

Regimes and Rebels

Aija Helena Brzozovskis
Bachelor of Design Studies,
Master of Media Production (Hons)

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Creative Industries Faculty, Queensland University of Technology.

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Abstract

The end of the recent Communist occupation of the many countries bordering Russia marked an end to the tyranny of illegal and forced annexation. Amid these countries are my parents' homelands, the small Baltic nations of Latvia and Estonia. Their occupation contravenes many of the numerous Articles listed by The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (2008), constituting many acts of violation.¹

As a filmmaker, I was unusually incognizant of these events, despite my relationship to them. My parents never discussed the war, while during the ensuing Communist era, information was conspicuously absent. However, this lack of knowledge provided the incentive that compelled a journey of discovery that resulted in the making of *Regimes and Rebels*.

This Masters project is presented in two parts. The film equates to 70% of the project (52 minutes in length), whilst the exegesis represents the remaining 30%. The film is a 'human rights', 'video diary' styled documentary film about the Communist occupation of my parents' homelands, Latvia and Estonia, and the resonating effect of the occupation on our family living in Australia and family still living in the homelands.

The production of the video diary is contextualised by this exegesis, which concurrently discusses the burgeoning video diary format as the basis for making a 'human rights' documentary film. A discussion about the latter genre of documentary film ensues, encompassing modes of representation, followed by various issues related to production including: issues of aesthetics, styles, digital media, lack of evidence and subjectivity analogous with both filmmaker and audience. Next, work by other filmmakers in the 'human rights' genre, linked to the proliferation of Communism in Europe, is discussed and analysed in terms of production and modes of representation. The exegesis ends with my experience as filmmaker and an analysis of factors that arose in making *Regimes and Rebels*.

¹ See Appendix C

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Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the exegesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the exegesis itself.

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(Aija Brzozovskis)

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Preface

My parents decided not to concern their young children with the baggage of their wartime experiences in Europe. Discussion about family still living behind the iron curtain was selective, occurring mostly out of earshot, behind closed doors.

Once, I witnessed a momentary lapse in guard by my father. There was reactive shock, followed by anger and grief, on receiving a letter about his brother's death in Communist occupied Latvia; but composure returned and we kids were scuttled away, as the door was hastily closed behind us.

Government policy of assimilation also encouraged my parents to break ties with their past. Consequently, although Latvian was my first language, English gradually replaced it, synchronous with learning it at school. My parents subsequently dropped their native language at home, using it only when visiting friends they'd made coming to Australia on the migrant boat 'Goya'. Thus I grew up knowing little of my parents' past, or the plight of their homelands and relatives.

Many years passed before I embarked on study at university, undertaking a Bachelor of Design Studies, majoring in 3D design followed by a coursework Masters, with honours, in Media Production, a process which resulted in my electing to study documentary film.

On searching for a theme for my first film, my supervisor suggested an exploration of my ethnicity. As I knew little about it, I was concerned about having insufficient material of interest. My mother agreed to being interviewed on camera. This was a 'jaw-dropping' experience - suddenly I was hearing stories I had never heard before. The gaps in knowledge about my parents' homelands, their experiences and those of relatives abroad, were now being filled with unexpected information.

This information awakened my interest in the issues faced by these countries, in the aftermath of Communist occupation. On commencing this Research Masters therefore, I was compelled to take this study a step further and explore the themes my first documentary film uncovered, by visiting these countries.

On visiting my parents' homelands, only small reminders of the Communist occupation remained. The decaying old Communist units seemed an appropriate symbol of the regime, with their lack of aesthetic appeal and bleak appearance compared to some of the grand old architecture.

Facing the gravesite of my father's brother, Raimond, I was struck by his youthful age at death - thirty. In postproduction, looking at his gaunt face in his wedding photo, following his return from a hard labour camp. the family resemblances became apparent - I could see I was closely related to him. Repetition during the editing process was a constant reminder of the couple's poor physical condition and emphasised the fact that they were unable to conceive for a long time after being released from hard labour camps. I have felt a little of my father's grief and anger, and although I sought details of Raymond's plight, this did not transpire, yet I felt reprieved of the burden of facing the details of the planned accident that killed his brother. It would be very frustrating to try to reconcile atrocity without any promise of justice.

My mother's twin sister in Estonia, a lifetime member of the Estonian Women's Defence Corps, introduced me to neighbours and friends, who further commented on life in the former totalitarian regime. Having grown up in Australia, and having owned property, it was difficult to comprehend the experience of forced deportation at gunpoint, while my family home was confiscated by the regime; returning a decade later to find my home is occupied by others and no longer belongs to me, while I have been stigmatised by propaganda and made an undesirable outsider in my own country.

Introduction

Background and Aim

My ethnicity and the troubled background which brought my parents to Australia as post-war displaced persons, has proven to be a resource for documentary story telling. Due to the process of making a documentary film, I have only recently discovered their history. Only my mother is still living and has been glad for the opportunity to help tell the story of her homeland's worst fifty years of history.

The aim of the research project is to produce a video diary styled documentary film and associated exegesis which would inform Australians and expatriates of Latvia and Estonia alike, about the personal actuality of events in these countries, as lived by the families who were irreversibly affected by forced Communist occupation.

Exploration of this theme was achieved through the personal perspective of my parents' family and relatives affected by the occupation. My ethnicity as filmmaker became the subjective filter driving the conceptual process of telling these stories, as propounded by Rabiger (2003, p. 214).

Research Questions

Making the video diary has generated the following questions:

- What are the key issues/problems related to making human rights documentaries?
- How has a selection of other filmmakers dealt with such problems, in the context of human rights documentaries relating to European Communist regimes?
- How did I, as a filmmaker, deal with such problems in making the film "Regimes and Rebels"?

Methodology

The research process was practice led. Gray (in Mafe and Brown 2006) describes practice-led research as being "initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners". The process of making the documentary film *Regimes and Rebels* engendered research, described in this exegesis, thus the project is by definition practice-led research in documentary filmmaking.

Burns (in Curran Bernard 2004, p. 202) articulates my experience as filmmaker and editor of *Regimes and Rebels*, explaining how film editing is "in a sense", "writing - not with words and ideas alone, but with words and ideas, images, interview moments, spoken material, archival newsreel footage, sound,

music". Editing was accompanied by scriptwriting. The process was iterative, the film creating the script, and the script creating the film. Although back-story and themes were conceptualised, structure was only "hazily present" "at the outset", and evolved as an "interplay of many considerations", the film changing "drastically", "during editing" (Rabiger 2003, p. 215).

Burns (in Curran Bernard 2004, p. 202) proposes that an "arc of change" drives storytelling, in that "a value is posited, you care about something, some problem is put in its path, and it develops and transforms over time". The 'value posited' in *Regimes and Rebels* is the effect of Soviet occupation on one family living in Australia, Latvia and Estonia. The 'caring' is about the suffering the occupation caused to family members, while the 'problem' is how to reveal the truth. The 'truth' was discovered through the voices of the victims of the occupation. This was achieved through interview, in a natural conversational style, where the participants were allowed freedom of expression - the antithesis of Communist dogma. Plans for the film were 'transformed' by unanticipated opportunities and 'evolved' into a 'video-diary' format. A "feeling of shared experience" became "the essence of the film", as described by Charlotte, on "The Documentary Blog" (2010), commenting on "The Video Diary of Ricardo Lopez". The "user generated" style, also coined by Charlotte, similarly represents the style interpreted through *Regimes and Rebels*, relinquishing central authorship and adopting an alternative position to traditional filmmaking styles that pivot on central authorship. Charlotte aptly ascribes "a greater feeling of intimacy and immediacy" to the "Video Diary" style of filming, fitting into "the pace, uncertainty and excitement of the day".

During this process, significant matters emerged and are discussed in this exegesis that accompanies the video diary. Such matters relate to the emergence of 'human rights' documentaries, and the issues and problems related to making such documentaries.

Synopsis of Exegesis and Film

The film equates to 70% of the project (52 minutes in length) whilst the exegesis (approximately 10,000 words plus appendices) represents the remaining 30%. Together these comprise the Masters project.

The film, entitled *Regimes and Rebels* is a 'Video Diary' styled 'human rights' documentary film about the Communist occupation of my parents' homelands, Latvia and Estonia, and the resonating effect of the occupation on our family living in Australia and family still living in the homelands. A more detailed synopsis can be found in Section 3.3.

Following this introduction, the exegesis is structured into four sections. Section One discusses the 'Video Diary' as part of the 'video art canon' in which *Regimes and Rebels* is located. Section Two deals with the emerging genre of 'human rights' documentary film. This genre gives a general context for *Regimes and Rebels* and engenders its own particular problems and characteristics, subsequently discussed. Section Three discusses other filmmakers in the 'human rights' genre, linked to the proliferation of Communism in Europe, from the Russian avant-garde filmmakers recording the Russian revolution, to today's post-communism filmmakers, recalling aspects of the Communist era. Their stylistic representation is analysed in terms of methodology and mode of representation, and informs the successive analysis of *Regimes and Rebels*. This analysis ensues in Section Four, wherein my experience as filmmaker and issues generated by making *Regimes and Rebels*, are described and analysed.

Section 1

Overview of the Video Diary styled documentary film

1.1 Defining the 'Video Diary'

An aspect of the technological and information revolutions is the advent of the 'video diary'. Disseminated predominantly on the Internet, it is regarded as belonging to a new genre of "video art canon", blurring the "boundaries between 'high' and 'low video cultures'" (Tamblyn in Zalis 2003, p. 85). The "video art canon", explains Tamblyn, is comprised of the work of "independent media artists who use small-format technology" and "home video genres, such as diaries" etc, opening up "*new spaces for cultural intervention* in everyday life." Stella Bruzzi (2006, p. 122) reiterates Tamblyn's observation by describing technological advances that have enabled experimentation with "multi-skilling", noting that it creates "opportunity for greater intimacy and immediacy". Leah Betancourt of the Star Tribune (2009, p. 2) describes the 'video diary' as a 'video blog' or 'vlog', Betancourt (2009, p. 4) asserts that internet video "puts people on equal footing versus the top-down communication of broadcast media and it allows for direct talkback from the audience".

1.2 'Video Diary' as 'democratisation of video'

"Innovative self representation" contributes to the "democratisation of video" claims Tamblyn in Zalis (2003, p. 85). Zalis maintains that "the Web, like video, expedites the production of social space, while at the same time accommodating personal storytellers". The web has spawned "innovative self representation" in many forms, including the 'video diary' format. A search on the Web yields a vast variety of video diaries such as travelogues, entertainer's itineraries, personal events diaries, etc. The video diary's inherent freedom of expression and unrestricted format creates a suitable vehicle for a foray into an unknown locality with an evolving agenda. It is a form of 'reality' documentary that avoids the traditional authorial control of "top-down broadcast media" and gives voice to the participants in a version of 'real life'.

Presenting reality, rather than a controlled version of reality, is the basis of many reality television shows and docu-soaps. Docu-soaps, claims Bruzzi (2006, p. 130) arguably failed due to "questions over their *honesty*". "Underlying the issue of entertainment", adds Bruzzi, "is the spectre of falsification", Bruzzi qualifies her statement with a quote from the journalist Allison Pearson, who claims "documentary aspires to tell us something about the human condition. The docu-soap, by

contrast tells us something only about the condition of human beings who know they're on television". Hogarth (2006, p. 46) observes that community "self representation" in documentary films is compromised by factors that undermine an honest portrayal. He states that "documentary portraits of local everyday life - particularly of the docu-soap variety - sometimes adhere to narrative and visual plans designed half a world away". By contrast, the 'video diary' style responds to the sensitivity of impromptu filming without the type of external control that would compromise its honesty or believability.

1.3 'Video Diary' and parody

Added to the above is the phenomenon of "mockumentary" that "teases the real by using familiar cinematic tropes to masquerade as authentic documentary" (Anderson 2009, p. 1). However the "familiar cinematic tropes" are less obvious in "other forms of cinematic realism, such as Italian Neorealism, the French New Wave, the Danish Dogme 95, and Casavettes' impromptu direction", claims Anderson (2009, p. 2), as they "elicit an equal sense of believability, breaking down the viewer's critical stance with their apparent unrehearsed scenes, raw emotional content, and haphazard camera work". Doherty (2003, p. 1) similarly cites the "stiff formal wear of the bombastic Hollywood newsreel" as being responsible for the believability of Orson Welles' "fake screen obituary in *Citizen Kane* (1941)". In effect, structuring a documentary film in a familiar format provides the ingredients for parody. By contrast, the 'video diary' format provides scope for an "unrehearsed" view of reality with less scope for parody.

1.4 'Video Diary' and forms of documentary

Bruzzi (2006, p. 3) describes Nichols work as the exemplar on documentary analysis, yet describes his "compartmentalisation of documentary" as "too reductive", due to "increased documentary heterogeneity and complexity". Imposing "this 'family tree' on documentary history" creates "a central canon of films that is exclusive and conservative", adds Bruzzi (2006, p. 4). 'Video diary' styled documentary films are heterogenous, as discussed in the preceding points, and their complexity defies compartmentalisation within Nichols' modes. The "conservative central canon" resulting from reductionist strategies equate to the "top down" broadcast model mentioned earlier, thus the 'video diary' by default falls outside of this category. Bruzzi's (2006, p. 4) statement aptly expresses the theoretical status of the 'Video Diary' format, asserting "reality does exist and ... can be represented without such a representation either invalidating or having to be synonymous with the reality that preceded it".

Section 2

Overview of the human rights documentary

2.1 Defining 'human rights' documentaries

Alicia Kemmitt (2006, p. 27) identifies “social justice as fundamental to the documentary form”, alluding to the work of documentary film pioneer “John Grierson (1898-1972)” who was the first to bring attention to social problems “through an intimate portrayal of the subject’s point of view”. Scholars have defined these films as “social documents” or “social documentaries” (Kemmitt 2006, pp. 26, 30). Daan Bronkhorst (2004), in his article on “the human rights film”, claims “such films have been made during many decades of moving pictures history”. He refers to both documentary and cinematic styles inspired by the devastation of various wars since Grierson’s work including the Second World War and the Vietnam war, until the present preoccupation with the war in Iraq, such as *The Battle of the Somme* (1916), *Guernica* (1950) on the Spanish Civil War, *Nuit et Broillard* (1955) which was the first major documentary on Nazi concentration camps and *Hearts and Minds* (1974) on the Vietnam War. More recently however, a distinct ‘human rights’ documentary genre has emerged, made possible by the “digital camera and the home computer” (Burres in Miller 2002, p. 37) and principally disseminated through organized human rights film festivals.

Information about human rights documentary films and associated festivals is predominantly disseminated by writers in the United States, where recent events have created widespread interest. In July 2003, a brochure on fourteen human rights film festivals was produced by the Amnesty International Film Festival of Amsterdam (Bronkhorst 2004). Significantly, The Human Rights Watch International Film Festival began with “a group of activists and lawyers who were concerned about the censorship and harassment faced by their friends and colleagues in the Soviet Union” (Miller 2002, p. 36) and founded Human Rights Watch in 1978. “In 1988, Human Rights Watch organized film screenings to coincide with its 10th anniversary, adds Miller, and out of that celebration, the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival was born”. “Now in its 19th year”, claims Meding, (2008) it “is an important annual event for the NY community” and selected films “can be viewed on local public television stations”.

The United Nations also sponsors a significant film festival, focusing on human rights documentaries. The United Nations Association Film Festival (UNAFF) eleventh film festival was screened in the United States in late 2008. Their mission statement (“Mission” 2008) claims “UNAFF screened some

of the most awarded and talked about documentaries in the industry including five that went on to win Academy Awards”. The success of UNAFF films, it seems, correlates with its selection criteria, “over four hundred and forty submissions from all over the world have been carefully reviewed for the 11th annual UNAFF. The jury has selected forty-one films to be presented at this year’s festival” (“Mission” 2008).

The first Australian human rights film festival took place in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth in December 2007. HRAFF (Human Rights Arts and Film Festival) showcased a broad range of human rights issues, together with the arts and music, reflecting growing awareness and concern in the Australian community. It was “the brainchild of Australian Volunteers International Youth Volunteer Janna Hayes and HRAFF coordinators Evelyn Tadros and Naziath Mantoo” (Australian Council for International Development 2007[article ‘Rights. Camera. Action!’, second paragraph).

Tadros (quoted in Lobo 2008) has spoken of the global precedent that spawned the first ‘human rights’ film festival in Australia:

I discovered that human rights festivals had taken place all over the world, including New York, Paris, London and Auckland but never before in Australia. So I just decided to jump in the deep end and try to organise Australia’s first ever Human Rights Arts and Film Festival.

In the article ‘Gay rights are human rights’ by Canvas magazine on their website (2009)², Tadros is cited as saying “the festival was born out of a growing awareness of Australia’s low standing on human rights worldwide” and the festival “aims to create a ‘common dialogue’ between a broad range of human rights issues; from religious persecution through to the plight of asylum seekers, from violence towards women through to the environmental demands of global warming on poorer nations”. The last paragraph in this article also refers to “the support of a number of high profile patrons”, including the “Australian High Court Justice, the Honourable Michael Kirby, who denounced Australia’s *poor record in responding to issues of human rights*”, and the film critic, Margaret Pomeranz, who states that “human rights is something that goes to the core of who we are as human beings”, while “any initiative that reminds us of our obligations to advance the cause of human rights has to be a good thing”.

2.2 The forms of 'human rights' documentaries

The production of 'human rights' documentary films varies considerably, analogous with the filmmaker's philosophy, methodology, level of skill, mode of production, and so on. Nichols (2001, p. 99) describes each documentary as having "its own distinct voice". "Like every speaking voice, every cinematic voice has a style or 'grain' all its own that acts like a signature or fingerprint. It attests to the individuality of the filmmaker or director". Given such diversity, do any communal forms for a human rights documentary film exist?

If the 'human rights documentary film' is a developing genre, then Bronkhurst's March 2004 paper, attached to the Amnesty International Website maintains, in the 'summary', a need "to establish a basic level of 'theory' of the human rights film". At page 4, paragraph one, he posits four basic forms:

- *The explanatory documentary*: "films that document a particular situation, country or theme", using "impressive images, interviews, and commentary";
- *The denunciatory documentary*: films that focus on abuse and seek to relegate responsibility for that abuse;
- *The search documentary*: "in which the filmmaker is a detective taking the viewer on" an investigation; and
- *The testimonial documentary*: which makes little attempt at "explanation, denunciation or a plot".

Notably, the four basic forms that Bronkhurst identifies, interrelate with the major forms of documentary film as articulated by Nichols (2001, p.138). Nichols' modes of representation tender a level of theory for documentary film modes up until the 1980s, some of which relate to aspects of the 'human rights' films discussed in Section Two of this exegesis, however the 'human rights' documentary form is an emerging twenty-first century genre. From the 1920s Nichols identifies the Poetic documentary which "reassemble[s] fragments of the world poetically" and the Expository documentary that "directly addresses issues in the historical world". From the 1960s onwards there is Observational documentary that "observes things as they happen" and Participatory documentary which uses "archival film to retrieve history" and "interview or interact[ion] with subjects". Finally from the 1980s Nichols' describes the Reflexive documentary, which "question[s] the documentary form" and "defamiliarizes the other modes" and the Performative documentary that stresses "subjective aspects of a classically objective discourse".

Documentary film theory, however, is at the forefront of change. For example, the emerging documentary film form of 'animated' documentary has no specific level of theory yet. Future modes or forms of documentary film cannot be anticipated, as suggested by Nichols (1991, p. 12), in stating that "documentary as a concept or practice occupies no fixed territory ... and adopts no completely known taxonomy of forms, styles, or modes".

2.3 Key issues related to producing 'human rights' documentary films

The following discussion describes differing perspectives of stakeholders in the 'human rights' documentary film phenomenon, including the film festival director, critic, audience and filmmaker, delineating key issues pertaining to producing 'human rights' documentary films.

Aesthetics issues – filmic interest, not just worthy subject matter:

Human Rights Watch International Film Festival Director, Bruni Burres (Miller 2002, p. 36) explains that "film selection criteria are clear: [You] want to feature films that are strong pieces of art and [which] just compel you". Basoli (2002, p. 34) further quotes Burres as saying however, that "for many years... the festival's reputation was that of showing films that were good for you, but not good", receiving a "pat on the back", until in 1994, a prominent writer, "Georgia Brown writing in *The Village Voice*" commended these films as being "the best films you're going to see in New York all year". This aesthetics issue is therefore a public misconception or 'myth', claims Basoli, which was debunked by Brown's advocacy of 'human rights' films. This first 'myth' is part of a paradigm of four; the remaining three are contextualised below.

Issues of mood and intent – critical versus sentimental styles:

Ken Burns' documentary films are high budget, highly successful and highly debated. His film *Civil War* deals with the issue of slavery, in the context of American history, and is accordingly described as a 'human rights film' by Bronkhorst (2004). However, documentary filmmaker Jill Godmillow (1997, p. 85) contends "I have no use for any history written without a critical stance and a political purpose or for one that addresses a national community", describing Burns' documentary style as being "a kind of national therapy, producing a kind of mourning moment, a nostalgia for the past, in which one can find no useful questions or analyses that we could employ in today's realities". Godmillow (1997, p. 83) further advocates that documentaries ought to be edifiers, producing ideas, not merely inducing sentiment, and should provoke discussion about "oppositions" such as "good/evil, desirable/undesirable, normal/abnormal, and the big one, us/them".

Referring back to Basoli's four myths, mentioned above, his second myth takes on a related point: are 'human rights' films always sober, sombre affairs? "The second myth", claims Basoli (2002, p. 34) "was that Human Rights films are, by definition, heavy". "It's not like we've got the humour festival of the century, said Burres, but we do have some comedies". "Humour brought home powerful points", adds Basoli.

Digital media issues – production values:

Other key issues related to the production of ‘human rights’ documentary films pertain to the digital revolution. Problems with digital media are recorded by Larry Qualls and Daryl Chin (2004, p. 58), writing about the 2003 Tribeca Film Festival and The Human Rights Watch Film Festival, stating “there were often disappointments”, “the digital revolution continues apace, but the results were often thin, under dramatized, tedious; even good directors seemed to lose their bearings when working in digital video”. Qualls and Chin (2004, p. 58) were often disappointed by “sloppy digital work”.

Lack of historical evidence:

In the process of making a ‘human rights’ documentary film, a common problem is the lack of historical evidence pertaining to human rights abuses. Incriminating documents are often destroyed. Criminal activities are planned secretly, ‘behind closed doors’ where access is impossible. Unauthorised filming and photography typically attracts heavy penalties, hence evidence may be scant or non-existent. Given the foregoing, how do documentary filmmakers overcome the lack of evidence dilemma?

In dealing with the ‘evidence dilemma’, Rabinowitz (1993, p. 129) states how Lanzmann’s film *Shoah*, achieves “the making visible, the witnessing, of an event without witnesses”, as “the purpose of the extermination camp was not only to annihilate a people, but to erase the evidence of its existence, to deny the power of looking and of telling”. The BBC was a precursor to the type of stylistic representation demonstrated in this film, by conceiving its ‘authored’ documentary style.

Following the post war period of *expository* styled documentaries of compiled historical footage, a way of representing older histories became crucial - histories which pre-dated 1895 and the advent of cinematography. “To overcome this [last] obstacle,” Winston (2006, pp 32, 33) recounts how “the British developed the successful ‘authored’ account of older histories”, using “footage of historical sites and artefacts”, while “the host explains what it all means”. Winston describes how detailed records also enabled dramatic re-constructions, while more recently computer generated images have further enabled reconstruction of events. The BBC’s ‘authored account of older histories’ has provided impetus for a range of representational options, where film footage does not exist, as a prototype for documentary filmmakers faced with a dilemma of factual corroboration.

The film maker’s subjectivity:

John Corner (2006, p. 125) reviewing Michael Renov’s book *The Subject in Documentary* states that “[t]he idea of ‘subjectivity’ exerts a complicating pressure upon documentary theory and practice”. He continues that it poses “an obstacle to achieving... ‘objectivity’ of account... [h]owever,

recognition of the subjective as an inevitable and enriching dimension of documentary work rather than a problem to be contained by rigorous methods and technology is now the dominant attitude here”.

An example of subjectivity in human rights documentary filmmaking is described by Larry Qualls and Daryl Chin (2004, p.58), writing about the ‘2003 Tribeca Film Festival’. They reported many disappointing films, but “just when you were fed up”, “there was a work to confound expectations”, they exclaim, a film by Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Hugo Berkeley entitled *A Normal Life*. The filmmakers, explain Qualls and Chin, (2004, p. 58) were “two college graduates who went to Kosovo and soon found themselves recording the experiences of seven young people”, “who had grown up in the midst of civil war, ethnic cleansing and refugee displacement”.

The success of this film could be ascribed to the degree of subjectivity, being the “passionate inwardness” defined by Kierkegaard 1846 (in Hong & Hong (eds.) 1992) as experienced by the participants, particularly the interviewees, whose degree of emotional attachment to the ‘truth’ factors, was very intense.

Audience subjectivity and engagement:

Ideas about audience engagement with ‘human rights’ documentaries are populated by various ‘myths’, claims Basoli (2002, p. 34). The first two myths, that ‘human rights’ documentaries are “good for you but not good” and their content is “heavy”, are discussed above, addressing the belief that the subject matter lends itself to poor representation and only deals with heavy, sobering facts and atrocities. Such notions could act as a deterrent to audience engagement, but Basoli contends that these notions are merely ‘myths’, which collapse under analysis. Basoli then proceeds to challenge the remaining two ‘mythical notions’, which pretend to threaten audience engagement, concurrently touching on the *subjectivity* paradigm.

Subjectivity in American audiences is observed by the director of ‘The Human Rights Watch International Film Festival’, Bruni Burres (Basoli 2002, p. 34), who comments on the defining role of September 11th in politicising Americans. Burres asserts: “They are upset about the candy-coated news they’ve been getting from mainstream venues. They are hungrier for alternative films, videos, and news or information”. Conversely, in Australia, it is popularly conjectured that local audiences are not fuelled by the same hunger, being far removed from human rights abuses, but is this another ‘myth’ or popular misconception? According to Basoli, this notion constitutes his third myth, that “Human Rights films often amount to little more than a travelogue of human misery”, only happening “in faraway places (2002, p. 35). Basoli contradicts by pointing out that “several features [were] about

abuses in the United States”. Comparatively, in Australia, the HRAFF 2008 festival (Multicultural Arts Victoria website) screened several ‘local’ features about human rights issues, including the drama *The Nothing Men* and indigenous films *Yolngu Guya Djamamirr* and *Back Seat*.

Basoli’s fourth ‘myth’ focuses on the helplessness “many people feel ... when they think about human-rights issues”, described by Zia-Zarifi, a Human Rights Watch researcher from Afghanistan, quoted in Basoli 2002, p. 35. “The movie’s great, now what? Question, is hard to die”, adds Basoli. Zarifi proposes that the festival serves to debunk this ‘myth’, stating the festival “puts people in touch with some of the work we’re doing at Human Rights Watch and some of the possibilities that we have”. Further, Zarifi commends the “Human Rights Watch’s website”, which “offers information” from trouble spots “around the world ... with links to campaigns, petitions and letters”. Similarly HRAFF’s website in Australia lists links to *Amnesty International*, *World Vision*, *Caritas Australia*, *SPAA fringe*, *NITV*, *RMIT university*, to name but a few.

As just overviewed, there are a range of issues that human rights documentary filmmakers must contend with. Different solutions and options exist, as will be highlighted next, exploring four examples of filmmakers who touch on the human rights abuses associated with the Soviet regime.

Section 3

Models and techniques

The following section analyses human rights based documentary style films relating to European Communist regimes, exploring how these filmmakers dealt with the problems innate to their productions, and the problems described in Section One related to human rights documentaries.

3.1 Eisenstein's *October 1917*

'October 1917' is an early depiction of the political turmoil that ultimately led to the Communist occupation of Latvia and Estonia. The film, now almost a century old, was made by Sergei Eisenstein, one of the most famous early filmmakers of the early Russian avant-garde. It is a depiction of the Russian revolution of 1917 and is characterised by the idealism associated with the advent of Communism and the rise of the proletariat. The DVD cover describes the philosophy of the period, stating "True to the Communist philosophy, there were no main characters: the proletariat providing the heroic 'star' quality throughout. The ultimate victory belonging to the revolution". This film gains momentum from Eisenstein's subjectivity, as an active and passionate participant in the political milieu, comparable to the subjectivity of the participants in the film "A Normal Life" discussed in Section One.

The film touches on human rights issues in portraying the plight of the exploited poor working classes, now overthrowing their tormentors, the Tsarists. Akin to human rights documentaries, the film exposes injustices but documents the abused retaliating en masse, reminiscent of a cinematic narrative, but not categorically a 'human rights' documentary in terms of Bronkhorst's analysis in Section 1.2 (above). Eisenstein's montage style combined news footage and re-enactment with fast cutting techniques to create rhythm, thereby metaphorically enhancing the film. Coupled with a strong musical score, the film meets the criteria proposed by Burres in Section 1.3, as being a 'compelling and strong piece of art'. However, the technique of montage in filmmaking created much debate.

Film's role in society by the 1930s was "a force for reform and revolution", a "weapon in changing the world", according to Tom Brandon in Robè (2004, p. 6). The preceding decade of revolution in Europe had inspired the Soviet avant-garde to produce convincing realism as its "weapon in changing the world". Accordingly, "the early Russian avant-garde filmmakers Eisenstein and Vertov" had "discovered and utilized the modern technique of filmic montage", affirms Kadlec (2000, p. 303).

The aesthetics of montage however, aroused debate concerning ethical issues. Documentary theorist “Philip Rosen, in examining what a documentary is, or is not”, “demonstrates how documentary representation, in trying to control mass perception of truth, is really a bid for political influence” (Rabiger 2004, pp. 108, 109). While Dancyger (2002, p. xxiii) proposes that “editing choices range from the straightforward presentation of material to the alteration of the meaning of that material”. He adds that “a set of ethical standards or personal morality is the rudder for all who work in film and television”, endorsing the work of Eisenstein and the avant-garde by pointing out that although “they used editing in a manipulative way”, “yet their works had an ethical foundation”, because “they aimed to move the minds and emotions of their audiences” (2000, p. 413). MacCabe (in Easthope 1993, p. 60) further describes “Eisenstein’s account of montage” as “a secondary process which comes after representation” yet not opposed to it, given that “representation is the rendering of identities in the world”. Montage became “the method of an epoch”, as predicted by Shlovsky, a writer for “the Soviet avant-garde arts journal, LEF. Standing for “left Front of the Arts”, and debate pertaining to its use continues unabated.

3.2 Latvian Occupation Museum’s video testimonies

The video testimony is the ‘human rights’ documentary form described as testimonial by Bronkhorst (2004, p. 4), which does not purport to having a plot, and makes no attempt at explanation or denunciation. This film genre serves the purpose of conveying human rights stories that lack other evidence, usually within the context of a criminal regime. It functions as evidence, concurrently making the viewer a witness, as described by Hesford (2004, p. 2): “within the context of human rights documentaries, victims’ testimonies bear witness to incommensurable events, and also function rhetorically as empathetic markers in an effort to create the viewer as witness”. Aesthetically, video testimonies alone may function negatively, as they are not placed within an aesthetically pleasing narrative form. They are a potential resource however, for filmmakers, such as Snoré, who utilised this resource to help make the film ‘The Soviet Story’, discussed below.

Bronkhorst (2004, p. 11) articulates the impact of human rights testimonials by emphasising that “one testimony on film can leave a deep impression. It reveals individuality in a single gesture, a glance, a sigh, a laugh”. Mary Marshall Clark (2006, p. 268), in her article *The Struggle Against Indifference* advocates that

through video testimony of trauma, we learn how the deepest and most pernicious of all silences, those that desensitise us to our own experience of suffering and

connection with others, can be broken in the liberating acts of speaking and being heard.

A “keynote address given to the ‘War and Memory Conference’, University of Sydney, 4 August 2006” by Martin Evans (2006, p. 217) commended the work of the Latvian Occupation Museum in Riga, in preserving the memory of the recent occupation. In describing the Museum’s apparent “obsession with recording personal testimony”, he pointed to “the need to preserve individual memory before the witnesses died out“, adding that in Latvia, “their primary task is to fight against indifference or forgetting” (Evans 2006, p. 341).

The lack of evidence pertaining to the Soviet occupation’s history of human rights abuse necessitated the collection of testimonies by the Latvian Occupation Museum to validate the people’s view of the occupation. Citing Havel, Evans (2006, p. 329) states “the imposed official history” “bore no resemblance to what people themselves remembered”, thus the video testimony bears witness to crimes that have been historically altered or erased.

Cowie (1999, p. 22) discusses the filming of soldiers who had been the victims of war trauma stating: “the absent trauma of war presented in the symptoms of the men displayed for the camera and represented in the repetition, replaying, and re-presenting of the subject’s relation to trauma”. She suggests that audiences not only have “a desire for reality” (1999, p. 19) to feed “scientific and rational knowledge”, but desire the real “as image, as spectacle”. Thus Cowie reiterates Bronkhorst’s observation that “one testimony on film can leave a deep impression”, in describing the quality of “spectacle”, as well as the “reality” of video testimonies provided by victims of trauma.

Dzinta Geka, a Latvian filmmaker, produced a DVD of Latvian testimonies (c2003). It was a compilation of some historical footage with voice over, interspersed with testimonials from various individuals (now elderly), who had been deported to Siberia as children under extremely harsh conditions, had been surrounded by death but somehow managed to survive. Watching them tell their stories echoes Cowie’s observation on the spectacle quality of the “subject’s relation to trauma”. My relationship to the testimonies as viewer, was subjective and I found myself watching intensely for signs of trauma - and I found them - controlled emotion, holding back tears, anger, determination to grab the opportunity to expose human rights abuses. This ‘spectacle’ quality however, is not easily imitated and cannot be contrived and thus, I propose, enhances the believability of the testimonial.

The innate qualities of testimonies are also noted by British psychiatrist Skultans (1998, p. 8), who recorded testimonies in post Soviet Latvia as part of her doctoral research, stating “I did not feel intact

after my fieldwork in Latvia. I had not anticipated the rawness of people's pain nor the force and urgency of their drive to narrate the past". Skultans (1998, p. 131) also notes: "the moment people talk about the past they remember it in the ways stories are told".

Hesford (2004, p. 107) notes that testimonials in "human rights documentary" function "in ways similar to the art form tragedy", adding that they "might be said to conjoin legal and dramatic forms of persuasion". The Latvian Occupation Museum's video testimonies possess the qualities of stories, having an innate narrative structure. They are also persuasive legally and dramatically, as evidence and subjective truth. However, they lack aesthetic and digital quality and are largely unedited, having been hurriedly recorded for evidentiary and research purposes where evidence was scant and witnesses aging.

3.3 Snoré's *The Soviet Story*

Recently, the release of the film *The Soviet Story*, made by a Latvian historian, resulted in the Director's effigy being burned in Moscow by neo Communists. This film lays bare the atrocities of the Communist regime. Joe Bendel (2008, p. 1, para 1), writing for the Epoch Times, reviews *The Soviet Story*, describing how an effigy of the Director Edvins Snoré, was burned in Moscow by "neo-Soviet Russians" "for his in-depth survey of Soviet crimes against humanity, including Soviet cooperation with the Third Reich". "The heart of Soviet Story explores the close ideological similarities and barbaric collusion between the Soviet Socialists of Stalin and the National Socialists of Hitler" (Bendel 2008, p. 2, para. 2). Bendel also points out that the "film makes clear [that] none of those who did (and still do) the Soviet dirty work has ever faced justice for their crimes". The Economist ("Telling the Soviet Story" 2008) describes *The Soviet Story* as "the most powerful antidote yet to the sanitisation of the past". The film opened in New York in October 2008, thus no scholarly articles are yet available for comparison.

The Soviet Story seeks to invalidate Soviet 'official history' by offering proof of Soviet crimes. Sponsorship from the UEN group of the European parliament enabled accessing of archival records from across Europe. This film validates the stories of human rights abuse, such as the stories collected on the video testimonies by the Latvian Occupation Museum, also utilising these resources in the film itself. In the motivated style of the early Soviet cinema, a montage of startling archival footage, bears witness to the crimes of the Communist regime. Images of Stalin's annihilation campaigns - on an industrial scale - executions, torture and experiment, and analogies with Hitler are presented, using archival film and documents, gathered from all over Europe.

Funding also enabled technical expertise; hence the film is aesthetically and digitally sound. *The Soviet Story* is strongly compelling. It also shocks and invokes a strong sense of injustice in the viewer. The Director's ethnicity also imbues the film with a strong subjective impetus. The film is controversial, creating debate; and informative, inspiring action and compensating for any sense of helplessness. Audiences can expect to be entertained, shocked and informed. The degree of subjectivity and objectivity will dictate the relationship between viewers and the film's content, whether or not they perceive it as 'heavy' or 'too far away', as discussed in Section 1.3.

3.4 *Grandfathers and Revolutions*

Filmmaker Peter Hegedus' relationship to his grandfather, who was Hungary's Prime Minister during the Communist takeover of that country, provided impetus for his documentary film *Grandfathers and Revolutions*. Made with the assistance of the Australian Film Commission and SBS, funding enabled the purchase of archival footage and the assistance of film crew and technicians, greatly reducing the possibility of aesthetic and digital media problems.

The film is not strictly a 'human rights' documentary as it does not deal with the human rights issues associated with the Soviet takeover of Hungary, merely touching on these issues. It showcases the opinions of Andras Hegedus and his grandson Peter Hegedus, reflecting on the circumstances which led to Andras Hegedus, the pro Communist Prime Minister of 1956, bringing in the Soviets to enforce Communism. The film juxtaposes the brief (heavily edited) comments of some clearly angry anti Communist Hungarians of the era, who opposed Soviet occupation, with Andras Hegedus, who is invited to respond.

Edited 'discussion' in the film gives a sense of the Director's control and the film tends to show bias towards rationalising the grandfather's actions and avoiding any serious discussion about human rights issues. However, family relationships provide another dimension for provoking discussion, apart from the political oppositions.

3.5 Summary

Surveying the methodologies used by filmmakers has revealed differing strategies in dealing with some of the problems of making 'human rights' documentaries.

Analysing Eisenstein's *October 1917* revealed that the filmmaker's subjectivity, coupled with the technique of montage and poetic stylistic devices of rhythm and metaphor, created a persuasive aesthetic art form. Montage engendered the need for ethical consideration. Although pre-digital, the film has fuelled debate since its inception.

A discussion about the Latvian Occupation Museum's video testimonies surmised that testimonials are persuasive forms, usually adopting the conventions of storytelling. In their essential form, testimonials function as evidence and can lack aesthetic qualities. However, they function as an archival resource when placed within a broader narrative situation.

The Soviet Story is a recently released 'human rights' documentary film, currently screening in festivals in America. The film is sustained by the Director's ethnic subjectivity and political knowledge, and funding from the UN. Funding has enabled the acquisition and compilation of extensive archival material, interviews with 'experts' and technical expertise. Reviews to date have been positive, while the film's content has generated widespread debate.

Grandfathers and Revolutions also benefited from the filmmaker's subjectivity, and production funding. The film's political oppositions and family dynamics created tensions that enhanced the storyline. This film was a journey to a parental homeland, similar to that embarked upon in *Regimes and Rebels*.

Section 4

Regimes and Rebels

4.1 The Journey

The forming of the idea:

This project has been a huge investment in time, energy and resources. My ethnic background and sense of obligation to my parents, their families, and their homelands has functioned as motivation when confronted with many setbacks.

The journey began with the idea of travelling to my parents' homelands of Latvia and Estonia, to film a story about the Communist occupation and the effect it had on my family. The ideation stage progressed to an initial draft synopsis in a way similar to this description by Ric Burns (in Curran Bernard 2004, p. 200):

We have a very clear outline of what the film is, and a kind of a treatment that's about fifty pages long, a corraling of the material likely to be in the story. But it's not a script. It's a chronologically-arranged treatment of what feels like the principal historical materials, an iteration that has enough structure in it to tell you where the themes of the film are going to emerge, where they develop to their highest point, and where they transform.

“Filmmaking has long been a white male preserve, but women and minorities are infiltrating and bringing their blessedly different ways of seeing” (Rabiger 2003, p. 8). My ‘ways of seeing’ were managed by my former male supervisors. Initially, they were John Hookham and Gary MacLennan. Their emphasis was on creating a personal story, exploring bigger themes from the perspective of an individual family. I decided to focus on my father's brother, Raimond, a Latvian partisan, who had been a victim of the political regime, I intended to pursue this story as an entry point or ‘inciting incident’, as described by Curran Bernard (2004, p. 46) which “sets the action of the story into motion”. I had nothing more than a memory of the incident involving my uncle, and my mother's knowledge of it. In pursuit of Raimond's story, before travelling overseas we had tried to contact his daughter Inta, only to discover that Inta had died two years before, but we were unable to find out why. Thus we embarked on a journey to discover what happened to both Raimond and Inta.

Traveling to Estonia and Latvia:

I traveled from Brisbane to Estonia in September 2006 for three weeks at my own expense. Without funding, accommodation would be at my Auntie's home, thus it was expedient to utilize my daughter's graduate experience as camera assistant. Additionally, her presence in the film added her generation's perspective and illuminated tensions arising from language and cultural differences. My mother, Helene, was our travelling companion and acted as a valuable translator. She had preceded us by two weeks, leaving earlier to spend extra time with her twin sister, Olga. Sarah, however, had assignments and music commitments beckoning and had to leave after ten days.

My technical equipment consisted of a mini DV camera on loan from the university, my own monopod and a supply of tapes. From the point of departure we began filming exits and entrances, travel shots, points of interest, and anything conceivably usable.

Olga's home was our 'staging area' for the ensuing three weeks. The trip involved various visits, interviews and explorations, with some activity in Latvia, and some in Estonia (Estonia and Latvia are situated side by side on the Baltic coast, each about the size of Tasmania; hence travel between them is easily achieved by motor vehicle).

Places visited whilst in Latvia:

- the Latvian Occupation Museum and the Latvian Archives in the capital city Riga, attempting to track down information on Raimond, to no avail;
- Raimond's (and my father's) hometown of Jelgava, not far from Riga, to meet Dace, one of Inta's friends. An invitation to Dace's home provided a venue for discussion about Raimond and Inta. The arrival of Inta's best friend, Larisa, provided further insight into Raimond's plight; and
- whilst still in Jelgava, Dace and Larisa took us to the site of the family plot at Jelgava cemetery and discussed the nearby site where Lenin's statue had been removed.

Activities in Estonia:

Our activities in Estonia were mostly organised by Olga. Being a longstanding local resident and lifelong member of the Estonian Women's Defence Corps, her local knowledge and network of friends and neighbours was coupled with a sense of nationalism. I was very grateful and surprised that Olga had made arrangements for us to film various local people, including returned deportees, and a community memorial to the victims of the occupation. Olga's arrangements resulted in:

- a visit to the 'Pilstvere Memorial', where the curator described the illegal annexation of Estonia and deportation and annihilation of innocent Estonians, followed by a visit to the adjoining 'memorial of stones';

- a visit to Olga's neighbour Johan, a returned kulak (Johan's family were farmers who were deported in 1949, following a family land dispute. Jealous relatives 'dobbed them in' to Communist authorities);
- a visit to distant relatives in the township of Tartu - Vello and Liina and their family, which resulted in a discussion about Estonian nationalism, partisans and heroes;
- an interview with three of Olga's friends in the local township of Puurmani - twins Mati and Helgi, and Helgi's husband, Juri. Helgi and Mati's family had been local farmers who were deported, while Juri's family were deported from Aluksne in Latvia, where they had settled -- all were deported as children, along with their mothers, following their fathers' earlier deportation; and
- finally, an interview with Salme, also the daughter of a local farming family who were deported primarily for their ethnicity and secondarily for their farm (being the victims of an ethnic purging campaign by Stalin).

Thus the search for Raimond and Inta's story had the domino effect of setting into action unpredictable events outlined above, connecting myself to a network of people and stories (represented in Fig 1). Personal memories, my own and those of the interviewees, provided impetus for a fusing of the private and public, as described by Kuhn (in Renov 2004, p. 179), by way of "associations", "they spread into an extended network of meanings that bring together the personal with the familial, the cultural, the economic, the social and the historical". All former structural plans for the film were laid asunder by way of the 'associations' that led to spontaneous situations; the film thus became a diary of events as they occurred, or a 'Video Diary' styled documentary film.

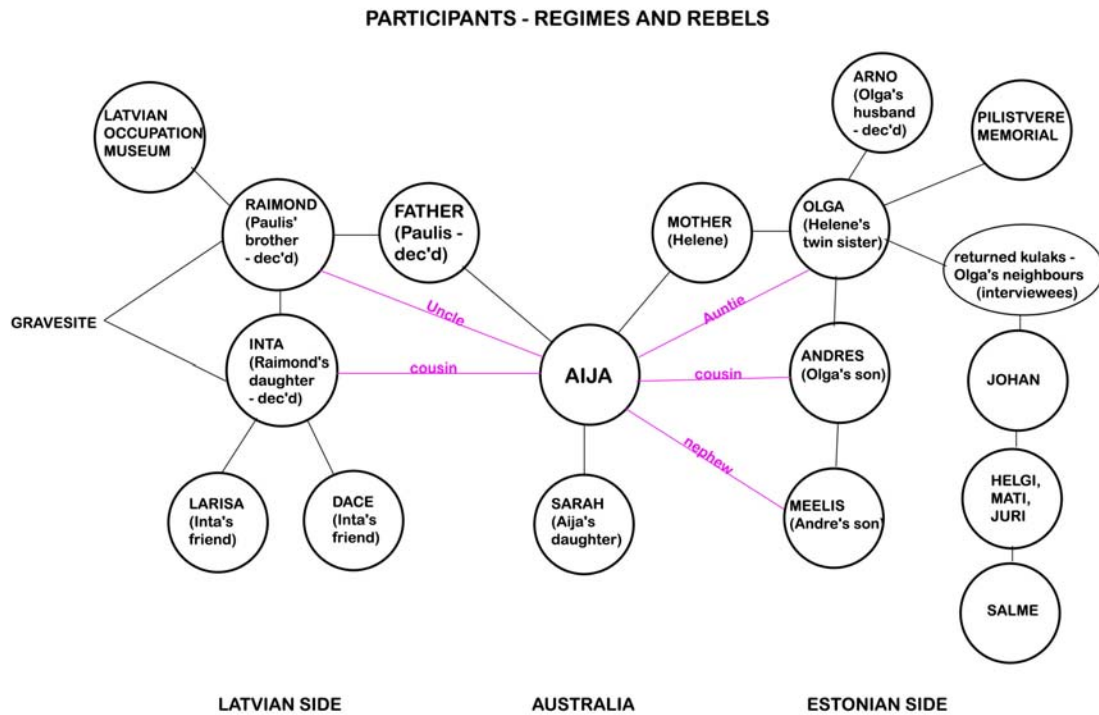


Fig 1: Relationships and stories within *Regimes and Rebels*

Filming and interviewing issues:

I filmed as much as possible en-route to Estonia but airport security was a deterrent. The camera had to be ready for use very quickly. There wasn't always time to check every setting. For instance, after exiting customs on our arrival at Tallinn airport, I grabbed the camera from my backpack and started filming immediately, discovering later that the footage was mute. Ingenuity prevailed and in the edit suite I transposed the sound of a small plane in the background, which gave the illusion that the speakers' (Helene's) voice could not be heard - a fortuitous metaphor for communication difficulties, mentioned in voice over.

While filming, we mostly had no idea what was being said until my mother explained briefly afterwards. We simply had to film everything possible and sort out the relevant from the irrelevant later. All films were reviewed daily on a television set at Olga's, described on the label, dated and numbered.

My mother and Olga took an active role in interviewing the returned kulaks, asking them questions and even jotting down notes themselves. I relinquished directorial control and remained unintrusive

because I hoped to obtain a natural and spontaneous response from the participants, but also because I was external to the communication process, due to my inability to speak the language.

4.2 Post production

British film critic, Clark (2000, p. 42) points out: “Every documentary is edited, shaped, material excluded and structure imposed. It would be unwatchable otherwise”. The editing process began by dubbing the tapes to VHS, watching them and writing a more detailed summary of content. I then went through the tapes with an elderly Estonian lady, whose details were supplied by the Gold Coast Baltic Club. She was able to give me a general overview of content but could not translate directly, as the Estonian language she recognised when she left Estonia after the war, was not the same as the language in use now.

Selections of the tapes were then shown to Rubbo but having been filmed in a spontaneous, ‘video diary’ style, there was a great deal of footage and editing decisions were required, so he asked me to write a story about the entire journey. This resulted in a 27 page (single spaced) document, which was useful as a reference point but was difficult to translate into visual form. The disparity between the story and the final film, scripted at Appendix A, reflects the difference between portraying events literally and visually. “While the literal storyteller always tells a story that has already happened, the film storyteller summons us into a story that is happening here and now”, claims Rabiger (2003, p. 214), adding “we see through other eyes yet seem to see directly”. Efrén Cuevas (2006, p. 56) develops this concept, stating “the shooting of the image provides an eternal ‘present’ time, with an immediacy not achievable in written texts”. It is film’s ability to capture and preserve chronotopes, he explains, that conveys the ‘immediacy’ of that moment to its audience. Chronotopes, explains Cuevas (2006, p. 58), are “singular combinations of time and space in each work of art where narrative events become specific”. This is what differentiates the telling of a story by film to its literal counterpart. Filmmaker Ric Burns further articulates this process, stating (in Curran Bernard, 2004, p. 200): “beginning with a clear outline of what the film is”, the storyline and the film happen “in tandem”.

I logged the footage in Final Cut Pro, concurrent with writing a script. The process of scriptwriting, as I logged footage, was reinforcing in a collaborative way, and facilitated the process of editing by creating an external reference to the material.

I then brought my mother into the process by dropping clips on to the timeline and reviewing them over and over until we had refined translation. This was a very time consuming and laborious process. As content became clear, so did the process of conversation. Interviewees did not deal with one

subject, moving on to the next in a progressive fashion, but began speaking about one, digressing to another, then coming back to the first, often remembering details of one subject while talking about another. Thus the job of editing, while translating, involved placing together diverse clips about the same subjects to create a complete story about an aspect of the interview.

After a great deal of work, a rough edit on the timeline was in place. I burned this to DVD. Subsequent edits tended to be refinements to the back-story and changes to narration, following interviews with Rubbo. Technical difficulties developed however, resulting in the first crisis, as my computer crashed. I was left with the latest burned DVD – my only back up. There was little left of the project – some assorted odd clips and no timeline. Computer technicians were unable to retrieve anything. Thus the process of re-logging and creating a new timeline began. Luckily, I had the DVD to guide the copying of translations and clips; this spared my poor mother from many hours of re-translating the material.

Rubbo recommended that participants view the segment in which they appear, prior to their signing a consent form, to avert legal repercussions. Thus relevant segments were burned to DVD and forwarded to equivalent participants in Latvia and Estonia, together with consent forms and cover letters, translated into Latvian and Estonian. The English version and the translations are shown at Appendices B. The translations of the consent forms were problematic, due to the complex legal terminology. The Latvian consent form was translated by Uldis Silins, a language specialist I was able to contact through the Latvian community in Brisbane, and the Estonian consent form was translated by Heino Mardiste, a faculty member at Tartu University in Estonia, whom I was able to contact through his brother Jaak, a member of the Brisbane Estonian community.

Mike Rubbo was a great help with coaching me on narration. A veteran of some thirty documentaries, his guidance was invaluable. Following a review by the film school at QUT, I was advised of numerous problems with sound – computer noise in the narration and background noises in other sequences, principally a high-pitched electronic noise in one of the interviews. As my documentary film studies had started at postgraduate level, I had never considered sound design as an elective but was now confronted with a sound edit, this was accomplished in Final Cut Pro. After many, many hours of experimenting with filters, searching the internet for help, swapping background sound in some sequences for better quality ‘noise’, using key frames to reduce excessive noise, etc., and burning numerous DVDs to check the sound, as it changed once compressed to DVD format, I was finally able to produce a good quality copy. I was also grateful for some technical advice from Brett Wiltshire at Griffith University, where I had completed a previous Masters, about export settings, as initially my DVDs were not burning successfully.

4.3 Detailed Synopsis

At this point in the exegesis, it is recommended that the reader view the film *Regimes and Rebels*, if they have not already done so. A detailed synopsis will provide a summary of the key sections and contents of this film.

Regimes and Rebels is about the end of Communism. It is structured around individual character-based storytelling, documenting the effects of the advance and retreat of Communism on individuals and families from the small countries of Latvia and Estonia.

Events in these countries created concerns about injustice and vulnerability, shared by many expatriates, primarily post-war immigrants, like my parents, living in countries such as Australia. This has resulted in efforts by both local and expatriate natives to establish memorials and Occupation Museums, which endeavour to maintain the memory of human rights abuses and collect information and memorabilia. Within this context, my ethnicity, and its affiliations, provides focus for the telling of stories, within the context of a 'video diary' styled documentary form.

Tensions resulting from recent events in these countries occasionally bubble over, such as the recent hostile confrontation with Russian authorities following the removal of a Russian war memorial from central Tallinn in Estonia, to a soldier's cemetery on the outskirts of the city and, as already mentioned, the burning of an effigy of a Latvian filmmaker in Moscow, who dared to portray the atrocities of the former regime. These tensions have the effect of imbuing much of the interview and discussion styled storytelling with an innate subjectivity, as discussed earlier.

Time code: 0'00" – 3'45"

The film opens in the plane, flying over Afghanistan, drawing on the association with terror. Initially clouds are used as imagery, followed by the view from the aircraft window. Some background information about our departure and destination points and ourselves is interspersed at this point. On our arrival in Estonia, dialogue and voice over provides background information about our destination and relatives. A short scene depicting my cousin Andres contacting Latvia to set up travel arrangements, is followed by travel shots with accompanying maps to introduce the next sequence.

Time code: 3' 35" – 5'24"

The next sequence covers our planned visit to Latvia, beginning with a visit to the Latvian Occupation Museum in Riga, the capital. The museum keeps records of partisans. A search for information about

my partisan uncle, Raimond, was unproductive, and we were directed to the Latvian archives, also in Riga. Without Raimond's date of birth, however, this also proved unproductive.

Time code: 5'24" – 8'58"

We then moved on to our next stop in Latvia, in the town of Jelgava, to meet with Inta's friend Dace. This meeting had been pre-arranged by Andres in the opening scenes. Dace was clearly surprised that we knew nothing about Inta's passing and proceeded to explain that cancer had been the cause. This being established, we headed for Dace's apartment by her invitation. Dace phoned Larisa (Inta's best friend) who promptly arrived. Following discussion about Inta, Larisa conveyed what information she had about Raimond. This enabled the telling of a short story of Raimond's deportation and hard labour camp experience, but details of his death were vague. Only my mother was able to recall the 'accident', planned by Communist authorities, which killed Raimond.

Time code: 8'58" – 10'40"

Inta's friends then took us to the cemetery to view the family gravesite, which they had been tending. The discovery that Raimond was just thirty at the time of his death and the re-telling of my deceased father's certainty that his brother Raimond had been 'set up' by the former regime provided missing evidence in testimonial form and some closure to this search.

Leaving the cemetery, the site of a statue of a Latvian folk hero, sparked some interesting discussion about the removal of Lenin's statue and the reinstatement of the folk hero, following independence, which also became part of the film.

Time code: 10'40" – 12'31"

Throughout my stay, I was waiting for an opportunity to talk to Olga about her late husband Arno, who had also been a partisan like Raimond. Through my mother's negotiations in Estonian, Olga agreed to tell Arno's story. Olga described how she met her husband and his ability to build up run-down farms, using his engineering skills. This was how he worked his way up the Communist hierarchy, despite having returned from a prison camp and being initially stigmatised. I only used the portion of her story that related directly to the film's content - the story of her husband's partisan activity, arrest and internment and return to Estonia.

In reality, I was unable to achieve this until our imminent departure for Australia. However, for purposes of continuity, the related partisan stories were placed sequentially in the film; hence Arno's story follows Raimond's.

Time code: 12'31" – 18'27"

The next sequence in the film is the visit to the Pilistvere memorial. At Pilistvere, the curator guided us through a display depicting the history of the recent occupation, including the Hitler/Stalin pact, the illegal politics and staged elections, the executions and deportations and the propaganda campaign. A brief glimpse at a few compiled life stories of victims, donated by families, put a human face to these events. We were then taken to another memorial site, which involved a rite of passage. This consisted of picking up a rock, which then became a symbol of all one's worries, and placing it on a pile of similar rocks at the site, symbolically leaving one's worries there. Behind the pile of rocks, there were huge carved stones, each bearing the name of a different region of Estonia that lost family members to the occupation. Candles and flowers were indicative of present grief.

In reality, this sequence was filmed before departing for Latvia, but as it tells the story of the occupation, it provides context for the interviews following, hence its strategic positioning in the film.

Time code: 18'27" – 22'12"

We were invited to return the following day to take a look at the old seventeenth century church near the manse. To avoid confusing the audience by excessive complexity, the film indicates a stroll next door on the same day. This segment introduces some light humour. We climb the church tower, where I unwittingly ring the bell and upset Andres. The humour creates some 'relief' from the sadness and tension of the previous scene and refers directly to Sarah as cameraperson, providing a link to the next sequence, Sarah's going away party. Camera movement while climbing the ancient tower was unavoidable but realistic and tense.

Time code: 22'12 – 25' 29"

Sarah was featured in the film as representing the next generation. The going away party introduces Andres' sons who are also around Sarah's age. They have learned some English from the Internet and patchy conversation develops between Sarah and Meelis (the younger of the brothers) about cultural styles of birthday celebrations. The following day, Sarah is filmed saying goodbye to Olga. The family pet, a German Shepherd named Karla, was always watching for an opportunity to get someone to throw a stick. Her constant presence was factored in to this scene and others, being a signifier of home and family. Visiting Tallinn briefly gives the viewer a look at the city and works to emphasise Sarah's constant use of the mobile phone, indicating some urgency for her to return. A moment at the airport reflects on the sense of isolation caused by language difficulties.

Time code: 25' 29" – 31'03"

The next sequence is a visit to Olga's neighbour Johan, a returned kulak. Johan's family were farmers who were deported in 1949, following a family land dispute. Jealous relatives 'dobbed them in' to Communist authorities. Cattle wagons transported them to Siberia where Communist propaganda had portrayed them as criminals to locals; however, sharing local celebrations convinced the Siberians that the deportees were 'normal' people. The Estonians initially built homes from turf and later from timber. Following Stalin's death in 1953, conditions eased and in 1958 Johan's family were allowed to return to Estonia. However, 'home' was no longer theirs and occupied by Russians and the inevitable Communist propaganda painted the returnees as criminals once again. Johan was eventually able to obtain forestry work and finally return to the family home, reduced to a ruin, but he rebuilt it with his own hands.

As we were leaving, two of our next interviewees - Juri and Helgi - arrived at Johan's. This provided the opportunity for good continuity to the next interview sequence. Johan's interview was edited to reduce the content, as it was overly lengthy, telling numerous stories about life over there.

Time code: 31'03" – 36'31"

Olga's friends, twins Mati and Helgi, and Helgi's husband Juri, were all deported as children. They all described being deported on cattle trains, along with their mothers, their fathers deported earlier. Snorè's *Soviet Story* describes how most of these deported fathers perished in hard labour camps, although there was no opportunity to convey this information in *Regimes and Rebels*. Mati described the building of turf houses (like Johan) and making some money by finding odd jobs, but Juri's description of the deportations was the most interesting, claiming they were a convenient way of disposing of farmers in order to take over their already established farms for collectivisation. Juri also provided the film with a humorous moment, after a few vodkas.

This sequence required editing, as it was a very unstructured and fragmented interview with periods of excess verbosity. All three interviewees were entering and exiting the room at various times, the twins continually talked over the top of one another, there were noises in the background and topics were dropped, then re-started, etc.

Time code: 36'31" = 40'26"

The next sequence was a visit to Olga's distant relatives (on her daughter-in-law's side) in Tartu - Vello and Liina and their family. Olga insisted I take the camera, I assumed she wanted some footage of her relatives, however it became apparent that the visit was another filming opportunity, pre-arranged by Olga.

Conversation ensued around the table after lunch about the restrictions imposed on students during the Communist era. Vello produced a photo album and proceeded to discuss one of his lecturer's, Juri Kukk, who had attempted to oppose the regime but was arrested and died on a hunger strike in a Soviet prison. Vello produced an article about Alice Kuperjanov, the wife of Julius Kuperjanov, a freedom fighter and Estonian hero. Vello and Liina also had a personal interest in the Kuperjanovs, as their home had been Alice's home.

Olga's own nationalism provides some perspective into these discussions. At eighty, Olga was a life-long member of the Estonian Women's Defence Corps, and exhibited the strong spirit of nationalism innate to most Estonians. This has evolved as a response to the constant threat to their language and culture, posed by occupying forces, particularly the recent Communist era.

This sequence was actually filmed towards the end of our stay in Estonia but was edited in at this point for the purpose of providing some 'breathing space' between interviews. Again, this interview was edited for continuity and reduced of excess verbosity.

Time code: 40'26" – 49'09"

The final interview sequence, and the most touching, is with Salme, who was the victim of an ethnic purging campaign by Stalin. Separated from her parents, Salme was deported as a child, along with her baby twin brothers, due to her father's German nationality. Fortunately, someone had hidden the children on the train so they could not be forced to disembark at 'Rapa Station' where others were being forced out. Happily, the children were then reunited with their parents on the train. Enroute to Siberia, the family were forced to disembark and were housed in a huge shed, along with some 500 others of German ancestry, but starvation threatened. Villagers took pity on them and temporarily sheltered them in their own homes.

They continued to Siberia where they remained for some 18 months and then escaped. In Estonia, they hid in rye fields and various places, eventually finding respite in an uncle's bunker. Their father went to the mill for flour one day, where he was apprehended by authorities and returned to Siberia, having been 'dobbed in' by locals. He escaped several times but was returned to Siberia due to the activity of informers. Her father spent ten years in Siberian prison camps. These informers had also absconded with the family's brand new furniture. Olga and Salme mulled over the enigma of informers, bewildered by the fact that many informers were locals and not always Russians.

Although the interview is quite lengthy in filmic terms, it is very engaging and was difficult to reduce. Any superfluous scenes were taken out but it was not possible to cut it heavily without reducing its impact. While filming, I was pushed into a corner with the camera, hence the interview was more a conversation between Salme and Olga, however this perspective worked extremely well in creating a sense of intimacy with the viewer.

Time code: 49'22" – 50'46"

The next scene explores a deserted house. (It was actually filmed much earlier - on the way to interviewing Mati, Helgi and Juri). Seeing the house as we drove to their apartment, I asked Andres if he wouldn't mind stopping the car to have a look. I was hoping to obtain footage of possible cut-ins. The house proved to be a 'gold-mine' in terms of resources to enhance the story. It really appeared as though a family had simply walked out, leaving everything behind. The chance find of an old Communist newspaper was an added bonus. Andres knew nothing of the house's history thus it is something of a quandary. This scene worked well in bringing home the futility and sadness of the recent occupation.

Time code: 50'46" – 51'24"

The film ends like most journeys - back at home, in Australia, contemplating the entire experience. This is followed by credits, accompanied by photos of Olga, who passed away in 2007, bringing the entire length to 52 minutes, or technically 01:52:01:01.

4.4 Formal analysis

Regimes and Rebels is primarily a 'Video Diary' styled documentary film, unfolding in a "user-generated" fashion, recording significant events with political and humanitarian connotations. Authorship has been avoided to eliminate a censored perspective and allow the subjects to speak directly to the audience. Editing has been used to tidy and reduce content but maintain the integrity of the information. The 'Video Diary' film is an emerging form of social media and cannot be adequately analysed in terms of the traditional categorical modes demarcated by writers such as Nichols, as explained in Section One.

Bruzzi (2006, p. 4) describes many documentaries as "wildly heterogenous", and unable to be contained within one mode of analysis that is limited to "Nichols' family tree". An analysis, within the framework of 'human rights' documentary films illustrates this point by locating *Regimes and Rebels* within numerous modes, beginning with Bronkhorst's four theoretical forms for 'human rights'

documentaries and exploring the more formal categories of Nichols and Renov. The following explores this relationship.

Explanatory form:

Regimes and Rebels is not a high budget documentary in terms of equipment, crew, high profile interviewees and narrators; it is therefore not unconditionally ‘explanatory’ as proposed by Bronkhorst’s analysis in Section 1.2, but demonstrates some ‘explanatory’ qualities of theme, interview and commentary, however, it lacks the ‘elaborate’ nature of dedicated explanatory forms. Despite this, Rabiger (2003, p. 8) maintains, “you can still make excellent films without elaborate settings or expensive props, costumes, equipment, or special effects ... the ability to make much out of little is a vital one and shows up throughout cinema history”.

Bronkhorst’s *Explanatory* form might be equated to Nichols *Expository* mode (Nichols 2001, p. 105), which “addresses the viewer directly, with titles or voices that propose a perspective, advance an argument, or recount history”. Both forms would describe the BBC’s ‘authored account of older histories’ and the Ken Burns’ films, described in Section 1.3 above; *Regimes and Rebels* however, is a compilation of several forms, varying with its content. The *Expository* or *Explanatory* styles best articulate the Pilistvere memorial sequence, where the curator of the collection recounted history through commentary.

Denunciatory form:

Bronkhorst’s *Denunciatory* form, as described in Section 1.2, is observable in *Regimes and Rebels*. The ‘denunciatory’ film typically focuses on the abuse of a criminal regime, seeking to relegate responsibility in the face of cover up and misrepresentation, thus the main narrative in *Regimes and Rebels* is ‘denunciatory’.

The ‘denunciatory’ narrative begins by describing the innuendo of assassination that underpins the story of Raimond’s death. This form continues by exposing the inhumane treatment of political prisoners, revealed through Arno’s story. The ‘denunciatory’ narrative then depicts illegal annexation and human rights abuses through the Pilistvere memorial sequence and continues to tell the story of the inhumane removal of native peoples from their homelands of Latvia and Estonia to facilitate takeover and forced occupation, through the interviews with returned kulaks.

Numerous sub themes and storylines interplay with the film’s main denunciatory position. My own family, living in several countries, represents the theme of war and displacement. The theme of grief is expressed at the Pilistvere memorial. Human rights and the politics of retribution and justice are

further sub themes pertaining to the ‘denunciatory’ narrative described above. Sub-stories include my own experience as narrator and filmmaker, Sarah’s experience as visitor, filmmaker and third generation relative. Sarah’s going away party and a visit to the old church at Pilistvere are further sub-story examples, while yet another is the demise of Lenin’s statue and its significance to school children living in occupied Latvia, as described by Larisa at Jelgava, Latvia. It is thus apparent that many sub-themes and stories are situated within the context of the overall ‘denunciatory’ narrative.

Bronkhorst’s conception of the *Denunciatory* form is exclusively relevant to the ‘human rights’ category of film, relating specifically to the subject material of many such films. Comparing this form to Nichols’ (2001, p. 138) documentary modes, also briefly described in Section 1.2, an equivalent form cannot be extrapolated but a related form is Nichols’ *participatory* mode. Emerging in the 1960s, this form of documentary uses “interview or interact[ion] with subjects”, and is exemplified in *Regimes and Rebels* through several sequences, specifically the three interviews with returned deportees and discussion about partisans and heroes over lunch at Tartu.

However, the *participatory* mode can be “too intrusive”, placing “excessive faith in witnesses” and resulting in “naïve history”, warns Nichols. ‘Testimonial’ is innate to the *participatory* mode in *Regimes and Rebels* and is discussed by Bronkhorst and Clark in Section 2.2 above. Both insist that testimonials are powerful, persuasive forms, contrary to Nichols’ generalised conclusion. *Regimes and Rebels* invokes testimonial forms that are also *participatory* and correlate to the main *denunciatory* narrative. These include the stories of the two partisan uncles, illegal annexation, human rights abuses and deportation, as delineated above.

Search form:

Regimes and Rebels is also defined by Bronkhorst’s human rights documentary film ‘search’ category, implied by my journey to Estonia and Latvia in pursuit of information. The *search* category is an aspect of my subjectivity as filmmaker, in being central to a search to reveal human rights abuse, based on a childhood memory, involving a partisan uncle and innuendo of callous brutality.

Subjective ethnic self-inscription informs my view of the historical world I am representing in *Regimes and Rebels*. This relates to Renov’s notion of a *subjective* documentary style as being “a more personalist perspective in which the maker’s stake and commitment to the subject matter [are] fore grounded”, as being part of “the growing prominence of work by women and men of diverse cultural backgrounds in which the representation of the historical world is inextricably bound up with self-inscription” (Renov 2007, p. 176). Bronkhorst’s *Search* form is thus ‘inextricably bound’ to a *Subjective* documentary style in *Regimes and Rebels*.

Testimonial form:

As illustrated above, testimonials are a facet of Bronkhorst's *denunciatory* form and Nichols' *participatory* mode. Similarly, Bronkhorst's *testimonial* form is a facet of *Regimes and Rebels*, since testimonials form part of the dialogue and are expressed throughout the various sequences. However, testimonials in the film are not characterised by Bronkhorst's pure *testimonial* form which purports to making little attempt at "explanation, denunciation or a plot", such as the testimonials collected by the Latvian Occupation Museum, discussed in Section 2.2 above, conversely the *testimonial* form in *Regimes and Rebels* is incorporated into the broader filmic structure, facilitating the denunciation, explanation and plot.

Aside from the afore-mentioned use of *testimonial* through interview, an example of the use of voice over as *testimonial*, as part of the overall narrative occurs in the sub-story sequence about my partisan uncle's death. At the time of filming, I was aware of the probable limitations on obtaining specific information about this suspicious incident. This was due to the purging of evidence alluding to any criminal activity by departing Communist authorities. This tactic brought with it claims that partisan records were buried in the forests outside Moscow. Knowing this, I was able to use a form of *testimonial* to allude to human rights abuse, by using voice-over at my uncle's gravesite, to convey my deceased father's grief and certainty of the former regime's criminal activity. Evidence as testimony was part of the overall structure of *Regimes and Rebels*, but aesthetics, composition and ultimately engaging subject matter also formed part of the filmic paradigm.

4.5 Dealing with the issues of human rights documentaries

Problems associated with making 'human rights' documentary films are expounded in Section Two and approaches by other filmmakers in Section Three, are analysed within this framework. The following compares this analysis with the process of making *Regimes and Rebels*.

Aesthetics issues: Is it a "compelling" and "strong piece of art"? asks Bruni Bures in Miller 2002, p. 36. In the process of endeavouring to create a film with a strong aesthetic, *Regimes and Rebels* was subjected to a great deal of polishing, tidying and re-arranging, following edit reviews. The process of editing and scriptwriting was iterative, while the research process provided constructive information on filmmaking. The sum of these factors, contributed to the film's overall artistic merit.

Issues of mood and intent: Is it an "edifier", does it "provoke discussion, not merely sentiment"? asks Jill Godmillow (1995, p. 83). Godmillow's criticism of documentaries that simply invoke sentiment

without provoking discussion, does not describe *Regimes and Rebels*, in that the film generates discussion. The events and stories portrayed question the validity of the ‘official’ communist version of events. This encourages people to think about the issues, leading to discussion, which can initiate action.

Digital media issues: Even good directors can “lose their bearings” when working with digital media, claim Qualls and Chinn (2004, p. 58). From the perspective of producing *Regimes and Rebels*, filming at overseas locations, with little knowledge of the languages, no film crew other than an extra cameraperson and no sound equipment other than the camera’s onboard microphone, brought with it its own digital media challenges, which are discussed in more detail in Section Four. However, the rigidity inherent in the controlled model of standardized documentary productions would not have elicited the “moments” captured with the least amount of intrusion, or the obvious ‘honesty’ portrayed by the participants, as discussed in Section 1. 2 in regard to ‘docu-soaps’. Fortunately, I was able to work from my own home-based edit suite - technical problems (discussed) necessitated a great deal of editing time.

The dilemma of evidence: the ‘evidence dilemma’ in *Regimes and Rebels* was analogous with the lack of evidence of criminal activity of the former regime, which disposed of related documentation and denied any unlawful activity. The evidence dilemma corresponded to my partisan uncle’s story and the stories of interviewees, wherein only their personal stories and claims of human rights abuse existed. However, as already discussed in relation to video testimonies and the power of testimonials, individual stories can have a profound effect. Hence the evidence dilemma was dealt with within the context of testimony, inherent in the dialogue, in the form of interview and voice over. Testimony and story were also shown to be iterative, in that testimony functions as story, combining to underpin the film’s human rights theme.

The filmmaker’s subjectivity: As filmmaker, my ethnicity and close relationship to the stories in ‘Regimes and Rebels’ creates a relative subjectivity. Lutkehaus and Cool (1999, p. 119) note, “Anthropologists of mixed cultural heritage (use) their own cultural bifurcation as a means of empathy in their exploration of other cultural worlds”. A similar analogy can be proposed with my function as documentary filmmaker, whereby my cultural links to family in other cultural worlds, provide a strong sense of empathy with their plight. Rabiger’s (2003, p. 214) proposition that a film’s “storyteller” must “have the subjectivity of a strong and interestingly biased personality”, similarly describes my subjective bias, which underpins the film *Regimes and Rebels*. Furthermore, my ethnic subjectivity motivated resilience in the face of many setbacks such as computer failure, sound issues, etc.

Audience engagement: Andrea Holley, Human Rights Watch International Film Festival Travel Coordinator, comments that “half the battle is making people aware that they’re unaware” (Miller 2002, p. 37). The telling of the stories in *Regimes and Rebels* concurrently makes Australians ‘aware that they’re unaware’. In addition, a portion of the Australian population is represented by the large contingent of migrants forced out of Latvia and Estonia by the Communist regime. *Regimes and Rebels* connects those remote countries to the local Australian community through the filmmaker’s family, split between them by the Communist occupation.

4.6 Initial responses to the film

I had promised to send the participants in the film a copy of the final composition, thus the first primary edit was despatched. I received very positive feedback from the Latvian Occupation Museum - a note from the Director stating they were pleased to be able to assist with the project and wishing me success. The Pilistvere Memorial have subsequently asked permission to copy the film for private use by community members. Jaak Mardiste from the Brisbane Estonian community expressed his appreciation of the film and asked for additional copies. I have also received notes of thanks and appreciation from the interviewees.

Here in Australia, my mother Helene, who appeared in the film and assisted with translation of the filmic material, has shown the film to friends and family. Their reactions have been: enjoyment of the film as entertainment and compliments on the standard of professionalism; lack of knowledge about the events portrayed; an emotional response of sadness and incredulity spawning the question “how would I respond if it happened here?”

The Baltic club on the Gold Coast (of which I am a committee member) watched the film at a monthly meeting - their response was a very encouraging standing ovation. This audience related strongly to the film particularly as they were active in lobbying against the occupation prior to independence and also because there has been a lot of confusion about the role of Russians in the ‘dobbing in’ of natives; the film clarified things for them. They are also anxious about publicising the human rights issues. As one Latvian man said to me “there is not one Latvian family who was not affected by the brutality of the occupation” – I am sure it is the same for Estonians, whose strong nationalism was regarded as a crime by the regime.

Both *The Soviet Story* and *Regimes and Rebels* deal with similar subject matter in entirely different ways. Comparatively, *The Soviet Story* shocked - my mother refused to watch it, feeling it would upset her too much - indeed she has suffered from PTSD in the past. A member of the Baltic club on

the Gold Coast claimed the content made her physically ill. Other club members viewed the film as the shock needed to awaken audiences to the reality of the atrocities wreaked on European citizens by the former Regime. Comparatively, *Regimes and Rebels* does not shock in the same way, although it similarly focuses on human rights. The film's 'video diary' styled approach, results in a subtle portrayal of stories, generating an inoffensive, but honest and emotional rendering of events. Both these films diverge stylistically, but are equally satisfying in terms of what they set out to achieve.

Conclusion

Regimes and Rebels began with an idea, and expanded into a synopsis. Travel plans were initiated and a journey from Australia to Estonia ensued. Once in Estonia, plans to pursue the story of a partisan uncle were implemented. Following this, my auntie arranged an eclectic series of interviews and visits, united by a 'human rights' theme, providing the fundamentals for a 'Video Diary' styled documentary film.

As the research progressed, an exploration of the 'Video Diary' style of documentary film described this modern genre that is an element of the information and technology revolutions. The associated theoretical field epitomized my rationale as filmmaker. The overriding thematic aspect of 'human rights' in the 'Video diary' progressed to an exploration of this theme. This resulted in a set of research questions crystallising around human rights documentaries, and the key issues and problems related to the creation and presentation of such films. I explored the way other film-makers in comparative genres had approached such issues, and this aided in reflecting on the ways that my own journey as film-maker unfolded.

In dealing with the problems of making *Regimes and Rebels* within the context of 'human rights' documentary films, it was surmised that my ethnic subjectivity was advantageous, comparable to the filmmakers Eisenstein and Hegedus. In discussing human rights documentaries and the problems associated with making such films, *aesthetics* and *digital media* concerns emerged as common issues. Aesthetic composition in *Regimes and Rebels* was informed but confined to the 'honesty' of the material and interviews, adhering to a 'video diary' approach. Aesthetic structure is further enhanced by testimonial styled storytelling qualities within the broader thematic framework of 'human rights'. Importunate editing eliminated digital media problems. It was determined that the majority of audiences in Australia, unlike America, were not attuned to 'human rights' issues and need to be 'made aware'. But a contingent of familiarity with the issues broached exists in Australia, in the form of expatriates, their families and other Europeans. A thread of empathetic commonality also exists in the Australian identity of my cross-cultural family.

As filmmaker, I speculated on the possibility of being able to solve the mystery of my uncle's death, thus engendering a story and film. However, this inciting mysterious incident could not be resolved but the journey rewarded us with a measure of resolution and a small amount of filmic material. Fortunately, at this point Auntie Olga began the process of bringing together "the personal with the familial, the cultural, the economic, the social and the historical", through her network of

“associations” that fused the private and public, described by Kuhn in Renov (2004, p. 179). As a member of the Estonian Women’s Defence Corps, Olga was intrinsically concerned with ‘human rights’ abuses meted out by the former regime, resulting in the loss of culture and language, along with the loss of property and lives. These themes therefore played out naturally through interview and discussion choices, ultimately fusing the seemingly disparate social sectors described by Kuhn above and resulting in a ‘video diary’ styled documentary film.

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Appendix A

Script

REGIMES AND REBELS

By

AIJA BRZOZOVSKIS

1 **TITLE SEQUENCE**

Title is superimposed over sky followed by view from aircraft.

AIJA - V/O - NARRATING

We're on our way to Estonia, flying over Afghanistan -
it's a stark reminder of terror.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 **AIRPORT, INT** **DAY**

Introductory footage of Aija, Sarah, Helene leaving Brisbane airport.

AIJA - V/O - NARRATING

Yesterday, I fare-welled my youngest daughter at
Brisbane airport. My older daughter Sarah, has come
along to help with camera. My mother left Brisbane for
Estonia some weeks ago - we're about to catch up with
her.

CUT TO:

3 **AIRPORT, EST. EXT** **DAY**

MCU of Sarah with Andres and mum in background and pan of the terminal.

TEXT OVER

Tallinn airport ..

AIJA - V/O - NARRATING

I'm meeting my cousin, Andres, for the first time. But
he doesn't speak English. My mother acts as translator,
for both of us. He's here with the family car to take
us to Olga's. Olga is my mother's twin sister.

CUT TO:

4 **TRAVELLING IN CAR, INT** **DAY**

Sarah asks Helene about her trip over, reminding the audience that Helene is already here.

SARAH

How did you go on the airplane - coming over?

HELENE

Oh yes, I was really good on the airplane, I had no problems.

You can see the buildings are in bad repair here too - everywhere - it's still from the Communist times - nothing was done.

CUT TO:

5

OLGA'S HOUSE, EXT

DAY

Helene's comment about Olga's place establishes where we are.

HELENE

That's already Olga's property here, and they used to have cows in the shed there, but they don't have anymore.

Helene disembarking from car.

CUT TO:

6

KITCHEN, INT

DAY

Food on the table is followed by views of the garden and fruit trees.

AIJA - V/O - NARRATING

Olga's worked hard to make us feel welcome. Life outcomes for her were tougher, than her twin sister's in Australia. Her hard-working attitude was at the heart of survival. It is still visible in her productive garden.

CUT TO:

7 **KITCHEN, INT** **DAY**

Helene, Aija and Andres are making plans.

AIJA - V/O - NARRATING

We're planning a trip to Latvia, my father's homeland. Memories of dad's grief over his brother Raimond's death, draws me back. Raimond had been a partisan, and a cloud of mystery hangs over his death.

Back in Australia, we tried to contact Raimond's daughter, Inta, only to find out she'd also met an untimely death, but the question why - remains unanswered.

8 **KITCHEN, INT** **DAY**

Andres on phone.

AIJA - V/O - NARRATING

Andres is phoning Latvia - speaking in Russian, the language of the occupation. He arranges to meet Inta's friend Dace, in Jelgava, dad's home town.

CUT TO:

9 **COUNTRYSIDE, EXT** **DAY-BREAK**

Some shots of the sun rising and mist over the road. Maps show travel plans.

AIJA - V/O - NARRATING

We left early this morning - before sunrise.

We're traveling from Olga's to Riga, then from Riga to Jelgava.

CUT TO:

10 **BORDER, LAT/EST, EXT** **DAY**

Approaching the border.

AIJA - V/O - NARRATING

We're at the border! Our passports are checked - but filming is prohibited.

CUT TO:

11 **RIGA, EXT** **DAY**

Riga skyline, multi arched bridge and busy traffic, indicating we are in Riga. Exterior of museum is followed by a CU of a sign, indicating our location.

TEXT OVER

Riga, Latvia

AIJA - V/O NARRATING

I've come here to try and find some information about Uncle Raimond.

CUT TO:

12 **OCC. MUS., RIGA, INT** **DAY**

AIJA - V/O NARRATING

I can't see Uncle Raimond's face here - with other partisans. Maybe the staff have more records.

DISSOLVE TO:

13

OCC. MUS., RIGA, INT **DAY**

Inside a tiny office in the Occupation Museum, Riga, we talk to several staff members.

STAFF MEMBER

We could .. we could try to find - we have some lists - made from State archives - lists about those who were deported 1941 and those who were arrested during the Soviet period.

STAFF MEMBER

No, there is not, in this er ...

STAFF MEMBER

You can try looking up some information in State archives and State history archives but it's hard if you don't know the exact year of birth and place.

AIJA

I was born in Australia. I've never met any of my father's family and I was hoping to visit their gravesites, and I don't even know where they're buried or anything.

STAFF MEMBER

When they lived in Jelgava, probably they are buried in Jelgava, so ..

CUT TO:

14

INSIDE CAR, INT

DAY

Scenery from car window.

AIJA (V/O) - NARRATING

We stopped at the State archives, before leaving Riga, but couldn't get any information about Raimond, without his date of birth.

TEXT OVER

Jelgava, Latvia

HELENE

They destroyed the Jelgava to the very ground, so .. what was left were houses that were built in the 50s .. look at this one ... interesting.

CUT TO:

15 **OLD CHURCH, JELGAVA, EXT** **DAY**

TEXT OVER

Dace - Inta's friend

HELENE

Good-day.

DACE

Good-day

HELENE

Are you Inta's friend?

DACE

Inta's friend - Dace.

DACE

How did the rest of you get on after our telephone call? You've been to the gravesite haven't you?

HELENE

No, we don't know where the grave is.

DACE

You don't know?

HELENE

And we want to know what happened to Inta, why she died so young.

DACE

Inta had a tumor ...

AIJA (V/O NARRATING)

Dace is communicating with Andres in Russian, as she doesn't speak Estonian, and with us in Latvian, as she doesn't speak English!

CUT TO:

16 **DACE'S UNIT, INT** **DAY**

We enter Larisa's unit, a candle is lit in memory of Inta.

TEXT OVER

Dace's apartment

TEXT OVER

A candle for Inta

HELENE

Do you remember anything about Inta's father?

DACE

Inta's father? Inta never told us anything, she only had a stepfather. Inta's father .. he was ill, and died after a while.

CUT TO:

17

DACE'S UNIT, INT

DAY

HELENE

But, I remember how Inta's father had a job, which was given to people who had been in Siberia. Yes, and he came back and they gave him a very ...

DACE

Dangerous ... risky

HELENE

Yes .. and he had an accident there and that's why he died. Maybe the Communists knew this would happen.

DACE

They could foresee it, yes.

HELENE

I remember that it was an accident at work because I got a letter from Maria, or Marite ..

CUT TO:

18

DACE'S UNIT, INT

DAY

Scene opens with picture in album, followed by contemplative shot of Dace and Larisa.

LARISA

been set up by the former regime - because he'd been a freedom fighter.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 **IN CEMETERY, EXT** **DAY**

The group is standing in a circle talking.

LARISA

On the 1st of September we went to Lenin's statue - we placed a flower and thanked him for setting us free, and making everything better.

On the ninth month, we all went here, to the fallen soldiers cemetery - here, on this side - with a flower and said 'we are free'. We had to go with the school - it was obligatory.

Our National hero's statue was replaced by Lenin's - there he stood - and now again, our national hero is back.

FADE OUT:

22 **IN CAR, INT** **DAY**

Views of the highway and forests while driving followed by Helene at Olga's back door.

AIJA (V/O - NARRATING)

We ran out of time, and couldn't get back to the Archives in Riga. But I expect they only had basic statistics anyway. It's known that partisan records disappeared along with the regime. But memories remain.

CUT TO:

23 **OLGA'S LOUNGE ROOM, INT** **EVENING**

Olga and Helene sit down in front of the fire in lounge-room.

TEXT OVER

Olga's lounge room, after dinner.

AIJA (V/O - NARRATING)

Back at Olga's, the sisters were comparing their lives on opposite sides of the world. Olga's husband Arno, also resisted the regime, so I asked what happened to Arno.

CUT TO:

24 **OLGA'S LOUNGE ROOM, INT** **EVENING**
Helene and Olga are seen talking to one another.

HELENE

So, the same as Inta's father, Arno went to fight for his country, for the freedom of Estonia, and eventually, the little handful of men who fought there couldn't stand against the masses of Red Army, that came one after another, and so they had to capitulate .. and they were taken prisoners and sent into prison camp in Siberia.

In the prison camp there, he was able to help them and fix some machinery that didn't work and in return they gave him his freedom.

Ever since he came back from Siberia, he was complaining about pains and aches in his body .. and .. he was never really a well man after that. He went through torture and severe starvation.

Arno loved this place, because it was near the river, and he loved the river.

FADE TO BLACK, FADE IN:

25 **INSIDE CAR, INT** **DAY**

Transit shot from car reveals we are traveling somewhere on a grey, rainy day.

CUT TO:

TEXT OVER

Pilistvere, Estonia

AIJA (V/O) NARRATING

Olga wants us to know the *real* story of the occupation.
That's why we're here.

CUT TO:

26

OUTSIDE MANSE, EXT

DAY

Exterior of Manse, Helene and Andres walking in, going up steps (location establishment).

HELENE

That's the Manse, here.

CUT TO:

27

INSIDE MANSE, INT

DAY

HELENE

The dear man wants to tell you what happened here.

CUT TO:

28

INSIDE MANSE, INT

DAY

Footage of old ruins outside manse, followed by interior and exterior shots of manse rebuilt.

HELENE

The Red Army burned down the church manse and all the farms that were around it - which were quite a few.

AIJA - V/O - NARRATING

This is the new manse, rebuilt by the local community in 1994 - after independence.

CUT TO:

29 **INSIDE MANSE, INT** **DAY**
The display in Pilistvere is followed by the display in Riga.

TEXT OVER

Latvian Occupation Museum

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

The story on these walls here at Pilistvere, is almost identical to the Latvian story, in Riga.

CUT TO:

30 **INSIDE MANSE, INT** **DAY**
Illustrative clips from both museums tell the story.

MINISTER

Ribbentropp ja Stalin ...

TEXT OVER

August 1939

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

Secret meetings between Hitler's aide, Ribbentropp, and Stalin, conceive a plot to divide up Eastern Europe. Stalin wants the coastal countries of Latvia, Estonia and Finland.

TEXT OVER

1940

first Communist occupation begins

MINISTER

Ribbentropp ja Stalin ...

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

A charade of staged revolutions is orchestrated by Stalin's cronies. Communist workers are co-opted to demonstrate with the promise of free vodka.

The sham continues with rigged elections - communist guards stand over the ballot boxes.

The stage is now set to dispense with local authority. The President and Cabinet are eliminated.

TEXT OVER

1941 - deportation terror begins

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

With the government gone, the local population is now terrorized.

Everyday citizens are herded into squalid cattle wagons by armed militia, destined for Siberia.

Solzhenitsyn shocked the West in the 1970s, with his book about the brutal gulags - this is where the men are taken. Few return.

These sketches, made in secret, were smuggled out.

The women and children are abandoned in isolated settlements. Many perish - their fate unknown to the rest of the world.

FADE IN

31 **INSIDE MANSE, INT** **DAY**

Photos and maps illustrating two fronts.

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

In their homelands, Stalin and Hitler fight for dominance.

TEXT OVER

1942

German occupation begins

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

The Reds are forced to retreat by the advancing Nazis.

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

The Red Army leaves behind the hastily buried remains of local community leaders. They had been imprisoned and tortured.

TEXT OVER

1945

WW2 ends, Communism returns

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

Germany retreats, as Communist forces return again - this time for forty five years.

CUT TO:

32

INSIDE MANSE, INT

DAY

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

Stalin beguiles the West at the Yalta Conference. Churchill and Roosevelt sanction the re-occupation of the Baltic countries.

FADE OUT TO BLACK:

33

INSIDE MANSE, INT

DAY

Stills of deportation trains.

TEXT OVER

1949

another - larger - mass deportation

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

This deportation is mostly ethnic farmers, labelled kulaks.

Deported ethnic populations are replaced by Soviet communist workers.

The remaining population are now forced to comply with collective farming.

CUT TO:

34 **INSIDE MANSE, INT** **DAY**

TEXT OVER

1949 displaced people flee Europe

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

1949 was also the year my parents fled Communist Europe, for a new life in Australia.

CUT TO:

35 **OLD CHURCH, EXT** **DAY**

Moving out of display into another room.

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

Here, local families have compiled these life stories, as a lasting tribute to their dear ones, taken - by the Communist machine.

FADE OUT TO:

36 **OUTSIDE MANSE, EXT** **DAY**

Olga and Helene pick up stones and place on pile of stones.

MINISTER

We can only imagine what these people must have gone through. When you pick up this stone and place it on the pile, you leave your worries there.

CUT TO:

37 **MEMORIAL SITE, EXT** **DAY**

Slow pan with stills of individual stones superimposed.

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

These silent sentinels stand for the many regions of Estonia which lost lives to the occupation.

38 **OLD CHURCH, EXT** **DAY**
WS of front entry and Aija walking through gate.

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

Just down the road, is the old church. The building's function was adapted to Communism - during the occupation.

39 **OLD CHURCH, INT** **DAY**
Features of the interior of the church and steeple.

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

Built in the 17th century, it's a stone memorial to survival.

The church is renowned for its ornamentation. It's a landmark in the area, by virtue of its very tall steeple.

DISSOLVE TO:

39 **OLD CHURCH, INT** **DAY**
Aija and Sarah follow Andres and climb up the steeple to the bell tower.

AIJA

Oh my gosh, Sarah!

Can you see all right Sarah?

SARAH

Oh, the camera's not doing so well, but I can see.

AIJA

Right up there - oh my gosh! What is that? It's a ladder.

SARAH

Can't see anything.

AIJA

The ladder's broken. Watch out here. He's trying to get another one down, and it's heavy - look out Sarah. Look at this! Right, here goes.

40

OLD CHURCH, INT

DAY

Arriving at the bell tower, photos are taken. Andres is seen balancing at an open window while Aija heads towards the bell and tests it out. It rings once and Andres panics. They all laugh and return down the tower.

AIJA

Oh my gosh, look at this - look at the view, will you. Amazing.

ANDRES

No, no, no, no, no!

AIJA

(Going down again) I tell you what, looking down is worse than looking up.

CUT TO:

41

OLGA'S KITCHEN, INT

NIGHT

CU of cake, then Sarah.

TEXT OVER

Sarah's going home party ..

SARAH

Cake ... mmmm cake.

42

OLGA'S KITCHEN, INT

NIGHT

Short clip of Sarah playing guitar and singing is interspersed.

AIJA (V/O) NARRATING

Sarah must return to Brisbane, so I'm losing my camera assistant, but university and music commitments won't wait.

CUT TO:

43 **OLGA'S KITCHEN, INT** **NIGHT**

HELENE

Do you sing 'happy birthday' here?

SARAH

Is it still the same tune?

ANDRE'S SON, MEELIS

The same melody yeah, but the words are different

SARAH

To say 'Happy Birthday' it says 'palju onne sunni pavaks'

Sarah starts to sing 'palju onne sunni pavaks'.

CUT TO:

44 **OLGA'S KITCHEN, INT** **NIGHT**

CU of cake being cut, followed by CU of cake half finished.

MS of Helene making humorous speech in Estonian.

MEELIS

Say some touching words.

HELENE

Some touching words .. tonight .. we are all together with Sarah .. tomorrow, she's going to Tallinn.

CUT TO:

45 **OLGA'S BACKYARD, EXT** **DAY**

Sarah hugs Olga and says goodbye. She gets into the car.

Some travel scenes follow.

SARAH

Oh, I feel sad - poor little Auntie Olga, I'm leaving.

CUT TO:

46 **IN CAR ON HIGHWAY, EXT** **DAY**

HELENE

Hundred and forty seven to Tallinn.

CUT TO:

47 **TALLINN, EXT** **DAY**

Sarah takes a photo in Tallinn square.

SARAH

Oh right ... well, do you want to go somewhere else?

Sarah talks on mobile phone while sight-seeing.

CUT TO:

48 **AIRPORT, INT** **DAY**

Cafeteria table, tarmac in background window, camera pans from Sarah to Helene then Andres.

SARAH

.. and I should be on a plane for about - over twenty hours.

ANDRES

One, four, five, star - that's the Estonian number, that's the Estonian code ...

AIJA (V/O NARRATING)

During her stay, Sarah confided that she'd felt very isolated at times, by not being able to speak the language.

FADE OUT TO:

49 **COUNTRY LANE, EXT** **DAY**

Scenery passing from car fades out to Olga and Helene, who are ambling down the road, on their way to Johan's. An alsation next door to Johan's barks loudly, Johan greets us.

AIJA (V/O NARRATING)

Returning to Olga's, we're meeting her neighbour, a returned kulak. Being labeled a kulak, meant deportation.

They're part of an ageing generation, says Olga, and their stories need telling.

TEXT OVER

Johan

CUT TO:

50 JOHAN'S HOUSE, INT DAY

JOHAN

(hand extended)

Sit on the divan.

CUT TO:

51 JOHAN'S HOUSE, INT DAY

HELENE

Why were you sent to Siberia?

JOHAN

Firstly, because I was in the German Army - mobilized. Later, I was a volunteer in the Estonian Defence Corps. Then my father was made a kulak.

On the 25th March, 1949, at 10 o'clock in the morning, the deporters came to take us, with five men.

The Soviet Captain who was in charge during the deportation was a wonderful man - if I met him again I would get him drunk. He gave us two hours to pack everything we needed. He kept strictly to the two

hours, but others were given much less time. He said "no paradise awaits you where you're going".

CUT TO:

52 JOHAN'S HOUSE, INT DAY

HELENE

How did you feel when you arrived in Russia?

JOHAN

Well, what was there to feel, you just had to accept it.

OLGA

Did you go in the cattle wagons?

JOHAN

Yes, cattle wagons, the doors were locked, windows barred. There was a little bunker stove in the corner and a bucket next to it for a toilet.

CUT TO:

53 JOHAN'S HOUSE, INT DAY

JOHAN

The first year - we arrived in April - in November the Russians held big celebrations. They had made Russian Praska - a second grade alcoholic drink - we were given meat because they slaughtered a beast, and everyone was given a portion of meat and Praska. After the celebrations, they accepted us as equals, before they rejected us because of negative propaganda, which portrayed us as criminals.

CUT TO:

54

JOHAN'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

JOHAN

In summer, just before John's Day, we began to build our own dwellings, from turf in the fields. We lived in those turf houses until 1954, then we built wooden houses.

OLGA

How did you make a house of clay, what was it like?

JOHAN

We ploughed up the paddock and cut pieces of turf about 70 cms long. We brought them home by cart and stacked them cross-wise. When it was high enough, we placed the rafters, covered them with wood, then turf. It was interesting that we found white clay which looked like lime. We covered the roof with it - a few cms thick - and it made the roof waterproof. The women mixed manure and clay to plaster the walls.

We were there 9 years and 4 months. Then they gave us our freedom.

I had a family - a wife and two children when we went to Siberia, and our third child was born over there in 1954.

CUT TO:

55

JOHAN'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

CU of Johan with cut-in of his parents.

HELENE

What was it like arriving back in Estonia?

JOHAN

It was very difficult. We were not accepted into the workplace. My father's home is 10 kms from here but we were not allowed to live there. Russian occupants lived there and we were not allowed to return home. When they returned, mum and dad managed to get a little room in their house, but were not registered.

CUT TO:

56

JOHAN'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

Helene & Olga exit the room and farewell Johan, running into Juri.

OLGA

Juri is here! Tomorrow we are coming to see you!

JURI

Oh, tomorrow you're coming? I was looking over my shoulder, wondering if you ladies had come to dig potatoes!

Going past barking dog again, scene fades out to Olga & Helene in driveway with ponies in background.

AIJA (V/O NARRATING)

The Communist propaganda about kulaks found its way into Australian history books. Kulaks were represented as greedy farmers who refused to give up their land for collective farming.

FADE OUT TO:

57

JURI & HELGI'S, INT

DAY

Helene & Olga get into car at Olga's. Arriving at Juri's, they climb the steps and knock on the door. Juri opens the door.

AIJA (V/O NARRATING)

Olga has brought us to Juri's place, in town. Juri and Helgi were also deported as kulaks, but they were children at the time.

JURI

Please ..

OLGA

Good-day (*in Latvian*)

JURI

Good-day, good-day, yes good-day.

58 **JURI & HELGI'S, INT** **DAY**

Helgi & Juri recall their family history.

TEXT OVER

Helgi and Juri

JURI

It was 1901 or 1902, my parents moved from South Estonia.

To Latvia, where the land was three times cheaper to buy than in Estonia.

CUT TO:

59 **JURI & HELGI'S, INT** **DAY**

Helgi exits and Mati enters the room and sits next to Juri.

TEXT OVER

Mati, Helgi's twin brother ..

MATI

Hello

JURI

(continuing)

In Latvia, they settled in Aluksne. There was an Estonian school at Aluksne. I finished 3 classes there but during the war it was liquidated, and I continued at a Latvian school. I couldn't finish fifth grade at school because on the 25th March I was taken to Siberia.

Our father was a mechanic in the military. As a citizen he was a mechanic, and he was still a mechanic during the German occupation - and that was enough of a reason. Mother said "who would take me away - one woman with two children - father's deported?" But she had a house! A beautiful two-storey house. The house was the second reason - it was that simple.

CUT TO:

60

JURI & HELGI'S, INT

DAY

HELGI

The farmers had horses and farming equipment and other animals. Some farmers had 30 hectares - more or less - that was considered to be quite a big farm - this was the beginning of problems for us.

There wasn't even a list of names - suddenly someone next to you would disappear - they had to fill their quotas.

MATI

You didn't need a reason to be taken away, if you didn't give them your horse, that was enough!

CUT TO:

61 **JURI & HELGI'S, INT** **DAY**

Juri leaves the room, leaving Mati & Helgi together.

JURI

Yes, OK

TEXT OVER

Twins, Mati and Helgi

HELGI

(cut-in of paddock)

Father had already been taken away in 1945 - August -
he was taken from the paddock.

They took grandmother and grandfather and the rest of
us all at once. We were put into a wagon - we were on
one side and Johan's family were on the other side.

CUT TO:

62 **JURI & HELGI'S, INT** **DAY**

HELGI

When we arrived, we took the place of another Russian
family, as co-tenants with a Russian mother.

MATI

The Russians were very good-hearted and generous people
- not mean at all.

HELGI

They were native Russians - not like those living here
now - altogether different.

CUT TO:

63 **JURI & HELGI'S, INT** **DAY**

Juri re-enters room, offering beer, and sits down.

JURI

You've got to offer beer to your visitors .. drink ..
drink.

CUT TO:

64 **JURI & HELGI'S, INT** **DAY**

MATI

To earn money was much simpler over there. At first we collected empty potato sacks from the fields - we sold them and made a little money, then I caught rats and got money for ratskins - I got 1 rubel for 1 skin. But you got a little more than someone who doesn't do anything.

CUT TO:

65 **JURI & HELGI'S, INT** **DAY**

HELGI

Are we going to have coffee now?

MATI

When I came from Siberia, I didn't even have a bag with me.

OLGA

Johan said that people mistrusted you when you came back

JURI

Yes.

MATI

Yes, quite right, they did.

CUT TO:

66 **JURI & HELGI'S, INT** **DAY**

Conversation continues over food and drinks.

OLGA

Was your farmhouse left intact?

MATI

The farm was leveled by the authorities because there was no-one living there.

HELGI

The paddocks that belonged to the Commissar were really ours.

JURI

The communal farm had no solid foundation, there was absolutely nothing there. They just made a communal farm and sent the population to Siberia. The animal sheds were left behind, the animals were left behind, the farm equipment was left behind, big grain threshing machines were left behind - all of this was used to start a communal farm. In 1949 many people were taken away, when the next communal farms began, everybody had to leave, if you didn't, you were taken to Siberia. Although it seemed that another deportation didn't occur, isolated instances continued.

MATI

Jesus worshippers and believers were sent and others that had been left behind.

OLGA

In 1950 there was another deportation.

MATI

Yes, yes, it was later.

CUT TO:

JURI

When the nose becomes red, because you've been drinking .. and then, record it on film, it adds colour to the film.

FADE OUT TO:

67 **OLGA'S HOUSE, EXT** **DAY**

Olga, Helene and Andres get out of car and Andres pats dog. Dog waits outside the back door with a stick for someone to play with him.

AIJA V/O - NARRATING

Karla the dog will have to wait 'til tomorrow, when we leave for Tartu, the second largest city to Tallinn. We'll be having lunch there with Olga's friends.

CUT TO:

68 **HOUSE IN TARTU, INT** **DAY**

Vello shakes hands with Andres and hugs Olga.

VELLO

hello, hello, hello, hello

FADE OUT TO:

69 **HOUSE IN TARTU, INT** **DAY**

Vello and Liina are at the table. After lunch, Vello brings out photo album with pictures of Juri Kukk.

TEXT OVER

Liina and Vello

VELLO

Yes, this is Juri Kukk - here he is celebrating with his colleagues.

I lacked courage at that time and was too scared to protest against the Soviet regime. Juri was my lecturer at university, and I was his student. He was fearless.

After he took the step of standing against the Soviet authorities in 1980, his doctoral career at the university began to go downhill. He went down, down, down. He gave fewer and fewer lectures to his students, until he was imprisoned and there he died.

OLGA

He came back from France though, and what about life over there? He was talking about life over there and that's why they imprisoned him. His family suffered a lot. They had two children and one of them died.

FADE OUT TO:

70

HOUSE IN TARTU, INT

DAY

TEXT OVER PHOTOS

The New York Times records ..

An Estonian dissident, Juri Kukk, a 40-year-old chemistry professor, has died in a Soviet labor camp after a four-month hunger strike, Estonian exile sources here reported today. He was arrested in February 1980 on charges of "distributing anti-Soviet propaganda."

FADE OUT TO:

71

HOUSE IN TARTU, INT

DAY

Article about Alice Kuperjanov opens scene.

HELENE

Alice Kuperjanov lived here happily and now our friends Liina and Vello with their family are living in this house here.

And her husband, Julius Kuperjanov, was a freedom-fighter for Estonia, and - he was killed in action.

VELLO

He symbolized freedom, and throughout his short life, he fought for Estonian freedom. People wanted to remember his spirit, so during the Soviet era, whenever there were celebrations - on his birthday, or at Christmas, people would gather at his graveside.

LIINA

Young people honor him very much and even now they go to his graveside.

DISSOLVE TO:

72 **HOUSE IN TARTU, EXT** **DAY**
Going down steps, looking at exterior of house, and getting into car.

HELENE (V/O)

Vello and Liina want to restore the house completely and put a little monument plaque somewhere to show that once upon a time Kuperjanovs lived in this house.

73 **SALME'S HOUSE, EXT** **DAY**
Driving shot, then arriving outside Salme's house.

AIJA (V/O) NARRATING

Today, we're visiting this picturesque old farm. The farm belongs to Salme, another of Olga's neighbors. Salme also became an enemy of the regime, but for a different reason to the others.

SALME

(She approaches from the garden, then we follow her into the house.)

Hello, I don't remember much about Siberia, I was only 8 years old at the time.

OLGA

And is this the same house you were taken out of, is it?

SALME

Yes.

Yesterday I went mushrooming. Then I bought some bread and potatoes.

CUT TO:

74

SALME'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

Helene & Olga & Salme sit around the kitchen table in front of a window.

HELENE

Why were you sent to Siberia?

SALME

Because of my father's German nationality, and the size of the farm as well.

CUT TO:

Mother and father went to Tartu. We were four children and they went to get money for us by bicycle - there was no other transport. Our father's sister was minding us, and my twin brothers were only six months old. The day we were deported was August 15th, 1945. One of the twins - Juri - died. Juri died of diphtheria.

CUT TO:

75

SALME'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

HELENE

How did they transport you?

SALME

By horse and buggy from Jogeva - Jogeva - my brother lost his jumper and I wanted to get it but the man with the gun wouldn't let me. We stopped at the train

station in Jogeva for several days. We were eating berries. I can't remember how I managed with the children. In 1945 I was just seven.

OLGA

How did you manage a six month old baby?

SALME

I don't know how. I look at my grandchildren today and they are so soft.

When our parents came back from Tartu, neighbours told them we'd been taken to the communal farm.

We stopped at Rapa station - here, people were being taken off the train. Some people hid us - I'm not sure who they were - so we wouldn't go missing.

CUT TO:

76

SALME'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

SALME

I didn't know how to fear anything. It was wonderful that our parents found us - in the wagons.

I know that the Russian children were much worse off. At least we had bread to eat. We threw our crusts into the toilet buckets in the wagons - these were emptied at the stations. The children were so starved that they ate these crusts.

CUT TO:

77

SALME'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

SALME

When we arrived in Siberia, we were taken to a big cattle shed, and we all slept on the floor.

My father's parents happened to be there too.
They were in Kiltsi, well they were Germans too.

OLGA

You were all born in Estonia, weren't you?

SALME

Yes - in Estonia.

OLGA

Did you endure starvation?

SALME

Of course - yes.

OLGA

They were really starved.

SALME

Father knew of an established potato field ten kilometers away. The potato crop was already established for winter, and there were turnips as well. When he got there, there was nothing left - except a few turnips, so we got some turnips.

CUT TO:

78

SALME'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

SALME

Well it was near Christmas time and they took us from the cattle shed to a Russian village - the villagers organized this.

OLGA

So the Russians welcomed you ... the Russians were really wonderful.

SALME

Yes, we were placed with a Russian family, and shared a room with them. It was divided down the middle. We were on one side and they on the other. Sometimes they

gave us some potato flour for baking and sometimes the little boy shared his bread with my mother.

OLGA

But they were deportees themselves, weren't they?

SALME

No, they owned that house themselves. After we'd left, they were being questioned, so we heard - because they had sheltered us. They knew we would be leaving.

OLGA

I see - so they didn't report you.

SALME

Yes.

CUT TO:

79

SALME'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

HELENE

How many years were you there?

SALME

Eight years and eight months, and then we all escaped. We escaped with our father - together.

OLGA

But where did you escape to?

SALME

When we escaped, we went to Rakvere, where we had an aunt there. During the day, we hid in a rye field, and at night, we slept somewhere - we knew people there and slept at different places each night - we knew they were searching for us. Then autumn came and we had to go to school, then we went to Kiltsi.

OLGA

Your father escaped as well, didn't he?

SALME

Yes, he escaped - that's the reason he was caught and taken back again.

Since then, I haven't been able to eat blackcurrants. We had nothing else to eat and we were very hungry, so we ate them until we were ill.

CUT TO:

80

SALME'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

SALME

Dad's brother had made this thing in the ground - um, what is it called - it was in the ground - you know ..

OLGA

Bunker

SALME

Bunker - yes - then we stayed there. Later on we lived with our aunt - no - uncle - then we had more privacy. Then they took father away again.

OLGA

How did they get him, I wonder if somebody informed on him. Must have been our own people reporting him.

SALME

Yes, they were all local people who informed on him. Dad asked the informers for his furniture back.

OLGA

Yes, they took the furniture for themselves.

SALME

It was all new furniture we'd just bought. It wasn't always the Russians informing.

OLGA

Often it was our own people betraying us.

DISSOLVE TO:

81

SALME'S HOUSE, INT

DAY

OLGA

How long was he in Siberia?

SALME

He came back in '57.

OLGA

So he was taken in '45 and escaped in '57 - that was a terribly long time - over 10 years.

SALME

Yes, he was in a prison camp then.

OLGA

That was a terrible time for him.

SALME

He came back to Estonia another time.

OLGA

So he escaped a third time!

SALME

This time he was freed from prison and he came back to Estonia but the informers had already reported him and he was taken back again - in 24 hours he had to be out of Estonia. So he went back to Russia again.

OLGA

This time, did they add years to his imprisonment?

SALME

He wasn't there for long, then he came back again.

OLGA

Stalin was already dead then.

SALME

Then we went to Kiltsi, because we weren't permitted to stay here. We were not allowed to stay in our own home.

OLGA

I suppose he talked about Siberia

SALME

No, he didn't talk about it much at all.

OLGA

Nobody wants to talk about it much.

CUT TO:

82 **SALME'S HOUSE, INT** **DAY**

HELENE

When you look back on it all, how do you feel now?

SALME

Well, what can you do, you just have to accept it.

FADE OUT TO:

83 **SALME'S HOUSE, EXT** **DAY**

Scan of outside of house and barn, the car is seen approaching in the distance.

AIJA (V/O) NARRATING

Tension between the Estonians and Russians is a thorny legacy of the former regime.

Inside car, Andres & Olga discuss Salme's farm.

ANDRES

This is a well-established farm here.

OLGA

Oh yes, it's been hugely successful in the past.

LONG FADE OUT:

84 **DESERTED HOUSE, EXT** **DAY**

Outside of house, then Andres inside looking at an old Communist paper, and various shots of furniture and everyday items left behind.

AIJA (V/O) NARRATING

We passed a deserted farmhouse. Curiosity brought us back to take a look.

ANDRES

The 'Kommunismile'

Such is the road to Communism - show them what the road to Communism is like - and we even found a newspaper called "the road to Communism".

This IS the road to Communism.

LONG FADE OUT

85 **BRISBANE AIRPORT, EXT** **DAY**

Qantas plane landing, followed by sign denoting place - Brisbane, then misty mountain road (as in opening), going up, not down this time.

AIJA V/O (NARRATING)

This was my first experience of my parents' homelands - a confrontation with the unknown - yet familiar.

I went with the hope of exposing injustices, but returned with a sense of obtaining privileged information - a kind of *insider* in an *outside* world.

THE END

Appendix B

Consent forms and letters

Consent forms and letters were required in three languages: English, Latvian and Estonian.

Dear

In September 2006, I visited you and filmed you as part of the story in a documentary film I was making as part of my Masters research project at the Queensland University of Technology.

Now I am forwarding consent forms, for your signature, and the first edit of the film where you will see the segment in which you appear.

As consent issues are not finalized, the film cannot be shown publicly yet, but I will send you a final copy when it is finished.

The consent forms are a standard release form, used by the university.

Please send the signed form back to me as soon as possible. This will allow me to finish the film.

I will be trying to promote the film to local television but the documentary film market is very competitive.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours faithfully,

Kallis....

2006. a. septembris ma külastasin Teid ja filmisin Teid osana dokumentaalfilmist, mida ma tegin minu magistri uurimisprojekti osana Queenslandi Tehnoloogiaülikoolis.

Nüüd ma saadan nõusoleku formulari Teie allkirja saamiseks ja filmi esimese montaaži, millest Teie võite näha lõiku, kus Teie olete peal.

Kuna nõusolekute load ei ole lõplikult vormistatud, siis filmi ei või veel avalikult näidata, aga ma saadan Teile lõpliku koopia, kui see on lõpetatud.

Nõusoleku formularid on standardne loovutuse vorm, mida ülikool kasutab.

Palun saatke allakirjutatud formular mulle niipea kui võimalik tagasi. See võimaldab mul filmi lõpetada.

Ma püüan hoolitseda, et filmi näidataks kohalikus televisioonis, aga dokumentaalfilmide turul on väga suur võistlus.

Ma ootan Teilt hea meelega uudiseid,

Austavalt Teie

Ļoti cien

Septembri 2006, es Jūs filmēju ka daļu no sava magistratūras darba Kvinslandes Technologiskās Universitātes dokumentārā filma.

Tagad es nosūtu Jums Atbīvošanas Dokumentu un lūdzu to parakstīt. Nosūtu arī pirmo filmas izlaidumu, kur Jūs variet redzēt to daļu, kurā Jūs esiet redzamas.

Tā kā Atbīvošanas Dokuments nav vēl parakstīts, tad filmu nevar publiski izrādīt, bet es Jums nosūtīšu kopiju, kad filma būs pabeigta.

Šis standartizētais Atbīvošanas Dokuments ir forma, kādu lieto Universitāte. Lūdzu atsūtiet man parkstīto dokumentu pēc iespējas drīz. Tas man dos laiku pabeigt filmu.

Es mēģināšu proponēt filmu vietējai televīzijai, bet dokumentāro filmu marketingā ir liela konkurence.

Uz Jūsu drīzu atbildi gaidot,

Ar patiesu cieņu,



STANDARD PERSONAL RELEASE (DOCUMENTARY)

The Film: **“Regimes and Rebels”**

In consideration of an end credit in the Film “Regimes and Rebels”, I hereby irrevocably authorise and grant to Aija Brzozovskis, and the Queensland University of Technology (“the Producer” which includes its successors and assigns) the right to:

1. record my (picture and/or voice) on photographs, film and/or video tape, for audio only, audio and visual and/or visual only reproduction (“the Recording”);
2. edit the Recording into a film/television program (which may include other recordings and material);
3. use my name and likeness, voice, biographic or other information concerning me;
4. screen and broadcast the Recording in the Film; and
5. use and license others to use the Recording in all media throughout the world for the full period of copyright, including for the purposes of publicity, advertising, sales and promotion of the Film.

Other material:

I also grant the producer a non-exclusive license to use the following material in the Film: (eg. Personal papers, manuscripts, photographs, memorabilia, footage, musical works)

I hereby release the producer from any infringement or violation of personal and/or property rights of any sort whatsoever based upon the use of the Recording.

I acknowledge that the Producer owns and shall own all rights, title, interest (including copyright) in the Recording.

I further acknowledge that the producer is not obliged to use the Recording.

I warrant that I have full power to enter into this Release and that the terms of this Release do not in any way conflict with any existing commitment on my part.

Reference to "the Recording" in this Release includes any and all edited versions made by the Producer and also includes any previously recorded material of me made by the producer.

.....
Agreed and accepted by the Releasor Date
(sign above)

Print Name:
Address:
.....

.....
Signature of the Producer Date



Standardne isiklik loovutus dokumentaalfilmiks

Film: “Režiimid ja vastuhakk”

Seoses filmi “Režiimid ja vastuhakk” lõputiitritega annan ma siinkohal tagasivõtmatu loa Aija Brzozovskis’ele ja Queenslandi Tehnoloogiainstituudile (edaspidi “Produtsent”, kes hõlmab ka tema järeltulijaid ja õigusjärglasi):

1. salvestada minu (pilte ja/või häält) fotodel, filmil ja/või videolindil ainult audio, audio ja visuaalseks ja/või ainult visuaalseks reprodutseerimiseks (edaspidi “Salvestus”);
2. toimetada Salvestust filmi/televisiooniprogrammiks (milline võib sisaldada teisi salvestusi ja materjale);
3. kasutada minu nime ja pilti, häält, biograafilist või muud mind puudutavat informatsiooni;
4. linastada ja levitada Salvestust Filmis; ja
5. lubada teisi kasutada Salvestust kõikjal meedias üle maailma kogu autoriõiguse perioodi jooksul, kaasa arvatud Filmi avalikustamise, reklaamimise, müümise ja propageerimise eesmärgil.

Muu materjal:

Samuti annan ma Produtsendile litsentsi järgmiste materjalide kasutamiseks Filmis: (näiteks, isiklikud dokumendid, käsikirjad, fotod, mälestused, meened, muusikateosed)

Käesolevaga välistan igasuguse omapoolse isiku- või omandiõiguse alase kaebuse Produtsendi suhtes seoses Salvestuse ükskõik millise kasutamisega.

Ma kinnitan, et Produtsent omab ja saab omama Salvestuses kõiki õigusi, tiitlit ja huve (kaasa arvatud autoriõigus).

Ma kinnitan lisaks, et Produtsent ei ole kohustatud Salvestust kasutama.

Ma garanteerin, et mul on õigus sõlmida seda Loovutust ja et selle Loovutuse tingimused ei lähe mitte mingil viisil vastuollu mitte ühegi minu olemasoleva kohustusega.

Viitamine Salvestusele selles Loovutuses hõlmab mistahes Produtsendi tehtud toimetatud versioone ja hõlmab ka ükskõik millist Produtsendi poolt minust tehtud salvestusmaterjali.

.....
Loovutaja nõusolek ja heakskiit
(allkiri)

Kuupäev

Nimi

Address

Produtsendi allkiri

Kuupäev



VISPĀRĒJS STANDARTIZĒTS ATBRĪVOŠANAS DOKUMENTS (Dokumentāla rakstura materiāliem)

FILMA „Režimi un Dumpinieki”.

Attiecībā uz kreditiem filmas „Režimi un Dumpinieki” beigās ar šo es neatsaucami autorizēju un piešķiru Aijai Bržozovskai un Kvīnslandes Tehnoloģijas Universitāte (Producentam, kā arī viņa pēctečiem un juridiskiem mantiniekiem) tiesības:

1. ierakstīt manu attēlu un/vai balsi foto attēlos, filmā un/vai video lentē, vai tikai ierakstīt skaņu (audio), reproducēt skaņu un vizuālo materiālu un/vai tikai vizuālo materiālu. (Ierakstīšana)
2. ievietot ierakstus filmu/televīzijas uzvedumos (arī tādos, kas satur citus ierakstus un materiālu)
3. lietot manu vārdu, attēlu, balsi un, cik tas attiecas uz mani, biografisko un citu materiālu.
4. izrādīt (ekranizēt) un pārraidīt ierakstus filmā; un lietot un dot atļauju citiem lietot ierakstus presē, radio, televīzijā (media) visā pasaulē, kamēr izbeidzas autortiesību periods, ieskaitot reklamēšanos, komerciāla rakstura sludinājumus un filmas propogandēšanu.

Pārējais materiāls.

Es arī piešķiru Producentam tiesības lietot sekojošo materiālu filmā (piem., personīgos dokumentus, manuskriptus, fotografijas, suvenīrus, kino vai televīzijas filmu kadrus)

.....

Ar šo apliecinu, ka Producenti nav atbildīgi par jebkādiem personīgo tiesību vai īpašumu tiesību pārkāpumiem, cik tas saistās ar Ieraksta lietošanu.

Es apstiprinu, ka Producentam pieder un piederēs visas tiesības, titulis un intereses (ieskaitot autortiesības) attiecībā uz Ierakstu.

Es bez tam apstiprinu, ka Producenti nav spiesti lietot Ierakstu. Es apstiprinu, ka man ir pilnas tiesības šādu Atbrīvošanas dokumentu parakstīt un ka tas nekādā veidā nav konfliktā ar manām patreizējām saistībām.

Visas references uz Ierakstu šajā Atbrīvošanas dokumentā iekļauj visus Producenta rediģētos variantus, kā arī viņa par mani iepriekš ierakstītos materiālus.

.....
Piekrists un akceptēts no Atbrīvošanas datums
dokumenta autora

drukāt vārdu
adrese
.....

.....
Producenta paraksts. datums

Appendix C

Footnotes

1. The website of the Museum of the Occupation of Estonia (2011) states:
“A significant part of the repressive policy conducted in Estonia by Soviet occupation powers in 1940–88 was repression of individuals, that is, people who were presumably disloyal to the current regime vanished without a trace (were secretly murdered) or were murdered publicly without court; arrests for political reasons on the basis of plans and deportations to faraway Russian prison camps were carried out continuously.”

Writing for Storia Libera.it, Sandra Kalniete (2011) states:

“There is not one family in the Baltic States, that does not have its own Siberian story to tell and the loved ones who disappeared in those vast frozen lands. All of our stories are the same. The dates and places of deportations are the same. The atrocities and the denials of human rights are the same. Only the names are different.”

Of the thirty Articles listed on the UDHR, the first ten reveals several that are congruent with the illegal occupation, forced deportation, execution and torture inflicted on the indigenous populations. Article 3 upholds the “right to life, liberty and security of person”; Article 5 prohibits “torture” and “cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”; Article 9 states that “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”; Article 10 advocates the right of everyone “to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him”. The list continues.

2. ‘Canvas’ magazine was published online at <http://canvas.e-p.net.au> in August 2009, where I accessed the referenced article. This magazine should not be confused with the current ‘Canvas’ magazine found at www.canvasmagazine.net