Subjectivities of Owning Land
Land Redistribution and the Nation State in the Baltics Across the 20th Century

23-24 November 2026
Lithuanian Historical Institute, Vilnius

Project Workshop: The Impact of Land Reform on Baltic Societies Past and Present. Lessons from History

This workshop should explore how land redistribution has functioned as a central arena for negotiating citizenship, morality, and national sovereignty in the Baltic states across a century of historical ruptures. From the post-WWI agrarian reforms aiming to dismantle 'foreign' estates, through the violent traumas of Soviet collectivisation, to the post-1991 drive for restorative justice, land policies have consistently shaped Baltic state-society relations. The workshop examines the profound clashes between central state directives and local bureaucratic practices, highlighting how rural populations actively articulate deeply rooted 'landowning subjectivities'. A focus of the workshop is on how understanding these historical dynamics can help navigating contemporary politics around market integration, economic transformation, and concerns around sovereignty.

At this workshop, which is part of the AHRC-DFG-funded project 'Subjectivities of Owning Land: Land Redistribution and the Nation State in the Baltics', we want to examine what can be gained from a conversation between historians and practitioners, how land reform was enacted both at the centre and in the peripheries, and how local societies made sense of it. The focus is both on an exchange of research findings and on outlining fields in which historians and practitioners can fruitfully collaborate.

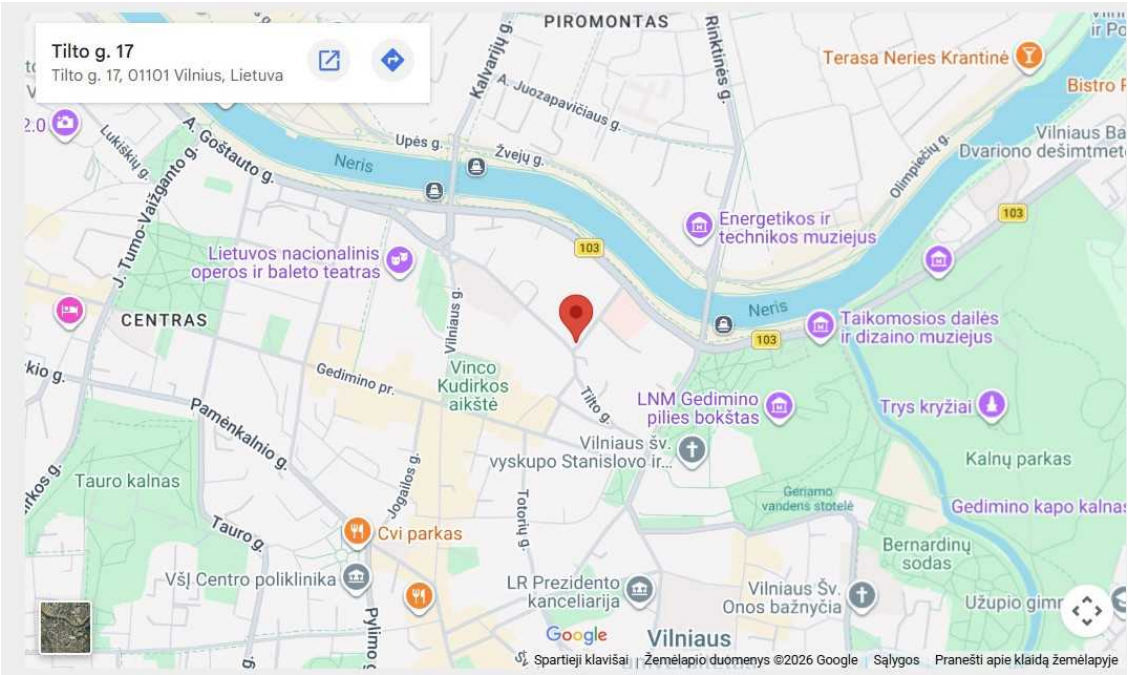
SOL Website: https://mob.subjectivities-of-owning-land.de/

Participants

1. **Karolis Dambrauskas,** Land Restitution in the First Post-Socialist Decade: A Bottom-Up Perspective
2. **Rasa Čepaitienė,** Property Regimes Written into the Land: Remaking Lithuania's Rural Landscape from the 1922 Land Reform to the Present
3. **Inge Melchior,** Estonian Memory Guardians Taking Care of Their Family Farms, Land and Nation
4. **Kristina Jõekalda,** Land Reform of 1919 Shaping Baltic German and Estonian Cultural Heritage
5. **Marju Luts-Sootak, Triinu Rennu:** Before Land Reform: Comparing the Preconditions of 1919 and 1991 Land Reforms in Estonia

6. **Roberts Grinbergs,** The Largest Manors in the Baltics and the Fate of Their Heritage Today
7. **Saulius Grybkauskas,** Lithuanian Village at a Crossroads in the Late Soviet Era: Between Industrial Production and the Traditional Way of Life
8. **Evelin Jürgenson**,Reshaping Land Relations after 1991: Estonia's Land Reform and Its Long-Term Legacies
9. **Lilian Pungas,** Dachas gardens at the European Periphery - land access, rooting and care
10. **Arturas Svarauskas,** Some Features of Land Nationalization, Confiscation, and Redistribution in Lithuania in 1940–1941
11. **Aistis Kitovas,** The Expanding Umbrella over the Lithuanian Farmer: Land Reform and Agricultural Cooperation in Lithuania in the 1920s
12. **Violeta Davoliūtė,** Dispossession Remembered: Deportation, Collectivisation, and the Discourse of Displacement in Lithuania
13. **Davis Pumpurins,** Who will get the land? Discussions on the criteria for land acquisition under the Agrarian Reform (1920–1937) of the Republic of Latvia.
14. **Paris Pin-Yu Chen,** Subjectivity and Dynamic Values of Land in Southeastern Estonia
15. Heidi Hein-Kircher
16. Klaus Richter
17. Stanislovas Stasiulis
18. Ieva Stecke
19. Tomas Balkelis
20. Anna Ivanova

Venue: Lithuanian Institute of History, Tilto str. 17, Vilnius



Programme

Monday, 23.11.2027		
Time		**Location**
9:00 - 09:15	Arrival of the participants	Renginių salė, I floor, no. 116
09:15 - 09:45	**Introduction & Project presentation** Heidi Hein-Kircher, Klaus Richter	Renginių salė, I floor, no. 116
09:45 - 11:15	Panel 1: Land Loss and Land Acquisition **Davis Pumpurins**, Who will get the land? Discussions on the criteria for land acquisition under the Agrarian Reform (1920–1937) of the Republic of Latvia. **Arturas Svarauskas,** Some Features of Land Nationalization, Confiscation, and Redistribution in Lithuania in 1940–1941 **Karolis Dambrauskas,** Land Restitution in the First Post-Socialist Decade: A Bottom-Up Perspective	Renginių salė, I floor, no. 116
11:15 - 11:30	**Coffee Break**	
11:30 - 12:30	Panel 2: Continuity and Junctures in Land Reform in Estonia **Marju Luts-Sootak, Triinu Rennu,** Before Land Reform: Comparing the Preconditions of 1919 and 1991 Land Reforms in Estonia **Evelin Jürgenson,** Reshaping Land Relations after 1991: Estonia's Land Reform and Its Long-Term Legacies	Renginių salė, I floor, no. 116
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	
13:30 – 15:00	Group Work Session	no. 324.
15:30 – 18:00	City Tour	
19:00	Dinner	

Tuesday, 24.11.2026		
Time		**Location**
9:00 - 10:30	Panel 3: Cultural Heritage and Land **Kristina Jõekalda,** Land Reform of 1919 Shaping Baltic German and Estonian Cultural Heritage **Roberts Grinbergs,** The Largest Manors in the Baltics and the Fate of Their Heritage Today **Lilian Pungas,** Dachas gardens at the European Periphery - land access, rooting and care	Renginių salė, I floor, no. 116
10:30 - 10:45	**Coffee Break**	
10:45 - 12:15	Panel 4: Memory, Subjectivity and Land Reform **Violeta Davoliūtė,** Dispossession Remembered: Deportation, Collectivisation, and the Discourse of Displacement in Lithuania **Inge Melchior,** Estonian Memory Guardians Taking Care of Their Family Farms, Land and Nation **Paris Pin-Yu Chen,** Subjectivity and Dynamic Values of Land in Southeastern Estonia	Renginių salė, I floor, no. 116
12:15 - 12:30	**Coffee break**	
12:30 - 14:00	Panel 5, Land Reform and Rural Life **Rasa Čepaitienė,** Property Regimes Written into the Land: Remaking Lithuania's Rural Landscape from the 1922 Land Reform to the Present **Saulius Grybkauskas,** Lithuanian Village at a Crossroads in the Late Soviet Era: Between Industrial Production and the Traditional Way of Life **Aistis Kitovas,** The Expanding Umbrella over the Lithuanian Farmer: Land Reform and Agricultural Cooperation in Lithuania in the 1920s	Renginių salė, I floor, no. 116
14:00 - 14:15	**Closing session**	