

Remembrance of the WW2 and the Holocaust in Estonia today

From a perspective of a regular Estonian

Kristi Leps

<p><u>Estonia is an independent democratic country again</u></p>	<p><u>Since 20.08.1991</u></p> <p>Army of Russia left in August 1993</p>
<p><u>Soviet occupation</u></p> <p>2nd big deportation in 1949 – 20 000</p> <p>Altogether 75 000 people suffered from the Soviet repressions.</p>	<p><u>1944-1991</u></p> <p>Arrests and deportations continued until 1953. Repressions and political arrests continued in a smaller scale and were more hidden.</p>
<p><u>Nazi occupation</u></p> <p>Killed or died in prison – 20 000 Of them Estonian citizens – 8000-9000</p>	<p><u>1941-1944</u></p> <p>ca 1000 stayed in Estonia → ca 8 <u>survived</u> 12 500 Jewish people deported to the camps in Estonia, 7500-8500 died or were killed → ca 100 survived</p>
<p><u>Soviet occupation</u></p> <p>Killed or died in prison – 12 000 Deported – 10 000</p>	<p><u>1940-1941</u></p> <p>Deported – 400 Jewish people* ca 3000 evacuated to Russia</p>
<p><u>Estonia is an independent democratic country</u></p>	<p><u>1918-1940</u></p> <p>Population 1.134 million (1939) ca 4400 Jews</p>

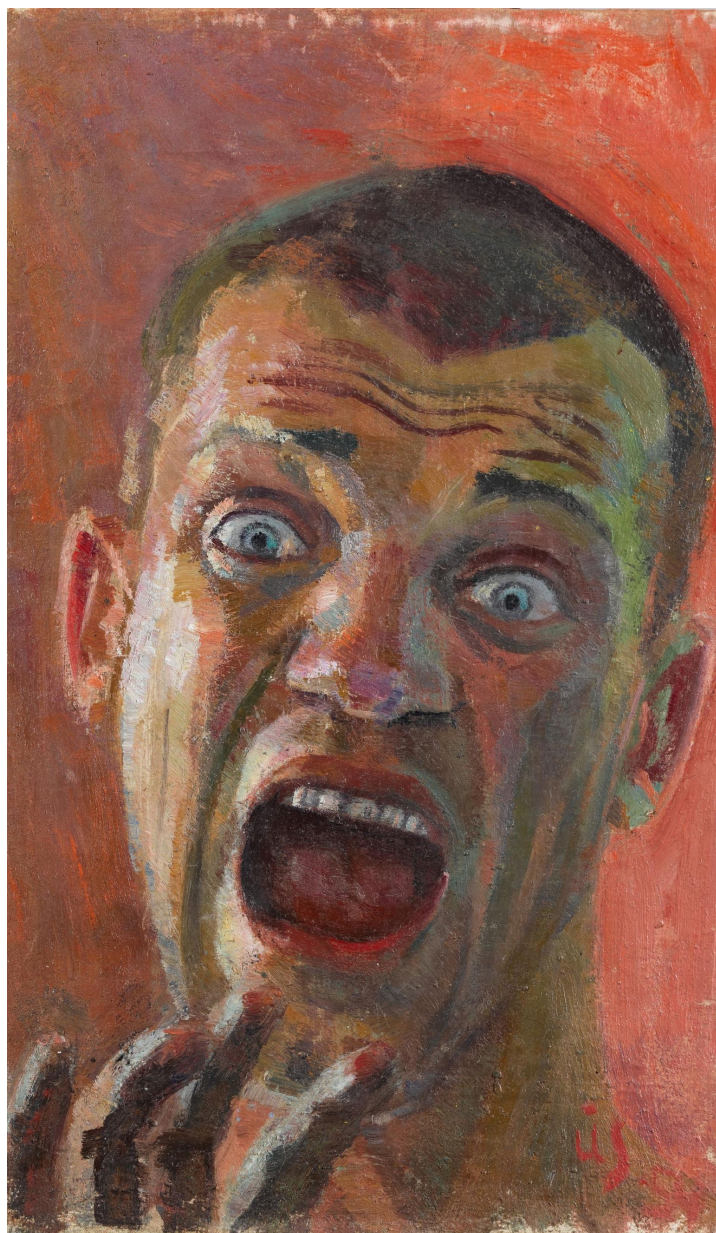


VALGE LAEV





PATAREI PRISON



Ülo Sooster
«Fear»
self-portrait
1954

**Painted in the Dolinka prison camp
in Kazakhstan**

Period of the Soviet historical truth Glasnost and collapse of the Soviet system



The Singing Revolution (1988) & regaining the independence (1991)

First time the people of Estonia could publicly talk about the arrests, deportations, mass killings, repressions.



What people think about WW2:

- **the occupation**
- **the injustice**
- **the suffering**
- **brothers fighting against brothers**
- **WW2 didn't end in 1945**
- **WW2 didn't liberate us**

For an regular Estonian the words Auschwitz and Holocaust automatically relates to the Jewish people.

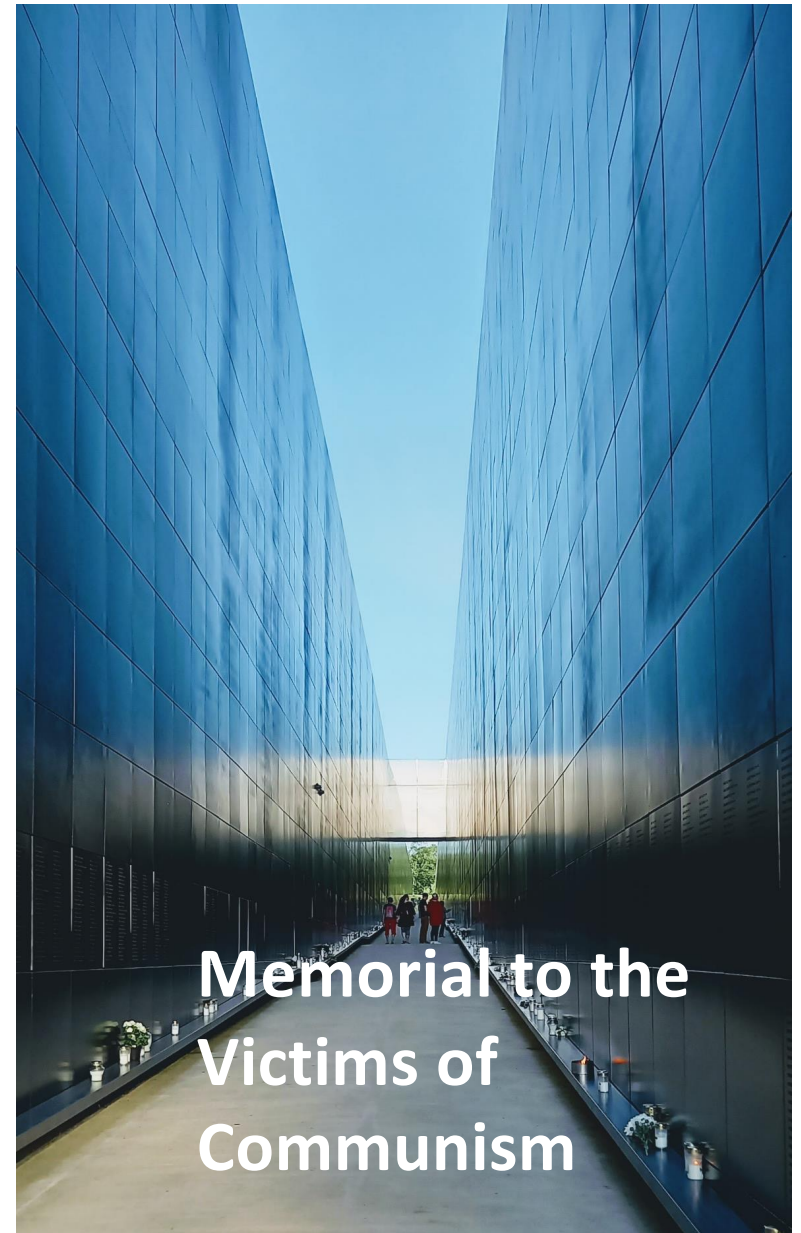
What about our suffering?

Who has suffered the most?

Remembrance Day of the deporatation



Memorial to the Victims of Communism





Memorial of the Holocaust in Klooga, Estonia

[Link](#)

Estonian Institute of Historical Memory

<https://mnemosyne.ee/en/>

Vabamu (a former Museum of Occupations)

<https://vabamu.ee/en/>

Estonian History Museum

www.ajaloomuuseum.ee

The Holocaust is taught and discussed in the 9th grade and the gymnasium level.

- **Analyse the mechanism of creating the Holocaust.**
- **Avoid the generalisation, look at the personal stories.**
- **Analyse the factors and mechanisms that made regular people support and take part in pogroms and participate as executors.**
- **The Holocaust doesn't determine who a Jew is. Jews have thousands of years long history.**
- **Nobody's suffering is superior and bigger than the others'.**

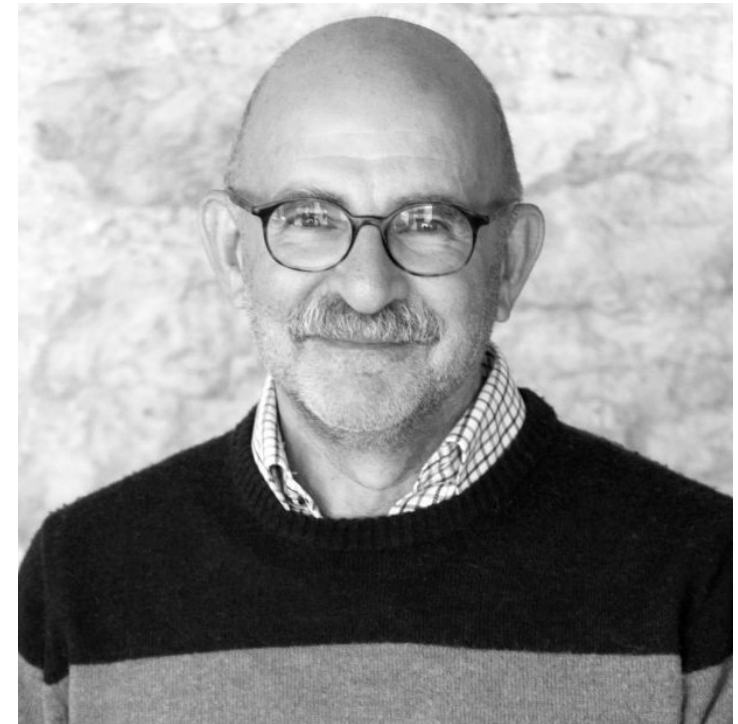
To understand the Holocaust you have to forget the Jews.

The Holocaust is a unique phenomenon in the European cultural space, and must be treated as such.

It is the largest pogrom in modern European history, inspired and organized by state power.

It is a story of human savagery.

Prof. David Vseviov, Estonian historian





<https://youtu.be/IWLKiLXBGhg>

Aitäh!
Thank you!