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SOCIETY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA



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Volume 20 – 2006

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COVER PHOTOS:

Front cover: The Roman Catholic Cathedral in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital city. The old Gediminas Castle is in the background.

Photo: A. Mockus / Vilnius: Its architecture to the beginning of the 20th c.

Back cover: Known as the city of churches, Vilnius has more than forty churches, built in a variety of architectural styles. St. Anne's church (pictured) is an example of the Gothic style: it was built in the mid-16th century. 33 different kinds of bricks were used in its construction. Napoleon was so fascinated by this church that he wanted "to grasp it in his palm and take it back to France." Photo: A. Mockus / Vilnius, op.cit.

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The Human Cost of Communism

Senator George H. BRANDIS
Parliament of Australia, Canberra

To this day, there are still some who practise discrimination in their condemnation of political tyranny and selectivity in their pity for its victims. It is in that context that I wanted to draw to the attention of the Senate a most important resolution of the European Parliament that was carried on January 25. It was resolution No.148, moved by Mr Goran Lindblad, a Swedish parliamentarian of the European People's Party.



The resolution, which acknowledged and condemned the extent of communist atrocities in the 20th century, came on the heels of a report to the European assembly of its political affairs committee. This is the first comprehensive audit of the number of deaths directly attributable to communism in the 20th century. Although there have been numerous estimates by writers, academics and think tanks, the Council of Europe's document is the first comprehensive study by a major government body. For that reason alone, it is an occasion of historic significance.

According to the Council of Europe, a conservative estimate of deaths worldwide which are directly attributable to communist governments and revolutionary movements since the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917 is **94.5 million souls**. That figure does not include people who died in wars fought by communist regimes against other nations. It does include deaths from genocide, purges, deportation, famines, civil wars, wartime reprisals, deaths in gulags and other concentration camps, and all other forms of domestic state-sponsored killing.

The countries in which the greatest number of deaths are estimated to have occurred are China, 65 million; the Soviet Union, 20 million; Cambodia, two million; North Korea, two million; Africa, 1.7 million; Afghanistan, 1.5 million; Vietnam, one million; and Eastern Europe, one million. According to the Council of Europe, the death toll attributable to communism in the last century was almost one million people per year. On average, more than 2,500 people a day for every day of every year of the 20th century were exterminated in the service of ideology.

To put those figures into context, the most reliable estimate of the number of people, military and civilian, killed in the First World War is between 10 and 15 million and, in the Second World War, between 50 million and 60 million. In other words, the number of people killed by communism in the 20th century - even on the most conservative estimate - exceeds by some 20 million the number of people killed in both world wars. Unlike war, the death toll from communism was the result of the deliberate policy of communist apparatchiks, driven by ideology to liquidate their own countrymen.

It has been rightly said by historians that the 20th century was the most bloody century the world has ever seen. It was the most bloody century because of the development of war and killing on an industrial scale. It was the most bloody century because of the rise of tyrannical regimes across the world. But of all the causes of human suffering, death and bloodshed in the 20th century, the deliberate, advertent imposition on domestic populations by communist governments and communist movements of a policy of extermination of those who did not fit into their particular ideology - almost 100 million people - was the greatest.

I think it is important that the Australian Senate acknowledge the resolution of the Council of Europe. Some six years into the 21st century, it is not too early for us to assess the 20th century with the beginnings of some sort of historical perspective. It is not too early for us to begin to grasp the awful magnitude of the experiment that was communism. Even though our minds can barely comprehend the almost astronomical numbers of human souls involved, including men, women and children, we can at least in relative terms appreciate that in the century of industrial

scale warfare, communism - an ideology, the fruit of the brains of men and women - was responsible for more slaughter than both of the great wars.

We should be pleased that the Council of Europe, which presides over the jurisdiction in which much of the slaughter took place, has at last published an audit of that tyranny. We, on all sides of politics - professed practitioners of liberal democracy - should note it with solemnity and humility; and we should resolve that that should never be allowed to happen in this century, and the moral blindness which saw the West avert its eyes in the 20th century should never be suffered to happen again.

George Henry BRANDIS, B.A. Hons., LL.B. Hons. (Qld.), BCL (Oxon.) is a Liberal Senator for Queensland, in the Australian Senate. E-mail: senator.brandis@aph.gov.au

The above extracts are from Senator Brandis's adjournment speech, delivered in the Australian Senate on 27th February, 2006.

* Human life meant very little to the Communists. For example: On 13th January, 1991, during the reign of USSR leader M. Gorbachev, Soviet tanks attacked innocent Lithuanian civilians in the city of Vilnius. Thirteen people were killed and 163 were wounded.

Pictured, right: With their bare hands, people tried to push this Soviet tank, to free a young woman crushed under the tracks of the tank. (Her legs can be seen at bottom left, in this photo). The woman, 23-year-old Loreta Asanavičiūtė, was finally extracted, but she died a few hours later in hospital. Her last words were directed at her surgeon, "Please, Doctor, will I stay alive?"



Photo: Lith. Heritage.



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UTAS

Lithuania's Catholic Church and Society

Romualdas DULSKIS

Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas

In spite of fifty years of Communist atheistic propaganda, the practising Catholics of Lithuania have remained firm in their faith. There is a deep devotion to Virgin Mary. Pilgrims in great numbers visit the famous Madonna shrines of Šiluva, Aušros Vartai, Žemaičių Kalvarija and Pivašiūnai. A unique sign of Christian faith is the Hill of Crosses near Šiauliai..

Though Lithuanians are not greatly inclined to worship saints, the main patron of Lithuania, St.Casimir (1458-1484), is popular. Six beatification cases are currently in progress in Lithuania: Archbishops Teofilus Matulionis (1873-1962 and Mečislovas Reinyš (1884-1953), Bishop Vincentas Borisevičius (1887-1946), Barbora Žagarietė (1628-1648), Adelė Dirsytė (1909-1955) and Elena Spirgevičiūtė (1924-1944).

The Bastion of Catholicism? Pope Pius XII referred to Lithuania as the bastion of Catholicism in northern Europe. With respect to denominations, Lithuania is indeed a Catholic country:

Denominations	
Roman Catholic	79%
Believe in God, but do not belong to any religion	9.5%
Orthodox	4%
Old Orthodox	0.8%
Protestant	0.8%
Neo-protestant [†]	0.3%
Moslem	0.1%
Ancient Baltic religion.....	0.04%
Other religions.....	0.46%
Non-Respondents	5 %

[†]It is likely that the numbers in the neo-protestant denominations are much larger. In the last few years these religious groups have been very active, and the new members very often are evasive about stating their religious affiliation.

Surveys have shown that trust in the Church is higher than in most European countries, with the exception of Malta, Romania and Portugal. Lithuania is distinguished for its people's favorable attitude to the teachings of the Church on moral, family, spiritual needs and even social problems. However, the faith of many Christians is superficial. Many people who consider themselves Catholics do not pray daily, while Sunday Church attendance reaches only 16% and is decreasing.² Baptisms, matrimony and Catholic funerals are favoured more.

Many people (9.5 % of total population) claim to believe in God but do not ascribe themselves to any denomination. This causes great anxiety to the Catholic Church. Reluctance to acknowledge one's belonging to the Catholic Church has been observed, and attempts have been made to revive the Baltic pagan religion in Lithuania (0.04% population consider themselves as followers).

Some people leave the Catholic Church because of personal problems, or because the Church does not recognize second marriages or because of the behaviour of some clergymen.

Church Structure and Pastoral Care. Lithuania has two Church provinces.³ The Vilnius Church province consists of the Vilnius Archdiocese and the Dioceses of Panevėžys and Kaišiadorys. The Kaunas Church province consists of Kaunas Archdiocese, and the Dioceses of Šiauliai, Telšiai and Vilkaviškis. The Military Ordinariate is responsible for soldiers' spiritual needs.

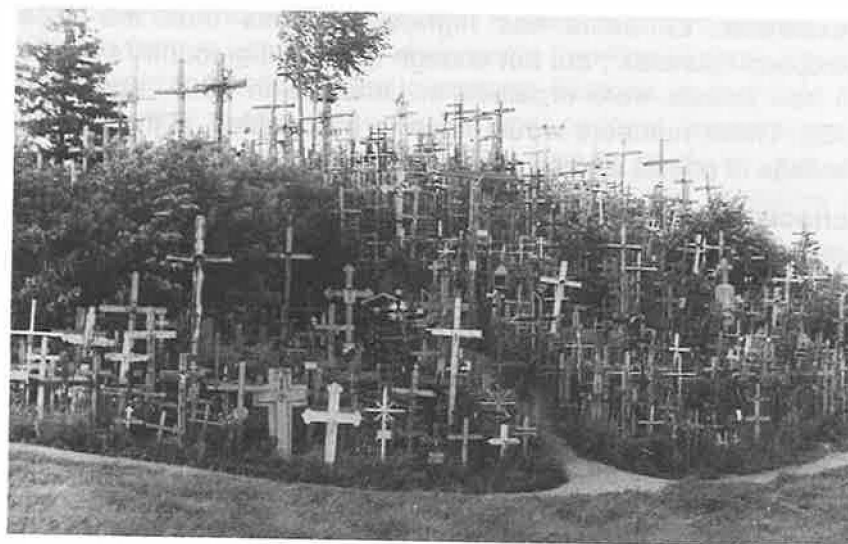
The present-day structure of the Lithuanian Church and the number of priests and religious are shown in the table below.⁴

Dioceses	7
Seminaries	3
Parishes	684
Diocesan priests	644
Seminarians	179
Priest-Monks	79
Nuns	853

² Cf. Katalikų Bažnyčia Lietuvoje po totalitarizmo, in: <http://www.lcn.lt/bl/istorija/5/>

³ The Holy See performed a new administrative redistribution in 1991.

⁴ Cf. Katalikų Žinynas, Vilnius 2006, p. 29; 172-173; 240.



The Hill of Crosses in Northern Lithuania: a unique symbol of the Christian faith. 100,000 crosses of all shapes and sizes are estimated to have found a home on this Hill.

In each Lithuanian parish there is a Caritas group which is concerned with helping the poor, the ill, the aged, impoverished families, the handicapped, the homeless and the prisoners.

A network of Family Centres has also spread across the country and has created a vast developmental program for the young. They prepare engaged couples for Matrimony and assist families. International organised centres, such as the Society of the Order of Malta, the Kolping Society and the Samaritans, are known for their activities in the developmental sphere and in the field of social work. Laypeople are involved in social work activities and their projects are often coordinated with other government and non-governmental organizations.

All dioceses have Youth Centres. These centres train parish spiritual youth leaders and support youth activities in parishes, provide assistance in training methods, take care of youth choirs and prayer groups and the spiritual needs of altar servers. Youth Centres also encourage cooperative work between Catholic youth organizations and other organizations, communities and groups that are interested in youth development.

Vocations. Lithuania has higher vocations than the West European countries⁵; but not enough to meet the country's needs. 20 new priests were ordained in Lithuania in 2004; and 22 in 2005. These numbers would have to be doubled, if the present shortage of priests is to be overcome.

Schools. Altogether, there are 33 Catholic and Catholic-oriented schools in Lithuania: 5 high-schools (*gimnazijos*), 8 middle-schools, 3 professional schools, 2 basic schools, 12 primary schools and 3 pre-schools. Most of these schools are funded by the State and are conducted in the Catholic spirit. Their total attendance is 16,500 or 2.5% of Lithuania's total school children.

As for the remaining State schools, Catholic religion lessons are available, but they are optional. The students, or their parents, are free to choose between Religion and Ethics. Catechismal Centres are responsible for checking the quality and the methodology of the catechetical teaching. Lay people make up 93% of the teaching staff; 7% are priests and nuns. Most religious instruction teachers have appropriate teaching credentials. Religion classes are attended by 60% of students. They also participate in youth camps, holiday celebrations and retreats.

A significant input into the pastoral as well as the entire life of the Church comes from religious orders and congregations, e.g. Benedictines, Jesuits, Marians, Franciscans, Capuchins, Community of Saint John, Salesians, Dominicans, Basilians as well as 8 female contemplative congregations and 29 other active women congregations throughout the country. Retreats led by religious orders are becoming more and more popular among people of various ages, education and professional backgrounds.

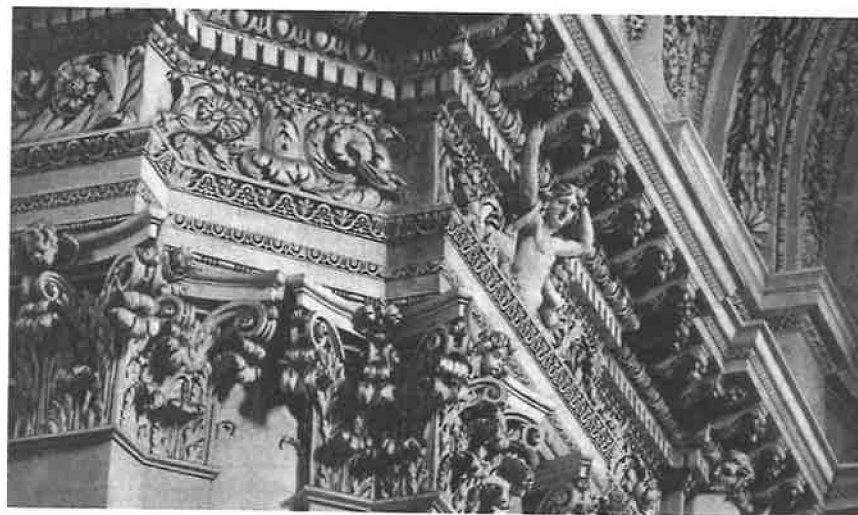
Financial. The Republic of Lithuania pays no salaries to Catholic priests, except those employed in the armed forces and state educational institutions. Nor does the republican government pay for the regular maintenance of church buildings, except perhaps for architecturally valuable and historic buildings.

⁵ 62 seminarians are currently studying in the Lithuanian seminary serving three dioceses (Kaunas, Šiauliai, Vilkaviškis). The West German St. Georgen seminary, serving five dioceses, has only 25 seminarians.

The Church and the Public Life. A great deal of response was brought forth in Lithuania by documents from the Catholic Church with regard to public political questions. Bishops, in their turn, try to raise the public conscience and political awareness in particular. They urge people not to give in to doubt, but, for example, to actively participate in solving public problems by making use of one's voting rights as a citizen.

Lithuanian bishops often touch on various life subjects in the public sphere, in their homilies and their appearances in the media. They respond with interest to problems that arise as well as to current topics. They discuss negative aspects and reiterate as well as explain the Church's position on various issues.

The Lithuanian Bishops' Conference spoke up in favour of joining the European Union. The Conference invited people to actively participate in the referendum. It stated that, "Your voice is needed, not any less than your prayers are needed. Prayers are needed for all of Europe that the Almighty would help us – from the Baltic to the Mediterranean – so that together we will create a loving civilization, a more conscientious and just society".



* A wall fragment in St. Peter and Paul church, Vilnius. This church was built in 1668 – 1676; the interior fittings were not completed until 1784. The church is noted for the richness of its interior decorations: of the human statues alone, there are over 2,000.

- Photo: Architectural Monuments Protection Foundation, Vilnius, op. cit.

So we will create a common home where no one would go without spiritual tranquility or material well-being. One should help the European Union so that everyone within it would honour Christian values.”⁶

Bishops spoke out publicly more than once against artificial conception, euthanasia, contraception, non-appropriate sex education in schools, creation of casinos and other relevant social questions. The Church aligns itself with the poor in its society and has people constantly within its scope who find themselves in extreme situations: families with hardship, neglected children, the unemployed, poverty-stricken country folk, retirees receiving meager pensions and others.

Theologians support bishops' efforts in their explanation of the position of the Church in its response to facing problems and actual topics, in their critical attitude towards negative phenomena and in their encouragement of social and political awareness. Further, Bishops encourage people not to give up or be indifferent but to participate actively in solving social problems, and making use of their civil rights and to vote.

The results of these positions can be seen both in forming public opinion and in the resolutions made by powerful institutions.

The Challenges of Today: Secularism, Sects and “the New Age”. Lithuania is distinguished among other European countries for its highly positive evaluation of mass media. Many people are inclined to accept almost all that is presented in the press or on TV, directly and uncritically. Non-constructive critiques, directed at different institutions and persons, only for the sake of sensation in the mass media, becomes an excuse for some people's apathy, irresponsibility, antisocial attitudes and hostility to legal power.⁷

The attitude of mass media – ignorance or even mockery of ethical values – is disturbing. Spiritual and religious values are spoken of very seldom.

⁶ Lietuvos vyskupų kreipimasis dėl stojimo į Europos Sąjungą, in: *Bažnyčios Žinios*. Kaunas 2003. Nr. 5.

⁷ Cf. I. E. Laumenskaitė, Vertybinių orientacijų pokyčiai Lietuvoje ir nauji iššūkiai, in: http://www.religija.lt/stra-vertybiu_pokyciai_laumenskaite.htm

Propagation of hedonism or the consumer's mode of life and various commercials predominate, smothering questions of the meaning of life and suppressing ethical principles. Due to radical changes some people have experienced economic failure and have been left without help. Beyond a doubt, this is one of the reasons why suicides are so numerous in Lithuania.⁸

After the restoration of independence in Lithuania and relations with the Western world were opened, many sects came rushing into our country. With an experience of evangelical work and having found an empty space here, these sects began attracting both Catholics and non-Catholics to their ranks. The Catholic Church was not ready for the challenge and it has lost some of its members. If in the Soviet time those who were indifferent usually returned to Catholicism, now the situation has changed and is causing concern in the Catholic Church.

The new religious movements of non-Christian origin that are spreading are pseudo-Christian groups – cults from Eastern sources, and a New Age manifestation. Common features of these movements are: authoritative leader, centralized administration, “brain washing”, only a superficial understanding of the faith, and an aggressive and persistent recruitment and refusal to take part in constructive dialogue with competent Catholics.⁹ Some people have become involved with new religious movements because they did not find help, support and warm fellowship in Catholic circles.

Cardinal Audrys Juozas Bačkis notes, “I am not afraid of sects. People in Lithuania are intelligent enough to evaluate them. More dangerous is the so-called *New Age* that muddles up spirituality with psychological and psychotherapeutic matters. Everything is so mixed up that it is very difficult even for rather mature believers to recognize what is what”.¹⁰

⁸ Lithuania is the top country in Europe with many suicides: approximately 45 suicides out of 100 thousand people in a year.

⁹ Cf. A. Pečkaitis D. Glodenis, *Šiuolaikinis religingumas*, Vilnius 2000, p. 124-180.

¹⁰ J.E. kardinolas Audrys Juozas Bačkis atsako į “Omni Laiko” skaitytojų klausimus, in: <http://vilnius.lcn.lt/ganytojai/arkivyvskupas/kalbos/k20040209/>. As many as 27% of inhabitants in Lithuania believe in reincarnation.

The future. Today, Lithuanians are still not active enough in looking for ways to overcome their social problems. They do not join organizations or movements which would help to realise their common initiatives.

A significant counterbalance to challenges of secularism, sects and New Age is the Catholic periodical press. Today, several magazines and newspapers of a Catholic orientation are being published that are geared for the whole country. Some diocesan, religious congregations, parishes and organizations produce their own publications. A great contribution comes from programs such as Catholic Radio, Catholic TV and the Catholic Internet¹¹ and also from the academic periodical press.¹²

There is some hope for the years ahead. An authentic spiritual awakening is becoming apparent in our society. People – both, old and young – are not content with a materialistic or hedonistic lifestyle; they are seeking something more meaningful. This gives us hope and confidence when contemplating Lithuania's future.

Translated from the Lithuanian by Irene ŽEMAITAITIS.

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¹¹ Catholic Internet Site: English <http://www.lcn.lt/en/bl/>; Lithuanian <http://www.katalikai.lt/>

¹² *Soter* – a theological and religious science journal published by the Faculty of Catholic Theology at Vytautas Magnus University. Also, *Logos* – a religious and philosophical journal published by the Institute of Culture, Philosophy and Art together with Order of Dominicans and *Metrašitis* (Annuals) and *Suvažiavimo darbai* (Congress Papers) by the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Science.

Recent Events

President's Visit

The President of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr Valdas Adamkus, paid his first State visit to Australia in February, 2006. He met the Prime Minister of Australia, Mr John Howard (*pictured, right*), and a number of other dignitaries; as well as many business and civic leaders.



The President and his wife Alma also attended social functions in Sydney and Melbourne, arranged by the local Lithuanian communities.

50th Anniversary

The School of Government (formerly the Department of Political Science) at the University of Tasmania has been celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Several events to mark this occasion concluded with a symposium and an anniversary dinner on 3rd November.

The School hosts a 1,000-volume Lithuanian Reference Library, the only university-based collection of this kind in the whole of Australia.



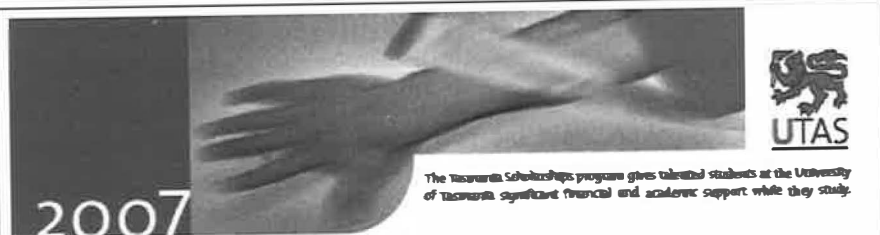
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Corruption in Lithuania

Jolanta PILIPONYTĖ

University of Vilnius

and Transparency International Lithuania

After the collapse of the Communist regime, most transition countries, and Lithuania as well, have met many problems - such as a moral and ideological vacuum, the rise of criminality, including corruption, the decline of control and even fear. Because of the vulnerability of the system there was a growth in corruption and organized crime.

Since 1990, Lithuania has put in place most of the components of an anticorruption legislative framework, including comprehensive anti-bribery legislation, conflict of interest and asset declaration provisions. The Special Investigation Service, a special body to fight corruption, was established in 1997; it was the only case of its kind in Europe. In May, 2001 Lithuania became a member of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). On January 17th, 2002 Lithuanian Parliament adopted a comprehensive document, the National Anti-Corruption Programme, which includes an Anti-Corruption Strategy and Measures for its implementation. The impact of the EU accession process which stimulated anticorruption actions under the EU requirements was significant as well.

In comparison to most of the other post-communist countries, Lithuanian legal and institutional framework in the anti-corruption area is comprehensive. Lithuania has in place operationally independent specialized anti-corruption bodies in the areas of corruption prevention, and investigation. However, the results of corruption surveys show that the state of corruption in Lithuania is improving slowly.

In order to draw the picture of a recent situation of corruption in Lithuania, we will examine the surveys' data regarding the attitudes towards the corruption and personal experiences in confronting cases of corruption and bribery. We will also look into the sources of information about corruption and anticorruption potential.

At the end of 2005, the Special Investigation Service engaged research agency TNS Gallup to draw up a *Map of Corruption in Lithuania 2005* using the methodology developed by the Lithuanian Chapter of Transparency International. They interviewed 1009 residents and 519 business company managers, to assess the attitudes relating to corruption, its level and role in society, analyse corruption experiences, evaluate the anti-corruption potential of Lithuanian society and compare survey findings with the findings of analogous surveys performed in 2002 and 2004.

The *Map of Corruption in Lithuania 2005* shows that both residents and business company managers identify corruption as one of the key problems faced by a modern society. The more serious problems than corruption, as seen by residents, are small salaries, crime and violence; whereas business managers say, it is emigration of Lithuanian residents.

The majority of Lithuanian residents and business company managers think that a bribe helps to solve problems and intend to use it, if necessary, in the future to "fix" their problems. More grounds for optimism come from the majority of the younger generation (aged 15-29): they believe that bribes do not help. In 2005, as compared with 2004, the number of company managers promising to give a bribe was decreasing, whereas the number of residents ready to give a bribe was growing (see figures 1 and 2).

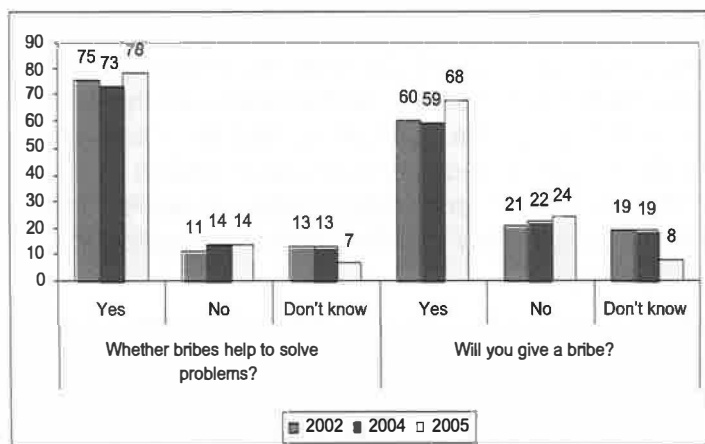


Figure 1. Lithuanian residents' attitudes toward giving bribes (%)

48% of Lithuanian residents and 37% of business company managers say that they have given at least one bribe during the last five years. In the recent 12 months, bribes were given by 26% of residents and 20% of business company managers. Bribes were given more often by economically active persons (aged 20-39), with higher/college-type education, having higher and the highest income per family member per month, self-employed (owners) and employed (having a paid job), residents of major towns, those who think that the material side of their life has improved significantly and Lithuanian residents who are actively (every day) listening to the news. The highest number of bribe-givers was among construction companies, having from 11 to 50 employees.

The *Map of Corruption in Lithuania 2005* calculated bribery indexes, allowing to compare institutions according to the frequency of bribe demands, payment of bribes and the effectiveness of bribes. Lithuanian residents said that most frequently a bribe was implicitly demanded from them by the traffic police, in national and local hospitals, county governor administrations and vehicle technical inspection centres. The respondents said that in the majority of cases they agreed to give a bribe. The "leader" position in the area was held by the traffic police who were given bribes by 52% of residents and 40% of business company managers, who had dealings with them.

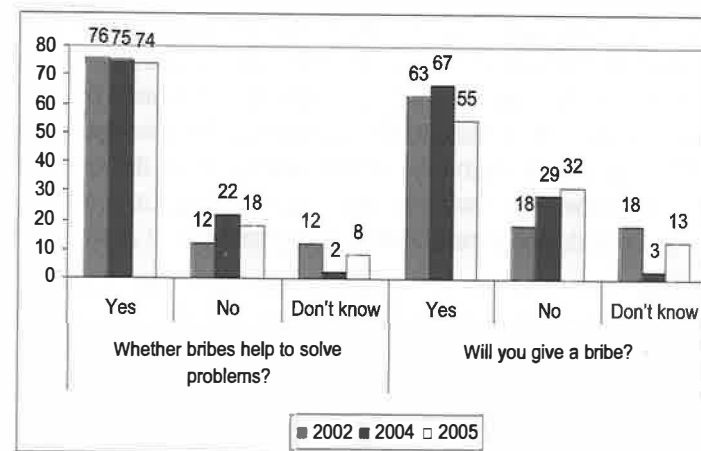


Figure 2. Company managers' attitudes toward bribing (%)

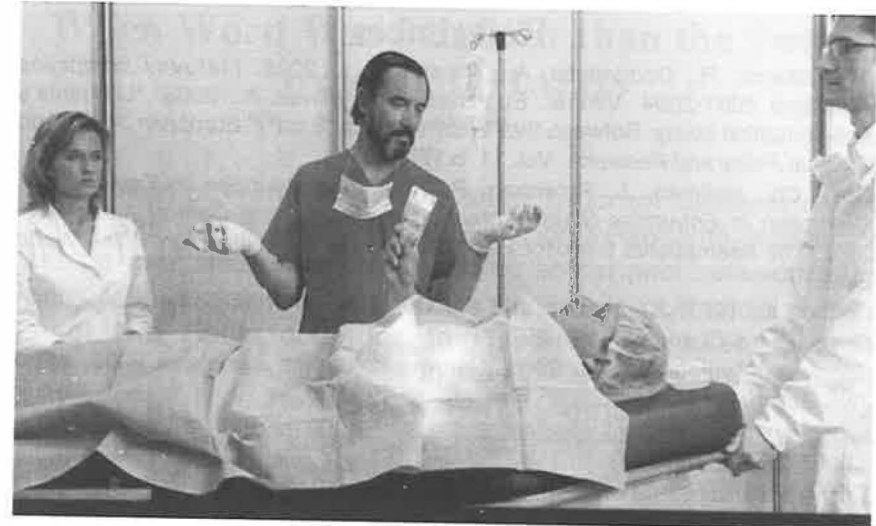
The good news is that in 2005, as compared with 2004, the State Tax Inspectorate was no longer included in the list of the five mostly bribed institutions and the scale of bribery decreased in municipalities. A half of Lithuania's residents (50%) and 32% of business company managers identified television as the most reliable source of information about corruption. The second most reliable source of information is personal experience or the experience of friends and acquaintances.

The survey shows that every fifth resident of Lithuania knows where to go to report a case of corruption. Businessmen, as compared to residents, are much better informed: 44% know where they would go if they faced corruption. Only 23% of residents and 21% of businessmen would report a case of corruption known to them. 41% of residents and 47% of businessmen would think about whether or not they should report the corruption case depending on a specific situation. 36% of residents and 32% of company managers would not report a case of corruption known to them. More than a half of Lithuanian residents (59%) and company managers (54%) admit that they do not want to participate in anti-corruption activities.

According to the Transparency International *Corruption Perception Index* (hereafter CPI) in 2005, Lithuania, with the score of 4.8,¹³ occupies the 44th place among 158 countries. It is a slight improvement from 4.6 in 2004. However, the Lithuanian CPI is still below the average of 5. It cannot be formally recognized as a country where corruption is sufficiently contained. CPI relates to perceptions of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and analysts. Another Transparency International's survey *Global Corruption Barometer 2005* shows that the residents of Lithuania consider the political parties, the legal system and the customs to be the three most corrupt institutions.

The World Bank's report '*Anticorruption in Transition 2: Corruption in Enterprise-State Interactions in Europe and Central Asia 1999-2002*' identified Lithuania as a country with medium state capture and relatively high administrative corruption index.

¹³ 10 means a highly clean country and 0 – a highly corrupt country.



* This posed photograph was produced by Transparency International, to illustrate the high level of bribery that exists in Lithuanian health services today ("A patient is handing over extra cash to her surgeon, on the way to the operating theatre").

The Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey in 2005 revealed that firms still have a difficult time with the corruption in Lithuania. About 27% of representatives of business companies stated that bribery is very commonly used in order to receive a state contract. This survey, developed jointly by the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, is based on the businessmen's direct experience.

In summary, Lithuania is still confronting corruption problems. It is a challenge for Lithuania to use institutionally created anti-corruption mechanism very efficiently. The contributions of the civil society and the private sector are very important in this process; but the most important one is the political will.

Jolanta PILIPONYTĖ is completing her PhD degree in Social Science / Sociology at the University of Vilnius this year. Some of her research was carried out at the University of Melbourne, under the supervision of Professor Leslie Holmes. Jolanta is also the Projects Director of "Transparency International" Lithuanian Chapter. E-mail: Jolanta.Piliponyte@fsf.vu.lt

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When Word Was Mightier than the Sword

Irene ŽEMAITAITIS

Kaunas

At the start of World War II, the small nation of Lithuania on the Baltic Sea with approximately 3.5 million inhabitants proclaimed itself a neutral country. However, the secret pact between Hitler and Stalin (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) subjected Lithuania and the other two Baltic countries to Russian and, later, German invasions. The first occupation was by Soviet Russia in 1940, followed by Nazi Germany in 1941, and then again by Soviet Russia in 1944. The latter lasted for 50 years, until 1990.

The Lithuanian people suffered great physical abuse through arrests, interrogations, incarcerations and executions; also mass deportations to the outermost reaches of Siberia, without regard to gender, age or health at a cost of one third of Lithuania's population. Starting in 1944, men and women joined the national armed resistance known as *partisans*; it lasted for nine years at the cost of 20,000 partisan lives.

After Stalin's death in 1953, Soviet tactics became subtler. The Soviets chose to undermine the influence of the Catholic Church by instituting all kinds of repressions which would lessen the strong role the Church had played in the lives of the people.

Underground publications sprang up, one of which was the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, which disclosed to the world at large the repressions committed against the faithful of Lithuania: repressions against their human rights and freedoms. The Soviets exerted a great effort to liquidate the *Chronicle*, but they did not succeed. This account will try to give a brief overview of how the *Chronicle* came to be, and how its publication and dissemination functioned in spite of the Soviet repressions.

Why The Chronicle ?

The early 1960's was the time when Sigitas Tamkevičius, a seminarian at the Kaunas Seminary (and now the Archbishop of Kaunas) experienced various upheavals.

At one point, he found himself in a KGB office being pressed into service "for friendly collaboration". It then became clear to him, why he had felt a change in the atmosphere at the seminary. The Soviet plan was to quickly bring down the number of new priests to a minimum, confine priests to their church territory, and even try to enlist some as collaborators. Convents and monasteries were closed. The religious had to seek work in the public sphere, and their gatherings had to be in secret.

In an interview given in November, 2005, Archbishop Tamkevičius agreed to share some reminiscences of those years.

"Although Stalin's bloody epoch had receded into the past, the Soviets continued to propagate their "bright future" in the early 1960's to the population of Lithuania. The Soviets felt that this was being hampered by nationalistic feelings and religion. The Soviet Bureau of Religion conscientiously proceeded to implement the Party's program to eradicate religion. All seminaries were closed, and only one, in Kaunas, was allowed to function. However, its activities were very much curtailed and enrolment was drastically limited. Also laws were passed and rules made public as to the restricted duties parish priests were allowed to perform. Those who would not adhere to these directives, had their priest's permit confiscated or they found themselves behind bars. Among the faithful there was also a great shortage of religious necessities, such as catechisms, prayer books and even rosaries."

All of these happenings to the Church gave no peace to those who lived by its teachings. While discussing the Church's problems in 1968, a group of trusted priest colleagues decided to make demands that the enrolment limit at the seminary be dropped. The idea was also born that the free world should be informed about the repressions committed against the Church.

The first petitions appeared in the Dioceses of Telšiai and Vilkaviškis which the Party and Security officials did not look upon kindly. As a result, some priests were reprimanded, others were forbidden to perform their priestly duties. In those days it was difficult, but not impossible, to circumvent the Iron Curtain. The first attempt was made by typing it on a white cloth and sewing it into the lining of a woman's clothing who was travelling to the US.



* The clandestine editors of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*: (left) Father [now Archbishop] Sigitas Tamkevičius SJ, 1972-1983; and (right) Father [now Bishop] Jonas Boruta SJ, 1983-1989.

Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevičius related some of the early beginnings that led to the publication of the *Chronicles*:

In 1969 my right to work as a priest was taken away and I had to seek other work. I worked in land reclamation with another man in the same shoes as I, Father Juozas Zdebskis.. Our supervisor was Jurgis Brilius who allowed us time off from our job to secretly perform our priestly duties. That year turned out to be truly a blessing .It widened our circle of trusted friends and provided the experience of working in underground conditions. Not just I, but also others, discerned that the Soviet permit to work as a priest is not salvation. It's more important to have "God's permit", as Bishop-in-Exile, Vincentas Sladkevičius (later Cardinal Sladkevičius) used to say.

Some time later I was assigned as a vicar to a parish in Simnas. There I was blessed again by having a good parish priest, Fr. Juozas Matulevičius, and enough free time.

In gatherings of our priest group we discussed the importance of having a publication which would awaken nationalistic feelings, and especially religious consciousness that would reflect the problems and worries of Catholics. Most of the priests were in agreement with this idea, especially Fr. Juozas Zdebskis.

For teaching catechism to children, Fr. Antanas Šeškevičius SJ, Fr. Juozas Zdebskis and Fr. Prosperas Bubnys MIC had been convened. The first publication was prepared by me, together with Petras Plumpa. He edited it and re-wrote it by hand. Some of the articles were re-written by Sr. Genovaitė Navickaitė. The rest was completed, collated and distributed by me to people I knew. (Later Petras Plumpa was instrumental in printing hundreds of copies of the Chronicles.) The name "Vivo vocos" ("Calling the Living") was chosen.

We wanted that the publication would receive the approval of the Church, so I travelled to Bishop V. Sladkevičius' who lived in exile, to get his blessing. In front of the bishop on the table was a Polish newspaper "Kronikos" and a popular Russian publication "Chronicle of Current Events".

The bishop approved the material presented and suggested the name "Chronicles..." with the following remark: 'Wouldn't it be best to write about one event and include a short commentary?' Subsequently I got the approval also of my Jesuit Provincial Superior, Fr. Jonas Danyla SJ. The "Chronicles of the Catholic Church in Lithuania" were thus born, back in March 1972.

The Initial School of Hard Knocks

There was no fixed date when a new issue should appear. Another edition would come out when enough articles were on hand. To gather material for publication was not an easy task. The publishers were fortunate to have a large group of like-minded priests, sisters and lay people who were dedicated, could be trusted not to betray, and who knew how to remain silent. People, generally, were not easily persuaded to talk or write about their troubles, especially knowing that they may land in the *Chronicle*. They wanted to remain anonymous for fear of reprisals from the KGB. However, there were some priests and lay people who were very brave to present their articles for publication.

Other Lithuanian underground publications were also appearing, such as *Aušra* that was edited by Fr. Lionginas Kunevičius. New editions of the *Chronicle* kept coming out and remained in circulation for 17 years, until 1989.

At first not many understood why these facts had to be gathered and publicized. The contention was that "everyone here knows what the Soviet government is doing". The reason for making it public, however, was to publicize as many facts of determined resistance as possible, so that others could learn from it and take courage. Care was taken to gather facts from reliable sources.

Anonymous accounts were not desired and those that seemed somewhat odd and over-stated were rejected. Later the *Chronicles* not only reported repressions of the Church, but also other human rights abuses.

Another important concern was to find trustworthy co-workers. This was often accomplished through contacts of people known to you personally or recommended by someone who could be trusted. Archbishop Tamkevičius related such a meeting:

When still serving in Vilkaviškis I met my pastor's (parish priest's) brother, Kazimieras Ambrasas, a Lithuanian language teacher. He readily agreed to do the editing. We made a plan of how we would meet. Whenever he visited his brother, I would bring the articles to him, and a few days later I would pick up the hand-edited text and return home to Simnas where in a few days' time I would type out the hand-written copy.

There was great risk involved for those who wrote out articles or edited by hand because the KGB could easily determine the author. We had also learned to change the fonts on the typewriters for the same reason. His brother, the pastor, knew nothing of our activities, and we didn't tell him in case he might be interrogated by the KGB at some future time.

Making copies was primitive, at first. People would type through several sheets of carbon paper. Later skilled printers devised copying machines that increased the volume of copies that could be made for distribution.

When Sr. Elena Suliauskaitė (*Eucharistic Heart of Jesus*) joined the ranks, the work load eased considerably. For many years she carried the greatest load of responsibility and she was very well aware of the imminent danger. Here is what she has said:

After consultation and editing, I typed everything twice. If the paper was thin, twelve copies could be made at once; if it was heavier, then 10 copies. These first 20 or 24 copies were then passed on to the people known just to us. A few copies I kept for myself to take to Kaunas and Vilnius. There they were duplicated further. Where and by whom they were printed, I did not know. It was better not to know too much—neither who does what, nor from whom one gets the copies, or where the copies end up. This makes it easier if one is subjected to interrogation.. I myself couldn't tell anyone about my work; not even my parents or my sisters. Even the nuns in my congregation did not know, except for the sisters with whom I resided and who were involved in this same work. At first I only knew Fr. Sigitas Tamkevičius and the two women in whose house I stayed, and where I did my copying. Otherwise I knew no one else involved in the publication.



* *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* gradually became better known in the West. It was featured at various human rights events, such as the *Helsinki Spiegel* (Helsinki Mirror) exhibition held in Vienna, in November 1986. *Pictured: The Chronicle* room of Helsinki Spiegel, with contributors Karoline Masiulis (Paris), *left*, and Algimantas Taškūnas (Hobart/Australia) *right*.

- Photo: Baltic House, Champigny.

Message to the Free World.

It became evident that putting out editions of the *Chronicles* accomplished just half the job, and that distributing it in Lithuania was not enough. The message had to reach the Free World. In the early years there were few tourists from the West. Contacts were again renewed with dissidents in Moscow, like Sergejus Kovaliovas (curiously enough, the first four letters of his surname means "battle" in Lithuanian). Lithuanians had many friends among the dissidents in Moscow who devised ways to get the *Chronicle* to the West. Archbishop Tamkevičius remembers them with great respect:

"We owe a great deal of gratitude to the quiet-mannered Sergejus Kovaliovas, the always good-humoured Aleksandras Lavutas, the very sensible Tatjana Velikanova, the super-energetic cleric Glebas Jakuninas and others. All of us were of a different nationality, religion and social background.

However, we had a common purpose—to inform the world about the violation of human rights by the Soviet Union. We were convinced that this information is the most important weapon in the fight against a totalitarian system."

The journey to Moscow to deliver new editions of the *Chronicle* was fraught with danger of being frisked at check-points. To take a plane became impossible when passports became a requirement. It became necessary even when taking a train, not to board one in Lithuania, but to choose a roundabout way to get to Moscow; for example, have someone drive you to Belarus, then hitchhike to another town and only then buy the ticket and board a train for the remaining 20 hours' ride to Russia's capital—always keeping watch that you weren't being followed.

At first Fr Sigitas Tamkevičius made this risky journey; later others undertook it, like Sr. Nijolė Sadūnaitė (Congregation of the Immaculate Conception) and Sr. Bronė Vazgelevičiūtė.

It was decided to take two copies of the *Chronicle* to Moscow. One was for the Russian publishers who used some of the material in their Russian-language publication of the *Chronicle of Current Events*. The second copy would be smuggled out to Western journalists.

Once the Vatican Radio or Radio Free Europe transmitted some information from a new issue of the *Chronicle*, the publishers in Lithuania knew that their latest *Chronicle* had reached the West successfully. However, the waiting was sometimes ever so long.

In the beginning it was not even known to whom to address and send the issues. Only the address of the Lithuanian newspaper *Draugas* ("Friend") in Chicago was known, and *Draugas* received some of the first issues. Later the office of the *Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid* in New York City became the recipients, and people like Father Kazimieras Pugevičius, Rožė Somkaitė and later Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Putnam, CT became important links for the *Chronicles'* distribution.

The *Chronicles* were subsequently translated into various languages and distributed world-wide. It became evident that it was not necessary to risk making many copies in Lithuania and be caught by the KGB: the important thing was that the information about the Soviet repressions reached the Free World.

Microfilming the *Chronicle* issues and hiding them in souvenirs became a solution for despatching them from Lithuania. Another obstacle was to locate tourists who would be willing to take the risk and transport them across the border. Many demonstrated their love of the old homeland by agreeing to take the risk.

Meanwhile, in 1978, Fr. Sigitas Tamkevičius learned from a visiting Orthodox priest that a *Committee of Christians to Defend the Rights of the Faithful* had been formed. Having received the approval of Fathers Svarinskas, Zdebskis and others, Fr. Tamkevičius came to the conclusion that the time was ripe to go public: the *Lithuanian Catholic Committee of the Faithful* was formed. Twenty documents of the Catholic Committee were drawn up and distributed, but not one response was received. Only after five years did Fr. Tamkevičius get the chance to see that the KGB had very diligently collected all these documents.

The KGB was, in time, able to get wind of how the information was getting to the West. One after the other, the Moscow dissidents were arrested. Larger numbers of tourists from the West, mostly expatriate Lithuanians, were now arriving in Lithuania; but their surveillance was being tightened.



* Nijolė Sadūnaitė (*centre*), photographed with her house warden and the warden's dog, at Boguchany, Siberia, in 1978. Three years earlier, the KGB (Soviet secret police) had found pages from the *Chronicle* in Nijolė's typewriter. For this, she was sentenced by a Soviet court to a total of six years' strict regime labour camp and Siberian exile.

A number of other *Chronicle* volunteers were also arrested by the KGB from time to time and received similar harsh sentences.

In 1973, 15 months after the *Chronicles* first appeared on the scene, its initial issue was found in Sister Jadvyga Stanelytė's home. On July 5th, Case #345 was drawn up against her. All people under suspicion were being followed. On November 20th numerous searches of private property were made, and many more people were followed.. New hiding places for gathered information had to be found, new duplicating machines had to be constructed for those confiscated during raids, new contacts had to be made to replace those arrested. Many individuals, too numerous to mention here, who wanted to serve the Church and their country, suffered at the hands of the KGB.

Some of the priests were Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas, Juozas Zdebskis, Jonas Kauneckas, Jonas Lauriūnas, Bronius Antanaitis, Jonas Boruta, Pranciškus Račiūnas, Kazimieras Zemenas.

The lay people were Petras Plumpa, Juozas Grazys, Vladas Lapienis, Povilas Bauža, Anastazas Janulis, Virgilijus Jaugelis, Povilas Petronis, Jonas Stasaitis, The nuns included Sr. Ona.Vitkauskaitė, Sr. Genovaitė Navickaitė, Sr. Ona Pranckūnaitė, Sr. Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Sr. Bernadeta Mališkaitė, Sr. Ona Kavaliauskaitė, Sr. Birutė Briliutė, Sr. Bronė Kibickaitė, Sr. Ona Šarakauskaitė, Sr. Janina Judikevičiūtė, Teklė Steponavičiūtė.

Without all these and many more dedicated and courageous people involved, it would have been hard to imagine the continuous publication of the *Chronicles* for 17 years. It can be truly said to be a miracle!

The KGB Network had set up an elaborate tracking and investigative system with many informers, interrogators and court officials. There were volumes and volumes of material compiled from information gathered by informers, tape recordings, interrogations and court proceedings. Foreign visitors, especially priests, were followed and their conversations recorded, and their Lithuanian hosts were later interrogated.

For one priest alone, Fr. Alfonsas Svarinskas, there were 17 volumes of proceedings against him, especially for his sermons. He was tried time again for slander and his answer was: *I merely sought better conditions for the faithful, as prescribed in the [Soviet] Constitution.* He spent a total of 22 years in Soviet jails.

All in all, the KGB was not able to get at the crux of the information they so desired to learn, e.g., **who** was the editor of the *Chronicle*? The question remained unanswered because those interrogated knew what to say and what to leave unsaid.

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius was eventually arrested in 1983 and convicted to six years of hard labour in Siberia and another four years of exile, charged with various anti-Soviet activities. However, his editorship of the *Chronicle* was never proven. It remained an unsolved puzzle for the Soviet authorities, to the very end: for *someone* was continuing the editing while Sigitas was well and truly imprisoned.

The possibility of Fr Tamkevičius becoming arrested was a calculated hindsight some time before it actually occurred. In preparation, Fr. Jonas Boruta (now a bishop) had agreed to take over the editing of the *Chronicle*, should the necessity arise; and he did so, immediately after Fr Tamkevičius's arrest.

In 1984, Sigitas Tamkevičius' interrogator V. Urbonas visited him in the prison camp. Urbonas asked directly, "You were the editor of the *Chronicle*, weren't you?" Tamkevičius said, "Is the *Chronicle* no longer appearing?" "Yes, it *is* still coming out," Urbonas shot back. That was like music to Tamkevičius' ears!

What can be said about the segment of the population that was collaborating with the Soviet occupiers, whose work was being orchestrated by the higher ups in the Soviet Union? There will always be those who join in because of ideology, to better their circumstances or because of fear of reprisals.

So it was in Lithuania. Many of the court officials, interrogators, agents and informers had Lithuanian *surnames*. Perhaps the day will come when their names will become publicly known and not be sealed off in archives by official agreement for the next 70 years. Those involved directly with Fr. Sigitas Tamkevičius's arrest and court case were: USSR prosecutor J. Bakučionis; the High Court Commission President M. Ignoras; and the lay commissioners A. Grigalavičienė and A. Ruzas.

The present Archbishop of Kaunas, Sigitas Tamkevičius, ended his reminiscences about the *Chronicles* with the following words:

Our gratitude to the Almighty for those years and people who did not expect to be rewarded but, nevertheless, each and every one of them stood in his or her place with an unquenchable ideal: for God and our Country!

Irene ŽEMAITAITIS, B.A. (Conn., Storrs), M.S. (Southern Connecticut) is a former lecturer at VMU (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas) and teacher of languages in the US and Lithuania.

The factual information in this article has been based extensively on the following book, published in Lithuanian: SPENGLA, Vidas (pseud.), *Bažnyčia, "Kronika" ir KGB voratinklis. 2nd edition.* Vilnius: Katalikų Akademijos Leidykla, 520 pp. ISBN 9986-592-31-3

Discovering New Aspects of Lithuania

Recent conservation movements in Lithuania have had a colourful history. Until 1987, the Soviet occupation authorities permitted only one environmental group in Lithuania. It was called 'The Society for the Protection of Nature', with a membership of 350,000. The scope of this organization was limited, centring around issues such as manufactured Christmas/New Year decorations, to avoid the destruction of Lithuanian forests. It was a token organization, designed more for image than substance.

Independent environmental groups began appearing in Lithuania in 1987, such as *Atgaja*, *Žvejonė* and *Žemyna*. Membership escalated, and the environmental associations acted as one of the main radical forces for the democratisation of Lithuania. The Lithuanian Green Movement (LGM) was established in 1988, to act as an umbrella body for all environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The Lithuanian Green Party (LGP) was formed in 1989. The LPG went on to win four seats at the first free elections. However, a split occurred between the LGP and the environmental NGOs. The LGP did not win any seats at the 1992 elections; and it did not contest the 1996 poll. In the meantime, the Lithuanian Green Movement's membership declined to approximately 260 by 1997.

All these little known facts, and many more, were traced and published in 1997 by Sarah Selena Taylor, in her Honours dissertation titled *Public participation and routinisation: The decline and transformation of Lithuanian environmentalism*. Sarah, a Sociology student, was the first Honours candidate to win the newly established Lithuanian Honours Scholarship at the University of Tasmania. Her successful work has since been followed by an impressive series of other Tasmanian dissertations.

Start of the Lithuanian Scholarship

The need for a Lithuanian Honours scholarship was first mooted during Simon Taškūnas's term as President of the Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania (1989-1992). However, the start was difficult. The largest Lithuanian foundations in Australia and in USA declined to finance the scheme.

* The scholarship idea was born during Simon Taškūnas's term of office as President of the Lithuanian Studies Society, 1989-1992. Today, Simon (pictured, right) is special counsel in the Singapore office of Freehills, a large Australasian commercial law firm. —Photo: Freehills.



A few wealthy individuals were approached without success: all offered plenty of comments, but no cash.

Nevertheless, a number of other societies and private persons did come forward with donations and the Tasmanian scholarship finally became a reality. At first, this scholarship was worth \$4,500 per annum; in 2001, the amount was increased to \$5,000 p.a. **Today, it is still the only scholarship in the whole of Australia that is sponsoring Lithuanian research at university level.**

The following Scholarship donations have been received to date:

Vladas Morkys Estate, \$20,000; Australian Lithuanian Community (Vic), \$2,000; Tasmania University Union Inc, \$1,500; Australian Lithuanian Community (NSW), Baltic Research Foundation (Tas.), \$1,000 each; Edward Leugoud, \$632; Australian Lithuanian Community (Sydney), V.Bosikis, \$500 each; Melbourne Lithuanian Pensioners Ass'n, \$200; V.Kruzas, \$165; Anonymous (Tas.), \$120; The Australian Lithuanian Community of Adelaide, Lithuanian Community in Hobart, Melbourne Skautininkų Ramovė, Regina Rupinkas, \$100 each; L.Cox, \$85; B.Prašmutas, \$80; Hon.J.Sharcunas, \$79; A.Kairaitis, \$70; S.Pacevičius, \$50; E.Aras, Mr Jahnsen & Mr Valeska, \$30 each; Dr P.Kabaila, N.Taylor, \$20 each; A.Giniunas, \$10.

This Scholarship is administered by the University of Tasmania. All Scholarship donations are income-tax deductible in Australia. If you wish to assist, please write your cheque or money order to *Tasmania University Foundation Trust*; attach a note clearly stating **Donation for Lithuanian Honours Scholarship**; and post to Tasmania University Foundation Inc, GPO Box 252-40, Hobart, Tasmania 7001 (Australia).

Letters to the Editor

A Friend in Need

Your reader Marjorie Rosenfeld has asked me to post the story of Aldona Krutulis about her father, a Righteous Gentile¹⁴, on the site <http://www.eilatgordinlevitan.com/vilna/vilna.html>

I think that it is most important to record the stories of Righteous gentiles in Lithuania. My father-in-law survived because of the help of such people (you could read his story on the *Kovno* site). I spoke to about a dozen survivors who as children were hidden by Lithuanians. Much is recorded about the participation of Lithuanians in the killing of their neighbours. It should be balanced by recording the stories of the brave Lithuanians who risked their lives to save their Jewish neighbours.

Eilat GORDIN LEVITAN

Los Angeles, USA.

<eilat.gordinlevitan@gmail.com>

Helping Migrants' Children

Your fine journal is meeting a great need for the Lithuanian migrants' children. Many of them do not speak Lithuanian and they find it difficult to get to know their ancestors' country – the country their parents had to leave against their own will.

After long years of occupation, Communism has left big scars in Lithuanian people's hearts and has wrecked their brains. However, the first signs of recovery are visible now. When times are hard, politicians and ordinary citizens do come together and reach a clear solution.

Your journal is presenting an ever improving Lithuania to the world. Thank you .

Povilas BABRAVIČIUS

Vilnius, Lithuania.

<diedukas@takas.lt>

¹⁴ The writer refers to Aldona Krutulis's story, published in last year's *Lithuanian Papers* (Volume 19 – 2005), pp.7-11.

The Red Cushion Ina BERTULYTĖ-BRAY

Seattle, USA

My father's cousin Theodora (1899-1987) and her elder brother Tadas Girvickas came to America in 1912, forced out by the harsh and hopeless conditions on farms in Lithuania. Theodora (Aunt Dorothy as we called her) started her new life in a glue factory in Idaho. She was thirteen years old, tiny for her age, so to get work, she had to pass for much older. As she told the story, her brother dressed her in outlandish clothes, applied some garish make-up, and apparently "fooled" the foreman into believing that she was 16!

She slaved like an adult, twelve hours a day, usually seven days a week, sleeping in her brother's bed at night while he worked the night shift – a widespread custom at that time. But she survived. Eventually, Tadas married, and they all moved to Seattle.

Aunt Dorothy, the vivacious, petite, funny, good-hearted, and very Lithuanian woman (to the end she retained her flawless Lithuanian), never was able to rise beyond hard, menial jobs. In time she married Fred Halam and they bought a house "way out" on Beacon Hill. Her brother and his family, however, returned to Lithuania in the 1930s where he developed a model farm, and prospered.



Right: Aunt Dorothy.

When my parents landed in Los Angeles in 1950, Aunt Dorothy's initial reaction to us could be described as almost hostile. As she explained some years later, she could not understand why we had left the "workers' paradise."

My family settled in Seattle in 1968 and over time we did develop an affectionate relationship with her. In Aunt Dorothy's Beacon Hill home, on her couch she proudly displayed a Lithuanian cushion - colourful, unique, hand-woven in Lithuanian designs. As she told us with a smile, it had been a gift from relatives when she visited her home country in the late 1950s. She delighted in telling the story of that extraordinary return, years before it became easier to get a Soviet visa and penetrate the Iron Curtain.

She would regale us with how she "lectured" her Lithuanian relatives on the ludicrous bureaucratic practices, the shabbiness of the surroundings outside their living quarters, the absurd system in their stores, their lack of a work ethic, and in general on the evils of their Communist ways.

For a woman with limited education, her perceptions surprised us, as did her apparent lack of fear of being so openly critical. For a tourist at that time, that could have been a "deadly sin." In the course of her reminiscing, she admitted that this trip had turned out to be far more than a sentimental journey to her past. It had opened her eyes wide to the true impact of Communism. After her trip to Lithuania, my parents indeed noticed a marked shift in her attitude toward us.

Years went by, Aunt Dorothy aged and her health deteriorated. The time arrived when I had to break up her meagre household. And there on the couch, in its habitual spot, lay the Lithuanian cushion, by now faded, a little frayed, abused by cats and who knows what else, but still an icon of the "Old Country", created by Lithuanian hands and of Lithuania's strands. Emotions tugged at my heart and I wanted to preserve it. Carefully, I unravelled the thread and pulled out the inner part. Nothing could have prepared me for what I found: This almost quintessentially ethnic and at that time clandestinely patriotic design, for a generation had served as a covering over a poppy-flower-red satin cushion, gold-embroidered with a huge Hammer and Sickle!

Did Aunt Dorothy create this ironic juxtaposition intentionally? Did she want to convey to me the message that in this cushion symbolically were combined the two forces that had shaped her life? Or did she simply use one cushion that she had at hand, to convert into a new one?

Whatever her answer might have been, the paradox of the "Red Cushion" represented the reality of that generation of the early 20th century. Those were the same "Red" immigrants who, in the early part of the 1900s, collected over a million dollars for the development of the emerging independent Lithuania. They were the people who laid the foundation in the United States on which political immigrants, in years to come, constructed the framework for our Lithuanian activities.

We know from reading Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) under what horrific conditions Lithuanians worked in the slaughterhouses of Chicago and in other areas. That book eventually led to far-reaching labour-protection legislation. But it took decades for conditions for the blue-collar worker to improve, and people continued to suffer, including Aunt Dorothy.

It was not coincidental that in the early 20th century, the American labour union movement and the Communist party frequently worked in tandem. And today, if we were to check over the Communist membership lists of long ago, we should not be surprised at the number of Lithuanian names. It had been a matter of perceived protection and survival, rather than ideology.

For us, the political immigrants, the World War II refugees from the USSR, such belief and affiliation on the part of our relatives had been very hard to accept. At times, this led to deep chasms in relationships. My family was no exception. But Aunt Dorothy's "Red Cushion" had received a new face, a new Lithuanian face, in the same way that an understanding slowly had been forged between those two earlier waves of very disparate immigrants.

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LITHUANIAN FOLKLORE:

Punktukas

A large rock called Punktukas lies deserted by the roadside, not far from the town of Anykščiai. Once upon a time, the devil wanted to block the door of the church of Anykščiai, and chose this rock for the job. But he failed, and the rock was abandoned in the fields.

The story goes that the parishioners of Anykščiai had built a beautiful church right on the road frequented by the devils. The devils did not like it, and they decided to destroy the new church.

Kipšas, a senior devil, found a big rock in a field. He made a straw rope, put it round the boulder, lifted it onto his shoulders, and headed for the door of the Anykščiai church. The idea was to block the front door completely, so that nobody could enter the church. Just as Kipšas was approaching the church, a cock crowed, the straw rope broke, and the rock fell off the devil's shoulders. Kipšas could not stop or try to rescue the rock: he had to disappear into the underworld promptly.

But the rock is still there today. And if you look closely, you can see a distinct groove, encircling the rock. This is where Kipšas had tied his straw rope around it.

Based on "Punktukas" in *Lithuanian Historical Legends, comp.* by Norbertas Vėlius, transl. Birutė Kiškytė.(2000). Vilnius: Vaga.



* **Punktukas now.** - Photo: *Lietuvių Enciklopedija* (Boston).

Australian Lithuanians and the Snowy Mountains Scheme

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The Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme (SMS), launched in 1949, has been one of the most ambitious engineering projects undertaken in Australian post-war history. A wealth of literature on this subject is available. The SMS received substantial publicity in 1999 when it celebrated the 50th anniversary since its inception. Although 'Snowy's' significance as both contributing to Australia's renewable power, inland prosperity and to its multiculturalism has been frequently described, and tributes have been paid to the men of various nationalities who had worked on the tunnel face, the Lithuanian input has so far received comparatively little attention.

After many years one of the protagonists, Ron Čėsna, has written a memoir of his participation in the construction of the SMS, providing a valuable testimony of the conditions the workers had to endure and of the Lithuanian contribution to the project¹⁵.

The Lithuanians of Snowy Mountains

Ron Čėsna has drawn up a comprehensive list of Lithuanians, noting the contractors who employed them, the type of employment and accommodation. Over 200 Lithuanians out of a total of approximately 100,000 workers were engaged in the Scheme in various capacities. This included a number of professional persons, such as engineers (P. Bimba, I. Alšauskas, A. Olšauskas, Mr. Vazgulevičius), two architects (E. Masiulis, A. Rimkus), a doctor of medicine (Dr. Stančikas) who was employed as a First Aid Officer, and a police officer (P. Bajelis).

University students of Lithuanian origin, temporarily employed in the 'Snowy', later took out degrees in the fields of engineering,

¹⁵ This unpublished manuscript consists of some 58 handwritten pages and is supplemented by a variety of materials relating to the *Snowy*, making up a total of some 70 pages.

architecture, law and medicine, notably Dr. A. Baužė who later headed a team of orthopaedic surgeons at a major hospital in Adelaide, South Australia.

The bulk of Lithuanians were variously employed as skilled tradesmen and, in most cases, as First Class miners. One of these, Jonas Kirša, distinguished himself by becoming the first so-called 'New Australian', selected to be union representative of the Australian Workers Union. Although union membership was compulsory, union activism among East European workers, including Lithuanians, virtually did not exist and involvement in strikes was rare. Nevertheless, Čėsna mentions Kirša in several parts of his *Memoirs*, stressing that he was well liked and respected by union officials and workers alike¹⁶.

The 'Snowy' Lithuanians were mainly engaged in working for either Norwegian and/or American contractors, but in the main, for the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Authority (SMHEA). Workers were accommodated in various camps and were involved in excavations of the Eucumbene tunnel, T2 Power Station, the Headrace and Tailrace tunnels, the shaft and the access tunnel into the Power Station. All SMS employees worked six days a week, including overtime. The food was excellent and the rooms in the camp, including all conveniences and comforts were free.

The conditions of employment were characterised as *hard living conditions*, relating to both the harsh living and working conditions as well as the accommodation and the danger of the workplace. Very soon, with the help of the unions, the workers received both better food and accommodation, but, above all, higher wages and bonus payments.

¹⁶ Ron Čėsna's *List* consists of 190 names of Lithuanians who were engaged in the SMS. This number, according to Čėsna, can be easily extended, allowing the figure to rise "over 200". The *List* has been supplemented by archival material from the National Archives as well as recollections of other Lithuanians who had worked in the 'Snowy' (Algis Bajelis; Petras Bimba; A. Dudaitis; Romualdas Genys; Endrius Jankus; Martynas Kaitinis; Jonas Kirša; E. Kuras; Jonas Povilėnas; Aleksas Saulius; Mr. Sirutis; Jurgis Staugirdas; L. Šilas; Vladas Šneideris; R. Tarvydas; Romualdas Tumpa).

* Lithuanian miners Romas Genys (*left*), Ron Čėsna (*right*) and an Italian electrician (*kneeling*, name not known) inside the Kaiser-Perini-Morrison-Raymond Joint Venture T2 underground power station, in 1958.

Čėsna subsequently wrote his comprehensive *Memoirs* which have provided an important source for this report.



The original contract conditions required workers to drill 23 metres a week (the usual rate before 1954). With the increasing pressure placed on the workers by the contractors, tunnels were soon being excavated at the rate of 147 metres, which was considered to be a world-record speed. Fast drilling was rewarded with the miners receiving prizes for this.

The Lithuanians were among those awarded prizes for fast hard-rock drilling. One of them was R. Genys who received a prize from Thiess Bros. on 16 March 1963, for drilling 552 feet (168 metres).

Čėsna also reported on the high work ethic and great physical endurance among the Lithuanians. On the other hand, the Lithuanians were no angels, as they were engaged in raucous behaviour on paydays, but were still tolerated by the bosses.

One of the highlights of the SMS project was the breakthrough of the Guthega-Munynang tunnel on 5 May 1954, an event that was celebrated widely.

A group photograph of the people involved in the breakthrough included two Lithuanians (Jonas Aleksandravičius and Ron Čėsna). This photo was reproduced widely in Australian and Lithuanian newspapers as well as in McHugh's book, *The Snowy*. To mark this occasion, Australia Post brought out a series of stamps.

Danger on the job, fatalities

Of all the work carried out in the Snowy Scheme, underground work in the mines was by all accounts dreadful. Men who worked in the mines had the most dangerous job of all, exacerbated by the fact that they worked with explosives. They also had to face arduous physical tasks such as long hours of drilling, blasting, timbering, knocking down rocks and driving locomotives. Not a "woman's knitting circle", was at best an understatement: 121 men died.

Čėsna has listed fifteen Lithuanians who were injured between 1949 and 1961. Two died, namely Jonas Jasiunskas and Kazys Błazinskas. Ron has expressed deep regret that neither of these men have been fittingly included in the Cooma, NSW memorial and its Roll of Honour which is dedicated to the memory of those who lost their lives whilst engaged on the construction of the SMS:

Jonas Jasiunskas, the friend of Leonas Šilas, was born in Telšiai, Lithuania, 1925; he worked as an electrician for SMHE and was married to an Austrian. He was electrocuted on the job in the middle of 1950; Kazys Błazinskas was employed by SMHEA. He died in one of the camps in the middle of 1950.

Čėsna himself suffered two major accidents. Whilst working at Surge Tank the first accident took place during a cave-in when he was buried under a large pile of rocks. The top of his head had been cracked open and eight front teeth had been knocked out.

Several years later, whilst working for Kaiser, the second large accident occurred, resulting in heavy injury: multiple compound fractures that required twenty operations and a series of skin and bone grafts. He spent five years in and out of hospital and was out of action for that time. He was eventually awarded damages of £A18,000.

Worthy of note is what happened after a worker was killed. Both in the *Memoirs* and in an *SBS Radio Interview*, Čėsna has recorded some details. Work was interrupted for 24 hours. Men reacted in a typical macho way. Nerves were on edge and at times "battles" in the form of boxing among the men took place, as a means of releasing tensions.

The family of the victim would be provided some form of financial compensation. Surprising from today's point of view was the fact that little attention was given to safety. Although helmets, waterproof trousers and boots were provided, no protective glasses or ear plugs were part of the equipment.

Community spirit among the 'Snowy' Lithuanians

Although there was little attempt to organize the Lithuanians, Čėsna's *Memoirs* provide evidence of a sense of community spirit. Around 1952, a Snowy Mountains Lithuanian Branch of the Australian Lithuanian Community (*Seniūnija*) was formed, which funded one issue of the Australian Lithuanian newspaper "Mūsų Pastogė" (*Our Haven*). When a visiting priest, Father Dr. Bačinskas, arrived at the camp, a considerable number turned up to greet him and appreciated being provided with Lithuanian newspapers. When a Catholic Church at Island Bend was built, the Lithuanians and the Irish soon lent a hand (*Tėviškės Aidai*, 28/01/2004). Most Lithuanians, as did other nationals, sat together at the same table, enjoying each other's company, at times engaged in visiting the pubs and engaging in recreational activities, such as gambling and other forms of recreation.

The 50th Anniversary of the SMS was organized by the Cooma Monaro Shire Council and the Snowy Mountains Authority. In anticipation of the anniversary, the Lithuanian community funded both, the Lithuanian flagpole and the flag that was ceremoniously hoisted in the Avenue of Flags. Instrumental in this were the local Lithuanian communities as well as the personal initiative of Mr Antanas Kramilius of Sydney who organized the donations.

Conclusion

Ron Čėsna's account of his personal experiences as a 'Snowy' worker strikes the reader with its graphic, laconic, unsentimental and fatalistic tone. His own contribution is played down, as he

emphasizes the contribution of his fellow Lithuanians, placing the following paragraph on the frontispiece of his *Memoirs*:

I started to work for Selmer's in 1953, being the youngest Lithuanian to have been given a miner's job. Since I spent a lot of time recuperating [from my accidents, kb] I would like to express my respect and pride in those Lithuanian bosses [foremen, kb] who were in charge of various miners' shifts and participated in breaking quite a few world records and received medals. The following miners worked longer and dug more tunnels than I did. They include: Stasys Andriejauskas, Vytautas Čeplikas, Romualdas Genys, Endrius Jankus, Antanas Kaitinis, Martynas Kaitinis, Jonas Kirša (Australian Workers Union Delegate), (+)Vytautas Kranauskas, Petras Mažeika, (+)Pranas Šereikis, Ričardas Šlikovas (Dick Scott), Jurgis Tendzigolskis, Romualdas Tumpa and (+)Vilius Žvilis. **Ex-Miner Renoldas Čėsna, Melbourne, 27.10.1999.**

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The World Around Us: Myths and Realities

Vilius BRAŽĖNAS

Vilnius

Lithuanians **can** have an impact on the world around us. This was proven by Lithuania's guerrilla war against the Soviet occupation in 1944-53. It was shown again by the restoration of the country's independence on March 11, 1990; and again by the unarmed Lithuanian civilians' heroic stand against the Russian tanks on January 13, 1991.

That the surrounding world - no matter how distant - affects Lithuania's fate was most clearly demonstrated by the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact and then by the Yalta Agreement. In either case, this means that we must grow stronger - especially in our spirit. We must develop a more precise understanding of the world around us, so that we may more effectively resist those external influences that can undermine our spirit, our freedoms, and our way of life.

The greatest threat to our understanding of the world around us is the effect of established myths. The late American humorist Will Rogers said that "the greatest damage comes not from what you don't know, but from what you know that just ain't so".

One of the biggest sources of confusion in discussions is the myth of "democracy". This myth is particularly harmful because "democracy" is a term which each person understands differently. We use the "D" word variously - in place of "self government", or "freedom", or a "free system" or a "free country". In fact, I doubt if anyone can name even one truly "democratic" state! I mean a state in which the majority has the absolute and totally unrestrained power to exercise the will of that majority.

Another persistent myth - originating from the Nuremberg trials of National Socialist [also known as "Nazi"] war criminals - is that the political "right", or "right-wing", is the same as Nazism. As a result, every attempt to defend the honour of one's own country, all resistance to being stripped of the national identity, is vulnerable to a depiction as "nationalistic", or "right-wing" which, in turn, have become tainted as alternative terms for "Nazism".



* There is nothing wrong with preserving one's national identity, *per se*.
 Pictured: Lithuanian women's group *Birutietės*, on a visit to Mt. Birutė.

By comparison, however, all forms of Socialism are leftist. Therefore "Nazism", i.e., Germany's National Socialist Workers' Party, is as much "Socialist" – and, *hence, Leftist* - as international socialism - Communism. So, we must not fear calling Lithuania a nation state.

Glancing around our Republic's horizons, even if we do so with our eyes closed, it is hard *not* to notice the signs of encroaching globalism. It is hard *not* to notice that those who espouse the New World Order are in the process of herding individual nations and states into a common one-world-government corral. Yet, it seems as though Lithuania's politicians and media try to avoid even mentioning the very word, *globalism*.

Possibly the most harmful myth - which had led many of the anti-communist immigrant communities in the US astray - was the myth that the pro-Soviet policies endangering the U.S. were being promoted and/or enacted by the politically naive or by the stupid.

Yet it turns out that even during the Roosevelt era there were some who saw past the fog. Even now, this myth of the "stupidity of the West" is widespread, including here, in Lithuania.

In 1966, an influential globalist historian, Carroll Quigley, published a book, *Tragedy and Hope*. Quigley - a member of the globalist private club, "The Council on Foreign Relations" (CFR) - described how the One-World-Government devotees amongst the USA's foreign affairs elitists were able to use the U.S. Government and its financial resources to establish the "New World Order".

A lack of knowledge can be as much a source of error as outright disinformation. For example, few people know – in Lithuania or anywhere else - of a very relevant article which appeared in the November/December 1994 issue of the *Foreign Affairs* magazine. The article by Anne Applebaum was titled "The Fall and Rise of the Communists". It explained why - in Lithuania and its formerly Soviet-occupied neighbouring governments - we see so many of the same people in high places who were the rulers during the Soviet occupation. Why? The Western diplomats feared the rise of "nationalism" in the countries that had regained their freedom. So, they chose to concentrate their support and promotion of leftists (who had been part of the *Nomenklatura*).

Fortunately, there are some important authority figures who are actually fearful of a One-World-Government. Pope Benedict XV, on July 25th, 1920, having observed the earlier efforts to create a world government, warned, "The coming of a World Government would banish all national loyalties... If these ideas are put into practice, there will inevitably follow an unheard-of reign of terror." And in his book (the "Keys of This Blood"), the late Vatican historian Malachi Martin wrote about Pope John Paul II's opposition to the increased secularisation of our world.

Yet, when contemplating the world around us, (specifically, around Lithuania) and the dangers of globalism, we should not forget that Russia, even before the advent of Bolshevism, was clearly infected with the globalist virus. It seems most likely that imperialism, driven by an ideology of Pan Slavism, led to Tsarist Russia's expansion in all directions.

Of those globalists who most directly affect the Lithuanian view of the world, probably the best known are George Soros and "Zbigie" Brzezinski. Soros operates from his own financial resources as well as from other funds. Brzezinski's abilities are said to be tied to the Rockefeller foundations, and the Trilateral Commission. Their activities and pronouncements need to be observed and assessed, to see which way the globalist winds are blowing and to understand their impact on our own countries.

For those who value freedom, any kind of World Government should be unacceptable. Yet, many nations were forced, for decades, to suffer a scaled-down version of world government by way of an entity we used to call the Soviet Union. Given the materialistic amorality of the globalists, and their grasping for world power at any cost, it is easier to understand the otherwise incomprehensible events of this era. In fact, many things become clearer such as leaving Berlin wide-open to the Red Army in 1945 and making generous concessions to Stalin at Yalta.

Communist ambitions for worldwide control have been shattered, as have those of the Nazis - Caesar - and Alexander the Great, before them. What some people can plan, other people - especially in their nations - can disrupt. But first, we need to rid ourselves of our myths and educate ourselves about the realities of the political world. Once you can truly see the world around you, then you can focus your energies on more effective activism in order to ensure that our children and our grandchildren will be able to enjoy freedom. I suggest we start by nurturing our core fighting spirit, our pride and our sense of patriotism.

Translated from the Lithuanian by Lyvia Bražėnas-Garsys.

Based on an address given by Vilius Bražėnas, on April 13, 2006,
at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Vilnius, Lithuania.

A Lithuanian political journalist and lecturer, Vilius BRAŽĖNAS was born in 1913, was educated in Lithuania and has been involved in resistance to Communism since 1939. He moved to the West in 1944 after facing the invading Soviet tanks. After migrating to USA, he spent 42 years actively campaigning for Lithuania's independence. He now lives in freed Lithuania. He is the author of five books, three of them on geopolitics.

Silent Resistance

The anti-Soviet guerilla war in Lithuania

Jonas ÖHMAN
Stockholm

The topic of armed resistance quickly leads to intensive debate, where strong positions are taken and it is not always easy to maintain a critical distance from the subject. Furthermore, concrete instances of rebellion have a tendency to be re-evaluated over time, and come to be seen in a different light. Examples of this are many and every case has its specific features, but there are important lessons to be learnt and standpoints to consider. The text below surveys armed resistance against the Soviet Union after the Second World War, and attempts to draw some conclusions and lessons for today. History, it has been said, is a living being, and the cases examined below support this point of view.

Generally speaking, one refers to those affected by communism in terms of victimization. This is true indeed, and from more than one point of view. One may here briefly note the enormous number of deportees, mainly to Siberia, for use as slave labour under rough, merciless conditions for periods up to 25 years, often leading to physical and psychic breakdown or death. Many were condemned to this fate without even the most primitive trial.

There is, however, also another side to it, not much spoken of. Not everybody agreed to conform to the new regime. Many of those in opposition did not flee their home countries. Furthermore, not everybody was easily dealt with by the authorities but swore to stand up against Soviet power using all means necessary.

Men and women formed an underground resistance with the ultimate aim to regain national freedom, as simple as it sounds. The amazing, almost unknown story of the harsh popular opposition encountered by the Red Lords in several countries - the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldavia, Caucasus and elsewhere - is worth telling about.

Few, if any, features of modern European history are so little known as the desperate resistance of the people in Eastern Europe after the Soviet takeover at the close of the Second World War. The so-called Iron curtain was indeed a most effective hindrance for all kinds of news and reliable information. Moreover, the many refugees escaping to the West generally decided to keep silent about what they were fleeing from, for more than one reason. Many children can now, as adults, tell of how their Eastern European parents, using all possible means, tried to keep them in oblivion about the causes and circumstances regarding how they ended up in another country, far away from their home soil.

The resistance in Lithuania serves as a good example. The small country on the Baltic sea is probably the territory where the opposition, as a proportion of the general population, was the most intensive, enduring and furthermore possibly the best organized. The Lithuanian *rezistencija* presented a severe source of concern to Kremlin well into the beginning of the 1950s, and they accomplished this – a remarkable fact - with almost no effective or consistent support from outside the country itself.

Armed movements are of course the most spectacular feature of any underground resistance. No mercy was given by either side. More than 30,000 people in total were killed during this ten-year war. At the beginning, open battle involving large units from both sides were common. For Lithuanians, the clash between partisans and Soviet forces that took place in the Kalniškės forest on May 16th 1945 has a special importance. Exactly one week after VE-day, two battalions from the 122 regiment of the Soviet interior troops, then called the NKVD, launched an assault on about 80 guerillas.

The fight lasted all day around a few forest hills from where the surrounded, heavily outnumbered guerillas were able to repel one charge after another, their machine guns and rifles exacting a heavy toll on the advancing NKVD soldiers. Finally, a number of guerillas managed to break out, leaving more than half of their comrades, including a few women, behind. The event is still vividly remembered in Lithuania today, not the least for its symbolic meaning.

The fact that it took place after VE-day was an indisputable confirmation that the war was by no means over, and that plenty of blood was still to be shed in the forthcoming decade, until the last armed opposition ceased in the middle of the 1950s.

Armed underground resistance against a well prepared, equipped and experienced opponent is a very delicate matter. It takes a lot of information to accomplish even the most basic operations and it is furthermore very complicated to adjust and adapt to the ever-changing tactics and counter-tactics of the opponent, not to mention the difficulty of making strategic decisions. In order to be able to perform effective resistance, a steady flow of information is necessary.

Such information cannot be delivered by normal means and it must be provided to the recipient at any cost. The stories of the messengers, mainly women, who travelled long distances by all available means such as trains, trucks and horse carts, are astounding. Risking their lives again and again in roadblocks or identity checks, their silent effort more than once saved lives and provided crucial information for highly important decisions.



* For almost ten years, thousands of Lithuanian men and women fought against the Russian invaders and their local quislings. Above: Two partisans of the Kęstutis partisan district, Western Lithuania, 1949, Milda Živatkauskaitė (left) and Jonas Paliokas (right),

This relatively efficient liaison network, together with broad public support, especially in the countryside, was one of the main reasons why the resistance could hold out for more than a decade under the worst imaginable conditions.

To this, one may add the vast number of pamphlets and newspapers produced and distributed by the resistance, often under extremely primitive conditions in hideouts and farmhouses. The impact of these primitive means of spreading news, given the prevailing situation, cannot be underestimated. Sometimes hundreds of people would read the same copy of the only source of non-Soviet information available to them. These activities must have made quite an impact, if the reaction by the authorities is to be taken as an indication. The Soviets made massive and enduring efforts to search for, and eliminate, these little news pamphlets. Sometimes, an assumed location for "mail delivery" would be under surveillance for months to tie up loose ends before striking against the clandestine editorial, production and distribution structures involved.

Having at first taken the form of an open rebellion - when guerilla forces in 1944 and the beginning of 1945 *de facto* controlled large parts of the rural territories, and when no party official could travel the country without an armed escort - the fight over time evolved into a deadly game of hide-and-seek. More than 10,000 bunkers were made all over Lithuania to evade search parties by the Soviet security forces and the *Stribai*, the local militia that for various motives had joined the Soviet side. The search parties could be made up of hundreds, sometimes thousands of people, searching the soil and forest with specially made metal spears and mine sweepers that detected metal. If a bunker was detected it was immediately surrounded, often by large forces that were positioned in two or three concentric chains. At first, efforts to make the guerillas give up were initiated, in order to gain information through interrogation. Very often, however, it ended with the blockaded guerillas blowing themselves up with hand grenades or mines after a last desperate stand.

Just as often, it must be said, the Soviets were not able to locate the well camouflaged hideouts. Stories of guerillas lying still and quiet in their bunker, often located beside or inside a farmer's

house, while the surroundings were thoroughly searched, are manifold. Nightingale recalls how he used to aim a pistol, resting comfortably in his hand, at the bunker entrance, waiting for the first soldier to stick in his head. Sometimes, the search would last for several hours, even days, before the Soviet soldiers were ordered to call it off.

As the war changed its character, ambushes and hit-and-run attacks soon became the main fighting tactics of the guerillas. Soviet troops were assaulted along the roads while communist party members and others loyal to the regime were killed and abducted, to disappear forever. One could mention an incident where top local party officials were invited to an engagement party in the city of Marijampolė. After everybody got drunk, the presumed fiance, a hardened guerilla with the codename "Small", pulled out two handguns and shot all the party members present, in the head. This operation, called the "Pancake party," has become legendary as one of the most cold-blooded acts in the history of the Lithuanian resistance.

The Soviets, in turn, showed no mercy to their opponents, not even after they were dead. Many witnesses can testify to how the local population would be summoned to the town square after a battle between guerillas and security forces. The bodies of the slain guerillas were lined up against a wall and all present had to file along the often severely mutilated bodies. Needless to say, sometimes someone's boyfriend, brother, son or father would be lying there. If anyone passing showed the least sign of sorrow or pain, security officers immediately grabbed the person in question, dragged him or her into their facilities and started to question them about possible connections with the fallen fighter. There are many testimonials about the ability of individuals to keep calm while walking past the bodies. After this humiliating treatment, the corpses were usually dumped into a swamp or a gravel hole by the authorities.

If a civilian was believed to have connections with the resistance - real or just possible - the most common measure was immediate deportation to any one of the many prisons and camps located all over the Soviet Union.

* Unable to defeat the Lithuanian freedom fighters in the battle field, the Soviets infiltrated the partisan units and destroyed them from within. Some traitors posed as underground activists and deviously delivered their fellow Lithuanians into the Soviets' hands. One such double agent was Vilnius university professor J. Markulis-Erelis (right), who betrayed many partisans' leaders and other devoted patriots.



The greater part of the deportees, it should be noted, consisted of women and children, often members of a guerilla's family. Fewer men were deported in part because they were better able to escape during the dramatic manhunts in the villages, as opposed to the weaker women and children. This might seem like a cowardly behavior, but it makes sense since the families were in any case separated before they were caged in railway transports. Often, spouses and their children never saw each other again. The vast, silent plains of remote Siberia effectively put an end to almost every kind of opposition. Often, the camps claimed death as the ultimate vow of silence from their inmates.

In many cases Siberia was not, however, considered a sure way to silence rebellious figures. To this day, few of those executed and buried at some unknown location have been found. Although it does happen that some are discovered. One could mention the group of youngsters at Marijampolė High in southern Lithuania who, watching their friends and relatives being deported, decided to form a secret resistance cell in order to support the opposition by whatever means.

When a deportation train was about to leave, they put hand grenades in the railway switches to prevent the trains from departing. Eventually, they were betrayed and arrested. Accused and sentenced for anti-Soviet activities, they were executed in the cellar of the KGB-headquarters in Vilnius and buried secretly at a site not far from the present city centre. Their bones and skulls, found and identified just recently, testify to their tragic bravery.

The location of the remains of one of the most famous guerillas, Juozas Lukša, lured and killed in an ambush in 1951, is unknown to this day. His body was probably ordered destroyed so that he could not become a symbol for the resistance, even after death. In the case of Lukša, though, ironically for the Soviets, it was too late. As a courier and representative of the resistance, he wrote a book about the atrocities taking place in his homeland during a stay in Paris. His book, *Partisans*, describes several features of the dramatic fight waged by a few against the Soviet terror.

The tactics used by the Soviets against the resistance indeed knew almost no limits when it came to inventiveness and ruthlessness. One of the most spectacular examples of this were the special squads formed according to principles already in use in Ukraine back in the 1920s, later refined by the Soviet security officer, Aleksey Sokolov, for use in Lithuania. Having acquired the necessary experience in the even more bloody guerilla war in Ukraine, he was despatched to Lithuania to set up fake guerilla units, dressed in uniforms captured from fallen guerillas and with one or more native speaker in the unit. These special squads were used to try to lure and kill the guerillas by cunning and deception, but also to spread horror and uncertainty by, for instance, killing innocent families, making it look like the work of the resistance.

When addressing the anti-Soviet guerilla war it must be noted that one is talking about a war that has never been officially acknowledged elsewhere. As the Soviet security forces were intensifying their manhunt in the Lithuanian forests, looking for the deeply dug-in guerillas with mine sweepers and dogs in the end of the 1940s, the resistance fighters desperately increased their efforts to get some public attention in the West.

Couriers literally shot themselves through the Iron curtain carrying backpacks with photos, documents and even pleas written in the languages of the leaders and decision makers they were aimed at. Alas, they soon found that the risks taken were in vain. Silence, disbelief and indifference were the West's reply.

In the Soviet Union itself, news of the low intensity but merciless "War of the Woods" (a term coined by the Estonian writer Mart

Laar in an eponymous book on the resistance in his homeland) on the western borderlands was kept from the public. Among the Soviet interior security forces themselves, the unofficial term for the long-lasting campaign against the anti-Soviet "bandits" was *nezrimyj front*, the invisible front. The Kremlin had no interest whatsoever in acknowledging this challenge to their superiority, waged by peasant boys and girls, led by a few students, priests, officers and school teachers in the forests and villages of the tiny countries on the Baltic sea coast.

One of the most tragic features of this public oblivion is the dubious moral support the resistance received via radio from various sources in the West. The public silence did certainly not mean that the Western governments in question were not aware of what was going on. Many can testify to repeated promises for support and even military intervention to overthrow the Red occupiers provided via special radio broadcasts aimed at the countries under Soviet control, promises that were never even seriously considered. Practical support to the resistance was extremely limited.

When asked about this matter, a surviving experienced Lithuanian guerilla, Povilas Pečiulaitis, who was known under the guerilla codename "Nightingale", simply responded that the only evidence of support he ever saw was 16 sub-machinegun-rounds given to him after a CIA-led airdrop in 1950.

Needless to say, the US and other intelligence services increased their interest in the resistance in the Soviets after the beginning of the so-called Cold War. Some efforts were undertaken to set up spy networks in Lithuania, among other countries, in order to get some idea of Soviet military preparations in case of war. For this tricky matter, refugees and other exiles in the West were drafted and trained in France, Sweden, West Germany and elsewhere, in order to infiltrate them back to their homelands.

The largest training facility was located in Kaufbeuren in the south of West Germany. These rather half-hearted and somewhat naive attempts, in combination with the counter-measures taken by the extremely effective Soviet counter intelligence, made the efforts more or less useless or even counter-productive.



* The Soviets displayed the bodies of dead partisans in market squares and in other public places. Any passerby showing the slightest sign of recognizing the dead was arrested and interrogated.

It even seems as if the last agents, drafted in 1951, were sent back mainly to get rid of them, thereby guaranteeing their silence about the shadowy operations they had been a part of. One example is the Lithuanian journalist Julijonas Butėnas who was air dropped in the spring of 1951 and soon thereafter was killed under tragic and somewhat strange circumstances: once they were surrounded, he was shot by his comrade.

Ironically, efforts on the part of the guerillas to provide intelligence to the West were surprisingly exact and would have been of a high value in the case of war. When the above-mentioned Nightingale was eventually betrayed and captured in 1951, he was carrying detailed information about a strategic radar installation in southern Lithuania, meant to be distributed to US intelligence. It may be added that the installation, according to the information gathered by the guerillas, may have been built by US airmen, who were captured by the Soviets at the end of the war from German POW-camps and never heard of since.

It should here be noted that preliminary efforts to obtain more exact information on these activities, including the preparation of agents in Germany, from official sources in the US have so far been unsuccessful. In response to an official request, the only reply given by the CIA was, "We do not cooperate with civilians."

Perhaps these activities - that could be in some sense be defined as "terrorist training" - are too sensitive in the context of ongoing political games, especially in view of the legacy of the anti-Soviet guerilla training in Afghanistan in the 1980s, which eventually paved the way for today's Muslim-based global terror networks. Perhaps it is related to the fear that the relatives of those involved and who perished may lodge claims for compensation. At this stage, one can only speculate about the reasons, and continue the search for information.

The post-war resistance in Lithuania lasted for almost ten years, beginning in 1944 and continuing until 1953. One could, however, also claim that it lasted from 1940 to 1953, a period of thirteen years. Here it must be noted that Germany from 1941 to 1944 occupied the Baltic countries, together with a large part of what is now the Soviet Union, which makes for a confusing history in these parts. A closer look, however, shows that the very same people who opposed the Soviets to a very large extent opposed the Germans as well, using methods similar to the ones used against the Soviets. This was the case for several prominent resistance leaders. As a somewhat tragic-comic detail, it might be mentioned that the Soviet authorities at first, in 1944-45, left alone those people who had participated in anti-German activities, believing them to be loyal to the new Soviet authorities. Soon enough they discovered that those same people quickly began to organize resistance against the new occupant.

It seems clear that active participation in resistance activities and a longing for national independence are intertwined, and to a higher degree than one may think at first. This might seem a banal remark, but some hint of the profound and painful significance of this statement can be glimpsed if one thinks about it in light of the present situation in Iraq. Without elaborating any further on this idea, it seems that the dearly bought lesson of the popular anti-Soviet resistance after Second World War might be useful to a larger extent than previously imagined.

Remnants of the experience of resistance in Lithuania would be felt until independence was achieved in the beginning of the 1990s. One could mention the incident on July 31, 1990 when a number of young border guards of the newly independent state

were surrounded at night in their barracks at Medininkai and seven of them were executed with shots to the head. This was probably done by the special interior forces of the Soviet Union, the so-called OMON, which still exists under the same name in Russia. One of the border guards, a certain Tomas Šernas, miraculously survived (the bullet passed between the halves of his brain) and he could tell the story. It might further be added that these kinds of tactics are among the standard measures still used by the Russian security forces in Chechnya, for instance.

When studying the counter-guerilla techniques developed in Ukraine and Lithuania it becomes clear that the tactics from the 40s and 50s are still being used to discredit and destabilize the resistance. One could mention several incidents in recent years in the Caucasus, by which several thousand of people have been abducted and/or executed by unidentified units for unclear reasons or no reasons at all; and with no one being able to tell who had actually performed the deed. In a number of cases it has been established that the abductions and killings have been performed by Russian-controlled units in order to create uncertainty and fear, and so silence anyone who considered joining the opposition. Further, every Chechen fighter has a personal FSB security officer attached to his file: a similar system previously used against the anti-Soviet resistance participants.

Sometimes, however, not even fear among one's opponents is good enough. The blowing up of a number of multistory residences in Moscow in 1999 remains to a large extent a mystery, not the least since some available evidence points to the Russian Secret Service (FSB) as a probable initiator of the bombings. Yet the Chechens were blamed, and this was used as a reason to initiate renewed military action on Chechen territory.

Here one could mention another circumstance connected to the theme of this essay. A part of the very same NKVD forces, the 25th NKVD regiment, used to deport literally all the Chechens in 1944 to Siberia and Central Asia – an act which in the long term paved the way for the ruthless acts of war in the last decade in the Caucasus – was soon thereafter despatched to Lithuania, where it suffered heavy casualties in 1945-46.

Without neglecting the many differences between the present-day conflicts and those of the history, the past nevertheless holds more lessons of consequence than one might at first conclude. It seems that the history of the anti-Soviet resistance, and the silence surrounding it, hold a special relevance to the present.

The reasons for this are many, one of the main being that history is written by the victorious. Another reason is that, as long there is more to gain than to lose by keeping quiet, - then that is exactly what people, and countries, will do. Both parties in question, in this case, the US and Russia, do not seem to be eager to talk about their past involvement in the events described above. They remain silent even now, each for their own specific reasons.

It is indeed remarkable, how the Lithuanian fighters did not give in to the pressures of the most totalitarian system ever to exist. Their fight took place in a space of silence, bearing in mind that they were not officially acknowledged by either side in the main global conflict of the day, the Cold War. One could claim that this silence regarding the armed resistance against the Soviet hegemony still prevails today.

The silent struggle once waged throughout the forests of the Baltic sea, on the tundra in Siberia, in the bunkers, on the bloody town squares in front of the local security office, in the execution cellars, in the production and distribution of primitive news pamphlets, by keeping quiet about information to be delivered under tough, sometimes almost impossible conditions, is in a way still silent. And this remains the case while the story of the resistance of the people in Eastern Europe may have more to tell us about the price of Freedom than we would have ever imagined.

Jonas ÖHMAN is a Swedish translator and journalist. He has interested himself in the armed resistance against the Soviet Union for the last 5 years. Jonas Öhman has translated, into Swedish, seven books by Lithuanian authors, including two of the best-known Lithuanian books on the resistance. He is now interviewing participants and is visiting locations in preparation to making a documentary film.

Book Reviews

Baltic Postcolonialism

KELERTAS, Violeta, ed. (2006), *Baltic Postcolonialism*. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 464 pages. ISBN 90 420 1959 X.

Some of the liveliest contributions to postcolonial studies in recent times have colluded with another discipline to challenge the theoretical parameters of each. It is at this dynamic intersection that *Baltic Postcolonialism* situates itself, launching a thorough and penetrating investigation into the issues that arise in the space between these two concepts.

Published as part of the Rodopi series *On the Boundaries of Two Worlds: Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics*, this edited volume contains the work of fifteen scholars with a shared concern to consider the Baltic states alongside the more obviously postcolonial nations of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. The contributors tackle this central issue from a variety of literary, cultural and historical perspectives, with the result that the widespread reluctance to conceive of the Soviet Union as a colonial empire is compellingly undercut.

Perhaps it is due to the strength of the argument for Baltic postcolonialism, as well as the argument's emergent nature, that the volume becomes bogged in the well-trodden territories of postcolonial theory. The editor comes close to acknowledging this problem in her introductory chapter, explaining the "risk of some repetition" as necessary to the process of ensuring a valid application of postcolonialism in this context. This validity, however, is convincingly established in David Chioni Moore's "Is the Post- in Postcolonialism the Post- in Post-Soviet?: Towards a Global Postcolonial Critique," the first essay in the collection and one to which many of the others respond.

Moore's essay, revised from its original publication in *PLMA* in January 2001, firmly locates Baltic postcolonialism in a manner that paves the way for the following essays to explore its diverse manifestations. It is a shame, then, that the majority of these essays require the reader to wade through a bulk of familiar debates in order to access some genuinely innovative and engaging scholarship.

This lends a cumbersome air to the collection that is exacerbated by the editor's unnecessary introductory chapter summaries, as well as by some clumsy stylistic inconsistencies – the layout of Andrejs Veisbergs' essay "Nazi and Soviet Dysphemism and Euphemism in Latvian," for example, is so messy as to render it almost unreadable.

With some rigorous editing the collection would more accurately reflect its innovative content, which will surely animate debate in a range of academic spheres. To dismiss *Baltic Postcolonialism* for its theoretical and stylistic superfluities would be to underestimate its potential to shed new light not only on postcolonial theory but on this site of its application. **Reviewed by Elizabeth MEAD.**

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The Long Path to Freedom

VENSLAUSKAITĖ - BOYLE, Marijona (2005), *Search for Freedom: The Man from Red October*. Klaipėda: Eglė. 288 pages. ISBN 9955-542-21-7. Available from Draugas, 4545 W.63rd St., Chicago, IL 60629, USA; or E-mail: redakcija@draugas.org Price US\$50, incl. postage.

If this tale of a Soviet navy captain's defection to the West at the height of the Cold War seems straight out of a Hollywood blockbuster, that's because it is – readers of Marijona Venšlauskaitė - Boyle's book will recognise its subject from the film adaptation of Tom Clancy's book *Hunt for Red October* starring Sean Connery. Using classified Soviet documents made available after Lithuania's independence in the 1990s, Boyle has pieced together a lost fragment of Cold War history and in doing so has brought to life the story of the real man behind Clancy's fiction.

The story is certainly an intriguing one. In 1961 Lithuanian Captain Jonas Pleškys of the Soviet submarine service took his ship to the Swedish island of Gotland and there staged his defection. Escaping to the United States under the protection of the CIA, Pleškys embarks on what Boyle calls a "desperate search for freedom" (p.10) from the oppressive Soviet regime.

This search, however, seems destined to continue throughout a life overshadowed by a terror of the KGB, and a longing for his Lithuanian homeland.

The personal tragedies of Pleškys' life, including the deportation of his parents to Siberia in 1948 and his life-long separation from his first child and her mother, are detailed in the photographs, letters, interviews and anecdotes Boyle intersperses throughout the narrative. Set against the backdrop of the grand historical moments of World War II, Nazi occupation and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, this collage of Pleškys' life is only rendered more compelling.

The fragmentary nature of the narrative, however, sometimes results in a lack of discursive coherence between chunks of historical exposition and the details of Pleškys' life. Furthermore, Boyle's desire to interpolate herself into the text, to the extent that she includes a chapter detailing her friendship with Pleškys entitled "I remember Jonas," threatens to undermine her biographical endeavour. As the author herself is keen to point out, however, *Search for Freedom* does not pretend to be an exhaustive biography or academic study, and it is with this in mind that the reader can enjoy this story of daring escape from an oppressive regime. **Reviewed by Elizabeth MEAD.**

Homeland Lost Forever

LIUBINAS, Alė, (2006), *Homeland Lost*. (?Melbourne:) Sid Harta Publishing. 682 pages. ISBN 1-877059-47-1 Recommended Retail Price AU\$24.95, plus postage. Available from major booksellers.

This book has a foot in both camps, non-fiction and fiction combined. I suspect that the author aimed at protecting the people involved, as the group that touched her life, perhaps, would not appreciate their real names being mentioned in the book. Memory is very subjective, and what may seem true from the author's point of view, would not necessarily be remembered in the same way by other people. So, if you get five persons to tell the same tale, you may get five different slants to the same story.

Having said that, I feel, many people from the Baltic countries would find this book very interesting, as, I hope, would many

Australians. Most of us, that is, ex-Balts (and that includes the reviewer) came through the same journey as Alè did.

There were many variations, but the main framework of the story reminded me of our own journey from Lithuania, our period in the displaced person camps in Germany after the war, and our subsequent travel to a new destination away from the war-torn Europe.

Alè's first section of the book starts in 1940, with the first occupation by the Russians of Lithuania, early during the Second World War. She is a nine-year-old who is frightened when the first Russian tanks rumble past her family's farm, followed by trucks full of soldiers as well as some on horseback riding through the green crops and destroying the rye fields.

It is the first indication of the brutality of the invaders who did not care what they damaged. During that occupation people started disappearing. They were taken mainly to Siberia: anybody who owned land or possibly worked in any official way.

The story proceeds through another invasion, this time by the German army, as the Russians are pushed out of Lithuania by the Germans, in June 1941. The Germans continued to occupy Lithuania until 1944, when they started losing the war and retreated again. This time, everyone knew what would happen when the Communists came.

Thousands of people including Alè's parents, left Lithuania, taking their horses, cart and a cow, and following the German troops. People fled in any way they could: on foot, by trucks or simply pushing a cart with some belongings. Germany accepted them. Many men were taken at the border to dig trenches, and it took many manoeuvres to avoid that, if possible.

At the end of the war, Germany was divided by the Allies into four zones: Russian, American, British and French. All of the Baltic people, and that included Estonians and Latvians, hurried to leave the Russian zone if they happened to be there, because the result would have been the same as not leaving their countries at all. The Communists visited the other zones trying to entice people to go back. But the refugees knew better.

In 1946 the traumas of the war were starting to fade away. The refugees became anxious about their future, as there was no hope of the Communists leaving their homelands. Everybody wanted to get away from the DP (Displaced Persons) camps to a country that offered a more secure, stable and better life. Alè and her parents were accepted by the Australian government as refugees. They were given free passage in return for working for two years anywhere and in any job they might be placed in Australia.

The next part of the book deals with Alè's and her parents' trials and tribulations of getting to know Australia. Starting at the transit camp of Bonegilla, then the first jobs, learning the language. By this time Alè was already old enough to work, and we continue the story with her first job as a trainee nurse. She had to face the difficulties with language, and the unfamiliar nature, so totally different from Europe. The story continues with the setting up of a grater community in Melbourne and finally getting to love her new country.

Alè Liubinas wrote this book as a novel. It is easy to read, and I would recommend it to anyone who likes adventure stories. It is a real page turner - except that it is based on real experience. It is good to know that such stories are being written now by people who enjoy, and are capable of, recording our experiences. It will be good for our children and grandchildren to see it all in print.

Not everyone is curious at first to know why granddad spoke with an accent, but later in life curiosity is aroused. And it is these kinds of books that will provide some of the answers.

I was much younger than Alè when my parents migrated to New Zealand, and apart from listening to the stories told when cultural friends got together, I had in reality many mistaken pictures of the events in my head. As both my parents have passed away, I have no way to check the facts, but reading this book has clarified some of the things I wanted to know.

Reviewed by Aldona NUNEZ.

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A Verb a Day Blows the Cobwebs Away

VILKIENĖ Loreta, STUMBRIENĖ Virginija, ROEBUCK, William (2002), 365 Lietuvių kalbos veiksmažodžiai / 365 Lithuanian verbs. Vilnius: Homo Liber. 413 pages. ISBN 9955-449-39-X.

This book will be welcomed by all English speakers who are learning Lithuanian. The 413-page volume is the first Lithuanian dictionary, devoted exclusively to verbs – 365 of them. Each verb has its own page (occasionally even two pages!), listing all common tenses and a range of other grammatical forms. In addition, several hand-picked sentences illustrate the most frequent applications and derivatives of each verb.

The world of learning should not underestimate the importance of quality Lithuanian text-books like this one. Increasing numbers of foreigners are now studying the Lithuanian language for its beauty, rich forms and for its intellectual challenge. To get good results, students need good books.

While equally useful to the native-speaking students, *the 365 Lithuanian Verbs* is a volume primarily designed for English speakers. The task has been successfully accomplished by a combined team of authors, consisting of an English-speaking academic and two Lithuanian lecturers who had been teaching foreigners for many years.

For those wishing to discover more, *365 Lithuanian Verbs* offers many refinements. For instance, in Lithuanian, a transitive verb requires its object to adopt the accusative case if the verb is positive; but, if the verb is negative, the object changes to the genitive case. This is explained in the Introduction (p.13), and both alternative forms keep occurring in the examples, throughout the book. However, the explanation on Page 13 alone may not be enough, if the student is not subsequently reminded, again and again, of the reason for the different structure in Lithuanian. In English, it is simple: the object always remains in the accusative and the verb – whether positive or negative – makes no difference. Because of this, *365 Lithuanian Verbs* should keep repeating the reason for the different cases, especially where examples are coupled in pairs, e.g., “They make televisions...

They don't make televisions...” (p.78). If book space is the problem here, even a repeated cross-reference to Page 13 would be better than nothing.

This book is to be commended especially, because all Lithuanian verbs in the text are equipped with intonation symbols (sometimes known as accents). The importance of intonation symbols, especially for foreign students, cannot be stressed too much. An intonation symbol serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it tells the reader which syllable is to be stressed, since the stress can fall almost on any syllable of a Lithuanian word. Secondly, there may be at least three types of pronunciation for the stressed syllable. To guide the student to the correct choice each time, three traditional kinds of intonation symbols are used. They eliminate all guesswork.

I strongly recommend that the second edition of this book should extend the intonation symbols to all remaining Lithuanian words appearing in the book, including the Lithuanian phrases.

As a side benefit, a student can use many sentences from this book to practise his or her conversation skills. The sentences used as examples are clear, and the translations are of very good quality. Just one slip: On Page 408, “Jo senelis pražuvo kare” means “His grandfather disappeared in the war”, not: was killed.

One detail is missing in the book. The headings at the top of each page should identify each individual Lithuanian and English verb as transitive (v.t.) or intransitive (i.v.), or any other type, such as reflexive. A specialised dictionary of verbs cannot claim to be complete without this information.

On the whole, the book is handsomely produced, clearly printed and easy to read. The authors and the publisher are to be congratulated for making a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the Lithuanian. **Reviewed by Algimantas TAŠKŪNAS.**

Algimantas TAŠKŪNAS, OAM, Ph.D. is the editor of this journal; and the author of seven books, including Nereikalingų svetimžodžių rinkinys. E-mail: A.Taskunas@utas.edu.au

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.

According to the National Geographical Institute of France (1989), the geographical centre of Europe is 24 km North-West of Vilnius.

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

Time: GMT + 2 hours or AEST less 8 hours. When it is 12 noon in Vilnius, it is 11.00 a.m. in Stockholm and Frankfurt; 10.00 a.m. in London; 5.00 a.m. in New York; 8.00 p.m. in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart.

Population (2004): 3,454,000. Distributed between urban 67%, and rural 33%.

Capital city: Vilnius (population 553,200).

Other largest cities (by population): Kaunas 373,700; Klaipėda 191,600; Šiauliai 132,700; Panevėžys 118,800.

Ethnic groups: Lithuanians, 83.5 per cent; Poles, 6.7 per cent; Russians, 6.3 per cent; Belorussians, 1.2%; others, 2.3%. Altogether, people of 115 different ethnic backgrounds live in Lithuania.

Literacy rate: 98 per cent.

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. - Lithuania has been a member of the European Union and NATO since 2004.

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:** Arturas Paulauskas.

Religion: Predominantly Roman Catholic (estimated 80%). A number of other religions are also practised: Evangelical Lutheran, Reformed Evangelical, Russian Orthodox, Judaic, Old Believers, Sunni Muslims, Karaims (Karaites), etc.



Population density: 53.026 per 1 square km.

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

GDP, % growth (2002): 6.1.

Exports (2002): 6,235m.euros. **Imports (2002):** 7.667 m.euros.

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

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

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

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

Largest lakes: Drūkšiai (4479ha), Dysnia (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 -4.9 degrees Celsius; July average, 23 degrees Celsius. Annual precipitation, 744.6 mm. Humidity, 78%.

National currency: Litas, equals 100 centas.

AU\$1 = (approx.) 2 Litas. 1EUR = 3.4528 Lt.

- SOURCES: S. Litviničiūnė; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

Our Thanks

This journal is now 20 years old*. During the past two decades, it has been edited, produced and distributed by unpaid volunteers. 127 authors in twenty countries have donated their services and have contributed 140 original articles without honoraria.

Even allowing for these great savings, money had still to be found for printing 3,000 copies of each issue (\$4,000) and for postage (\$7,000 per issue). A single copy of *Lithuanian Papers* now costs \$1 to post within Australia, and \$3.70 to most overseas countries.

This is why we are indebted to our supporters and advertisers: their generous donations have enabled *Lithuanian Papers* to continue. We thank the Australian Lithuanian Foundation (\$2,000) and the Societies Council of Tasmania University Union Inc. (\$1,000) for their latest grants. [The TUU's logo is at the foot of this page]. We also thank you very much for the following donations of \$10 or more, received since our last issue:

Edward Leugoud, US\$500; Sydney Lithuanian Women's Social Services Association, £400; Melbourne Lithuanian Women's Social Welfare Society, \$300; Dr.S.Pacevičius, \$200; Adelaide Lithuanian House Library, \$150; J.A.Cibulskis, A.Grikepelis, A.Krutulis, N.Šalkūnas, M.&J.Vizgirda, \$100 each; P.Šiaučiūnas, \$75; J.&O.Maleckas, \$74; F.Ročka, \$64.95; P.Bobenskas, Dr.K.Brazaitis-Česnaitė, Brisbane Lithuanian Society, E.Jonaitis, S.&M. Katinas, S.E.Laucius, L.Milasas, D.Rafferty, V.Rupinskienė, S.Starinskienė, I.Taunys, I.Ziemelis, \$50 each; E.D.Davidėnas, L.V.&SR.Waitkus, \$46.95 each; J.A.Jūragis,\$45; J.Krikščiūnas, V.Navickas, \$40 each; B.Prašmutaitė, \$33; L.L.Bricky, T.J.& P.E. Flanagan, P.Kazlauskas, \$30 each; J.Blacher, J.Janavičius, P.Pullinen, J.&V.Repševičius, \$25 each; Adelaide Lithuanian Catholic Women's Society, J.Arienė, A.Butkus, S.Daulius, V.Joseph, C.Kent-Kriauciūnas, A.Liubinas, F.Luckienė, V.L. Mačys, J.Pakalniškis, J.Prakapas, R.Stokman, E.Šidlauskas, \$20 each; Dr.P.Jokubka, \$15;

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- **Vince J. TAŠKŪNAS**, President, L S S (Tas.)



* A social afternoon to celebrate this anniversary will be held in the German Club, 30 Bowden St., Glenorchy, Tas. on Saturday 25 November, at 2.p.m. Admission is free. Please bring a plate.

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