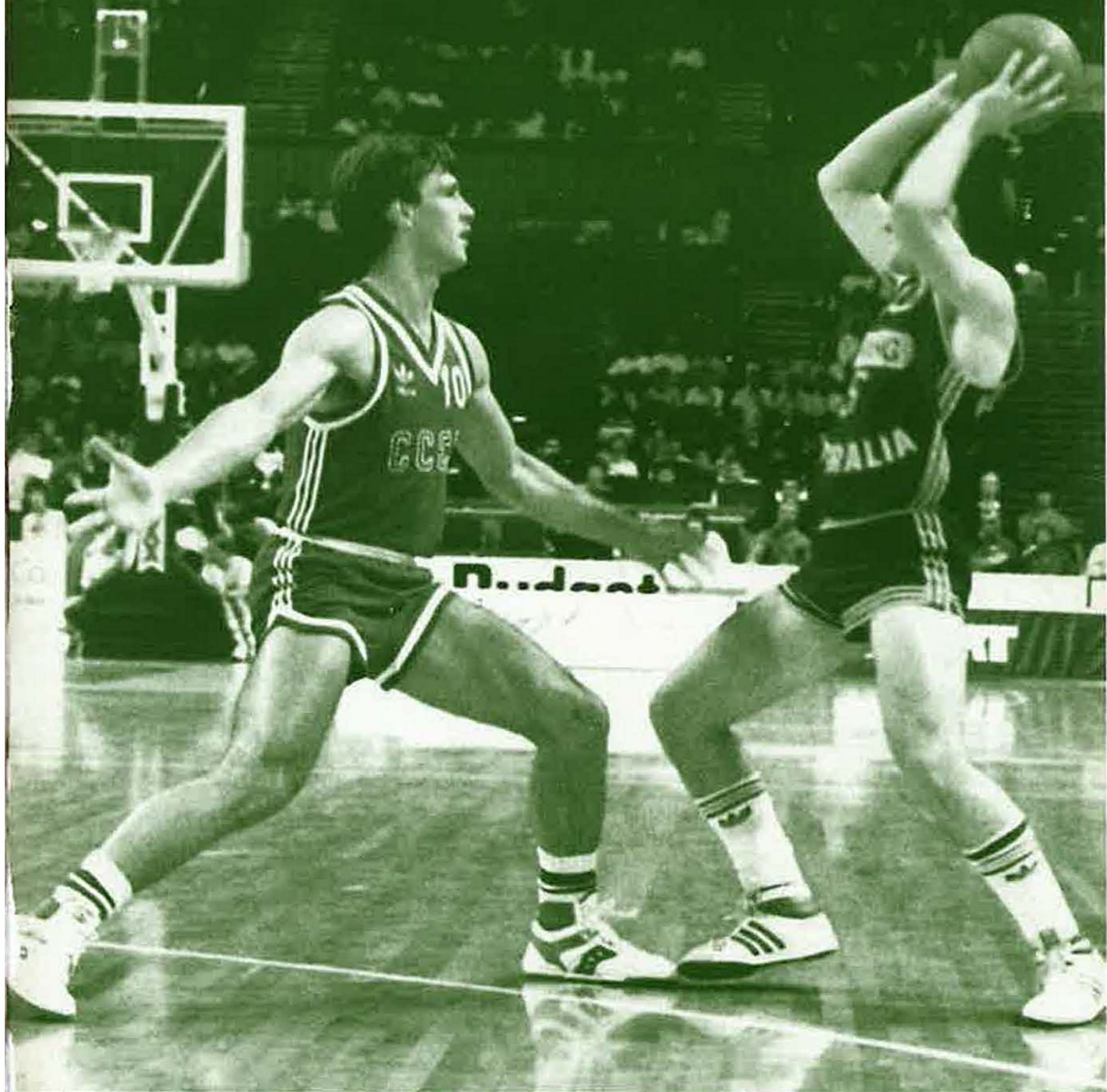


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# *Lithuanian Papers*

Volume 18 - 2004

ANNUAL JOURNAL OF THE LITHUANIAN STUDIES  
SOCIETY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA





## Why *Lithuanian Papers* ?

The origin of this journal's name goes back to 1987. During that year, the Lithuanian Studies Society started fortnightly lunchtime lectures at the University of Tasmania, on a wide range of topics connected with Lithuania. Some of these lectures were given by the University's members of staff; others were presented by visiting speakers and invited guests.

It soon became apparent that many original papers had emerged from this lecture programme, and that it would be a great pity to lose the newly gained knowledge. Although short of money and resources, the Society decided to publish the best papers, chosen from each year's presentations. And so, the *Lithuanian Papers* were born. The annual journal has since grown and is now read by 3,000 subscribers in 29 countries and in all continents.

Professor Alec Lazenby, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Tasmania at the time, wrote in 1988:

*"The programme was not only of obvious interest to those members of the University with Lithuanian connections, but I believe, of considerable educational value to the whole University... This is an admirable project; it will enable the culturally enriching influence of the Society to be extended to many members of the University..."*

### COVER PHOTOS:

Basketball ("*krepšinis*") is Lithuanians' favourite sport. The game was introduced into the country in 1919, by Steponas Darius and Karolis Dineika. Within less than two decades, Lithuania won the Second European championship in Riga (1937) and retained the title two years later, at the Third European championship held in Kaunas, in 1939.

During the Soviet occupation, Lithuanian basketballers helped to develop the game in Russia. V. Kulakauskas wrote a basketball manual for the Russians. Not permitted to appear in their own colours, Lithuanians played in Soviet teams. S. Petkevičius was the captain of the Soviet team in 1956. Arvydas Sabonis and three other Lithuanians were the backbone of the USSR team in the Seoul Olympics in 1988 where the team won gold.

After the restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990, Lithuanian basketballers won bronze at three consecutive Olympics (Barcelona 1992, Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000). At this year's Athens Olympics, the Lithuanians were undefeated until the last two rounds, when they succumbed to Italy and then, to the U.S. team.

*Front cover:* Young Rimas Marčiulionis (*left*, wearing USSR colours), in a match against Australia. *Back cover:* Darius Songaila (No.9) in action. - Photos: jpg.photo - algisb photos; R.Jurgaitis, M.Kulbis/*Lietuvos rytas*.

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***Lithuanian Papers***

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## Lithuania's Prospects after Joining NATO and the EU

**Leslie HOLMES**

**University of Melbourne**

The first half of 2004 was a time of major historical significance for Lithuania - a watershed. In April, in the wake of a parliamentary enquiry, President Rolandas Paksas was impeached; following an interim period under Acting President Arturas Paulauskas, Valdas Adamkus was re-elected president in June. In at least two ways, the change of president was highly symbolic.

The outgoing president had been accused of corruption, and collusion with a Russian - to whom President Paksas had inappropriately granted Lithuanian citizenship - alleged by some to have links with Russian organized crime. The "new" one (he had previously been president 1998-2003) had spent most of his life in the West, and was considered clean. In a sense, then, Lithuanians were showing their disapproval of the corruption that has typified so many post-communist transition states, and of overly close relations with Russia. They were looking forward to a better, less corrupt future as part of "the West".

Lithuania did unambiguously become part of "the West" in 2004. While there had been earlier important steps in this direction - such as Lithuania's admittance to the Council of Europe in 1993, her inclusion in NATO's Partnership for Peace in 1994, and, while it is less clearly Western oriented, her admittance to the World Trade Organization in 2000 - none was as significant as her admission into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in March and the European Union (EU) at the beginning of May. She had become a member of the West's major military alliance, and Europe's principal economic (and increasingly social and political) bloc.

Did Lithuanians *want* to join these organizations? The evidence suggests they did. In the case of NATO, Lithuania's forced incorporation into the USSR (with German connivance) in 1940



has left an understandable determination among many Lithuanians to ensure their country is never again "swallowed up" by larger states; NATO membership is the best guarantee of this. As for the EU, Lithuania had, like almost all the other ten applicant countries that had signed the Accession Treaty in April 2003, held a referendum on membership. In May 2003, over 91% of the almost 64% of Lithuanian citizens who cast valid votes in the EU referendum favoured joining; this compared with only 67% in both the Estonian and Latvian referenda (with respective turnouts of 64% and 72.5%) of September 2003.

But what of the future? Will Lithuania really be able to turn its eyes westwards, and forget its time under Soviet domination? The answer is that it will not entirely - and that, as with any people and culture, it would be unwise to forget the past too thoroughly anyway, lest a similar situation of domination should arise again because the lessons of the past have been forgotten.

Many specific issues that were troubling the relationship between Vilnius and Moscow until recently have been more or less resolved. One of the thorniest had been access to Kaliningrad - a Russian "island" that was to be surrounded by EU member-states from May 2004. Following intense negotiations, a new regime was introduced, effective July 2003, whereby Russians could apply for a "Facilitated Transit Document" (FTD) if they wanted to access Kaliningrad; FTDs are easier to obtain than regular visas. At the same time, the situation was further eased by the introduction in mid-2003 of much cheaper flights between Moscow and this Russian enclave of nearly one million inhabitants.

The situation had not been entirely sorted out, especially for Russian soldiers and some children (if they had not been on their parents' passports). But these were manageable irritants. Of more concern was what some have seen as a developing Putin dictatorship. While it is still premature to be certain that such a dictatorship will emerge, Lithuanian membership of NATO means that it now has enormous military support in the unlikely event that Russia becomes not merely a dictatorship but one seeking to be *expansionist*.



\* Lithuania joined NATO this year. The poster proclaims, "NATO: Peace in the world".  
Photo: Vytautas Ylevičius.

There are also specific issues still to be finally resolved between Lithuania and the EU, such as the introduction of the Euro and the staged closure of the Soviet-era Ignalina nuclear power plant, which supplies much of Lithuania's energy. These issues will be settled one way or another. But what of the broader implications for Lithuania of joining the EU?

Whilst Greece has not benefited from EU membership as much as many Greeks might have hoped, Spain and Ireland - like Lithuania, strongly Catholic countries - have been outstanding successes by most criteria. Having been a Baltic laggard for most of the 1990s, Lithuania's economy has boomed in recent years - with GDP growth at 5.7% in 2001, 6.7% in 2002 and a blistering 9% in 2003 - so that it enters the EU in an upbeat mood.

This bodes well. Of course, there will be teething problems. But some of these are already looking as if they will be less significant than widely anticipated.

Thus, high levels of inflation have not yet materialised; after an initial price 'spike' in May of 1.5%, the economy appears to have settled again very quickly, and there was no recorded inflation in July 2004; the Finance Ministry did adjust its annual inflation forecast upwards in August, but by only one per cent. Meanwhile, the already relatively low level of unemployment in April (7.5%) declined to 7% in the first month of EU membership, and even further - to 6.4% - in August.

But not everything in the garden is rosy! Many Lithuanians and external observers have been concerned about recent electoral behaviour. In the 2004 elections to the EU, the newly-established (October 2003) Labour Party headed by Russian-born millionaire Viktor Uspaskikh – also known as 'Mr. Gherkin', because his face appears on jars of pickled cucumbers produced by a company he owns – secured more support than any other, with just over 30 percent of the vote. The reason for concern is that many Lithuanians fear that Uspaskikh wants to strengthen the ties and resonances between Russia and Lithuania; this is particularly disturbing to those who believe Russia is becoming ever more of a dictatorship under President Putin. Uspaskikh's own record in the city of Kėdainiai might be described as that of a welfare-oriented populist – a self-made millionaire who promises to look after the 'losers' in post-communism. He is thus seen by some as a potential Russia-oriented 'benevolent dictator'.

But is this a realistic assessment? Much of the support for his new party can be attributed to disillusionment with the established parties, in particular because of perceptions of growing inequalities and recent scandals. Thus the Labour Party's current popularity does *not* necessarily represent a longing for a Russian type system, or even closer ties to Russia. Indeed, Lithuanians - like others in the region - can see for themselves the problems Belarus is experiencing under the Lukashenka dictatorship. Thus, it is far more likely that support for Uspaskikh represents a protest vote. And if the Labour Party wins the next *Seimas* election, it is highly probable that Uspaskikh will, in power, have to be just as hard-nosed and Westward-looking as those he has criticised.

In any case, it should not be forgotten that the Labour Party has consistently been pro-EU, and now works *within* rather than

outside it. A Labour government would seek to secure as much as it can from Brussels, not to leave it to join the CIS. With a clearly Western-oriented president, the enhanced influence of the EU since May, and his own proclivities and common sense, Uspaskikh will not and cannot move too far towards Moscow.

Lithuanians have only just been integrated into the West. While there will always be those in any system who will criticise present arrangements, and may even hark back to the past, they will never be either a majority or powerful in Lithuania. Most Lithuanians know they will be much better off in a democratic, affluent and relatively stable Europe than linked to an ever less democratic Russia in which the majority of the population lives close to the poverty line and – as seen in the recent banking crisis – the economic outlook is unclear.

The Uspaskikh 'protest vote' might actually serve as a useful wake-up call to the majority of Lithuanians who did not vote for the Labour Party. As with the 1992 election results, the recent Euro-elections have alerted those Lithuanians who have not forgotten their decades under Soviet domination to the dangers of becoming complacent. They know now that just enough of their fellow-citizens have been 'losers' under post-communism to rock the boat, even though these 'losers' will not be able to reverse Lithuania's steady move westwards. It's now up to all Lithuanians to take maximum advantage of their EU membership.

In both politics and economics, perceptions and social psychology are often much more significant than many economists acknowledge. If Lithuanians *want* to make their newly consolidated membership of 'the West' a success, they almost certainly can – at least within the limits imposed by an unstable global economic order, and an EU that cannot afford to be as generous as it was in the past. Here's one outside observer who believes they will, even if Uspaskikh comes to power.

**Received September 5, 2004**

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## A Challenge to Democracy: *Lithuania's Presidential Crisis*

Ginta T. PALUBINSKAS

George Mason University

In 2002, Lithuania appeared to be a state well on its way along the path of democracy. Its growing economy, an invitation to join NATO, and concluding negotiations for joining the European Union all suggested that Lithuania was successfully overcoming the Soviet legacy and establishing its place in the community of Western democracies. Then, in 2003, a presidential scandal rocked the nation, testing the strength of Lithuania's democratic institutions.

The third post-independence presidential elections held in 2002, with a second round in January, 2003, yielded surprising results. President Valdas Adamkus was unseated by stunt pilot and construction business owner, Rolandas Paksas, twice a former prime minister and an ex-mayor of Vilnius. The results were surprising given each candidate's record.



\* Former President Rolandas Paksas, in an interview with the Lithuanian media.  
- Photo: *Lithuanian Parliamentary Mirror*, 3, 2004.

Adamkus had successfully brought the nation to the threshold of NATO and EU membership, and had promoted Lithuania as a reliable partner world-wide. Paksas had a record of changing party allegiances, no foreign policy experience, and had quickly resigned from all political posts he had held in the past. In addition, Paksas' campaign had made unrealistic promises, which fell outside of the president's constitutional powers to fulfill (i.e., raising pensions). Ten months later, a presidential scandal began to unfold rapidly.

On October 30, 2003, Lithuania's State Security Department issued a report to parliament linking Paksas, his Adviser on Security, Remigijus Acas, as well as his main campaign contributor Russian businessman Yuri Borisov, with international criminal groups. That evening, Paksas denied the accusations in a televised address to the nation.

Shortly thereafter, on November 3, 2003, Lithuania's Parliament (*Seimas*) held an emergency session, which was broadcast to the nation. During the course of the session, some of the secretly recorded telephone conversations that underpinned the State Security Department's report were played. On them, individuals with ties to organized crime discussed deals that had been made with Paksas before the elections in January. In one of the tapes, Russian national and businessman, Yuri Borisov, was heard threatening the President for reneging on a deal the two had made prior to the election. The news stunned the nation.

On November 4, 2003, the *Seimas* formed a special parliamentary commission to determine if Paksas posed a threat to national security, had violated the Constitution, or had broken his presidential oath. The special commission, headed by Aloyzas Sakalas, immediately decided to keep its hearings as public as possible based on the principle that the public has a right to know the facts upon which it would base its report. Consequently, the commission's hearings were televised live, allowing citizens throughout the country to hear all of the evidence, except that which had to remain classified.

As the scandal unfolded, public calls for Paksas to step down grew. Paksas continued to insist that he would not resign, and began travelling across Lithuania to meet with supporters.

\* **Valdas Adamkus (pictured, right):** a Lithuanian leader reflecting Western values. Having previously served as the President of the Republic of Lithuania (1998 - 2002), Adamkus was returned to the office of President at the most recent election held on June 27, 2004.

As a young man, Adamkus retreated from the second Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1944; and received his education at the Lithuanian High School of Eichstätt, Germany (1946) and the University of Illinois, USA (BE, 1960). He was later a senior official in the US Environmental Protection Agency. - Photo: G. Mačiulis, 2001



His visits strained communities, and encouraged conflict as he urged his supporters to "remember the names of those who did not support him" – words that stirred up memories of the Soviet era when neighbours spied on neighbours, and "other" meant "enemy."

On December 1, 2003, the Sakalas commission issued a 10-page report, which confirmed the State Security Department's report alleging ties with the mafia and Russian secret service to be accurate, that Paksas had personally leaked secret information, and that he constituted a threat to Lithuania's national security. *Seimas* then asked the Constitutional Court to rule on the legality of Paksas' decision to grant citizenship to Borisov as a payback for financing his election campaign. On December 31, 2003, Lithuania's Constitutional Court determined that the decree by Rolandas Paksas granting citizenship to Yuri Borisov, the main backer of his campaign, was unconstitutional. The reading of the court's verdict was televised live to the nation.

In the meanwhile, 86 parliamentarians signed a document stating that they would vote to launch impeachment hearings and the proceedings began on December 16, 2003.



On February 19, 2004, after an exhaustive investigation, the impeachment commission announced that the six impeachment charges levelled against Paksas were well-founded. The commission's findings were read aloud to Parliament and broadcast live to the nation. The reading took seven hours. Afterwards, Parliament asked the Constitutional Court to determine whether these charges constituted a grave violation of the Constitution and whether Paksas had broken his presidential oath.

The Constitutional Court took the matter under review and on March 31, 2004, found Paksas guilty of both grave breaches of the Constitution and of violating his oath of office. He had breached the Constitution when he had granted citizenship to Yuri Borisov as a payback for financing his political campaign. He had violated his oath of office when he had leaked secret information to Borisov, as well as when he had applied personal pressure on the directors and shareholders of the enterprise *Žemaitijos Keliai* demanding that shares of the enterprise be transferred to individuals close to him. The Constitutional Court's reading of its findings was televised live to the nation.



\* Before entering politics, Rolandas Paksas was widely known for his aerobatics. After another stunt pilot, Jurgis Kairys, attracted a lot of attention by flying under a bridge (pictured), Paksas emulated this feat, too.  
Photo: S. Laukys.

On April 6, 2004, the Parliament of Lithuania convened for a Special Session to vote on whether or not to impeach Rolandas Paksas. The session was chaired by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Lithuania Vytautas Greičius, and broadcast live to the nation. With 115 of the 136 Members of Parliament in attendance, the three charges against Paksas were read and a vote taken by secret ballot. One year, two months and twenty days after taking office, Rolandas Paksas was impeached. The presidential scandal had lasted six months.

Lithuania's empty presidential seat was quickly filled using the emergency line of succession: Arturas Paulauskas, President of Lithuania's Parliament was sworn in as the Acting President of Lithuania and Česlovas Juršėnas, Vice-President of Lithuania's Parliament stepped into position as the Acting President of Lithuania's Parliament. Early presidential elections were immediately set for June 13<sup>th</sup>.

Paksas wanted to run in the early presidential elections to replace himself. Since this defied logic, Parliament amended the election law on May 4 prohibiting an impeached individual from running for the presidency for five years following his removal from office. Paksas supporters in Parliament appealed to the Constitutional Court to rule on the constitutionality of the amendment. The Constitutional Court agreed to take the matter under review. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, the Constitutional Court ruled that the amendment was unconstitutional and stated unequivocally, that an individual impeached for gravely breaching Lithuania's Constitution or for breaking their oath of office could never again run for the presidency, nor could they hold any other office that required them to swear an oath to the nation, since they had already proven incapable of honouring it.

The early elections showed how deeply the citizens of Lithuania have internalized democratic norms and values. In the first round of voting during the early presidential elections, three of the candidates were eliminated, leaving two: Valdas Adamkus, the candidate reflecting western values, held 30.18% of the vote, and Kazimira Prunskienė, the candidate backed by Paksas and espousing closer ties with Russia, reflecting a return to eastern values held 20.6% of the votes.



◦ Kazimiera Danutė Prunskienė, *nee Stankevičiūtė (pictured, left)* is a former Soviet Prime Minister of Lithuanian SSR (1989) and a former Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania (1990-91). She is a Habilitated Doctor of Social Sciences, one of the Signatories of the Act for the Re-establishment of Lithuanian Independence and has been honoured with the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree.

Kazimiera Prunskienė is the author of at least 17 books and brochures, and 500 articles and reports. One of her better known monographs is *The Confession of an Amber Lady*, 1991.

Then, in the second round held on June 27, 2004, Valdas Adamkus was voted into office with 51.51% of the votes and a peaceful political transition followed.

Lithuania's first presidential impeachment crisis tested the strength of Lithuania's democratic institutions and showed Lithuania's democratic system to be solidly in place. As the crisis unfolded, Lithuania's Electoral and Judicial branches functioned smoothly. Lawmakers kept the public informed by maintaining transparency in the proceedings and allowing citizens to gain an enlightened understanding of the matter by broadcasting parliamentary and court proceedings live.

Despite Paksas' efforts to instigate unrest, Lithuanian citizens maintained calm and the country continued to exhibit all of the traits of a consolidated democracy: the rule of law remained in place; citizens continued to organize themselves into social groups and movements; political, bureaucratic, and economic systems continued to function. Given the choice between democracy and a return to closer ties with Russia, Lithuanian citizens chose the democratic path.

*Ginta T. Palubinskas, Ph.D. (Geo. Mason) writes on democratization, and on the interaction of political, economic and cultural change. She currently works as a Research Associate at The School of Public Policy at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, and teaches in that University's Masters of Public Policy Program. <gpalubin@gmu.edu>*

## Lithuanian Language and Books

The Lithuanian Parliament (*Seimas*) has designated 2004 as "the Year of the Lithuanian Language and Book". The Lithuanian Community of Australia, the Lithuanian American Community and other groups abroad have joined in the commemorations.

The Lithuanian language belongs to the Indo-European family of languages, and is one of the oldest spoken tongues today. A brief survey of Lithuanian was published in this journal last year.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible to study Lithuanian outside Lithuania. For example, a Lithuanian course for beginners has been taught, since 1987, by the Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania.

The Lithuanians had no written language of their own until the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. The first Lithuanian book, *Mažvydas' Catechismusa Prasty Szadei* (The plain words of Catechism) was published in Karaliaučius (Königsberg) in 1547<sup>2</sup>. Another early book, *Postilla*, translated by Mikalojus Daukša and published in Vilnius, is significant for its 'Prefatory Word to the Gentle Reader',<sup>3</sup> in which Daukša explains the great importance of the native tongue.

The Lithuanian printed word suffered a setback in 1863 when, after an unsuccessful natives' uprising, the Russian Governor-General Muravyov ("The Hanger") forbade the use of Lithuanian (Latin) characters in all printed matter, from prayer-books to newspapers. In the following year (1864), such printing was made a crime. The ban continued for 40 years. During that period, books in Lithuanian characters were printed abroad, mainly in Prussia, and smuggled into Lithuania. Those who were caught by the Russians, were punished severely. The 'press ban' was finally lifted in 1904, mainly because a revolution had broken out in Russia and the Tsar feared, the revolt might spread to Lithuania.

UNESCO has honoured the centennial of the restitution of the Lithuanian printed word by including it in the 2004-2005 UNESCO calendar of noted dates. *-Acknowledgement: Lithuanian Heritage.*

<sup>1</sup> Hendin, James, 'The Lithuanian Language' *Lithuanian Papers*, No.17/2003, pp.41-43.

<sup>2</sup> Reviewed in *Lithuanian Papers*, No.11/1997, p.19.

<sup>3</sup> English translation in *Lithuanian Papers*, No.10/1996, p.51.



## The Struggle for the Lithuanian Press

Antanas TYLA

Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas

Researchers usually evaluate the Lithuanian national consciousness of the late 19th - early 20th century by reference to the most significant events of the time: the 1863-1864 uprising, the ban on printing in Lithuanian, the 1905 national rebellion and the re-establishment of the Lithuanian state in 1918. Each of these steps was individually important for the development of national identity and for the maturing of civic consciousness and readiness for statehood. However, for both of these manifestations of self-awareness, an initial impulse was created by the period of prohibition on printing in Lithuanian. In this article we will analyse how the collective actions of the Lithuanian peasants in opposing the Russian government's assimilationist policy helped to form and strengthen the notion of Lithuanian identity.

The ban on Lithuanian printing from 1864 to 1904 was a deliberate policy of assimilation aimed at Lithuania and Lithuanians by the Russian empire. No Russian bureaucrat made any attempt to ask Lithuanians how they would feel about this ban on printing in Latin or Gothic letters, which the Lithuanians had already been using for more than 300 years. The Russian government did not expect that anyone would try to disobey this edict, given the savage and bloody end the Russians had put to the rebellion of 1863-1864, with mass hangings and deportations to Siberia. The Russian government was making a concerted attempt to strangle the nascent Lithuanian national identity.

The Russian government had already started to shape an anti-Lithuanian program in the first 70 years after the annexation of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1795. By the 1860s they had progressed to formalising the program in law and legally codifying it. At that time the preferred approach to destroying national identity was through assimilation: parish schools were banned, after which the teaching of reading and writing in the native language (Lithuanian) outside of schools was relentlessly persecuted.

Another method of strengthening assimilation was banning the use of Lithuanian as a language of administration in the District Councils that were established after the abolition of serfdom, and thereby russifying the organs of local government. And finally, the inevitable ban on Lithuanian publishing. To implement this policy the Russian government and its local representatives made available the whole bureaucratic apparatus, the police, the army and the Tsar's special militia, and it was decided to jail and exile the disobedient. This was a formidable force, led by no less than the monarch himself. The Tsar and his henchmen were determined to see that this edict was obeyed without resistance.

Initially, it appeared that Lithuanian society might not be strong enough to repel the assimilationist aggression of the Russian government. In 1863 the Lithuanians attempted by armed force to throw off the political yoke and the religious persecution imposed on them by Russia; however, they were not prepared for the cultural defence of their national identity.



\* A monument to Lithuanian "book-carriers" in Kaunas. "Book-carriers" (aka "book-hawkers" and "book smugglers") were courageous individuals who crossed the Polish-Lithuanian and Prussian-Lithuanian frontiers during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They transported books, papers and other materials that had been produced abroad in Lithuanian print. These idealists performed a vital function in the effort to perpetuate Lithuanian language, culture and heritage during a dark period of "Russification". - Sculpture by Juozas Zikaras, 1939. Photo: M.C. Edwards

No one had foreseen the need to prepare training manuals and leaders for such a struggle; unlike in planning for the rebellion, they had not planned defence tactics and directions. At first some cultural leaders even assisted the implementation of the assimilationist policy. Nation-wide opposition to the Russification of parish schools and the banning of Lithuanian as a language of administration in the District Councils had to wait for a more propitious moment, which finally arrived in 1905. Then an attempt was made to democratise the District Councils and to revive, at the District Councils' expense, the local elementary schools. Indeed, some early collective attempts at democratising the primary schools had already been made: in the 1870s the residents of Alytus, Kupiškis, Subačius and Šimonys agreed to establish schools or allow girls to attend them only on one condition – that Lithuanian would also be taught at those schools.

From 1864 to 1904 there was very real and very open resistance to Russian assimilation policy in everyday life on an individual, group and local community basis. At the base of this resistance was the emergence of a unique identity-protecting Lithuanian cultural and political life, which was inimical to the Russian regime and not able to be controlled by it. Children learned their native language from banned Lithuanian textbooks or prayer books, and the forbidden Lithuanian literature was read at home and in church, treasured and traded widely. People of all generations got involved in this illegal activity — from the very young pupils of the secret schools up to these pupils' elderly teachers. People from all social classes were involved – from the homeless beggars who were sometimes involved in transporting the illegal books, through to the pupils, high school students, university students, doctors and bishops published, supported and read this literature.

Opposition to the ban on publishing greatly united the Lithuanian nation. This encouraged other forms of non-compliance with Russian edicts. Opposition to the Tsarist schemes took the form of a fourfold societal approach not able to be vanquished by the regime: 1) The secular and religious intelligentsia, which prepared Lithuanian material for publication, edited periodicals, sent them articles and correspondence; 2) The printing presses of "Lithuania



\* In the secrecy of their homes, mothers taught their children to read in Lithuanian. - Sculpture by Petras Rimša. - Photo: *Lithuanian Heritage*.

Minor" (Prussia), which managed to satisfy the demand for the banned literature; 3) The *knygnešiai* – book carriers – who smuggled such literature into Lithuania on their backs and distributed it widely; 4) The general public, who read such books, as well as supported their publication with their donations, who taught their children from primers smuggled in by the *knygnešiai*, who prayed from Lithuanian prayer books published in Tilžė (Tilsit), who signed petitions to the Russian government demanding the repeal of the unjust ban on Lithuanian publishing.

There was no single institution in Lithuania co-ordinating the activities of all four resistance elements. However, the Catholic Church, the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church, and the Reformed (Protestant) Church gave institutional support to the publication and distribution of religious and moral material published in Lithuanian using Latin or Gothic (not Cyrillic) letters. The smuggling and distribution of the banned literature, and sometimes even its publication, was taken care of by fellowships of *knygnešiai* (book carriers) and secret educational organisations.



A clear expression of the national mindset in defending the nation's rights, in the form of the Lithuanian language and alphabet, were the collective popular petitions organised by various administrative units and sent to the Russian government demanding an end to the ban on Lithuanian publishing. There were two main periods of petition-gathering activity: 1) 1881-1883; and 2) from 1895 to the repeal of the ban on Lithuanian publishing. Altogether about 100 such petitions were sent: about 10 during the first period, the rest later.

In all of these petitions it was stressed that in the absence of Lithuanian publishing there were no longer any publications suitable to be used for the moral education of Lithuanian youth; therefore there was a pressing need for Lithuanian material to be published. The petitions are not sharply worded, they do not attack Russian assimilationist policy, they just write about the Lithuanian background of the petitioners and the fact that they use Lithuanian at home and at church. In 1883, agricultural workers from several District Councils in the north of Lithuania – Biržai, Gulbinai, Kiburiai and Pabiržė – sent a memorandum to the Russian newspaper *Novoye Vryemya* ("The New Times") protesting forcefully about the ban on Lithuanian books and demanding the resumption of Lithuanian publishing in Lithuania. Needless to say, the newspaper did not publish the memorandum.

Undoubtedly, people in positions of authority in the District had to take the initiative in organising petitions, and it took courage to face the risks inherent in signing one. In eastern Lithuania much of the credit for such initiative can be ascribed to the priests Silvestras Gimžauskas and Aleksandras Burba.

In the District of Daugėliškis, Father Gimžauskas was assisted in recruiting signatures for petitions by Antanas (first name not certain) Petkelis, an educated peasant who was at that time working as *viršaitis* (head of the District). Without the help of the peasants' own organisations it would have been impossible to gather hundreds of signatures for the petitions.



\* Fr Silvestras Gimžauskas: a poet and fighter for the Lithuanian press.

Sometimes local people were encouraged to send petitions by Lithuanian intellectuals living outside Lithuania, for example, Silvestras Baltramaitis, who was working in Saint Petersburg (Russia) and was active in the cultural life of the Lithuanian community there.

To believe that such petitions would be heeded was, sadly, useless. The senior official in charge of education in the Vilnius region, to whom was given the task of evaluating the petitions sent by people to the Education minister, defended the Russian assimilationist policy and rejected the petitions. The "Supreme Committee for the Press" informed the people of the Žiežmariai district – through the Police Committee of the Trakai district – that the Ministry of Internal Affairs was "unable to satisfy their request". Other petitioners did not even receive a reply. Dr Jonas Basanavičius did not get a reply either when he wrote to the Ministry of Internal Affairs asking for permission to publish Lithuanian material and to transfer the editorial headquarters of *Aušra* to Kaunas. He wrote about this in later years, saying that he had been moved to action by a suggestion sent to the publishers of *Aušra* by some people in the Raseiniai district. He also described, in retrospect, this youthful action of his as "somewhat naive".

As mentioned earlier, collective petitions to Russian government agencies became more frequent in the last decade of the 19th century as the tsars changed and the effects of the prohibition on publishing in Lithuanian began to be considered at higher levels in the Russian administration. At that time S. Didžiulis was one of the main organisers of petitions, assisted by his colleague Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas and some of the *knygnešiai* (book carriers). The senior official in charge of education in the Vilnius region declared that Catholic priests were the main instigators of the petition movement. In literature, it is mentioned that as the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II approached, Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas sent petitions to the tsar's Petitions Committee from people in the Mosėdis and Skuodas regions. The Mosėdis petition was signed by 72 people; the Skuodas petition by 74. According to Vaižgantas' biographer Aleksandras Merkelis, Vaižgantas was the

author of quite a few petitions – probably more than ten – to the tsar, the Minister of Internal Affairs, and to the Education Minister. He also distributed copies around all the districts in his region (near the border with Prussia). At the beginning of 1896 eleven petitions were sent from places in his region: Tauragė, Sartininkai, Žemaičių Naumištis, Švėkšna, Kvedarna, Veiviržėnai, and Ylakiai (the neighbouring district to Mosėdžiai).

After a couple of years another seven petitions were sent from other districts in that region: Darbėnai, Kretinga, Kartena, Salantai, Gintališkė and Plungė. The book carrier (*knygnešys*) Jonas Šiaučiūnas, who lived in the district of Andrioniškis (Anykščiai region), wrote in his memoirs that, on becoming tsar, Nicholas II was presented (1896-7) with nine petitions praying that he restore freedom of the press to the people of Lithuania. Šiaučiūnas wrote that collecting signatures was a very difficult task, as people were afraid to sign.

Most of the petitions were sent from the northern parts of Ukmergė and Panvėžys regions and the western part of Zarasai region. This contiguous strip of central and northeastern Lithuania was also very active in 1905. In some of the Districts more than 100 people signed petitions. The Telšiai district was very active. There were not many petitions from Užnemunė (6 petitions), but a petition from Griškabūdis district carried 630 signatures. There was a democratic distribution of sexes among the signatories: about half were male and half female. According to information held by V. Merkys, about 4,644 Lithuanians signed petitions. This was a mass movement, which stimulated common understanding of Lithuania's interests.

The matters mentioned in the petitions usually reveal the difficulties caused by the press ban. The emphasis is on concern for the misfortunes being suffered by Lithuanians in all three of the provinces of tsarist Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas and Suvalkai); it is mentioned that the Latin script had been used in Lithuania since the earliest times; that people refer to the specially modified Latin alphabet as "our Lithuanian alphabet"; they considered it part of the literary heritage of the Lithuanian language, passed on from generation to generation.



\* If caught by the Russian police, the book carriers were often consigned to Siberia, as shown in this contemporary painting by A. Grotgter (1863).

They complained that because of the lack of Lithuanian books there was a worsening decline in the cultural, intellectual and moral standards of society, particularly among youth; and that continual police raids in search of contraband Lithuanian literature were wearying the populace. It was frequently reiterated that the Russian (Cyrillic) alphabet was not suitable for writing Lithuanian, and that it was hard for people to get used to it.

All of the petitions were written in Russian, except for three: those from the people of the Plungė, Betygala and Valkininkai districts, which were written in Lithuanian. The first of these was sent to the Minister of Internal Affairs, the second to the Tsar, and the third to the Governor-General of Vilnius province. By openly defying the decree banning the use of Lithuanian in official matters, these petitions demonstratively forced Russian officials to tolerate the Lithuanian language.

It is not known why quite a few of the signatories of the petitions signed their names using Cyrillic script. In the ten petitions presented in 1896 to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 24 people signed in Lithuanian-Latin script, while 247 signed in Russian-Cyrillic.



Education officials in the Vilnius region and the "Supreme Committee for the Press" drew attention to this fact and tried to use it as a counter-argument to the claim made in the petitions that members of the public are not acquainted with the Cyrillic alphabet.

During the second wave (1895 to 1905) of petitions for the repeal of the ban on Lithuanian publishing, many arguments were aired in the (secret) Lithuanian press about the process of approaching the institutions of the Russian government with such petitions. Some explained that this was an act of self-debasement, and that it just encouraged people to become subservient to the Russian government. Others urged people to keep up the petitions and to give the Russian bureaucrats no respite, and not to let "the Lithuanian question" to abate.

The periodical publication *Vienybė Lietuvininkų* ("Unity of the Lithuanian-speakers") suggested people should not put too much faith in the petitions. Others argued the opposite. In 1897 J. Bagdonas wrote in the periodical publication *Tėvynės Sargas* ("Guardian of the Homeland"): "What is important here is not whether or to what extent the petitions will be heeded; what is important is the number of voices being raised, the number of people in Lithuania saying that they do not want to be without their own press." The Secret Police Committee of Kaunas province had this article translated into Russian and sent it to the Police Department in Russia, who in turn sent it to the "Supreme Committee for the Press".

The Russian government reacted to such petitions; it did not destroy them, but gave them to the state archives. However, over time the reaction to the petitions changed. At first, it was believed that this was a provocative action orchestrated by Poles; later some consideration was given to how to respond to the demands made in the petitions. All of this served to stimulate more active consideration of the Lithuanian press ban issue on the part of the institutions of the Russian government.

It could appear that sending petitions to Russian government institutions meant trying to make peace with them, putting trust in these foreigners. However, it was done secretly, in the knowledge that those who gathered signatures, and those who

signed these petitions to restore to the Lithuanian press the freedom that had been taken away by the Russian government, could be prosecuted. In 1901, the *knygnešys* (book carrier) Jurgis Baranauskas of Debeikiai district was sentenced to three years exile. Among the charges was that he had signed a petition urging the Tsar to allow the publication of Lithuanian books.

The "Supreme Committee for the Press", in an analysis of petitions and their content, indicated its belief that the Lithuanian public opposed Lithuanian books published in the Russian-Cyrillic script and demanded that books be published in the Lithuanian-Latin script "not because they did not know the Russian alphabet, and not because of its unsuitability to write Lithuanian words, but because they wanted to separate the Lithuanians from the Russian nation, that is, because they opposed the aims of Governor M.N. Muravyov, the subduer of the 'Polish' rebellion of 1864".

On 24 December 1898 the new Tsar, having acquainted himself with petitions from Lithuania requesting freedom for the Lithuanian press, issued an order that "neither now nor in the future should any petitions be satisfied to allow the printing of books in the Lithuanian language using Latin script". At the same time he ordered the Minister of Internal Affairs to formalise a decree on publishing Lithuanian books only in Cyrillic script. However, a few months later the Tsar retracted this order, calling it a 'misunderstanding', and in 1902 he urged that the Lithuanian press question be quickly resolved.

Education officials in the Vilnius region, who fanatically defended the Russification policy, were worried about the collective aspect of the petitions, therefore they described the organisers of the petitions as 'inciting public unrest', and they viewed the petitions not as a desire to satisfy the religious needs of the population, but as an attempt to use religious motives to disguise anti-Russian propaganda. The Governor-General of Vilnius Province, Vitali Trotski, was of the same opinion. These views were also adopted by the Education Ministry, which participated in the high-level Government deliberations about the question of putting an end to the ban on Lithuanian press freedom.

The Tsar was in a quandary over the suggestion made to him by the Governors of the Kaunas and Suvalkai provinces and the Governor-General of Warsaw that he should repeal the press ban as a 'mistake'. The Tsar initially made contradictory pronouncements and then demanded that the matter be resolved one way or another. After lengthy deliberations, Education Ministers and Ministers of Internal Affairs put forward a plan to partially abolish the Lithuanian press ban. This plan was opposed by the Governors-General of Vilnius and Warsaw, who suggested that the ban be entirely lifted, but that Russia continue to exercise censorship over Lithuanian literature, and simultaneously to control Lithuanian cultural and ideological life. This plan was supported by the Council of Ministers. Once the Tsar signed the decree, the Lithuanians' assiduous resistance to the policy of assimilation had won: on 7 May 1904 the ban on the Lithuanian press was lifted.

### Conclusions

Between 1864 and 1904 about one hundred petitions were sent to various agencies of the Russian government requesting that the ban on Lithuanian publishing be lifted and that the publishing of Lithuanian material be allowed in Lithuania and all of the Russian Empire.

The process of preparing petitions helped in forming a national consciousness and in unifying the nation. Those who signed the petitions did so with a clear understanding of the value of the Lithuanian language, its writing system and Lithuanian books. They also showed their concern for Lithuanian culture and for a public expression of our heritage. The fact that petitions were signed by women as well as men gives an insight into the democratic attitude toward women at the time. While superficially expressing loyalty to Russian rule, these petitions embodied a rejection of Russian assimilationist policy and expressed open opposition to its rules and regulations.

**Translated from the Lithuanian by Gintautas KAMINSKAS.**

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## Nekrošius: Europe's Theatre Innovator

Ludvika APINYTĖ POPENHAGEN

Sydney

Eimuntas Nekrošius is a contemporary Lithuanian director who now spends less and less time in his native Lithuania. Internationally-acclaimed, this 50-something director stages multifarious theatre productions of Chekhov and Shakespeare, as well as adaptations of novels and short stories at major theatre festivals from Chicago to Hong Kong. Winner of numerous awards for innovative *mise en scene* (including the Heiner Müller Award, the Ubu Award from Italy three times, and the Golden Mask from Moscow), this director from Vilnius, born in Raseiniai 1952, is one of the new luminaries of European director's theatre.

Nekrošius' professional directing career began during the Soviet era in 1977 with an acclaimed production - in Moscow and Vilnius - of Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*. Since Nekrošius' first performance outside of the USSR in Belgrade, 1984, his career has skyrocketed with productions of Chekhov (*Uncle Vanya*, *The Three Sisters*, *The Cherry Orchard*), Pushkin (*Mozart and Salieri*), Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*) and 18th century poet Kristijonas Donelaitis (*The Seasons*).



\* Pictured above: Aldona Bendoriūtė and Vytautas Rumšas in A. Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* directed by Eimuntas Nekrošius. Created in 1995, this production is still on tour in Europe.

- Photo: Audrius Zavadskis.



Nekrošius' productions are nearly always in his native Lithuanian. Most audiences experience the language of Nekrošius' theatre as an evocative soundscape. As if at the opera, the public at a Nekrošius production reads surtitles in their own language (Chinese, English, French, Italian, Polish, Russian, etc.) while the actors speak their lines in Lithuanian. Despite the limitations created by this mediation, this making material, of the language, critics and the "other-language" public remark that the company's performances are moving, dynamic and precise.

The script/performance texts, radically edited by Nekrošius during the rehearsal process, contain entire scenes where words have been totally replaced by visual images. This is Nekrošius' *forte*: he successfully devises visual imagery that encapsulates the mood of the text, but he does not reiterate the text, nor illustrate the words.

Nekrošius acknowledges his local Lithuanian heritage as the source for his artistic inspiration. At the beginning of *Macbeth*, when Macbeth and Banquo enter, they both carry their booty - two small saplings protruding from their sort-of back-packs. The witches set a trap for Macbeth, they take a heavy cauldron, invert it, and insert a small stick at the base to create an opening, a lure. This "set-up" is reminiscent of the spring-time, children's games in rural Lithuanian districts.

In Nekrošius' *The Three Sisters*, a tower of birch logs creates an axis around which Prozorov's life revolves. The birch tree has more significance in Russian literature than in Lithuanian literature which refers more frequently to the oak tree. Nekrošius chose the lighter birch over the heavier oak for technical, handling reasons.

When interviewed, both Nekrošius and Nadiežda Gultiajeva, his chief designer, also his partner, profess no interest in any single-ethnic focus. Ultimate choices of objects are pragmatic, based upon issues of colour, texture, and practicality of construction and transportation. Of late, Italian and Portuguese technicians have been influential in solving problems with the dangers and fantastic demands on stage objects requested by Gultiajeva and Nekrošius.



\* Another scene from A. Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*, directed by Eimuntas Nekrošius and starring Dalia Michelevičiūtė, Aldona Bendoriūtė and Viktorija Kuodytė. The birch tower is transformed into three wells by the three sisters at the end of the play. - Photo: Audrius Zavadskis.

In Nekrošius' productions the acting appears rich and multi-layered. Until the mid-1990s he cast actors from a select group of his own peers from the Vilnius Conservatory [now the Vilnius Academy]. For *The Three Sisters* (1995) Nekrošius cast three young actresses who were just completing their final year of actor training: Aldona Bendoriūtė, Viktorija Kuodytė and Aušra Pukelytė, (who have also featured in subsequent productions by Nekrošius). They were all students of Algirdas Latėnas - director, teacher and lead actor for Nekrošius in *Mozart and Salieri*. *Don Juan*.

In 1997 when Nekrošius cast *Hamlet*, and in 2000 when he opened *Othello*, he cast two icons of contemporary Lithuanian culture: the rock star Andrius Mamontovas as Hamlet, and prima ballerina Eglė Špokaitė as Desdemona.

In 1998 Nekrošius founded his own theatre company, *Meno Fortas*, [A Fort of Art], severing his ties with LIFE Festival funding, i.e., government funding.

He marked this independence by premiering *Macbeth* in the same year. A Fort of Art was a curious choice for a title, perhaps inspired by his recent Shakespearian productions, and definitely immovable by external forces (political regimes, budgets, renown.) Also, in 1998 *Meno Fortas* was invited to join the prestigious *European Theatre Union*, and was the first company to have all financial prerequisites waived.

At his Fort of Art Nekrošius has rehearsed *Macbeth*, *Othello* and in 2003 the Lithuanian poet Donelaitis' *Metai* [Seasons], co-produced by the city of Porto, Portugal. Since 1999, Nekrošius has been invited to rehearse at Gibelina, Italy - an exclusive rehearsal site frequented by Europe's greatest directors, such as Peter Brook, Peter Stein and Thierry Salmon, who come to work and relax in the Sicilian sun at the city's expense and by invitation only.

In 2002 Nekrošius staged G. Verdi's *Macbeth* at the prestigious *Teatro Comunale* in Florence, Italy. His innovative opera incited as much controversy as the composer's original production in 1847. Nekrošius has been called *metteur en scene* as *auteur/author*, a "stage-poet", a proponent of *regie-theater*. The trendy nomenclature comes and goes. All of these expressions apply, and Nekrošius survives them all, just as he has survived the changing political regimes that he has experienced, and with which certain critics have tried to associate his creative energy over more than 25 years.

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## Siberia through the Eyes of a Child

Dainora URBONIENĖ

Panevėžys (Lithuania)

For Mother, Father and Arutis.

*What is exile? All former exiles will tell you much the same thing: it means broken families, hunger, cold. Degradation of human beings. That moment when they loaded you, a child, into the truck, you did not understand what degradation meant. You did not yet know that the stigma of being expelled from your own home would be with you all your life. The need to keep looking back will grow stronger; you will want to look back not just to the events of 1941, but back further in time, mentioning your parents' youth and childhood, during the nation-building period of the first Lithuanian Republic (1918-1940). So will be born this narrative about the family of village schoolteachers the tragedy that befell them.*

*There were thousands of stories like this one; that's why I dedicate this modest book not just to those near to me, but to all the teachers of Independent Lithuania who suffered terribly.*

On the evening of 13 June 1941, I went to sleep dreaming about mother serving honey-cake to guests, but I woke up on hearing a very unaccustomed racket. I got up, ran to the lounge room door, opened it, and stopped in the doorway: mother was sitting on the sofa in the lounge room and weeping. Beside her was a man with a rifle. Another armed man was leaning against the window-sill.



\* Above, right: Dainora in 1938, three years before tragedy struck her and her family.



When mother saw me she shrieked and wanted to come to me, but the man who was guarding her roughly grabbed her by the shoulder and sat her down again. Then through the doorway I saw father being led in. He was being intimidated with a rifle shoved into his back; a soldier in Russian uniform guarded him. In the bedroom my baby brother Arutis began to cry. A soldier told me to get dressed, take the warmest clothes I had and some preserved food. I remember, I sat on the bed, shook, and didn't know what to do.

I put on a dress, the one mother had put aside for me for our planned trip to Žiliškiai the next day. Arutis was now dressed and was not crying, he just looked around, frightened. I remember the sack into which we put things: bread, a section of smoked pork, a few other things. Mother wrapped our clothes in sheets. Mother's preparations were cut short by the returning Russian soldier. He yelled at mother, who was at that moment taking a small garment out of a wardrobe. He ran up to her and angrily grabbed the garment from her, throwing it back into the wardrobe.

With our bags and bundles we were all chased back into the lounge room, where father was standing in the middle of the room. His hands were tied behind his back, a rifle barrel against his body. Two men guarded him. This scene left the worst scar on my memory. They searched us and chased us out into the yard. I asked mother why grandma wasn't going with us. She told me to be quiet, but grandmother approached the soldier and begged him to leave the children behind. When he shook his head, she pleaded for Arutis, pointing out how small he was. But the soldier pushed away grandmother with his rifle barrel, and he chased me and mother, with Arutis in her arms, into the yard.

They stopped us on the stairs. Father was already in the truck. He was sitting by the cabin, a rifle barrel shoved into his shoulder. The soldiers told the people who were helping them search the houses to put our things into the truck. When everything was in the truck, the soldiers must have thought we had too many bundles, because they started throwing our possessions out of the truck while shouting something in Russian. Mother grabbed one bag and asked them to let her take it, because it had warm



\* A family about to be torn apart: Dainora with her parents, 1937.

clothes for the children. That one they let us take, but a portion of our possessions was left behind in the middle of the yard.

Rifles threatened us, especially the one pointed at father. But suddenly I was very sad when I grasped that we were being driven out of our own home, in which it had been so good to live. For some reason, thoughts of our well, our orchard and the lane to our house passed through my mind. I sobbed, but I looked at father and saw that he was smiling. Through tears I smiled back and fell silent.

#### **In the railway wagon**

As the truck drove through the streets of Panevėžys, father asked one of the guards something in Russian. The reply was, "To the railway station." When the truck stopped and we were told to get out, I was very frightened again. Armed soldiers swarmed around the train. They herded the bundle-carrying people into the wagons. The wagons themselves were intimidating, with their wide doors and tiny windows. "Cattle wagons!" cried out someone.

I stared at the wagons and was puzzled by how they could hold all those people, who just kept on piling in. Father lifted me into the wagon, then Arutis, and told me to take him into the middle of the wagon. I stood there holding my brother and didn't move. I was afraid the train would start going before my parents joined us and would take him and me away all on our own.

People were jostling all around. A Russian soldier angrily barked orders at people in Russian, which frightened me greatly. When my parents joined us, father explained that the words the soldier was saying meant "Hurry up!". Mother led us to some rough wooden structures against the walls. I found out that these were meant to be bunk beds, on which we were supposed to sleep. Some were higher, some were lower. We claimed a couple of upper bunks, right near the window.

I looked at the door, through which Russian soldiers were still pushing people into the wagon, still shouting "*davay*" ('Hurry up!'). I learnt a Russian sentence: "*Davay bistrey po vagónam*" ('Hurry up into the wagons!'). It was hot and stuffy, Arutis was crying. Unknown people sat all about. Some were moaning, others crying, others talking, starting to get to know each other. I learnt another Russian word: "*kipyatok*", which is what they call boiled water. I would soon be drinking that sludgy, bad-tasting water.

As night fell the people in the wagon drifted off to sleep. It was crowded, stuffy, but we were glad to be among our own. Even though we lacked fresh air and were thirsty, we still felt rested after such a horrendous day. Arutis cheered up and began to play and laugh. Breakfast consisted of – "*kipyatok*" (boiled water). But our recovery did not last long. Suddenly we heard shouting outside in Russian. The wagon doors slammed open, the guards climbed in and shouted something. Father said, "They are telling us that the men have to travel in other wagons. They are telling us to take only our most important possessions."

The soldiers began to read names from a list. I heard mother start to cry as they read out father's name. I looked at father and saw how his face changed. He tried to comfort us, but his voice was trembling. For a moment the wagon was silent, but then a furore arose, and one could hear crying, and angry shouting. Crying I clung to father, grabbed his hand and wouldn't let go. I looked around and saw that all the children were clinging to their fathers.

The soldiers broke up these farewell embraces as they approached screaming and hurling insults at the men. Father kissed us all again, said we would all meet again soon, and asked me to help mother look after Arutis while he travelled in another wagon. Mother wanted to come part of the way with him, but the soldiers wouldn't let her. The next day sitting in the stuffy wagon we were all breathless, fainting from the heat. At night as I slept I shuddered and shook. Arutis cried a lot, and would only calm down when he was held.

In the morning we were awoken by the locomotive's whistle. We felt the wagon shudder, heard crunching sounds, then loud banging. At first people in the wagons fell strangely silent, but then they all got up, tried to get to a window. They started singing the Lithuanian hymn "Marija, Marija". I hounded mother by continually asking her when father would be coming back. But he did not come back, and we went on without him.



A map of Soviet prisons, concentration camps and psychiatric prisons (1980). - Reprinted from *Letters from the Outside: The history of FOPs*.



At one station we stopped a bit longer. Someone said the station's name: it was Naujoji Vilnia. They let the women out of the wagon, so they could get some water. I looked out the window and saw mother running toward another train. I could see father looking out of one of the windows of that train. He was saying something to mother, I heard him mention my name and my brother's. Mother pointed to our train. Father spotted me and Arutis, he waved, even smiled. The women came back to our wagon. I saw how sadly mother climbed back into the wagon: crying out loud, no water, an empty dish. She climbed onto the bunk, sat down with me and Arutis, hugged us and said: "Now we have to continue our journey alone. Father is being taken to prison."

I still had hope. I remember, whenever the train stopped, whenever they let us out of the wagon, my eyes looked around for the other train, the one in which the men were travelling. Many trains went by, but never the one with my father in it. When mother and I cried, my little brother would start to cry, too.

We were very happy the first time they let us out in a wooded area. It was summer, the weather was beautiful, we could smell the pleasant smell of pastures. We didn't want to go back into the smelly wagon, we wanted to stay outside longer. We found some blue berries. We were afraid to eat them, but the soldiers told the women that the berries were edible. Arutis liked the berries very much. We ate a lot, and brought some back into the wagon.

However, that night our little one began to get an upset stomach, and he threw up. We were frightened. Who knows if the berries were responsible. Mother complained constantly that there was no suitable food for such a young child, the journey was too hard for him. Arutis really suffered because of the food. At first he greedily sucked the bread and ham, but later, from constantly eating the same thing, his stomach started to hurt.

At first he did not want to taste the porridge that was brought to the wagon from time to time. Later he began eating it. Mother was pleased that at least he was getting some warm food. At first I didn't want it, either, but I got used to it, just like I got used to the other inconveniences: for example, the hole in the middle of the wagon's floor that served as our toilet.



\* In Soviet prisons, women had to do the same work as men.  
- Photo: Avraham Shifrin, *The first guidebook to the USSR.*

It was hard when the baby had an "accident". From the deteriorating food, from the dirty clothes, and from the unwashed bodies, the air in the wagon was sometimes so horrible that you wanted to chop or cut a little hole in the wall to get some air. Arutis was getting weaker. At home in Raguva he was trying to walk, he was happy, but now in the wagon he slept a lot, did not laugh much, did not always want to play. After the men were separated from us at Naujoji Vilnia, two more events upset us greatly: receiving news about the outbreak of war; and arriving at the Ural mountains.

Mother discussed war – and possible bombardment – with the other women a lot. When the talk about war simmered down, we arrived at the Urals. The women cried and said that now we were a long way from Lithuania, no one would come to rescue us, probably we would never return. We started to learn Russian. We soon learnt quite a lot, but for quite a while we children, especially the girls, could not understand why our mothers were so reluctant to translate the Russian soldiers' swearwords.

At one station we saw a gang of beggars. We wondered where they had all come from. Later we saw more and more of them all along the roadsides. Old men and young women were begging for alms. Children my age and younger stretched their skinny arms toward us, repeating the word "*pomiluyte*" ("have pity"). Sometimes these beggars would scramble for the half-rotten food we would throw to them from the wagon, and they would eat it. We ourselves were not yet suffering too much hunger, but we would have like more hot food.

We thought about how we used to eat in Lithuania. More than once my mouth watered as I thought about our meals in Raguva. The mothers began to become fearful about the sight of all the roadside beggars. They wondered what awaited us, where they were taking us. I remember, once when I didn't want to eat some sort of swill, mother said to be more tolerant, because those waiting in the railway stations would be very happy to eat it. "Maybe we will starve in Siberia", she added sadly. We used to talk about father, where they were taking him, what he was eating, maybe he was already being starved.

Finally one morning we found out that we were approaching Barnaul, where we would have to get out. Everything there was horrible for me. There were guards by the tents and the potato fields, continual searches, as if we were likely to be concealing a bomb. Littered streets, wooden footpaths, heavily strewn with sunflower seed husks. We thought the Russians were like circus performers, the way they husked the seeds with their teeth. They throw some seeds into their mouth, husk them nimbly with their tongue and teeth, and spit the husks out wherever they feel like it.

If you are standing in a queue with them, they may spit the husks out all over you. We children tried to learn the technique but we couldn't. In any case, it's not as if we had a lot of sunflower seeds to practise with. They had to be bought, and only rarely would some Russian give me or my mother a few. Barnaul became even more horrible as winter approached. At first the sleet tortured us, then the snow and blizzards. People said that we were going to be moved somewhere. Some were happy to hear this, because the cellars we lived in were cold and damp. Others feared that our lives would take a turn for the worse.

They moved us from Barnaul at the end of November. They took us to the railway station by lorry. They told us to get out at a spot further away from the railway station, out of the way. The weather was terrible, it was snowing, a strong wind was blowing. Sitting in the open back of the truck we got wet, and then we were thrown out onto the snow, getting terribly cold. It's just as well that we had some winter clothes, but they were not enough to protect us from the extreme cold.

We didn't have to wait for the train for too long. We then travelled most of the day. In the evening they told us to get out in Talmenka. They made us go into the middle of a field. The weather was getting worse. Tired, cold, the three of us huddled. We protected Arutis as best we could. No one met us or guarded us. All they did was tell us to get out of the train and told us where to stand with our things and wait. We sat on our bundles, wet and cold. Finally late that night a man came and told us to go to a shed not far away. It had a little fireplace, but when we lit it, it smoked so much that we were coughing from the smoke.

Arutis dozed off, he was quite pale. He wasn't eating. In Barnaul, mother had managed to get us some food for the journey by selling or bartering one of her meagre possessions in exchange for some boiled potatoes, and, if I remember correctly, some sauerkraut, a few biscuits, and little bit of flour and groats and a ration of bread. Before the trip we had made some porridge; we carried it in a little army saucepan.

*To be continued.*

**Translated from the Lithuanian by Gintautas KAMINSKAS.**

*Dainora Tamošiūnaitė subsequently returned to Lithuania, posing as an orphan. In due course, she grew up, received her education, became a school teacher and got married (Urbonienė is her married name). She later wrote her memoirs, a 188-page book in Lithuanian. This testimony is still waiting to be translated into English - all it needs is the equivalent of the price of a second-hand car.*

*Gintautas Kaminskas, B.A.Hons. (Flinders), M.A. (Monash) is a professional translator and presently lives in Montreal, Quebec.*



## Letters to the Editor

### Lithuanian Freedom Fighters



Thank you for Thierry Pinet's factual report on Jonas Žemaitis and Jonas' fellow freedom fighters (*LP*, No.17/03).

Every so often, we see TV programs featuring the French resistance, Dutch underground and others - but the Lithuanian freedom fighters have never been mentioned, yet. After all, the Lithuanian partisans were idealists who believed in the promises of the Atlantic Charter and kept their foreign invaders at bay for almost a decade.

Are we ashamed of having turned our backs on them? Or, are we hoping against hope that history will forget?

Just to remind me of the Baltic tragedy, I keep this picture of Bronius Alūza on my desk. Like thousands of his countrymen, young Bronius fought with the Lithuanian partisans and later served as the adjutant to another Žemaitis, unit commander Vladas Montvydas-Žemaitis. Bronius and Vladas were both betrayed by a Soviet collaborator and died near Lake Lūkstas, shortly before Bronius' 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, on August 23, 1953.

**J. ANDREWS,**  
Brisbane, Qld.

I would like to add a few details to Thierry Pinet's excellent article. Jonas Žemaitis-Vytautas was captured on May 30, 1953. This date is now treated as the end of the Lithuanian armed resistance, although some scattered fighting still went on for some time after.

Outnumbered and under-resourced, the Lithuanians fought for some 9 years while we in the West looked the other way. They were finally defeated, not by Soviet military superiority, but through KGB-organised Judas-style internal betrayals. J. Žemaitis, too, was betrayed by his fellow fighters J.Palubeckas and J.Narbutas.

**Simon WILTSHIRE,**  
South Perth, W.A.

### European Union

The prime ministers of three eastern and central European states - Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary - resigned within 3 months after their countries had joined the European Union in May, 2004. As pointed out by Strategic Forecasting, Inc., the new EU members Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia have had around three dozen governments among them, since 1992.

Will this pose problems for the Council of the European Union?

**B.A. JONES,**  
Manchester, U.K.

### Lithuanian Papers

It is really fantastic that Lithuanian publications are appearing somewhere in Tasmania - a country I got to know, as a primary school boy, through my stamp collections. I wish you all a successful and happy New Year, 2004.

**(Professor) Algirdas SABALIAUSKAS,**  
Vilnius, Lithuania.

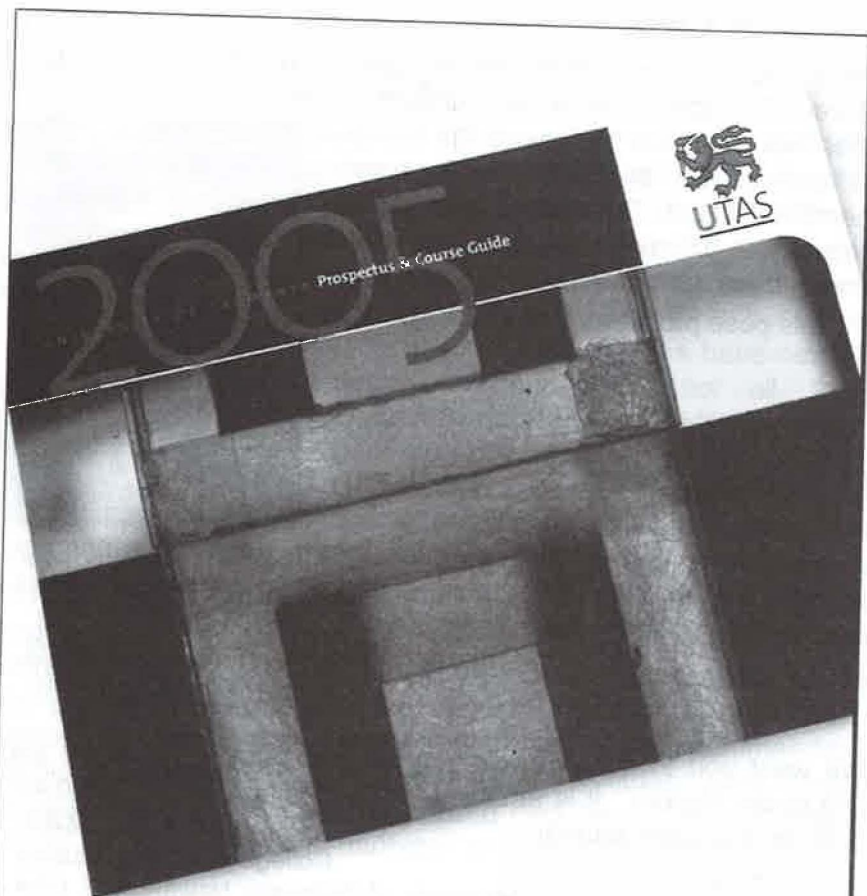
We want you to know how much we and our friends enjoy the *Lithuanian Papers*. It is amazing that a small group can produce such an excellent journal.

**Victor V. KLEMAS,**  
College of Marine Studies,  
University of Delaware, Newark, DE, USA.

I have been meaning to write to you for ages about your wonderful publication. Although I am not of Lithuanian descent, I have married into such a family. We have two teen-aged children who are interested in their heritage. I am just as interested, particularly in the history of Lithuania.

**Karen PETRAITIS,**  
Montrose, Tas.

- *The Editor welcomes letters, especially brief ones, at Post Office Box 777, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7006, Australia and reserves the right to condense or edit them..*



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## Lithuanian Oil

**Kazys J. KEMEŽYS**

Canberra

The oil, or petroleum industry in Lithuania consists of three parts, that of the Mažeikiai oil refinery, that of natural gas transmission, and that of oil production from local deposits. The addition of the atomic powered electricity generator at Ignalina, and of the transmission of this electricity, provides an inclusive summary of the Lithuanian energy industry.

These industries are a legacy of the Russian(Soviet) occupation era and were developed as part of the energy supply program for the region, one which includes the present day Byelorussia, Estonia, the Kaliningrad enclave, Latvia and Lithuania. The Soviet Union had an electric power grid, a natural gas pipeline grid and a crude oil pipeline grid. On gaining independence in 1990, Lithuania acquired control of the Ignalina atomic power station and the Mažeikiai oil refinery, both of which far exceed Lithuanian requirements.



\* Ignalina power station: the main supplier of electricity in Lithuania.



Ignalina electricity generation continued uninterrupted, but Lithuania began to charge the Soviet era consumers (mostly Byelorussia), in effect making it a commercial enterprise, especially lately, when some of the electricity is sold even to Poland, a new customer. Natural gas supply through pipelines from various Russian deposits has continued uninterrupted since independence, except that Lithuania has to pay world prices for it.

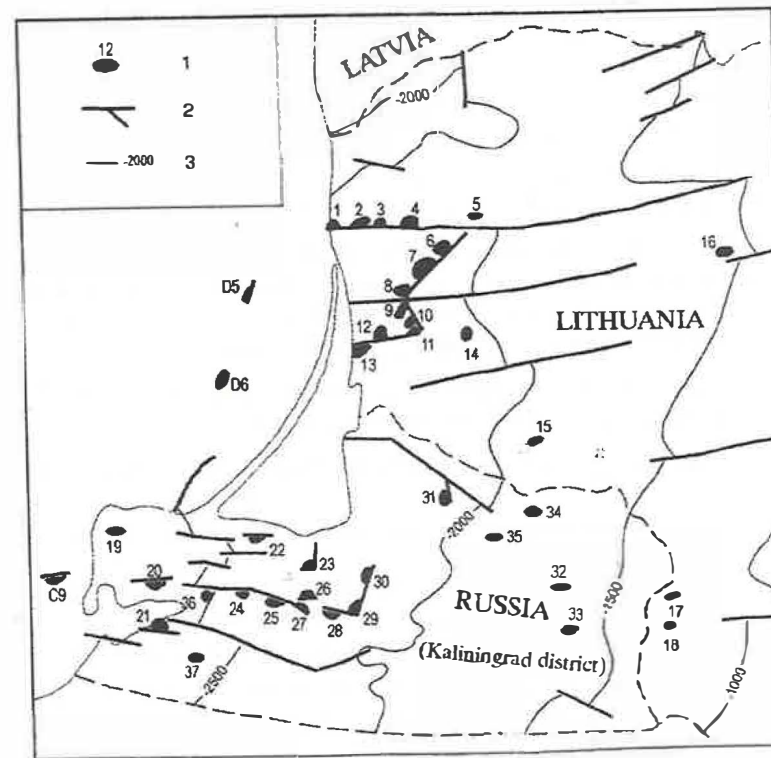
The Mažeikiai oil refinery was built in the 1970s and was supplied by a crude oil pipeline from Russian deposits. On independence, the Russians began to charge world prices for the crude oil, which, coupled with the legacy of Soviet style work and management ethics, made the refined products uncompetitive with newly available imports from the West. To compound the problem, the Russia politicised the crude oil supply, making it unreliable.

To overcome these problems, Lithuania built an oil terminal on the Baltic coast in order to supply the refinery by ships from anywhere in the world. As well, it privatised the refinery, and, to ensure a new management style and expertise, as well as to keep it from Russian control, it sold a majority interest to a US firm, which, however, soon on-sold it to a Russian firm.

There was no oil production from local deposits during the Soviet era, but their discovery was part of the Soviet-Union-wide program of oil exploration. The first drilling in the region was done before World War II by the Germans in East Prussia (now the Kaliningrad enclave). In 1949 drilling resumed on a wider scale, and, strangely enough, the first oil, thick and oxidised, was found within the city of Vilnius, in Lower Palaeozoic rocks at 226 m depth.

Because Lithuania, geologically, is underlain by the Baltic syncline or basin with its deepest part under the Baltic Sea, these horizons were explored to greater depth westwards. By the late 1980s, 37 oil deposits were discovered, mainly in Middle Cambrian sandstones, a few hundred metres above the unconformity with the Baltic Shield, at depth of 2,000 to 2,700 m. The bigger deposits are all within the Russian Kaliningrad enclave, the remaining half, i.e. those in Lithuania, are smaller and clustered around the city of Klaipėda on the Baltic Sea coast (see map).

In addition, three large oil structures have been discovered offshore in the Baltic Sea. One of these (D6 on map), within the Russian resources zone, lies some 10 km from the pristine Lithuanian sandspit near Nida, and the ongoing development of which by the Russians is causing consternation to Lithuania's environmentalists.



**Explanation of map:** 1. Oil fields. 2. Major faults. 3. Depth to basement contours.

From 1975, there has been exploration for oil in the Silurian barrier reef carbonate rocks which occupy much of central Lithuania as a N-S structure. Although many small deposits were found, exploration for this type of deposit is relatively expensive and currently has not attracted the risk capital required. A large deposit in a porous reef, however, if discovered, would cause an oil rush in Lithuania.

### Mažeikių Nafta

Mažeikių Nafta (MN) is a large commercial combine which includes Butingės Nafta (oil terminal), Mažeikių Nafta (the only oil refinery in the Baltic States) and Naftotiekis (oil pipeline).

Mažeikių Nafta (MN) is now managed by Yukos, a major Russian oil company. The MN profit in 2003 was 104.22 million Litai, a drop of 10% compared to the previous year. The Mažeikių Nafta refinery processed over 2.13 million tonnes of crude in 2003.

The Butingės oil terminal handled 2.45 million tonnes of oil, down 9.6%. The number of tankers dropped from 27 to 24.

Fuel transported through the Biržai pipeline dropped 1.01% to 5.31 million tonnes of oil and diesel fuel.

Last year's sales of gasoline, diesel fuel and other oil products amounted to 294,000 tonnes in Lithuania, 130,000 tonnes in Latvia, 76,000 tonnes in Estonia and 86,000 tonnes in Poland. Oil product exports to other countries totalled 1.3 million tonnes.

Yukos Finance, which is registered in The Netherlands, owns 53.7% of MN, and the Lithuanian government owns 40.66%.

The exchange rate of the litas is currently tied to the euro at 3.4528 litai/ EUR1.

-BNS, *The Economist*.

During the Soviet era, for a variety of reasons, including state secrecy, their small size compared to those in NW Siberia, the environmentally unfriendly nature of the industry in Russia, and the special attention paid to Lithuanian primary industry, there was little knowledge of, or interest in, local oil deposits in Lithuania until 1990, when, in an effort to suppress a popular insurgency against the occupation, the Russian leader Gorbachev blockaded oil imports into Lithuania.

In a symbolic gesture of defiance, given the small production relative to demand, Lithuania produced 12,000 tons of local oil from known deposits in 1990. But the secret was out: there is oil in Lithuania!

Since the restoration of independence in 1990, the industry has been gradually privatised by the process of tendering out those deposits which had been found during the occupation years which

had commercial potential. The successful tenders were joint ventures between Western European (Danish, Swedish...) and Lithuanian investors. From the meagre beginning with government operated production of 12,000 tons in 1990, with creaky, environmentally unfriendly Russian technology and practices, the industry has now four producers, Minijos Nafta, Geonafta, Genčių Nafta and Manifoldas, for 500,000 tons of oil annually. They have state-of-the-art well heads and pumps in garden settings which remind the locals of water birds.

Current production is only about 7% of consumption, so that Lithuania is neither self-sufficient in oil, nor is it a direct benefit to each citizen as it is in Denmark. However, since 1990, the world price of oil has tripled, and the industry has become very profitable for the companies, and for the government which imposes a 33% royalty on production, collecting about \$A100 million per year.

Current reserves are 4.5 million tons, about 10 years of production. Estimated onshore reserves are 23 million tons, but there is little if any exploration: risk capital operates under its own logic. Indeed, even one of the Lithuanian oil producing companies has become multinational by exploring for oil in Denmark.

It is estimated that there may be 64 million tons of oil offshore, but it is all within sight of, and certainly within the capacity to pollute the 90 km of Baltic Sea beaches that Lithuanians are so proud of.

Only a major crisis in supply could quell opposition to their development.

**Acknowledgments:** This article is partly based on publications of the Geological Society of Lithuania, and of the Geological Survey of Lithuania.

*Dr Kazys J. Kemežys, BSc Hons (Sydney), PhD (ANU) is a consulting geologist in Canberra.*



\* Above: Part of the Mažeikių Nafta complex. - Photo: ELTA/*The Baltic Times*



## "The Good Oil" on LUKoil

RoLUKoil-Kaliningradmorneft, a subsidiary of Russia's giant LUKoil company, commenced oil production at the Kravtsovskoye deposit in the Baltic Sea, in August this year.

The operation is in the immediate proximity of the unique Curonian Spit National Park (*Kuršių Nerija*), 5 km from the Lithuanian maritime border and 22.5 km off the coast of the Kaliningrad region. Lithuanian and Swedish authorities have repeatedly expressed concern about tapping this sensitive shelf deposit. UNESCO experts studied the technical data at the end of November, 2003 and found that the project was posing an ecological threat to the Curonian Spit.

The Russian company has since allocated 174 mil. roubles for environmental protection (US\$ 1 is approximately 29 roubles). It has also announced that some 7.7 billion roubles will be invested in the development of the deposit. It remains to be seen, whether all production will be carried out according to the zero dump principle. This method requires all industrial and household waste to be taken to the coast and recycled.

Twenty-one wells are planned to be drilled on the field. The deposit has an average depth of 2,160 meters. By the end of this year, 70,000 tons of oil are expected to be produced, rising to 600,000 tons by 2007. Operations on the deposit will last for 30-35 years.

From an onshore platform, a 47 km underwater pipeline has been laid. The pipeline will transport crude and associated gas to a central oil gathering point, where it will be processed. The oil produced from the deposit will be delivered to the Izhevsk export terminal, which has the storage capacity of 120,000 ccm.

"We are proud that our company was able to implement this unique project," Vagit Alekperov, the president of LUKoil said, "which will allow us to strengthen Russia's position in the Baltic region. The company has once again proved that Russian oilmen possess advanced technology and can achieve impressive results. The beginning of production at the Kravtsovskoye deposit will almost double oil production in the Kaliningrad region, increase the region's total exports and improve its foreign trade balance."

- Based on reports by Russian Information Agency Novosti, The Baltic Times and <http://www.gasandoil.com/goc/company/cnr43187.htm>

## SHIP: Focus on Conflict and Co-operation in the Baltic Sea Region

Christian WELLMANN

Christian-Albrechts-University, Kiel

Lithuania is located on the shores of the Baltic Sea and consequently participates in what – for better or worse – is happening in the Baltic Sea region. These Baltic Sea regional developments are what SHIP, the Schleswig-Holstein Institute for Peace Research, has at the centre of its concerns. Its agenda for research and dissemination activities is about "conflict and co-operation in the Baltic Sea region". Thus, SHIP tracks issues that are also of particular interest for Lithuanian affairs, although it has to be admitted that until now not a single project was conducted by the Institute which dealt exclusively with Lithuania.

SHIP was established in 1995 as an independent research facility by a decision of the government of the German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, itself an active participant in Baltic Sea regional co-operation. The Institute's home is in Kiel, the capital of Schleswig-Holstein, bordering on the Baltic Sea in the very North of Germany. With an academic staff of four to five and an annual budget of some 300,000 Euros, the Institute is in fact quite small (if the acronym SHIP did not fit so nicely, it would surely be more honest to label the Institute BOAT, to avoid any impression of something big cruising the Baltic Sea).

Apart from participating in the debate on region-building in the Baltic Sea region, the Institute throughout its first years of existence dealt intensively with the role of international actors in tackling the citizenship conflicts in Estonia and Latvia as well as with issues of Baltic security in general. Further, a strong focus was on conversion issues (civilian use of former armaments industries as well as military bases). From these beginnings, two strands of interest were developed which guide the present research and dissemination activities of SHIP: "Russia, Baltic Sea co-operation and the future of European integration" and "Human rights oriented politics as a field of conflict in the societal world".



\* Sand dunes on the Baltic coast. - Photo: Algimantas Maskoliūnas.

Within this framework, the present core project of SHIP deals with the situation concerning the Russian Federation's Baltic exclave, the Kaliningradskaya Oblast, an issue which not only affects Lithuania, but in which Lithuania is involved as one of the main players. The project is titled "Pilot-region Kaliningrad? Participatory research on conflict prevention". It aims to explore the preparedness of all actors concerned to act constructively in relation to the particular constellations emerging with respect to Kaliningrad. They may be described as a "syndrome of conflict" that goes far beyond what became visible in the course of the 2002 crisis concerning the transit of people between the exclave and the mainland via Lithuanian territory and again in early 2004 with respect to the transit of goods.

With regard to Lithuania, the project does not only draw attention to the governmental Kaliningrad policies, but also to the societal perceptions, not the least the activities of the proponents of the so-called Lithuania Minor (cf. Wellmann in Birckenbach and

Wellmann, 2003). The latter proponents contribute insofar to the syndrome of conflict because they add to the worries prevailing in Moscow that Russia's integrity might be harmed by processes of alienation between the exclave and the mainland, eventually ending in secessionist attitudes to occur among the Kaliningrad residents (cf. Karabeshkin & Wellmann, 2004).

These worries regarding the direction in which the regional Kaliningrad identity might develop provide explanation for the obviously indecisive and inflexible Kaliningrad policies of the Russian federal authorities and should be taken more seriously by the EU and its member states than it has been the case until now. The perspectives of development of the Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russian Federation are of high significance to the future of relations between the EU and Russia and therefore for peace and stability in Europe at large.

In 2002, a group of 14 experts on Kaliningrad from seven European states, including Russia and Lithuania, and the USA met at the invitation of SHIP to jointly prepare and unanimously adopt a policy paper which was to provide comprehensive recommendations in regard to problem-solving (In Focus, 2002).

Further in-depth reasoning was provided by the same group in an edited volume (Birckenbach & Wellmann, 2003). In 2004, the initiative was followed up by the New York and Prague based EastWest Institute. SHIP was represented in the group of experts, at a round table meeting held in Moscow and attended by officials from Russia, the EU and its member states. The aim of this meeting was to support the establishment of Kaliningrad as a pilot-region for EU-Russia relations.

Another current SHIP project is investigating cross-border cooperation between the Kaliningrad Oblast and Lithuania as well as Poland. Far from being concluded, the project is nevertheless indicating that such a co-operation at the new outer borders of the EU is severely hampered by the existing asymmetries between the partners as well as a lack of respective competencies among the actors on both sides of the borders. Until now, the Euroregions have been a sympathetic programme, rather than a functioning reality, whether it concerns Russian or Lithuanian local authorities.



Further issues of recent relevance to the Institute's work have been the issues of nuclear waste management in Northwest Russia as well as aspects of transnational co-operation of non-state actors in the Baltic Sea region (cf. Wellmann, 2004). Finally, it has to be mentioned that since 2000 SHIP has been conducting an annual International Summer Academy "The Baltic Sea region in the New Europe". It addresses young regional leaders from throughout the Baltic Sea Region from state agencies, municipal self-government and from all types of non-governmental organisations. The Academy strives at increasing the understanding of processes of region-building and at developing the abilities for cross-border networking. Lithuanians have participated in all Academies held so far.

Due to its topical orientation, SHIP itself is actively co-operating with researchers and others throughout the entire Baltic Sea region. Again, Lithuania has no exclusive role in this cross-border co-operation, but certainly does not rank last. The experiences gained are ambiguous. Some encouraging and inspiring evidence is matched by less promising events. The former included the very motivated and competent involvement of the representatives of Klaipėda town hall in a SHIP-organized conference "From Town to Town – Local Authorities as Transnational Actors" (Wellmann, 1998).

\* For centuries, Lithuanians have enjoyed a close relationship with their Western neighbours.

Classical poet Kristijonas Donelaitis (pictured, right) and hundreds of other Lithuanians were graduates of the University of Königsberg, (*Albertina*). The old University was established in 1544, and was destroyed during an Allied air raid on August 29-30, 1944.

The ancient *alma mater* of Königsberg was never rebuilt. Its place has been taken by the new Russian University of Kaliningrad which counts its age from 1945 and does not acknowledge its predecessor's achievements.



An example for the latter is a Lithuanian translation of a SHIP-authored German article. When somebody else accidentally selected the Lithuanian version, to be translated once again, and this time into English, we learned that the Lithuanian translators in their version had omitted without notice certain sentences from the original German text. Namely, they had left out all the sentences that were critical of some parts of the official Lithuanian policies.

In regard to the co-operation with Lithuanian political scientists, we have quite often gained the impression that, despite their undoubted proficiency, they nevertheless tend to be very affirmative with respect to Lithuania's official policy line. They often act more as diplomats of their country, rather than as impartial analysts and critical intellectuals.

However, as mentioned before, the negative experiences in co-operation are only one side of the coin and do not devalue the other side. Consequently, SHIP remains committed to further co-operation with its Lithuanian counterparts. As a proof of this, SHIP's Summer Academy convened this year for the first time abroad – and it was held at Druskininkai in southern Lithuania.

*Dr Christian Wellmann is the Deputy Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Institute for Peace Research (SHIP) at the Christian-Albrechts-University in Kiel, Germany.*

*For more information on SHIP, everyone interested may visit its website (mostly in English) at <<http://www.schiff.uni-kiel.de>>.*

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## Kaliningrad

The city of Kaliningrad (Lithuanian: *Karaliaučius*) has the dubious distinction of being situated on the graves of two nations.

Until the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Baltic coast between Frisches Haff and the Courish Lagoon was inhabited by the Sambians, a branch of the original Prussian nation which was closely related to the Lithuanians and had no Germanic connection.

In 1255, the native Prussians in this region were conquered by the Teutonic Knights. The invaders were supported by King Ottokar II of Bohemia who personally took part in the action. After the conquest, the Teutonic Order built a castle on a hill chosen by King Ottokar and the surrounding city was named *Königsberg*, or King's Hill. (Historians believe that the Prussians may have called this place *Tvanksta*).

Systematic colonisation and germanisation followed over the next 600 years. Native Prussians were forced into serfdom, men were conscripted into Teutonic armies. German settlers were brought in, and they were required to live separately from the Prussians. Within two centuries, urban settlements were populated entirely by Germans and the everyday use of the Prussian language vanished by 1700.

German rulers took over the name of Prussia and used it while this region was a kingdom (1701-1871), then, a part of the German Empire (1871-1918), a *Land* of the Federal German Republic (1918-1934) and, finally, the East Prussian province of the Third Reich.

At the end of the Second World War, East Prussia was divided between the Soviet Union and Poland, pending the conclusion of a peace treaty and a review of German boundaries. The city's name was changed to Kaliningrad in 1946, and the part of Prussia under Russian administration was named *Kaliningradskaya oblast'*, a component of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic. The name *Prussia* was formally deleted by the Allies on February 25, 1947.

By 1950, the German population of Soviet-held Prussia was eliminated: many died during the siege of April, 1945; some drowned in the Baltic Sea while trying to escape; others died in the famine of 1945-1947. The remaining Germans were deported to Russia or were exiled to West Germany. They were replaced entirely by Russian colonists, accompanied by large Soviet military and naval contingents. To complete this "ethnic cleansing", the original geographical names of Prussian towns, rivers, lakes etc. have been wiped out and substituted by unrelated Russian names. - A.T.

## The Quest for the Truth

Madeleine SHUEY

University of Tasmania

Whilst reading Edgars Dunsdorfs' *The Baltic Dilemma* (New York, 1975), it became obvious that Dunsdorfs had been unable to answer many questions relating to the Australian government's 1974 *de jure* recognition of the Soviet Union's occupation of the Baltic States. It then became apparent that my thesis topic should be: 'Why were these questions unanswered and what were the real answers?'



So far most scholarly research on the 1974 Baltic Recognition has focussed on two main areas: firstly, the public reaction to the decision and the influence of public pressure groups on foreign policy; and, secondly, analyses of the Baltic Recognition as an example of Whitlam's changes in foreign policy.

Dunsdorfs' *The Baltic Dilemma* presents a very factual report with little speculation as to why the policy was changed, as his evidence does not enable him to be conclusive. He highlights the inconsistencies between the government's assurances to the Baltic people that Australia would not recognise the Soviet Union's occupation of their home land and the government's change in foreign policy. In many ways Dunsdorfs' book raises more questions than it answers, as he presents facts which do not conclusively attribute reasons or speculate why the foreign policy was changed.

In 1974, when Dunsdorfs would have begun researching *The Baltic Dilemma*, his sources would have been limited to Hansard, newspapers and correspondence between politicians and various

\* Pictured, above: Madeleine Shuey, the author of this paper.



Baltic organisations. Now, thirty years after the recognition, the National Archives of Australia have made public files relating to the 1974 Baltic Recognition and Australia's relations with the Soviet Union and the Baltic States. These files contain letters, memos and departmental and governmental reports giving insight into what went on behind closed doors.

The files reveal that Whitlam ordered his party in mid 1973 to give less definitive answers when asked about the Baltic States and Australia's attitude towards their occupation.<sup>1</sup> Instead of refusing to recognise the Soviet Union's occupation and vowing continuous support for their independence, the government's response changed to a sympathetic attitude towards the Balts and confirmation that in the past they had not recognised the *de jure* occupation - rather a *de facto* recognition. This subtle difference suggests that publicly the foreign policy appeared stable yet internally changes were being considered.

The files show how Balts in Australia from an early date were concerned about Australia's attitude towards the recognition.<sup>2</sup> Similarly the government's attitude towards the Baltic States, although it may have appeared consistent to the public, was in a state of confusion. There was confusion surrounding what Australia's stance regarding the occupation of the Baltic States was, whether it was politically, diplomatically and legally correct to have a Latvian Consul when it was an occupied state<sup>3</sup> and whether Australian ambassadors could visit the Baltic States.<sup>4</sup>

Like Dunsdorfs' book these files have raised more questions than they have answered and, although they gave hints as to why

<sup>1</sup> National Archives of Australia A1838 69/2/5/1 PART 4. Correspondence between F.B.Cooper (Acting First Assistant Secretary for the Pacific and Western Division) and P.F.Peters (Europe, Central and Southern Africa Bch.).

<sup>2</sup> National Archives of Australia A1838 69/2/5/1 PART 2. Correspondence between Aust. Latvian Fed'n and the Minister for Foreign Affairs 17/03/1965.

<sup>3</sup> National Archives of Australia A1838 69/2/5/1 PART 4. Correspondence between the Department of External Affairs and the Australian High Commission in Ottawa and the Australian Embassy in Moscow on 29/12/1967.

<sup>4</sup> National Archives of Australia A1838 69/2/5/1 PART 4. Correspondence between the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Australian Embassy in Moscow on the 26/03/1973.

Australia suddenly and surreptitiously recognised a *de jure* occupation, they did not give a definitive answer.

I wrote to the one man who could potentially answer all questions, Gough Whitlam. When I asked whether there were any sources other than the National Archives of Australia files, Hansards and various publications on his foreign policy which could reveal more about the instigation to the change in his policy towards the Baltic States his response was critical.

He replied by giving a brief history of the Cold War, *detente* and a general overview of his foreign policy changes, stated that my research lacked perspective, and my supervisor was foolish to allow me to study this topic.<sup>5</sup> This issue was clearly a sensitive topic for Whitlam.

Undeterred I made contact again. This time in a phone call Whitlam hinted that the role of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1973-5 may have played a greater role in influencing the Australian government to recognise the *de jure* occupation of the Baltic States than people previously suspected. When looking at the Helsinki Final Act from this conference, it promoted human rights, self-determination, freedom of speech, the right to practise religion and the condemnation of illegal occupations, changing borders and enforced rule.<sup>6</sup> However recognising an illegal occupation appears to be in stark contrast to the intentions of the Final Act.

Once again, further research created further questions which require further research. I continue to search for the catalyst of Whitlam's *de jure* recognition with the anticipation that research can be infinite but an Honours thesis is not.

*Madeleine Shuey is an Honours student in the School of History and Classics at the University of Tasmania. In 2004, she won the University's Lithuanian Honours Scholarship. The above excerpt is based on her Honours thesis, to be completed in November '04.*

<sup>5</sup> Letter in the author's possession.

<sup>6</sup> E. Osmańczyk, *The Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Relations* (New York, 1990), pp. 370 - 381.

## The Spiritual Economy

Gregory JORDAN, S.J.

Brisbane

Imagine, if you can, living under the Soviet regime, shaped as it was by atheistic communism, and the paranoid mind of Stalin and his totalitarian successors. You work as a teacher, bus-driver, engineer, but with a difference from your fellow-workers: you are a believer. You are Russian Orthodox, Baptist, Evangelical, Roman Catholic (Lithuania and Latvia) or Ukrainian Catholic. If you have studied at University you are likely to be an adult convert, or you have skilfully learnt to hide your personal beliefs, becoming a silent believer, and practising your faith, if that were at all possible, surreptitiously.

Perhaps because you became involved in dissident activities detested by the authorities, perhaps because you are caught in possession of dissident or – in the Baltic States – nationalist literature like the *samizdat* ("self-published" and so anti-state), underground newsletters that were a lifeline for all rational and free-thinking spirits, you are arrested. Tried and sentenced to the Gulag, you find yourself in the hideous underworld of the labour camps, mines, factories, extending from above the Arctic Circle beyond Archangel all the way across to Siberia.

You know no one, and can scarcely trust anyone. You may do nothing of your own free will, but only in obedience to harsh and brutal guards, who administer a savage round of hard labour in appalling conditions where there is no privacy and minimal rations. Worse, if that were possible, there is next to no human contact. No visits as in Western prisons even for high security criminals – as if it were ever possible for one's family to 1) afford and 2) get permission for a train journey of several days to reach the camp where one's loved one was held.

The rare letter sent to you will be censored – probably by the wife of the Camp Commandant, who regularly assigned that plum job to her. It was an interest for her in the exile she shared with her husband. Of course you may not be given the letter: it might or might not be passed on. In a sense, even among thousands of

\* Lithuanian sailor Simas Kudirka (pictured, right) was imprisoned by the Soviets, because he had tried, unsuccessfully, to escape from the Soviet Union.

While in prison, Simas received a postcard from a total stranger in the West who had heard about his plight. Realising that someone "on the outside" could speak for Simas, prison authorities immediately improved Simas' treatment.



fellow-prisoners, you are in solitary confinement. Read Solzhenitsyn's *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* to recall, as he did from personal experience, what the world of the gulag was like. It is only a brief paperback, a short though intense read, but it will serve the purpose admirably. You may then want to pursue that world more deeply, and read his *The Gulag Archipelago*.

It is only in your heart that you can live a life of your own in the prisons, only in the depths of your soul that you can carry on a conversation with your God, with the Mother of God, with the Martyrs, whose numbers have doubled in the one century, the Century of Martyrs, the Twentieth. Only a person of deeply ingrained faith could sustain so crushing a burden of suffering and deprivation. The world you live in is the very reverse of what God planned human existence to be. This is life as planned by the Devil. In these circumstances you could be forgiven for forgetting the real world, for thinking that you were entirely forgotten, that there was no hope, and that you were already living in the ante-chamber to Hell.

The day comes when the authorities – who knows why? - it was utterly arbitrary – pass on to you a postcard from a complete stranger on the other side of the world. It is from Tasmania. That's in Africa, isn't it? The writer says simply that she and her friends remember you every morning and every evening, and will continue to do so.



You immediately know what that means; it is referring discreetly to morning and evening prayers. The writer is praying for you . And her friends. What a word that is, a word from a different world. So friendship still exists! And compassion and humanity still exist! *I will not forget you, my people; I have carved you on the palm of my hand.* You are told, there will be another card or letter every month while your sentence lasts.

Imagine the impact a card in your rough and grubby fingers would have on you. Think of the lift it would give your spirits, even just the colours of the photo on it: the crimson rosella, the bottle-brush or waratah, the mountain or seascape sunset. Your world is entirely without colour. It is black or white (blanketed in snow) or a dirty grey. The colourful card has been chosen by your new-found friend with this in mind.

Above all, think of the implications of that postcard. It tells the prisoner that there is a real world out there, and somebody in it, real people, who know about you, care about you. They are praying for you. Suddenly you feel a human being again; once more you are a person. Your hopes are raised, love floods into your starved soul, and you are given the courage to face another night, another day. All this alone warranted the founding of *Friends of the Prisoners*. But there is more.

So far what I have suggested is of a psychological nature, on the human level, which I do not for one instant discount; but more than this is the world of grace, in which our prayers go to God and are heard by God on behalf of the most wretched and despised people in the world. Even if our letters do not reach our prisoner friends, the Friends' prayers certainly reach the Throne of Grace. Even if the Prisoner, who may write only once a month at best, so naturally will use that precious opportunity to communicate with his loved ones, never replies, there is still an invisible bond between Prisoner and Friend in the eyes of God, and to the eyes of faith.

The prayers and sufferings of the Friends will be received by God on behalf of the Prisoner for whom they are offered, and in God's mysterious design, all will somehow be channeled to the spread of the Kingdom, that kingdom of justice and peace and freedom Our Lord came on earth to establish, if only we will cooperate with him.

This was what we called the Spiritual Economy. Not the world economy, with its global exchange of commodities and manufactured goods paid for in petrodollars, or euros or the like. This was a transfer to the other side of the world of spiritual goods, of gifts of faith, hope and love, where there was an acute shortage of these virtues; a transfer of endurance, perseverance, longsuffering, where these qualities were essential for survival. The only legal tender supporting this transfer was prayer and sacrifice, which the Friends of the Prisoners, made acutely aware of the plight of their brothers and sisters in Christ in the Gulag, in their charity and compassion willingly undertook. I have never forgotten them, and remain everlastingly grateful to them. Their names are in the Book of Life.

And that was the Spiritual Economy. That *is* the Spiritual Economy.

*Father Gregory Jordan, S.J. was the Inaugural President of Friends of the Prisoners, 1980-1987. - See the book review, "Letters from the Outside" on the following pages in this issue.*

## LETTERS FROM THE OUTSIDE

*For eleven years (1980 - 1991), more than a thousand Australians and New Zealanders kept writing encouraging monthly letters to Lithuanian prisoners of conscience, and to other prisoners in the Soviet Union. Known as the Friends of the Prisoners, these supporters "on the outside" also prayed for the victims and campaigned for their early release.*

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## Book Reviews

### *Letters from the Outside*

GROSS, Kate Elizabeth and ROZENTALS, Darien Jane (2004), *Letters from the Outside: The History of the Friends of the Prisoners*. Sandy Bay, Tas.: TUU Lithuanian Studies Society., 122 pp. ISBN 1 86295 147 0. RRP.\$19.95 plus post.

This book depicts the history of the *Friends of the Prisoners*, a grass root movement that originated in Tasmania in 1980, and spread into Australia and other countries.

Its purpose was to lend spiritual and moral support to "Prisoners of Conscience", imprisoned by the Soviet Union. This was accomplished through prayer and having each person in the West "adopt" a prisoner and keep in touch with him or her through letters, even if these letters were often not allowed to reach its recipients. Nevertheless, this outside contact with the West not only helped the state of mind of the prisoners, but also eased the harsh treatment prisoners received, as well as let them and the prison officials know that they're not forgotten.

This type of attention given to prisoners by ordinary people demonstrates how much can be accomplished by peaceful means when united in a common cause. There is a good lesson to be learned now by those living in what previously were Soviet bloc countries. People there often tend to hold a pessimistic view about what can be done in certain situations. You can hear them say that "nothing can be done, so why even try".

The authors, Kate E. Gross and Darien J. Rozentals, recorded a very interesting and important segment of human history in their writing. It's a remembrance for all those who have lived through similar trials, and an eye opener to those who have little knowledge of how oppressive ideologies act against people. Most appalling was the practice of the Soviet regime to diagnose dissenters as mentally ill, shutting them off in psychiatric hospitals, and subjugating them to potent drugs. There is a map with many black dots showing the location of prison camps and mental hospitals that appears like a huge ant-hill.

\* One of the better-known Lithuanian prisoners of conscience was a brave and generous woman, Nijolė Sadūnaitė (pictured, right). In June 1975, she was sentenced by a Soviet court to six years' labour camp and Siberian exile. Nijolė's only 'crime' was that the Soviet police found a half-finished copy of an underground journal (*The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*) in her type-writer.

Today, Nijolė is back in her native Lithuania, working full-time for the poor of her country.



The authors further give brief glimpses of various biographies of dissidents. Most of those mentioned were from the Baltic. A few more are included although they are from other eastern European countries. At the outset a brief history with maps of Tasmania and the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) is given.

Chapter 11 presents the various people who were guest speakers in Tasmania over the years. It was a surprise to find that many of those who were mentioned were also personally known to me. The "Foreword" is written by Rev. C. M. Bourdeaux, founder of Keston Institute in Oxford, England, which has been responding to pleas from persecuted churches in the Baltic and other Communist countries. The "Afterword" by Fr. Gregory Jordan SJ, the Inaugural President of *Friends of the Prisoners*, provides a good summary of the thoughts of "Lest we forget".

At the end is also a chronology (1975-1991) of *Friends of the Prisoners* and significant world events. Books that were cited in



the text are mentioned, including an entire page of books for further reading. Some of these may not be readily available, but this book, *Letters from the Outside*, is bound to stir up interest in the reader to seek further reading material on this subject.

- Irene ŽEMAITAITIS (Kaunas).

*Irene Žemaitaitis, B.A. (Conn., Storrs), M.S. (Southern Connecticut Uni., New Haven) is a retired teacher of languages, having taught in the U.S. and Lithuania for some 30 years.*

*This book, LETTERS FROM THE OUTSIDE, may be ordered directly from the publishers, Lithuanian Studies Society, Post Office Box 777, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7006 (Australia).*

*Price: \$19.95 plus postage: \$3 in Australia, \$5.05 to all other countries. Prices are the same, in Australian and US currencies.*

### *Leonas Urbonas: A Painter of Rare Introspection*

**KEMEZYS, Kazys J. [selected and annotated by], (2004), *The consummate art of Leonas Urbonas: An autobiography.* Curtin, ACT: K.J. Kemezys, 136 pp. - ISBN 0 9596662 4 9.**

Artists are generally not inclined to comment on, or explain, their work. The works are meant to speak for themselves, for they are supposed to embody, well or not so well, the envisaged creative aim. Nor are artists inclined to make pronouncements about the essence of art, or about what is said to be the process of artistic creation. They leave such expostulations to professional critics and theorists, or to that inescapable class of spectators who indulge in loud and self-assured evaluations. Not seldom the artist views them - with some disdain - as presumptuous and by the same token incompetent. And so the nature and springs of art and creativity remain a mystery . . .

An interesting exception was provided by the Lithuanian-born painter Leonas Urbonas whose most creative period overlapped with his residence in Sydney. Like a meteor he lit up in the late 1950s when he won the prestigious Mosman Art Prize in 1959.

This event was followed by easy entry into art galleries and by a series of favourable reviews in the press. This period was also marked by a number of successful exhibitions in south-eastern Australia. It was a period of feverish creativity, of incessant diligence of imagination resulting in a stream of paintings. Predominant were his colours - vortices of colours, not seldom aggressive, and forming compositions to which the word 'form' was not easy to apply. An art critic wrote of the "*identity of Leonas Urbonas and his colours*". The high tide of his fame came with his forays into Canada and the United States when, in 1967, he participated in a mixed exhibition in Palm Springs, California, where his work was displayed side by side with Picasso, Dali, Diego Riviera, Nag Arnoldi and Rodriguez. His second tour of the USA was less successful and, indeed, painfully disappointing. The meteor began to descend in the 1970s.

However, the painter Leonas Urbonas was also concerned, to the point of obsession, with the deeper sources of artistic creativity. What made him paint also made him write - and to write down his introspective discoveries just as feverishly. The originality of his experimentations with colours and colour motion found a parallel in



\* Leonas Urbonas in his studio, Oyster Bay, 1968.

his sincere, at times seemingly naive, descriptions of his self-observation in the process of artistic production. At one point, as he put it, *"my sole purpose became to know the artist himself"* (p.66). In this sense, Urbonas was a somewhat rare exception among painters. He was concerned not with, say, the technicalities of colour chemistry and vibrance, but rather with what goes on deep inside, with 'the subconscious' - a term he liked to use. "A Journey into the Subconscious" is a title he gave to one of his published essays. In all, he had about 60 newspaper articles published between 1953 and 1971 in the Lithuanian language in British, Canadian, USA, Australian and (Soviet) Lithuanian newspapers. However, most of his numerous reflections and jottings, apparently making up thousands of pages, remain in manuscript.

A slender volume (136 pages) on Leonas Urbonas has been edited by **Dr Kazys J. Kemezys** under the title of **"The Consummate Art of Leonas Urbonas"** (2004). Here one can encounter some of the passages that explicate Urbonas' contention that genuine artistic activity is spontaneous and that the artistic process suffers from being interrupted by a preconceived, conscious aim. As Urbonas puts it, *"each creative impulse is the giving forth of the spiritual state of man at that moment. His action is also the result of his ability to understand at that moment. The closer that these two factors of creativity come together, the smaller the time interval between the impulse and action, the greater the harmony that is reflected in the painting"* (p.54-5). This point is being expressed also by such other statements as the following:

*"Where there is a goal, there creativity disappears. Creative desire and having a goal are different things"... "If ecstasy, inspirational thought and technique occur at the same time, then theoretically, every moment of inspiration should produce a work of art. Time, interspersed between these three creative phases, proportionally diminishes the possibility of success"... "Too much rationalisation stops spontaneous thought and affects the comprehensive feeling of the situation; in other words, it pushes one out of the creative track"* (p.57-9).



\* Leonas Urbonas, *Self portrait*, pastel, 40 x 53 cm, probably 1955.

To put it more generally, for Urbonas an essential feature of genuine art is absence of subordination / submissiveness. Genuine artistic activity cannot be separated from spontaneity - and this means, art is freedom. Urbonas also asks what impact on artistic creativity is exercised by such factors as knowledge and the emotions. Whereas knowledge could work *"both ways"* (p.81), the good emotions, such as love, can only have a positive effect. *"There can be no creation without love. Man creates best when he is in love. He creates even better when he is in love and loved"* (p.81).

Along these lines Urbonas stresses (though he does not use this terminology) the socialising, conflict-reducing impact of artistic production. The element of love pervasive in a work of art manifests itself like *"the subtle healing, soothing energies radiating from a piece of material which has been worked upon by the intensely creative individual"* (p.89). Indeed, Urbonas would have been applauded by such psychoanalysts as Ian Suttie (in "The Origins of Love and Hate") for whom love is the psychosocial basis of culture, and by such philosophers as Hegel and the impressive line of Hegelians for whom art was an ethical force *in concreto*.



In addition to some of Urbonas' introspective endeavours, the collection edited by Dr Kazys Kemezys also provides the reader with the more mundane biographical materials. The editor's introduction depicts Urbonas' childhood in an impecunious family in a distant corner of Lithuania, his early but talented acrobatic ambitions, his postwar ambivalent experiences in the Stuttgart Academy of Art (Germany), his eventual migration to Australia as an indentured labourer in the sugar cane industry, then the limelights in Sydney and, finally, a somewhat solitary attempt to give artistic shape to a block of bushland in the vicinity of Mittagong, NSW. A very informative inclusion in the slender volume is the lengthy letter by Urbonas (probably not sent off) to his cousin Vincas who resided in the USA. Here the reader can discover a great deal about Leonas' personal ups and downs, including entanglements with women, which in turn throw clarifying light on the several phases in his life as a painter.

The content of the book is enhanced by several colour reproductions (faithful, though reduced in size) from Urbonas' more well-known periods. The biographical part is illustrated by a dozen or so well chosen photographs which give concreteness to a number of names recurring in the texts. Thus the editor, Dr Kazys Kemezys, deserves meritorious recognition not only for bringing to wider notice Urbonas' work and thought, but also for collecting them in a publication which is very pleasing aesthetically.

**Vytautas DONIELA** (Sydney).

*William Vytautas Doniela, M.A.Hons (Sydney), Dr.phil. (Freiburg), formerly Associate Professor of Philosophy in the University of Newcastle (NSW). One of his professional interests is aesthetics, on which he has organized a conference. He has contributed to philosophical journals and collections, also to Lithuanian newspapers, including. "Mūsų Pastogė" (Sydney).*

*This book may be obtained directly from Dr K. Kemezys,  
P.O.Box 194, Curtin, ACT 2605, Australia, at \$20 incl. postage.*

*Email: [kazyskemezys@hotmail.com](mailto:kazyskemezys@hotmail.com)*

## Our Thanks



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We now need more help with the sale and promotion of our latest book, *Letters from the Outside* (please see the review on pp.64-66).

We thank you in advance. **Vince J. TAŠKŪNAS**, President, LSS.

## Lithuania - Main Facts

**Location:** on the Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. Lithuania borders Poland and Kaliningrad (currently under Russian administration) to the southwest and west; Latvia to the north; Belarus to the east and south.

**Area:** 65,300 square kilometres (25,212 square miles), about the size of Tasmania or West Virginia.

**Population** (May 1, 2003): 3,462,600. Distributed between urban 67%, and rural 33%.

**Ethnic groups:** Lithuanians, 83.5 per cent; Russians 6.3 per cent; Poles, 6.7 per cent.

**Literacy rate:** 98 per cent.

**Capital:** Vilnius (population 541,800).

**National language:** Lithuanian, an ancient Indo-European language of the Baltic group. Lithuanians use a Latin-based alphabet of 32 letters.

**Form of Government:** Parliamentary republic.

**Head of State:** President (Valdas Adamkus, elected June, 2004)

**National assembly:** Seimas (parliament), consisting of 141 members who are elected for 4-year terms.

**Chairman of Seimas:** Arturas Paulauskas.

**Religion:** Predominantly Roman Catholic (estimated 80%). A number of other religions are also practised: Evangelical Lutheran, Russian Orthodox, Judaic, etc.



° Vytis - Lithuanian coat of arms.

**Population density:** 53.026 per 1 square km.

**Chief Products:** Agriculture, forestry, fishing, light industry.

**GDP, % growth** (2002): 6.1.

**Exports** (2002): 6,235 m.euros

**Imports** (2002): 7.667 m.euros

**Per capita annual income:** US\$7,300.

**Current account deficit:** 2.67 billion Litass (773 m. euros) or 5.3% pf GDP.



° The distances (in kilometres) from Vilnius, Lithuania's capital, to various European cities.

**Greatest distances:** East-West 373 km, North-South 276 km.

**Highest points:** Juozapinė (293.6 metres), Kruopinė (293.4m), Nevaišiai (288.9m).

**Major rivers:** Nemunas (937.4km), Neris (509.5km).

**Largest lakes:** Drūkšiai (4479ha), Dysnai (2439.4ha), Dusia (2334.2ha). Altogether, there are over 4,000 lakes in Lithuania. Of these, 2,830 are larger than 0.5 ha, covering a total of 880 sq.km.

**Visitors:** A total of 3.635 million tourists visited Lithuania in 2003.

**Climate:** Temperate, between maritime and continental. Mean annual temperature is 6.7 degrees Celsius. Average January temperature in Vilnius is -4.3 degrees Celsius; July average, 18.1 degrees Celsius. Annual precipitation, 744.6 mm. Humidity, 78%.

**National currency:** Litas, equals 100 centas.

Exchange rates vary daily. Recent rates of exchange were: (approx.): Euro 1 equals 3.50 Litass; or US\$1 equals 3 Litass; or AU\$1 equals approx.2 Litass..

Sources: S. Litvinaviciene/ LR Gvt. Statistics Dept., Bank of Finland/BOFIT, Lithuanian Heritage, Lithuania in the World.

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