO EXHIBIT OPENED IN LITHUANIA

On September 12, an exhibit *No Home to Go to: The Story of Baltic Displaced Persons, 1944–1952* opened at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania.

The exhibit, a joint project of Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago, Vytautas Magnus University Lithuanian Emigration Institute and Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian diaspora communities, is a unique project that presents the exceptional living conditions of the Baltic diaspora in DP camps in Germany.

This year marks 70 years since Baltic people, the political, cultural, and academic elite, trying to avoid Soviet repressions left their countries and settled in DP camps in Germany where they led an active social and cultural life. They established Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian schools, the Baltic University, published newspapers and books, organized theatrical gatherings, concerts and art exhibitions. During the first years of living abroad, the Balts protected and cherished their language and cultural traditions, the most important guarantee of ethnic identity in exile.

The exhibit, available in two languages English and Lithuanian, shows the stages of emigration: fleeing West, living in the DP camps, and further emigration to other countries.

The *No Home To Go To* exhibit opened earlier at Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago and the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, DC.

VMU Lithuanian Emigration Institute



The seminar also provided an opportunity to discuss various forms of cooperation with regional public libraries and other memory institutions in Lithuania.

■ NLL Lituanica Department

## SUNNY ARCHIVAL DAYS IN WASHINGTON, DC

American Latvians held the second conference dedicated to the Latvian diaspora's archives, libraries and cultural materials from September 11 - 13. The first such conference was held in the spring of 2012 in Minneapolis, Minnesota at the Immigration History Research Centre (IHRC). This year's conference took place in Washington, DC, and was organized by the American Latvian Association, the Latvian Embassy and the Library of Congress.

The first day of the conference was held at the Library of Congress. Participants were welcomed by high-ranking officials: the Library Director James Hadley Billington, the Latvian Ambassador to the United States Andris Rasāns, Congressman John Shimkus and several leaders of American Latvian organizations. The keynote speaker was Grant Harris, the director of the European Section of the Library of Congress. He told us of the founding of the Library of



Congress, of its collection policies and of its cooperation with Latvians in Latvia as well as the diaspora. During a break I had the good fortune to chat with the curator of the Baltic collection, Taru Spiegel, about the Estonian collections. Hopefully this will develop into a useful contact for VEMU.

Presentations continued about Latvian printed collections, archives and museums in North America. In the afternoon, we were acquainted with the historic Library of Congress Jefferson Building. After this, a reception was held at the Latvian Embassy where the exhibition of the Latvian artist Janis Šternbergs was opened.

The second day of the Conference reconvened at the Embassy. The morning was spent talking about the academic research of the Latvian diaspora and the resources that support this research. We



were also introduced to an exciting web project about the Riga ghetto during World War II. Afterwards, both Estonians and Lithuanians made presentations. I introduced the work being done to preserve the history of the Estonian diaspora, describing the aims and achievement of VEMU and the Baltic Heritage Network. The vice-president of the USA Lithuanian archives and the Chair of the archive committee, Dale Lukas, gave an overview of the Lithuanians' archives, museums and libraries in the United States.

Information was distributed on how to give guidance when old houses or flats are offered for sale so that old documents, photos, rare books, etc., are not destroyed. Finally, the National Library of Latvia representative described its information resources.

On the third day of the conference we drove to the Latvian Museum in Rockville. This small, likeable display has been set up in a Latvian centre that houses a number of other Latvian organizations, including a library, Latvian and Estonian schools, the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) and the World Federation of Free Latvians (PBLA).

After a tour of the museum, the activities continued in work groups such as the digitization and publishing of visual materials and tips for community organizations wanting to write their histories. Since these groups were working in Latvian, I was able to discuss work issues with the archivist of the Lakewood Estonian archives, Ave-Maria Blithe, who had just arrived to visit the museum.

I had interesting and useful meetings with both old and new acquaintances. Although Estonians might be a bit jealous of the work that American Lithuanians have done in preserving their heritage, they can still be an example to the Latvians. Although the Latvians in the US have a number of museum exhibitions, they lack archives where people may leave their own material for preservation. Also, cooperation between the Lithuanians and Estonians appears to be more advanced - both within the North-American communities as well as in their

homelands. Latvians, however, are steadily moving forward with events such as these conferences. For this, we wish them success!

■ Piret Noorhani

## THE VEMU AND ENM EXHIBITION IS READY!

### FOOD – A TREASURY OF ESTONIAN HERITAGE. BUSINESSES AND FACTORIES IN TORONTO.

The exhibition "Food – A Treasury of Estonian Heritage: Businesses and Factories in Toronto" opened in Toronto at Tartu College on the 21st and 22nd of September. The events included an English language symposium "Everyday Culture as a Keeper of National Identity", the Dr. Vello Soots Memorial Lecture delivered by the writer Elin Toona, followed by the premiere of the documentary film "Makers of Food" (Toidutoojad). This series of events marked the 70th anniversary of the "Great Exodus", Tartu College's 44th anniversary, and the start of the VEMU/ Estonian Studies Center academic year.

The exhibition project started about four years ago, with the idea of collecting information about a variety of Estonian businesses that have operated in Canada. We realized quickly that we had to come to terms with a number of realities. To begin with, there were too many businesses operating over the years to fit them into one exhibition. It seemed that it was more appropriate to focus on a narrower topic. Also, there was a shortage of researchers: only the VEMU archivist.



Another sad fact was that the VEMU collection, although otherwise large and well organized, had less than 10 photos showing Estonian food businesses. All Estonians from the Toronto area had vivid memories of Rooneem's and Amjärv's bakery and confectionery shops, as well as Poko's meat and delicatessen shop. However, no archival matter or materials existed. Information was also missing about the fate of the original owners and their descendants. Everything would now have to be collected from scratch.

It soon became clear that we could not finish this exhibition with our limited resources. Fortunately, it did not take much to persuade Riina Reinvelt to help. As an experienced ethnologist and a researcher of Estonians in exile, Riina had a like-minded interest. Her employer, the Estonian National Museum, was able to offer the necessary artistic and technical support for the exhibition set-up. Additional help for Riina came from Mairo Selgmäe, Merike Tamm and Tiit Sibul. Both Riina and Mairo came to Canada to film the interviews. Riina also did thorough archival research in Estonia and wrote the exhibition text. Merike gave the exhibition its eye-catching design and Tiit sent the exhibition off to Toronto. Mati Tee, of Regio Ltd., was responsible for creating the map that shows the location of all the food businesses and the printing of the exhibition was done by OÜ Seridisain. A great many people contributed to the completion of the exhibition and to all, a heart-felt thank you.

From the beginning, the idea was to compile an attractive and useful book complete with pictures and recipes from the exhibition material. The Koppel gift store of Toronto had such a book, but information for other stores could only be found in newspapers and then mostly in advertisements. Furthermore, the collection "Estonians in Canada" only touches upon food stores briefly. We still do not have a book on food stores but the idea has not been forgotten. In the end, we obtained more material than we could use for the exhibition, but it can still be useful. Experience has shown that more information and materials will be submitted after an exhibition has been open to the public. The plan is to select additional material and after a few years develop the book. However, an unplanned project – a documentary film "Makers of Food" was made possible by using the extra materials at hand. The film, by the Baltic Film and Media School graduate Kaisa Pitsi, was shown at the EstDocs film festival in Toronto.

The exhibition continues at Tartu College until February, 2015. After that, the exhibition will tour North America and then Estonia.

■ Piret Noorhani

## VIRTUAL EXHIBIT: REFUGEES FROM THE BALTIC COUNTRIES IN GERMAN CAMPS 1944-1951

This year marks 70 years since thousands of citizens from the Baltic countries began their journey as refugees. A large number of them left their birthplaces forever.

Many of the refugees of 1944 found their



Project team of the National Archives of Latvia. From left: Aija Kalnciema, Inese Kalnina, Ainars Mazversitis, Guntis Svitins, Gatis Karlsons and Birgit Kibal from The National Archives of Estonia. Photo: Aleksandrs Alunans



first place of detention in Germany, where countless camps were organized, and which



From right: Mara Sprudza, director of National Archives of Latvia and Birgit Kibal, Adviser for The National Archives of Estonia. Photo: Aleksandrs Alunans



Dr. Hist. Karlis Kangeris  
Photo: Aleksandrs Alunans

were later called DP Camps (displaced persons camps). According to historical research, it is calculated that approximately 40,000 Estonians, 171,000 Latvians, and 60,000 to 70,000 Lithuanians came to Germany.

To introduce the public to evidence, processes, and activities of this dramatic period, the following archival institutions

of Baltic Countries have developed a virtual exhibit, Refugees from the Baltic Countries in German Camps 1944-1955. These institutions are the Estonian National Archives, the Latvian National Archives, the Martynas Mazvydas National Library of Lithuania, and the Baltic Heritage Network. The creators of the exhibit offer a look into the period of the refugee camps, beginning with their formation, daily activities, holidays, and closing.

The camps were not only homes where people lived temporarily, but also in their own way, represented each Baltic country's traditions and way of life. Schools, publications, books, theatre groups, orchestras, ballet troops, and choruses were organized in the camps. Art exhibits, song festivals, concerts, and various sports' competitions took place in the camps. Various trade workshops such as sewing, shoe repair, metalworking, and others were popular. A great deal of attention was paid to activities that maintained national self-assurance such as the celebration of founders' days and national holidays of countries.

Those interested in this virtual exhibit can become acquainted with documents, photographs, and a small collection of movie fragments from camps. These offerings can be of interest to specialists of history, as well as to those studying Baltic history concurrent with that of Germany from 1944 to 1951.

The opening of the virtual exhibit was on October 9, 2014 in Riga and specialists from various memory institutions, as well from the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia and Latvians from Germany, Great Britain and U.S.A. took part.

Visit the virtual exhibit here: [http://www.archiv.org.lv/baltijas\\_dp\\_vacija/](http://www.archiv.org.lv/baltijas_dp_vacija/)

■ Guntis Svitins, The National Archives of Latvia, Project manager

## VEMU BECAME AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF THE BLOOR STREET CULTURE CORRIDOR

In April of this year, the Bloor Street Culture Corridor was established in Toronto, bringing together important cultural institutions between Bathurst Street and Bay Street, such as the Royal Ontario Museum, the Gardiner Museum, the Bata Shoe Museum, the Royal Conservatory, the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, as well as the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Center, the



Native Canadian Center of Toronto, Alliance Française de Toronto, Instituto di Cultura, and the Japanese Foundation.

The aim of the partnership is to increase awareness and appreciation of Bloor Street as a destination for professional cultural events and to take advantage of the synergy that results from cooperation. The Culture Corridor has already taken part in Open Streets Toronto and Toronto's Cultural Days.

After discussions with Heather Kelly, the Culture Corridor founder and director, and with the approval of the Tartu College Board of Directors, approval was given to VEMU/ Estonian Studies Center to become an associate member of the Bloor Street Culture Corridor. VEMU has grown professionally and this partnership should raise the profile of the work being done in Canada. It offers VEMU opportunities for broader cooperation, as well as a vehicle for promoting its activities to the Canadian multicultural audience.

■ Piret Noorhani

## INTERNATIONAL DIASPORA CONFERENCE IN TALLINN

This fall the Baltic community commemorated the 70th anniversary of the great escape that took thousands of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians to the West. In affiliation with that the Estonian Diaspora Academy in collaboration with Tallinn University Institute of History and Expatriate Estonian Literature Centre organized a conference for migration and diaspora researchers as well as archivists and museologists who are active in the field. The event took place at Tallinn University on September 18-19.

The conference managed to attract many key-figures in Estonian diaspora research from Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Latvia. The participants ranged from an even wider geographical area. Two days of presentations and discussions were audited by an interested audience. Both the more theoretical



Photo: Priit Parro

approaches as well as the more practical treatments were greeted with a keen spirit of investigation and thus provided ample food for thought.

On September 20th, the Estonian Diaspora Academy joined forces with the Museum of Occupations to host an oral history day where the stage was taken by people who had first-hand experience with living in the diaspora. They shared their families stories of escape and migration as well as provided insight into topics connected with settlement and acculturation.

The oral history day provided a scene for Estonian Diaspora Academy's first book presentation as well. „Mis teha? Siin ta on“/“Refugee“ by Endel Kõks and Arnold Sepp is a unique narrative in pictures depicting the life of Estonian refugees in German Displaced Person's Camps during the aftermath of the Second World War. The humour embedded in the book offers valuable insights into the diasporic condition of the people who fled Estonia in fear of Communist persecution and as such has already attracted attention in the scholarly community. The book was re-issued under Ilvi Jõe-Cannon's editorial leadership and with the help of many donors.

■ Maarja Merivoo-Parro

## CELEBRATING THE 20TH YOUTH SEMINAR

BaltHerNet youth seminars have become a reliable presence in Baltic diaspora research over the past five years. In November a small but significant jubilee took place in the North-Estonian countryside – Kuusalu became the stage for the 20th youth seminar.

The location was chosen to further enrich the geographical and institutional diversity that youth seminars are known for. In the past these gatherings where young minds can test their ideas with a friendly forum of junior and senior colleagues have taken place in different memory institutions located in Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, Tartu and Kaunas. Kuusalu is not even a city, but it does have something unique to offer. A few years ago it became home to a small but unique archival collection and an accompanying book collection created by Väino Esken - an Estonian who spent most of his adult life in Sweden.

The first presentation of the day focused on the contents and history of the fund which is now part of Kuusalu library. Director Elle Ots not only discussed the intricacies of the project but also showcased some of the more unique features of the collection. Film director Jaanis Valk was the next to present. He talked about his latest documentary project which is focused on an Estonian



world-traveller Ahto Walter. Jaanis walked the listeners through his research process which has led him from Estonia to The United Kingdom, Canada, US Virgin Islands, and South Africa.

The seminar was topped off by a movie session at the Kuusalu Cinema Society. The cosy but diverse group of seminar participants enjoyed Elen Lotman's documentary "Andy Stands Up" which is centred around a San Francisco Estonian stand-up comedian Andy Valvur's first show in his native land. After that it was time to enjoy a set of archival footage from the vaults of the Estonian Film Archive. All of the clips were tied in with Estonian diaspora issues and spanned from the inter war period until 1989.

## "SONGS OF SIBERIAN ESTONIANS" COLLECTION IS NOW ON-LINE

This online collection of songs of Estonians in Siberia is based on a CD anthology 'Songs of Siberian Estonians', published in late 2005 at the Estonian Literary Museum. The most important addition to the anthology is video-material introducing the dances of Siberia's Estonians, recorded in the same villages. The majority of the songs, dances and instrumental numbers were recorded when these traditions of Siberia's Estonians were already disappearing. The recordings were made during the fieldwork of the Estonian Folklore Archives (EFA) in Siberia in 1991-2000; some video recordings are from the years 2004 and 2012.

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