

Paper proposal

**Lessons and Legacies Conference XVI:
The Holocaust: Rethinking Paradigms in Research and Representation**
Canada Carleton University and University of Ottawa
7-10 November 2020

Title: Lithuanian Nationalist Anti-Nazi Resistance and the Holocaust: An Intellectual and Social History

There is no doubt that the “return of ideology” has been one of the most important recent developments in Holocaust studies. Nevertheless, not all subfields of Holocaust research benefited equally from this recent historiographical trend. This paper will examine Lithuanian nationalist anti-Nazi resistance (united in 1943 under the VLIK-the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania) from a perspective that combines intellectual and social history approaches. The goal of this paper is to show how a simultaneous focus on ideology and social careers of resisters can be of use to the histories of nationalist anti-Nazi resistance in German-occupied Eastern European borderland regions.

Firstly, based on German police reports, wartime personal and official correspondence, underground press accounts, and postwar memoirs, this paper will discuss resisters' ideological beliefs regarding ethnic and national belonging, anti-Semitism, and statehood. Among various anti-Nazi groups that operated in German-occupied Lithuania (Jewish resistance fighters, Polish Home Army soldiers, red partisans), only Lithuanian nationalists developed an underground movement that included a significant number of members from former collaborationist organizations. What do such examples of navigating from collaboration to resistance tell us about the agency of resisters, their beliefs and motivations?

In order to provide a sufficient answer to these questions, the discussion on the ideological premises of Lithuanian nationalism will be completed by a study of individuals' social careers in the nationalist resistance. The paper will show how a multitude of factors, including ideological beliefs, generational belonging and pre-war social and political loyalties shaped resisters' views regarding the “Jewish question” and the Holocaust. In particular, it will demonstrate that personal pre-war relationships conditioned an individual's behavior during the war, which, among members of the VLIK ranged from helping Jews to connecting the political struggle for independence with the Holocaust.

This paper emanates from my doctoral research, which concerns gender and inter-ethnic relations in multiple anti-Nazi resistance movements in German-occupied Lithuania.