**The Portrayal of the Holocaust in Latvia as told by The National Occupation Museum of Latvia**

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The purpose of this poster is to analyze how the history of perpetration of the Holocaust within Latvia has been portrayed by the National Occupation Museum of Latvia. Under the guidance of Dr. Teresa Sanislo, I began reading literature on Latvian History and the Holocaust during the summer of 2006. I continued building my background knowledge while participating in the Central and Eastern European Seminar Tour, during which I acquired general knowledge about the Holocaust and Eastern European History. I gathered my data at the museum during the Fall Semester of 2006 while in the Baltic Studies program at the University of Latvia in Riga, with an emphasis on Latvian History.

### National Occupation Museum of Riga
- Established in 1993 by the Occupation Museum Foundation
- The goal of the museum is to show what happened to the Latvian Nation from 1940 to 1991, remind the world of the crimes committed against Latvia, and remember the victims of occupation
- The museum portrays the three occupations of Latvia: The first Soviet Occupation, National Socialist German Occupation, and the Second Soviet Occupation
- The exhibits consist of numerous primary source documents such as government documents, newspaper clippings, photographs, and artifacts.
- Written explanations of the exhibits, as well as audio guides, are provided in Latvian, English, Russian, and German

### History of Occupation
- November 18, 1918 Latvia declared its independence from Russia
- Latvian independence would come to an end on June 17, 1940 as Soviet Tanks entered Riga, the capital of Latvia
- On July 1, 1941 Latvia was invaded by the German Army, replacing the Soviet Union as the ruling power
- May 8, 1945 marked the end of Nazi control of Latvia and the reestablishment of Soviet Occupation, which would last until 1991
- August 21, 1991 Latvia declared its independence from the Soviet Union, after 51 years of occupation

### The Holocaust in Latvia
- Jews segregated from society and forced to wear Yellow Star of David
- Mass executions committed by Security Police and Einsatzgruppe A
- 25,000 Jews murdered at Rumbula Forest by a twelve man military unit
- 25,000 Jews Deported to Latvia from Nazi Occupied Territory
- Total of 70,000 Jews killed
- Historically Latvians not highly anti-Semitic
- Many Latvians sympathetic of Jews
- Some Latvians gave Jews food in Ghettos
- 400 Jews (of the 6000 still remaining) were rescued by local Latvians – 55 by Žanis Lipke
- Due to effective Nazi propaganda, apathy, or ignorance of Nazi activities, most Latvians were passive

### Strengths of Museum
- Highly informative
- Strong collection of primary sources and artifacts
- Inclusion of Holocaust in the overall presentation of Latvian occupation history
- Acknowledgment of Latvian participation in perpetration of the Holocaust
- Emphasis on Latvians who risked their lives to save Jews

### Analysis and Assessment

### Areas for Improvement
- 18 of over 200 exhibits dealt with Nazi Occupation, only 4 of which directly dealt with the issue of the Holocaust
- More emphasis was put on Soviet atrocities during First Occupation than German atrocities against Jews
- Lack of personal experiences of Jews during the Holocaust in Latvia
- Jews were portrayed as a distinct subculture within Latvia, not part of the Latvian Nation as a whole
- The controversial nature of Latvian anti-Semitism and participation in the Holocaust should be emphasized and the audience given the opportunity to determine the extent

**Funded by Differential Tuition and the UWEC History Department**