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Filling gaps in President's biography

THE OCTOBER 19 issue of the Tartu-based Edasi daily announced the discovery of the burial-place of Konstantin Päts, President of the independent Republic of Estonia.

No encyclopedia or any other book of reference put out in Estonia has given the burial-place of Päts so far.

Päts's biography, portraying him as a 'Fascist dictator', usually ends by stating that he was deported from Estonia in 1940.

Sometimes there have been references hinting that he died in a 'psychiatric institution somewhere in central Russia'.

Now it was two retired Estonian officers who found out the burial-place of Päts,

something that official history has failed to do in the course of half a century.

The retired military men, Valdur Timusk and Henn Latt, were able to identify, with the help of local medical people, the supposed burial-place of Päts, which is in the Russian Federation, in a small town of Burashevo, 15 kilometers from Kalinin.

Following the Soviet takeover in 1940 President Päts was deported to Russia. After the end of the war he was taken back to Estonia and put in a mental hospital near the town of Viljandi.

As people started a pilgrimage to the institution the authorities decided to move Päts back to Russia.

This happened on December 31, 1954. After one year at the Burashevo psychiatric hospital Päts died there on January 18, 1956, and was buried at the local cemetery.

Investigation into the exact location of the grave continues. According to Ksenya Gusseva, 83, the doctor who witnessed the last minutes of Päts, he was not mentally ill but suffered from some somatic troubles.

The deputy head physician of the hospital, however, refused to show the investigators the case history of Päts, referring to a decree of the Soviet Minister of Health, which says that data about the mental state of patients should not be made public.



DEEP IN THOUGHT: The present political situation in Estonia is in many ways similar to the summer of June 1940 when Estonia lost its independence. How would President Päts act today?