



Project Update – Construction Restarted!

Following the announcement in April of \$4 million in funding from the federal budget to complete the Memorial, planning and work toward completion of the project has continued to progress. On July 19, construction on the site restarted. In the following weeks excavation, formwork, concrete and masonry work began and is scheduled to be completed in late Fall. In this same time period work will continue on the Wall of Remembrance.

The photos below show sections of the mud slab being poured, the formwork for the rest of mud slab being installed, and formwork for the stairs being installed as well as the site being backfilled. *Photos continue on Page 4.*



Commemoration Held at Memorial Site in Ottawa for Victims of Baltic Deportations of 1941

In June the Ambassador of Latvia to Canada, Kārlis Eihenbaums, gave a speech at the Memorial site to commemorate the 1941 Baltic Deportations. The following is the text from his speech:

June 14th is a day of sadness, it is a "Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Communist Genocide".

80 years ago, in June 1941, tens of thousands of women and men, children and seniors — from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — were forced into cattle trains at gun point in the middle of the night. They were deported to Stalin's GULAG slave labour camps. Thousands died along the way — from starvation, illness and mistreatment by Soviet troops. Many were executed.

A total of about one-hundred-thousand people were deported from the Baltics, occupied territories of Western Ukraine, and Western Belarus. These countries were seized by the Soviet Union under the criminal agreement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union: known as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact.

This is one of the most tragic events of our nation in the 20th century. All nationalities inhabiting Latvia suffered under these Stalinist deportations.

The Soviet authorities at the time did not explain anything. They pretended that nothing had happened. There was not one mention in the newspapers about the missing. Their relatives had nowhere to turn for information, help or defence. The world was also silent.

A few years later, in 1944, hundreds of thousands would flee this kind of terror. Many came to Canada where they found refuge, freedom and the opportunity to rebuild their shattered lives.

On the 80th anniversary of the Soviet deportations, we remember the victims of Soviet imperial colonialism. Up until this day, this is a crime that has neither been condemned, nor even acknowledged by Soviet authorities — or their heirs.

Let us all remember the victims with respect.



Estonian Ambassador to Canada Toomas Lukk, Latvian Ambassador to Canada Kārlis Eihenbaums & Lithuanian Ambassador to Canada Darius Skuscevičius.

History Unhidden Excerpt from A Stolen Childhood, Five Winters in Siberia

By Ilmars Salts

"Like dried flowers, we were scattered in the wind..."

June 14, 1941 – Early Morning

My brother and I were awakened earlier than usual and told to dress quickly and go downstairs.

Our family home – Saltes – was built by my great grandfather in the 19th century as a single-story dwelling with five rooms and a large kitchen. My father added three rooms in the roof-space. The largest one, in the middle, had a window looking south. It was my grandmother's room and also had beds for my brother and me.

Groggy with sleep, we pulled on our clothes and made our way down the steep stairs, through the kitchen and into the dining room.

My father was sitting at the table along with several

men. Another man, holding a Russian rifle with a bayonet, stood near the window.

The strangers were interrogating my father. They asked him, again and again, where he had hidden his pistol. Apparently their search of our house had yielded a tan leather gun case, which my father had neglected to turn in when the orders came down to surrender all weapons and ammunition.

That morning, our house, along with many others in the rural municipality of Panemune in the Bauska district in southern Latvia, was visited by heavy trucks carrying armed men.

They were acting on Order No. 004067 – dated June 13, 1941, and signed by Sorokin of the security service – to carry out the search and arrest Aleksandrs Salts and his property.

Our family was on a list of names of people to be taken into custody and transported to Meitene railway station:

- My father, Aleksandrs Janis, born June 2, 1900.
- My mother, Olga, nee Rankis, born July 26, 1903.
- My grandmother, Emma, nee Grube, born November 4, 1875.
- Myself, Ilmars Aleksandrs, born March 20, 1931.
- My brother, Visvaldis, born February 25, 1934.
- My sister, Mirdzalnta, born November 22, 1938.

I watched as the intruders emptied the contents of our large wood-and-glass cabinet, which held a collection of silver and tableware that had been accumulated over several generations, including monogrammed children's christening spoons.

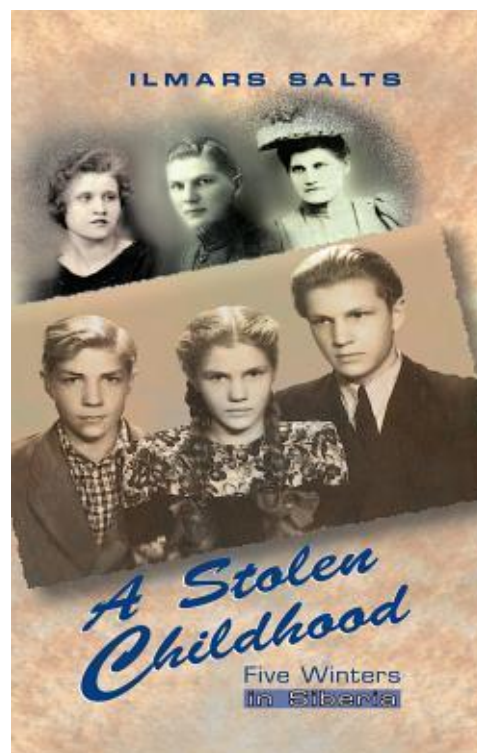
The men pulled out drawers and opened boxes, tossing our family heirlooms into a pillowcase that, when full, must have weighed at least 10 kilos. Then, inexplicably, they turned it over for "safekeeping" to our neighbours, who had been brought over as witnesses to the arrest.

Our maid Kate, a beautiful Polish woman, was helping my mother pack. As it turned out, Kate would remain in our house for most of her life and raise her own family there. We learned later that she had asked to come along with us, but her request was denied.

My little sister was crying and my mother tried to

comfort her while gathering up various articles of clothing, linens and food to take with us. Flustered by the men's orders to hurry up, she grabbed first one item, dropped it, then took up another and stuffed them into bags.

My 66-year-old grandmother – my father's mother – had tied up her own belongings in a large bundle and insisted she did not need help carrying them to the truck. She was wearing an ordinary housedress, a lightweight black coat, and a scarf tied around her head.



My memory has faded over the years. And while some significant events have been lost, other minute details remain fresh in my mind.

I clearly remember that one of the intruders had holes in his shoes. My father noticed it too and gave him a pair of his own boots, which the man hastily put on, leaving his tattered shoes on our dining room floor.

The search was done. As the wall clock struck 7 am, we were escorted out of our ancestral home. We climbed into a truck, where four other deportees – Mr. and Mrs. Klavins and Mr. Zelmenis and his son – were already waiting.

As the truck pulled away, we must have all been thinking the same thing: Would we ever return to

our house? Would we ever again be able to plant our gardens, take care of our farm animals, or raise our children there?

We rode past the family cemetery, where generations of my ancestors had been laid to rest. Many years ago, they were given a plot of land that was overgrown with trees and shrubbery. They cleared it and built on it, creating a more thriving legacy for each generation.

Next, we drove to Tukums to collect two more people whose names were on the list. When we arrived at Zemdegas, the Arins family residence, an elderly man tried to run away, but they caught him. Fate had not been kind to the Arins – their son Eizens was mentally incapacitated and their daughter Laima had a congenital limp.

We did not pause for long. The advance team had done its work and all belongings had already been packed. The only thing left to do was load them into the truck.

On the way to Bauska, we stopped at Grenctale dairy farm, which my father had helped to establish. As the truck rolled to a stop, the manager, Akmentins, came over to give my father that day's proceeds. I can still see the dairy workers standing at the windows and watching our truck pull away.

At Meitene railway station, a train of cattle wagons was waiting on the tracks. The men in our truck were told to get off first and go to one of the more distant wagons "so the women would be more comfortable".

That was to be the last time I would ever see my father. With a half loaf of rye bread in one hand, and a sheepskin over his other arm, he walked out of our lives forever. He died eight months later in the Vjatlag labour camp.

History Unhidden

Mass Grave from Stalin's Great Terror found in Ukraine

In August the media reported that a new mass grave has been uncovered in Ukraine thought to hold the remains of thousands of victims executed

by the NKVD during Stalin's Great Terror in the late 1930s. The media are reporting the grave holds around 5,000 to 8,000 people. As excavations continue the number of victims may increase. Mass graves of victims of Communism have been discovered in Ukraine previously.

Read more about the discovery [here](#).

Memorial Site Construction Photos

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