“Unless They Have To”: Power, Politics and Institutional Hierarchy in Lithuanian Holocaust Education

Christine Beresniova

Introduction

The Holocaust is a controversial topic in post-Soviet states (Bartov 2008; Dietsch 2012; Gross 2013; Gross and Stevick 2010; Himka 2008; Pettai 2011a; Stevick 2007; Weiss-Wendt 2009). Because of this, teachers in these countries can encounter critical reactions from peers when they suggest classroom lessons and additional school programmes on Holocaust history. The potential for conflict with colleagues makes teachers hesitant to teach about the Holocaust. As one teacher in Lithuania explained, teachers and school directors do not talk about the subject “unless they have to”. The frequently spoken comment “unless they have to” highlights both how unpopular the topic is in Lithuanian society and their view of the educational system as a vertical hierarchy rather than a horizontal structure. In Lithuania, where the educational system remains highly centralised, teachers suggested that school directors could be a significant factor in developing Lithuanian Holocaust education; however, few studies address how politics and hierarchy influence teachers’ levels of motivation to participate in Holocaust education.

Unsurprisingly, teachers with supportive school directors were more willing to subject themselves to peer criticism for working with Holocaust programmes than those without similar administrative support; the study I describe here reveals the dynamics that undergird this pattern. In addition, I examine how teacher attitudes toward the benefits of hierarchy changed significantly when international agencies became more outspoken about Lithuanian Holocaust education. Most supportive teachers and school directors saw the leadership of international “experts” in

C. Beresniova (✉)
Takiff Foundation Fellow, Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126 USA
e-mail: acberesn@indiana.edu

© Springer International Publishing Switzerland 2015

Z. Gross, E.D. Stevick (Eds.), *As the Witnesses Fall Silent: 21st Century Holocaust Education in Curriculum, Policy and Practice*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-15419-0_22

Holocaust education as counterproductive to their efforts because the visibility of foreign advocates exacerbated local perceptions of the Holocaust as a "western" or "Jewish" issue. The widely-held view that the Holocaust was an "outside" issue made it harder for supportive teachers to persuade colleagues that it had local significance. The desire teachers expressed for more visible participation by school directors—but less visible participation by international agencies—highlights how not all forms of hierarchical pressure were equally helpful in promoting Holocaust education in Lithuania.

In light of the politics inherent in post-Soviet Holocaust education, in this chapter I ask what a case study of Lithuania can tell us about the ways that school directors navigate political issues in their professional life. Additionally, I explore how the attitudes of school directors influence teachers' motivation to engage in Holocaust education. I seek to inform both theoretical and practical discussions. I also advocate for more detailed research on how power, politics, and hierarchy influence the development of Holocaust education.

Methodology

This chapter is informed by 24 months of anthropological fieldwork in Lithuania (2011–2013), which took place at schools in 19 different cities with over 75 key interviews. To better understand the role that hierarchy plays in Holocaust education, I used qualitative methods, including participant observation and interviews. Because I was interested in the effects of international power relationships, I employed a multi-sited research design. George Marcus (1995) explains that multi-sited ethnographic research "moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space" (p. 96). Multi-sited ethnography maps how relationships move across groups rather than how individuals relate to a topic in a fixed site.

I conducted and analysed my observations and interviews primarily in Lithuanian. I interpreted my data using Phil Carspecken's (1996) methods for ethnographic research in educational settings; they focus on how power relationships influence socially-negotiated meanings. To further understand the role of hierarchies in Lithuanian Holocaust education, I drew on the framework of "policy as practice", developed by Bradley Levinson and Margaret Sutton (2001), which views individual appropriation as integral to policy implementation. Appropriation is an important concept to integrate into policy studies; researchers need to ask how an individual understands policy expectations and then enacts these in her daily practices.

The majority of individuals I interviewed were teachers and school directors, a position that is similar to a school principal in the United States. I also spoke with politicians, diplomats, museum workers, and members of the Jewish community. As I report on our conversations, I refer to all of them with pseudonyms. One of the key participants in this study, Ona, was both a teacher and a political representative. Ona

served as the deputy director of education at the Commission for the Evolution of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Regimes in Lithuania (the Commission) and also taught history part-time at a large secondary school. Ona oversaw the daily operations of the Commission's educational division, which had several key aims. The first aim was to acquaint Lithuanian teachers with the Commission's findings on formal classroom lessons. The second aim was to train teachers to lead five nationally recognised days of commemoration in their schools. These are Lithuanian Holocaust Remembrance Day; International Tolerance Day; 13 January, the date when Soviet troops killed Lithuanians; International Holocaust Remembrance Day; and the Lithuanian Day of Mourning and Hope to commemorate Soviet exiles. The third aim was to establish Tolerance Education Centres (TECs) in schools around Lithuania. These centres used historical examples from the Nazi and Soviet periods to promote democratic values, such as tolerance. While the Commission's activities focused on supplementing regular classroom lessons, most of their programmes were offered as extracurricular activities in the TECs. Students who participated in the centres volunteered to clean Jewish cemeteries, research their town's wartime history, host Soviet exiles as guest speakers in their schools, or participate in local programmes about tolerance. Most of the teachers who oversaw school the TECs were also teachers of history or literature, or teachers responsible for classroom lessons on these topics.

Theorising School Directors, Politics and Hierarchy

Because teachers play an important role in school operations, the success of school policy reform depends on what Levinson and Sutton (2001) call teacher "buy-in". However, when teachers are involved in implementing policy, that process entails more than simply acting on personal motivations: practical considerations can also limit their professional practices. Levinson and Sutton see educational policy implementation as "constantly negotiated and reorganized in the ongoing flow of institutional life" (p. 2). As researchers examine how individuals appropriate policy, discussions move from how hierarchy is envisioned in theory, to how people understand its influence in practice.

One factor that influences individual policy appropriation is politics (Blase and Anderson 1995; Hallinger and Leithwood 1998; Leithwood 1995; Owen 2006). However, Gary Crow and Dick Weindling (2010) argue that scholars do not fully understand the impact of broader political situations on school leadership because most studies focus primarily on technical competencies and bureaucratic politics. In their study on English headmasters, Crow and Weindling found that contemporary school leaders had to develop professional skills beyond "micro-level" institutional politics to understand "how the school is a political institution both inside and outside at the global, societal, and community levels" (p. 141). An especially important point in their study was the need to train school leaders to navigate political situations because few English headmasters felt prepared for the politically fraught aspects

of their job. Many headmasters explained that they figured out how to navigate political influences through "trial and error" (2010, p. 154)—not an approach they felt was effective for school leadership.

Because politics can significantly influence school policies, the authors posit that school leaders require "a different type of knowledge" to account for "interest group pressures on education, ideological differences that impinge on schools, and environmental conditions that struggle for recognition and resources" (p. 142). Thus, they see the need to pay more attention to the influence of political situations on school directors; this need is especially acute in post-Soviet states, where educational reforms took place simultaneously at the international and local levels.

Holocaust Education in Lithuania

In 1991, Lithuania achieved independence from the Soviet Union and immediately sought accession to western organisations, such as the European Union (EU). As part of its membership negotiations for such groups, the Lithuanian government adopted a wide array of reforms. During the conversations for accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), expectations for post-Soviet Holocaust education emerged. However, the idea that Holocaust knowledge could serve as a marker for an "educated person" (Short and Reed 2004, p. 1) was a considerable departure from earlier Soviet attitudes toward the subject. In the Soviet Union, events of the Holocaust had been subsumed into a broader Soviet narrative about mass atrocities perpetrated against all "Soviet citizens" during the war (Gundare and Batelaan 2003, p. 155; Gross and Stevick 2010, p. 23). Therefore, when post-Soviet countries applied for NATO and EU membership, local populations did not value knowing the details of Holocaust history. In fact, Eva-Clarita Pettai (2011a) found that international calls for Holocaust education actually "caught Baltic elites rather by surprise" (p. 159) because local historians saw the Soviet Occupation as more relevant to post-Soviet national identity.

To address outstanding Holocaust issues in post-Soviet states, members of the international community linked accession requirements to Holocaust atonement. These requirements included instituting commemorations for Holocaust-era events and returning Jewish communal property to survivor communities. Consequently, many Holocaust programmes in Lithuania were introduced by western agencies. The international introduction of Holocaust education had ramifications on the degree to which local populations internalised its importance.

Many scholars have attempted to explain teachers' post-Soviet attitudes toward Holocaust education, especially their negative attitudes (Gross 2013; Gundare and Batelaan 2003; Michaels 2013; Misco 2008; Stevick 2012; Waldman 2004). The most commonly cited reason for resistance to Holocaust education is the importance that the history of the Soviet Occupation holds in post-Soviet states. But local connections to Soviet history do not completely explain the situation. In Lithuania, many teachers explained that their participation in Holocaust education was shaped

by the culture of their school community, which they saw as reflecting attitudes found in the wider society.

However, it is important to note that highly-charged discussions about the Holocaust were not taking place only in the post-Soviet states. In the 1990s, reparations cases were being pursued all over Europe—largely at the impetus of politicians and lawyers in the United States. Following especially visible reparations cases against Switzerland, Germany, and France, 41 member states from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) met in Stockholm in 2000 to discuss the future of Holocaust remembrance. As a result of the meeting, OSCE member countries agreed to create an international Holocaust task force based on the *Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust* (IHRA 2000). The declaration was significant because it called on all member states to make Holocaust remembrance a national priority.

In response to international calls for more attention to Holocaust education, the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science organised several initiatives, including teacher training programmes. For political reasons too complex to discuss here, Lithuanian Holocaust education programmes were subsequently shifted from the purview of that ministry to the Commission, a small and relatively powerless governmental agency. Similar to historical commissions established in Latvia and Estonia at the same time, the Lithuanian Commission was a product of politics. According to Eva-Clarita Pettai (2011b), the Baltic commissions were created "in response to outside pressure to confront many still open questions about the recent past" (p. 265). While all three commissions were tasked with researching the histories of Nazi and Soviet Occupation in the Baltic States, the Lithuanian one also adopted a local educational component. Although pedagogical institutions were still technically responsible for preparing teachers to teach history in Lithuania, professional development for Holocaust education became largely the responsibility of the Commission. According to the Commission's records, it trained between 4,000 and 5,000 teachers in various seminars over the last 11 years; it cannot say exactly how many individuals attended, as some may have come to more than one seminar.

However, the work of the Commission has not been without controversy.

Controversy and the Commission

The Lithuanian government has heralded the Commission's programmes as demonstrating Lithuania's commitment to Holocaust education. But they have also sparked debate. First, some question whether its educational programmes are effective, given that they lack significant financial resources. Second, some have asked why the Commission is charged with educational programmes when it is not part of the Ministry of Education or affiliated with any pedagogical universities. Third, many educators argue that the Commission has established a monopoly on Holocaust education programmes, shutting out other potential programme partners: the OSCE,

B'nai Brith, the Anne Frank House, and Centropa have offered Holocaust education programmes in Lithuania. Finally, concerns exist about the decision to situate the Holocaust with the Soviet Occupation in historical conversations. Many western politicians questioned such a twofold approach to historical investigation because they worried that local people would conflate the suffering from the Soviet era and from the Holocaust as morally equivalent.

In conversations in the West, people discuss the Holocaust as a distinct subject, but many Lithuanians teach about the Holocaust and the Soviet Occupation as overlapping genocides. Because Lithuanians call that occupation a "genocide", some groups accuse them of trying to equalise the suffering caused by the two events; Zilinskas (2009) reviews these debates. In fact, some engage in what the historian Antony Polonsky (in Cohen 2012, p. 1) calls a "Suffering Olympics" as they discuss the motivations of Lithuanians who want to teach the Soviet Occupation as genocide. In response to such accusations, many Lithuanians criticise western politicians for neglecting the Soviet Occupation in their schools; they think this reveals an acute power imbalance in international politics of memory.

Given this context of debates over how to interpret this Nazi and Soviet history, the international origins of the Commission had a serious impact on the way local communities viewed its work. Dovilė Budrytė (2005) suggests that many local populations accepted European pressure to engage in Holocaust education because it was necessary for EU and NATO accession; thus, their "acceptance" of these policies did not significantly influence the way they viewed the Holocaust. Lithuanians generally countenanced the policies on Holocaust education to achieve political ends, but few actually internalised the Holocaust as a nationally relevant event.

Researchers have discovered a similar lack of interest in Holocaust history in many post-Soviet States. In Estonia, Doyle Stevick (2007) found that when the Estonian Ministry of Education implemented new guidelines for Holocaust education, politicians continued to refer to "multiple" tragedies in public discussions about World War II. Therefore, policies for Holocaust education were implemented in Estonia to meet EU and NATO guidelines, but politicians undermined their importance when they spoke about them publicly. Stevick also found that the Estonian government allowed teachers to "choose" when and how to interpret the Holocaust, a policy that subjected willing teachers to pressure from resistant peers.

The Estonian case highlights controversies also present in Lithuania. Many Lithuanian teachers said they experienced few professional rewards for spending more than the required lesson time on Holocaust history. More importantly, they reported that there were no professional sanctions for those who spent less time than was specified by curricular guidelines—or did not teach it at all. In fact, most said that working with Holocaust education had some personal cost. Some were nicknamed "the Holocaust teacher" as others publicly questioned their loyalty to ethnic Lithuanians, calling out a perceived allegiance to "the Jews" in their work. Given how unpopular it is to teach about the Holocaust in Lithuania, teachers saw the authority of school directors as integral to the development of Holocaust education. In the next section I describe Lithuanian school directors in more detail.

The Role of Hierarchy in Lithuanian Holocaust Education

Given the legacy of the Soviet system, hierarchical relationships still have an effect on individual motivations in Lithuanian schools. Therefore, teachers frequently articulated the need for school directors to leverage their professional authority in the face of political controversy. Ona, the deputy director for education at the Commission, said on many occasions, "It depends on the school directors. If they don't care then nothing will happen" in the schools. This statement was not wholly accurate, because some teachers did work on Holocaust education even when they were not forced to. Moreover, though teaching about the Holocaust is technically required in Lithuania, teachers reported that most of these requirements are either ineffective or unenforced. Still, Ona's comment echoed a sentiment I frequently heard in Lithuanian schools: that educational change was driven from the top down. Ona saw school directors as key to changing school culture because they could enforce reforms more expediently than grassroots initiatives working from the bottom up. Thus, Ona wanted to develop a training programme for school directors, but she struggled to find financial support because most local agencies did not see the Holocaust as an educational priority.

In turn, the need to search for external resources for Holocaust education influenced how people perceived its importance in Lithuania. Before the country was granted accession to the EU and NATO in 2004, the Lithuanian government was more willing to provide support for Holocaust programmes to facilitate that accession. Government investment in Holocaust programmes gave teachers the impression it was a nationally relevant topic. After accession, however, teachers said that financial support for those programmes dwindled, and so did concern about the topic. In order to fund school programmes, educators had to seek funding from international agencies, such as those connected with the EU, or from the US Embassy in Vilnius. This reliance on external sources of funding left many teachers feeling that Lithuanian politicians were mostly "talking to talk", as one teacher put it, when it came to the importance of Holocaust education. A teacher I will call Aronas, who had worked on Holocaust education programmes with the Lithuanian Ministry, said that politicians rarely backed political support with funds:

> We never had any problem with those [Holocaust] seminars, except one: We never received any money. So, all levels of officials are either not interested, or quite "pro" the idea. But of course, "pro" as in many other projects. Lithuanian politicians, as far as they can remember, are very "pro-Jewish". Why? You can get everything from them… except money. (Laughs)

The need to support local projects with outside funding meant that educators had to develop the political acumen to navigate international grant requirements. However, a colleague who worked at the US Embassy in Vilnius said that few Lithuanians were skilled at writing successful applications for international grants; this put them at a double disadvantage when it came to promoting Holocaust education in Lithuania.

Ona explained that she learned to navigate the international bureaucracy by paying attention to institutional politics. Her political sensitivity was visible in the

way she responded to situations around her. Although she was known for her gregarious nature, she usually dissolved into the background whenever she was around her boss, the director of the Commission. She always referred to him as "director" in public, rarely calling him by name. And when other people were present, she always deferred to his decisions, even if she disagreed with them. Her deference was particularly visible to those who knew her at a 2012 ceremony with the Lithuanian prime minister, Andrius Kubilius.

At the ceremony, Kubilius recognised a dozen TEC teachers for their work. All of them worked closely with Ona, but Ona's only role during the official event was to stand in the back and bring up certificates when asked to. People who did not already know her would have had no indication that she was the educational lynchpin of the Commission. In her work, she designed training seminars, built community relationships, and stayed abreast of relevant pedagogy. In fact, not a single educational planning detail at the Commission escaped her attention. Yet, she was careful not to call attention to herself in certain circles, as hierarchy, status, and position were still central to the way the educational system operated. Petras, a secondary school teacher in a large city, expressed the importance of hierarchy most succinctly: "Without the permission of my boss, I am nothing". In light of such institutional expectations for deference to hierarchy, Ona felt that influencing school directors would be the most effective way to bolster teacher involvement in Holocaust education.

School Directors

Deference to educational hierarchy was visible in many of my conversations with Lithuanian school directors. Most of them explained that their administrative practices were guided by expectations from the ministry. While some cited a personal interest in Holocaust education, the majority said they had to temper personal interests with professional expectations. A major factor for them was whether programmes would make their school more attractive to students, given the competition between schools. Attracting students was important because each student came with an annual student funding "basket" that bolstered the bottom line of the school they attended. Given that the Holocaust was a sensitive topic for many Lithuanians, few school directors were interested in programmes that would stoke controversy.

On the other hand, that same competitiveness between schools sometimes influenced directors to open a TEC in their school. Gediminas, the director of a secondary school in a large city, explained, "The first programme came into my school when one teacher came to work here". After that teacher came, "Our goal became essentially that we would have the same [centre] in our school". In this way, competition between schools to offer various programmes could sometimes serve as a motivating factor in the directors' decision making. Still, several directors explained that even if they wanted to implement more comprehensive Holocaust education programmes, they were cautious about doing so given that the ministry had not provided a clear "path" for how to proceed.

When I talked to Ramunė, a school director in a large city, I mentioned the more than 200 local massacre sites and asked why more Lithuanian teachers did not use some of them as part of Holocaust education. She answered by pointing to the lack of professional guidelines on the topic: “The thing is, how could Lithuania use these places? First, this topic has to be prepared by someone else in a certain way”. The “way” she was suggesting was through formal curriculum programmes outlined by ministry officials. While ministry approval is certainly a normal concern for school directors, it is important to note that directors did not always seek ministry guidance for every programme they undertook. What was significant about Holocaust education was that it was contested in society, so directors could cite a lack of reinforcement from above as an excuse for not engaging with it. Therefore, they sometimes pointed to hierarchy to avoid responsibility for a topic even though they could have navigated past that issue if they wanted to do so. Thus, they acted strategically when they faced conflicting social pressures about running their schools: they appropriated policy selectively, sometimes choosing to ignore it or adopt it only partially.

In addition to concerns over curricular guidelines, some directors did not want to reveal their lack of education on a topic. The directors I worked with started their professional careers during the Soviet Occupation, so many were learning about the Holocaust for the first time through Commission programmes. As school directors, they did not want to institute programmes that would expose their own unfamiliarity with a subject. Orinta, a school director who worked in an area famous for its anti-Soviet partisans, told me that her school focused minimally on the Holocaust because she knew “only a little” about it herself.

School directors frequently said that they needed more training on Holocaust history, but when I asked Ona if Commission programmes should be required for all teachers, she adamantly rejected the idea. She preferred to see teachers and school directors come to the topic on their own. She explained that the Commission’s programmes remained voluntary because it was not productive to mandate seminars for attitudinal change. In fact, researchers have found that governmental mandates have only limited ability to prompt teacher involvement. For example, in a study on Holocaust education in American schools, Thomas Fallace (2008) found “not a single example of a teacher who became interested in the topic” of the Holocaust “as a result of a mandate” (p. 155). This is important to note because Holocaust education is officially mandated in the Lithuanian curriculum, but still remains a source of contention for many teachers in practice.

The few school directors who were active in Holocaust education usually worked closely with the Commission. At Commission events, it was common to hear them speak about the importance of Holocaust education. However, Fausta, a school director in a village, spoke about her responsibility differently than most: she explained that she made all the teachers in her school participate in Holocaust commemorations even if they didn’t want to. In an interview, she explained:

> I am the director. As the director, I am pressing [the teachers] to do this thing [Holocaust education] (laughs)… I am not going to let [teachers] make excuses that “I will participate”, or “No, I will not participate”. That’s the fundamental difference in our school. We are doing school commemorations… and every teacher who is in the school on that day participates. It’s clear not everyone wants to do it, but they have to participate because it’s their job.

Fausta saw her role as one of enforcement and she did not wait for a teacher's interest to be piqued on its own. Fausta used her position in the hierarchy to frame Holocaust education as a job-related activity for all teachers who worked in her school.

But her approach—of requiring teacher participation—was not common. However, several teachers in her school explained that her approach worked because it had gotten them interested in participating in other seminars. One of them, Ina, said that at first she had shown up at events only because Fausta required it. However, over time, she found the history interesting. When an optional programme on Holocaust history was presented in her town, Ina attended: "I realised I didn't know about it, so I thought, why not? [The Holocaust happened] here in my own town, and I didn't know what was here". Several months later, Ina called me to say she was organising a field trip to a local museum for other teachers who also didn't know the history. She went from being a required participant to a self-motivated programme organiser. In this instance, the authority of the school director resulted in a positive outcome, but that happened because an active school director leveraged her professional position to create a school culture around Holocaust education.

School Directors' Influence on Teachers

Teachers often said that they were motivated by the attitudes that their school directors held about Holocaust education—whether positive or negative. Many teachers saw school directors as central to defining their duties as a teacher; those who worked in one of Lithuania's 97 schools with a TEC said that they especially needed the directors' support. For a school to become a TEC, the director had to sign a memorandum of understanding with the Commission guaranteeing that the school administration would support the centre. Petras explained that he participated in a Commission training programme in Auschwitz in April 2012 because his director told him, "Petras, you are not going [to Auschwitz] just to travel…. we are planning that you will create a tolerance centre in our school". Because his director had instructed him to do so, Petras said that he came back from Poland with "many ideas about what to do" to start his school's centre. Uršulė, a teacher in a small town, remarked that her school director had participated in a training seminar at Yad Vashem hosted by the Commission and had similarly come back with "promises" for activities in the school's TEC.

Yet, while some directors were supportive in theory, they were not always active participants in practice. Kargauda, a teacher in a large city, said that even though the director at her school started the centre there, she still had to figure out ways "to circumvent" him because he was not always supportive of her work on Holocaust history. She appealed to her assistant director, who told her discreetly, "Don't you pay attention to the director. Pay attention to me, and I will take care of everything". Barbora, a teacher in a medium-sized town in the southern part of Lithuania, said her director tolerated their TEC but showed no real enthusiasm for it:

> He's still a little cold with that kind of thing. That he would be fired up, like those other directors from [another town], those two directors who said, "Wow. We are doing, doing,

> doing everything!" That? No. [pause] He's not sitting there clapping his hands and saying, "Oh, good, good! Do it! Do it!" But he lets us work and he's not angry about it when he does.

The various ways that school directors participated in TEC activities had a direct influence on teacher interactions. Several teachers said that when their directors withheld support from centre activities, they felt especially vulnerable to peer criticism.

When the directors did not participate in TEC programmes, many teachers felt they had to defend their motivations to colleagues. Many said their peers had asked why anyone would voluntarily work on an unpopular topic when it wasn't required. Deividas, a teacher in a large city, said that some teachers made fun of his attachment to "the Jews" because of his class section on Holocaust literature. He explained that a fellow teacher had even accused him of "using" his work on the Holocaust to become the next school director. Deividas said he laughed at the suggestion: "If I was going to try and get ahead in Lithuania, I certainly wouldn't do it by talking about the Jews! That's what you talk about if you don't want to get ahead". He laughed again at the very idea. His example represents the kind of interrogations from colleagues that many teachers faced when working in schools with unsupportive directors.

Dorotėja, a teacher in a large city, said support from the director was "a necessity" in navigating relationships with other teachers. She explained, "If you are alone, and you don't have support from the administration—and if you have colleagues who are also saying, 'Aha! Again with the Jews? What's that about?' [Well,] that's it. What can you do by yourself?" Dorotėja felt that school directors could help temper criticism from peers, as well as make a stronger place for Holocaust education in the national curriculum. When I asked Ramunė, a director I mentioned earlier, how she got teachers involved at her school, she responded:

> You know how? Because I myself was involved, and I got pulled into this topic by [another teacher], and after I got pulled into this Holocaust theme then one more teacher got pulled into it like I was, and she herself wanted to participate that year.

Teachers who led by example seemed to have a positive effect on teacher involvement.

Not all teachers were motivated by oversight from their directors. Some sought more top-down support from directors as they implemented Holocaust education, but they did not want to be told what to do. Kargauda, mentioned earlier, who has three decades of experience, said she sometimes found herself forced to attend seminars run by international "experts" who "have never in their life worked in a school, and don't even know what a school is". Her reply to such seminars on teaching methods was "Whatever it is that they do, I don't want to see it". She said that when she encounters such "experts" at programme seminars, she wants to say to them, "It's best just to let me be and to try to perfect and to do my work on my own". This sentiment highlights the complicated navigations that both teachers and school directors faced in their professional decision making.

Ivan, a university professor, said that the Lithuanian educational system had become too reliant on experts, which resulted in a lack of respect for teacher expertise.

The technocratic infrastructure of the Soviet Union had remained largely intact after Lithuania gained independence in 1991, and Ivan said that the bureaucracy of the Lithuanian system did not value the input of teachers. He explained:

> Decisions are made not in the communities, in the teachers' communities, or in the universities' communities. Much more, decisions are made in the ministry by saying, "Well you will do this, and you will do that, and we are experts, and if we are not experts, we have hired an expert". And then one group of educators is saying, "Maybe we need some broader discussion; maybe you should listen to our opinion as well". And the reply is that "We have experts, and this is the suggestion of experts".

Ivan believed that few people understood the complicated ways that teachers and school directors had to navigate around various issues in their professional practices. The tension between educators wanting support, but not wanting to be told what to do, resulted in teachers only valuing the authority of certain hierarchies.

Teachers further disliked the political hierarchies that had developed between international agencies and the Lithuanian government on the topic of Holocaust education. Most teachers saw international involvement in Holocaust education in Lithuania as resulting from a patronising power imbalance between Lithuania and "the west". In this context, even the most dedicated Holocaust educators saw the international political hierarchies as lowering their motivation; they felt that international involvement prompted peer scrutiny of their efforts, when it was in fact intended to quell it. Additionally, many said the topic of the Holocaust was becoming overrepresented in their communities because of international political agendas. Three individuals used the same sentence to explain the backlash to the topic: "It's just Holocaust, Holocaust, Holocaust all the time". Thus, international attention to the Holocaust without corollary discussions of the Soviet Occupation left many Lithuanians unable—or unwilling—to see Holocaust history as connected to their identity or culture. In the next section I discuss negative reactions to the development of international hierarchies in Lithuanian Holocaust education.

International Power Politics and Holocaust Education

Since the end of the communist era, post-Soviet Holocaust education has had considerable political significance in the international community. While the international politics of Holocaust education are too complex to fully discuss here, it is understood as a "given" that the international community will play a role in post-Soviet Holocaust education programmes. From ambassadors, to politicians, to children of survivors, many Holocaust education programmes in Lithuania arose at the impetus of non-local populations, entrenching an international community dedicated to preserving the Holocaust memory, a community that linked culturally diverse educational initiatives. The role the international community played in local educational programmes has seriously affected how teachers view Holocaust education. Values education programmes are especially suspect in Lithuania because of the Soviet-era requirement that schools engage in state-sponsored character building, or *vospitanie*.

When the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania a half century earlier, the government used formal schooling to build the "New Soviet Man". The top-down bureaucracy of the Soviet Union meant that no alternatives were allowed in describing what it meant to be a Soviet citizen. Therefore, when communism ended, freedom was an important concept for many Lithuanians as they embraced ideas of national and personal self-determination. Over time, many Lithuanians started to feel that the international programmes for the promotion of "western values" were no different from the Soviet-era system of *vospitanie*. Thus, Lithuanians who were familiar with governments using educational programmes for political ends grew resistant to western policies for remaking people's political beliefs—even if the values they espoused were supposedly "universal".

In a study on the promotion of tolerance, Wendy Brown (2006) found that discourses about "universal" values gave western politicians an "acceptable" way to elevate their values over those of non-western countries. In this vein, many Lithuanians felt that western policies were openly ethnocentric, and they challenged the idea that the United States could "bring" values to Lithuania that they could not achieve on their own. As a result, conversations about policy reform in Lithuania have shifted from debates about the content of reforms to how reforms were presented in local communities. Generally, Lithuanian teachers saw programmes associated with western democratic values as unidirectional policy conversations that did not consider the experiences of local populations. Falk Pingel (2014) found that, in some countries, Holocaust education was "interpreted as a new kind of cultural hegemony of western experience" (p. 83). This is not to imply that people cannot understand values outside their original cultural context. The issue is that it is often inaccurate to perceive or promote particular values or educational programmes as universal, and that local populations are often skeptical about efforts to do so.

Many Lithuanians wanted to become part of the EU: 63% turned out to vote on accession to the EU and 93% voted in favour of it. Still, some of the accession guidelines alienated individual Lithuanians, because once again they felt that government bureaucrats were telling them how to raise their children. Nomedas, a professor of pedagogy at a Lithuanian University, described the sentiments of many:

> During Soviet times it was necessary to raise your child as an atheist so that they would not go to church, that they would not believe, that there was no God… Now people are thinking, "Don't talk to me. I will not be doing anything about this [tolerance]". Some are even thinking, "I will do something *against* this idea, in principle, because you are ordering me…" [Or they are thinking,] "You cannot order me in general to come and do it like, 'Now you will raise your children with this tolerant way of being!'" Half of the auditorium will say, "No. Oh no. You think that I will do it whether I want to or not? That's too much. No thank you".

Professor Nomedas' comment highlights the complications that arise when concepts firmly entrenched in one society are introduced into another as "universal" values. As a result, a common perception in Lithuania was that western values were supposed to change Eastern European culture but meanwhile the western states had nothing to learn from post-Soviet experiences. The impact of such perceptions was a clear differentiation in the kinds of hierarchies valued in Lithuanian Holocaust

education. The issue was not simply that many Lithuanian teachers did not want to discuss the Holocaust; what they wanted was to see a shift in who was discussing it in their communities.

In light of the negative attitudes toward international involvement in Holocaust education, teachers wanted more direct involvement by school directors to help counter the perception that the Holocaust was not relevant at the local level. Therefore, many teachers saw that two factors were fundamental to forward movement in future Holocaust education programmes: more local support, and less international political pressure.

Conclusions

In Lithuania, top-down decision making continues to be an important element of the educational system, although teachers sometimes try to negotiate around this hierarchy in practice. Overall, teachers working on Holocaust education wanted to see more institutional support for their efforts, but their own support for a top-down hierarchy depended on the source. Programmes introduced into Lithuania by western agencies were viewed as hindering rather than helping teacher efforts because they drew attention to the Holocaust as an "outside" political issue. Therefore, they saw international political pressure on Lithuania as a reason to avoid talking about the Holocaust because such conversations made it harder to recruit local colleagues for school programmes. The negative perceptions that Lithuanians held about international involvement in Holocaust education meant that teachers saw school directors as being even more important to motivating teachers to participate. Responding to a school culture that allowed peers to criticise their efforts on Holocaust education, many teachers wanted school directors to hold their colleagues accountable for creating a more supportive environment. However, school directors revealed that they were also subject to broader political pressures, and therefore many blamed the politics of institutional hierarchy as a reason not to develop Holocaust education. Overall, the Lithuanian case demonstrates the need for further study on the role of power and politics in Holocaust education in post-Soviet states.

References

Bartov, O. (2008). Eastern Europe as the site of genocide. *The Journal of Modern History, 80*(3), 557–593.

Blase, J. J., & Anderson, G. L. (1995). *The micropolitics of educational leadership: From control to empowerment*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Brown, W. (2006). *Regulating aversion: Tolerance in the age of identity and empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Budrytė, D. (2005). *Taming nationalism: Political community building in the post-Soviet Baltic States*. Hampshire: Ashgate.

Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. New York: Routledge.

Cohen, R. (2012, January). The suffering Olympics. *The New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/31/opinion/the-suffering-olympics.html?_r=0

Crow, G., & Weindling, D. (2010). Learning to be political: New English headteachers' roles. *Educational Policy, 24*(1), 137–158.

Dietsch, J. (2012). Textbooks and the Holocaust in independent Ukraine: An uneasy past. *European Education, 44*(3), 67–94.

Fallace, T. (2008). *The emergence of Holocaust education in American schools*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gross, M. H. (2013). To teach the Holocaust in Poland: Understanding teachers' motivations to engage the painful past. *Intercultural Education, 24*(1–2), 103–120.

Gross, Z., & Stevick, D. (2010). Introduction to the open file: Holocaust education—international perspectives: Challenges, opportunities and research. *Prospects, 40*(1), 17–33.

Gundare, I., & Batelaan, P. (2003). Learning about and from the Holocaust: The development and implementation of a complex instruction unit in Latvia. *Intercultural Education, 14*(2), 152–166.

Hallinger, P., & Leithwood, K. (1998). Unforeseen forces: The impact of social culture on school leadership. *Peabody Journal of Education, 73*(2), 126–151.

Himka, J. P. (2008). Obstacles to the integration of the Holocaust into post-communist East European historical narratives. *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue Canadienne des Slavistes, 50*(3/4), 359–372.

IHRA [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance] (2000). *Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust*. http://www.holocaustremembrance.com/about-us/stockholm-declaration

Leithwood, K. (1995). Introduction: Transforming politics into education. In K. Leithwood (Ed.), *Effective school leadership. Transforming politics into education* (pp. 1–12). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Levinson, B. A. U., & Sutton, M. (2001). Introduction: Policy as/in practice—A sociocultural approach to the study of educational policy. In M. Sutton & B. A. U. Levinson (Eds.), *Policy as practice: Toward a comparative sociocultural analysis of educational policy* (pp. 1–22). Westport: Ablex.

Marcus, G. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 24*, 95–117.

Michaels, D. L. (2013). Holocaust education in the 'black hole of Europe': Slovakia's identity politics and history textbooks pre- and post-1989. *Intercultural Education, 24*(1–2), 19–40. doi:10.1080/14675986.2013.790209.

Misco, T. (2008). No one told us what happened: The current state of Holocaust education in Romania. *International Education, 38*(1), 6–20.

Owen, J. C. (2006). *The impact of politics in local education: Navigating white water*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Pettai, E.-C. (2011a). The convergence of two worlds: Historians and emerging histories of the Baltic States. In M. Housden & D. J. Smith (Eds.), *Forgotten pages in Baltic history. Inclusion and exclusion in history: A festscrift for John Hiden* (pp. 263–279). Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi.

Pettai, E.-C. (2011b). Establishing "Holocaust memory": A comparison of Estonia and Latvia. In O. Rathkolb & I. Sooman (Eds.), *Historical memory culture in the enlarged Baltic Sea Region and its symptoms today* (pp. 159–174). Vienna: V&R Unipress/University of Vienna Press.

Pingel, F. (2014). The Holocaust in textbooks: From a European to a global event. In K. Fracapane & M. Haß (Eds.), *Holocaust education in a global context* (pp. 77–86). Paris: UNESCO.

Short, G., & Reed, C. (2004). *Issues in Holocaust education*. Burlington: Ashgate.

Stevick, D. (2007). The politics of the Holocaust in Estonia: Historical memory and social divisions in Estonian education. In B. A. U. Levinson & D. Stevick (Eds.), *Reimagining civic*

education: How diverse societies form democratic citizens (pp. 217–244). Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield.
Stevick, D. (2012). The Holocaust in the contemporary Baltic states: International relations, politics, and education. *Holocaust: Study and Research* [Holocaust Studii şi cercetări]*, 1*(5), 87–103.
Waldman, F. (2004). Holocaust education in Romania. *Studia Hebraica, 4*, 88–102.
Weiss-Wendt, A. (2009). *Murder without hatred: Estonians and the Holocaust*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
Zilinskas, J. (2009). Broadening the concept of genocide in Lithuania's criminal law and the principle of *nullum crimen sine lege. Jurisprudence, 4*(118), 333–348.