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'Woe from Stones': Commemoration, Identity Politics and Estonia's 'War of Monuments'

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This year marks the 20th anniversary of the start of Estonia's 'Singing Revolution'. Looking back on these events, one is reminded not least of the important role that the reappearance of Estonian national symbols had in galvanizing the mass movement for independence. Here one thinks particularly of the national flag - so much in evidence during 1988 - but also of the work by the Estonian Heritage Society to restore monuments connected to the founding of the Estonian Republic during 1918-1920. These monuments had been systematically destroyed after 1940, as part of a failed effort to expunge the memory of inter-war independence and transform Estonia into a Soviet place. Restoring them in the 1980s became an essential part of undermining Soviet power and restoring sovereign statehood.

The events of 1987-1991 thus underline the fact that - to quote George Schöpflin - the 'use of flags, monuments and ceremonies is not a superfluous extravagance, but a central component of identity creation and maintenance' (Schöpflin [2000](#), p. 29). As markers of political space, public monuments have a particular significance for efforts not only to establish and legitimize but also to contest state power. This significance has recently been demonstrated in a wholly new context, as public monuments have become emblematic both of sharpened socio-political divisions within Estonia and of an intensification of long-standing international disputes between Estonia and the Russian Federation. In what follows, I first seek to analyze the origins and nature of the so-called 'War of Monuments' that broke out during 2004-2007, and reached its peak in the April 2007 riots that followed the relocation of the Bronze Soldier.¹ I then conclude by discussing the possible significance of the April 2007 crisis for ongoing processes that seek to construct an integrated 'multicultural democracy' in Estonia.

As John R. Gillis has observed, 'the core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity' (Gillis [1994](#), p. 1; see also Halbwachs & Coser [1992](#); Assmann [1992](#)). In the case of contemporary Estonia, efforts to build an imagined national community embracing all residents of the restored sovereign state have been complicated by the existence within the population of two divergent - one could say diametrically opposed - national collective memories relating to the events of World War II and its aftermath. For the vast majority of Estonians, these years are synonymous first and foremost with suffering at the hands of the Soviet regime: 1940 marked military occupation and forcible annexation, 1944 not liberation but simply the replacement of one occupying regime by another. In both cases, the Soviet takeover was followed by a wave of deportations and killings that left hardly a single family untouched. These mass individual memories of Soviet repression and the popular resistance that they elicited were banished to the private sphere by the Soviet regime, whose subsequent nationalities policy prompted growing fears as to the Estonian nation's continued possibilities for cultural reproduction in the long term.

For most of Estonia's Russian-speaking population, or at least of the immigrant community that developed during Soviet rule, World War II is remembered as a victorious struggle against a Nazi German invader that inflicted immense suffering on the peoples of the USSR. Once again, this struggle was one that touched almost every family. Within this variant of national collective memory, the arrival of the Soviet army in Estonia in September 1944 was understood not as renewed occupation but as part of the liberation of Europe from fascism. Moreover, the official Soviet narrative of history held that the events of 1940 in Estonia did not constitute occupation and annexation, but rather voluntary incorporation into the USSR. The intervening period of Estonian independence was dismissed as an illegitimate 'bourgeois dictatorship' and a line of continuity was drawn back to 1919 and the abortive Estonian Workers Commune that sought to impose Bolshevik rule on Estonia with the aid of the Red Army. The Russian-speaking immigrant community established in Estonia after the war certainly developed a separate 'Baltic' form of identity that distinguished it from Russians living in what is today the Russian Federation. However, many of these Soviet citizens had no sense that they were living in another country - for them, Estonia was another constituent part of the USSR; moreover, Soviet nationalities policy meant that they were able to use Russian freely in all spheres of social existence, and were thus under no obligation to undergo linguistic and cultural integration with the majority population.

To point to divergent collective memories is not to essentialize nationality or to posit the existence of two internally homogenous groups with no points of contact between them. Ultimately, memory is a matter for individuals rather than communities. Estonia's Russian-speaking population - not to speak of the Soviet immigrant population - is far too diverse a group to speak as one, displaying tremendous heterogeneity in terms of ethnicity, descent, degree of integration with Estonian culture and political outlook. Recent events also testify to the marked divisions that exist amongst ethnic Estonians over how to define Estonian nationhood and over what should and should not be commemorated in an independent Estonia. Nevertheless, it is possible to point to diverging national collective memories in the sense of different frames in which 'nationally-minded individuals place and organize their histories in a wider context of meaning, thus forming collective identity' (Müller [2004](#), p. 3).

The latent tension between these different frames or fields of identity within Estonia has been exacerbated by the poor state of relations between Estonia and neighboring Russia, a situation which itself rests upon diametrically opposed foundational narratives of nationhood. In this regard, the Russian view of 1991 as a 'year zero' in Estonian-Russian relations clashed headlong with the Estonian doctrine of legal continuity, which saw the 1920 Tartu Treaty as the sole legitimate basis for relations. Whereas most Estonians saw the collapse of the USSR as marking a return to European 'normality', most Russians in the neighboring RSFSR saw it as anything but. The period since 1992 has witnessed an increasing recourse to the traditional Great Power discourse and the use of Soviet past within Russia's own current project of nation-building, including adherence to the Soviet fiction that 1940 was not occupation but voluntary incorporation. These developments, coupled with Moscow's

pretensions to speak on behalf of ethnic Russian 'compatriots' in neighboring countries, have fuelled continued perceptions within Estonia of an external Russian threat.

The project of nation-building in the restored Estonian Republic has been first and foremost about rejecting the Soviet past, reclaiming the historic homeland for the titular nationality and reconnecting with the 'Western World' following five decades of enforced isolation (Lauristin *et al.* [1997](#)). Key to realizing both of these aims was the doctrine of legal continuity, upheld by the Western powers throughout the Cold War, which framed the period 1940-1991 as an illegal occupation and traced a direct line of continuity back to the foundation of the Estonian Republic in February 1918. This recourse to legal continuity, however, was inevitably tempered by recognition of post-Soviet realities within a state order that is often characterized as a variant of an ethnic control regime.² Thus, the original citizenship law of 1992, while prioritizing the claims of the inter-war citizen polity - and thus the titular nationality - to the homeland, also created a legal mechanism for integrating Soviet-era immigrants and their descendents into the polity. The state also extended fundamental civil rights and social and economic entitlements to all permanent residents, regardless of citizenship, and has continued to fund basic mother-tongue education for all Russian-speaking residents, with a switch to bilingual upper secondary education thereafter. Finally, the creation of a single, overarching societal culture based on the Estonian language has not precluded the continued use of Russian as a second working language of government in those areas of the north-east where Russian-speakers constitute a local majority.

In the symbolic/commemorative sphere, too, the 1990s were marked not by efforts to impose a new unifying national narrative of the past, but rather by the persistence of 'competing myths and dissonant voices' with few points of connection between them.³ The fact that all permanent residents have the right to vote in local elections, for instance, means that municipal governments in Tallinn and the north-east have had to remain at least partially responsive to the concerns of their Russian-speaking constituents as far as commemoration of the past is concerned. This can be seen perhaps most strikingly in the case of Narva, where Soviet-era monuments continue to sit alongside new or restored ones that commemorate the foundation of the Estonian Republic, the Stalinist deportations of the 1940s and - in the case of the Lion re-erected in 2000 - the historical Swedish 'Golden Age' of the city's development (Burch & Smith [2007](#)). To give one example, the Narva city government appointed in October 1993 promptly removed Estonia's last remaining statue of Lenin from the central Peter's Square. The monument was not, however, definitively banished from the city; instead, the 'father of the proletariat' has been relocated to a quiet corner of the grounds of Narva's German castle, where he stands somewhat incongruously alongside a recently mounted plaque commemorating Finnish fighters who helped to liberate the city from the Bolsheviks in 1919. This kind of approach presents an image of Narva as a borderland with a complex hybrid identity that is neither 'Western' nor 'Eastern', neither Estonian nor Russian, but something in-between. This can be illustrated not least by the fact that Lenin's former plinth on Peter's Square still remains unoccupied. Seen from the standpoint of those who would seek to 'nationalize' political space, this symbolizes the 'empty' space at the heart of

the city that still needs to be filled - this, at least, was the view put forward by one local journalist in the fall of 2000 (Solodov [2000](#)).

Elsewhere in Estonia, the most prominent symbols of communist power such as statues of Lenin and other Soviet leaders were quickly removed in the aftermath of independence; however, more than a hundred Soviet-era monuments to the Great Patriotic War were left in place. These monuments had been erected as markers of Soviet power in Estonia, and yet at the same time they served as memorials to the fallen. By leaving them intact, the state implicitly continued to recognize this latter function. This can be seen clearly in the case of the 'Bronze Soldier': previously entitled the 'Monument to the Liberators of Tallinn', this monument had its Soviet-era plaques referring to 'liberation' removed, and was reframed simply as a memorial to 'the fallen of World War II'. The Bronze Soldier, of course, was always going to be particularly contentious, given its central location and its proximity both to the seat of government power and to the country's main Lutheran cathedral. It is perhaps also significant that there has until 2008 been no Estonian Freedom Monument in central Tallinn that might have served as a countervailing symbol of Estonian statehood.⁴ Nevertheless, the site continued to function as an unofficial site of memory for those residents of Tallinn who remembered the end of the War as liberation from fascism rather than renewed occupation. Until 2005 the annual gatherings at the monument on 9 May did not form the object of great controversy. Most Estonians, it seemed, had learned to ignore the monument; no doubt many Russians had, too.

Outwardly, at least, the past did not seem to matter that much to most residents of Estonia during the decade or so after independence. This was a period when the Estonian and Russian-speaking communities appeared to converge in many important respects: there was a steady decrease in the number of people without Estonian citizenship, while legislative amendments adopted as part of the EU accession process ensured that citizenship will cease to be an issue altogether in the medium term; knowledge of the Estonian language amongst Russian-speakers - at least those living in Tallinn - increased enormously; the state, meanwhile, adopted a new strategy for 'multicultural integration' designed to enable residents of non-titular nationality to preserve their own language and aspects of their own distinct culture and heritage whilst integrating into the polity and the Estonian 'common core'. This strategy also recognized that integration was not a one-way process affecting one community, but a matter for society as a whole (Lauristin & Heidmets [2002](#)); finally, *New Baltic Barometer* surveys taken during 1993-2004 showed that despite obvious discontent over the citizenship law and perceptions of discrimination, a growing number of Russian-speakers expressed approval of the economic and also the political performance of the Estonian Republic, suggesting a trend towards pragmatic adaptation to the new state order (Smith, D. [1998](#); Kolstø [2002](#); Budryte [2005](#); Ehin [2007](#)).

Highlighting these trends, however, should not be taken to imply the emergence of an integrated political community within Estonia during this period. In many important respects, Estonian and Russian-speakers have continued to inhabit different social worlds which coexist somewhat uneasily alongside one another. The *New Baltic Barometer* survey data from 2004 found that support for the political community remained ethnically based, with most Russian-speakers in Estonia (and

Latvia) declaring immediate locality and Russia as the primary bases for self-identification. Commenting on these results, Piret Ehin (2007, p. 15) notes that this identification with Russia

should not be regarded as politically alarming *a priori*, provided this attachment is primarily cultural-ethnic in nature. However, this also means that regime allegiance of Baltic Russians depends, to a larger extent, on the Baltic regimes' ability to perform and deliver: there are no bonds of cultural-ethnic loyalty to fall back on when times get tough.

Research carried out by Estonian social scientists since 2004 would seem to suggest that things have indeed been getting tougher in recent times. Research conducted by sociologists from Tartu University over the past two years, for instance, points to a widening socio-economic gap between Estonian and Russian-speakers, with respondents from the latter category expressing higher levels of dissatisfaction with their economic status as well as a perception that they are disadvantaged in terms of access to jobs and education and of participation in political life.⁵ In this respect, the events of 2006-2007 testify to the emergence, amongst a *younger* generation of Russian-speakers, of a protest identity that has centered on the symbols of the Soviet past, with the 'Bronze Soldier' becoming a particular focus. This development has challenged previous understandings which emphasized issues of citizenship and language and saw integration as mainly a question of generational replacement in what was fast becoming a dynamic and forward-looking 'tiger economy'. The events of April 2007 in particular suggest that Estonia, beacon of the 'New Europe', is facing the very 'Old European' challenge of how to diminish feelings of exclusion amongst second- and third-generation immigrant youth. This realization was conveyed neatly in a newspaper article by Tartu University Professor Eiki Berg (2007), who stated that: 'What shouldn't have happened has happened: burning kiosks, upturned cars, windows kicked in ... The images are not from East Jerusalem, Jakarta's "Chinatown" or the Banlieues of Paris, but from the heart of Tallinn ... in a state that is marketed as the purveyor of innovative solutions'.

The same research has found that most Estonians remain wary of seeing greater participation by Russian-speakers within economic and political life. This testifies to the continued feelings of insecurity (one might say existential anxiety) arising from the experience of Soviet occupation, which have persisted despite Estonia's entry to the European Union and NATO.⁶ In some respects, these insecurities may even have increased over the past decade in the face of rapid economic and political change. Jüri Böhm, the self-styled 'Estonian nationalist' whose actions prompted scuffles at the site of the Bronze Soldier on 9 May 2006, stated that his avowed aim was to 'awaken the Estonian people from the dream of well-being where we fell after regaining independence'.⁷ As Dovile Budryte (2005, pp. 3-10) has suggested, the ongoing promotion of a minority rights discourse by the EU and its cognate international organizations has also evoked resentment and unease amongst more nationally minded Estonians, who portray external conditionality in this area as something threatening to the political and cultural hegemony of the Estonian nation within the state.

Also relevant in this context has been 'growing international pressure to face up to uncomfortable questions of the past and to research past crimes against humanity also if committed by one's own countrymen' (Onken [2007b](#), p. 110). The Estonian state has responded to these calls to 'democratize' the discussion of history, most notably through the establishment in 1998 of a Historical Commission charged with researching both totalitarian occupations of Estonia during 1940-1991. However, such pressure has also jarred with a still-dominant Estonian collective memory that emphasizes national victimhood at the hands of the Soviet regime and the heroism of those compatriots who resisted it by force of arms. This could be seen clearly in the Lihula events of 2004, which marked the opening battle in the 'War of Monuments'. In August of that year, veterans' groups and prominent 'dissident' Estonian nationalists erected a stone tablet in the western town of Lihula, dedicated 'to Estonian men who fought in 1940-1945 against Bolshevism and for the restoration of Estonian independence'. In flagrant disregard of the taboo in Western Europe against display of Nazi symbols, the stone carried the image of a soldier, machine pistol aloft, wearing the uniform of the Estonian SS Legion. In the face of predictable international condemnation, the Estonian government of the day ordered the monument to be removed. The ill-conceived police operation to carry out this order on 2 September 2004 provoked clashes with local residents, sparking a political storm that contributed to the fall of Prime Minister Juhan Parts several months later.

The groups behind the Lihula stone can hardly be seen as representative of ethnic Estonian opinion as a whole. For some commentators, the events of September 2004 and their aftermath were occasioned first and foremost by governmental ineptitude and high-handedness in effectuating the removal, and by the broader problematic relationship between state and society.⁸ For all this, there was undoubted resentment at the government's perceived alacrity in bowing to external pressure. There was also a predictable response to the official justification given by Prime Minister Parts, who argued that there was no room in Estonia for symbols glorifying totalitarianism. This led critics of the government to argue that the same logic should now be applied to remaining Soviet monuments. The latter - including the Bronze Soldier - were subjected to a wave of attacks following the events at Lihula, which in turn prompted retaliation against monuments to the Estonian independence drive and German military cemeteries within Estonia.

The Lihula episode was, not least, a propaganda gift to official commentators in Russia, who have long made it clear that they will brook no alternative interpretations of the Soviet Union's role in the events of 1939-1945. Estonian efforts to challenge the narrative of Soviet (read Russian) liberation of the Baltic (and the wider Europe) have therefore been characterized as expressions of sympathy for 'fascism', as part of a campaign designed to isolate the Baltic governments within the international political architecture of the new Europe. Although largely unsuccessful, Russia's efforts in this regard simply reinforce continued suspicion and fear of the 'Eastern Neighbor'. These have only grown during the Putin era, which has been synonymous with the reassertion of centralized political control and a renewed international assertiveness on the back of soaring energy revenues. As such, the war of words with Moscow has shown no signs of abating since 2004; indeed, it has actually intensified, and it has begun to focus more and more on the past.

As several commentators have noted in recent times, the victory over Nazism in 1941-1945 has arguably become the main unifying factor within Russian national identity and 'the constitutive story defining the Russian position in Europe' (Lehti [2007](#), p. 141).⁹ In this regard, as Olga Brednikova ([2007](#), p. 62) observes, 'from the whole of Soviet history, only the period of the Great War ... makes it possible to find "heroes free from doubt"'. As space for public discussion has receded ever further in Russia, we have seen an ever greater sacralization of the Great Patriotic War within Russian political discourse and, correspondingly, a decreasing likelihood that the Russian political elite will ever acknowledge the repression that the Soviet Union perpetrated against the peoples of the Baltic states and the other central and east European countries during and after World War II. The contemporaneous entry of the Baltic states to NATO and the EU has led some sections of the political elite in these countries to 'abandon their diffidence' (Bult [2006](#), p. 165) towards Russia and challenge the dominant Western 'memory regime', by insisting more loudly that the crimes of the Soviet regime in eastern Europe should be placed on a par with those committed by the Nazis (Onken [2007a](#)).

Pointing to the links between the defenders of Soviet monuments in Estonia and Russia-based forces such as the pro-Putin youth group *Nashi*, many Estonian commentators have argued that external manipulation lay at the root of what happened in April 2007. Whatever view one takes on the origin of these events, the increasingly bitter discursive conflict between Estonia and Russia from 2004 could hardly fail to have affected inter-communal relations within Estonia. One obvious factor in this regard has been the lack of a common media space linking Estonian and Russian-speakers; while the overwhelming majority of Estonia's Russian-speakers have not developed an active political affiliation with Russia during the post-Soviet era, many nevertheless continue to receive most of their news from Russia. One key event linking the external and internal spheres was the controversy surrounding the 9 May 2005 commemoration in Moscow, which led to heightened public discussion - though not necessarily constructive debate - over the events of World War II (Onken [2007a](#)). Not least for the purposes of the present discussion, the anniversary focused attention on the 'Bronze Soldier' - already firmly in the public eye following the Lihula events - as a continued locus for commemoration in Tallinn. In the changed socio-political context of 2005-2006, this monument in the heart of Tallinn was 're-Sovietized': it ceased to be a simple memorial to the dead and was again politicized as a symbol of occupation/liberation.¹⁰

The 'War of Monuments', however, began as a series of small-scale public demonstrations by what could rightly be termed radical fringe groups. Polls undertaken during the 12 months prior to April 2007 showed that public opinion more broadly was far from ethnically polarized over the question of the Bronze Soldier: the overwhelming majority of Russian-speakers wanted the monument left *in situ*; the ethnic Estonian majority, however, was almost evenly divided over whether it should stay or it should go. The fact that the dispute culminated in a large-scale riot and an international incident can be attributed partly to external interventions by Russia in the dispute, but also in no small measure to the Estonian electoral campaign of 2006-2007. In this context, those voices calling for a calm and constructive debate over the past were drowned out by those of the main parties, who were determined to use the issue for political ends. In this regard, the Reform Party (*Reformierakond*) vied

with a revived Fatherland League (*Isamaaliit*) to present itself as the embodiment of national coherence and order in the face of a purported external threat. The Centre Party (*Keskerakond*), meanwhile, sought to exploit Russian-speakers' sensibilities over the issue. Opinion polls during the campaign showed that most voters did not see the monument as a burning issue; however, by the time the election was settled, the new government had painted itself into a corner over this question.

The crisis that broke in late April 2007 briefly turned the eyes of the world upon Estonia. Attention, however, quickly shifted to Moscow. The Kremlin's heated response to the crisis and the many misrepresentations of events by the state-controlled Russian media further exacerbated tensions in Estonia around the Bronze Soldier issue. However, the blockade of the Estonian Embassy and the attacks on Estonian (and Swedish) diplomatic representatives ensured that the controversy was framed more as an issue in EU-Russia relations than a domestic affair of Estonia as such. If the British press coverage of the issue is anything to go by, the international media showed far greater understanding for the Estonian position than it did for the Russian.

The international fallout for Estonia was thus far less dramatic than some had predicted. The longer-term ramifications of the crisis for Estonian society, however, remain to be seen. In domestic terms, the immediate effect of the April events was to polarize public opinion along ethnic lines, but there have since been indications that the profound sense of shock engendered by the nights of violence in April 2007 has served to engender a more meaningful public debate over how to resolve the continued challenges of 'multicultural integration'. Yet the question remains as to how best within this context to tackle the issue of divergent collective memories and commemorative practices. Logically, a multicultural approach to society-building would not seek to achieve 'some elusive thick social consensus in which one narrative of the past is enthroned', but rather a state of 'negotiated memory' based on mutual critical engagement with the past and greater tolerance of different viewpoints (Müller [2004](#), p. 33).

In the course of the 1990s and again during the long maturation of the Bronze Soldier crisis during 2006-2007, a number of Estonian commentators - including the current President Toomas Hendrik Ilves - argued that rather than removing the statue, the surrounding space should be reconfigured and transformed into a site of memory where anyone - Russian or Estonian - could go to commemorate the events of World War II. Such proposals would seem to represent the kind of 'innovative approach' of which Eiki Berg ([2007](#)) has spoken and which has indeed been applied in the case of the Maarjamäe memorial complex, now transformed into a multi-layered site of memory.¹¹ Although the setting of the Bronze Soldier was very different, the failure to consider something comparable in the case of this monument strikes one as an opportunity lost as far as fostering a more constructive approach to the past is concerned. In the event, the degree of contention that came to surround the monument during 2006-2007 was such as to render relocation the only viable option.

The removal of the Bronze Soldier has not depoliticized the former site of the statue on Tõnismägi in central Tallinn. However, the statue itself - now reconfigured as a more nonspecific monument to the Unknown Soldier - appears to have quietly re-attained its status as a memorial to the fallen within its new setting of the Armed Forces Cemetery, where it stands amidst the graves of a

multiplicity of different combatants, reflecting Estonia's complicated history. The wreath-laying by the Estonian Prime Minister and Defence Minister at the newly relocated Bronze Soldier on 8 May 2007 appeared at the time to be an important symbolic gesture of reconciliation. This gesture was repeated in 2008, albeit with a lower degree of public visibility. In the meantime, public monuments and commemorative practices have provided the focus for an ongoing war of words between the Estonian government and the numerous social scientists who criticized the removal of the monument in April 2007. The latter - whose arguments the government characterizes as unpatriotic and detrimental to state security - have now focused their ire on the 20-meter-high 'Freedom Cross' that will be erected on Tallinn's main square in November 2008 to mark the 90th anniversary of the start of Estonia's War of Independence against Soviet Russia. The inauguration of this monument will enshrine a heroic narrative of Estonian nationhood, while also symbolically marking the shift in power in the Estonian capital after 1991.

The state and the political elite have a considerable responsibility and a key role to play in terms of fostering an open and critical discussion of the past. Such a process, however, would also logically seek to engage a wide range of societal actors and individuals. As sociologists from Tartu University have asserted over the past year and a half, negotiation of the past needs to be embedded within broader measures to prevent ethnic segregation, foster tolerance, dialogue and interaction between communities and promote civil society development more generally. No-one can pretend that this will be an easy process. It is made all the more complicated by the international dimension to the 'memory politics' equation, which, as this essay has sought to demonstrate, locks the Estonian state and its constituent nationalities into a dynamic interrelationship with the Russian Federation and Estonia's new Western partners within the EU and NATO.¹² However, only by adopting this approach will it become possible to focus attention away from the divided past towards the common future of which Estonia's leaders have spoken on a number of occasions since April 2007.

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Notes

1. The title of this essay is a translation of the title of a *Postimees* editorial from 3 August 2007 entitled 'Häda kivide päras'. This is a play on 'Häda mõistete päras', which the Estonian title of Aleksandr Griboyedov's 1820s satirical comedy '*Gore ot uma*', known in English as 'Woe from Wit'.

2. On the relationship between legal continuity and post-Soviet realities, see Smith, D. J. (2001). With regard to the Supreme Council declaration of 20 August 1991 that paved the way for international

recognition of independence, Marju Lauristin ([1996](#), p. 81) has spoken of a compromise 'third way' that guaranteed the legal continuity of statehood and yet allowed for the possibility of radical renewal according to the democratic principles of the late twentieth century. Subsequent accounts (Smith, G. 1994; Pettai & Hallik [2002](#)) have pointed to continued practices of ethnic control during the ensuing decade and a half, although Western governments and international organizations have been instrumental in the adoption of new measures designed to facilitate the legal-political and linguistic integration of the large non-citizen population.

3. This phrase is taken from a more general discussion of identities across the FSU in Smith, G. *et al.* ([1998](#), p. 26).

4. This offers a further illustration of how the form and context (physical, temporal, political) of a monument is intrinsic to its ascribed meaning: for instance, it is interesting that the more abstract and far more peripheral Soviet monument at Maarjamäe on the outskirts of Tallinn has not aroused a similar degree of contention, despite being far larger than the Bronze Soldier. In this regard, one might say the same about the immense Soviet war memorial in Riga, which is quite far removed from the historic center of the Latvian capital. To extend this analogy further, it is perhaps also significant that central Riga retained the inter-war Freedom Monument as a symbol of Latvian statehood and national liberation.

5. This conclusion is based on data from the 2005 *MeeMa* survey, and subsequent survey data from 2006 and 2007, provided by Professor Marju Lauristin of Tartu University. See also Triin Vihalemm and Veronika Kalmus, 'Conflict, Citizenship and Civil Society' and Külliki Korts 'Post-Communist social transformation and changes in the attitudes among ethnic Estonians and Russians', both papers presented at the 8th Annual Conference of the European Sociological Association, Glasgow, 3-6 September 2007.

6. Vihalemm & Kalmus, 'Conflict, Citizenship and Civil Society'.

7. From an interview on the DVD of the Estonian *Kanal 2* documentary film 'Pronksöö: vene mass Tallinnas', 2007.

8. For a full discussion of the Lihula events and their link to debates over the Bronze Soldier, see Feest ([2007](#)).

9. See also 'Politoloog Andres Kasekamp: Eesti on praegu väga haavatav', *Postimees*, 27 April 2007.

10. Prime Minister Andrus Ansip stated this quite explicitly during the run-up to the election. As was noted in a the 3 August *Postimees* editorial, one of the saddest features of the 'War on Monuments'

was that war memorials had lost their function of commemorating the dead and become objects of contestation. 'Juhtkiri: häda kivide pärast', *Postimees*, 3 August 2007.

11. The Soviet memorial at Maarjamäe commemorates the Soviet army units that took Tallinn in 1944, and was constructed around the 50th anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Alongside it one now finds memorials to the Estonians who defended Tallinn against Soviet forces in 1944, and a restored cemetery that contains the graves of Germans and Estonians who perished during 1939-1945 but which is dedicated to the 'victims of all wars', as well as the soldiers in question. The neighboring Estonian History Museum complex will also soon become home to a new sculpture park that displays previously dismantled Soviet monuments, along the lines of Lithuania's *Grūto Parkas* and an analogous museum in Hungary.

12. A number of scholars have explored this relationship in recent times. See, for instance: Smith, D. J. (2002) and the review of more recent work by Pettai (2006). For the best exploration of 'memory politics' within this framework, see Onken (2007a).

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