



**LITHUANIA'S
ENVIRONMENTAL
PROBLEMS**

Amanda J. Banks

This book examines the relationship between politics, culture and the environment in Lithuania. It is argued that the political system has had the greatest impact on culture and the environment in Lithuania, while environmental issues and aims of independence have been the catalyst for change. The traditional culture of Lithuania had a pantheistic perception of nature which influenced their behaviour toward the environment. Religious and political changes altered this perception and validated development at the expense of the environment. A brief political history demonstrates the volatile nature of Soviet-Lithuania relationships and the effects that various occupations had on Lithuanian culture, and on the possible formation of a green movement. Political influences from the Soviet Union, since the annexation of Lithuania in 1940, have had disastrous effects on the environment and suffocated Lithuanian culture. The examination of the Mažeikiai Oil Refinery and the Ignalina Nuclear Generating Station indicate some of the environmental problems facing Lithuania, as well as the obstacles in the path of concerned people in attempting to improve the situation. The restoration of Lithuania's independence on March 11, 1990, has given emerging green and reform movements the opportunity to publicly protest against the environmental crisis and, ultimately, the system that allowed the problems to occur on such a large scale. Politics has been the most influential in the relationship, since it is also being used to effect further changes by the new opposition groups. The political system of the Soviet Union is still powerful and remains a major obstacle to the groups who aim to be economically and politically independent with a cleaner environment.

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LITHUANIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS: Cultural and Political Aspects

Amanda J. Banks



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FRONT COVER: A small part of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian crowds who gathered on September 1, 1988, to protest against the continuing pollution of the Baltic Sea. The banner (at the back) reads: "The sea is dirty. What about your conscience?"



PREFACE

This book serves to illustrate the fervent commitment of the Lithuanian people, throughout their long and often tragic history, to the principles of social justice and environmental integrity.

Despite the years of occupation under which the Lithuanian people have endured, their spirit has continued to shine as a guiding beacon to other oppressed peoples of the world. Lithuania has led the way among the captive Soviet republics in asserting its rightful independence. Encouraged by the Lithuanian example, the peoples of Latvia, Estonia, the Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Moldavia and other republics are also embarking on a path of emergence from the long nightmare of Russian occupation.

Throughout this emergence to freedom, the environmentalists have played a critical role. Horrified by the environmental degradation forced upon them by the occupation, the Lithuanian people have struggled to reassert their own cultural perspective to the environment; a pastoral and gentle perspective that worked in harmony with the land. The Green Party rose to prominence through this struggle, and today plays an integral role in securing Lithuania's freedom. The Lithuanian Greens, through their inspiring fight, have won a key place in the annals of the Planet's greening.

I encourage people to read this book to gain a deeper understanding of the Lithuanian people and the historic precedent they have set for us all.

Dr. Bob BROWN, M.H.A.



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INTRODUCTION

Lithuania is a small country situated on the East coast of the Baltic Sea. Although once a much larger country, its borders now surround an area of 67 785km² with a population of approximately 3.5 million (1984). The country is of interest because of its continuing battle for independence, particularly since it was incorporated into the Soviet Union by what has since been revealed as a secret pact between Hitler and Stalin and, later, by staged elections.

Ideological and political changes in many of the Eastern Bloc countries have allowed information about environmental problems to surface. In the Soviet Union, such information was not disclosed by the Soviet bureaucracy. The "opening up" of the Soviet administration makes it an opportune time to examine the relationship between political ideology and the environment. The effects of the Soviet dictatorship on Lithuanian culture will be examined, as will the role of culture in effecting further changes for the society. Lithuania was chosen for the study because it has been one of the most vocal in fighting for cultural, political and economic autonomy.

The aim of this book is to establish the links between politics, culture and the environment in Lithuania. It will be shown that nature has always been connected with cultural identification in Lithuania, even after the pagan traditions were no longer practised faithfully. The changes in the image people have of nature, it will be argued, has affected their behaviour toward the environment, and these perceptions have been influenced by the conversion to Catholicism and the political takeovers by the Russians.

Politics is regarded as the major player in the relationship, since it has had the power to dictate beliefs and behaviour which affect the environment. By dictating certain behaviour, such as the use of fertilisers, the political leaders of the Soviet Union may have prevented more appropriate action toward the environment. That is to say, the government's policies toward the environment dictated certain behaviour which may not have occurred, on such a large scale, had Lithuania remained independent. This has

been proven by the increase in outspoken environmental activists in Lithuania since the easing of political restrictions on the people.

With a history of a strong connection with nature and centuries of care embodied in the soil, Lithuania's economy became centred around agriculture during the period of independence (1918-40), following 120 years of control by the Czars. The annexation to the Soviet Union, in 1940, brought many changes to the Lithuanian people and their environment. Agriculture was seen as "backward" by the Bolsheviks, who were eager to join, and catch up with, the industrialisation process which had encompassed the West.

In implementing the economic restructuring of Lithuanian society, the Soviet leaders also attempted to enforce cultural changes which aimed to "internationalise" the republic and thereby create the appropriate environment to effect the policy of industrialisation. These processes suffocated Lithuania's unique culture and the race to industrialise has left disastrous effects on the environment.

For the discussion of the environmental problems that exist in Lithuania, it will be necessary to examine the political climate since cultural and environmental changes have revolved around possible and actual political changes.

In order to establish the strong connection between Lithuanian people and the land, Chapter one examines the ancient system of beliefs which venerated nature and gave the pagan Lithuanians a pantheistic concept of the environment. Contrasted to this are the different perceptions of nature held by Catholicism and Marxism. The pagan culture was the foundation for a culture, although changed through "natural" and "unnatural" processes, that retained much of its concern for the natural environment and particular traditions in soil conservation.

Following this, Chapter 2 aims to illustrate the significant role of politics in changing the social and physical environment of Lithuanian society. It becomes apparent that the notion of "progress" is fundamental to Marxist theory, on which the Soviet Union is based, as well as to Western Capitalism. The chapter includes a brief political history

leading up to the annexation of 1940. The volatile nature of this political history is important in demonstrating how the fight for independence has been ongoing and the significance this has had for environmental awareness. The cultural and environmental effects of the political changes (facilitated by the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact) are also discussed to emphasise the impact of politics and illustrate the connection between cultural identity and concern for the environment.

Chapter 3 consists of two case studies which give clear examples of environmental destruction in Lithuania. The first, an overview of pollution caused by the Mažeikiai Oil Refinery, is typical of the problems created by the rapid industrialisation of a country with minimal natural resources. The second study examines the actual and potential ecological damage caused by the controversial Ignalina Nuclear Generating Station. Also, the social problems created by forced immigration of Russians to work at the station.

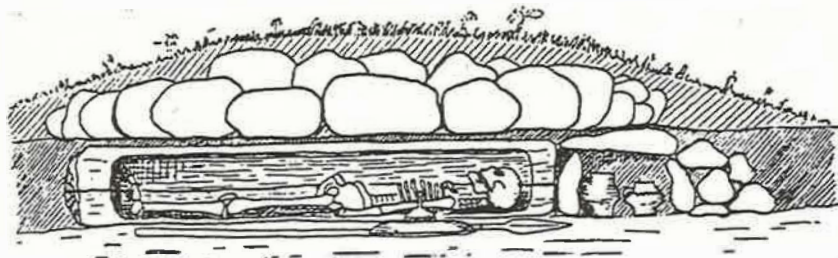
Chapter 4 reviews the latest political changes, demonstrating once again a significant impact on culture and the natural environment. Political reform in the Soviet Union has lifted many of the restrictions suffocating Lithuanian culture and the release of previously secret information has increased environmental awareness. Concern for the environment is embedded in the Lithuanian culture. However, with no information and no freedom to voice criticisms, an environmental movement did not emerge until the mid-1980s, in the wake of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika'. The reform and environmental movements are using the political system to effect further changes, namely independence and a cleaner environment.

The relationship between politics, culture and the environment in Lithuania, then, has involved a strong link between culture and the environment, with politics having an impact on both.

The information for this book has come from a variety of texts, articles and communication with Lithuanian people living in Hobart and Melbourne. Information on environmental problems was scarce and the majority of information came from the Brief from the Kaunas Economics Institute (KEI) submitted to the Council of Ministers of the

Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic in November 1988. Also, the subsequent report from the Lithuanian World Community (LWC) based on this research, which was submitted to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Meeting on the Protection of the Environment in October, 1989, in conjunction with the Lithuanian Green Movement. These reports form the basis of the case studies given in Chapter 3. The LWC and other environmental activists, consider the KEI report to represent a fairly accurate picture since it was not originally intended for public release.⁽¹⁾

A research trip to the Lithuanian library in Melbourne, Victoria (a resource collection on Lithuania, provided in several languages) was useful for obtaining facts on the current situation through information bulletins and discussions with members of the Lithuanian community which were valuable in framing an overall understanding. Although some of my perceptions may be contestable, particularly regarding the impact of the Catholic Church in Lithuania and levels of paganism remaining, they have been formed primarily through such discussions with young people who have recently migrated to Australia. The Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania has also been helpful in providing reference material.



• An ancient Lithuanian grave, dating back to 1st - 2nd century A.D.. Note the jars of food, placed at the head of the casket.

1. Lithuanian World Community; 1989; Degradation of the Environment in Lithuania: Brief of the Lithuanian World Community and the Lithuanian Green Movement to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Meeting on the Protection of the Environment; Sophia, p.4

CHAPTER 1

Traditional and Modern Lithuanian Culture: How the Environment fits in

Perception, Attitude and Action

Attitudes and behaviour toward the environment ultimately depend on the perceived relationship of people with nature. It has been argued that action toward the environment is conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny.⁽²⁾ The image a person or society has of nature influences their attitude and, therefore, their response to the environment.⁽³⁾ The belief in reincarnation of the spirit into other living things held by ancient Lithuanians, together with the perception of nature as part of people and people of it (a pantheistic approach)⁽⁴⁾ strongly influenced their attitude to the environment. The Lithuanian pagans had an image of nature as sacred and alive. Such an image gives reasons for not approaching nature in the exploitative way which later became the dominant response.

The perception of nature held by the pagans is at the root of Lithuanian culture and is therefore important in discussing cultural and environmental effects of the political climate. The image of nature has changed over time and, consequently, this led to human induced changes in the natural environment.

The pantheistic perception held by the ancient Lithuanians gradually changed following conversion; however, a general knowledge of care for the land remained with the people and perhaps existed outside the realm of religion since it could not find a niche in the Catholic perception of nature. The changes to society brought about by the annexation of Lithuania to the Soviet Union in 1940 involved a new

2. White, L., Jr., 1971; 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis' in Barr, J. (ed.), 1971; The Environmental Handbook, FOE, London, p.10

3. McLaughlin, A., 1985; 'Images and Ethics of Nature' in Environmental Ethics; vol.7, p.300

4. Reese, W.L., 1980; Dictionary of Philosophy And Religion: Eastern and Western Thought; Humanities Press, New Jersey, p.409

perception of nature. The Soviet ideology had a strong desire for progress and an infinite faith in technology and in nature's capacity to provide. The environmental effects of the behaviour that followed from these beliefs were greater than those caused by the religious change.

Although it could be argued that Lithuanian people have retained some of the images of nature held by the pagans,⁽⁵⁾ and thus a particular concern for its care, political forces have directed behaviour toward the environment. The image of nature created by the ideology behind the political system has been superordinate to the perceptions held by the people. The Soviet image has seen nature as inferior and only as a source for improved productivity.⁽⁶⁾ Viewed in this way, there are no boundaries for exploitation and manipulation.⁽⁷⁾

Friend or Servant?

Although the Catholic Church is now strong in Lithuania, its introduction was not without resistance. As the last country in Europe to be converted to Christianity (officially 1387), Lithuanian culture still includes remnants of the previously pagan way of life despite the Christian propaganda from the Teutonic Order and the more recent pressure from the atheist Soviet Union. Their pagan faith appears to have been environmentally benign, with people seen as an integral part of the equal, although venerated, natural world. These beliefs were slow to alter and, in fact, still can be found within *dainos* (songs) and other myths, fairytales and traditional practices.⁽⁸⁾

5. Knowledge about environmental management that has roots in the beliefs of paganism still exists. However it is no longer a matter of religion, it has become common practice. Further, this knowledge is perhaps limited to those people living in the country and is tending to exclude young people. Their concern for, and knowledge about, environmental protection has come from other sources: mainly through experience of environmental pollution and an increase in the flow of information in the Soviet Union and from the West.

6. Kalensnik, S. V. and Pavlenko, V. F., 1976; Soviet Union: A Geographical Survey; Progress Publication, Moscow, p.128 cited in Thomas, I., 1987; Environmental Impact Assessment: Perspectives and Practice; Monash University, Aristoc Press, pp.3-4

7. McLaughlin, A., 1985; p.300 (see note 179)

Christianity's image of nature did not include the notion of animism and this 'made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects'.⁽⁹⁾ It does not necessarily dictate this behaviour, but it offers no resistance.⁽¹⁰⁾ However, the perception of nature as the servant of people meant that progress, particularly the industrial revolution, was morally justifiable. What does it matter if you destroy the forests, grossly over-use fertilisers and thereby pollute the water, and increase construction of industry with little control on emissions, if nature is seen purely in an instrumental light? However, if people see themselves as interconnected with the living earth, 'we could no longer justify economic exploitation' since from a pagan point of view, 'the ethics of integrity prevents us from accepting a solution for someone else that we are unwilling to accept for ourselves'.⁽¹¹⁾ The conversion to Christianity then, is important in discussing environmental problems in the country since the philosophies behind Catholicism do not embody the same level of respect for nature as the pantheistic faith of ancient Lithuania. It is also significant to note that the official acceptance of the new religion was made for political reasons.(1385-87)

Lithuania's religious tolerance (particularly between 1550-1580), stemmed from the separation of policy from religious ideology - 'to each group its own religion'. This was instrumental in preventing the complete permeation of the Catholic attitudes into Lithuanian culture.⁽¹²⁾ Equal rights to all religions was given in the Charter of 1563 through the influence of Calvinism which became a popular form during the Protestant reformation. The reformation waned quickly,

8. Kazokas, G., 1982; 'The Life and Work of M. K. Čiurlionis'; vol 1 M.A. Thesis, University of Sydney, p.21

9. White, L., Jr., 1971; pp.10-11 (see note 2)

10. McLaughlin, A., 1985; p.300 (see note 3)

11. Starhawk, 1990; 'Power, Authority, and Mystery: Ecofeminism and Earth-based Spirituality' in Diamond, I. and Orenstein, G. F. (eds.), 1990; Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism; Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, pp.83-4

12. Kavolis, V., 1989; 'The Devil's Invasion: Cultural Changes in Early Modern Lithuania' in Lituanus; vol.35(4), pp. 10,14

lasting only until about 1569.⁽¹³⁾

Ironically, Lithuanians resisted the Christian ideas strongly and only became faithful followers of the Christian tradition in the nineteenth century.⁽¹⁴⁾ And now there has been widespread resistance from the Catholics in Lithuania against the culturally suffocating force of communism since the 1940 annexing of Lithuania to the Soviet Union. It is only since 1988 that the estimated three million Lithuanian Roman Catholics have been able to practise publicly again and without fear.

The atheist Soviet government closed down the churches and banned the practice of religion from 1940 onwards. However, the Lithuanian Reform Movement (Sajudis), was gradually able to persuade the Lithuanian Communist government and the reform-minded Communist Party Chief, Algirdas Brazauskas to 'return the Vilnius Cathedral to believers as of October 22nd [1988]⁽¹⁵⁾ and grant other concessions. The Cathedral had been converted into an art museum in 1950 and its return is one of many changes implemented in the republic during Gorbachev's perestroika.

Although the Catholic perception of nature tolerates development and exploitation of the environment, the Soviet perception imposed on Lithuania in 1940, sanctioned it and dictated it. The Soviet government's restrictions on religion and other areas of social life led to changes in the people's perception of the environment as well. The Lithuanian people were instilled with fear and were forced to approach the environment in a way which may have contradicted with their image. Restricted information compounded the problem. However, with the recent political changes, the respect for nature that is remnant of pagan traditions was able to resurface. Politics, then, has always had a significant role in the religious and cultural changes and, therefore attitudes to the environment in Lithuania.

13. Jakštas, J., 1969; 'Lithuania to World War I' in Gerutis, A. (ed.), 1969; Lithuania 700 Years; Manyland Books, New York, pp.75-7

14. Kavolis, V., 1989; p.10 (see note 12)

15. Anon., 1988; 'Lithuanian Cathedral Returned' in Bridges; vol.12(10); p.10

Affinity with Nature: A Friendship

It is plausible to argue that, the religious practices of ancient Lithuania embodied an appreciation and respect for nature that supported protection and continuous care for the environment. Their belief in the reincarnation of the human spirit into trees, flowers, birds and other animals led to a strong commitment to their protection.

It was thought that people were divided into three parts: *Kūnas* (the body); *Vėlė* (the soul) and *Siela* (the spirit). The *Siela* was the living power which was reincarnated on the earth while the *Vėlė* travelled, in the form of a bird, beyond the Milky Way.⁽¹⁶⁾ The most common trees for incarnation were Birch, Oak and Ash for men and Linden and Spruce for women. The Oak and the Linden, in particular, were highly venerated and one was planted each time a child was born.

At the time of one's birth, a specific tree is assigned to one, and it grows imbued with the same life forces as its human counterpart.⁽¹⁷⁾

The trees were thought of as "mute brothers" and it was believed that if the tree was cut down then the person would die. Trees, then, were sacred for their connection with individuals as well as for their role as an abode for the *Siela*. The Lithuanians not only viewed trees as sacred, but whole forests, and to cut down any trees from these sacred groves was an offence punishable by death.⁽¹⁸⁾ The Christians or 'ignorant ones' were forbidden to enter the sacred forests. Divine assistance was expected from the virgin forests.⁽¹⁹⁾ These sorts of beliefs and prohibitions helped to retain the large percentage of virgin forest standing in Lithuania up to the

16. 'The Milky Way' is called 'The Bird's Way' in Lithuania. Gimbutas, M., 1963; The Balts; Frederick, A. Praeger, New York; p.190

17. Gimbutas, M., 1963; p.191 (see note 16)

18. Kazokas, G., in prep., PHD thesis, University of Tasmania. The sacred groves allowed areas to be fully preserved while small townships developed in other areas and timber could be used for building or furniture. The groves could be likened to National Parks in Australia (although with more stringent regulations and stronger penalties) with all organisms within the grove also protected.

19. Gimbutas, M., 1963; p.193 (see note 16)

sixteenth century.

Christianity stood in absolute contrast to this paganism since it established a dualism of humans and nature and gave humans power to exploit nature for their own benefit. 'To a Christian a tree can be no more than a physical fact'. The animism was replaced by 'the cult of saints'. The Christian saint, however, is seen in the likeness of man and his abode is not within the tree but in heaven.⁽²⁰⁾ He is not nature's brother, he is nature's master.

In ancient Lithuania, many gods were worshipped, but Earth was the Great Mother (*Žemyna*). All life came from her; she held the mystery of eternal life. *Žemyna* was not given an anthropomorphic image but existed as an immanent power. For the pagans, man and woman were born from the earth and, with gratitude, they kissed the earth each morning and night. Nature, represented by *Žemyna*, was the life-giving force and 'all manifestations of [her] fecundity were lovingly cared for and protected'.⁽²¹⁾ The images of the gods held by Lithuanians have definite Indo-European roots, preserving the ancient trait of connection with natural phenomena.⁽²²⁾

Some areas of soil, rocks and rivers were also sacred. People were forbidden to fish in streams situated in the sacred forests or plough in sacred fields. Several rivers are called *Šventa*, *Šventoji*, *Šventupė* or *Šventėžėvis* which means holy. They were honoured and respected and 'no one dared soil their life-giving water, which had purifying, healing and fertilizing properties'.⁽²³⁾

For the Lithuanians, man's [or woman's] life was inseparable from *dainos* (songs) which

reflect these people's feeling of kinship with Mother Earth and her many creatures, and appreciation of her manifold gifts.⁽²⁴⁾

20. White, L., Jr., 1971; p.11,14 (see note 2)

21. Gimbutas, M., 1963; pp.191-3 (see note 16)

22. Gimbutas, M., 1963; p.199 (see note 16)

23. Gimbutas, M., 1963; p.193,196 (see note 16)

24. Gimbutas, M., 1963; p.15 (see note 16)

The Lithuanian pagan religion was sensitive to, and had great respect for, nature making daily life environmentally benign. The faith in and fear of the gods and the resulting image of nature aided the protection of the environment. At the time of Marija Gimbutas' research, in 1963, the religion still preserved the basic elements of the recorded religions of the early Indo-Europeans. And, at the same time,

remained true to the peasant's perception of the real world and to his rich natural environment, sustaining his profound veneration for the living land - forests, trees and flowers - and his intimate relationship with animals and birds.⁽²⁵⁾



• A Lithuanian child being kidnapped by the Teutonic Order (around 14th century). - Painting by J. Kosakas

25. Gimbutas, M., 1963; p.204 (see note 16)

The Conversion

Lithuania has been called 'the youngest daughter of the church' with the official baptism date recorded as 1387.⁽²⁶⁾ The official acceptance of Christianity was made by leaders for political gain. The Krėva Union Act 1385, made between Poland and Lithuania, stated that Jogaila (Grand Duke of Lithuania) and his country would convert to Christianity. The trade-off was that Jogaila would marry the young Polish queen, Jadvyga, and consequently be crowned King of Poland. As a result, Lithuania and Poland were to be ruled as 'two separate states with a common king'.⁽²⁷⁾ Jogaila, then, saw conversion as a personal and political advantage whereas Lithuanian rulers before him had found it

such a political liability that it outweighed the very real advantages it offered in securing their Polish authority at home and in dealing with their neighbours to the West.⁽²⁸⁾

Religion and, therefore, cultural practices have been strongly connected to political decisions in Lithuania. The decisions regarding whether to convert were made in relation to what was seen as best for Lithuania politically and without consideration of the majority of the population. Furthermore, as pointed out earlier, the religious doctrine or ideology chosen for any society has direct implications for the environment since it entails a certain perspective of the nature which influences behaviour toward it.

An earlier decision to embrace Christianity was made some 134 years before Jogaila, but it did not last. Mindaugas, considered to be the founder of the Lithuanian state, became a Christian in 1251 and was crowned King of Lithuania in 1253 by Pope Innocent IV. The Christian monarchy was the dominant form of government in the West at that time. However, Christianity was abandoned by the new ruling family after Mindaugas and his sons were assassinated in 1263.⁽²⁹⁾

26. Skabeikis, P. quoted in Editorial, 1987; 'About this Issue' in Lituanus, 33(4), p.5

27. Sruogienė-Sruoga, V., 1987; 'Jogaila (1350-1434)' in Lituanus, 33(4), p.25

28. Urban, W., 1987; 'The Conversion of Lithuania 1387' in Lituanus, 33(4), p.13

In the thirteenth century, Lithuania was a powerful force, continually expanding its boundaries. The Teutonic Order used Christian slogans against a resistant Lithuania - the last pagans in Europe. Their strong resistance in battle prevented the total expansion on the Order.⁽³⁰⁾ Lithuania, then, fought hard to retain its pagan identity, and this resistance continued among the people despite the official policy.

Conversion to the Catholic faith through the Teutonic Knights would have probably led to the total destruction of Lithuania, while baptism into the Eastern Rites was not an attractive option. The most suitable option appeared to be acceptance of Christianity through union with Poland.⁽³¹⁾ This happened via the marriage of Jogaila and Jadvyga in 1385, starting the Jagellian dynasty which continued in Lithuania-Poland until 1572.

The Bishopric of Vilnius was established on February 1, 1387, and all pagan practices were forbidden. However, paganism clandestinely continued into the twentieth century.⁽³²⁾ Today, the Catholic church is the largest institution in the republic.⁽³³⁾ In 1940, 85.5% of the population considered themselves Catholics,⁽³⁴⁾ a figure which has remained at the same level. Its dominance was not immediate since the infiltration of Christian practices into the population was difficult - particularly because of language barriers and a strong resistance from the country people.

29. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; 'Lithuania from Medieval to Modern Times: A Historical Outline' in Vardys, V. S. (ed.), 1965; Lithuania Under the Soviets: Portrait of a Nation, 1940-1965; Frederick A. Praeger, New York, p.4

30. The northern branch of the Teutonic Order was defeated by King Mindaugas in 1236. Gimbutas, M., 1965; pp.172,176 (see note 16)

31. Sruogienė-Sruoga believes that the honour of bringing Christianity to the last pagan nation must have been attractive to the Poles. Sruogienė-Sruoga, V., 1987; p.25 (see note 27)

32. Sruogienė-Sruoga, V., 1987; p.27 (see note 27)

33. Sužiedėlis, S., 1987; 'The Meaning of 1387' in Lituanus, 33(4), p.8

34. Pugevičius, C., 1984; 'Introduction' in Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania; no.63, July 1, p.1 (Translated American Publication; November 15, 1984) and Savasis, J., 1966; The War Against God in Lithuania; Manyland Books, New York, p.13

While the Christian faith infiltrated the palaces of the nobility and the cities, the villagers retained the old religion for many more centuries.⁽³⁵⁾

Some Marxists have argued that,

the Church was an important pillar of the upper classes in upholding a feudal system based on the grievous exploitation of the peasant masses by a land holding elite.⁽³⁶⁾

Some other writers have argued that the introduction of Catholicism brought with it aspects of the Polish culture to the detriment of the native language and culture. Others see it as a major factor in 'the eventual subjugation of Lithuania, particularly after 1569, to the political interests of Poland'.⁽³⁷⁾

The criticisms are generally dismissed by Sužiedėlis, who argues that,

the Church, like other medieval institutions, was a product of its times, and carried with it some of the social inequities and national prejudices of the age.⁽³⁸⁾

This is perhaps true but it must be recognised that Christianity played a significant role in the attitudes of that age. The doctrine, which provided the basis for everyday life (and still does although it is not usually referred to as Christianity), perceived nature as the servant of people and established man's domination over nature.⁽³⁹⁾ Christianity therefore accommodated the scientific revolution which was dominated by a faith in 'perpetual progress'.⁽⁴⁰⁾ For McLaughlin, once a society has the instrumental image of nature (such as implicit in the Christian doctrine) then the 'thirst for power over nature develops, albeit slowly at first, into a ravenous hunger'.⁽⁴¹⁾ So, although it does not necessarily follow that such a perception will dictate certain

35. Gimbutas, M., 1965; p.179 (see note 16)

36. Sužiedėlis, S., 1987; P.9 (see note 33)

37. Sužiedėlis, S., 1987; P.9 (see note 33)

38. Sužiedėlis, S., 1987; P.10 (see note 33)

39. White, L., Jr., 1971; pp.10-11 (see note 2)

40. White, L., Jr., 1971; pp.10-11 (see note 2)

41. McLaughlin, A., 1985; pp.300-1 (see note 2)

environmentally unsound behaviour, it is likely, since there is no resistance to it and eventually the desire to dominate and develop is paramount.

As mentioned previously, the interpretation of life and nature given by Christianity gives people mastery over nature. This is usually attributed to the passage from Genesis 1:28 - 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it and have dominion over every...living thing'.⁽⁴²⁾ According to the Christian account of creation, God created all nature for man;⁽⁴³⁾ every physical creation was designed specifically for the benefit of man and for no other purpose.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The introduction of such a profoundly different religious philosophy into Lithuania was bound to take a long time to infiltrate the whole society. Thus, a particular variety of Catholicism developed in Lithuania. Although the Christian perception is likely to lead to environmentally unsound behaviour, the fact that pagan traditions and values were incorporated into Lithuanian Catholicism meant that nature was taken into account more seriously. A concern demonstrated by the formation of an Environmental Protection Act just prior to annexation. (See page 33)

Acceptance of Roman Catholicism increased in the sixteenth century when Lithuania realised that it was necessary for gaining Polish help in the contest with Moscow. Faith became stronger as Roman Catholicism came to represent national sentiment in Lithuania.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Again the official religion was chosen and upheld on political grounds with direct effects for the environment. As Roman Catholicism became more dominant, it was, in turn, used as a political weapon.

Political Dominion

In this century Roman Catholicism has become an integral part of Lithuanian culture and efforts were made, after the annexation in 1940 (see Chapter 2), to suffocate this faith and any remaining pagan traditions, provoking a strong

42. Kalensnik, S. V. and Pavlenko, V. F., 1976; p.3 (see note 6)

43. For the purposes of the discussion of Christian ethics, man and nature are taken to be separate entities.

44. White, L., Jr., 1971; p.11 (see note 2)

45. Urban, W., 1987; p.21 (see note 28)

nationalistic response. The official statements from Moscow cannot hide the fact that the Lithuanian people have been the victims of cultural, political and ethnic genocide.⁽⁴⁶⁾

The Christian dogma began to create changes in Lithuanian attitudes toward nature, yet the gravest environmental damage has occurred under the Soviet Union dictatorship. The nature of communism in the Soviet Union compounds the environmental problems experienced in the Christian West for Lithuania, since no limiting forces (such as pressure groups) were placed on its leaders' desires for power and progress. The people were unable to express concern for the environment because the Marxist image of nature advocates environmental destruction for the sake of productivity, and this was the perception of the powerful political leaders. Politics, then, has been the ultimate master in Lithuania, with nature (including people) its servant.

White's assertion that communism espouses a similar philosophy of progress as the "Christian" West,⁽⁴⁷⁾ which is seen to accommodate the domination of nature, can be supported by the environmental destruction in Lithuania as well as other republics of the Union. According to Shtromas, the Soviet leaders no longer believe in Communist ideals and function only to retain power.⁽⁴⁸⁾

The view of nature given by Marxist theory, that nature is there to be used, justified the rapid industrial growth in the Soviet Union. In an effort to keep up with the West, the Soviet Union has taken many "short cuts", in planning and construction of industry, for example, which have had a detrimental effect on nature. (See Chapter 3) The government was able to enforce the behaviour toward the environment that results from such a perception and any other images of nature became subordinate.

Action, which is clearly a consequence of a different

46. Šilbajoris, R., 1983; 'Introduction' in Šilbajoris, R. (ed.), 1983; Mind Against the Wall: Essays on Lithuanian Culture Under Soviet Occupation; Institute of Lithuanian Studies Press, Chicago, p.9

47. White, L., Jr., 1971; p.10 (see note 2)

48. Shtromas, A., 1983; 'Official Soviet Ideology and the Lithuanian People' in Šilbajoris, R. (ed.), 1983; pp.57-73 (see 6)

perception of the environment, has begun to resurface in Lithuania in the form of a green movement. This perception of the environment has been enhanced by a growing awareness of environmental problems and of the finite capacity of nature to support the needs of the modern world. Green movements, recognising that a different perception of nature is required, have begun to look back to the images held by pagan societies like Lithuania.⁽⁴⁹⁾ It is likely that the Lithuanian Greens and their supporters are looking back to their roots and beginning to look at nature with a similar perspective. This image will, of course, be fundamentally different, owing to cultural changes and the level of the destruction they have witnessed.

Nationalism, together with concern for ecological problems, has provided a focus for reform. The new pressure groups are using the political system to make changes (see Chapter 4) and are developing a new image of the environment which should lead to a different approach. That is not to say that environmental problems will no longer exist, only that, with a new perspective, the scale of the damage will decrease.



• Emperor Louis IV ("the Bavarian"), giving Dietrich von Altenburg (master of the Teutonic Order) a free hand to crusade in Lithuania (1337). This illustration has been reproduced from the original Royal mandate.

49. Starhawk, 1990; p.75 (see note 11)

CHAPTER 2

The Effect of Political Dominion on Culture and the Environment

The Significance of Politics

It has been argued that, in the interaction between politics, culture and the environment, it is politics which has been the most significant. The political relationships between Russia (which later became the Soviet Union) and Lithuania are particularly relevant to this book since they demonstrate the volatile nature of the political situation in Lithuania. The country has been subject to frequent changes in external control, with pressure to change coming from the Teutonic Order, Poland, Germany and most importantly, the Soviet Union.

The brief political history provided in this chapter demonstrates that Russia had a desire to expand its territory, particularly to the Baltic coast, in order to exploit the ice-free ports, for several centuries. The conflicting nature of the relationship has, most often, placed Russia (and later the Soviet Union) in a position of dominance. The periods of occupation under the Soviets (or the threat of this possibility) are crucial in establishing the effects on culture and the environment.

The environmental problems in Lithuania have been compounded by the pro-industrial policies of the Soviet Union and the policy of "internationalism", which includes processes of indoctrination and russification. These processes have prevented public criticism on environmental issues.

It could be argued that the threat of occupation by a country might distract the government, or the population, from other issues such as the environment. So, even during periods of self-determination, environmental issues do not receive the attention they might deserve. This could be said for Lithuania during the period between the mid-fifteenth century and mid-eighteenth century before the first occupation by Russia, and again during the twenty-two year period of independence before the second occupation.

The periods of occupation had a similar effect, however it was not the threat of invasion that prevented such interest,

but rather the restricted freedoms under the regime and the fear of breaking those restrictions. The Lithuanian governments during the occupations were mere mouth pieces for the central leaders and were unable to confront them on environmental issues even if they had a desire to do so. The secrecy of the administration and the fear that was instilled in the Lithuanian population inhibited public criticism of the government regarding the environmental problems that they witnessed.

This precarious political situation in Lithuania could be seen to conflict with the inter-generational nature of environmental management, whereby conservation and protection of the environment focuses on the long term.⁽⁵⁰⁾ That is to say, that under the threat of occupation, people may be sceptical of preserving for future generations since their efforts may be thwarted by future Soviet, or other, policies. Alternatively, if it were possible to actively protest during the periods of occupation, action toward the environment may be considered futile by the population since they had no control over longer term policy decisions.

This volatile political situation, which distracted attention from environmental issues and restricted freedom of speech, thus inhibited the formation of organised groups, such as a green movement, to actively petition for a cleaner environment as had occurred in the West. Furthermore, the arrest and deportation or imprisonment of the outspoken intelligentsia by the Soviet Union between 1940 and 1983 significantly reduced the base for such a movement. For example, one in ten members of the Writer's Union was incarcerated in 1948.⁽⁵¹⁾ The Writer's Union has since been publicly critical of environmental problems and the system that has caused them. During independence, the intelligentsia were extremely nationalistic and strongly orientated toward

50. The notion of stewardship of the environment for the benefit of future generations is a major concern of environmental management. This is demonstrated by the first goal of the U. S. National Environmental Policy Act 1969. It states; '(1) fulfil the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations'.

51. Girnius, K. K., 1986; 'Soviet Terror in Lithuania During the Post-War Years' in *Lituanus*; vol.32(4); p.40

the West.⁽⁵²⁾ It is precisely the intelligentsia and activists who are most often critical of government policy on the environment in Western countries.

Therefore, the history of the political relationship between Lithuania and the Soviet Union is important since it strongly influences the link between culture and the environment in Lithuania. The political situation has suffocated concern for the environment. The policies of the Soviet Union toward Lithuania since annexation in 1940 made it difficult for the republic to maintain a sense of cultural identity of which the environment is part. The policies, which severely restricted the freedom enjoyed during independence and in the West, prevented the formation of a green movement any earlier than 1988.

The latest political decisions have further changed the nature of society and attitudes to the environment in Lithuania, since they have facilitated the expression of concern regarding the problems. Gorbachev's "glasnost" (openness) and "perestroika" (reform) have lifted some of the restrictions and thus enabled the formation of various reform movements, including the Lithuanian Green Party. These changes, then, have created a political environment which is more accommodating of pressure groups. Further, since the victory of the reform movement, Sajūdis, in the March 11 1990 elections, independence has become a reality. Confidence in being able to preserve for future generations may also have aided the popular support of the Lithuanian greens. The road to independence and the formation of various groups espousing both independence and environmental protection will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Russian-Lithuanian Relations

Lithuania, with its continuing desire for autonomy, has been consistent in fighting invading forces from surrounding nations. Independence has been intermittent for the country, with occasional Polish unions and both German and Soviet occupations.

Serious conflict between Lithuania and Russia may have

52. Vardys, V., 1965; 'Independent Lithuania: A Profile' in Vardys, V.(ed.), 1965; p.28 (see note 29)

begun in 1499 with the breaking of the Peace Act of 1494. This signified the intent of the Grand Duchy of Moscow to gain control over the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.⁽⁵³⁾ Another treaty between Lithuania and Moscow recognising Lithuania's sovereign rights was signed in 1920. However, relations between Lithuania and Moscow continued in the same vein since subsequent Russian leaders of the latter refused to honour either agreement.

Political relations between Lithuania and Moscow have been dominated by continuing deception by the latter. Although the policies on ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union have varied between leaders, it is apparent that the annexation of Lithuania (along with other republics) has been a priority for a long time, particularly due to its strategic position on the Baltic Sea.

Political Situation between 1410-1918

Lithuania reached its greatest power under Grand Duke Vytautas, while Jogaila remained King of Poland. Vytautas was obliged to continue the close relationship with Poland, although he tended to act independently from the King. Under Vytautas, Lithuania checked the Tatar invasion of the Christian West and defeated the Germans in the great battle of Tannenberg in 1410.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Dispute with the Teutonic Order finally ended with the 'Peace Act of Melno 1422' which resulted in a winding border between Lithuania and the Order.⁽⁵⁵⁾ This, together with the 'Horodle Union Act 1413'⁽⁵⁶⁾ strengthened the Lithuanian nation and confirmed its independence from Poland.

Vytautas elevated Lithuania to a position of eminence in Eastern Europe through his successful battles and negotiations.

53. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.69-70 (see note 13)

54. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; p.4-5 (see note 29)

55. The border, lasting until 1919, was one of the most permanent in Europe. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.64 (see note 13)

56. Although the Act stated that after Vytautas's death, Lithuania would be independently ruled by a separate Grand Duke, it also stipulated that Jogaila or his heirs would designate the heirs of Vytautas. So, effectively, the Act acknowledged a separate Lithuanian state within the Union of Poland. Jakštas, J., 1969 p.65 (see note 13)

He intended to take Moscow, but was restrained by family ties.⁽⁵⁷⁾ His connections gave him considerable power and many Russian dukes claimed loyalty to him. With this widespread support, Vytautas prepared for his coronation as King of Lithuania despite the protests of Jogaila and the Poles. Only his death prevented the realisation of his ambition to have Lithuania become a Kingdom.⁽⁵⁸⁾

The new Grand Duke, Švitrigaila, was soon ousted by a Polish conspiracy due to his independent policies. Žygimantas followed with pro-Polish policies while Švitrigaila continued to rule the Russian lands. The opposition divided Lithuania for the first time, almost to the point of civil war.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Victory at the battle of Pabaiskas in 1435, with Polish support, restored the union with Poland which lasted, with interruptions, until both nations lost their independence.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Lithuania's concern for independence had always been strong and continued in the fifteenth century. The nobles aimed to govern through participatory democracy, so a council of nobles formed and became the government authority, assuming the rights of the Grand Duke. The council represented the beginnings of democracy, however as a feudal society, the serfs belonged to their nobles and had no participatory role. The council began an independent rule, leading to disputes over territory with Poland between 1448 and 1458. The Lithuanian council tried hard to reiterate their independence from, and equality with, Poland.⁽⁶¹⁾ The intent of the grand Duchy of Moscow to gain control over the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became obvious toward the end of the fifteenth century.⁽⁶²⁾

Alexander's reign (ending in 1506) wavered between war and peace. He intended war but also intended to marry the

57. Vytautas's daughter was the widow of Duke Basil of Moscow and consequently, Vytautas became the guardian of his grandson, and heir to the Moscow throne, Basil II. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.65 (see note 13)

58. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.65-6 (see note 13)

59. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.66 (see note 13)

60. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.66 (see note 13)

61. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.68-9 (see note 13)

62. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.70 (see note 13)

daughter of Grand Duke Ivan III of Moscow. As a condition of his daughter's hand in marriage, Ivan III demanded that a peace agreement be signed. The agreement, known as the Peace Act of 1494, stipulated that all Lithuanian territory captured or peacefully surrendered to Russia was to be acknowledged as the possession of the Grand Duchy of Moscow.⁽⁶³⁾

It appears that Ivan III had no feeling of kinship to his new son-in-law, Alexander, since he continued to take land and initiated open warfare in 1499-1500. Lithuania lost the first battle without the support of Poland.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Agricultural reform occurred particularly under one of the last two descendents of Jogaila, Sigismund August (1548-72). Although lumber was in high demand during this time, the forests were not neglected. They were measured, categorised and guarded. The nobles were forbidden from using the forest for their own purposes.⁽⁶⁵⁾

The son of Ivan III, Ivan the Terrible, continued as his father had done, pushing into the Baltic through Livonia (now Estonia and Latvia) in 1558.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Lithuania signed an agreement with Livonia and thus the wars with Moscow were renewed in 1562. Lithuania had increased its area, now including Livonia, which made it harder to defend all boundaries. Another alliance with Poland was urged to enable stronger and more organised defences.⁽⁶⁷⁾

Threatened by the growing power of Russia, Lithuania formed the union with Poland in 1569, known as the Union of Lublin.⁽⁶⁸⁾ The Commonwealth of Lithuania-Poland countered the Russian force in the twenty-four year war with Czar Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible).⁽⁶⁹⁾ The union, or commonwealth endured for two centuries until, with its power weakened, it was partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1772, 1792

63. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.70 (see note 13)

64. Jakštas, J., 1969; p.71 (see note 13)

65. Jakštas, J., 1969; pp.74-5 (see note 13)

66. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; p.6 (see note 29)

67. Jakštas, J., 1969; pp.78-9 (see note 13)

68. Jakštas, J., 1969; pp.78-9 (see note 13)

69. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; p.6 (see note 29)

and 1795.

Precarious political relationships between Moscow and Lithuania continued into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Moscow invaded Lithuania in 1655-61, with many Lithuanian casualties; and again in 1701-21 when a lot of Lithuanian land went to Russia. Most of Lithuania was taken over by Russia when the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was partitioned in 1795. The Czarist occupation lasted 120 years (1795-1915). During this time, russification and colonisation policies were implemented for the first time. There was even an attempt to change the name of Lithuania in order to suffocate the spirit of the people.⁽⁷⁰⁾

These policies aimed to dampen cultural identity which is strongly linked to attitudes to the environment. These infringements of human rights were the beginnings of a swell of opposition which was violently expressed at first. Later, under the Soviets, opposition was suppressed and has only recently surfaced without fear or retaliation. The opposition to the culturally suffocating policies of the Czars and the Soviet Union formed the basis for the green movement in Lithuania.

In the nineteenth century, resistance took the form of rebellions in 1831 and 1863 which were suppressed by Russian force. The Lithuanian language was banned from schools and the University of Vilnius was closed. The printing of books and newspapers in the Latin alphabet were banned between 1865 and 1904. These measures attacked the very essence of the society, they changed the way of life considerably.

Lithuania declared self rule during the first Russian revolution in 1905, but it could not be put into effect. Later, World War I brought changes that led to demands for complete independence. Germany occupied Lithuania between 1915 and 1918 but, following its defeat in the war, could not colonise the country. The nationalistic movement in Lithuania, which later advocated environmental reform as well, was inspired by a speech from Woodrow Wilson on January 1917. His speech pointed to the right of nations to be self-determined. Later that year, Lithuania renewed its restoration for independence

⁷⁰. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; p.6 (see note 29)

at the congress of national minorities in Russia.⁽⁷¹⁾

In 1917, Lenin publicly acknowledged the right of self-determination for all nations of Russia. This claim was a mask for his real intention to keep the Soviet Union undivided. For Lenin, such independence was only possible in a socialist setting.⁽⁷²⁾ The Commissar for Lithuanian affairs later made this clear in the following statement,

We recognise the right of self-determination for all nations, but this does not mean independence.... We have in mind the needs of nations and of the Lithuanian proletariat. Since in an independent Lithuania these needs might suffer, we reject independence and fight against it.⁽⁷³⁾

Rejecting any union with Russia or Germany, Lithuania declared its independence on February 16, 1918, 're-establishing an independent, democratically ordered Lithuanian state with Vilnius as its capital'.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The fight for independence did not end there, with invasion from Russia, Germany and Poland; all eager to take control of Lithuania.⁽⁷⁵⁾ In 1918, to appease German forces, the Lithuanian council asked Prince von Urlich to become the new monarch, King Mindaugas II. The invitation was later withdrawn. Lithuania was firstly governed by a presidential triumvirate. One of the members, Antanas Smetona, later became sole President in 1919. He was succeeded by Aleksandras Stulginskis in 1920 but returned as President in 1926.

Independence: 1918-1940

Lithuania's success in regaining independence in 1918 was largely due to its favourable position after World War I. Both Russia and Germany collapsed and could not enforce their will on the Baltic states. Thus, in September 1921, Lithuania was accepted as a member of the League of Nations. Official recognition from the United States came later in July 1922

⁷¹. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; pp.7-9 (see note 29)

⁷². Slavėnas, J., 1983; 'Russian Communism and Lithuanian Nationalism' in Šilbajoris, R.(ed.), 1983; p.20 (see note 46)

⁷³. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; p.9 (see note 29)

⁷⁴. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; p.12 (see note 29)

⁷⁵. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; pp.12-16 (see note 29)

and from France and England in December of that year.⁽⁷⁶⁾ In that year, Lithuania issued its own currency which cemented its economic and political⁽⁷⁷⁾ autonomy.

Although Lithuania did not have a tradition of self-government, all groups participating in the national revival favoured the formation of a democratic state. The organised authoritarianism that developed in Lithuania, occurred only after independence was won.⁽⁷⁸⁾

A Constituent Assembly was formed with an estimated 85-90 percent of voters casting their ballots. The Constituent Assembly reflected the ethnic, political and ideological diversity in Lithuania. This resulted in internal conflict since some policies estranged some sectors of society. In particular, some policies seemed to benefit the Communist Party almost exclusively. The activities aroused fears of Communist domination, particularly among the youth, who arranged demonstrations.⁽⁷⁹⁾

It can be seen that the threat of Communist domination remained a reality for the people of Lithuania. The internal strife which resulted from these fears, would have distracted the government and the population from issues such as the environment. The demonstrators were more concerned with protecting their nation from communism, and the government with social order, than the environment. It must also be noted that due to agricultural nature of society, that environmental problems would not have been severe, especially without the use of chemical fertilisers.

During Lithuania's period of independence (1918-1940) the government carried out a programme of fundamental social and economic reform.⁽⁸⁰⁾ They adopted a democratic constitution, a land reform act was passed and industrial output increased.

The principal component of the programme was the land

76. Sužiedėlis, S., 1965; pp.18-19 (see note 29)

77. Didelis, V., 1990; 'Lithuania - Out of the Pit and no Stepping Back' in *Jaužiniai*; no.27, April, p.6

78. Vardys, V., 1965; p.30 (see note 52)

79. Vardys, V., 1965; pp.30-5 (see note 52)

80. Vardys, V., 1965; p.23 (see note 52)

reform which had far-reaching social, economic environmental and political results. It stilled land hunger of the peasants and established the middle-sized family farm. Previously, the majority of land was in the hands of a small group of Russian and Polish landlords. The redistribution raised many farmers to a new status of respectability and self-reliance and eliminated the influence of the foreign owners, thereby destroying the basis of feudalism conservatism. Thus, the reform led to changes in attitudes and conditions which facilitated an increase in crop yields, thereby improving the economy.⁽⁸¹⁾

In the late 1920s, the government decided to develop the dairy and livestock industry in Lithuania. The Communists regarded this as "backward" and began industrialisation immediately after the annexation in 1940. However, it is apparent that the independent government's decision was appropriate for Lithuania since the land did not (and still does not) contain the raw materials for heavy industry.⁽⁸²⁾

The power resources for a more radical industrial development were too scarce and too expensive. Industrial output was increased during this period, but this was mainly in the food and clothing industries. Importantly, since the Lithuanian governments of the 1920s and 1930s were orientated toward agriculture and were conservative in their finances, significant investment capital was not created to expand those resources.⁽⁸³⁾ Thus, independent Lithuania was not a progress-orientated capitalist state and it could be argued that, therefore, environmental damage to the country would have been far less severe had the occupation not taken place. Schools using the Lithuanian language were re-opened during independence which aided the re-building of national culture and a more favourable attitude toward the environment.

Toward the end of independence, an Environmental Protection Act was formulated, but Soviet occupation prevented its implementation. This concern for the environment might suggest that pagan traditions were no longer effective in

81. Vardys, V., 1965; p.23 (see note 52)

82. Vardys, V., 1965; p.25 (see note 52)

83. Vardys, V., 1965; p.25-7 (see note 52)

protecting nature. However, it could also be argued that it was because of the remaining pagan traditions, which had been absorbed into the new Catholic perception, that such action toward the environment was taken. It also demonstrates the people's commitment to conserve; a commitment which became an obligation to people, other species and their shared environment, rather than a duty to the gods.

As noted earlier, the consistent effort of Lithuanians to reclaim independence, came to fruition by 1920.⁽⁸⁴⁾ In the same year, Lithuania signed a peace treaty with Moscow in which the Soviet Union recognised Lithuania's independence and self-government and renounced for all time sovereign Russian rights to the Lithuanian nation and its territory,⁽⁸⁵⁾ a renunciation that the Soviets broke with impunity in 1940.

The Molotov Ribbentrop Pact Of 1939

The pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939 (usually named after the two countries' Foreign Ministers - Molotov and Ribbentrop) facilitated the subsequent invasions of the Red Army into the Baltic States and the forced annexations of those States to the Soviet Union. The incorporation of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union was illegal and prohibited by international law. Legal literature (including that from the Soviet Union) describes annexation as forcible incorporation; an act of violence, and actively condemns the practice. In the case of the Baltics, general "elections" were rigged by the Soviets to legitimate the annexation. According to Lapradelle, an authority on international law:

Never before had an occupying power arranged general elections in an occupied country in order to create an elective parliament charged with the task of voting incorporation of its country in the occupying one.⁽⁸⁶⁾

^{84.} The official date of independence is February 16, 1918 which is celebrated as the National holiday. However, the declaration did not result in immediate political independence. The process of regaining full autonomy took almost 4 years. Didelis, V., 1990; p.6 (see note 77)

^{85.} Gerutis, A., 1969; 'Independent Lithuania' in Gerutis, A. (ed.), 1969 (1984); p.164 (see note 13)

The first Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement, signed on August 23, 1939, was known as the 'Treaty of Nonaggression Between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics'.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The secret protocols divided Poland and the Baltic States between Germany and the Soviet Union. Lithuania was to fall into a German 'sphere of influence'.⁽⁸⁸⁾

The Pact gave Germany the ability to attack Poland without fear of Soviet retaliation.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Thus, on September 1, Germany invaded Poland and World War II commenced. Later that month, the Soviet Union also invaded Poland and the Red Army occupied Vilnius (temporarily in Polish territory).⁽⁹⁰⁾

After the collapse of Poland on September 25, 1939, Moscow proposed that Lublin and part of Warsaw be included in the German share while, in return, Lithuania would be relinquished to the Soviet Union. Germany eventually agreed and signed the 'Secret Supplementary Protocol' on September 28 which gave the Soviet Union rights to all but a strip of Lithuania which the Soviets promised not to occupy and ceded it to Germany.⁽⁹¹⁾

Following this, Molotov sought to have the agreement revised again. After protracted negotiations, Germany agreed to accept compensation for the remaining Lithuanian territory. A third secret protocol was signed on January 10, 1941.⁽⁹²⁾ The protocol stated that

the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is prepared to compensate the Government of the German Reich for the territory mentioned in Point 1 of this Protocol⁽⁹³⁾ by paying 7,500,000 gold dollars or 31,500,000 Reichsmarks to Germany.⁽⁹⁴⁾

^{86.} Krivickas, D., 1989; 'The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939: Legal and Political Consequences' in *Lituanus*; vol 35(2); p.22

^{87.} Krivickas, D., 1989; p.10 (see note 86)

^{88.} Tuškenis, E., 1986; 'Critical Dates and Events' in *Lituanus*; vol.32(4); p.5

^{89.} Krivickas, D., 1989; p.11 (see note 86)

^{90.} Tuškenis, E., 1986; p.5 (see note 88)

^{91.} Krivickas, D., 1989; pp.14-17 (see note 86)

^{92.} Krivickas, D., 1989; pp.17-19 (see note 86)

^{93.} The strip of Lithuanian territory ceded to Germany in the 'Secret Supplementary Protocol' of September 23, 1939.

Under Soviet pressure, Lithuania also signed a pact on October 10, 1939, known as the 'Treaty of the Transfer of Vilnius and Soviet-Lithuania Mutual Defence and Assistance'.⁽⁹⁵⁾ The secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact demonstrate that the Soviet Union had no intention of honouring the mutual assistance agreement with Lithuania. The Soviet-Lithuania pact gave the Soviet Union the right to maintain Soviet land, navy and air bases in the Lithuanian territory.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Ultimately, the pact with Lithuania served only to camouflage Stalin's imperialistic aim to control the Baltic region.

In violation of both the Peace Treaty of 1920 and the October, 1939 pact, the Soviet Union had begun the process of annexing Lithuania. The intent of the Soviet Union to expand its boundaries to the Baltic Sea was made clear by Molotov who stated that,

since the reign of Peter the Great, one of the chief objectives of the Russian state had been the control of the Baltic area.⁽⁹⁷⁾

Stalin, who did not want to publicly profess his aggressive policies, disguised his objective of re-acquiring Lithuania and the other Baltic States. The cover involved accusing the Smetona regime of offences against the Soviet Union. The Soviets insisted that their actions were liberating the "masses" from "fascism" (referring to Smetona's right-wing policies).⁽⁹⁸⁾ Slavenas describes the paradox of these claims;

While in theory, Soviet rule in Lithuania has emancipated the "masses", in practice a regime came in to existence that did not allow the implementation of the freedoms guaranteed by its own constitution.⁽⁹⁹⁾

94. Krivickas, D., 1989; p.19 (see note 86)

95. Tuškenis, E., 1986; p.5 (see note 88) Both Latvia and Estonia signed similar pacts with the Soviet Union.

96. Nahaylo, B. and Swoboda, V., 1990; Soviet Disunion: A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR; Hamish Hamilton, London; p.84 and Krivickas, D., 1989; p.20 (see note 36)

97. Slavėnas, J., 1983; p.26 (see note 72)

98. Slavėnas, J., 1983; pp.26-27 (see note 72)

99. In particular, Slavėnas is referring to the provisions in Stalin's constitution and the Soviet constitution of 1977, for the Union republics to

These freedoms are essential for cultural identity and thus environmental consciousness. The two are linked since, 'an attachment to the land and natural resources is deemed part of the individual's ethnic identity'.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

The intention to annex the Baltic republics began to materialise when, on June 14, 1940, the Soviet Union delivered an ultimatum (based on the accusations against Smetona) to Lithuania demanding the formation of a pro-Soviet government and free entry into the territory for an unlimited number of Red Army troops. On June 15, the Red Army occupied Lithuania, including the strip that it had promised not to occupy. The "People's Government" was formed on June 17.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

This "puppet government" was instructed to carry out mock elections for a Peoples Diet on July 14-15 with only a single list of candidates selected by the Communist Party. On the night of 11-12 July, before the elections, 2000 possible opponents were seized and deported. These opponents were also likely to form the basis of a green movement in Lithuania, since it is usually the outspoken academia and activists that criticise governments on environmental policy in the West.

Although the election candidates were clearly pro-Communist, demanding the redistribution of landholdings among the peasants, they denied any intention to incorporate Lithuania into the Soviet Union. The issue was not meant to be at stake in the elections.⁽¹⁰²⁾ However, after a supposed 95% of all voters had cast their votes with 99.19% choosing the candidates, the People's Diet produced an 'application for admission to the Soviet Union'. And, on August 3, 1940, the Supreme Soviet granted this "request" and the total annexation of Lithuania followed.⁽¹⁰³⁾ Due to the strong Red Army presence, it was unthinkable to demand recounts or enquire into the

secede from the Soviet Union. Slavėnas, J., 1983; pp.27-8 (see note 72)

100. Redclift, M., 1989; 'Turning Nightmares into Dreams: The Green Movement in Eastern Europe' in The Ecologist vol.19(5), p.183

101. Krivickas, D., 1989; p.21 (see note 86) and Tuskenis, E., 1986; p.5 (note 88)

102. Nahaylo, B. and Swoboda, V., 1990; p.85 (see note 96)

103. Nahaylo, B. and Swoboda, V., 1990; p.85 (see note 96) and Tuskenis, E., 1989; p.6 (see note 88)

legitimacy of the voting.

Lithuania was claimed to be:

a sovereign unitary state of workers and peasants, being at the same time a state in the union, based on the principle of self-determination and equality with all other Soviet republics.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

However the absolute control over this "sovereignty" resided with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Thus the Soviet Union promptly began, as Molotov described it, 'the political and economic reconstruction of the new Soviet Republics'.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

The reconstruction involved a strong push toward industrialisation. This was used by Moscow to relocate some Lithuanians to other republics while at the same time maintaining a steady inflow of Russians and other non-Lithuanians into Lithuania for settlement. According to Slavėnas, the intent was to make Lithuanians a minority in their own country.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ An example of Soviet-arranged employment in Lithuanian factories is discussed in Chapter 3 in the case study of Ignalina Nuclear Power Station.

The political decision to increase the number of industries in Lithuania has led to critical environmental effects. Also, the processes of sovietisation, russification and indoctrination, which have gone with it, have had a significant cultural effect. The attempts to sovietise Lithuania, through control over language, suppression of religious worship and festivities, deportations of the outspoken intelligentsia (and many other so-called political dissidents) and the arranged immigration of Russians and migration of Lithuanians, changed the essence of the society. The suffocation of cultural activities changed everyday life, the intelligentsia were likely to be outspoken on environmental issues, so their deportation reduced the base for a green movement and the increase in Russians gave increased support for the Communist Party.

104. Puzinas, J., 1973; 'The Situation in Occupied Lithuania: Administration, Indoctrination and Russianization' in *Lituanus*; vol.19(1),p.56

105. Puzinas, J., 1973; p.56 (see note 104)

106. Nahaylo, B. and Swoboda, V., 1990; p.87 (see note 96)

107. Slavėnas, J., 1983; pp.20,30 (see note 72)

The will to resist these attempts and to eventually fight back to probable independence, demonstrates the strong spirit of Lithuanians which has been embodied in the nationalistic movement. It may be that, after surviving the attacks on its culture, that environmental problems (as a result of increased industry and their mismanagement) have been an impetus for action in the fight against the Soviet dictatorship. In light of this, the cultural and environmental effects⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ of Soviet policies will be examined in more detail.



* Stalin was personally present when Russia's Molotov (seated) and Germany's Ribbentrop (standing, right) met on August 23, 1939 and signed the pact which bears their names. The pact divided Eastern Europe into Soviet and Nazi "spheres of influence". On January 10, 1941, the German Ambassador in Moscow and Molotov signed a secret protocol in which Germany renounced its claim to "a strip of Lithuanian territory" (the SUVALKAI region), in exchange for 7 500 000 gold dollars to be paid by the USSR to Nazi Germany.

108. Although it has been established that cultural (or ethnic) identity and environmental consciousness are inextricably linked, for the purposes of this thesis, the effects on both will be generally discussed separately.

Cultural Effects

The cultural effects of Soviet policies are important in the discussing the relationship between politics, culture and the environment, since they are a direct consequence of politics and are the basis for opposition to the environmental effects. Criticism of the ecological crisis in Lithuania has been a focus for the reform movement, Sąjūdis, which is concerned 'as much with ethnic identity and alternatives to the centrally planned economies, as with the breakdown of ecological systems.'⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ The ecological crisis is bound up with questions of human rights, freedom of information and participatory democracy⁽¹¹⁰⁾ of which the Lithuanian people have been denied. This denial necessarily inhibited the formation of active resistance which could only occur once such freedoms were returned. (see chapter 4)

The Russian Pattern

The Soviet Russians immediately introduced the Soviet regime following the annexation on August 3, 1940.⁽¹¹¹⁾ The regime used various processes in subverting Lithuanian culture in order to "internationalise" the Soviet Union. Indoctrination (of Communist ideals), russification and sovietisation were used, particularly through education, arrests, deportations and mobilisation, in an attempt to suffocate the Lithuanian culture and create the "Soviet man".

There was a belief in the eventual disappearance of ethnicity and the emergence of a Soviet identity. Significantly, this affected attitudes toward the environment, since 'ethnic identity and environmental consciousness function as two sides of the same coin.'⁽¹¹²⁾ The farmers seem to be more responsible in caring for the land when working on the small plots allocated for private use. This demonstrates that with the knowledge that the land belongs to them, they tend to look after the soil and produce better results. Alienation is clearly the reason behind the relatively low productivity from collective farms compared with the private plots. The

109. Redclift, M., 1989; p.177 (see note 100)

110. Redclift, M., 1989; p.182 (see note 100)

111. Puzinas, J., 1973; p.56 (see note 104)

112. Redclift, M., 1989; p.183 (see note 100)

productivity of the private plots surpasses the productivity of the entire socialised agricultural sector.⁽¹¹³⁾ The importance and necessity of private farming in a socialist economy is an ideological anomaly. But it does demonstrate that the socialised sector cannot feed the entire population of Lithuania.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Since environmental awareness is related to cultural identity,⁽¹¹⁵⁾ it could be argued that it will, therefore, increase when people are able to recognise their connection with the land.

In line with Marxist theory, the Bolsheviks aimed for unity through class solidarity leading to the disintegration of nations.⁽¹¹⁶⁾ Later, in the 1977 constitution, the various nationalities are described as "the Soviet People". This national identity has supposedly taken place through the

deliberate, planned and successful intervention of the Party, and characterized by a common socio-economic structure, common language of communication (Russian), and common ideology (Marxist-Leninism).⁽¹¹⁷⁾

However, contrary to the official portrayal of communal harmony, the 1970s and 1980s have been characterised by various dissent movements (see chapter 4) involving 'passive and moral opposition to the established order, with periodic violence, and also revolutionary efforts to overthrow the system.'⁽¹¹⁸⁾ The groups have been concerned with changing the very system that has denied them the right to decide how their own resources and environment are managed.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

Usually new regimes employ the "carrot and the stick" strategy to enforce the new ideologies. Girnius believes that in the case of Lithuania, the Soviets used only the stick. They

113. Zundė, P., 1965; 'Lithuania's Economy: Introduction of the Soviet Pattern' in Vardys, V. (ed.), 1965; p.155 (see note 52)

114. Idzelis, A., 1983; 'Branch-Territorial Dichotomy and the Manifestations of Republic Interests in Lithuania' in Lituanus; vol.29(2), p.20

115. Redclift, M., 1989; p.183 (see note 100)

116. Welch, I., 1983; 'Nationalism and Lithuanian Dissent' in Lituanus; vol.29(1), p.41

117. Welch, I., 1983; p.42 (see note 116)

118. Welch, I., 1983; p.42 (see note 116)

119. Redclift, M., 1989; p.182 (see note 51)

were confident in their ability to forcibly repress any resistance. When the mobilisation of Lithuanians into the Red Army was not as successful as was hoped, the soldiers entered villages and carried out executions. Arrests and deportations were also used to demonstrate the superior power of the Russians.⁽¹²⁰⁾ The carefully organised deportations of "enemies of the people" involved many Lithuanians since anyone living in territory occupied by Germany during the war was under suspicion by Stalin.⁽¹²¹⁾

The organised opposition to environmental problems is deeply rooted in opposition to the state and its policy of "internationalism". Therefore, it is important to examine the processes involved in "internationalising" the republic more closely.

Indoctrination

Through the use of heavy propaganda, the Soviets aimed to produce servants to the Russians and to the Communist Party. In the resolution endorsed by the conference of the party activists on April 23, 1968, it states;

The task of the party organizational units is to educate the working people of Soviet Lithuania, especially the youth, in the spirit of boundless faith to party ideals, Soviet patriotism, proletarian internationalism....It is necessary - through all the means of ideological education - to strengthen the Communist faith of every Soviet Citizen, to foster the ideological firmness and the ability to resist any form of bourgeois influence.⁽¹²²⁾

Numerous Soviet festivals, holidays, commemorative days and anniversaries were used for this kind of indoctrination.⁽¹²³⁾ Communist leaders were glorified and emphasis was placed on the bright future under communism.⁽¹²⁴⁾

The education system and, as stated, the youth, were prime

120. Girmius, K. K., 1986; pp.33-43 (see note 51)

121. Girmius, K. K., 1986; p.32, 44 (see note 51)

122. Quoted in Tiesa, April 25, 1968 and cited in Puzinas, J., 1973; p.62 (see note 104)

123. Puzinas, J., 1973; p.62 (see note 104)

124. Musteikis, A., 1985; 'The New Soviet Child' in Lituanus; vol.31(1), p.35

targets for the indoctrination policies. Communism was incorporated into lessons. History, geography, literature and languages were particularly exploited. Students were continually bombarded with the notions of "Soviet internationalism" as well as "eternal friendship" and "love for Russians".⁽¹²⁵⁾

The propaganda apparatus consisted of Communist Party schools, supplying loyal workers for the party and the Soviet bureaucracy. Youth were organised into three groups; the Oktyabrists (Grandchildren of Lenin), the Pioneers (Lenin's children) and the Komosol (The Lenin Communist Youth Association of Lithuania) which supports and supplies members to the Communist Party. Thus, youth are indoctrinated through the school classes and through their participation in the Communist Party groups.

For the indoctrination of the masses, television, radio, press, literature and the arts have also been a major target of the regime. Cultural plays have been adapted, uniformising costumes and adding commemoration of Soviet life. Writers are required to produce work reflecting the 'faithfulness of the toiling people to the immortal ideas of Lenin' and instil 'uplifting feelings of the friendship of Soviet nations, socialist patriotism and of proletarian internationalism' in the readers. The artists are also urged not to give in to 'alien ideology'.⁽¹²⁶⁾ This must cause conflict within the individual artists who wish to express life as it is in reality which may include environmental problems. According to Musteikis, the children reading these portrayals of Soviet life, recognise that the stories are not really true; they do not identify with the life-style depicted.⁽¹²⁷⁾

Museums form many outlets for Communist education. The museums

propagate revolutionary and work-related traditions, the friendship of nations, the ideals of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [and] the achievements of the Communist regime.⁽¹²⁸⁾

125. Puzinas, J., 1973; pp.62-3 (see note 104)

126. Puzinas, J., 1973; pp.65-8 (see note 104)

127. Musteikis, A., 1985; p.40 (see note 73)

Therefore, the cultural, political, historical and environmental information that the people received was suppressed, contorted or falsified for the purposes of official indoctrination. The secrecy of the administration restricted feed-back to the population leading to a lack of awareness. Despite instinctively rejecting the official ideology and the information it provided, Lithuanians remained misinformed and disorientated. Shtromas argues that this had a "numbing effect"; it created a numbed civic consciousness. He adds that the lack of information led some to seek it where they could.⁽¹²⁹⁾ According to Puzinas, in many cases, indoctrination was preparation for Russianisation (or russification) and that both permeate all areas of life.⁽¹³⁰⁾

Russification

Only about fifty per cent of the Soviet Union's 285.7 million inhabitants are Russian.⁽¹³¹⁾ But with the aid of the Red Army and the secret police, they control all the republics, autonomous republics, regions and ethnic areas.⁽¹³²⁾ In general, the Russians are loyal to the Communist Party and support Moscow.

It has been a policy of the party to allow the infiltration of Russians into Lithuania and other republics, with the specific aim of reducing the numbers of the natural inhabitants. Deportations of both specific "enemies" and random families have also been used as part of the policy to reduce nationalistic support. By forcibly deporting Lithuanians and "resettling" them in other areas of the Soviet Union and arranging the immigration of Russians as "technical specialists" to work in the ever-increasing industrial sector, the Communist Party leaders aimed to create "Russianised" republics. It was thought, this would help eliminate national cultures and facilitate the process of "internationalism" and the disintegration of ethnic identification.

The Leninist-Stalinist formula of 'national in form, Socialist

128. Puzinas, J., 1973; p.67 (see note 104)

129. Shtromas, A., 1983; pp.70-71 (see note 48)

130. Puzinas, J., 1973; p.68 (see note 104)

131. Nahaylo, B. and Swoboda, V., 1990; p.xi (see note 96)

132. Puzinas, J., 1973; p.56 (see note 104)

in content' proposed cultural autonomy within the union. The meaning of this was broadened, legitimising russification. Accordingly, it was argued that the assimilation of national cultures into the Soviet Union was indispensable. The assimilation was to occur through the Russian language.⁽¹³³⁾

The Russian language was introduced into schools, both primary and secondary. Any texts in Lithuanian were usually Russian books translated and thus were basically statements of Soviet idealism. The Russian language was also introduced into everyday life. Many towns, streets, plazas and squares were named after Soviet heroes, in an attempt to subvert Lithuanian heritage.⁽¹³⁴⁾

The Russianisation of occupied territories is not a new phenomenon for the Soviet Union. The process is deeply rooted in the imperialist policies of Czarist Russia. This was implemented through forced introduction of the Russian language in schools and in public life, the forced acceptance of Russian Orthodoxy and a propagated cult of love for the Czar in order to dampen the national spirit.⁽¹³⁵⁾ The Bolsheviks, then, have followed the traditions of past Russian leaders in attempts to broaden the empire.

Sovietisation

Sovietisation could be seen as the resulting process involved in eradicating ethnic identities. Through indoctrination and russification, the Communist Party attempted to "sovietise" the Lithuanian people. In other words, the aim has been to create a completely different national culture based on the ideals of socialism and, eventually, communism.

Russianisation involved creating a society that had Russian values and sovietisation involved creating societies that were the same, based on communist values. It was necessary to Russianise (to increase support for the Bolsheviks after the revolution) in order to sovietise (to create a society of "equals" based on Marxist ideology).

Soviet ideologists have claimed that the transformation of

133. Vardys, V. S., 1965; 'Soviet Social Engineering in Lithuania: An Appraisal' in Vardys, V. S. (ed.), 1965; p.238 (see note 52)

134. Puzinas, J., 1973; p.70 (see note 104)

135. Puzinas, J., 1973; p.72 (see note 104)

the productive system will necessarily give rise to different social institutions and therefore the new culture. Thus individuals will have a new national identity as a "Soviet man".⁽¹³⁶⁾

The "Soviet man" fostered in communist dominated countries such as Lithuania is a 'collectivist, atheistic Russophile, unreservedly loyal to the Party and to the Moscow directed state'.⁽¹³⁷⁾ The new Lithuanian should be an "internationalist"; in favour of eternal union with the Russians.⁽¹³⁸⁾ According to Musteikis, this "Soviet man" bears little resemblance to the original soviets who represented equality. Once in government, however, the party assumed a totalitarian nature and would not tolerate the sharing of power.⁽¹³⁹⁾ The Soviet man that they envisaged, originated as an ideological construct which was executed by force and manipulation. Thus the sovietisation of Lithuania did not result from natural changes as perceived by the Soviet ideologists.⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

As the superior power, the Soviets could quickly impose the new order. However, this imposition has not radically changed the ideological views of Lithuanians; there has not been a transformation of the society's basic loyalty to itself into loyalty to the Soviet Union. Even the younger generation is fully aware of its cultural particularities.⁽¹⁴¹⁾

The cultural policies of Moscow which embody indoctrination and russification (and indeed sovietisation) have been partly successful. Despite the penetration being superficial, the process of cultural alienation has made it easier for the regime to obtain political loyalties.⁽¹⁴²⁾ Remeikis explains:

restrictions on the cultivation of national heritage and creative arts, parochialization of the sciences through specialization, linguistic russification, etc.,

136. Vardys, V. S., 1965; p.237 (see note 133)

137. Vardys, V. S., 1965; p.238 (see note 133)

138. Vardys, V. S., 1965; p.238 (see note 133)

139. Musteikis, A., 1985; pp.30-1 (see note 124)

140. Musteikis, A., 1985; p.31 (see note 124) and Vardys, V. S., 1965; p.237 (see note 133)

141. Vardys, V. S., 1965; p.258 (see note 133)

142. Vardys, V. S., 1965; p.258 (see note 133)

are gnawing at the vitality of national cultures of all three Baltic nationalities.⁽¹⁴³⁾

However, it could be argued that, as the leader of the Baltic drive for independence and as the most ethnically homogenous Baltic republic,⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Lithuania has since been able to rescue much of its cultural heritage (at least as it was during the period of independence before annexation to the Soviet Union) from the clutches of the Communist Party. Environmental problems, also a direct result of political policies, have provided a focus for advocates of reform and are bound up with the questions of social justice discussed.

Environmental Effects

The political changes in Eastern Europe and the USSR are revealing an environmental disaster far worse than was ever feared or even imagined.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

Various political and ecological journals have contributed to the general perception of environmental problems in the communist countries. From the coverage, it is clear that environmental degradation cannot simply be explained in terms of Western capitalism.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ The previous section examined the difficulties that the people of Lithuania have had in maintaining their cultural identity and the infringements on their human rights. The environmental effects of Soviet policies in Lithuania are bound up in these attempts at cultural suffocation. Thus opposition to the ecological crisis, which will be examined in Chapter 4, is deeply rooted in the opposition to the centralised system and its policy of "internationalism".

In discussing the environmental problems in Lithuania, with specific reference to the political policies of the Soviet Union, it will be interesting to note the ideological foundation of that political system. In doing this, it can be seen that the problems which have been revealed are not surprising. It is not only capitalism that espouses progress through the

143. Remeikis, T., 1984; 'Dissent in the Baltic Republics: A Balance Sheet' in Lituanus vol.30(2), p.6

144. Nelan, B. W., 1990; 'Lashed by the Flags of Freedom' in Time Australia: March 12, p.22

145. Cave, S., 1990; 'Cleaning Up Eastern Europe' in Our Planet vol.2(2), p.4

146. Redclift, M., 1989; p.182 (see note 100)

domination of nature. Marxist theory, on which the Soviet system is forged, expected 'social mastery' over nature by technology; nature was 'man's original tool house'.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ Trotsky echoed this technocentric view;

...the proper goal of communism is the domination of nature by technology, and the domination of technology by planning, so that the raw materials of nature will yield up to mankind all that it needs and more besides.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

The notions of 'sustainability' and 'carrying capacity' are not considered by the forefathers and advocates of communism.

With this ideological base, the policies of the Soviet political system were bound to have significant environmental problems. Communism's faith in technology, progress and the infinite capacity of nature to provide, is shared with capitalism under which environmental damage has also occurred. It appears, however, that the problems in the Soviet Union are more pronounced than in the West. The problems in Lithuania have been compounded by rapid industrialisation, the primacy given to branch planning (central planning) over territorial planning⁽¹⁴⁹⁾, the cumbersome bureaucracy, "information management", a lack of measuring instruments, a problem with enforcement and the policy of "internationalism", which attempted to eradicate ethnic identity.

Industrialisation

Following the technocentric Marxist ideology, the Soviet Union pursued a rapid drive to industrialisation. The aim was to establish heavy industry in the shortest time possible. Heavy penalties for failing to meet planning objectives were developed to encourage quick results. In their haste, little attention was paid to the possible environmental effects. In the course of this rapid industrialisation, the political elites 'sought to legitimize their own position through acquiring [semi-obsolete] industrial technology from the West'.⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ For

147. Marx, K. quoted in Redclift, M., 1989; p.178 (see note 100)

148. Redclift, M., 1989; p.178 (see note 100)

149. Idzelis, A., 1983; p.6 (see note 114)

150. Redclift, M., 1989; pp.178-9 (see note 100)

example, the Soviet government has been criticised for its poor consideration of possible environmental problems created by the construction of an out-dated nuclear power plant at Ignalina as well as the short-cuts in planning the construction and management of the plant thereafter. (See Chapter 3)

Lithuania has few natural resources and is unsuited for the development of metal, machinery or other types of industry.⁽¹⁵¹⁾ However, the central planning system dictates that industries supporting the Union as a whole be established in Lithuania. Thus industrialisation in Lithuania concentrated on those types of industries which required importation of raw materials.⁽¹⁵²⁾

This policy has placed enormous pressure on the environment and on labour resources. Importation of manpower, usually Russian, became necessary for the operation of industry at the government's desired rate. The steady increase of Russian workers into Lithuania was designed to enhance primary loyalty to the State over issues such as the environment.

Apart from the environmental consequences, this policy resulted in social and economic problems. The immigration of workers for employment in Lithuanian factories had implications for the ethnic Lithuanians and the immigrants. The town of Sniečkus, near Ignalina, for example, has become a "Russian Suburb" which cannot identify with the rest of society. (See Chapter 3 - Ignalina Nuclear Generating Station) The development of industries unrelated to the natural resources of Lithuania, hindered the development of the indigenous economy.⁽¹⁵³⁾ All profits from such production would not remain in Lithuania but were designed to strengthen the Centre.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ Knowing this, Lithuanian workers become alienated. Zundé concludes that the only inference to be

151. Zundé, P., 1965; p.168 (see note 113)

152. Zundé, P., 1965; p.160 (see note 113)

153. Zundé, P., 1965; p.160 (see note 113)

154. Gajauskaitė, R., 1990; 'Ekologijos vieta Pertvarkoje' in Mokslas ir Gyvenimas; no.2, February, p.3 (trans. Taškūnas, A.) Gajauskaitė has the equivalent of a Phd in Law.

drawn from the speedy industrialisation of Lithuania, is that the motives of the Centre are purely political. Clearly, the aim was to merge Lithuania permanently into the Russian sphere; to russify and assimilate it.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾

The Lithuanian Writers' Union denounced pollution in 1987 and the concentration of industry in 1988. As a group formerly persecuted by the Soviet attacks on "enemies of the people", the union has been vehemently outspoken on the Soviet policies which have led to an ecological crisis in Lithuania.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ In 1987, the group attacked the crude oil refinery, which is usually portrayed as an example of Soviet progress, for its contribution to the pollution catastrophe. (See Chapter 3 - Mžeikiai Oil Refinery) They seemed to indirectly oppose the Marxist belief in unlimited progress:

the perspective of infinite progress, which was so alluringly portrayed by the scientific theories of the nineteenth century, does not exist any longer, because the natural resources are about to be depleted...⁽¹⁵⁷⁾

In the statements of 1988, the writers laid the blame for the destruction of Lithuania's environment with the Central government. They referred to the Soviet policies as "colonial management" whereby the concentration of the chemical industry in particular would continue to be developed in the up-coming five-year plans.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ In their resolution, they challenged totalitarian control by calling for the formation of grass-roots bodies to monitor violations and to protect nature in their occupied country.⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ (The resolution will be discussed in Chapter 4).

Industrial activity has gradually shifted to the coastal area of Lithuania. The ice-free and easy access ports make the seaboard location favourable. This has been supported by an increase in the coastal population and a growth in the ports.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾

155. Zundė, P., 1965; p.169 (see note 113)

156. ELTA, 1987, no.7(339), p.9 and ELTA, 1988, no.4(350),p.3

157. Kubilius, V., 1987; in ELTA, no.7(339), p.9

158. Maldonis, A., 1988, in ELTA, no. 4(350), p.4

159. ELTA, 1988, no.4 (350), p.5 (see note 156)

160. Ratneiks, H., 1984; 'Soviet Hydrocarbon Exports and the Baltics' in Journal of Baltic Studies; vol.xv(4); p.285

However, this has had dire consequences for the Baltic Sea.

Sewage is a major problem in the coastal regions caused by the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of the area. The centre of industrial development on the coast is the port of Klaipėda which has made it a heavy polluter of the Courish Lagoon and the Baltic Sea. Oil pollution is also a major problem in the harbour with only a small percentage recovered annually by skimming vessels.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ The oil refinery at Mžeikiai increased the importance of Klaipėda as an oil-exporting port but increased the possibilities of oil spills. The refinery also contributes to the pollution through industrial brine-waste which is discharged close to the shore due to a failure in the piping system. (see chapter 3)

Other factories, such as the wool factory and leather factory discharge raw effluent into the Akmenė river which then flows into the Baltic Sea. The Nature Protection Committee of the Lithuanian SSR requested the Ministry of Light Industry to install treatment facilities for industrial waste water by 1974. The facilities had not been installed by 1979.⁽¹⁶²⁾ The Nature Protection Committee, obviously active before the recent political changes, has been hindered by its make-up. It seems that the chairmen of the regional organisations of the Committee have been mainly the executives of industry.⁽¹⁶³⁾ The checks would, therefore, not be sufficient. The example given shows that the Committee is not necessarily concerned with strongly enforcing the recommendations. This points to the problem of mismanagement and of policing any legislation regarding environmental pollution, mentioned by Bogert.⁽¹⁶⁴⁾

Agriculture and Tourism

Tourism and agriculture have also had an impact on the coastline. The main impact of agriculture in the coastal area as well as most other areas, has been due to the growing use

161. Ratneiks, H., 1984; p.301 (see note 160)

162. Idzelis, A., 1979; 'Response of Soviet Lithuania to Environmental Problems in the Coastal Zone' in Journal of Baltic Studies; vol.x(4), p.302

163. Lithuanian Writers' Association, 1988; 'Resolution on Ecology' in ELTA, no. 4(350), p.5

164. Bogert, C., 1990; 'Poison Politics' in Newsweek; January 22, p.17

of fertilisers which has led to eutrophication (algae growth and subsequent depletion of oxygen from the water) in streams and the Courish Lagoon. Considered more significant by environmental activists in Lithuania, is the fact that chemical residue from the over-use of fertilisers has leached into the ground-water system which supplies the country's drinking wells. Also clearing of forests, draining of wetlands and land reclamation have intensified soil erosion leading to large sediment deposits in the delta of the Nemunas river. This is of concern since the delta is the spawning ground of many fish.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ The impact of tourist industry has been in the form of dune erosion from camping and some contribution to the sewage problem from the Baltic Sea resort towns of Palanga and Svventoji.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

The Secret Bureaucracy

The top heavy administrative system of the Soviet Union and its obsessive bureaucratic secrecy has contributed to environmental degradation in Lithuania. The fragmentation of government departments, each with their own narrow concerns, is not peculiar to communist countries, however it seems to be more pronounced. 'The top-heavy bureaucracy is a blight on efficiency in every branch of the economy.'⁽¹⁶⁷⁾

Environmental problems tend to be inter-jurisdictional; that is, they fall between different departments, and when departmentalism is so pronounced, their resolution becomes even more difficult.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ According to Idzelis, this has led to growing criticism of the branch principle in planning with the focus on the all-union ministries.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾

The branch principle is embodied in the all-union and union-republic ministries; that is, those agencies working for the central government. The primacy given to the branch principle strengthens the centralised system which hinders the implementation of regional projects or the resolution of

165. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.299 (see note 162)

166. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.303 (see note 162)

167. Ratneiks, H., 1984; p.291 (see note 160)

168. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.304 (see note 162) and Redclift, M., 1989; p.179 (see note 100)

169. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.304 (see note 162)

inter-branch problems such as the environment.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾

Decades of meeting central-planning targets, no matter what the cost, have taken a catastrophic toll on the environment.⁽¹⁷¹⁾

As a republic, Lithuania advocates the territorial principle which refers to management of regions rather than the whole from a central power. Such preference may be considered as a desire to improve self-sufficiency and to advance national interests.⁽¹⁷²⁾

The centralised system, then, is the subject of opposition due to its inefficiencies in dealing with pervasive issues such as the environment. The Soviet bureaucracy is cumbersome and the environmental laws are extremely complex.⁽¹⁷³⁾ Opposition to environmental degradation in Lithuania is an attack on this system itself (see chapter 4).

Critics were previously unable to voice their opposition to the environmental problems due to the Soviet administration's "information management".⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ Secrecy was an important characteristic of Soviet environmental planning which 'kept problems hidden and hushed up ecological disasters'.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ Information on pollution which had been systematically collected was obscured in reports to hide facts and restrict comparisons. This secrecy inhibited the formation of opposition groups since they could not access information. Thus, it could be argued that the extremely bureaucratic system and its policy of secrecy has contributed to the environmental crisis in Lithuania, since it prevented the pressure from concerned citizens which is now emerging. The groups that have formed have had some success which may have come earlier and reduced the eventual destruction, had the Soviet administration not been obsessed with secrecy.

The problems caused by the Soviet Union's faith in infinite

170. Idzelis, A., 1983; p.6 (see note 114)

171. Bogert, C., 1990; p.16 (see note 164)

172. Idzelis, A., 1983; p.6 (see note 114)

173. Preston, Y., 1990; 'Environmental Glasnost Gives Hope to the Volga' in: The Sydney Morning Herald; Saturday, February 10, (p.unknown)

174. Redclift, M., 1989; p.179 (see note 100)

175. Preston, Y., 1990; (p.unknown) (see note 173)

progress through industrialisation was exacerbated by the government bureaucracy and its policy of secrecy. The movement which has formed in opposition to the crisis, 'realize that their bitter enemy is neither pesticides nor technology, but the system which makes use of them.'⁽¹⁷⁶⁾



• A group of young Lithuanians protesting for cleaner air during an environment rally in 1988.

The largest rally that year was held in Kaunas, Lithuania's second-largest city, on August 2. Organised by *Atgaja* (=the sprout) ecology club, the rally attracted about 500 000 people. After addresses by Saulis Gričius, *Atgaja*'s chairman, and other prominent people, the mass gathering passed a 20-point resolution which had an impact on the Soviet authorities. Photo: The Observer

¹⁷⁶. Redclift, M., 1989; p.180 (see note 100)

CHAPTER 3

Case Studies

Introduction

The following case studies examine the environmental effects of two different types of industry in Lithuania. The decisions to construct and operate both the Mažeikiai Oil Refinery and the Ignalina Nuclear Generating Station were made by the Central Soviet government in Moscow

The arbitrary concentration of industry by the all union ministries (central government) has been criticised by the emerging pressure groups in Lithuania. In the resolution of the Lithuanian Writers' Association (see Chapter 4), the group strongly criticised the central government on this issue. They aimed to stop such expansion of already active enterprises which they claim happened with the Mažeikiai Oil Refinery.

Attempts to deal with the pollution problems have been thwarted by the Soviet planning system where the central government is sovereign to the local governments, such as Lithuania. The pervasive nature of environmental problems necessitates the cooperation of various ministries which is not accommodated by a system with narrow departmental views. The scarcity of environmental information in Lithuania has also added to difficulties in improving environmental degradation.

Despite the institutional hindrances some resolutions and plans have been passed by the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic but this does not guarantee successful implementation. The implementation process 'accentuates the inherent tension between the goals of development and preservation.'⁽¹⁷⁷⁾

A growing number of groups are demonstrating publicly about their concern for the environment (see Chapter 4). Although they may not have significant power yet, the groups have had some successes, including overcoming some problems with the case studies to be discussed. The original site proposed for the oil refinery, Jubarkas on the Nemunas river,⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ was changed to Mažeikiai, following pressure from

¹⁷⁷. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.305 (see note 162)

citizens about the possible pollution effects. The main arguments used against the construction included the pollution of the shallow waters along the coast which had become a major resort zone, and the perceived damage to the fishing industry in the Nemunas River Delta and the Courish Bay.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Although this is significant in the battle to regain control of important decisions about the nature of Lithuanian society, the problems were merely transferred to another area.

Public outrage was successful in preventing the construction of a third reactor at the Ignalina Nuclear power plant which would have increased the existing pollution problems further.

Mazeikiai Oil Refinery

The coastal zone of Lithuania, a strip twenty kilometres wide and ninety one kilometres in length, has been placed under severe strain by the growing vigour of its use. In this area, 'competition between resource use and resource protection has reached critical proportions.'⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ The rapid industrialisation and urbanisation of Lithuania, particularly in the coastal zone, has led to a severe air and water pollution problem.

Mazeikiai is situated in Northwestern coast and the oil refinery is the largest industrial operation, by production value, in the republic.⁽¹⁸¹⁾ The choice of a Lithuanian site was given as being part of the USSR energy policy which aimed to expand oil-refining capacity in the western regions of the Soviet Union.⁽¹⁸²⁾ Klaipėda is the industrial centre port of the coastal area and it was thought that the construction of the Mazeikiai Oil Refinery would increase the importance of Klaipėda as an oil exporting port.⁽¹⁸³⁾ Although expansion of capacity might sound reasonable, it does not address the question of whether the refinery is necessary, only that Moscow intended to expand the capacity of that area.

178. Ratneiks, H., 1984; p.286 (see note 160)

179. Idzelis, A., 1973; 'Locational Aspects of the Chemical Industry in Lithuania: 1960-1970' in Lituanus; vol.19(4), p.54

180. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.299 (see note 162)

181. Lithuanian World Community (LWC); 1989; p.8 (see note 1)

182. Ratneiks, H., 1984; p.286 (see note 160)

183. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.301 (see note 162)

Construction began in 1971 and the first unit began operations in 1980, aiming to supply Poland as well as the Baltic regions.⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ The new refinery removed some of the pressure on the dangerous and accident prone rail deliveries.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ However, it is claimed that the cost to the environment (the atmosphere, the water and human health) has been enormous. Writing in 1979, just prior to the commencement of operation at the Mazeikiai refinery, Idzelis saw the project as 'a potential new source of pollution'.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ After nine years of operation a report by the Kaunas Economics Institute (KEI) demonstrated that the refinery is in fact acritical source of pollution.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾

Air Pollution

Despite having some of the toughest emission standards in the world, the Soviet Union has not enforced them effectively.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ According to Valdas Adamkus, the Soviet law on air quality is very similar to the U.S. Clean Air Act. But the problem is that it is being ignored.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ The oil refinery at Mazeikiai is a significant contributor to regional acid rain due to the release of 45 637 tons of waste into the atmosphere after treatment. Almost all of this (45 554 t) consists of gas and liquids, particularly hydrocarbons (27 579 t), sulphur oxides (11 845 t) and carbon monoxide (3 662 t).⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ All the

184. Ratneiks, H., 1984; p.286 (see note 160)

185. It was claimed that such accidents would be reduced because the oil was pumped to the coast through the Druzhba pipeline. Ratneiks, H., 1984; p.283 (see note 160)

186. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.302 (see note 162)

187. Kaunas Economics Institute (KEI), 1988; Urgent Ecological Problems in Lithuania: Brief submitted to the council of Ministers of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic; pp.11-15

188. Bogert, C., 1990; p.17 (see note 164)

189. Adamkus is a Lithuanian-born engineer and has served as a regional administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes region since 1981. He has had significant input into the agency's international programmes, especially in Canada and Eastern Europe. He was awarded an honorary doctorate, on April 1, 1989, from the University of Vilnius for his contribution to the preservation of Lithuania's environment. Drunga, M., 1989; 'Adamkus on Lithuanian Environmental Issues' in Baltic Forum; Spring, p.28

nitrogen dioxide (1 770 t) and some hydrogen sulphide (68 t) produced is released into the atmosphere. Although the actual amounts are significantly lower, the 'relative pollution index' for each (41.1 and 54.8 respectively) demonstrates their relative impact on the environment. Hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide score only 3.16 and 1 respectively.⁽¹⁹¹⁾ It is apparent that effort has been directed toward capturing the less hazardous hydrocarbon pollutants: while no sulphur oxide or nitrogen dioxide is trapped, 75 per cent of hydrocarbons are removed or trapped.⁽¹⁹²⁾ This is not sufficient since it is the former wastes that are most damaging to the environment.

The Māžeikiai refinery allocated 46 million rubles for environmental protection in the 1987 budget. The distribution was heavily skewed toward 'water resources and their rational utilization' with 41.3 million rubles designated for that area and only 4.7 million rubles for the 'protection of the atmospheric environment'. However, this allocation was not followed in practice and actual expenditure on environmental protection was 9 million rubles: 8.1 million for water and 0.9 million for the protection of the air. Treatment of gaseous wastes at Māžeikiai, then, is not in line with their more detrimental effect on the environment.⁽¹⁹³⁾ Perhaps more damaging than the process pollutants are the contaminated products of the refinery such as lead, ethyl gasoline and heavy oil containing sulphur.⁽¹⁹⁴⁾

Leaded petrol is gradually being phased out in the West, with USA heading the way. From 1986, the USA maximum concentration of lead in petrol has been set at 0.026 g/L: whereas it is 0.15 g/L in England and Hungary. However, the Soviet Union's standard, in place since 1977, is fourteen times greater than the American limit at 0.37g/L. According to the KEI report, it is possible to produce petrol with a lead content of 0.15g/L immediately and to eventually eliminate the use of leaded gasoline.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ Australia is also heading toward

190. Table 4.1, KEI, 1988; p.13 (see note 187)

191. KEI, 1988; p.12 and Table 4.1, p.13 (see note 187)

192. KEI, 1988; p.12 and Table 4.1, p.13 (see note 187)

193. KEI, 1988; pp. 12 and 14 (see note 187)

194. KEI, 1988; p.14 (see note 187)

unleaded petrol with a standard of 0.013g/L, yet leaded petrol is still sold with a concentration of 0.46g/L.

Māžeikiai could accept an offer to work with an Italian company, *Ekofuel*, to produce ecologically sound alternative additives for petrol, in order to completely eliminate the use of lead.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ The management of the refinery explained that the change is hindered by the all union agencies which are concerned about the increased costs of producing cleaner petrol.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ The report expresses the view that extra cost would be compensated by the reduction in environmental damage.⁽¹⁹⁸⁾

Sulphur oxides are a major cause of acid rain,⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ soil carbon leaching, fisheries stock depletion, increased incidence of poor health as well as other negative effects. Lithuanian factories emitted 238 000 tons of sulphur oxides into the atmosphere in 1987 alone,⁽²⁰⁰⁾ leading the KEI to advocate its elimination. They suggest that the desulphurisation of heavy oil should begin at Māžeikiai, using the desulphurising technique developed by the All Union Petroleum Research Institute.⁽²⁰¹⁾

Water Pollution

Apparently, in designing the refinery, reduced pollution and environmental disruption were a primary focus. The

195. KEI, 1988; p.12 (see note 187)

196. KEI, 1988; p.12 (see note 187)

197. KEI, 1988; p.12 (see note 187)

198. Interestingly, the KEI have presented the argument of decreased environmental pollution in monetary terms. Using the 'All Union "Provisional Typical Methodology 1986"', they estimate that the reduction of lead from 0.37g/L to 0.15g/L would reduce the environmental damage by 24 rubles per ton of gasoline. KEI, 1988; p.12

199. In Poland, geographically close to Lithuania, scientists estimate that between 30 and 50 percent of the country's forests will be damaged by acid rain by 1995. To compound the problem, 50 percent of sulphur affecting Poland comes from nearby countries. Lithuanian factories may be contributing to the problem in Poland and other nations. Cave, S., 1990; p.4 (see note 145)

200. Using the same method as that used to estimate the damage caused by leaded petrol, the KEI suggest that sulphur oxides were responsible for 25.1 million rubles of damage in 1987. KEI, 1988; p.15 (see note 187)

201. KEI, 1988; p.15 (see note 187)

refinery has a water cleaning system that treats its waste together with the municipal sewage from the town.⁽²⁰²⁾ The treatment facility performs relatively well, with the results almost meeting the union effluent standards. In 1979, Idzelis⁽²⁰³⁾ appeared to praise the disposal method which, as discussed below, has since been shown to be insufficient by the KEI report.

The method involves pumping the effluent ninety-three kilometres into the Baltic Sea. Soviet authorities claimed that the brine wastes would not be harmful to the natural ecosystem, yet the discharge was to be prohibited during the summer holiday season.⁽²⁰⁴⁾ The pipeline should take the waste water three kilometres off-shore. However, when the untreated sewage from Palanga is introduced, the differing pressures of the two pipes prevents the flow of the Mažeikiai effluent into the sea. Thus, effluent remains in the bay and is washed onto the beaches. For this reason, the KEI stress the importance of treating the Palanga sewage and equalizing the pressures of both pipes.⁽²⁰⁵⁾

Using the same 'All Union methodology', it was estimated that 118 000 rubles of environmental damage was caused by pollutants discharged into the sea, in 1988, from the Mažeikiai refinery. The cause of this damage was the release of 120 tons of BOD (biochemical oxygen demand), 5.6 tons of crude oil, 47.5 tons of suspended materials and 18.9 kg of phenols were pumped into the Baltic Sea.⁽²⁰⁶⁾

The treatment of all wastes is insufficient causing severe environmental damage. Mutations have been noted in plants and animals in the area around the refinery as well as an increased incidence of human illness. One argument points to poor management (as in the case of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant) as a significant cause of the environmental damage experienced near Mažeikiai. For example,

202. LWC, 1989; p.8 (see note 1)

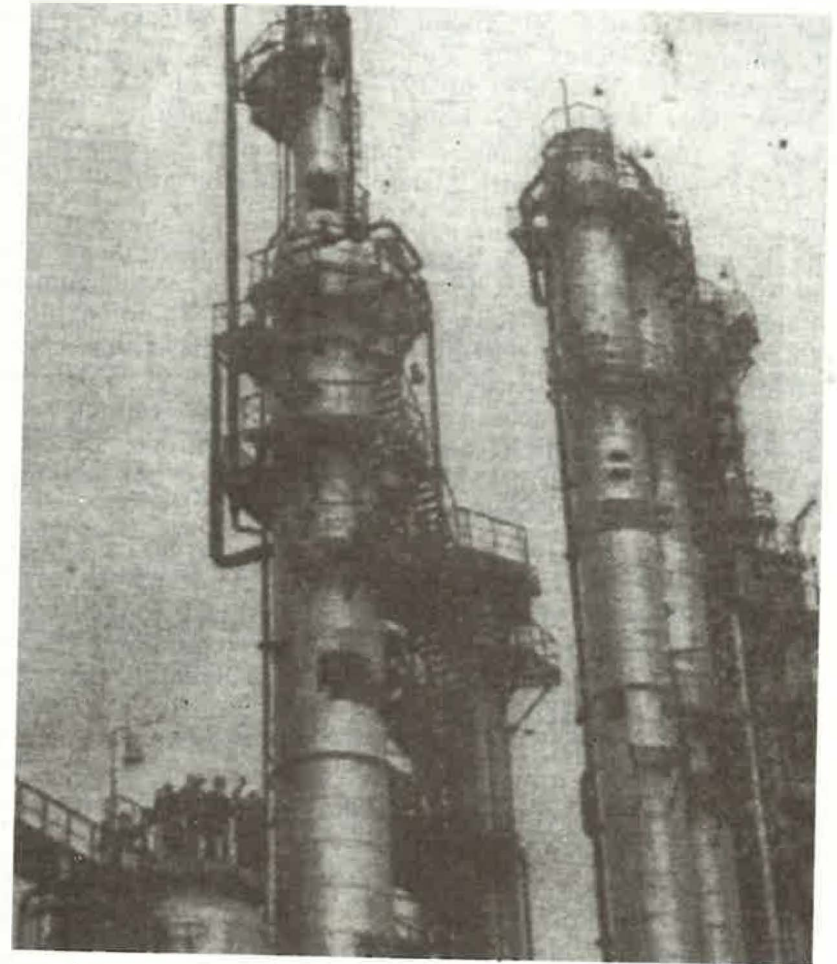
203. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.302 (see note 162)

204. Idzelis, A., 1979; p.302 (see note 162) It is not certain whether this policy was actually implemented once the refinery began operation.

205. KEI, 1988; pp.12-14 (see note 187)

206. KEI, 1988; pp.12-14 (see note 187)

petroleum products are often transported in poorly sealed containers, surface run-off and ground waters are contaminated by leaking oil, gasoline evaporates from open containers; refinery gases are not fully utilized and are burned.⁽²⁰⁷⁾



• The Mažeikiai Oil Refinery (pictured) was hailed by soviet planners as "the chemical giant of [Moscow's] five-year-plan".

207. KEI, 1988; p.14 (see note 187)

Ignalina Nuclear Generating Station (NGS)

The small town of Ignalina, situated 105 kilometres north-east from Vilnius, was famous for its many beautiful lakes and surrounding forests. Today, its name is more often used when referring to the Soviet Union's potentially largest nuclear power plant, located 50 kilometres away. Sniečkus, named after Antanas Sniečkus, the First Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party from 1940 to 1974 and friend of Stalin, is the artificial town formed to house the predominantly Russian workers at the power plant. Today Sniečkus is dubbed the 'Soviet enclave', a 'Soviet island in Lithuania' or a 'feudal Soviet castle'.⁽²⁰⁸⁾

The Ignalina NGS which began operation in 1984 is a virtual clone of the station at Chernobyl, using the same outdated and technically unsafe RBMK-type reactors which exploded at Chernobyl in 1986, leaving a legacy of disastrous effects all over Europe. Lithuania is one country which has experienced problems caused by the Chernobyl fallout. For example, young children are given prescriptions for milk from "safe" cows, referring to those which have not developed leukaemia from the Chernobyl radioactivity.⁽²⁰⁹⁾

According to an official Brief by the Kaunas Economics Institute (KEI) submitted to the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, additional safety measures were incorporated into the two operating reactor-units of Ignalina after the Chernobyl accident. However, with evidence of several fires in the station, the authors of the brief believe that the possibility of accidents cannot be removed.⁽²¹⁰⁾ One fire broke out in September, 1988 in the cable room of the second unit of the station, which increased concern about another Chernobyl-type explosion.⁽²¹¹⁾

Two of the planned four 1 500 MW reactors have been built and are currently in operation.⁽²¹²⁾ The KEI argued strongly

208. Sinnig, C., 1990; 'Sniečkus: a Soviet enclave in Lithuania' in The Lithuanian Review; May 11, p.2

209. LWC, 1989; p.4 (see note 1)

210. KEI, 1988; p.16 (see note 187)

211. Anon., 1988; 'Round the Clock Control' in Bridges; vol.12(9), p.4

212. LWC, 1989; p.5 (see note 1)

for an investigation into the continuing operation of the two reactors and that the construction of a third reactor should be terminated since it would place increased pressure on the environment.⁽²¹³⁾ The Chernobyl accident, which generated a wave of fear across many European countries, occurred during the construction of the third reactor. The accident and the outbreak of fires at the Ignalina plant, gave the Lithuanian Greens and the Lithuanian Reform Movement (Sajūdis) a focus for action, and the fear it had created gave them popular support. Experts warned of Ignalina's limited safety and possible design faults.⁽²¹⁴⁾ In 1988, a mass demonstration was organised and the construction was abandoned. This was a step forward for the Lithuanian people, but the numerous problems with the existing operation still remain.

Structural Dangers

Nuclear plants outside the USSR use more reliable gas-cooled graphite reactors which are enclosed by a reinforced concrete shroud. This shroud can serve as part of the reactor encasement shroud after about 30 years of reactor operation - thus reducing a decommissioning problem - one which will inevitably face Lithuania since recycling is not possible with RBMK-type reactors.⁽²¹⁵⁾

The Chernobyl-style reactors used at Ignalina are no longer used in the West due to their susceptibility to explosions. High accident risk has been verified by the outbreak of numerous fires at the plant. Usual automatic controls and safety mechanisms are also absent from the Ignalina station. Consequently, safety relies on the staff who control the reactors manually. If an operating error occurs in a Western gas-cooled reactor, staff have six to seven hours to correct the situation before effects become critical. However, a similar situation at Ignalina would leave staff with one minute to counteract the process.⁽²¹⁶⁾

Site Dangers

No geological survey was conducted before the reactors were

213. KEI, 1988; p.16 (see note 187)

214. Anon., 1988; p.4 (see note 211)

215. KEI, 1988; p.19 (see note 187)

216. KEI, 1988; p.19 (see note 187)

constructed. It is feared that the Ignalina nuclear power station has been built on or near an active fault between two tectonic structures (Baltic syncline and Masurian-Byelorussian anticline). This suspicion is supported by observed differential settling of the foundations of both reactors. This necessarily increases the possibility of an explosion or radioactive leak. According to the KEI, if Ignalina has been built on a fault then structural damage is unavoidable during its expected 25 years of service.⁽²¹⁷⁾

Seismic studies were also not carried out prior to construction. The designers of the plant considered the area to have a maximum earthquake intensity of 5 bales [Lith: balai; a unit of measurement] which meant that the structure did not need to be earthquake-resistant. However, geological information indicates that earthquakes over seven bales have occurred in the area which could be hazardous for the Ignalina station. Nuclear generating plants are not allowed in areas with potential earthquakes of eight-bale intensity. On the basis of these problems, the KEI called for a seismic assessment program for the region.⁽²¹⁸⁾

Environmental Consequences

An operating nuclear power plant emits various radioisotopes into the environment with half-lives of hundreds and thousands of years. For example, surface run-off water from Ignalina, containing these long-lived radioisotopes, runs into the groundwater which in turn supplies drinking water to wells across the country. The KEI suggest that for this reason alone, the Ignalina NGS should not have been built.⁽²¹⁹⁾

The station has caused not only radioactive, but also chemical and thermal pollution. Rather than using the typical gas-cooling method of the West, the Ignalina plant uses water from the nearby Drukšiai Lake to cool its system. When the water is pumped back into the lake it upsets the ecological equilibrium. The Botanical Institute of the Lithuanian Academy of Science has stated that, in 1987, varieties of oxygen

217. KEI, 1988; p.16 (see note 187)

218. KEI, 1988; p.17 (see note 187)

219. KEI, 1988; P.17 (see note 187)

and biomass producing phytoplankton had decreased from one hundred to twenty species (including those eaten by fish) since the operation of the plant began. The total biomass had been reduced to one twentieth its original value.⁽²²⁰⁾

Most damage has occurred from the excessive heating of the lake. The station is required to restrict the water temperatures to the regulatory limit of 24.3 degrees Celsius and not exceed the biological limit of 28 degrees Celsius. If the temperature does exceed this limit, the management must shut down the station immediately. On particular days in July 1988, the temperature measured 30.1 degrees resulting in the destruction of cold-water fauna. It is practices such as this which have led to allegations of poor management of the station.⁽²²¹⁾

The chemical pollution carried in by the returning cooling water has also had a detrimental effect. In particular, sulphur contamination has led to growing 'lifeless zones' in the deeper parts of the lake and marshes have developed in the shallow areas. On the basis of this evidence, the KEI advocated precautionary measures to protect the lake and its inhabitants from further degradation. They conclude that it is imperative to regulate the discharge of the cooling water into Lake Drukšiai using available modern technology. The researchers also concluded that the construction of a third reactor [now abandoned] would destroy the lake entirely.⁽²²²⁾

On the basis of the information provided in the KEI Brief, the Lithuanian World Community Environmental Committee and the Lithuanian Green Movement put forward recommendations to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe Meeting on the Protection of the Environment, held in Sophia, Bulgaria, October 1989. They advocated the formation of an internationally supervised independent commission to:

- a) investigate and report on the design safety of the RBMK-type reactors, the operating and safety procedures and radioactive waste disposal methods;

220. KEI, 1988; P.18 (see note 187)

221. KEI, 1988; P.18 (see note 187)

222. KEI, 1988; P.18 (see note 187)

b) establish an instrumentation network and program to monitor radioactive emissions from Ignalina;

c) conduct a comprehensive hydro-geologic investigation to assess the integrity of the station at its location, and its potential to contaminate groundwater.

The two groups also recommended that the construction of additional reactors should be cancelled, which has since been done.⁽²²³⁾

The environmental consequences of the Ignalina nuclear power station are 'transboundary'⁽²²⁴⁾ and therefore of great significance. An accident similar to the one which occurred at Chernobyl would have consequences beyond the boundaries of Lithuania and indeed the Soviet Union. The safety and health of those who work at the station as well as the entire Lithuanian population are at risk due to the poor preparation, operation and management of the plant.

As the Chernobyl example has shown, the possible effects from an explosion would not be limited to Lithuania, but rather, a large section of Europe could be affected. The radioactive impact would not be restricted temporally either, with effects continuing for an estimated minimum of 50 years. Apparently, most citizens outside the Baltic region are unaware of the danger that Ignalina poses.⁽²²⁵⁾

There are also the indigenous consequences including the contamination of the country's entire water-well supply and the extinction of many species once found in Lake Drukšiai. It is these actual and potential problems which outweigh any argument in support of the nuclear generating power station, particularly if poor management continued.

Moscow has not been required to give any explanation for decisions regarding proposed industries and their sites. Fear has been their means of implementation. However, in the case of Ignalina, which began operations in 1984 (on the eve of the introduction of the 'perestroika' and 'glasnost' policies),

223. LWC, 1989; P.7 (see note 1)

224. LWC, 1989; p.5 (see note 1)

225. LWC, 1989; p.3 (see note 1)

it was argued that the nuclear process would be cheaper. This has been shown to be false by the attempted privatisation of the nuclear industry in the United States of America, where it was found that a profit could not be made.⁽²²⁶⁾ Also the cost to the environment in the long term is much greater.⁽²²⁷⁾

Gajauskaitė argues that the economy should not be developed at the cost of ecology. She points out that production which exposes the population's health and genetic pool to a high risk, such as the nuclear power plant, is unacceptable. Gajauskaitė suggests that such production is expanded in Lithuania not to generate profit for the republic, but to strengthen the centre - Moscow.⁽²²⁸⁾

Sniečkus: A Russian Suburb of Lithuania

As with several other Soviet industries in Lithuania, the construction of the Ignalina nuclear power station led to a flood of Russian emigrants who took up employment at the plant. Many of these people were "invited" by Moscow as "specialists" needed for the operation of the plant. However, it is strongly suggested that these "invitations" partly aimed to subvert the Lithuanian culture by incorporating Soviet sympathisers into the population as part of the 'Russification' plan. Ostensibly, the provision of equipment, raw materials and trained staff is a development of the Lithuanian economy. However, it is simply a transfer of polluting manufacturers to the Lithuanian republic creating debt problems and the transfer of part of Russian population to an artificially created infrastructure.⁽²²⁹⁾

Thus the formation of the Russian "suburb" has generated

226. Dr. Greenhill pers. comm.

227. Although it is essentially impossible to calculate the cost of the degradation of the natural environment in monetary terms, the argument can still hold with those who see no cost in its destruction by using techniques which estimate clean-up costs for example, or estimates for new technologies or programmes which are necessary due to unforeseen consequences of the destruction itself.

228. Gajauskaitė, R., 1990; 'Ekologijos vieta Pertvarkoje' in Mokslas ir Gyvenimas; no.2, February, p.3 (trans. Taškūnas, A.) Gajauskaitė has the equivalent of a Phd in Law.

229. Gajauskaitė, R., 1990; pp.3-4 (see note 228)

many unexpected social problems. Firstly, the predominantly Russian inhabitants of the town do not identify with Lithuania and are largely unaware of the native culture. As well-provided for employees of Minatomenergoprom (Ministry for the Exploitation of Energy), they cannot identify with the newly independent Lithuania and their electorate supported the pro-Soviet Lithuanian Communist Party in the local elections of 1990.⁽²³⁰⁾ The workers naturally support their providers. As employees of Minatomenergoprom their average wage is almost three times the Soviet average.

According to Sinnig, although 15% of the people living in Sniečkus would like to take part in the green movement, any further support has been diminished by the image portrayed of their town by Sajūdis and the Lithuanian Greens. Lithuanians have tended to form a view of Sniečkus as an "enemy village" and to refer to it with anger after its representation as a "Soviet island" by those groups.⁽²³¹⁾ Subsequently, the Russians in Sniečkus have been isolated physically and socially from Lithuanians. They are hated for two reasons; firstly, because of their support for an industry which has caused considerable pollution and secondly, for being colonists in their country.

Many of the well-educated Russians that came to work at the nuclear station brought families with them. Their wives tended to also be well-educated, however they faced unemployment in the artificial town. Many men will also be retrenched due to the compromised size of the plant.⁽²³²⁾

Conclusion

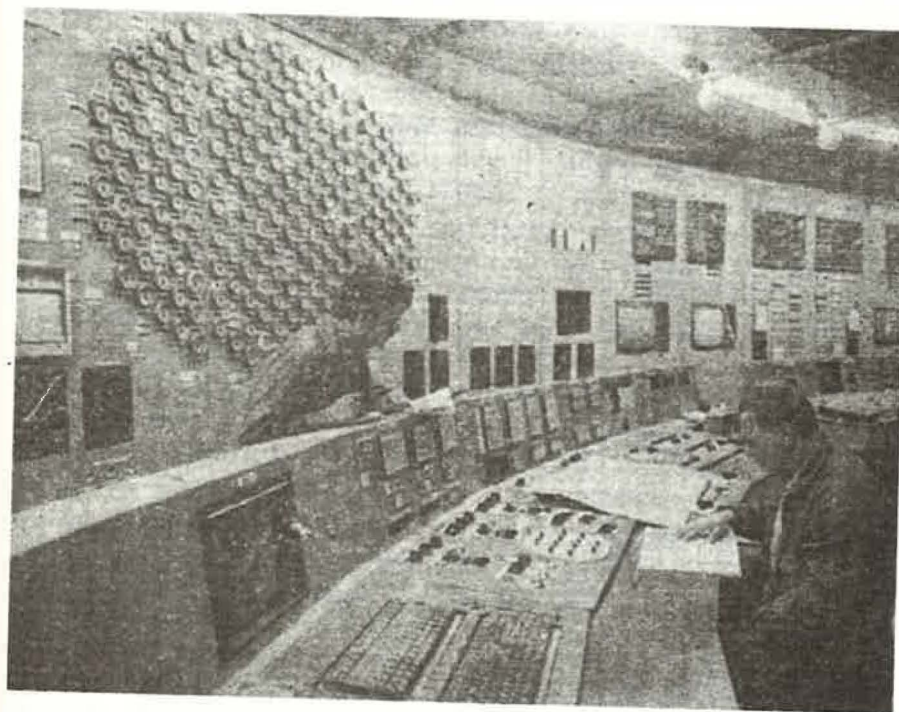
The oil refinery and the nuclear power station represent only a small portion of the environmental problems in Lithuania. However, they help to demonstrate the magnitude of the crisis and the problems facing the environmentalists who wish to improve the situation. Both have been subjects of criticism regarding poor management which, together with the cumbersome and secretive bureaucracy, is clearly responsible for the scale of the problem in Lithuania and

²³⁰. Sinnig, C., 1990; p.2 (see note 208)

²³¹. Sinnig, C., 1990; p.2 (see note 208)

²³². Sinnig, C., 1990; p.2 (see note 208)

other Soviet republics. The management of the industries lies, ultimately, with the central ministry which is a mouth-piece of the Communist Party, so, in the end, it is the political system which is criticised. The environmental problems, represented by the case studies, have been a focus of concern for the emerging pressure groups which aim to improve the situation by using the political system. These groups will be discussed in the following chapter.



• The control room of the Ignalina Nuclear Generating Station. Although public pressure has successfully halved the plant's size, it is still of major concern for Lithuanian environmentalists.

CHAPTER 4

The Road to Change

Emergence of Opposition

The last few years have seen the emergence of various pressure groups in Lithuania. Gorbachev's 'glasnost' (openness) and 'perestroika' (reform) have allowed a flow of information into Lithuania which is no longer so obviously falsified and distorted. This has, in turn, enabled an increased awareness among the people, especially the younger generation. It is the youth and the academics that are most vocal in Sajūdis (the reform movement) and the green movement. It is evident that in Soviet republics, such as Lithuania, that environmental values are inextricably linked to concern for ethnic identity and freedom of information and speech which forms the nationalistic movement.⁽²³³⁾

The political and social changes have been dramatic, yet many activists remain suspicious of the intentions behind the reforms. Some restrictions on Lithuanian activities still remain, impeding the complete implementation of the concepts of autonomy and openness espoused by President Gorbachev.

What remains are Soviet-imposed regimes, Soviet tanks, an imported Soviet ideology, over 40 years of dictatorship, exploitation, cultural distortion and an ecological disaster.⁽²³⁴⁾

Thus the groups remain in opposition to the State and its policy of internationalism, which is essentially still in force.

Before the nation can regain its independent stature, there are several obstacles in the path of the newly-elected Lithuanian government. The Soviet Union, although taking positive steps toward joining the market system⁽²³⁵⁾ and

²³³. Redclift, M., 1989; pp.180,182 (see note 100)

²³⁴. Anon., 1989; in *ELTA*, 1989; no.5(365), p.13

²³⁵. Although aiming to completely join the market system, Gorbachev does not have plans for a multi-party system with democratic elections. There will be some elections, however the Communist Party will continue to be the main party and Gorbachev thinks it should stay that way. Mašanauskas, J., pers. comm.

advocating more autonomy for the republics, remains adamant that Lithuania should remain in the Soviet Union.

Following Lithuania's declaration of independence in March 1990, preliminary talks with Moscow began in October. The declaration pre-empted new Soviet legislation which will give Gorbachev more extensive powers as President.⁽²³⁶⁾ Gorbachev promised more autonomy for Lithuania providing they support the economic plan for the Baltics which requires them to remain part of the Soviet Union. For Gorbachev, any break from the Soviet Union will lead to disunity.⁽²³⁷⁾ Gorbachev's announcement that he intends to give the republics more power, has been met with suspicion by the Lithuanian people. It is believed that the announcement aimed only to appease them.⁽²³⁸⁾

One of the major hindrances facing the environmental movement is a lack of measuring instruments that would make it easier to prove that industries are polluting more than the minimum standards.

Although glasnost is allowing environmental groups to spring up all over the country and the publication of a highly critical Green's newspaper, Lithuania lacks the technology to measure the damage caused by industry, cars that still use heavily-leaded fuel and pesticide overkill in the fields. Instead, scientists resort to theoretical paper calculations to judge how critical certain situations have become.⁽²³⁹⁾

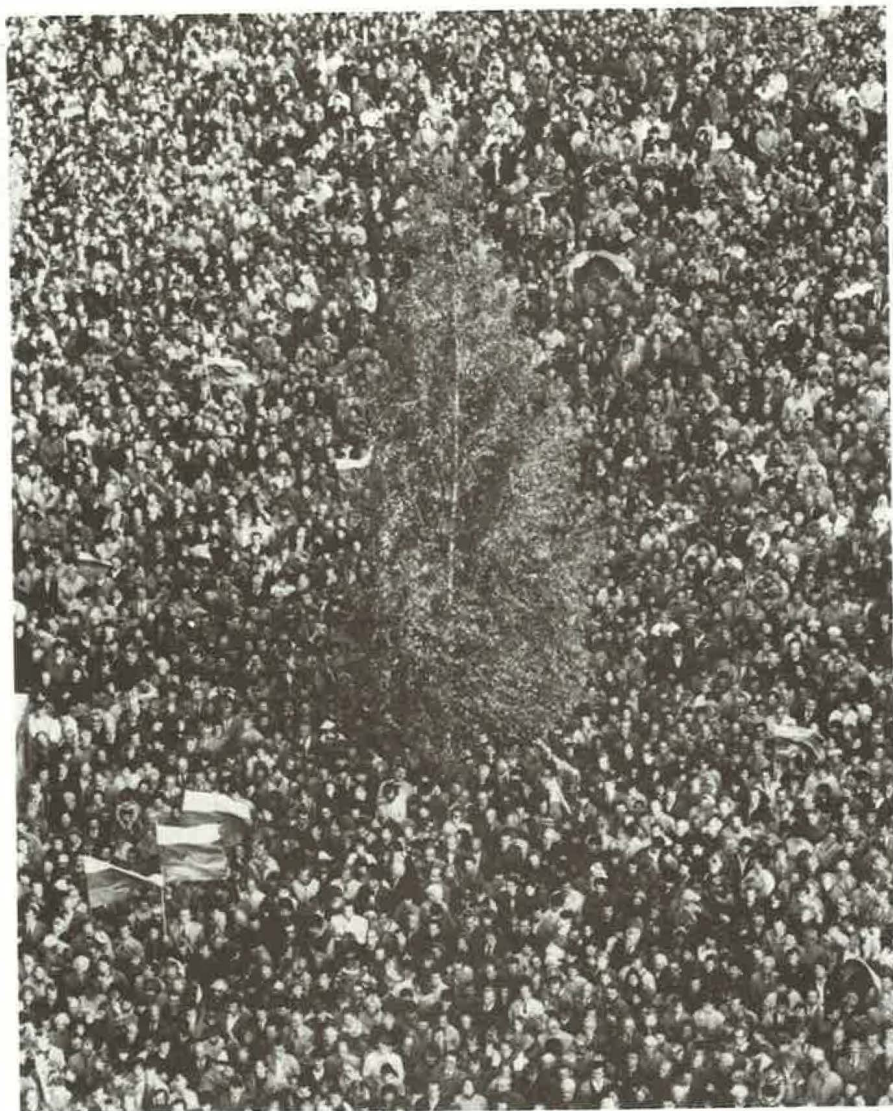
The two most significant groups to emerge have been the Sajūdis and the Lithuanian greens. The green movement essentially sprung from the reform movement and both exist as representation of the concern for the environment and the nature of society. A swell of opinion in the country has given mass support to the groups who are using the political system to effect further changes. According to Sovietologist and demographer, Murray Feshbach, 'ecology...is politicizing the population throughout the country'.⁽²⁴⁰⁾

²³⁶. Mašanauskas, J., 1990; 'Going for Broke' in *Jaužiniai*, no.27, April, p.4

²³⁷. Mašanauskas, J. pers. comm.

²³⁸. SBS World News, 20.11.90

²³⁹. Lithuanian World Community (LWC), 1989; p.3 (see note1)



• After 48 years of foreign domination, the Lithuanian national flag was hoisted publicly once again in Kaunas, on October 9, 1988. Thousands of Lithuanians were there to witness the historic event.

²⁴⁰. Bogert, C., 1990; p.16 (see note 164)

The Reform Movement

Sajūdis is an umbrella group with around 200,000 members. Some members of the groups are also members of other more specific groups. The movement gives support for restructuring, advocates national rights and interests and promotes environmental concerns.⁽²⁴¹⁾ The group aims to achieve these goals through the rule of law.⁽²⁴²⁾ Environmental protest has been a focus for Sajūdis, who have been equally concerned with finding alternatives to the centrally planned system.⁽²⁴³⁾ Among its founding members are intellectuals who bravely spoke out against environmental problems in pre-Gorbachev times.⁽²⁴⁴⁾

The support for social and political reform in Lithuania was demonstrated at the first relatively free elections to the Congress of the USSR People's Deputies and the Lithuanian supreme soviet parliament in March, 1989 and February, 1990. In the elections to the Lithuanian government on February 24, 1990, Sajūdis and Sajūdis-backed candidates won 72 of 90 seats filled, with 51 seats to be determined by run-off elections in March, 1990. The pro-independence Lithuanian Communist Party (after its break from the USSR Communist Party) won twenty-two seats, thirteen of them with the support of Sajūdis. The Social Democrats won nine seats and the Greens and the Christian Democrats won two seats each.⁽²⁴⁵⁾

These victories have given hope to the people of Lithuania who are now more confident of their prospects for independence. With confidence that they will be able to make decisions about their society, the people are being more outspoken on issues such as independence and the environmental crisis. For example, in 1988, thousands of people from all three Baltic republics joined hands along the coastline, singing folk songs and demanding that the heavily

²⁴¹. *Baltic News*, June 1989; vol.xv, no.2(62), p.2

²⁴². Mašanauskas, J., 1990; 'Beyond the 1990's' in *Jaužiniai*; no.26, January, p.5

²⁴³. Redclift, M., 1989; p.177 (see note 233)

²⁴⁴. Mašanauskas, J., 1990; p.4 (see note 242)

²⁴⁵. Anon., 1990; 'Sajūdis Candidates Score Big Election Victory: A Major Step Toward Independence' in *ELTA*, 1990; no.2(375), p.3

polluted Baltic be saved for future generations.⁽²⁴⁶⁾ It is only since the political changes that such a protest could take place. This has been aided by the increase in information made available.

The Green Movement

The Lithuanian Greens are part of the restructuring movement and have helped give that movement added support. The permanent crisis of culture has nourished concern about the ecological crisis⁽²⁴⁷⁾ which has led to a desire to find alternatives to the centralised system. The group has had some success in protesting against various environmentally damaging programs. For example, a demonstration organised in 1988 prevented the construction of a third reactor (to be followed by a fourth) at the Ignalina Nuclear Generating Station. Public opposition also forced the authorities to reconsider the ecological feasibility of drilling for oil off the Lithuanian coast, near Palanga.⁽²⁴⁸⁾ Nationwide, ecological activists managed to shut down 240 polluting enterprises in 1989.⁽²⁴⁹⁾ Ecology has increasingly become a major issue at elections, with more people taking advantage of voting eligibility. Polls show that the environment is the most important issue for voters in many of the local elections.⁽²⁵⁰⁾

The green movement, facilitated by the political changes, exposes problems in orthodox Marxist analysis, [it] remind[s] us that ecological politics cannot simply be understood in terms of Western Capitalism.⁽²⁵¹⁾

The Greens in Lithuania highlight the problems which environmental issues pose for orthodox Marxism.⁽²⁵²⁾ As argued in 'The Conversion' in Chapter 1 and 'Environmental Effects' in Chapter 2, Marxist theory did not take the notion of 'carrying

246. Anon., 1988; in *Bridges* vol.12(9), 1988, p.5

247. Extract from an extensive letter to President Gorbachev signed on November 2, 1987 by concerned people from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Cited in *ELTA*, 1988; no.5(351), p.8

248. Nahaylo, B. and Swoboda, V., 1990;p.267 (see note 96)

249. Bogert, C., 1990; p.16 (see note 164)

250. Bogert, C., 1990; p.16 (see note 164)

251. Redclift, M., 1989; p.182 (see note 233)

252. Redclift, M., 1989; p.177 (see note 233)

capacity' into account. For Marx, nature's supply was infinite. So, any attack on the government regarding the state of the environment is necessarily an attack on the centralised system which was forged in Marxist theory.

Both the groups, and indeed many others, have a high level of involvement from the intelligentsia. The Writers', Historians' and Artists' Associations, for example, demonstrate the previously made argument of their significance to movements. The processes which silenced many of the intelligentsia (now partially lifted) impeded the development of movements. Leopold Ozolinsh, a Latvian physician, explains; 'We are in a state of ruin, and no one is left to protest'. It appears that 'most of the people with brains' were executed, deported or bought out by the government.⁽²⁵³⁾ Such people, as the basis of a green movement, were previously prohibited from arousing public concern but with public opinion permitted (to a certain extent) their contribution has been significant.

Other Opposition

Other groups and parties involved in active opposition to the State include, Lithuanian Freedom League, Lithuanian Helsinki Group, Catholic Committee for the Defence of the Rights of Believers, Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, Lithuanian National-Democratic Movement, Lithuanian Workers' Association, Committee to Rescue Political Prisoners and Lithuanian Human Rights Association.

The Lithuanian Freedom League began unofficially in 1978 and began public opposition in July 1988. The League's main objective is the re-establishment of national independence in a confederation with free European states.⁽²⁵⁴⁾ They advocate economic sovereignty for Lithuania and making Lithuanian the official language of the republic.⁽²⁵⁵⁾ In their opinion, Lithuania cannot be sovereign while still annexed to the Soviet Union. Thus the evacuation of the Soviet troops is a top priority.⁽²⁵⁶⁾ The Freedom League is Sajūdis' non-communist

253. Vesilind, P.J., 1990; 'The Baltic Nations' in *National Geographic*; vol.178(5), November, p.10

254. *Baltic News*, June 1989; p.6 (see note 241)

255. *Baltic News*, June 1989; p.6 (see note 241)

rival. Although espousing many similar views as the reform movement, the League engages in more radical tactics which has not aided popular support. It must be added, however, that the League is important in the process of change since it exerts pressure on Sajūdis to take a more radical path.⁽²⁵⁷⁾

The frustration felt by the Lithuanians at a continuing Red Army presence was expressed through a demonstration recently. The procession made its way to the military base in Vilnius to protest against the Red Army presence and conscription of Lithuanians. Hundreds of men threw their conscription cards over the locked gate. The demonstration ended in violence.⁽²⁵⁸⁾ This is indicative of the constant tension in the republic and the significant amount of power that the centre still holds over the republics.

The Lithuanian Helsinki Group, founded in 1976, and the Lithuanian Human Rights Association, founded in 1988, are concerned with the Human rights situation in the country. The latter point to the necessity to inform the world about the situation. The Catholic groups have aimed to publicise the situation of the Catholic Church and to have the ban on worship removed.⁽²⁵⁹⁾ The ban was lifted in the mid-1980s and was symbolised by the return of the 14th Century Vilnius Cathedral in October, 1988, which had been converted into an art museum in 1950.⁽²⁶⁰⁾

The Lithuanian National-Democratic Movement is an umbrella group for various dissident movements. Its objectives include the release of political prisoners, full freedom of religion and expression, status to the native language and opposition to the expansion of nuclear energy in the USSR.⁽²⁶¹⁾ The Lithuanian Democratic Party was founded later, in July, 1989. Its most immediate goal is the restoration of independence

256. Anon., 1989; 'Lithuanian Freedom League Calls for Withdrawal of Soviet Troops' in *ELTA*, 1989; no.1(361), p.14

257. Mašanauskas, J., 1990; p.6 (see note 242)

258. SBS World News, 20.11.90

259. *Baltic News*, June 1989; p.6 (see note 241)

260. Anon., 1988; 'Lithuanian Cathedral Returned' in *Bridges*, 1988; vol.12(10), p.10

261. *Baltic News*, June 1989; p.6 (see note 241)

through parliamentary struggle.⁽²⁶²⁾

Another group, the Independent Workers' Association, was founded in July 1988. The main political goal is independence but it also defends workers' rights in the many Soviet factories. It is thought that the Association will be the basis for a Lithuanian Labor Party.⁽²⁶³⁾

The fact that these groups have been able to form and protest publicly is significant, but perhaps even more so is the content of their criticisms. They are generally outspoken against the Soviet system. Such public opposition would never have been tolerated before 1985 and execution, deportation or political arrest would have resulted.

Glasnost, but no perestroika!

The recent political changes have lifted some of the restrictions which have frustrated the Lithuanian people since 1940. It has been argued that without those changes, the Sajūdis would not have formed. It would have been impossible. One of the Sajūdis leaders explained that 'people were angry yet completely silent because of fear.'⁽²⁶⁴⁾

The lifting of restrictions has created a political environment which has accommodated the formation of the various pressure groups mentioned and their public demonstrations. Referring to the various citizen groups and green unions throughout the Soviet Union, Bogert remarked that;

The new movements have mobilized grandmothers, peasants, workers and children - and confronting authority is no longer the preserve of a few Moscow dissidents.⁽²⁶⁵⁾

However, there is still much condemnation of any outspoken critics and the framework of coercion still exists. This has aroused suspicion among the people of Lithuania. (The

262. Anon., 1989; 'New Political Parties in Lithuania'; in *ELTA*, 1989; no.10(370), p.10

263. Anon., 1989, in *ELTA* 10(370); p.10 (see note 262)

264. Juozaišis, A., 1988; quoted in Mann, A., 1988; 'Lithuanians Lift their Heads' in *The New Leader*, December 12 and cited in *ELTA*, 1989; no.1(361), p.17

265. Bogert, C., 1990; p.16 (see note 164)

restrictions that remain will be discussed later in this chapter). As discussed in Chapter 2, the restrictions and the fear of breaking those restrictions together with the threat of continued Soviet occupation, distracted the Lithuanian population from environmental issues. Lennart Meri, Estonia's new foreign minister, explains;

When you shut people's mouths so they cannot talk, when you close their eyes by forbidding them to travel, when you plug their ears by jamming airwaves, the population becomes very passive. In this condition, when people don't care, it seems as if nature herself reacts: Fields produce less wheat, forests die of pollution, fouled rivers catch fire. The entire society degrades.⁽²⁶⁶⁾

With the prospect of independence a reality, the new groups are also able to take environmental issues on board, since they are more confident that Lithuanians will control future decisions affecting the environment rather than the Soviet Union.

These two major concerns, preservation of cultural identity or independence and environmental problems, have coincided and complemented each other. That is to say, while it could be argued that the policy of openness has increased awareness of environmental issues and thus facilitated the formation of organised opposition, the prospect of independence that has arisen following the political changes has strengthened this opposition and environmental issues have been a focus for the continued criticism of the centralised system which has denied Lithuania the right to make decisions about such issues. Environmental issues, then, have been the source and sustenance of opposition to the centralised system.

The resolution of the Lithuanian Writers' Association, mentioned in Chapter 3, is an example of this extremely vocal concern about the environment. The writers challenged totalitarian control by the Soviet Union and called for the formation of grass roots bodies to monitor violations against nature in their country. They believe that, although the government is active in solving problems of war and peace,

²⁶⁶. Vesilind, P.J., 1990; p.10 (see note 253)

'it lags in the protection of nature, all plans and resolutions are still carried out very slowly, and sometimes are even sabotaged.'⁽²⁶⁷⁾ So, the Soviet administration firstly ignored environmental issues and later, when plans were made, their implementation was hindered by the ongoing bureaucratic process.

The resolution declared that the Soviet government's policy of 'production for production's sake, harvest for harvest's sake' was actually criminal and has been defined by the United Nations resolutions as colonial economic management.⁽²⁶⁸⁾ The group, frustrated with the government's short-sightedness explain that the government has been repeating a fallacy for a long time,

the economy must be economical, while forgetting that only a production that justifies itself ecologically can be effective and humane.⁽²⁶⁹⁾

The association agreed to several necessary steps to improve the environmental situation. They resolved to form ecological monitoring units to consist mainly of 'writers, scientists, journalists, and other members of the creative intelligentsia.'⁽²⁷⁰⁾ This demonstrates the earlier point regarding the significance of the intelligentsia for an environmental movement. Clearly, such people are considered valuable to the movement because of their status in society and the authority with which they can make allegations.

The next stated task of the resolution was to urge the government of the republic to enable the monitoring groups to publicise their observations. The third aim was to ensure that a large number of the creative intelligentsia involved in environmental protection be included in the activities of the Committee for the Protection of Nature, following its reorganisation. They argued that,

it is time to change the improper arrangement whereby the executives of the agro-industrial complex

²⁶⁷. Lithuanian Writers' Association, 1988; 'Resolution on Ecology' in *ELTA*, no. 4(350), p.5

²⁶⁸. Lithuanian Writers' Association, 1988; p.6 (see note 267)

²⁶⁹. Lithuanian Writers' Association, 1988; p.6 (see note 267)

²⁷⁰. Lithuanian Writers' Association, 1988; p.6 (see note 267)

also act as chairmen of the raion [regional] organizations of the Society for the Protection of Nature, because this way the polluter becomes the only controller of his activity.⁽²⁷¹⁾

The State Committee for Environmental Protection (for the whole Soviet Union), set up in 1988, is another organisation with enforcement problems due to the make-up of its membership. The staff are drawn primarily from ministries in charge of many of the worst polluting enterprises. Technically the committee has equal status with the ministries, but it must operate with a much smaller budget, fewer personnel and less power. Without an effective body to monitor pollution and enforce legislation, the people of the republics must campaign alone.⁽²⁷²⁾ Valdas Adamkus also recognised this disparity between policy and implementation. For example, the committee had no legal or practical authority to force municipalities to set up water-treatment facilities. He argues that the committee, being mostly concerned with protecting game and setting up forest reserves, was not involved in the direct protection of the natural environment. The industrial polluters, says Adamkus, were allowed to act as they wished. There were no environmental policy constraints placed on them.⁽²⁷³⁾

The fourth point made in the resolution focuses on the need for public awareness of air pollution and immediate information to inhabitants of an area near any kind of catastrophe. Fifthly, it was agreed that energy should be directed toward ending the arbitrary concentration of industrial enterprise by the union ministries, an aim supported by the republic government. Finally, an invitation to all the creative intelligentsia to write about nature and its protection.⁽²⁷⁴⁾

Despite the ability to voice opposition to the Communist government and its environmental policies in Lithuania, there is still evidence that the central government does not intend

271. Lithuanian Writers' Association, 1988; p.6 (see note 267)

272. Bogert, C., 1990; p.17 (see note 164)

273. Drunga, M., 1989; (see note 189)

274. Lithuanian Writers Association, 1988; pp.6-7 (see note 267)

to allow the nation to have complete autonomy. Glasnost and perestroika are widely supported by the various pressure groups, however, the policies have not been put into practice effectively. In terms of the environment, the changes bring another obstacle. According to Adamkus, although glasnost and perestroika have brought more honesty,

there's also the imperative to loosen up their society's productive forces, to make and save money, and that means economic considerations take precedence over ecological ones.⁽²⁷⁵⁾

A lengthy letter was presented to President Gorbachev, signed by concerned people from the three Baltic republics. In the letter, they acknowledged their support for perestroika but point to the fact that preventing those who think differently to organise public meetings and reserving information to the regime media does not represent 'openness'. Since it is argued that reconstruction will remain within the limits of communism, the letter asserts that this negates Gorbachev's principles of democracy, openness and new thinking. They add that despite perestroika, the apparatus of coercion is maintained through large numbers of Red army troops, KGB agents and special army units for internal affairs.⁽²⁷⁶⁾

Such suspicions are supported by Gorbachev's recent announcement that the Baltic republics will suffer harsh consequences if they refuse to sign a new Union Treaty that would keep them in the Soviet Union. For Moscow, independent armies will not be tolerated and drafting to the Red Army will continue.⁽²⁷⁷⁾ The suspicions were upheld further by the attacks on the Lithuanian people by the Red army in January, 1991, while the world's attention was distracted by the war in the Persian Gulf.

Kondrotas, a young Lithuanian prose writer, argued in 1987 that many criticisms of the system remained outside the borders of the glasnost policy. He suggests that after all prisoners are free and people can speak openly about anything

275. Drunga, M., 1989; p.28 (see note 189)

276. ELTA, 1988; no.5(351), p.6 (see note 247)

277. ABC Radio News, 3.12.90

(when there really is openness), then,

let us wait some fifty years to allow people to recover, get used to it all, and stop being afraid. Then it will be possible to measure Gorbachev's real importance.⁽²⁷⁸⁾

Such opinion embodies the suspicion many Lithuanians have about Gorbachev's sincerity. The significance of the reforms must not be forgotten, yet neither should the practices which continue to contradict them. Blackmail, threats and physical coercion still exist,

but we are conquering the fears...We have taken the first step - we have named the objects of our fear and they have become smaller.⁽²⁷⁹⁾

The exercise of grass roots pressure has nudged the central bureaucrats toward a new understanding of the country's natural assets and the wants of the people. 'The only way the republic can save its environment is if it takes matters into its own hands.'⁽²⁸⁰⁾

And right now, people power offers the best hope the Soviet Union has for coming to grips with its environmental mess.⁽²⁸¹⁾

If the power of the people is successful in regaining independence for Lithuania, which is hoped to be within two years, the environment is likely to remain an issue of priority. The groups, like many environmentalist around the world, are looking back to different perceptions of nature such as that held by the pagan Lithuanians.⁽²⁸²⁾ With a new perception, although possibly never in harmony to the extent of the traditional people, Lithuanians hope to radically change the way their society has been organised and the values on which it has been based for the last fifty years.

Adamkus believes that the ecological crisis in Lithuania

278. Kondrotas, S. T., 1987, quoted in *Akiračiai*, February, 1987 and cited in *ELTA*, 1987; no.6(338), p.9

279. Juozaitis, A., 1988; 'Officials Obstruct Restructuring Movement' in *Sąjūdžio Žinios*, July, 1988 and cited in *ELTA*, 1988; no.9(356), p.9

280. Drunga, M., 1989; p.28 (see note 189)

281. Bogert, C., 1990; p.21 (see note 164)

282. Starhawk, 1990; p.75 (see note 11)

can be turned around if serious steps are taken immediately. He suggests that the republic's government should show leadership and force industries to clean up their production processes in order to salvage the situation.⁽²⁸³⁾

Questions regarding who owns the factories in Lithuania have already been asked. Moscow claims that the factories belong to them and hopes to retain full control over them. Mašanauskas argues that the agricultural sector is 'well-developed and could be modified for export.'⁽²⁸⁴⁾ Because of its obsession with the economy, it is likely that the new Lithuanian government will continue to run many of the industries. However, its aim is to improve management and therefore reduce environmental impact.

Conclusion

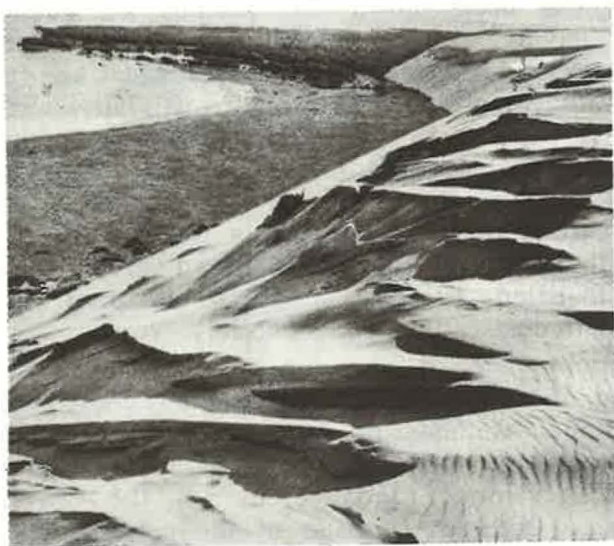
This book sought to examine the relationship between politics, culture and the environment in Lithuania. From the analysis, it has been shown that politics has been the most influential, having an impact on culture and nature. The political system in Lithuania has changed the fundamental basis of Lithuanian society through officially changing the religion in 1387 and by attempting to suffocate their culture and creating a soviet nation in 1940. The central government in Moscow also aimed to industrialise as quickly as possible in order to secure a powerful position in world politics. In doing so, the Lithuanian environment suffered greatly and due to the fear instilled in the people, no opposition to the environmental destruction was publicly voiced.

With a background of care for the land, Lithuanian people were forced into a situation where they could not practise these traditional methods of farming or new methods which did not break with their perception of nature. The cultural changes are strongly connected to the environmental consequences. Both are a result of the policies of the Soviet Union which were a part of the overall policy of union and interdependence, and internationalisation. The Bolsheviks aimed to create a new society based on communism and now, their power in relation to the rest of the world rests with the

283. Drunga, M., 1989; p.35 (see note 189)

284. Mašanauskas, J., 1990; p.4 (see note 242)

Union retaining its unity. Thus, the central government remains adamant that the republics should not be independent. Moscow continues to place obstacles, in the form of physical coercion and political and economic embargoes, in the path of the new Lithuanian government, the reform movement and the Lithuanian Greens who are attempting to restore full independence and clean up the environment.



• The Kurish Sandspit (pictured), a thin finger of sandy beach separating the Kurish Lagoon from the Baltic Sea. Soviet plans to drill for oil in the area were halted after Lithuanian protests in 1986-7 (see page 74)

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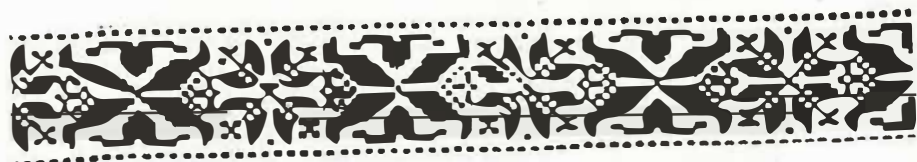
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A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHERS

This book has been published in Australia by the Lithuanian Studies Society of Tasmania University Union. Established in 1987, the society is the only students' association of this kind in the whole of Australasia and Southern Hemisphere.

The Society's central aim is to make Australians more aware of Lithuania and its heritage. Films and lectures on Lithuanian topics are presented at the University of Tasmania regularly during term. Workshops are arranged to demonstrate traditional Lithuanian crafts. Academic papers emanating from these activities are published annually in the Society's journal, *Lithuanian Papers*.

This book is Volume 3 in the *Lithuanian Papers*' series. It is devoted entirely to Amanda Banks's important study of Lithuania's contemporary environmental problems. It is based on Amanda's Honours thesis which she completed at the Centre for Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, 1990. Amanda's meticulous work was rewarded with the highest grade: First Class Honours.

On behalf of the Lithuanian Studies Society, I thank our numerous volunteers who have helped in the production and distribution of this book, in so many ways. I also thank our early subscribers. And, above all, the Society is indebted to our patrons whose generous donations have underpinned the entire publishing venture:

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- Australian Lithuanian Foundation
- Lithuanian Co-operative Credit Society TALKA Ltd.
- Mr. C. Čekanauskas, of Narrogin, Western Australia.

We thank you all sincerely.

I would like to remind all readers that our Lithuanian Studies Society encourages, and helps with, postgraduate research on all topics connected with Lithuania. Several projects are now in progress, ranging from final year undergraduate assignments through to PhD. Theses. Excellent opportunities and expert supervision await new candidates in a variety of departments at the University of Tasmania.

Finally, a few words about the Society's logo, the black Iron Wolf. It goes back to the establishment of Vilnius, Lithuania's capital city, in the 14th century.

According to legend, Gediminas, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, dreamt of an iron wolf howling from a hilltop. This dream was interpreted as a message from the god of Thunder, Perkūnas, that a new city, large and famous, was to be built around that hill. Grand Duke Gediminas went ahead with the project, then moved his headquarters from Kernavė to Vilnius. Today, Vilnius has a population of half a million.

Simon TAŠKŪNAS

President

Tasmania University Union Lithuanian Studies Society



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