Abstract

Eastern Europe provides an interesting case study for the effects of life under occupation and how peoples and societies may recover from such traumatic histories. Recently, the lasting effects of Soviet occupation have once again been brought to the forefront, especially in Ukraine and in world relations with Russia more generally. One area that seems often forgotten is the Baltics. Estonia, specifically, has a unique history of overlapping occupation, resistance, and independence that offers a fascinating perspective and insight for those who take the time to understand it. In Part I of this joint thesis, Brianna Lisak explores life in Estonia under its multitude of occupations, and more significantly, life under Soviet occupation. Section I will give a brief look at the history of Estonia and its first occupations, prior to the 20th century. Section II will explore Estonia and Europe in the first half of the 20th century, discussing Estonia's experience during the Russian Revolutions, the World Wars, and how, ultimately, it came to be under more permanent Soviet control. Section III will explore life in Soviet Estonia until roughly 1980. In Part II of the joint thesis, Anna Wiegand explores life in Estonia from the independence movement to the present. Section I discusses the measures that the Estonians took to gain independence from the Soviet Union. Section II examines the challenges the country faced during its political, economic, and social transitions. Section III explores Estonia's attempts to preserve its culture and form an independent national identity. Though Estonia's history of occupation still affects the country today, in many ways, its recovery has been a remarkable success.