

## 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

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Viktors Arājs and the Latvian Auxiliary Security Police  
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