

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who spoke at the State Archives' scientific conference entitled "Two Initiatives: 15 Years of the Independent Republic of Estonia" at the Academy of Sciences on 23 November, announced that Estonia needs a new institution to systematically and impartially investigate and record recent history.

"I am pleased to announce that in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice we will shortly create the Estonian Institute of Memory, the mission of which will be to record, explicate and analyze that which has happened in recent history," said President Ilves. "All this can only be accomplished by an academic research institution, whose activities are of course unimpeachable and honest."

President Ilves quoted the almost 2000-year-old thoughts of Tacitus, "The histories of Tiberius, Caius, Claudius, and Nero, while they were in power, were falsified through terror, and after their death were written under the irritation of a recent hatred. Hence my purpose is to relate a few facts about Augustus – more particularly his last acts, then the reign of Tiberius, and all which follows, without either bitterness or partiality." According to the Estonian Head of State, the key phrase is *sine ira et studio* – without bitterness or partiality.

"We owe ourselves and all future generations a faithful record of our past," stressed President Ilves. "In order for us to understand and remember that which occurred, that which was done to the Estonian people, and by whom and how this was carried out. So that our grandchildren will never ask the legendary question about the deportations that has been attributed to the Swedes, "But why didn't anyone call the police?,"" President Ilves said.

In the opinion of the Head of State, the task of the Estonian Institute of Memory consists of the systematic recording of our knowledge just as explicitly as has been done by the International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity created by President Lennart Meri.

"There is much more of this material, many of those who suffered or were persecuted under Communism are still alive. Let everyone have the opportunity to ask and explain, and not in the newspapers, but before academic experts. However, this is strictly voluntary, because a commission cannot assume the functions of a court. Silence is a constitutional right that applies to everyone, just like the freedom of speech," said President Ilves.

“However, the moral obligation to our parents, grandparents, our children and our nation is clear—to explain how things really were, *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*. We do not need to judge, but to understand, explicate and analyze. Without bitterness, without partiality,” President Ilves concluded.

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