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Great News

Lithuanian Honours Scholarship

Here is great news: a \$4500 scholarship will be offered at the University of Tasmania next year, to the best Honours (Fourth year) candidate undertaking an Honours research project on Lithuania or Lithuanians.

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The Lithuanian Studies Society has now appealed to everyone - Lithuanians and non-Lithuanians - to support this Scholarship with donations, no matter how small. The project needs your moral support and your friendly assurance that the students choosing Lithuania for their research topic are not alone in their undertaking.

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The Lithuanian Studies Society thanks all supporters in advance, for their generosity in this appeal.

Amanda BANKS, President, Lithuanian Studies Society.

The Adventure of Lithuania

Reflections on Not Making Predictions

Edis BEVAN

Open University, U.K.

Making predictions is an odd game. And as we approach the important but artificial landmark of the year 2000, there will be a lot of predictions that will be very odd.

I am part of the Lithuanian diaspora, and don't have an intimate personal knowledge of Lithuanian conditions. It would be presumptuous to write as if I had special knowledge to pass on about the country and its people. But I have hopes and expectations drawing on my ragbag of other experiences.

In the entrance to Canadian Chancellery in Washington, is a sculpture; the 'Spirit of Haida Gwaii'. This shows the heroes of traditional stories of the Haida Nation of British Columbia all together in a canoe, some stiffly uncomfortable in each other's presence, all paddling together into an unknown future. That is the image of the "Spirit of the Islands of The People".

For me, Lithuania is certainly in part a place on a map, but also an adventure by many peoples through the years, with a heritage of being different and (sometimes) preserving more humane values than in many other parts of our troubled planet. An adventure by people of many religions, several languages and innumerable belief systems. The past from which we can draw inspiration has many roots, including the remnants of the great Jewish civilisation so cruelly destroyed in our lifetime, and the ambiguous (for Lithuanians!) heritage of the Noble Republic.

What can we say about the adventure into which Lithuania, this land of the most insular, friendly and stubborn of peoples, is paddling in the next few years?

Like all the countries emerging from Sovok,¹ Lithuania can look at

¹ The standard Russian word for a garbage bin is 'Sovok'. On the analogy of all those USSR-period words like Sovinform, a slang term of the USSR was 'Sovok'.



• "All in the same boat..." - From *Refugees*, a painting by Anatanas Rūkštelė, 1950, oil, 81 x 130 cm. Lithuanian Museum, Lithuanian House, Adelaide.

a wide range of experiences around the world and learn from other peoples' mistakes - and follow perhaps the very successful Japanese strategy of 'starting as number two'. This means adopting good practices where others have paid the price of following the first fashions. Not following gurus blindly.

That's one thing I want to suggest - constantly but critically look outside our experience to bring home what is valuable to Lithuania's conditions. We do not have to invent everything again. Can Lithuania, for example, learn from the history of other small countries in uncomfortable closeness to larger and perhaps sometimes more overbearing powers? Of Ireland perhaps? Or maybe Lithuania should learn from Spain and Portugal, emerging also from long years of dictatorship and battered by rapidly changing economic fortunes.

Maybe the Latin American countries offer sobering lessons. There so often small wealthy elites live an international lifestyle while most people are poor and excluded. That growth of a wealthy elite certainly is a trend very visible in Lithuania now. Will we suffer the same consequences in terms of institutionalised criminal contacts,

economic markets manipulated to benefit the few at the expense of the many, and deeply flawed democratic institutions? There are sobering indications that this model is becoming established by default.

For many people, just surviving is a crushing, time-consuming labour. How should we act to bring liberation from this burden? Perhaps Lithuania has something to learn from the huge experience Catholic development agencies, such as Caritas, have gained worldwide. Experience of what actually happens to peoples' lives as fashionable economic theories are played out.

All this means looking beyond the extensive, interesting, valuable experience of the United States to a whole world of other valuable experiences in other countries. But some say that any deviation by Lithuania from the US model is a betrayal of the cause of independence and the start of a slide back to Soviet days. This is coupled to an often intense suspicion of any suggestions that we need to pay attention to wider social issues - as if there is no choice between unfettered markets and the dead hand of GOSPLAN.

That is a position increasingly being challenged by bodies such as the World Bank, the OECD and the UN development programme. In three separate studies this year these bodies come to similar conclusions. It is that those market-economy countries which try to ensure reductions in inequalities and an equitable distribution of public and private resources grow fastest in current conditions. And *because of* those efforts, not despite them. This is not sentimental 'welfarism', but a hard headed economic assessment. And social cohesion, loyalty and commitment to the system also grow, reinforcing this economic impetus.

Investing in education and in health care systems brings real economic benefits - the World Bank now suggests that a country can raise its GDP by 9 percent for every extra year of primary education it provides. Health, education and basic welfare are not luxuries that impose a long-term drain on the growth of the economy.

This directly challenges the economic orthodoxy that was at its triumphant height in 1991 as the Soviet Empire collapsed and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said, "It is our job to

glory in inequality". Let the rich get richer and benefits will flow faster to everyone, that was the "trickle down theory". It was the basis of the economic shock treatment of the last few years.

The newer studies suggest that the success stories under shock treatment are largely the result of a large historic investment in education which have enriched countries such as Estonia. But I don't have the feeling that Lithuania is investing in education at a rate that will provide in the future the skilled workforce we inherited from the USSR and which give us today some ability to win markets in the growing 'information economy'. And look at the collapse of so much of the Lithuanian health system - I am told of doctors who quit practice in despair as they have literally no drugs to work with.

And yet it was Thatcher, who said in 1988, "We do not have a freehold on the earth, only a full repairing lease" and warned that through the world's industrial processes we are experimenting with the life support systems of the planet. Life support systems need our collective attention - guarding the purity of our air and water and ensuring uncontaminated food, for example. In Sweden over the last decade collective action in raising agricultural standards has led to the eradication of salmonella from the poultry flocks and other impressive benefits. This gives Swedish produce a premium slot in European markets. Maybe Lithuania can find another model from Sweden, on the way forwards?

The encouraging signs are here - like the groups and individuals getting together to try clean up Nemunas and restore salmon to our main rivers. And it is not just the projects themselves that give hope, but the evidence of the growth of individual initiatives and civic responsibility - people are not always waiting for government (or even the Church) to tell them that something needs doing and to provide the impetus to get it done. So one more hope is that there will be a flowering of social and political and single issue clubs and societies, drawing people into work for the good of each other and not incidentally fostering the habit of enterprise and organisation.

That spirit of building together, of forming associations for mutual benefit is a precious national resource. And it is one that suffers under the conditions of a directed society, where everything needs an official sponsor.

That brings us to national security - and here we have a last wish. A country where people work for the good of others, trying to follow a path of justice, find the light to deal with dark places (including recent historic horrors not yet fully admitted), may be one where controversy and argument are visible daily. But it will be one where all know in what canoe they paddle. Building an economic and moral society where the tendency is to include rather than exclude will be a bedrock to protect our security from foreign meddling.

One of the unhappiest stories I heard in Lithuania was about the celebrations of the declaration of independence restoration. Every year there are two separate celebrations with mutually exclusive membership - one for the LDDP supporters and government and one for everyone else. No social binding of differences here...

The love of Lithuania burning in our hearts should not be an occasion for tribalising what should be national occasions. Whatever the real and practical differences between our political factions, can we try to reclaim these days as occasions for looking for unity? If so, perhaps outsiders, looking at our society, will make the same mistake as those who thought England the 1650's was weak. But as Milton said in his 'Areopagitica' :

*"The adversary stands and waits the hour:
'When they have branched themselves out', says he,
'small enough into parties and partitions, then will be our time'.
Fool! He sees not the firm root of which we all grow,
though into branches, nor will he beware until he sees
our small divided maniples cutting through
at every angle of his ill-united and unwieldy brigade".*

Can the adventure of Lithuania lead us to seek this real and diverse security? From the safety of a foreign shore, I can only hope that we find the inner resources - perhaps from our spiritual heritage - to do so.

Edis BEVAN, B.A. (Sussex), M.A (Lancaster) is a research associate in the Department of Systems, in the Open University in Britain. His interests include social impact of information technology, local economic development and problem solving in complex social situations. He is editor of BALT-L.

"Nobody Has Done So Much for Us"

Iceland and Lithuania, 1990-1991

Gudni Thorlacius JÓHANNESSON
University of Iceland

On March 12, 1990, the day after the Lithuanian declaration of independence, the Icelandic parliament sent its congratulations to Vilnius. This was the beginning of Icelandic support for Lithuanian independence, which culminated in the establishment of diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Iceland, in the wake of the attempted putsch in Moscow in August 1991.

When examining this period of eighteen months, three main questions spring to mind: 1) *Why* did the Icelandic authorities support the Lithuanian drive for independence? 2) *How* did they do it? 3) *What effect* did it have?

Historical overview

It is apt to begin with a very brief historical overview of Icelandic and Lithuanian relations, mentioning some basic facts about Iceland. Norsemen began to settle there in the 9th century AD. One of the first Icelandic men to be seen by Baltic people was the legendary viking, Egill Skallagrímsson. He and his entourage "robbed and killed" in Courland, as recounted in the saga of Egill.

In 930, the free men of Iceland founded their national parliament, the *Althing*. In 1262, after a long and bloody conflict between the various families and clans, the Icelanders accepted the rule of the Norwegian kingdom. Later, when Norway came under Danish rule, Iceland followed.

In the mid-19th century, national revival began in earnest in Iceland. In 1904 home rule was won and self-government followed in 1918. Iceland was still a kingdom, though, in personal union with Denmark, and the Danes continued to handle foreign affairs on behalf of the Icelandic authorities.

In early 1922 the Danish consul in Kaunas declared to the Lithuanian government that Iceland recognized *de jure* the

independence of Lithuania. The government in Kaunas in turn sent "especially warm thanks to Iceland, whose age-old culture was well-known and respected in Lithuania."¹ In the following year, a commercial treaty was concluded between Iceland and Lithuania.

In April 1940, Nazi-Germany invaded and occupied Denmark and the *Althing* resolved that, since the Danes could no longer manage the foreign affairs of Iceland, the Icelanders would have to do it themselves. When Lithuania was annexed to the Soviet Union later that year, Iceland did not recognize that act *de jure*. However, in 1944, when Iceland declared full independence and became a republic, recognition of this event by the great powers was considered of primary importance. The Icelandic authorities therefore had no qualms about establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, ignoring the question of the Baltic states.

It is obvious that over the next decades Icelandic authorities recognised the Soviet annexation, at least *de facto*. Various examples of this could be cited. Perhaps the most significant of these was the official visit to the Baltic republics, in 1978, of the Icelandic ambassador to Moscow.

1990: Lithuanian declaration of independence

Immediately after the *Althing* sent its congratulations to the Lithuanian people in March 1990, hopes were raised in Vilnius that greater support would be forthcoming, and disputes on further responses arose in Reykjavík. The Progressive Party (mainly a rural centre party), the People's Party (the Social Democrats) and the People's Alliance (the Socialists) held the majority in parliament. These parties had formed a coalition government from the autumn of 1988 to May 1991 (from September 1989 with the aid of a small centre party, the Citizen's Party, and one independent MP). The largest opposition party was the right-wing Independence Party which called on the coalition to grant the Lithuanians what they longed for. The media had quickly got in touch with Vytautas Landsbergis and other Lithuanian politicians.

¹ Archives of the Icelandic Foreign Ministry. *SU*: 8.G.2. Pack 2: The Danish consulate in Kaunas to the Foreign Ministry in Copenhagen, February 2, 1922. Copy in the archives of the Icelandic Foreign Ministry (Documents from these archives are hereafter cited as *SU*, with the number of the pack following).



• The author (left), with Professor Landsbergis in 1993.

Their message was clear: they wanted both, renewed recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations from Iceland.

In late March, in a private message to Jón Baldvin Hannibalsson, leader of the Social Democrats and Foreign Minister, Landsbergis emphasised the importance of these steps. "We ask you expressly to accord immediately a formal and legal recognition of the Lithuanian Republic as founded in the declaration of independence from 11 March 1990," Landsbergis said.²

Nobody doubted that Hannibalsson sympathised with the Lithuanian cause — but he was not ready to meet the wishes of Landsbergis. He stressed that, in a legal sense, the recognition of 1922 was still valid. Other Western states opted for caution, he said, mostly for fear of Mikhail Gorbachev's position in the Soviet Union. In one of his messages to Reykjavík at the end of March, Ólafur Egilsson, the Icelandic ambassador to Moscow, described how his Western colleagues thought little of Lithuanian actions and felt that Landsbergis was far too hasty and reckless: "Speaking of the speed of the Lithuanians in their quest for independence,"

² *SU*-1: "Telephone conversation with Vytautas Landsbergis, President of Lithuania," March 24, 1990.

Egilsson concluded, "one ambassador put it this way: once a firework was set alight, there was no way to follow it."³

Gadflies on the international scene

So Foreign Minister Hannibalsson faced a dilemma. On the one hand, he wanted to give the Lithuanians full support in their struggle for independence, but on the other hand he wanted to side with Western allies, cautious as they were. Hannibalsson soon came to realize that this would not work out. In June 1990 his radical remarks in support of the Baltic cause at a CSCE-meeting on human rights in Copenhagen were clearly noticed and indicated his position. But did that matter? Iceland was, and still is, a tiny state, with inherently limited influence. "I will never forget," Hannibalsson recalled later, "when the US delegate approached me after I had finished my speech, embraced me and said: "It's truly a privilege to represent a small country and be able to speak one's mind".⁴ The implication was that the Icelandic Foreign Minister could do so because his words did not carry any weight.

But the Balts praised Hannibalsson highly for his comments, and for the rest of the year he and his Danish colleague, Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, held the Baltic cause high wherever they could at international level. The Icelandic Foreign Minister's argument that this *did* matter is convincing:

"We were like gadflies, we stung them [other Western representatives and politicians]...Should small states interfere and have an opinion in matters which don't concern them directly? I thought so, especially when larger states had their hands strictly tied, because of German unification and the superpower agenda".⁵

Bloodbath in Vilnius

In late 1990 and at the beginning of 1991, Landsbergis felt that Hannibalsson and the Icelandic authorities were among his most ardent supporters in the West. This was clearly manifested on January 13 when Soviet military units attacked the TV-tower in Vilnius. After failing to reach Gorbachev, Landsbergis decided to

³ *SU-1*: The Icelandic embassy in Moscow to the Foreign Ministry in Reykjavík, March 30, 1990.

⁴ Interview with Hannibalsson, in *Alth+dubladid* (Icelandic newspaper), March 17-19, 1995.

⁵ Author's interview with Hannibalsson, Reykjavík, November 2, 1994.

seek help in the West by trying to contact Mr. Hannibalsson in Icelenad first⁶

The Icelandic Foreign Minister felt the responsibility on his shoulders. He had spoken for the Lithuanians, but Landsbergis challenged him to do more, to come to Vilnius and visit the barricaded parliament. Hannibalsson agreed and during January 18-20 he visited the three Baltic states. He affirmed that the journey constituted a *de facto* recognition of their independence, even though he travelled on a Soviet visa. In Vilnius, he declared that the Icelandic government would "carefully consider establishing full diplomatic relations with Lithuania, and possibly the other Baltic states." This news was met with great applause.⁷

Vytautas Landsbergis and his team truly expected that this would come about within a short period of time, days or weeks. There were serious obstacles to this in Iceland, of which Hannibalsson had always been aware. Caution was expressed by members of the coalition, especially the Progressive Prime Minister, Steingrímur Hermannsson. Lithuania did not control her borders, diplomatic representatives could not deliver their credentials and while not admitting it publicly, Hannibalsson, Hermannsson and other ministers felt they had to consider the reaction of the Soviet Union, not the least because trade negotiations with Moscow were at a very sensitive stage.⁸

Still, hopes had been raised in Vilnius and right was obviously on the side of the Lithuanians. In Hannibalsson's mind, Soviet violence had demonstrated that the Kremlin would hardly conduct real negotiations with the Baltic states. After some hesitation the *Althing* formally confirmed, on February 11, that the recognition of Lithuania from 1922 was fully valid and declared that diplomatic relations would be established, "as soon as possible." The Lithuanians hailed the resolution and in their rejoicing even

⁶ Author's interview with Landsbergis, Vilnius, June 7, 1994.

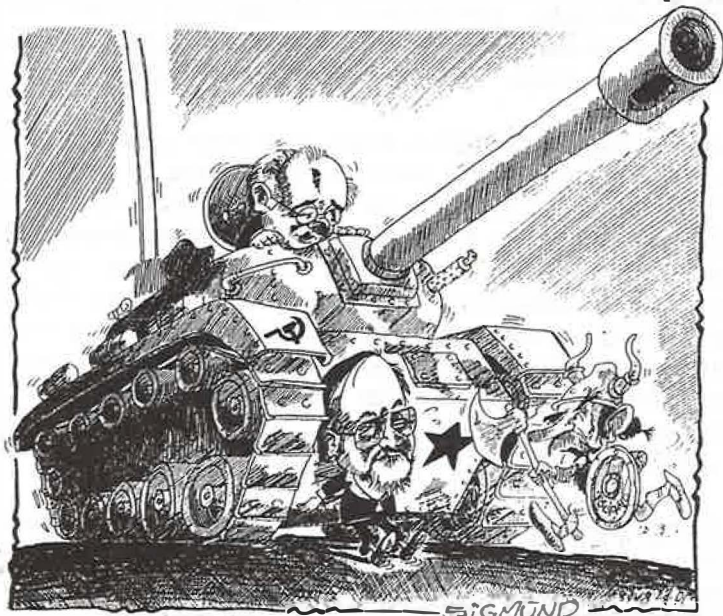
⁷ *DV* (Icelandic newspaper), January 21, 1991.

⁸ This can be seen from minutes of meetings of the Foreign Affairs committee of the *Althing* in January and February 1991.

mistook it for immediate establishment of diplomatic relations.⁹ Other Western states, however, did not follow the Icelandic lead, as Landsbergis had hoped. Iceland could offer Lithuania political and moral support but she could not change the mood or opinions of other states.

Stalemate

A stalemate in Icelandic and Lithuanian relations ensued. The Icelandic government had long proposed that negotiations between the Baltic states and the Soviet Union should take place in



• This cartoon by Sigmund Johnsson appeared in *Morgunbladid*, Iceland's largest newspaper, on February 17, 1991, after the Soviet Union had strongly protested Icelandic intentions to establish diplomatic relations with Lithuania. The cartoon shows Landsbergis struggling to stop the tank (driven by Gorbachev) while Jon Baldvin is running towards Landsbergis and calling out, "Now that I am here, Mr Landsbergis, you can let go!"

- Reprinted with permission from *Morgunbladid*.

⁹ See for instance "Iceland establishes diplomatic relations with Lithuania." *Estonian Independent*, February 21, 1991, and *SU-9*, a letter from A. Brazianus, Kaunas, to the Foreign Minister of Iceland, February 16, 1991.

Reykjavík, an idea which the Estonians highly supported. Landsbergis felt that efforts along these lines stood in the way of establishing diplomatic relations between Iceland and Lithuania.¹⁰ The idea of Icelandic mediation bogged down and in late March 1991 Hannibalsson was left to say of the Balts that he had "absolutely no idea what these friends of ours are thinking any more."¹¹ Then, in May, a new coalition took power in Iceland. The Independence Party and the Social Democrats became partners and throughout the summer of 1991 the new chairman of the *Althing's* Foreign Affairs committee, Independent Eyjólfur Konráð Jónsson, often called for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Lithuania. Hannibalsson, still Foreign Minister, seemed to agree, especially after Lithuania and Russia signed a deal at the end of July, recognizing each other's independence. It could be argued that Iceland would have gone ahead and taken up full relations with Lithuania later in 1991, even without the coup attempt in Moscow in August, which dramatically changed the scene.

The race for recognition

Things happened quickly after August 19, when the putsch began in Moscow. Two days later the Foreign Ministers of the NATO-states convened in Brussels. During the meeting, they contacted Boris Yeltsin who assured them that the coup was failing. As the conversation with the Russian President ended, Hannibalsson was due to speak. As he himself recounted, he did away with his prepared speech and capitalized instead on the latest events in Moscow, arguing that it was now or never to fully recognize Baltic independence. But nobody seconded that suggestion.¹²

Undeterred, on August 22 the Icelandic Foreign Minister contacted representatives of the three Baltic states and declared that Iceland recognized the independence of Estonia and Latvia, as had been done in the case of Lithuania on February 11, and was ready to resume diplomatic relations with the three of them. It was a unique statement at this stage, and on August 26 the Foreign Ministers of Iceland and the Baltic states were scheduled to seal these declarations in Reykjavík.

¹⁰ *SU-10*: Landsbergis to Hermannsson, March 6, 1991.

¹¹ *Tíminn* (Icelandic newspaper), March 26, 1991.

¹² Author's interview with Hannibalsson, Reykjavík, November 2, 1994.

Events accelerated in the final stretch of the "race for recognition". Hannibalsson was later to insist, tongue in cheek, that "we were first, although Uffe will never admit that."¹³ Ellemann-Jensen of Denmark had not spoken out as early as Hannibalsson on immediate Baltic independence, but he felt he had a strong card up his sleeve. Shortly before midnight on August 24 dispatches, confirming Danish resumption of diplomatic relations were sent to the Baltic capitals — "so we were the first in the world," as Ellemann-Jensen proudly claimed.¹⁴ Still, "nobody had done so much for us," Landsbergis later reminisced on Icelandic support.¹⁵ On August 24, he wrote to Hannibalsson, saying how he always

*"...believed that Iceland would be the first and this is finally happening. In January, the first time that the Soviet putsch choked on the blood of unarmed combatants, your unforgettable visit to Vilnius inspired hope in the people of Lithuania that someone in the West was not neglecting them. And now larger countries have resolved to follow Iceland. I press your hand so hard as if I had eaten, once again, a piece of [Icelandic] shark meat."*¹⁶

Two days later, the Baltic Foreign Ministers signed formal declarations on diplomatic relations in Reykjavík. Over the next days a score of nations did so, too; but did they "follow Iceland", as Landsbergis remarked? On September 2, the United States joined the pack and President George Bush brushed aside suggestions that he had been late in acting, insisting that "when history is written, nobody is going to remember that we took 48 hours [sic] more than Iceland, or whoever else it was."¹⁷

Conclusions

1) Why did Iceland support Lithuanian independence in 1990 and 1991? It began with some common historical experiences: foreign rule and freedom won in 1918. General sympathy because of the harm done under Soviet occupation also played a role. Then Icelandic politicians, with Foreign Minister Hannibalsson at the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Morgunbladid* (Icelandic newspaper), August 27, 1991.

¹⁵ Author's interview with Landsbergis, Vilnius, June 7, 1994.

¹⁶ SU-12: Landsbergis to Hannibalsson, August 24, 1991.

¹⁷ Cited in Alfred Erich Senn: *Gorbachev's Failure in Lithuania*. New York 1995, p. 153.



• *Althingishúsid*, Iceland's Parliament House, built in 1880.

forefront, realized that most Western statesmen felt they had their hands tied and the Icelanders did not want to see Lithuania abandoned, in the face of Soviet aggression and intimidation.

2) How did Iceland support Lithuania? Firstly, Hannibalsson spoke on behalf of the Balts at international level, was a "gadfly" as he himself said. Secondly, Iceland offered political and moral support, with Hannibalsson's visit in January 1991, the *Althing's* reconfirmed recognition of Lithuanian independence the following month and Icelandic actions during and immediately after the attempted putsch of August 1991 being the most important.

3) What effect did Icelandic support have? It certainly gave the Lithuanians a moral boost, a feeling that they were not alone in their struggle. On the other hand, they exaggerated the importance of Iceland on the international scene. While Hannibalsson's efforts must have had some indirect effect, other states were not willing to follow Icelandic calls for greater support for the Balts. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the events in Moscow in August 1991 the Baltic states of course would have gained independence, regardless of Icelandic actions and decisions, noble as they were nonetheless.

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Eugene: In Retrospect

Darius V. SNIEČKUS
Montreal

*For my father, Victor Algirdas Sniečkus, on the occasion of his
being awarded the University of Oregon Alumni Award*

*Eugene, Oregon: life's hypotheses
were rising in the flask-neck. Origins;
countries; language; study; science distilled
and left filtrate here. Before; since, you've lived
through homes that urged return or passage on;
won hospitable welcome; worked without -
yet every road in memory led to,
or from, this city's University.
Between mountain and sea, Eugene, nineteen
sixty-six: then as now, the Willamette
runs with quick ice; the black Pacific, white,
evaporates; and onshore winds condense
renewed water to run again. And you,
again, are on campus, alumnus, faced
with honour's end: a means to new vision.*

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He has published a chap-book (The Brueghel Desk, 1994) and
poems in various literary journals. He is now completing
Translations, a collection of ekphastic poems.*

Lithuanian Nationalism and its Role in the Decay of the Soviet Union

Vince J. TAŠKŪNAS
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Benedict Anderson (1987, 15) suggested that nationalism should be treated "...as if it belonged with 'kinship' and 'religion' rather than with 'liberalism' or 'fascism'". Anderson's concept of it as a "cultural artefact" (1987, 14), is a defining characteristic of nationalism under foreign rule. Lithuanian nationalism, a unique blend of history and legend, grew stronger as a result of its role in the dismantling of "the Kremlin's contrived nationalism" (Hartman 1992, 69-70). It was both cause *and* result; and simply, the more preferred option. It has been argued that Lithuania's distinctive sense of national identity, its history of "cultural artefacts" and national symbols and its persistent quest for independence combined to produce the nationalist triumph in 1990 (Hartman 1992; Hiden and Salmon 1991; Senn 1990: Smith ed. 1994).

The Lithuanian nationalist tradition is indeed an extensive one; its construction spans centuries. Following World War I, Lithuania gained independence from the 19th century Russian occupation and this gave "... a stamp of legitimacy to the culmination of centuries of growing nationalism" (Hartman 1992, 78). This brief period of *nationhood* became its own 'cultural artefact': "there already existed a pre-Soviet civic culture of democracy, embedded in the years of independent statehood" (Smith ed. 1994, 130). This was of great importance during the Soviet occupation of 1940-1991 and was used as the *touchstone* of nationalist sentiment.

Stalinism had no place within its framework for Baltic nationalism. The contradictions in the Soviet Union in terms of ideology and *real practice* account in part for its terminal illness. The Lithuanian SSR Constitution declared "all power in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic belongs to the people" (*article 2* cited in Senn 1990, 12). The Stalinist totalitarian rule of terror produced a Soviet culture of fear and repression, incompatible with the ideology, susceptible to change.

The failure of Communist economics led to "an economy of permanent shortage" (*Economist* April 28, 1990, 6). The Soviet Union, a supposed 'Superpower', had endured decades of poverty and recession due to inept centralised planning, a poor currency and "visibly and often laughably inferior quality" of produce (*Economist* April 28, 1990, 5). These conditions nourished discontent. Communist ideology, never popular in Lithuania, imploded as a result of its own incongruities.

Mikhail Gorbachev was the first Soviet leader to accept the existence of an economic crisis. "*Glasnost* and *perestroika* were primarily a response to the breakdown, above all economic, of the Soviet system" (Hiden and Salmon 1991, 147). Gorbachev's 'openness' and 'restructuring' were intended to initiate a degree of reform and *khosraschet* (accountability). The pervasive 'openness', however, led to profound change: the Communist contradictions drew "new critical attention" (Senn 1990, 11).

Gorbachev had "...inadvertently triggered off a resurgence of nationalism" (Smith ed. 1994, 128). More accurately, this provided the opportunity for Baltic nationalism to be legitimately practised. "Rather than aiming for Baltic independence through these reforms, Gorbachev probably envisioned a dynamic Baltic economy which, harnessed securely to the rest of the Soviet Union, could pull the entire country out of the economic mire" (Hartman 1992, 81).

Lithuania used the reforms to give its own move towards independence legitimacy. *Sąjūdis* (the 'movement') was formed at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in May 1988 (Vardys in Trapans ed. 1991, 12), bringing the people together "to share long-suppressed thoughts and feelings" (Senn 1990, 135). It used the previously banned national symbols to galvanize Lithuanian sentiment.

The Church had long been the victim of repression and consequently was a bastion of anti-Soviet feeling. After the *glasnost*, public Masses celebrated by Church leaders helped unite and strengthen the nationalist fervour (Senn 1990, 226-227). Churches became centres for anti-Soviet communication and "...served an important dual role as both spiritual and political centrepieces of the community" (Hartman 1992, 72).



• Lithuanians rejoiced when, as a symbol of defiance against the Russian occupation forces, a flag of free Lithuania was hoisted at the War Museum, in the city of Kaunas, on October 9, 1988. - Photo: A. Kairys/Žygio Draugams.

In the 1980s, Baltic environmentalism "frequently turned anti-Soviet" (Peterson 1993, 215). Nature became a medium for social and political change, a notion well-supported in other parts of the world. In Lithuania, the environment lobby increasingly became the vehicle for nationalist views, as in the 1988 protest against the expansion of the Ignalina nuclear power plant.

The decline of the Soviet Union provided the means *and* conditions for the 'rise' of Lithuanian nationalism. The Lithuanian declaration of independence in 1990 was facilitated in no small measure by the failure of Communist ideology and economics, the diminished status of the Soviet Union as the Cold War wound up, and the Gorbachev reform policies and the resulting decentralisation of power. The 1990 declaration is already another important "cultural artefact" in the intriguing history of Lithuanian nationalism.

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The Currency Board

and Alternative Monetary and Exchange Rate Policies for the Bank of Lithuania

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Introduction

Since Lithuania regained independence in 1991, its money and monetary institutions have been evolving. Continued use of the rouble after 1991 resulted in hyperinflation, and the rouble was replaced by temporary coupons or talonas in October 1992. In June 1993 the litas became the national currency and once again the Bank of Lithuania became a central bank. Initially the litas floated against other currencies as the goals of the Bank remained unclear. In April 1994 legislation created the Lithuanian currency board with the obligation of maintaining a fixed exchange rate of four litai¹ per dollar. A currency board is a kind of central bank with limited discretionary authority. It must trade litai for dollars at the fixed exchange rate, but it is not allowed to extend credit to the government or private domestic borrowers.

Currency boards also exist in other countries, including nearby Estonia, but public support for the board seems weaker in Lithuania. A recent visitor to Lithuania contrasted public attitudes toward currency boards in Estonia and Lithuania (Zavoico, 1986). In Estonia the currency board is a symbol of independence, and advocates of devaluation of the kroon would be considered traitors. Conversely many Lithuanians consider the board to be a symbol of oppression and opponents are considered to be heroes.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an economic analysis of the Lithuanian currency board and some feasible alternatives. The goal is to stimulate discussion among interested parties rather than to advocate a particular policy. Decisions about economic policy are political, but they must take into account principles of economics and empirical evidence about central banks in other countries and

¹ Litai is the plural form of litas. Both forms are used, as appropriate, in this paper.

Table 1: Inflation in Eastern Europe, the Baltics and the CIS
(% per year)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995 Projection
Albania	104	237	31	16	5
Armenia	25	1,341	10,996	1,885	45
Azerbaijan	126	1,395	1,294	1,788	100
Belarus	93	1,558	1,994	1,875	200
Bulgaria	339	79	64	122	50
Croatia	149	937	1,150	-3	3
Czech Republic	52	13	18	10	10
Estonia	304	954	36	42	22
FYR Macedonia	115	1,935	230	55	10
Georgia	131	1,463	7,492	7,380	25
Hungary	32	22	21	21	28
Kazakstan	150	2,567	2,169	1,160	60
Kyrgyzstan	170	1,771	1,366	87	25
Latvia	262	958	35	26	23
Lithuania	345	1,175	189	45	30
Moldova	162	2,198	837	98	20
Poland	60	44	38	30	23
Romania	223	199	296	62	30
Russia	144	2,318	841	203	145
Slovak Republic	58	9	25	12	10
Slovenia	247	93	23	18	10
Tajikistan	204	1,364	7,344	5	240
Turkmenistan	155	644	9,750	1,100	2,500
Ukraine	161	2,000	10,155	401	150
Uzbekistan	169	910	885	423	155

Source: Transition Report 1995, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

other times. Otherwise logically contradictory policies may be attempted. For example, political leaders might instruct the Bank of Lithuania to produce a low rate of inflation (without shortages) and extend credit at low interest rates to all borrowers who need money. No central bank has ever accomplished such a result, but populist politicians in many countries have advocated it.

1. Central Banks are not Commercial Banks

A central bank is a government agency whose traditional goal is to produce a quantity of money that results in a stable purchasing power for money. It is not expected to earn profits by accepting deposits and making loans. Those are the functions of commercial banks. The Bank of Lithuania has been criticised for earning low interest rates on its dollar-denominated reserves while refusing to extend credit at higher interest rates in Lithuania. The criticism is misplaced. The Bank has the power to create money, so that if it were allowed to earn maximum profits, it would follow an inflationary monetary policy. Most of the central banks of the former Soviet Republics have produced high inflation rates by printing money to finance large budgetary deficits (see Table 1). Annual inflation rates in 1994 for the twelve republics, excluding the Baltics, ranged from 87% (Kyrgyzstan) to 7380% (Georgia). Estonia (42%) and Lithuania (45%) restrict money creation with currency boards and Latvia follows a fixed exchange rate against an average of five major currencies.

The Lithuanian Currency Board holds dollar reserves to fulfil its obligation to sell dollars for litai when there is a shortage of dollars at the fixed exchange rate and buy dollars when they are in surplus. The Board earns competitive interest on dollar assets with negligible default risk. As long as the exchange rate remains fixed, the Board is not subject to capital gains or losses on its dollar assets.

2. Currency Boards and Domestic Loans

The currency board is not authorised to make loans to domestic borrowers, private or government. This restriction distinguishes a currency board from a central bank. In the United States, for example, the central bank carries out its monetary policy by trading U.S. government bonds for money. However, the obligation of the U.S. central bank to keep the inflation rate low has limited the amount of credit it can extend to the government, and the resulting

inflation rate has been consistently low. In Lithuania the justification for prohibiting the Bank of Lithuania from extending credit to the government is that the restriction protects the Bank from the kinds of political pressures that have produced inflationary monetary policies in most of the transition economies. For example, the same political forces that produced a large energy debt in Lithuania (International Monetary Fund) would have lobbied the Bank of Lithuania for additional monetary emissions.

3. Inflation and the Need for a Monetary Constitution

A central bank has the power to create money, and limits must be imposed on the bank to prevent abuse of its authority. These limits have been called a monetary constitution. In absence of limits, the bank is vulnerable to political pressure to print too much money. Lithuanians experienced hyperinflation in 1922 when German Ostmarks were the circulating currency and large emissions of money occurred. Insufficient limits on the money creating authority of new central banks in the former Soviet Republics after 1991 resulted in massive monetary emissions and hyperinflation.

To avoid this problem central banks must be assigned a specific goal, like maintaining a fixed exchange rate or a stable price level, and they must be given protection or independence from other government agencies that might have competing or contradictory goals. The classic conflict is between the central bank seeking low inflation and the finance ministry or treasury seeking low interest loans from the bank to finance its budgetary deficit. Extensive studies of inflation and central banks around the world indicate that banks with the least independence from other government agencies produce the highest rates of inflation (Cukierman and Webb, 1995).

The same studies indicate that there is no compensating benefit from tolerating a higher rate of inflation. Inflation does not stimulate real economic growth or employment. Economic growth is a result of saving, investing, and innovating, rather than printing additional pieces of paper money (World Bank, 1993). Thus, policies that limit the growth rate of the money supply do not reduce economic growth in Lithuania.

The central bank can be assigned the goal of fixing the exchange rate (as with the currency board) or producing a stable price level



• Poverty is visible in today's Lithuania.

- Photo: Lietuvos Aidas.

but not both. If a fixed dollar exchange rate is chosen, the Bank of Lithuania must allow the supply of money (litai), price level, and money interest rates to adapt to those in the United States. If a particular rate of inflation is the goal, the Bank must allow the dollar-litas exchange rate to float, and the currency of the country with the higher inflation rate will tend to depreciate.

4. Compatibility of Money Interest Rates and Inflation

Money interest rates are highest in countries with the highest inflation rates. High money interest rates serve to compensate lenders for the expected inflation created by monetary emissions. High money interest rates are a result of "too much" money creation not "too little". Money interest rates can also be influenced by high default risk on loans and monopoly power by banks, but expected inflation is the dominant influence. Money interest rates must be compatible with inflation in order to reward savers and avoid a shortage of credit.

For example, if the inflation rate is 20%, the average good that initially cost one litas will cost 1.2 litai. Each litas will buy only $.833 = 1/1.2$ as many goods as before, i.e. the purchasing power

of money has decreased by 16.7%. To compensate lenders for the loss of purchasing power, a higher money rate of interest must be paid. Legal maximum interest rates that result in negative real rates can act as a severe deterrent to savings, lending, and economic growth (World Bank, 1993). Money interest rates must be compatible with inflation rates.

5. Fixed Exchange Rate

The Currency Board is a particular way to achieve a fixed exchange rate and discipline the central bank. The money supply in Lithuania adapts automatically to the fixed exchange rate. If the money supply in litai is too large, the Bank must buy back the surplus by selling dollar reserves. If the money supply is too small, the Bank will buy dollars and emit additional litai. The adjustment of the Lithuanian money supply brings about the convergence of the inflation rate to the U.S. rate for goods entering international trade. The Lithuanian inflation rate has moved toward the U.S. rate since 1994, although convergence remains incomplete. One problem with the gradual convergence of inflation rates is that Lithuania's export sector is harmed during the transition. When Lithuania has inflation with a fixed exchange rate, litai received per dollar earned by exporting remain constant, but costs expressed in litai rise. Exporting becomes less profitable.

The Currency Board places the same restrictions on the Bank of Lithuania as participation in the gold standard did from 1922-40. The litas was introduced and the Bank of Lithuania was founded in 1922 following the hyperinflation associated with the use of the German Ostmark. The Governor of the Bank from 1922-29 was Vladas Jurgutis, who was strongly committed to the gold standard and providing the Bank with independence from political pressure (Grennes, 1996). In spite of the upheaval associated with the Great Depression, Lithuania never devalued the litas, and there was a strong consensus in favour of the policy. In a sense, the post-1994 Currency Board follows the Lithuanian tradition of commitment to a fixed exchange rate with substantial independence of the Bank of Lithuania from the political process. A difference is that today all countries in the world have abandoned the gold standard. Lithuania cannot recreate the gold standard unilaterally, but it can secure the same essential features in a slightly different way. Lithuanians also participated in the gold standard earlier as part of the rouble area at the end of the Tsarist period, 1897-1914.

Another reason to favour a rigidly fixed exchange rate is the desire by Lithuanians to join the European Union. All Lithuanian political parties appear to support membership in the EU, and accepting monetary union would be a likely condition of membership. Monetary union is the most extreme form of fixed exchange rate, since devaluation is prohibited. So if the Lithuanian Currency Board is objectionable, the adoption of a single European currency should be even more objectionable. Other conditions of EU membership are giving up all trade barriers against goods from the EU and allowing residents of those countries to own land in Lithuania. A difference between the Currency Board and joining the Monetary Union is that the value of the litas would be fixed in terms of the Europa (whose value is yet to be determined), not the dollar.

Some critics of the Lithuanian Currency Board have pointed to the advantages of Latvia's policy of fixing the value of the lat relative to an average of five currencies (United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, France) rather than a single currency. The policy allows the lat to fall in value against certain currencies while simultaneously rising against others. It has resulted in slightly lower inflation rates in Latvia than in Lithuania and Estonia in the last two years. It gives the Bank of Latvia slightly more flexibility, but it is not fundamentally different from the Currency Board. If the Bank of Latvia creates too many lats it will have to sell reserves and buy the lats back.

However, the Bank of Latvia has received greater independence from political pressure than the Bank of Lithuania. Latvia has had only one head of its central bank (Einars Repse), whereas Lithuania has had four heads of its bank as of June 1996. Mr. Repse has earned an outstanding reputation as a central banker in the view of the international community as well as in Latvia, and that may contribute to the length of his tenure and the independence delegated to his bank.

6. Floating

One could allow the litas to float against other countries and assign the central bank a target inflation rate. That is, the Bank of Lithuania could be required by law to produce an inflation rate within a specified range. For example, New Zealand has made realisation of a target range for inflation (zero to 2%) a condition of

employment of the head of its central bank. In order to achieve the target inflation rate the central bank must allow a slow rate of growth of the money supply, and it must allow the exchange rate and money interest rates to vary with market conditions.

Countries like Germany, Japan, and the United States have had floating exchange rates for more than twenty years, and they have given their central banks more discretionary authority than New Zealand. Although price level stability is not the only goal assigned to these central banks, they have been given some legal independence from their governments, and they have earned a reputation for credibility by regularly producing low inflation rates. One can imagine that currency boards like those in Lithuania and Estonia might evolve into central banks after achieving sustained price stability.

7. Adjustable Peg

A compromise between a rigidly fixed exchange rate like a currency board and a floating exchange rate is the adjustable peg. The exchange rate is fixed for an indefinite period subject to occasional changes at the discretion of certain government officials. Unlike a currency board, an adjustable peg would allow devaluations, but only under extraordinary circumstances. Most Western countries carried out an adjustable peg (Bretton Woods System) from 1946 until a series of currency crises led to its demise in 1973. The United Kingdom followed an adjustable peg until it was forced by a currency crisis in September 1992 to float the pound. Mexico also followed an adjustable peg until the currency crisis of December 1994 forced the government to float the peso. A major weakness of the system is that when the credibility of the government's commitment to the fixed exchange rate is reduced, speculators abandon the domestic currency and an exchange rate crisis occurs.

Currency crises are more likely when governments are weak and when there is no consensus about exchange rate policy between the ruling party and opposition political parties. These conditions plus frequent turnover of prime ministers and heads of the Bank of Lithuania describe Lithuanian politics since 1991 (Viesulas, 1995; Norgaard, 1996).

If the litas is devalued to five litai per dollar, the credibility of the government's commitment to the new rate is likely to be weak. If a subsequent devaluation to six litai per dollar is anticipated, speculators will convert litai to dollars expecting to sell the dollars later at a profit. Because of the tendency for currency crises to develop, many analysts consider the adjustable peg to be an unsustainable monetary system (Obstfeld and Rogoff, 1995).

Another disadvantage of the adjustable peg is that it allows corrupt government officials to profit from inside information about the timing of exchange rate changes. If an official knows the timing of devaluation, he can speculate against the litas himself or benefit friends and allies by leaking information to them. Comparable opportunities to abuse power do not exist under a currency board, since exchange rates don't change. Frequent changes occur under floating rates, but government officials possess no more information about these changes than private traders.

When devaluation occurs under an adjustable peg the new monetary policy and inflation rate must be compatible with the new exchange rate. If not, another realignment will soon be necessary. For example, if the litas were devalued and the Bank of Lithuania emitted enough litai to produce an inflation rate of 1500% per year



• The original Bank of Lithuania, photographed in the 1930s. The Bank was established on October 2, 1922. It had twenty-six branches, throughout the country. The Bank's first governor was Professor V. Jurgutis (to 1933); he was succeeded by V. Stašinskas (1933-1940).

- Photo: Lithuania through the Ages.

(Belarus experience 1992-94), the new exchange rate could not be defended. Furthermore, even if the government that devalues the currency intends to implement a monetary policy compatible with the new exchange rate, it may be replaced due to an election or scandal by a government with different intentions. Thus, the credibility of the commitment of the new exchange rate is in doubt.

A slight variant of the adjustable peg would allow the exchange rate to move within a limited range (target zone) or corridor around the official fixed rate. Russia experimented with this system in 1995 and 1996. For example, the exchange rate might be allowed to float between 4.5 and 3.5 litai per dollar. However, the same problems of credibility and currency crises arise when the upper limit of 4.5 is reached.

8. Conclusion

What are the logical alternatives to the Lithuanian Currency Board? The closest alternative is to follow Latvia and link the litas to an average of five currencies that includes the dollar, rather than the dollar by itself. More extreme alternatives are floating and an adjustable peg.

The case in favour of continuing the Currency Board is that it would prepare Lithuania for membership in the European Union and its planned single currency. The Currency Board also incorporates the same kind of monetary discipline as the gold standard that was chosen freely by Lithuanians during the inter-war period. By ruling out devaluation, the Currency Board reduces profit opportunities for corrupt officials. Although the inflation rate in Lithuania has been higher than those in the U.S. and the European Union, it has been close to the rates in Estonia and Latvia, and it continues to decline. It has also been far below the inflation rates in the non-Baltic Republics of the former Soviet Union.

A freely floating litas is a logical alternative, but a precise price level stability goal would have to be imposed on the Bank of Lithuania, and the Bank would have to be protected from political pressure that would lead to a high inflation rate. Like a Currency Board, a floating rate would provide few profit opportunities for corrupt officials.

The remaining alternative, the adjustable peg, has been tried in different variations many times and in many countries. Its main feature is that the exchange rate is fixed for an indefinite period and changed at the discretion of certain government officials. The main disadvantage is that it has frequently resulted in currency crises when a change in the exchange rate has been anticipated. It also provides profit opportunities for corrupt officials to use inside information.

Minor variations of these three monetary systems can be constructed, but there are no additional fundamentally different alternatives. Critics of the Currency Board must either advocate floating rates or an adjustable peg. If floating is to succeed, a way must be found to protect the Bank of Lithuania from political pressure that would lead to high inflation. For an adjustable peg to succeed, a way must be found to avoid the government's credibility problem that leads to currency crises.

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In Brief

- Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University in Greifswald (North-East Germany) has been offering Baltic studies for the past five years. Professor Dr. Rainer ECKERT is in charge of the University's Baltic Institute which teaches major sequences in Lithuanian Studies, Latvian Studies (language, literature, folklore), Ancient Prussian as well as background studies in history, mythology, etc. Professor Eckert's group has produced a range of valuable publications. (AABS)
- The scientific achievements of Aldona BUTKUS, DMLT, AIMLT, MAppSc(RMIT), PhD were crowned last December, when she received her Ph.D. degree at the University of Melbourne. Using a different approach, Aldona had isolated and, with others, cloned the major secretory component of the Corpuscles of Stannius (CS) which had defied isolation and identification for over 100 years. Aldona is now a Senior Research Officer at Howard Florey Institute of Experimental Physiology and Medicine, located at the University of Melbourne.
- *Vilnius Vision 2015* is a comprehensive examination of the Lithuanian capital city's future, produced by the Canada Baltic Municipal Co-operation Programme in conjunction with Lithuanian experts. The scheme is financed by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency). It was originally set up by the Canadian Urban Institute early in 1994, in the three Baltic capitals, Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius. The work is proceeding to its second stage, in 1996-99; and CIDA has allocated 2 million dollars (Canadian) for this purpose. Mrs. D. Bardauskienė is the programme's manageress in Vilnius. Her address: Vilnius 2600, Gedimino 35/1, 110 kab., Lithuania. Tel.(3702) 617196. Fax. (3702) 227723. (APT)
- The German Foreign Ministry announced on July 26, 1996 that Germany will pay 2 million German marks (AU\$1.9 million) in compensation to Lithuania for atrocities committed during the Nazi occupation. The money will be used to fund hospitals and nursing homes for surviving Nazi victims. In addition to Lithuania's Jews, 29,000 Lithuanians were imprisoned in 103 concentration camps and prisons during the Nazi occupation (1941-44). At least 6,225 died.
- Pranciška Gaidamavičiūtė, a Lithuanian missionary nun, died in Rooty Hill, NSW on February 21, 1996, at the age of 99. Her lifelong service to God and mankind included 29 years in Kharbin, China.

From Rouble to Talonai and Litas *Monetary Disintegration in Lithuania*

Clemens MUTH
University of Munich

Introduction

Lithuania has been the front runner of the Baltic States in gaining political independence from the Soviet Union, leaving Latvia and Estonia quite behind. Surprisingly it was the last of the Baltics to achieve monetary independence. Estonia left the rouble zone on June 20, 1992 and introduced the Estonian Kroon. Latvia followed one month later, but it took Lithuania until October 1, 1992 to declare the Soviet rouble a foreign currency and to make the Talonai¹ (an interim coupon-currency) the sole legal tender in the republic. In this article we analyse the Lithuanian exit from the rouble zone and some factors which delayed it.

Economic theory gives us a number of possible motives for an individual country to leave a monetary union. These are: the disintegration of markets for goods; factors and financial assets; an increase in asymmetric shocks within the union, differences in the amount of public debt and in the preferences for monetary policy (especially the rate of inflation); an unequal share of one country in the amount of seigniorage as well as the exit of other member states from the union. In addition, political motives, like the desire for national sovereignty, the self-interest of politicians and third-party interests play an important role in the decision to leave a monetary union.

Towards Litas

Preparations for the introduction of a Lithuanian currency started in 1990, when the Bank of Lithuania was founded with a view to it becoming the future Central Bank. According to the bank law of February 1990, the president, the vice-president and the other members of the board of the bank were elected by the Supreme Soviet of the Republic. The competence of the Bank concentrated on banking supervision, until in June 1991 it took over most of the

¹ *Talonai* is the plural form of *talonas*. Both forms are used in the literature. The term *disintegration* is used here as the opposite of *monetary integration*.

activities and accounts of the Gosbank (the Soviet central bank) branch in Vilnius.

In 1990 and 1991 monetary relations between Lithuania and the Soviet Union became part of the confrontation over Lithuanian political independence. In March 1990 and in December 1991 the Soviet and later Russian Central Bank refused to supply Lithuania with new amounts of rouble banknotes. This step demonstrated Lithuania's dependence on the decisions of the Russian monetary authorities. The growing demand for cash-money, caused by the accelerating rate of inflation, was not accompanied by an increase in the supply of banknotes and led to a severe shortage of rouble banknotes within Lithuania.

It was not because of this cash shortage, but in an effort to restrict the sale of goods to foreigners, that the Lithuanian authorities started introducing, in the summer of 1991, the first type of coupons (Lithuanian Talonai). From now on every citizen received 20 percent of his or her salary, wages or pension in Talonai and sales of some goods were restricted to the use of coupons. Mainly because of the rise of markets for Talonai, this first generation of coupons failed, and so in February 1992 the government started to withdraw them from circulation.

Apart from this measure, considered to be a step in the wrong direction, Lithuania fell behind its Baltic neighbors on its way to monetary independence. Indeed, before securing their political independence the authorities placed an order worth US\$6.6 million with an American company to print new Lithuanian banknotes. Eight months after the establishment of the Estonian monetary reform committee, the Lithuanian parliament also established, on November 5, 1991, the so-called Litas-reform-commission. This commission had the full authority to determine the time and method for the introduction of the new Lithuanian currency, the Litas. Members of the commission were President Vytautas Landsbergis, Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius and Vilius Baldišis, head of the Bank of Lithuania.

Unfortunately, the work of the commission did not proceed as planned. Instead, inner conflicts within the commission became part of the political confrontation. Baldišis favoured a more gradual approach to the introduction of the new currency,

cushioned by trade and payments arrangements with neighbouring countries (especially Russia); while the political leadership preferred a fast disintegration. The debate about the timing of disintegration was accompanied by a personal controversy about the abilities of Baldišis. Even after the detection of a fraud scandal, together with the unsatisfactory printing of the Litas notes (caused by the low quality of the new banknotes and another order with the same company), the unhappy troika still remained. Supported by the parliamentary Opposition, Baldišis survived three attempts to remove him from office. He finally resigned on March 10, 1993.



• A specimen of the 50 Litas banknote, introduced in 1993.

Photo: *Lietuvos Aidas*.

The Russian price-liberalisation in January 1992, the subsequent excess in the demand for money in Russia and the inability of the Central Bank of Russia to accommodate the increased demand, depleted the cash-supply in all of the former Soviet republics. The situation was particularly serious in Lithuania, because it was not receiving any shipments of rouble banknotes from Moscow. This increasingly hampered the payment of wages and pensions, so the Lithuanian government decided to introduce a second type of coupons. Following a decree of the Prime Minister on April 28, new Talonai coupons, equal to 200 and 500 roubles, were introduced and the shops were ordered to accept the new Talonai at the rate of 1 Talonas: 1 rouble. Firms were instructed to pay 40 % of their wages in Talonai. From that time on, two currencies - the Soviet rouble and the Talonai - were in circulation in Lithuania, as parallel currencies.

However, the country stayed in the monetary union. Bank accounts remained recorded in roubles and the rouble also remained (together with foreign currencies) the favoured method of payment in the shops.

Beginning in June, 1992, the situation changed. Now the Central Bank of Russia started to print roubles with higher denominations and the cash shortage was additionally met by a growing inflow of the rouble notes, mainly from Ukraine (which had also introduced a coupon-currency) and from Estonia (which left the monetary union on June 20). This resulted in an oversupply of rouble banknotes.

While Latvia reacted to the new situation very quickly by making the Latvian rouble (introduced as a parallel currency in May) the sole legal tender on July 20, the developments in Lithuania were overshadowed by political instability. In July Prime Minister Vagnorius announced the introduction of the Litas for August 1; but he had to resign after losing a confidence vote in the parliament related to the banknote scandal. He was replaced by Aleksandras Abišala as the new prime minister.

Abišala planned to introduce the Litas in mid-October, but the inflow of rouble banknotes forced him to speed up the process. In September, the government began to buy roubles against Talonai and to withdraw them from circulation. In the last week of that month, the people were ordered to change all their rouble amounts into Talonai. Finally, on the day exactly 70 years after the introduction of the prewar-Litas, the Talonai was declared the sole legal tender in Lithuania. All liabilities and bank accounts were changed 1:1 from roubles to coupons and the political guarantee of the 1:1 exchange rate against the Russian rouble was abolished. With this step, Lithuania was the third country after its northern neighbours to leave the rouble zone.

The separation did not coincide with the introduction of the Litas. It was another eight months before the Litas replaced the Talonai. In June 1993, the Talonai was exchanged against the Litas at the ratio of 100:1; and on August 1, the Litas became the sole legal tender in the Republic of Lithuania.

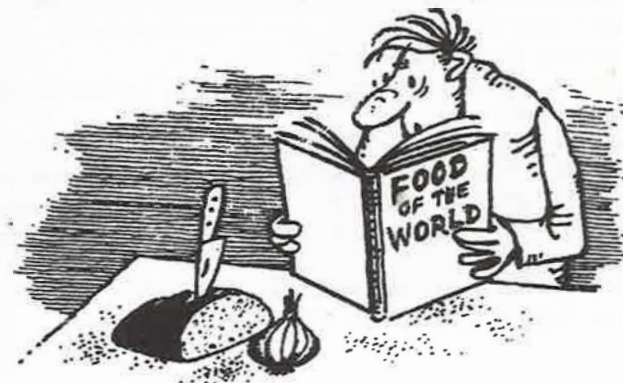
Conclusions

There was no doubt about the general political will of the Lithuanian authorities to leave the rouble zone. The rouble was seen as a relic of Soviet rule, and the introduction of a national currency as the restoration of the pre-war situation which could be reached after achieving political independence. But despite the clear political goal, the procedure of the exit was not planned and was an uncoordinated reaction to external factors. While the cash-shortage in April led to the introduction of the coupon, the subsequent inflow of rouble notes, caused by the departure of other members of the Union (especially Ukraine), accelerated Lithuania's exit. In that sense, the Lithuanian departure from the rouble zone can be seen as a reaction to earlier exits or plans to leave the union by other countries, in order to protect the country from inflationary pressures.

From the theoretical point of view, the inadequate supply of banknotes by the Central Bank of Russia as signifying an unequal distribution of seigniorage within the union, and the poor participation on the decisions of the central bank, relevant because of different preferences, could be seen as further motives, which justify the Lithuanian decision to leave the union. The disintegration of markets seems to be more a supporting factor, rather than a decisive factor.

In the cases of Estonia and Latvia, third-party countries and the International Monetary Fund played a more or less sceptical role, at least without convincing them to break away from the rouble zone. In the Lithuanian case, on the other hand, the IMF supported the exit, exemplified by the October economic reform package with loans worth some US \$57million and special drawing rights.

Cartoon by Vytautas Vebliuskas.
Reproduced from *Mikų Pastogė*.



Vladas Meškėnas

Vladas Meškėnas is a well-known and respected Lithuanian painter in Sydney. He celebrated his 80th birthday, earlier this year.

A perfectionist in his work, Meškėnas says, he loves each portrait as if it were his own child. At the same time, he is never quite satisfied, always believing that his next work will be better. A man of a temperamental, forceful yet compassionate nature, Meškėnas chooses subjects who are kindred spirits and who have experienced life with intensity. Probably for this reason he has painted fellow artists Weaver Hawkins, William Dobell, Russell Drysdale, Lloyd Rees, Elwyn Lynn, John Olsen, Adomas Varnas and Donald Friend, to name just a few. Meškėnas considers sitting sessions exhausting, "a spiritual duel of two personalities".

Vladas Meškėnas was born on February 17, 1916, the youngest of three sons. He showed exceptional talent from an early age and, even at school, he was able to produce remarkable likenesses of people. Meškėnas's oldest surviving drawing, Father, 1930 was done at the age of fourteen and reflects his study of the work of Leonardo da Vinci.



• Vladas Meškėnas (right), with some of his portraits.

Bearing in mind the election in October/November and the turbulence before the reform, the self-interest of the politicians could not be ruled out. Since, however, the population reacted positively to the government's actions, this point does not appear to be too important.

A comparison of the Lithuanian case to the exit of Estonia and Latvia shows the importance of political unity during a monetary reform. The dissensions between government, the central bank and parliamentary Opposition together with technical failures (banknote-scandal) led to a delayed disintegration in Lithuania, accompanied by an inflow of rouble notes and higher inflation.

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Vladas Meškėnas became a freelance artist in the late 1930s. His pencil drawing, *Mother's Sorrow*, won him an award in Lithuania for the best depiction of the atrocities of the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. In 1943, Meškėnas and his wife were sent to forced labour in Germany. Later, they lived in southern Austria for five years.

Meškėnas and his family migrated to Australia in 1949. After a two-year work contract at the Victoria Army Barracks in Sydney, he worked at various factory jobs. He, his wife and three children lived in very crowded conditions, and he had to paint outside in the backyard.

Meškėnas's creative work may be divided into paintings and drawings. His paintings form two sub-groups: expressionistic and 'double-image'.

Meškėnas's earliest expressionist portraits in Australia include the oil painting, *Family Portrait*, 1953 (first prize at the First Lithuanian Art Exhibition in Sydney) and *Weaver Hawkins and his wife*, 1962 (*Helena Rubinstein Prize*).

In 1963, Meškėnas painted Sir Russell Drysdale and William Dobell in 1964. Meškėnas recalled, 'Dobell reminded me of the Lithuanian folk art, the image of the Sorrowful God (Rūpintojėlis).' The outcome is in fact a portrait of Dobell in a pose characteristic of the Sorrowful God, with his head inclined and a meditative expression.

In the middle sixties, Meškėnas again became a full-time freelance artist. He painted about 150 small portraits, charging an average fee of £5 (\$10). Among his larger works of the period were the portraits of painter and director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Hal Missingham, 1963; and of artist Lloyd Rees, 1965.

During the 1970s, Meškėnas developed a unique style which he calls 'double image'. This consists of veils of subtle colour superimposed on the whole picture plane, over the painted subject. An endless variety of ephemeral colour folds embrace the painted image. A double portrait, *Elwyn Lynn*, 1973, is an outstanding example of Meškėnas's 'double image' style: Lynn is represented



Top left:
Vladas Meškėnas,
Father, 1930, pencil,
45 x 30 cm. Collection
Artist. Meškėnas drew this
picture at the age of four-
teen. The work reflects
his study of Leonardo da
Vinci.



Below:
Vladas Meškėnas,
Elwyn Lynn, 1973, oil
100 x 140 cm. Collection
Artist. An outstanding
example of Meškėnas's
'double image' style.



• **Vladas Meškėnas, *Mother and Child*, 1974, pastel,**
55 x 69 cm. Collection Artist.

in two images, each of a different mood and appearing as if in discussion with himself. Among other major works of this style are the portraits, Donald Grant, 1976, Algis and Vida Kabaila, 1976 and Self Portrait, 1978-79.

There is a place in Meškėnas's work for young, beautiful women and children, too. In these works the subjects' treatment becomes more subtle and lyrical, and expressionistic boldness is avoided. Instead, he accentuates the soft, serpentine line, uses a warmer, more impressionistic palette and applies the paint smoothly, e.g., Judy Pongrass, 1972 and Two Sisters, 1984 (see front cover).

Between painting works of high intensity, Meškėnas indulges in the sheer relish of images and colour by painting genre compositions, e.g., Paddington Market, 1972 and The Beatniks of Paddington, 1976. These are sophisticated compositions with a conglomerate of images and superimposed 'double image'



Vladas Meškėnas,
***Elle Macpherson*,**
1996, oil.

Meškėnas has also produced literally hundreds of pastel sketches. Such works as Art Dealer, 1958, John Olsen, 1962, and Donald Friend, 1985 are examples.

Although Meškėnas has had no formal training, he considers his greatest teacher to be Leonardo da Vinci whose illustrations he meticulously copied in high school. Since adolescence he has admired Rembrandt's portraits for their compassion, drama and insight into psyche. Meškėnas's work is an idiosyncratic mix of many styles and trends of modern art.

Meškėnas prefers to live and work in isolation. He has had no solo exhibitions. However, he has participated in various art exhibitions and was an Archibal Prize finalist seventeen times.

Genovaitė KAZOKAS.

The above article is based on an extract from Dr. Kazokas's doctoral thesis, *Lithuanian Artists in Australia, 1950 - 1990*. Dr. Kazokas was the first Ph.D. candidate to undertake research on a Lithuanian topic at the University of Tasmania, after establishment of the Lithuanian Studies Society at this University in 1987. The Society acts as the catalyst for Lithuanian research in all disciplines, and five other candidates have since been attracted to Lithuanian research programmes in Tasmania. Dr. Kazokas completed her thesis in December 1992, and the Ph.D. degree was awarded to her in 1993.

What Price Human Life?

Dalia GRINKEVIČIŪTĖ, M.D.

Barren and uninhabited, Trofimovsk lies well within the Arctic Circle, a tiny island at the mouth of the river Lena, not far from Tiksi. Late in 1942, as the winter ice was closing in, we, four hundred Lithuanian women and children, were dumped on Trofimovsk. And dumped with us were the bricks and timber with which we were to build our camp.



• Dr Grinkevičiūtė

We were left without any roof over our heads, without warm clothes, without food. The few men and older boys were all seized and sent to nearby islands to catch fish for the state. Then we, women and children, hurriedly began to build barracks. The barracks had no roofs, just plank ceilings through which the blizzards would blow so much snow that people lying on their bunks turned completely white. A space 50cm wide was allotted for each person - a big ice grave!

Most of our 400 died on Trofimovsk, of cold, hunger, exhaustion and scurvy. Nearly all of us could have been saved. But nobody cared - and we were left to die. Once winter set in, prisoners would drag friends' bodies from the leaky huts and pile them up some distance from the camp. When their parents died, children were transferred to "the orphanage". The corpses were carried out in sacks and thrown on to the pile. There may have been several little bodies in a sack; nobody could tell. Blizzards made it impossible to leave the huts: the dead might lie for days beside the living. And when the time came for them to be taken out, their hair would often remain caught in the ice that had formed around them.

There were forty women in our section. Only four of us were able to stand up and go to work. We had to go and find logs brought

down by the Lena some miles from the camp. When we found them, we chopped them out of the ice and hauled them back ... to heat the guards' quarters. Our shoulders were covered with sores from the chafing of the sleigh-ropes.

Every night I used to creep out of our hut and steal a few bits of wood for our brazier (*barabona*). This was the only way we had of melting snow and ice into the water the sick women wanted, and of heating bricks to warm their feet.

But when the brazier was alight, the ice on the ceiling melted, too, and dripped down on us. We lay under a sheet of ice.



• Lithuanian women, forced to cut trees in Northern Siberia.

Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve, 1942, guards burst into our hut. They had picked up my footprints in the snow and caught me red-handed. I was up for trial.

Seven people appeared in court, counting me - five charged with stealing firewood, two with taking bread. (These two had fainted in the warm bakery!) I was the last to plead. I pleaded guilty.

The court withdrew. Not long to wait now, I thought; for with the court's verdict our suffering would be over. They would march us all off to the punishment camp 30 km away ... and not one of us would reach it. We would all freeze to death on the way. With the spring thaw, any of our friends who happened to survive would see the ice-floes carrying our bodies out to sea.

The court returned. Its sentence: three years each for those who had stolen wood, one year for those who had stolen bread.

A few days later, the condemned were taken off to prison. A blizzard blew up on the way. We heard of one party that got lost: they probably all perished with their guards.

But I was not among them. I had been acquitted because of my "sincere confession"!

I returned to the hut. It was freezing. My mother was still lying there unconscious, her face so bloated that you could not see her eyes. She was lying on a board, with a sack for a blanket. There was no water. The brazier was out.

I went back to steal more wood.

Adapted from "Frozen Inferno" (NY: 1981), by John W. DOYLE, S.J. Original translation by Paulius VADUVIS and Milda DANYS.

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Native Language

Mikalojus DAUKŠA

From the Foreword of Postilla (1599), one of the earliest Lithuanian books. Translation by Gintautas KAMINSKAS, using the text in Lietuvių kalbos istorija, by Dr Zigmantas Zinkevičius, Volume III, Page 181, as his source.

Let me ask: is there in the world such a nation, however impoverished it might be, that does not have these three basic things: ancestral homeland, customs and native language? Always and everywhere people have spoken their native language and always struggled to protect it, and to beautify, improve and perfect it.

Nowhere on earth is there such a miserable nation as would abandon its own native language. Every nation aspires to use its native language for its laws, its affairs of state, its literature, and wishes to use it proudly and appropriately at all times, be it in the church, or at work, or at home.

One might ask, would there not be a sensation amongst the animals if the crow decided to sing like the nightingale, and the nightingale to croak like the crow? Or if the goat began to bellow like a lion, and the lion to bleat like the goat?

It is not the bounty of its crops, nor the distinctiveness of its garments, nor the beauty of its countryside, nor the strength of its castles and cities that make a nation hale; rather it is the maintenance and use of its native language, which strengthens fellowship, peace and brotherly love. For our language is our common bond of love, the mother of unity, the father of civic solidarity, the guardian of nationhood. If you destroy our language you destroy cooperation, unity and wellbeing.



- From Jogaila's seal (1422).

Romuva

Ancient Religion Revived

Audrius DUNDZILA
Chicago, U.S.A.

Romuva is rekindling the ancient indigenous spiritual tradition of the Lithuanians. Ancient Balts did not profess a religion per se, but rather their spirituality, world view, and way of life composed what is now called "religion". The three are not distinguishable or separable from each other: the way of life of the ancient Balts was deeply spiritual, it included their world view, and encompassed everything they did.

The name "Romuva" honours the Prussian Baltic sanctuary called Romuva which stood in the Prussian land of Nadruva (near Chernahovsk in the so-called Kaliningrad region). Chronicles indicate the sanctuary was the religious centre of all the Balts - Lithuanians, Prussians, and Latvians alike. The word literally means both, temple and harmony.

The focal point of the temple was a millennial oak with statues of three gods: *Perkūnas* (thunder, lightning and justice), *Pikuolis* (the dead and cattle) and *Patimpas* (avatar of *Dievas*, the sky god). An *aukuras*, a fire place with an eternal flame, burned next to the oak. Priestesses called *vaidilutės* protected the flame while priests called *vaidilos* performed rites at the oak tree. The *krivių krivaitis*, the spiritual leader of all Balts, resided in the sacred forest that belonged to the sanctuary.

Romuva is firmly and deeply founded upon Lithuanian folklore, the Lithuanian well-spring of Baltic religion. Folklore encompasses *pasakos* (folktales), *dainos* (folk-songs), dances, games, riddles, proverbs, weaving, embroidery, sculpture, traditional household and farm decorations, and traditional musical instruments. Romuva espouses the Lithuanian *pasaulėjauta* (world view) that folklore expresses and studies the works of the archaeologist Marija Gimbutas and semiologist Algirdas Julian Greimas as well as those of mythologists Norbertas Velius, Bron Dundulien, Bronislava Kerbelyt and Donatas Sauka.

In the early 19th century, historian Simonas Daukantas was the principal supporter of the native Baltic religion. He provided much needed intellectual support and advocacy for the indigenous religion. At the end of the 19th century, linguist Jonas Basanavičius assumed a similar role, followed by philosopher Vydūnas in the early 20th century. Vydūnas created the intellectual philosophical framework for the modern Lithuanian Baltic religion.

In the olden days, Lithuanians did not form congregations. The village council also served as the local religious body. In the early 20th century, Lithuanian Duke Jonas Beržanskis tried to establish congregations in the pre-war Russian-occupied Lithuanian Grand Duchy as well as in post-war Lithuania. The 1930's saw a very healthy resurgence of Lithuanian Baltic religion, but World War II prematurely curtailed the movement.

After the war, congregations were established in Canada and in Siberian exile, where some Catholics had been accused of having betrayed their compatriots by turning them over to the Stalinist NKVD (forerunner of the KGB). In the late 1960's, a congregation was established in Vilnius, but it was extinguished by the KGB. Currently there are Romuva groups in Boston, Cleveland, Toronto, Chicago, Kaunas, and Vilnius. Active membership varies from group to group: Western groups average about 10 active members, while the groups in Lithuania have about 50 or so active members each.

Western groups tend to meet monthly at people's homes, while the Lithuanian groups meet at least weekly at set meeting places (the groups rent space or share space with another organisation). Meetings typically focus on learning Lithuanian folklore, especially the *dainos* (folk-songs). Members research topics of interest and make presentations as well. Meetings are also used to prepare for the holidays: Kalėdos, Užgavėnės, Velykos, Jore, Rasa, Rugių šventė, Atlaibo šventė, Vėlinės, Kūčios, etc. The groups also meet to celebrate the holidays. In Lithuania, they celebrate at the ancient temple sites, when appropriate.

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Audrius DUNDZILA, Ph.D.(Madison) is a Seniūnas (Elder) of Romuva, and one of the organisers of Romuva/Chicago.

Brief Notes

- The Third Baltic Studies Summer Institute (BALSSI) took place at the University of Illinois at Chicago, on May 28 to July 19, 1996. It was supported by a consortium of five U.S. universities: the University of Illinois at Chicago, Indiana University and the Universities of Michigan, Washington in Seattle and Wisconsin-Madison. Next year's Institute will be held again in Chicago. For information, contact Professor Violeta Kelertas, Dept. of Slavic and Baltic Studies at the University of Illinois (m/c306), 1628 University Hall, 601 S.Morgan St., Chicago IL 60607-7116, USA. Telephone (312) 996-4412. E-mail Kelertas@uicvm.uic.edu
- The Historical Institute of Latvia, in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC, has recently published Andrew Ezergailis' massive study, *The Holocaust in Latvia 1941-1944: The Missing Center*. It is the first full study of the Holocaust in Latvia. It is available from The Historical Institute of Latvia, 1157 Danby Road, Ithaca, NY. 14850. USA. (US\$49.95 plus \$3 postage; or US\$49.95 post free, if the order is prepaid).

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Lithuanian Identity in the United States, 1950-1985

Giedrė R. VAN DEN DUNGEN
Adelaide

There is a very extensive literature on "what makes an American" and on the experience of becoming an American. Almost invariably the writers stress the joyous and liberating experience of identifying oneself as an American, and an exploration of the means which made it possible. But many of the approximately 30,000 Lithuanian refugees who emigrated to the United States after World War II, did not expect to experience the joys of becoming American, for they were determined to remain Lithuanian. They thought of themselves as exiles and intended to return to Lithuania if it became independent. With this in mind, as well as the perceived threatened extinction of the Lithuanian nation behind the Iron Curtain, they endeavoured to maintain their national identity and to inculcate their ideals and values in their children.

But as their children grew up, or were born and brought up in the United States, and as the hope of an independent Lithuania seemed to wane, it became more and more difficult to maintain that heightened sense of Lithuanian consciousness. As the children of the immigrants were increasingly influenced at school and university by American ideas, they began to question what had appeared to their elders to be self-evident. The children formulated their own ideas on the relevance of such crucial factors to Lithuanian identity as an understanding of Lithuanian history, a knowledge of the Lithuanian language and the Catholic faith.

Many of the ideas which shaped modern Lithuanian national identity were formulated in the nineteenth century. The re-discovery of a glorious Lithuanian past had kindled the imagination of many Polish-influenced Lithuanians, and had been a source of national pride during independence (1918-1940). But when the older generation in the United States attempted to arouse a similar enthusiasm in their children, they were met by indifference and a questioning derived from a different tradition and different values.

Even the shining beacon of their own lives - independent Lithuania - was regarded by their children with ambivalence. History could not speak to those who did not want to listen.

In nineteenth-century Lithuania, the Catholic faith could be regarded in a positive light as well as in a negative light as far as the national consciousness was concerned: it provided a strong defence against the Russian Orthodox Church and hence Russification, but for many years the Church hierarchy had been almost totally Polish-minded and could be regarded as a very strong Polonizing influence.

During the period known as the National revival, in the second half of the nineteenth century, there had been great ideological rivalry between the Catholics and the liberals. Both claimed to be the true guardians of the Lithuanian language and fosterers of the real Lithuanian identity. This rivalry continued into the twentieth century and was even transposed to the United States. There, a new and decisive factor emerged in this old struggle - a new, American-style liberalism. Ultimately even the Catholics could no longer claim that only a good Catholic is a true Lithuanian.

From the perspective of the original immigrant activists the effort to sustain a Lithuanian national identity amongst the immigrants for a number of generations was not successful. The post-World War II refugees who emigrated to the United States had a disproportionate number of the educated and intellectual elite among their members. Consequently, they were misled into thinking that a high level of Lithuanian cultural and intellectual activity could be maintained indefinitely. But creative talent is not necessarily hereditary, and so the next generation could expect a more normal distribution of talent and hence a much smaller number of creative individuals. In addition, the creative members of the second generation would be tempted to contribute to the wider, i.e., American society, where recognition would be more highly rewarded. On the other hand, even those who wished to contribute to Lithuanian American cultural life, could not be unaffected by the American cultural life around them. They tended to stigmatise what their elders perceived as the specifically Lithuanian features of their culture as being merely parochial and old-fashioned. Even the Lithuanian language, the one truly unique marker of Lithuanian ethnic/national identity, was difficult to maintain when the wider society placed no



• Chapter 85 of the Knights of Lithuania in Westville, Illinois (1931). Some Lithuanian organisations, such as the Knights, have managed to span generations and have survived to the present day.

Photo: Wolkovich-Valkavičius, *Lithuanian Fraternalism*

value on it, and indeed rewarded competence in its replacement, English. By the third generation Lithuanian had become, at best, the second language in a bilingual situation, and at worst was deemed unimportant.

Nevertheless, almost despite themselves, the post-World War II Lithuanian refugees in the United States laid the foundations of a real face-to-face community. Many of the activities which were initiated with very high ideals and aims, served to bring scattered members of the Lithuanian community together and to provide opportunities for "meeting people and for making friends" and, one might add, for making marriages. Thus the various Cultural and Youth Conferences and the annual *Santara-Sviesa* conventions, to name only some of the more important events, drew participants not only from the United States, but from other countries with Lithuanian communities, as well. On a more local scale, branch-meetings of the various organisations, Lithuanian parishes,

Saturday schools, folk-dancing groups and choirs, concerts and commemorations provided opportunities to meet and to develop face-to-face relationships. It was at this level that the changing perceptions of what constituted a Lithuanian identity were accommodated and individual members were welcomed, or made to feel unwanted because they did not conform to group expectations.

One of the more striking features of the numerous formal and informal exchanges regarding what is or is not an important feature of Lithuanian culture, character or identity, is the exclusion from consideration of the possible views of Lithuanians in Lithuania on these matters. Such total disregard would indicate that, consciously or not, what was under discussion and elaboration was not a Lithuanian identity, but a totally new identity. That this new identity was regarded as totally American in Lithuania, came as a surprise to those who still felt themselves to be in some way, or at least in part, Lithuanian.

In a sense we have come full-circle. The nineteenth century saw the first stirrings of an ethnic awareness in Lithuanians living in what was then a part of the Czarist Russian Empire, an awareness which quickly developed into a sense of national identity quite separate and distinct from that of its neighbours. The sense of national identity was further strengthened during independence. After World War I many of the Lithuanian refugees who emigrated to the United States were determined to maintain that national identity themselves and to pass it on to their descendants. But in their grandchildren that heightened sense of national identity had already declined to a flickering awareness of ethnic origin, of kinship and of "roots".

Recent events in Eastern Europe have removed one of the prime justifications for the future existence of a Lithuanian community in the United States. Lithuania regained its independence, however precariously, without any direct assistance from Lithuanians abroad, who could only watch as events unfolded in the former Soviet Union. Lithuania is still in need of assistance, but it has become already clear that what Lithuanians think they need from Lithuanians abroad does not coincide with what Lithuanians abroad think Lithuania needs. There has been no mass return to Lithuania of "exiles" from abroad; nor, one suspects, would Lithuania

welcome it. Indeed, there is much to learn on both sides. On present evidence, it would seem that that learning will take place, if at all, on an individual basis as relatives in the United States get to know their relatives in Lithuania, and a sense of kinship is maintained.

This summary of conclusions draws on Dr. Van den Dungen's Ph.D. thesis, accepted by Flinders University of South Australia earlier this year. The thesis is entitled "The Elaboration of Ethnic Identity: Lithuanians in the United States, 1950-1985", where a discussion of sources and a full bibliography may be found.

Lithuania at the "United Nations"



High-school students from all over Tasmania flocked to Deloraine last April, to take part in a mock General Assembly of the United Nations Organisation. The two-day event was hosted by the local Rotary Club, and was known as the Rotary Model United Nations.

Lithuania was ably represented at this large gathering by Jodie Dare and Nichola Horton (pictured, from left to right). Both are Grade 10 students at Cosgrove High School in Hobart.

Although neither girl has any Lithuanian blood, they made a very successful major presentation on Lithuania at the assembly. They had been coached for this task by their teacher, Mary Koolhof, and by members of the Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania.

Jodie and Nicola wore authentic Lithuanian national costumes, provided by two members of the small Lithuanian community in Hobart, Mesdames T. Kairys and Ona Barnes. The colourful costumes attracted a lot of interest among the participants.

Research in Progress

Lithuanians in Tasmania

Ramūnas TARVYDAS
Hobart

On 28 November, 1947, the US Army Transport (ship) *Gen Stuart Heintzelmann* arrived at Fremantle, WA, with the first shipment of Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian refugees (843 in all) whom the Australian authorities had gathered from the Displaced Persons' camps all over Western Germany. After four days in WA, they transferred to the Australian Navy ship, the *HMAS Kanimbla*, for the voyage to Melbourne. From there, by train and bus, they were all taken to Bonegilla Transit Camp, for initiation into the Australian way of life. From that camp, the new arrivals were sent out, at different times, to all parts of Australia to work. The first Balts to arrive in Tasmania did so on 21 January, 1948, and were taken to log timber near Maydena, on the edge of what is now the SW World Heritage Area.

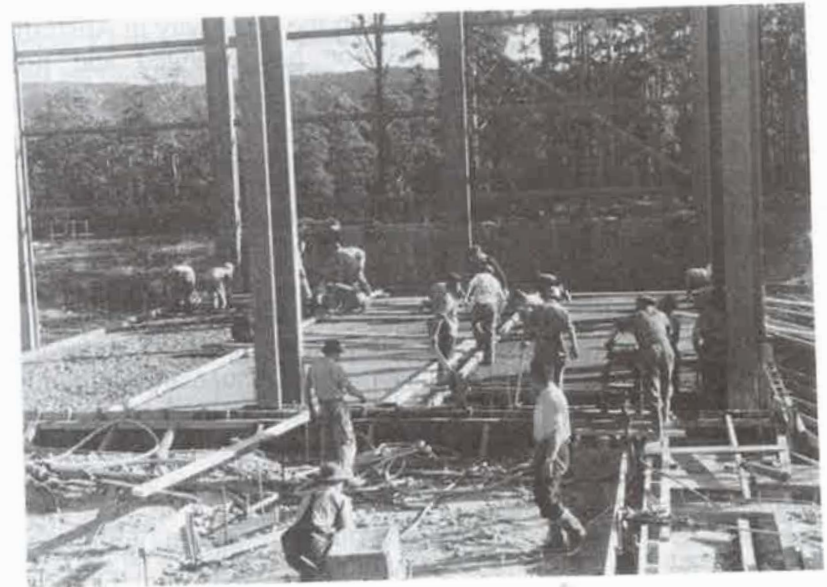
For the 50th anniversary of the coming to Tasmania, 21 January 1998, I have undertaken to write a book, describing the arrival and settling in Tasmania of Lithuanian migrants who came here from 1948 to 1952, and a few who came later. I think this should be done not only to record their story, but also to acquaint Australians with the Lithuanian heritage that was brought here by those pioneers.

For that task, I have a questionnaire aimed at all the Lithuanian migrants in Tasmania. I ask for the names, dates and places of birth of the migrants, their children, parents and siblings. These details I will deposit with the Tasmanian Archives.

The rest of the questionnaire asks briefly about their life in Lithuania, their arrival in mainland Australia, and mainly about their first few years in Tasmania, e.g. where they worked off their 2-year contract, how they obtained their first house, what conditions were like economically and socially. From these questions, I hope to describe their early life in Tasmania.

I am also interviewing the older survivors of those early arrivals. It is here that the human side of the story is revealed. During these interviews, whether I like it or not, they describe how they escaped from Lithuania; the sufferings in the refugee camps of Germany; the selection process for migration; the transit camps in Germany, Italy and Australia; the varied experiences at sea; and, finally, the first years of hardship in Tasmania. These stories are fascinating, and worth sharing. I hope that my publication will do justice to the memory of those Baltic pioneers in Tasmania. If any reader has information or photographs about the Baltic settlement of Tasmania, I'd be glad to hear from him or her.

Ramūnas (Ray) TARVYDAS, M.Sc.Hons. (Auckland) is President of the Lithuanian Community in Hobart. All correspondence should be directed to him at 26 Balmain St., Glenorchy, Tas. 7010 (Australia). Telephone (03) 6225 1920 (work), 6272 5147 (home).



• 10,000 Lithuanian refugees settled in Australia after World War II. They made lasting contributions to Australia's economy, arts and sciences; but these contributions have not been documented adequately, so far. **Pictured:** Migrant labourers at the construction of Wayatinah 'B' Power station in Tasmania, during the mid-1950s.

- Photo: Hydro Electric Commission, Tasmania.

Lithuanian Music-Making in Australia

Jennifer RAKAUSKAS
Benowa, Qld.

Lithuanians came to Australia as refugee immigrants during the years 1947-1952. They brought with them a long tradition of music-making. They wanted to preserve this tradition, along with many other customs, as part of the heritage to be passed on to their children in Australia. As displaced persons, and forced to flee their country for political reasons, their sense of Lithuanian identity was very strong. This sense of identity, largely expressed in song, either alone or within the group, helped provide a stabilising factor for them, particularly as they settled into an alien environment.

Although the *liaudies dainos* (literally: "songs of the people") had formed an integral part of Lithuanian culture in the homeland, a similar lifestyle could not be practised in the same way in Australia. The functions of the singing tradition had changed and now belonged to a different time and place.

Spontaneous singing when gathered together with their countrymen and countrywomen had always been a prolific form of music-making for Lithuanians. Today, Lithuanian music-making in Australia embrace two cultures instead of one.

Lithuanians of the first generation have described participating in a choir as a social event. Because they were living in a foreign environment, attending choir practice at the Lithuanian community centre and socialising with their compatriots helped to ease the sense of isolation encountered largely through a lack of English language.

The second generation Lithuanians who were raised within this tradition remember their childhood with great warmth. They recall attending functions at the community centres, singing songs around the fire at scout camps or around the dining table with family friends. Many participated in the folk dancing groups. They recall feeling a very strong emotional attachment to their Lithuanian heritage through the songs. As adults, however, they

had formed closer ties with non-Lithuanians through school and the workplace. The Lithuanian centres no longer fulfilled their interests, although they still maintained the connection by attending social functions there.

The third generation of Lithuanians who still participate in groups within the communities are very interested in their "roots". They have a particular interest in the *sutartinės* and the *liaudies dainos* because they see them as the essence of their Lithuanian heritage. Although the words of the songs describe a far distant land, and have little meaning for them, they are representative of the culture to which they are tied. Language presents some difficulties as not many of them are fluent in Lithuanian.

Young people feel that the old songs are sung and played far too slowly by the first generation. Those who are involved with music-making activities want to express their cultural heritage in a way which is familiar to them.

Being Lithuanian has different connotations for each generation. The second and third generations of Lithuanians in Australia have not had the opportunity to expand their individual repertoires of Lithuanian songs over time. The third generation generally feel more non-Lithuanian than Lithuanian. Older members of this group who have been to Lithuania enjoy the common bond which knowledge of the language and the songs bring for them.

Have Lithuanians been able to retain a strong music-making tradition in Australia? Will Lithuania's recent independence from the Soviet Union result in closer ties with the homeland for Australian Lithuanians and thus reinforce the traditions? Will the ties be maintained by younger members of the community? Will the strong sense of identity felt by first generation Lithuanians continue to be felt by the following generations (expressed so emotionally in their songs)? How is being Lithuanian expressed by music-making in Australia? These are all questions which future research (my own included) will need to address, so that a complete picture of the contribution of Lithuanian music-making to Australian song tradition is better understood.

Jennifer RAKAUSKAS is a Master's candidate at the University of Queensland.

Northern European Security Community

Darius FURMONAVIČIUS

University of Nottingham

After the restoration of their independence, the Baltic States had faced enormous security problems: withdrawal of the Soviet army, reorientation of their economies to the West, sensitive questions of minorities, environmental problems caused by Soviet colonisation. One could only wonder how the Baltic States successfully solved their major security problem - the withdrawal of the Soviet Army.

A number of internal and external factors can be identified:

(i) *internal*: * the firmness of leadership, particularly of Lithuania; * the political culture of the Baltic nations based on participation; * the active foreign policy of Lithuania and other Baltic States; and

(ii) *external*: * international pressure for Russia to withdraw the army; * in particular, the granting of US economic aid to Russia linked to the withdrawal of the army from the Baltic States; * CNN and other media attention.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet army, a Northern European security community expanded to the eastern shores of the Baltic sea. So, in this brief note I would like to explain the formation of the Northern European Security Community and to emphasise the role of Professor Vytautas Landsbergis in its development.

The Northern European security community means that a war is now unthinkable between any of the Baltic and Scandinavian states. The Baltic States share a common historical experience of Russia's aggression, common goals and values and a similar political culture. These factors have led to their peaceful collaboration and economic competition.

This is not necessarily a state of affairs that needs to be held together by treaties. Institutional ties and the sense of habitual co-operative behaviour among individuals, social groups and the Baltic and Scandinavian states indicates that a Northern European security community has been formed in this Baltic sea area.

The precondition for the establishment of this community was the withdrawal of the Russian army from the Baltic States. Lithuania performed the major role in the withdrawal arrangements.

Professor Vytautas Landsbergis developed an active foreign policy for Lithuania which convinced other leaders of the Baltic States - such as former communist nomenclatura wolf Gorbunov (Latvia) and Rutel (Estonia) - of this necessity. Lithuania and other Baltic states managed to win a diplomatic victory over Russia in the UN and the CSCE, where resolutions were accepted demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops.

The Russian army, despite strenuous attempts to stay longer, left Lithuania in the autumn of 1993 and Latvia and Estonia in the end of 1994.

The Northern European security community will most probably play the central role in European security framework in the near future. The Baltic States need NATO security guarantees most of all. It seems, however, that the Alliance enlargement issue is strongly influenced by Russia. NATO is afraid to provoke Russia, but on the other hand is concerned with the future of the Baltic States. The Baltic States are seeking membership of NATO and other interlocking institutions, EU and its defensive arm WEU. The Baltic States became associate members of EU in 1995, associate partners of WEU in 1994, and members of NATO partnership programme for peace in 1994.

My study of the Baltic security after independence also attempts to give the reasons why the Baltic States need to be invited to join NATO in the first round of its enlargement. Surrounded by a more powerful Slavic world, the Baltic States have been important islands of European civilisation on the Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. To what extent has their example influenced the development of democracy and independence in Belorussia and Ukraine (which were formerly parts of the Great Duchy of Lithuania), as well as in Russia itself?

Darius FURMONAVIČIUS, B.Eng. (Kaunas TU) is a post-graduate student in International Relations, in the Department of Politics of the University of Nottingham, U.K.

Swedish-Lithuanian Cooperation

(It all started in Hobart!)

Lillemor LEWAN
Lund University, Sweden

Introduction

Lund university, Sweden, has had a student exchange programme with the University of Tasmania since 1987. The programme brought me in touch with the Lithuanian Society when I and my husband Nils visited Tasmania in 1988 and we were invited to give a lecture about our close neighbour country across the Baltic Sea. Everything was very different at that time. All these countries were actually more distant to us than Tasmania. They were not at all possible to visit and we got no dependable information.

But the situation changed rapidly, and I think that it was my visit to the Lithuanian Society in Hobart, which made us focus on Lithuania when we started a Lund University Baltic Cooperation Project a few years later. It was really a coincidence that Amanda Banks, in 1996, came to our workshop in Vilnius to share her knowledge about the environmental situation in Lithuania developed at the antipode - Tasmania! This workshop was arranged within a joint research project which I have coordinated.

The Lund Cooperation Project

The possibilities of travelling and communication within the region improved greatly after the restoration of independence in the Baltic Republics and Central Europe. A Lund University Baltic Cooperation project was organised with a steering committee representing different fields of the university: The aim was to promote cooperative research, especially in the environmental situation of the area. Initial activities focused on universities in the southern region of the Baltic area, primarily universities in Gdansk and in Lithuania. Experiences from this pilot project would then improve possibilities of bilateral and network cooperation with universities in other regions of Eastern and Central Europe.

Some researchers and students from Kaunas and Vilnius who were already in Lund on grants from the Swedish Institute were then contact persons in the project which was coordinated by me. The

possibilities for cooperation in teaching and student exchange as well as research were investigated. Further grants from the Swedish Institute for research visits and exchange between departments have broadened the base for cooperation.

The EU Programmes

The EU programmes for mobility and network cooperation in research and education (Tempus), first in Central Europe and then also in the Baltic Republics and other former Soviet Republics, opened new possibilities from 1992/1993. Planning was initiated for a Tempus project coordinated by Lund University in Environmental Sciences: Analysis and Solutions of Environmental Problems - Strategies for a Sustainable Development, coordinated by Ingrid Stjernquist, Dept. of Ecology and Dept. of Environmental and Energy Systems, in cooperation with universities in Lithuania, in Kiel, Germany, Roskilde, Denmark, and Utrecht, the Netherlands. The project is still running and several MSc courses are being developed at the participating universities in Lithuania which have organised Environmental Study Centres or their equivalent for the joint programme. Lithuanian students can now combine courses from different universities for their Master's degree. Responsible teachers visit Tempus partner universities abroad for this development and up-grading.

Lund University also joined other ongoing Tempus projects in Environmental Sciences in the Baltic area: Centre for Environmental Sciences and Management Studies, Riga, Latvia, and Centre for Environmental Studies, Gdansk, Poland, coordinated from Roskilde University Centre, Denmark, in cooperation with the Free (Freie) University, Berlin. Other disciplines and countries were also involved in Tempus projects: such as France and USA.

We participated in the two satellite-transmitted series of video seminars on "The Baltic Sea Environment" and "Peoples of the Baltic" coordinated by Uppsala University, Sweden, by making video films in special fields of interest. The programmes were received at some hundred universities in nine countries around the Baltic Catchment Area. At Lund University, the programmes were used for two new courses based on the themes of the seminars.

A Lund University Student Workshop was arranged for a week in May 1991. Students from Kaunas, Vilnius, Gdansk and Lund had

a joint seminar for presentation of their projects made during the satellite transmitted Baltic Sea Environment course. The students were invited to departments in Lund according to their interests, and field trips and visits to some industries and municipal departments were arranged.

An International Environment Summer School was organized 1992-1995 by the Department of Environment and Energy Systems Studies. Students from Lithuania and other Eastern and Central European Republics have participated.

Research

Planning for bilateral research projects resulted in funding of two projects in Lithuania from 1993/94 by the Swedish Institute:

1) Cooperation in Research and Education in Environmental Education between the Department of Industrial Economics and the Centre for Environmental Engineering at Kaunas Institute of Technology, Lithuania. The Swedish Department has now developed into an International Institute of Industrial Economics and offers a special Master's Programme for foreign students, taught in English.

2) History, Use and Management of Wetlands. Economy and Legislation for Restoration and Future Sustainable Development. The project is interdisciplinary covering Departments in Technology, Biology, the Social Sciences and the Humanities in Lund and equivalent departments in Kaunas and Vilnius. It is coordinated by me and we are now planning for final reports and continued cooperation. Joint work between scholars involved in this research programme and the Environmental Science Tempus project has been very fruitful. We hope that the cooperation can be extended to include scholars in the Tempus project in Law with Ms Graciela Ratti de Carbonari as Swedish coordinator.

Special efforts have been made by the Centre for Women Studies at Lund University for cooperation in research and education with corresponding centres or departments in Kaunas and Vilnius.

Lund University Library has initiated cooperation with the Vilnius University Library, the Vilnius Technical University Library and the Vilnius University Medical Library. The Dept. of Informatics,

Lund University, has initiated cooperation with the Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University for education of librarians and information specialists.

Experiences from the project

Experiences from the Lund University Baltic Cooperation project show that

- there is a great need and interest in contacts in the West among the Central and Eastern European Universities;
- it is very important to support young researchers and research students already at the Master's level, particularly in planning for their future PhD studies;
- networks within the Tempus programme can be used for invitation of students at advanced levels for both undergraduate and research studies in the West;
- it is very difficult to get sufficient funding for equipment in the eligible countries;
- assistance with librarian services is of importance;
- English is not always spoken and understood in East European countries;
- it is relatively easy to get funding for visits, but very difficult to get research funding; invited students and researchers are supposed to participate in ongoing projects;
- it is difficult for Swedish researchers to find funding for their own research in the East European projects and for time devoted to the joint projects;
- transports of equipment, books and journals which can be relinquished at the university in favour of the Eastern European countries poses substantial practical problems;
- once started the network grows, and it is no longer possible to keep in one project!

The Lund University cooperation project is now a group of people who can tell others about their experiences and perhaps give some good advice for future cooperation.

Dr Lillemor LEWAN is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Animal Physiology, Lund University, Sweden.

The British Council in Lithuania

Barbara HYDE
Vilnius

Since the end of the Soviet period, the English Language has boomed in Lithuania. Almost every school child learns it, and many adults also attend English classes for professional or other purposes. What has the British Council contributed to this development?

The British Council Baltics, with offices in each Baltic country, started operations in 1992. Not all of its work is concerned with the English Language: however, in these four years it has perhaps become best known for its support for English language teachers. This support falls loosely into three interrelated categories: resources, the ELT Consultant, projects and programmes.

Resources

The English Language Teaching Resource Centre in Vilnius is well stocked with the best up-to-date books on ELT, which teachers can consult in the centre or borrow. There is also a wide range of newspapers and journals. For teachers outside Vilnius there are five branches of the library, called Outreach Centres, in Kėdainiai, Utena, Marijampolė, Panevėžys and now, since July 1996, in Klaipėda. These libraries borrow collections of books from Vilnius on a shift basis, and also have their own permanent stock.

Donations of books can occasionally be made to departments of schools or colleges in cases of special need. Additionally, there is some funding to enable teachers to attend conferences in the region. These could be refresher courses, or increasingly, conferences on special areas such as Business English or Testing.

English Language Teaching Consultant

This UK-appointed specialist has a full-time job covering various aspects of ELT: managing the projects, giving advice and consultancy to departments or individuals, running Teacher-Training sessions, and so on. The consultant also writes and edits the monthly English Language pages in the teachers' newspaper Dialogas. I am the second person in the post, and I have now completed my first year. The previous consultant survived three years in the job!

These projects support groups of Lithuanian professionals in different areas of expertise, and are the fruit of careful long term planning, in which the British Council responds to clearly articulated needs in Lithuanian Education. They thus represent a more focussed and specific channelling of resources than the other two categories. Some projects have already reached completion, such as the one supporting Teacher Requalification and the Translation and Interpretation project.

Existing projects are:

- Year 12, concerned with the setting up of a new school leaving examination in English,
- Advanced Writing and British Studies, both involving the writing of new courses in these subjects at Vilnius University,
- the Professional Development Programme, supporting a group of 12 experienced teachers from different parts of Lithuania who work as trainers in their regions, and come to Vilnius at monthly intervals for ongoing development and support.

There are other projects in the pipeline: the aim is always to answer clear needs and achieve sustainability.

Barbara HYDE is ELT Consultant for the British Council in Vilnius.

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From Vilnius with Love

Signe Maria LANDGREN
SIPRI (Sweden)

In May this year I visited Lithuania to collect material for my current research report entitled *The Baltic States - New Participants in the European Security Debate*. Lovely lovely Vilnius! It has changed many of its facades since I was there last - the Old Town is being brushed up with light yellow, blue, rosy and green colours. I arrived with the recently opened Lithuanian Airlines' direct flight from Stockholm and my first encounter turned out to be a Lithuanian official who was the very best example of a new generation without a trace of any old "Soviet thinking" - a theme which kept coming up during my trip as a great worry and obstacle to reforms and development in these countries. This young man with the title of Third Secretary was 23 years old and had learned English on his own from videos and music tapes. (I also met his opposite - a Russian-speaking taxi-driver who was 40 and found the new life unbearable because he was a former state-employed artist and now the new Lithuanian state refused to pay him...)

In all, I interviewed over twenty officials in Vilnius who were strikingly outspoken and without exception "Western" in style and outlook, irrespective of age. Most of them expressed scepticism as to Russia's capacity to become a "normal and democratic" nation - one veteran MP in the Seimas declared, for example, that "Russia is already Euro-Asian with a Euro-Asian economic system and a post-Soviet heritage that will never be overcome."

The march backwards to a neo-communist totalitarian state of neighbouring Belarus is watched closely in Lithuania, as it gets worse by the day. Through the near-union agreement with Belarus, Russia has actually advanced its state border right up to Lithuania and Latvia. The build-up of a modern border guard force is a defence priority for Lithuania, and the new defence doctrine states that, in case of attack from any foreign country, the plan is to fight back, irrespective of possibilities of foreign aid against the attacker.

Professor Vytautas Landsbergis, the once formidable fighter for Lithuanian independence and now in opposition in the Seimas, has cautioned against a danger, perceived by many in the Baltic States:

namely, that the United States may bend to Russian demands and not allow the Baltic nations to join NATO. It would amount to a shameful repetition of history if the West should once again abandon Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and leave them behind as a "grey zone" between Russia and a NATO expanding only to incorporate the Visegrad nations. Such a move would also dispose of all the beautiful words from the OSCE about the indivisibility of European security on to the "garbage heap of history", together with many other grand dreams.

Western Europe and the United States should this time stop to consider a broader aspect, namely that such a grey zone would also endanger Europe and as a matter of fact present a danger to Russia, contrary to whatever parts of the latter's political or military establishment might think! Fortunately, the Russian electorate turned out to be perfectly "normal", in spite of all predictions of the opposite, and they voted for democracy and continued reforms. Maybe the outcome of the Russian presidential elections is a first signal of a new time to come - a time of co-operation instead of confrontation. Such a development is indeed the most-wanted scenario in Lithuania and a fair answer to all their hard work to consolidate their renewed state!

Signe Maria LANDGREN, B.A., M.A. (Stockholm) is a Senior Researcher with SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) and is writing her Ph.D. thesis for the Stockholm Military Academy on a Baltic subject. SIPRI is a non-profit independent research institute financed by the Swedish Parliament and set up in 1966, to commemorate Sweden's 150 years of unbroken peace. The staff members are international and include an Australian, Mr Trevor Findlay, who is an expert on Peace-keeping Forces. For more details of SIPRI research program, and staff, see SIPRI homepage on the Internet: <http://www.sipri.se>

• **Giedrius Plechavičius** (a contemporary Lithuanian artist living in Vilnius), **Detail from sculpture, A Woman's Figure, 1994**, granite, 95 x 45 x 65 cm.



Book Review by Michael BENNETT:

Impressive Scholarship

S.C. ROWELL, *Lithuania Ascending: A Pagan Empire within East-Central Europe, 1295-1345*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994

Rowell's *Lithuania Ascending* is an impressive work of scholarship. The fruit of research stretching back into the 1980s, when Lithuania languished under the dead weight of the Soviet regime, the book now achieves publication in more propitious times for Lithuania and Lithuanian studies. The upbeat title is both literally and symbolically appropriate, and publication in the prestigious Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought will assure the work the attention it merits in the Anglophone world.

Rowell identifies the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries as the crucial phase in the formation of the Lithuanian state. While there has been a tendency to focus on Mindaugas, the Lithuanian warlord who fought his way to supreme power in Lithuania in the 1230s, embraced Christianity and received a crown at the hands of a papal legate in 1253, or on the reign of Jogaila (Jagiello) in the late fourteenth century who finally brought his people into the Catholic fold and secured the fateful union between Lithuania and Poland, Rowell's study focuses on the arguably more solid political achievements of the first Gedimid princes. The key figures are the sons of Pukuveras, a Lithuanian warlord of the 1280s, most notably Vytenis 'Grand Duke' from around 1295, and Gediminas who succeeded his brother as 'Grand Duke' around 1315 and ruled until around 1341.

Lithuania was a land of peasant farmers whose villages lay under the protection of a horse-borne warrior class. Pukuveras and his sons proved ruthless and effective warlords, eliminating rival princes, drawing into their following the best warriors, and creating a new Lithuanian identity. The basic task was defence, and patriotic history acknowledges their success in thwarting the ambitions of the Order of Teutonic Knights and other predatory powers. In this period, though, it was Lithuania that was in expansionary mode. Livonia was conquered, and Gedimid rule extended east and south into present-day Belorussia and Ukraine. Vitebsk was under

Lithuanian control by around 1318, and Kiev was occupied in 1323, while Novgorod and Smolensk were tributary or allied states. The nature of this expansion is a matter of some debate. For rather different reasons Lithuanian and Russian historians have both tended to emphasise the acquiescence of the Slavs in the process. The Lithuanians were after all moving into a power-vacuum consequent on the retreat of Tatar power, and through the establishment of a pax Lithuanica brought a measure of security and prosperity to the Slavs of the region. Still, to outsiders, the Lithuanians appeared first and foremost as raiders and conquerors. It was well known at Constantinople in the 1360s that the Lithuanians were brave warriors and that 'their ruler surpasses immensely all the Christian princes of northern Rus' in power and the martial skill of his army' (94).

The success of the early Gedimids was not solely attributable to ruthless warlordism. It was also a matter of intelligent and imaginative policy. Rowell documents in some detail the skill with which Vytenis and Gediminas manipulated the strengths of their position and addressed some of the weaknesses. The style of warfare of the Lithuanians was well-suited to the intractable terrain in which they lived. Early Gedimid power was based on respect as well as fear, was nourished by the distribution of the spoils of war, and was consolidated in the growing weight of the grand-ducal office. The Gedimids certainly recognised the wealth that could be derived from their command of trade-routes between the Baltic and the Black Sea, and derived great benefit from their alliance with the merchants and the Archbishop of Riga. Above all, Vytenis and Gediminas knew the value of diplomacy, exploiting rivalries among their neighbours, and more generally the confessional divide between the Catholic and Orthodox worlds.



**Grand Duke
Gediminas,**
founder of the
Gedimid Dynasty.

From *Lithuania 700 Years*.

Their achievement was quite simply the creation in Lithuania of a state which bears comparison with the emergent Christian kingdoms of central-east Europe and Scandinavia. Rowell documents in some detail the development of the grand-ducal office and the beginnings of warriors into the semblance of a landed aristocracy. Though lacking a crown, Gediminas was generally styled rex and on his seals he is acclaimed as *Dei gratia* and depicted with a diadem. He made use of Italian clerks and German merchants in his administration, and used Latin in diplomacy with foreign powers. Already significant as a trading post and cult centre, Vilnius began to take on the role and appearance of a small capital. Gediminas built as his palace a stout timber fort (not the brick tower that now bears his name).

Unlike the rulers of other European peoples, however, the early Gedimids remained resolutely pagan. Amid great fanfare in the early 1320s Gediminas invited in a papal mission, but shortly after its arrival in Vilnius he sent it packing. For the most part he showed more interest in the Orthodox Church, working hard to secure the establishment of a metropolitan church in Lithuania (and thus ecclesiastical independence for his Orthodox subjects). Rowell is at his most interesting in his analysis of the pagan religion of the Lithuanians, and of the development towards a more centralised state-cult under the early Gedimids. Excavations in old Vilnius in the 1980s revealed, between the foundations of the church built by Mindaugas and the stonework of later medieval cathedral, the outlines of a square temple constructed by the early Gedimids. The resilience of paganism in Lithuania is a complex and fascinating problem, but Rowell's study certainly helps explain both the adaptiveness of the traditional religion and the resistibility of Christianity.

Most basically, Gediminas was able to have his cake and eat it. Divisions within Christendom, not only between Catholic and Orthodox, but also competing interests in the Catholic world itself, meant that a pagan power was neither friendless or isolated. Much was gained by playing on the rivalries of Pope and Emperor, the king of Poland and the Teutonic Knights, the missionaries and the merchants. The Lithuanians were able to borrow selectively and in their own time, absorbing the technology of war and government from the west but deriving much, too, from the culture of the Orthodox world. Early Gedimid Lithuania remained 'open' for

business, and indeed its generally open-minded approach to other religions assisted its territorial expansion. It was a time when the Lithuanians, or at least their Gedimid grand dukes, seem to have had real options. As a people and culture, Lithuania seems to have derived an inner strength from the fact that for most of the fourteenth century 'the pagan realm had the chance to avoid an irrevocable decision to join the Christian club in Europe' (288).

Rowell is to be congratulated for this learned and stimulating study. In prosecuting his research he has seemingly mastered a polyglot literature and acquired linguistic and technical skills of a high order. He has used his sources critically but creatively, and his conclusions deserve respect. It will be interesting to see their impact on Lithuanian historiography and present day discussions of identity. In his preface Rowell alludes to the fact that in September 1991 when the Kremlin renounced the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and relinquished claims to the Baltic states, the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences held an international symposium to mark the anniversary of the death, six hundred and fifty years earlier, of Grand Duke Gediminas, arguably the founder of the Lithuanian state. One would assume that the author was present, but Rowell is disappointingly reticent about himself, how he came to his subject, the conditions in which he worked, and his own perception of the changes taking place in present day Lithuania. True, this monograph is not really the place for anecdote and reflection. The hope is that in the coming years Rowell will write more and more expansively on Lithuanian history.

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• A 9th-10th century Lithuanian fortification.

- Lithuanian Heritage Magazine.

Book Review by Amanda J. BANKS:

Poverty, Children, Policy

Between 1989 and 1994, the number of people living in poverty in Lithuania has increased by 26 times, according to a UNICEF report. The report, *Poverty, Children and Policy: Responses for a Brighter Future*, provides many statistics and graphs showing poverty indicators in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Baltic region.

It argues that, since 1989, poverty has escalated with the steepest increases being in Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, and Azerbaijan (with Latvia and Estonia also having sharp increases). In Lithuania, the percentage of the population in poverty increased from 1.5% in 1989 to 39.1% in 1994 with a further 25% in the low income bracket who, while not considered to be below the poverty line, are unable to fully participate in social life. It points out that there were approximately 75 million NEW poor in the CEE and former Soviet Union region (excluding Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan, and Former Yugoslavia but including Slovenia) between 1989 and 1994.

The report looks at changes in welfare during the transition as well as desirable policy options. Although the title refers to the welfare of children in particular, the report contains many detailed graphs of other indicators of health, well being, and poverty for all ages such as infant and child mortality, fertility, and average wages.

It is Regional Monitoring Report No 3 in the 'Central and Eastern Europe in Transition' Series and can be ordered from the UNICEF Headquarters in Sydney or directly from
UNICEF International Child Development Centre
Economic and Social Policies Research Programme
Piazza Santissima Annunziata, 12
50122 Florence, Italy. Tel.(39 55)2345258. Fax(39 55)244817

Further statistical information may be ordered from the Methodical Publishing Centre, Gedimino 29, 2746 Vilnius, Lithuania.

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"Don't Judge a Book by its Cover"

In the early 1980s, new kinds of books started appearing in Lithuania, Estonia and in other Russian-occupied regions. On the outside, they did not differ from other official Soviet publications. They had the replica covers of well-known Soviet books; the first few and the final pages were reprints of the same Soviet title, too. Nestled inside this camouflage, however, there were history texts in local languages - texts totally banned by Soviet censors.

A book circulated in Lithuania purported to be the biography of Mečislovas Gedvilas, a prominent figure in the Communist Party of Lithuania (*Lemiamas posūkis*). After Page 16, however, this book abruptly switched to *Vienų Vieni* (All Alone), a factual account of the Lithuanian resistance against the Russian occupation forces from 1944 to mid-1950s. This book by N.E. Sūduvis had been previously published in the West: the German edition was printed in Germany in 1964 (*Allein, ganz allein*); and a Lithuanian edition subsequently, in the United States. Because of the strict book import controls by the Soviet authorities, neither edition was accessible to the ordinary people of Lithuania.

Another book doing the rounds in Estonia had the cover and the title-page of E.Öpik's study of the Estonian peasants' socialist struggles against the big landowners. Inside, was something quite different - the chronological history of the Estonian people, by E. Mägi, first published in the West, in 1979.

These "camouflaged books" were the brainchild of a wealthy Ukrainian expatriate. He had desperately searched for a way to smuggle Western books behind the Iron Curtain, without arousing the suspicions of the Soviet customs officials. Over the years, hundreds and thousands of his books reached their destinations from a number of despatch points, including Australia.

Finally, a Swedish parliamentarian was caught, on entering Estonia. A Soviet official thought, this visitor had too much "prohibited" weekend reading with him. Soon after, an article full of venom and accusations appeared in the Estonian paper *Kodumaa* (Homeland). Maybe books are mightier than swords?

Acknowledgments: *Estonian Daily* (Stockholm), Mrs. Lia Looäär, B.E.M.

What is BATUN?

BATUN is a voluntary Baltic association with headquarters in New York. Its name is an abbreviation of Baltic Appeal to the United Nations.

BATUN was founded in 1967 by Baltic-Americans who were determined to use the UN to support human rights and the rule of international law in the Baltic States. The Baltic issue was pursued through the Commission on Human Rights and with the assistance of friendly diplomatic missions. Former BATUN activists and student interns now work in the UN missions, the Latvian Foreign Ministry, are members of the Estonian Parliament, and have served on the staff of the Lithuanian Parliament.

Long before 1991, BATUN organised demonstrations, seminars, and letter writing campaigns for prisoners of conscience. BATUN distributed position papers, chronologies, and news bulletins. As the USSR relaxed its grip, BATUN arranged press conferences and itineraries for dissidents and political leaders in New York and Geneva. Since then, BATUN has concentrated on troop withdrawal and human rights issues - including the plight of national minorities in Russia - and has helped found the Baltic UN Associations.

Each year, BATUN activists - or Baltic volunteers supported by BATUN - attend sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission, as well as the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. BATUN tries to prevent Russia from using either the Commission or the Sub-Commission as a political tool for pressuring the Baltic governments. BATUN has also been active at conferences in Vienna (1993) and Copenhagen (1995). In 1994, BATUN sponsored a Geneva press conference on the history and consequences of Soviet ethnic cleansing - including Chechen and Crimean Tatar representatives.

BATUN welcomes new members and donations. The address is: UBA/BATUN 15 W 183rd St. Bronx NY 10453 USA.

This article has been sponsored by Cox's Pendle Hill Pharmacy (Laurie Cox and Kristina Rupsys), 136 Pendle Way, Pendle Hill, NSW, 2145. Tel. (02) 9631 3688. Fax (02) 9896 3347.

Our Thanks

A specialised journal like *Lithuanian Papers* cannot break even: the readership is small, yet the costs of production and distribution still have to be paid. In spite of such handicaps, this is the tenth year that *Lithuanian Papers* are appearing in Tasmania.

This uninterrupted publication milestone has been achieved, thanks to the combined help of our advertisers; our contributors who continue writing for us without an honorarium; our unpaid volunteers who help in the production and mailing; and our financial supporters throughout Australia and beyond.

We thank you all for your support in so many ways. We also gratefully acknowledge the following donations received since our last issue:

Lithuanian Club Library Bankstown, Lithuanian Community of Brisbane, Tasmania University Union Inc., \$250 each; Adelaide Ateitininkai, \$236; Anon. (Tas) \$195; A.Kramilius, Dr.K.Zdanius, \$130 each; The Australian Lithuanian Community of Sydney, \$125; M.O'Learey, \$105; The Australian Lithuanian Community of Adelaide, ALB Krasto Valdyba, Geelong Lithuanian Association Club, Lithuanian Caritas Inc. (Adelaide), Rev.A.Savickis, Socialines Globos Moteru Draugija Melbourne, \$100 each; J.Cyzas, I.M.&A.L.Loder, E.Sidlauskas, \$50 each; J.Paskevicius, \$40; S.Katinas, \$35; Q.King,\$30; A.Grikepelis, \$26; B.Francas, G.Kaiteiva, J.Kupris, J.Mockunas, V.Navickas, A.Rahdon, A.Reisgys, P.Siauciunas, "Zidyns" (Geelong), J.Zinkus, \$20 each; V.Kristensen, E.Sidlauskas, \$16 each; J.W.Kuncas, \$15;L.Dunsdorfs, H.A. Johansons, J.Karosas, \$12 each; I.G.Bray, A.Budrys, J.Jonavicius, J.P.Kedys, J.Kniuipys, J.Kojelis, J.Krutulis, A.Luksyte-Meiliuniene, Dr.A.Mauragis, M.Musinskas, V.&J.Rupinskas, \$10 each; Anon.(S.A.), B.Siksnius, \$6 each; Rev.D.Clarke, \$5.

The first part of the eyewitness report "Conscripts for the Soviet Empire" by Algirdas Makarevicius was published in last year's Lithuanian Papers (Volume 9, 1995). The report will be continued in our next issue (Vol.11, '97).

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• Vladas Meškėnas, *Mother's Sorrow*, 1943, pencil.

