

The Embassy of Estonia
in collaboration with the European Commission Representation
and the European Parliament office in Ireland
is pleased to invite you to a public viewing of

MEMORIES DENIED:
THE REPRESSION OF MEMORIES OF STALINISM

Tuesday, 2nd December 2008, at 6pm-8pm
at European Union House, Dawson Street, Dublin 2

Entrance free

An award-winning Estonian/Finnish documentary “**Memories Denied**” tells the story of a family under Stalinist terror in Estonia and in the Gulag.

The film is followed by a discussion with the participation of the film’s director **Imbi Paju**.

Topics: Repression of memories as the only method of self-defence for victims of communism, and the difficult healing from the wounds of history. Political and cultural need for a common history in today’s EU, where the memories of Nazi crimes often overshadow those of Stalinism.

More information:

Estonian Embassy, embassy.dublin@mfa.ee , Tel. 01 2196734



"By describing the fate of her mother - arrested, imprisoned, deported to the Gulag as a young woman - Imbi Paju has, in effect, told the story of an entire nation. Widely admired in her native Estonia and elsewhere, "Memories Denied" could bring that country's history alive for many others too."

*Anne Applebaum
Author of Gulag*

Imbi Paju

MEMORIES DENIED

(Torjutut muistot / Tõrjutud mälestused)
Like Publishing Ltd., 2006

During the Soviet occupation in the 1940s and 1950s, tens of thousands of Estonians were arrested and deported to Siberia. Imbi Paju's mother and her twin sister were among them. They were arrested at the age of 18, and were not released until after Stalin's death in 1953. They were not able to speak of their experiences for decades. The fear that silenced the entire nation still touches innumerable Estonians.

MEMORIES DENIED has emerged from Imbi Paju's need to understand the experiences her mother has carried with her and lived through in her nightmares for half a century. To get closer to her mother's experiences, she interviews people who have lived through the Soviet occupation and the cruelty of the terror, as well as academics who have researched the subject. Her central questions are: What happened and why? Why did they kill millions of good and talented people in the Soviet camps? And how come the victims started to see themselves as guilty for what had overtaken them? Imbi Paju discusses the occupation of Estonia in psychoanalytical and lego-philosophical terms, in which the traumatic experiences suffered by an individual are set against the background of major historical events.

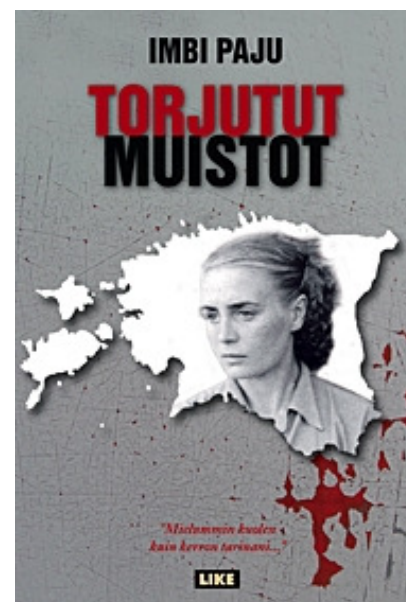
For those who grew up in the time of the terror, denial of the memories has been the only way to survive. Imbi Paju's aunt said in the first interview that she would rather die than tell her story. Neither of the sisters knows to this day why they were declared criminals, and why it was precisely their home that was put under surveillance.

The weakening and destroying of the memory, of intimacy, and of family ties was one of the goals of Sovietisation. MEMORIES DENIED shows us how the tragedy of an individual family repeated over and over slowly becomes a national tragedy, a part of the collective European ceased narrative, silenced by the occupations and practical politics. Today Estonia is an independent state, but the national trauma still sustains an atmosphere of fear. People want to forget the past - they don't wish to discuss it. And yet the influence of the past can be seen in the life of individual families as well as in the society as a whole.

IMBI PAJU is a well-known Estonian journalist, author, and film director. Her award-winning 2005 documentary film of the same title tells her family's story and also gives a graphic image of the totalitarianism, oppression, and brutality of the Soviet authorities towards the Estonians.

MEMORIES DENIED is originally written in Estonian. It was first published in translation in Finnish, by Like Publishing Ltd., in 2006. Published in Estonian by Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers and in Swedish by Atlantis in 2007. The Swedish edition, *Förträngda minnen*, became the best-seller of Gothenburg Book Fair in 2007 and has awoken a wide discussion in Sweden. A Russian translation will be published in 2008.

A translation in English is available.



DISCUSSION AROUND THE DENIED MEMORIES

After the release of her documentary film MEMORIES DENIED and the publishing of the book with the same title, Imbi Paju has been invited to lecture and take part into numerous seminars and discussions about the ceased crimes of communism and the commanding of the past in Estonia, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and the USA. The Swedish translation of the book, *Förträngda minnen* (Atlantis, 2007) was chosen to the reading list of Swedish schools in the programme Living History (www.levandehistoria.se), which aims to the widening of the next generations' knowledge about the most horrible periods in the history of the humankind.

With the book and the film Imbi Paju has been able to open the discussion between the Eastern and Western Europe as well as in the USA. The discussion lives on, and for more and more people it is becoming clear, that you can not, should not and must not deny the memories any more.

In 2007 Imbi Paju was shortlisted for the Estonian State Cultural Prize and decorated by the President of Estonia with the medal of the Order of the White Star, V class.