

# *Lithuanian Papers*

Volume 9 - 1995

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



**FRONT COVER: Women of Lithuania Minor, in their national dress.** A 19th century lithograph by German artist A. Kretschmer, reprinted with permission from *Lithuanian Heritage*.

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# Lithuanian Papers

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

Volume 9 - 1995

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## A Note from the President

The Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania has had another productive year. Including this volume, the Society has had around 100 articles published on Lithuania furthering our aim to increase awareness about Lithuania in the wider community. One of our members, Al Taskunas, began a PhD in the Education Faculty this year where he will investigate Lithuanian (and other Ethnic) Studies in Higher Education System. Al is the fifth member to undertake postgraduate research at the University of Tasmania with a focus on Lithuania.

I welcome this opportunity to introduce *Lithuanian Papers* volume 9 which I am sure you will enjoy reading. There is the usual mix of papers from politics, history, environment, education, and the arts. Many are written by people who have recently spent time in Lithuania making their stories all the more pertinent and heartfelt.

I must thank sincerely all those contributors who have endowed us with their expertise and wonderful insights without honorarium. We also thank Mrs Pam Titherley for her excellent typesetting and David Robson at Advance Publicity for printing the final product.

In addition, I would like to thank the advertisers whose welcome support has reduced the financial burden on producing this volume. We are also grateful for the support provided by many private persons and organisations who have donated money for our work. The following donations were received up to November 10, 1995:

Australian Lithuanian Foundation, \$2000; V.Patasius, Lithuanian Co-op Credit Soc. Talka, \$1000 each; Lithuanian Club in Melbourne Inc., \$500; Melbourne Lithuanian Pensioners' Society, \$375; Melbourne Lithuanian Catholic Women's Association, \$250; Soc.Globos Moteru Draugija Melbourne, Irta Valodkiene (Geelong Lithuanian Community), LKVS Ramove Melbourne, Kankles Ensemble Melbourne, \$100 each; Adelaide Lithuanian Catholic Women's Society, DLK Vytenio Sauliu kuopa Melbourne, Dr.S.Pacevicius, \$50each; M.O'Learey, S.Katinas, \$30 each; B.G.King, J.A.Rakauskas, \$25 each; S.&E.Smyth, J.Zinkus, C.Narkunas, A.&M.Reisgys, A.E.Rahdon, Mrs.Eskirtas, J.Paskevicius, B.Francas, \$20 each; E.Sidlauskas, \$16; J.W.Kuncas, \$15; Mrs.L.Dunsdorfs, \$12; M.Musinskas, N.A.Nilsson, P.Siauciunas, A.P.Andrikonis, \$10 each; Anon.(S.A.), B.Siksnius, \$6 each; Anon. (Geelong), Rev.D.Clarke, \$5 each.

Amanda Banks -President, Lithuanian Studies Society

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## Lithuania Minor

Vytas KERNIUS  
U.S.A.

Lithuania Minor is the area on the southeast rim of the Baltic Sea enclosed by the Republic of Lithuania to the north and east, and Poland to the south. Although up until the First World War it was officially part of the northeastern section of German Prussia, from as early as the 16th century German writers and historians had called this area "Kleinlittaw" (*Little Lithuania*). The northern part of Lithuania Minor, around the city of Königsberg (Karaliaucius in Lithuanian) became occupied by the Soviet Union during the Second World War and was renamed Kaliningrad Region (*Kaliningradskaia Oblast*). The southern part was assigned to Poland. Since then Kaliningrad has undergone heavy colonisation and militarisation by the Soviet Union and Russia.

The status of both, Germany and Russia in this area has always been that of an occupier and coloniser, but Lithuanian roots in Lithuania Minor go back thousands of years. This is attested by the myriad of place-names of Baltic origin covering the landscape. Historically, culturally, ethnographically, and linguistically Lithuania Minor is more closely related to Lithuania than to any other country.



## Early History

The area was settled over 4,000 years ago by people who together with the Lithuanians and Latvians formed the Baltic branch of the Indo-European group. From between 600 and 400 B.C. these people were already known as Prussians. Unlike the Germans who conquered and later ruled the area as Prussians, these "Old Prussians" were of Baltic, not Germanic stock. The three Baltic nations shared the same language, traditions, customs and pagan religion. The Old Prussians, whose inhabited area according to historians extended from the Nemunas River in the east to far beyond the Vistula (Wisla) River in present-day Poland in the west, were comprised of many clans with such strange names as the Pomesanians, Pogesanians, Varmians, Bartians, Natangians, Sambians, Nadrovians, Skalvians, Galindians and others. It is believed that the Pomeranians and Pomerelians were also Prussians.

German power was first introduced to this area around 1228-30 A.D. The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II "gave" the lands of the Prussians to the German Order of Teutonic Knights for the purpose of baptising the pagans into the Christian faith and ruling over the conquered lands. The Teutonic Order was one of many religious-military organisations that were expelled by the Muslims from the Holy Land at the end of the Crusades, and were out of work. The Order invaded the land of the Prussians and from their fortress city of Marienburg began a war of conquest and plunder. In 1255 the Knights built the castle and city of Königsberg or "King's Hill" (Lat. *Mons Regius* or *Regiomontum*) on the Sambian peninsula, in place of an old Prussian fortress which local residents called Tvanksté (which in Lithuanian means "sultriness").

Over the course of several decades, with the support of the Emperor and other European monarchs, and the blessing of the Catholic Popes who called crusades against the pagan Prussians, the conquest of the area was completed. The Prussian population was exterminated or submitted to slavery. The conquerors assumed the name of the conquered and called their new state Prussia.

After consolidating their power in Prussia and uniting their forces with the Swordbearers - another German religious-military order who had conquered the Latvians and Estonians in the north - the



- The city of Tilžė (Ger. Tilsit), shown here in a 17th century engraving, was considered as the true capital of Lithuania Minor.

Teutonic Knights directed their campaigns towards the Kingdom of Lithuania. The Order built a series of castles along the Lithuanian border from which incursions and attacks against the Lithuanians could be launched. One of these was the coastal fortress of Memelburg, built on the site of an old Lithuanian settlement named Klaipėda.

In 1410, the combined Lithuanian-Polish armies invaded the lands of the Order and defeated its might at the Battle of Žalgiris (Tannenberg). Lithuanian ruler Vytautas the Great, who led the battle to victory, proclaimed that the Order's lands in Old Prussia "are my inheritance left to me by my forebears". On another occasion Grand Duke Vytautas remarked: "The Prussians descend from my ancestral family". Unfortunately Lithuania did not regain Lithuania Minor.

After a series of more defeats, the Order lost its military and political power, and saw its conquered lands greatly reduced by the expanding Lithuanian-Polish Alliance. During the Reformation, the Order's Grand Master Prince Albrecht (Albert) of Brandenburg became a Protestant, made himself a Duke, and reorganised his state as the secular German Duchy of Prussia. This action cost him the support of the Pope and the Catholic monarchs of Europe. After being threatened by outside forces, Albrecht was compelled to submit to the vassalage of the Lithuanian-Polish king. At a public ceremony in Cracow in 1525, the Duke pledged allegiance to King Sigismund II from the House of Gediminas, who was actually his uncle.

As consequence of wars between Lithuania-Poland, Sweden and Russia during most of the 17th century, the Duchy of Prussia regained full sovereignty in 1660, and in 1701 was renamed the Kingdom of Prussia. In the 18th and 19th centuries, this kingdom became a most powerful German state, and in 1871 it was the nucleus of the reunified German Empire.

## Modern Times

During World War I, as the collapse of both the German and Russian Empires seemed likely, Lithuanians in Lithuania Minor and Lithuania Major agitated for a union of both areas into a single new independent state. The Lithuanian Commission of Lithuania Minor, formed towards the end of the war, published an appeal on November 16, 1918 urging union with a re-established independent Lithuania. On the same day a mass meeting held in the city of Tilžė elected the Council of Lithuania Minor made up of the most prominent patriots in the region. In its declaration the Council stated that "*We Lithuanians who live in Prussian Lithuania... demand... the incorporation of Lithuania Minor into Lithuania Major*". All these efforts did not receive much support from international bodies who were too involved in the finalisation of the war.

After losing the war, Germany was forced to renounce ownership of the northeasternmost strip of Lithuania Minor called the Klaipėda Territory and the seaport city of Klaipėda (called Memel in German), which came under the protection of the victorious Allied Powers. France was assigned the duty of administering it.

The territory of Klaipėda was to be ceded to the Lithuanian Republic after it received *de jure* recognition by the international community. There were also proposals to make the territory a "Free Zone" (*Freistaat*) or to give it to Poland.

Even after the *de jure* recognition of Lithuania, the question of the Klaipėda Territory remained unresolved. Frustrated patriots formed the Committee for the Salvation of Lithuania Minor and with the help of volunteers from Lithuania Major seized control of the territory. Shortly afterwards the area was annexed to the Lithuanian Republic. Lithuanian control of Klaipėda was confirmed by Germany in 1928, but on March 22, 1939 Hitler issued an ultimatum to the Lithuanian government demanding the return of the territory, which Lithuanians unwillingly surrendered.

During the Second World War, the Soviet Union occupied both Lithuania Major and Lithuania Minor. Although Klaipėda was allowed to rejoin Lithuania, the Karaliaučius (Königsberg) Territory was renamed Kaliningrad and incorporated into the Russian Republic. The Peace Conference held at Potsdam in 1945 did not specifically allow the Soviet Union to do this, but only gave it temporary administration of the area until a final peace conference.

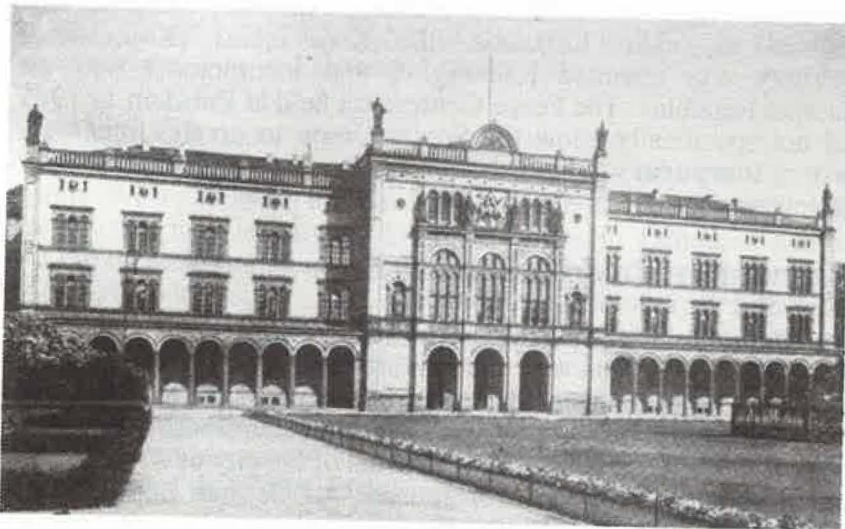
## Lithuanians in Lithuania Minor

In earlier times, the population of Lithuania Minor was made up of Prussians, Lithuanians and German settlers. It is estimated that in some parts of Lithuania Minor, particularly its northern section, 80%-100% of the inhabitants were of Lithuanian stock. At the end of the 16th century, 20% of the residents of the city of Karaliaučius were Lithuanians. Over seven centuries of German rule, the Old Prussians became extinct, and the Lithuanians, to a large degree germanised. The region, however, continued to be known as Prussian Lithuania or Lithuania Minor until 1945, since a significant portion of its population preserved the Lithuanian language and cultural tradition.

During the 15th and 16th centuries, the city of Karaliaučius was the hub of Lithuanian activity in Lithuania Minor. But other cities and towns such as Klaipėda, Tilžė, Ragainė, Gumbinė, Isrutis,

Labguva, Vėluva and Tepliuva were also very important in the preservation of Lithuanian language and culture in the area.

Karaliaučius became an important centre of commerce, culture and learning. It was the main port through which goods from Lithuania were exported. Its main institution of learning, the Albertus University (*Collegium Albertinum*) was founded in 1541-1544, and until the founding of Vilnius University in 1579, was the most important centre of culture and scholarly knowledge in all of northeastern Europe. Among its founders and first instructors were the enlightened Lithuanians Stanislovas Rapolionis and Abraomas Kulvietis who had been invited to come to Lithuania Minor by Duke Albrecht himself. Scores of other Lithuanians taught or studied at the university. Many, such as Mažvydas, Bretkūnas, Kleinas, Ruigys, Vaišnoras and Donelaitis, later distinguished themselves as noted educators and writers.



• The new University of Königsberg (Karaliaučius), built in the 19th century. The University's origins go back to 1541 when Duke Albrecht established a higher academic school *Paedagogium* or *Particular* in Königsberg. The founder, Duke Albrecht, was the last Grand Master of the Order of Teutonic Knights. He later became a Protestant and formed the secular German Duchy of Prussia. In 1544, Žygimantas, the King of Poland, Grand Duke of Lithuania and sovereign of Prussia, granted permission for the *Paedagogium* of Königsberg to be upgraded to a university. The new academy's statutes were modelled on those of the University of Cracow.

The first book in the Lithuanian language, Martynas Mažvydas' *Catechism* was published here in 1547. It was followed by a number of other books which included prayer-books, hymnals, dictionaries, collections of songs and literary works. Danielius Kleinas published the first grammar of the Lithuanian language in 1653. Kristijonas Donelaitis, the world-renown 18th century Lithuanian poet, wrote his famous epic poem *The Seasons*. Among others who studied at the university and later dedicated themselves to the study and scholarly research of Lithuanian folklore were Liudvikas Rėza (Rhesa) and Friedrich Kuršaitis (Kurschat).

Lithuania Minor also produced many other famous Lithuanians who distinguished themselves in one area or another. For example, the noted cartographer Antanas Vydas (Wied) drew the first map of Russia, and perhaps of Lithuania. The celebrated philosopher Immanuel Kant, who taught at the University of Karaliaučius from 1770 to 1797, descended from an old Prussian or Curonian family who had settled in the Klaipėda region in the 15th or 16th century. In 1833 Karaliaučius became the home of the first Lithuanian newspaper. During the 18th and 19th centuries, various books in the German language dealing with Lithuania Minor, its inhabitants, traditions, folklore and the Lithuanian language began to be published by the printing houses of Karaliaučius.

During the 15th century, and especially the 16th, German colonisation of Lithuania Minor began to slow down and many Lithuanians moved here from Lithuania Major. Some came to study, others to farm the land which in earlier times had belonged to the exterminated Old Prussians.

Contrary to their predecessors, the Prussian rulers in the beginning allowed and even encouraged the Lithuanian language and culture to flourish and prosper. In order to spread the Reformation not only among the inhabitants of Lithuania Minor, but of Lithuania Major as well, books in the Prussian and Lithuanian languages were printed, schools and churches built. Protestant teachers and priests were invited to come from Lithuania Major to teach and preach to their countrymen in their own native language. Students were invited to come to study at the university. The Prussian ruler

himself financed their studies and the publication of Lithuanian books.

But all this ended after Prussia severed all political ties with the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth, and especially after the Kingdom of Prussia became involved in a series of wars with neighbouring states. From that time on, non-German minorities, and particularly the Lithuanians and the descendants of the Old Prussians, began to be discriminated and mistreated. More wars, a devastating plague and subsequent famine decimated the local population. To replace it, the Prussian king brought in colonisers from Germany, Switzerland, France, Holland and Poland. They received better lands and privileges and looked down on the local Lithuanians. The Lithuanians were forced to pay higher taxes, received lower wages, and were even ordered, by royal decree, to wear clothes different from those of the Germans. At this time the changing of place-names of Baltic origin into German-sounding names intensified. For example, Ragainė or Raganytė became Ragnit, Vėluva became Wehlau, Gumbinė became Gumbinnen, Tepliuva became Tapiau, Įsrutis became Insterburg, and so on.

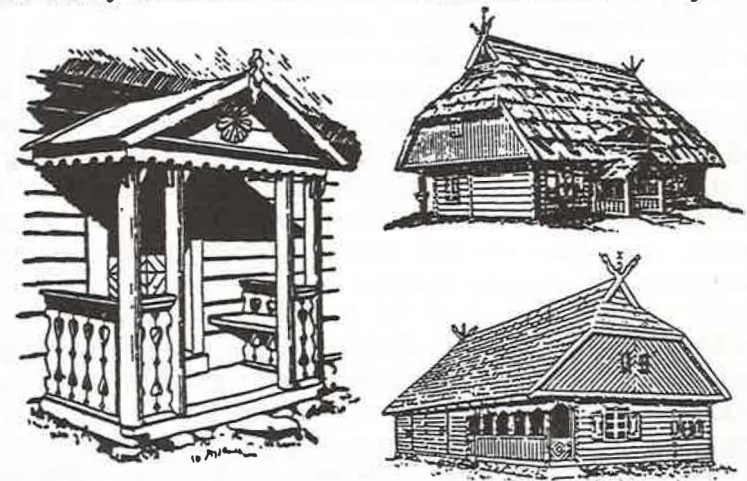
During the second part of the 19th century, the situation of Lithuanians in Lithuania Minor became deplorable. In the creation of the empire, German rulers intensified germanisation oppression of non-German minorities. Teaching children in the Lithuanian language was prohibited and preachers in churches were not allowed to give sermons in the only language the majority of parishioners could understand.

But Lithuanians being a hardy people, used to long periods of suffering, persevered and fought back. Lithuanian language and culture did not disappear even under those harsh conditions. While the language, culture and traditions were repressed and destroyed in Lithuania Major by the Russian czarist regime, in Lithuania Minor they were fostered and nurtured by patriots dedicated to their preservation and propagation. Newspapers in the Lithuanian language continued to be published and a number of patriotic organisations were founded. After the Russian czar prohibited the printing of books and periodicals in the Latin alphabet in Lithuania, these continued to be printed in Tilžė, Ragainė and other Prussian cities and smuggled into Lithuania by the so-called "knygnešiai" (book-smugglers). In other words, Lithuania Minor became the

place where Lithuanian culture and national identity survived while they were being destroyed elsewhere in Lithuania. This culture, language and national spirit were nurtured by such great men as Vilius Storasta-Vydūnas, Martynas Jankus, Martynas Šernius and others. Many patriots from Lithuania Major came here to publish newspapers and books and to work for the liberation of Lithuania.

It was here, in the city of Ragainė, that Dr. Jonas Basanavičius began the publication of *Aušra*, the most influential late 19th century newspaper of the Lithuanian renaissance period. And Dr. Vincas Kudirka, the author of the Lithuanian National Anthem, published *Varpas*, another patriotic newspaper which called on Lithuanians to "awaken" to their heritage. It was from here that the concept of national identity spread throughout Lithuania Major and eventually culminated in its independence.

Lithuania Minor was also important in other respects. It was a window through which many Lithuanians escaped Russian repression and ended up in countries of Western Europe and even America. During the great wave of Lithuanian emigration from 1865 to 1914, hundreds of thousands crossed the border into Lithuania Minor. After reaching the ports of Bremen or Hamburg in Germany, they departed for England, Scotland and the New World. Many native inhabitants of Lithuania Minor, mostly of the



- The rural architecture of Lithuania Minor is not much different from that of Lithuania Major, as these examples of farm buildings show.



Protestant faith, also left. Such was the case of the early Lithuanian settlers in Texas, who founded one of the earliest - if not the earliest - Lithuanian communities in the United States. Many of these immigrants bore germanised Lithuanian family names, which often makes it difficult to distinguish them from Germans.

## Post-War Period

After taking control of the Karaliaučius region in 1945, and in violation of the Potsdam Conference, the Soviets changed its name to Kaliningrad and incorporated it into the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic. In 1946-1947 the Soviets initiated a policy of deportations, mass executions and forced starvation of the local native population, which resulted in the almost total annihilation of any vestiges of previous human habitation. The original inhabitants were replaced by settlers brought in from various parts of the Soviet Union. All the ancient Prussian, Lithuanian and German names of cities, towns and villages - even rivers, lakes and hills - were changed to newly devised Russian designations.

Today the majority of the population of this region, which numbers around 900,000, is Russian (78%). It's made up mostly of military personnel and their dependents who contribute nothing to the region's economic, social or cultural advancement. The rest of the residents are Belarussians, Ukrainians, Germans and a few other nationalities. Lithuanians make up only about 3.5% of the population (30,000). Most of them arrived here shortly after the end of the Second World War or moved here after returning from Siberian Exile. Of the original pre-World War II inhabitants, a few Lithuanians, Germans and descendants of the Old Prussians remain. All others are new settlers. Most Germans living here today have been recently resettled from Siberia and Kazakhstan.

On September 12, 1990, both East and West Germany signed a treaty with the four victorious powers of World War II on the final settlement with respect to Germany's unification. According to this treaty Germany gave up its sovereignty over its eastern lands beyond the Oder-Neisse boundary and over Karaliaučius. However, the four powers did not bring up the question of the ownership of this territory. Since neither the Allies nor Germany signed any treaties to transfer the sovereignty of the Karaliaučius

region to the Soviet Union or Russia, the legal status of this area remains undetermined.

The Soviet Union created a militarised fortress out of the Karaliaučius region, a process which is being continued by Russia today. According to some sources, Russia has between 200,000 and 300,000 military personnel in the region, in addition to naval, air force and other installations. It is the **heaviest concentration** of military power in all of Europe, perhaps the world. It presents a threat not only to the three Baltic nations, but to all of Central and Northern Europe as well. The Baltic States have called on international organisations to bring up the question of the demilitarisation of the Karaliaučius region, but, as it was in the case of Chechenya, Russia lashed back at the Baltics for their interference in its "internal affairs".

The Karaliaučius region is of utmost concern to Lithuanians, both in Lithuania and abroad. Most regard this region to be an integral part of Lithuania, which because of its past historic and ethnic ties, should be reunited with the rest of Lithuania. They are also concerned about the fate of ethnic Lithuanians living in the region, who are being discriminated against and mistreated by local Russian authorities. The same situation which existed during the German and Soviet periods continues today. Lithuanian cultural, social and religious activities are being obstructed and frowned upon. Centuries-old historic and cultural sites and monuments are being desecrated or left to disintegrate. Teaching of children in their mother tongue is being curtailed and even prohibited. And perhaps worst of all, it makes Lithuanians very nervous to have such a heavy concentration of Russian forces just across the border. The recent events in Chechenya give them plenty of reasons to worry about.

*This is an abridged version of Mr Kernius's article, originally published in **Lithuanian Heritage Magazine**, Vol. 2, No. 2, March/April 1995. Reprinted with permission.*



*Letter to the Editor*

## **Königsberg, alias Kaliningrad**

Dear Editor,

Earlier this year, I introduced House Concurrent Resolution 51, calling on Russia to demilitarize the Kaliningrad area, currently the site of a massive Russian military enclave in the heart of the Baltic region. Russia's fifty year occupation of Kaliningrad, formerly German territory, remains unrecognized by international law.

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland continue to view Russia's presence in the Baltics as a threat to their sovereignty, with good reason. Russian transit in and out of Kaliningrad has proved to be a pretext for unauthorized Russian military excursions into Baltic territory:

\* Between December 1994 and March 1995 Russian military rail traffic travelling from Kaliningrad to Russia - by way of Lithuania - totalled 2,148 train cars, 310 of which carried undeclared hazardous cargoes, most likely en route to Chechnya.

\* 5,339 violations of Lithuanian air space were registered between April 1992 and May 1995. Three-fifths of these unauthorized flights were to or from the Kaliningrad area.

\* On April 1, 1995 armed Russian helicopters flew 200 meters above a residential district in Lithuania's capital, Vilnius.

\* The latest illegal Russian incursion into Lithuanian airspace, involving two military cargo planes in transit from Kaliningrad, brazenly coincided with a visit to Lithuania by U.S. Undersecretary of Defence William Slocombe.

Russian troops in Kaliningrad alone - an area of only 15,000 square kilometers - outnumber all U.S. troops in Europe by a margin of two to one. International attention must be drawn to this inherently destabilizing situation.

(Congressman) Christopher COX  
Congress of the US House of Representatives,  
Washington, D.C., USA.

16 members of Congress are co-sponsors of this resolution.

## **The Teutonic Order and the Prussian Tribes:**

*Images of a conquered Baltic people in German literature*

**Audronė Barūnaitė WILLEKE**  
Miami University

The clash of two cultures, one technologically advanced, the other primitive, and the gradual eradication or assimilation of the primitive culture has supplied fertile subject matter for literature. Since the Romantic period, German dramas, prose, and poetry have depicted the conquest and christianisation by the Teutonic Order of the "savage tribes" on the German eastern frontier, the heathen Prussians. The literary image of the heathen Prussians as it developed during the last two centuries reveals above all the attitudes of the individual writers as well as contemporary assumptions about Germany's historical mission.

Contradictory stereotypes of the Prussians as both diabolical savages and as free inhabitants of a state of nature marked their appearance in German literature during the Romantic period (Zacharias Werner). In the last decades of the nineteenth and during the first three decades of the twentieth century historical fiction generally presented a more sympathetic view of the Prussians, while the destruction of their culture was seen as a regrettable but unavoidable result of historical progress (Agnes Miegel). Disillusioned with Western culture in the aftermath of World War I, writers discovered in the remnants of Old Prussian culture alternative spiritual values for a materialistic world (Alfred Brust). After World War II the image of the Prussians was transformed into a symbol of historical guilt (Johannes Bobrowski) and Prussian mythology was evoked to reveal the psychological roots and the dangers inherent in mythological thinking (Günter Grass).

Culturally and linguistically related to the Lithuanians and the Latvians, the Old Prussian tribes dwelt along the southeast coast of the Baltic sea, between the Vistula and the Nemunas rivers, the area later called East Prussia. The Teutonic Knights began their crusade against the Prussians in about 1230. After more than fifty years of almost constant struggle, by about 1283, the last of the tribes had been subjugated. Intensive German colonisation of the Prussian lands followed, so that the remaining Old Prussian population was gradually absorbed into the dominant German culture and their ancestral language vanished by the end of the seventeenth century.

The earliest historical references to the Old Prussians described them as peaceful and hospitable tribes. The Romans called them "Aestii" and knew them as collectors of amber and as diligent farmers. Later travellers from Western Europe described some of their customs, noted their bravery and their legendary hospitality. An eleventh-century visitor to Prussia, Adam of Bremen, called them "humanissimi homines", a humane people who, in contrast to other coastal dwellers, came to the aid of the ship-wrecked. "Many praiseworthy things could be said about these people with respect to their morals," he concluded, "if only they had the faith of Christ whose missionaries they cruelly persecute."<sup>1</sup>

As hostilities between the Prussians and their Christian neighbours increased, and as all attempts to Christianise them met with stubborn resistance, medieval chroniclers began to refer to the Prussians as "filii Belial", sons of the devil. A papal letter of 1218, which proclaimed a crusade against the heathen Prussians, described them as "a people indifferent to religion and given to animal-like savagery. The fathers kill off all but one of their daughters, and among them daughters and wives are used as objects of wild pleasures. Their swords and lances are red with the blood of their prisoners, whom they sacrifice to their idols."<sup>2</sup> Two medieval sources of particular importance for later depictions

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Marija GIMBUTAS, *The Balts* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963), 25.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Johannes VOIGT, *Geschichte Preussens von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Untergange der Herrschaft des deutschen Ordens*, Vol. 1 (Königsberg: Verlag Gebrüder Bornträger, 1827; reprinted Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1968), 447.



- *Lithuanians of Prussia* by T. Lepner, first published in Danzig (Gdansk) in 1744. The boy in the picture is holding amber-gathering tools.

of the Old Prussians are the chronicles of the Prussian crusade prepared for the Teutonic Order by Peter of Dusburg and his successor Nicholas of Jeroschin. Written in the fourteenth century, after the final subjugation of the Prussians, these chronicles extolled the heroic deeds of the Christian knights against barbaric opponents.

Together with the rising power of the Prussian state in the seventeenth century came the first significant historical self-examination, Christoph Hartknoch's *Altes und neues Preussen* (Old and New Prussia) of 1684 in which he consolidated information about the Old Prussians from various sources. Eighteenth and nineteenth-century historians such as Ludwig Baczko (*Geschichte Preussens*, 1792-1800) and Johannes Voigt (*Geschichte Preussens von den ältesten Zeiten bis zum Untergange der Herrschaft des deutschen Ordens*, 1827) were able to build on this foundation, providing a more comprehensive portrait of Old Prussian culture.

While German historians no longer justified the conquest of the Old Prussians in terms of a religious mission, they tended to justify it in the name of cultural progress. It was assumed that the Teutonic Knights brought the benefits of a higher culture to a backward people. By mid-nineteenth century, this view grew into arrogant nationalism in the works of Heinrich von Treitschke (*Das Deutsche Ordensland Preussen*, 1862). During the 1930's the argument of historical progress was accompanied by such notions as "national will" or "national destiny" and the German need for "Lebensraum" (living space) in both popular and scholarly writings.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century it was widely believed by Germans that the Old Prussians were of Germanic origin - a mixture of Goths and Vikings. Despite linguistic and archaeological evidence to the contrary, this misconception was retained by many Germans into the twentieth century.

During the Romantic period the attention of German scholars and writers was first drawn to the Baltic area by its wealth of folklore. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), himself an East Prussian, included examples of Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian folk songs in his important collection of *Volkslieder* (Folk Songs, 1778-1779). In his major work *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Humanity, 1782-1791) he condemned the destruction of the Old Prussian culture and voiced his indignation at the violence done to the Balts by their more powerful neighbours. As an heir of the Enlightenment, Herder espoused a cosmopolitan, humane view of history - each culture has a right to exist on its own terms, to flourish and develop according to its own inner laws. In dismissing the argument of conquest as a means for spreading a superior western or Germanic culture he also called for a historical study of the ancient Prussians.

In the year following the publication of Herder's *Ideen*, a new history of Prussia did appear, namely the first part of Ludwig

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Christian KROLLMANN (*The Teutonic Order in Prussia*, trans. Ernst Horstmann, Elbing: Preussenverlag, 1938) states that: "The Teutonic Order, engaged in establishing in the Prussian country an independent State, became the interpreter of the national will, expressed in a powerful longing for more eastern territory, and gave this struggle against the heathen a direction corresponding to national interests" (5).

Baczko's *Geschichte Preussens* (History of Prussia, 1792) which, together with Hartknoch's seventeenth-century work, provided the historical basis for the first German drama about the Prussian crusade, Zacharias Werner's *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee* (The Cross on the Baltic Sea, 1806). Werner (1768-1823) apparently did not expect his readers to be familiar with the culture of the Old Prussians, for he preceded his drama with a lengthy introduction on their mythology, customs and social organisation taken almost verbatim from his sources. Werner's portrayal of the Old Prussians encompassed two extreme stereotypes. On the one hand, following his historical sources, Werner described the Old Prussians as a barbaric people. On the other hand, influenced by Rousseau's theories, Werner depicted the allure of their simple, free and natural existence. In the drama the Prussians are seen as a culture in transition from the "state of nature" to organised society.

The conflict between Paganism and Christianity is personalised in the spiritual development of the Prussian chieftain Warmio. After his capture by the Christians, he falls in love with the saintly Malgona and accepts baptism in order to wed her. She, in turn, converts him to the moral ethos of Christianity. The first part of the drama entitled "Die Brautnacht" (The Wedding Night) was to be followed by a second part, "Die Weihnacht" (The Sacred Night) which Werner apparently completed, but never published, and which was lost.<sup>4</sup> The drama was conceived as a grand struggle of the holy against the demonic, a struggle which could be won only through a renunciation of the flesh for the sake of the spirit.<sup>5</sup> The instrument of salvation was the saintly, self-sacrificing woman, a common Romantic topos.

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<sup>4</sup> Franz STUCKERT, "Das Drama Zacharias Werners: Entwicklung und literargeschichtliche Stellung", *Deutsche Forschungen*, vol. 15, ed. Friedrich Panzer and Julius Petersen (Frankfurt a. M.: Verlag Moritz Diesterweg, 1926), 48.

<sup>5</sup> The conflict in the play between extremes of spirituality and passion reflect Werner's personal development. Raised in a Protestant family in Königsberg, WERNER (1776-1823) oscillated as a youth between debauchery and religious mysticism. Converting in 1811 to Catholicism he became a priest and a popular preacher in Vienna. The Christian heroine Malgona in *Das Kreuz an der Ostsee* was modelled and named after his third wife. See Paul HANKAMER, *Zacharias Werner* (Bonn: Friedrich Cohen, 1920).

In terms of the dramatic action, the Prussians and their culture constitute the most interesting elements of the plot, with colourful rituals, songs, humour, and folkloric details. Werner's evident fascination with the Prussians reflected the Romantic period's interest in the primitive and the folkloric. However, in Werner's case this interest was subordinated to the earlier stereotype — the pagan as the moral inferior of the Christian.

Three years after the appearance of Werner's drama, Ludwig Rhesa published a collection of poems, *Prutena* (1809), in which he celebrated the Old Prussian heritage. In the poem "Die Ruinen von Balga" (The Ruins of Balga) he echoed with passionate language Herder's sentiment that the destruction of the Old Prussians was an unjust deed and predicted that history would some day avenge the victims.<sup>6</sup> The author, descended from a Lithuanian-speaking family and a respected scholar at the University of Königsberg, later edited the first anthology of Lithuanian folk songs with German translations (1825).



• His people vanquished forever: A 16th century Prussian. - A woodcut from Henneberger Kurze's book *Beschreibung des Landes Preussen*, 1584.

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted in *Borussia. Eine Sammlung Deutscher Gedichte aus dem Gebiete der Geschichte Preussens*. ed. Joh. Aug. O.L. LEHMANN, 2nd ed. (Marienwerder: Jacoby, 1855), 66-68.

From the middle of the nineteenth century to about 1940, a considerable number of fictional works appeared which portrayed the history of the heathen Prussians. Many of these novels and dramas focused on the best known Prussian chieftain, Hercus Monte, leader of the last major uprising against the Teutonic Order (1260-1275). The approach taken by these works is often similar to the "last of his race" theme found in nineteenth-century fiction such as James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*. In such works the romanticised heroic figure valiantly fighting for his people is portrayed with sympathetic admiration, but is shown as succumbing ultimately to the invincible forces of historical progress. Among these largely forgotten works and authors Agnes Miegel's poetry and prose on the Old Prussians stands out as both characteristic in treatment and artistically impressive.

While Werner had focused on the Prussians at the beginning of their contact with the Teutonic Order, Agnes Miegel (1879-1964) was most interested in the period following the conquest, in the gradual amalgamation of the Germanic and the Prussian peoples to form a new East Prussian type. "Die Fahrt der Sieben Ordensbrüder" (The Ride of the Seven Teutonic Knights, 1926), Agnes Miegel's best novella, depicts a tragic event: the self-annihilation of a noble Prussian family upon the death of the last Prussian prince. In about the year 1283, shortly after the failure of the Prussian rebellion, a small group of Christian knights lose their way on a winter expedition through the wilderness and witness unexpectedly the funeral rites for the Prussian Prince Dorgo. The historical collision of two cultures is expressed through the dialectical structure of the novella which is built on a series of contrasting pairs with respect to setting, characters, events, and world views.

The most significant contrast is between the leader of the Christian knights, Commander Friedrich von Wolfenbüttel, and the Prussian leader Skurdas. Friedrich's conduct is consistently guided by the medieval chivalric virtue of "mæze", moderation and prudence. He represents the ideal Christian knight — chivalrous, compassionate, and disciplined. The appearance of the Prussian chief, Skurdas, is described in a highly dramatic scene. As the only remaining leader of the uprising, he is his people's last hope for resistance. Aware that Skurdas has arrived for Prince Dorgo's funeral, the gathered Prussians call to him to show himself. When Skurdas steps out of

a sauna hut, naked, his powerful blond body glowing in the torchlight, the Prussians fall to the ground in reverence. However, his beard hides a festering, mortal wound symbolic of the entire doomed race. Skurdas, in contrast to the compassionate Friedrich, rigidly follows the demands of ritual and tradition. Not only Prince Dorgo's horses and dogs are sacrificed at his funeral, but also his two young grandsons. Finally, the entire fortress is turned into a huge funeral pyre, in which Skurdas perishes as well. Thus, Friedrich's Christian compassion is contrasted to Skurdas' uncompromising stance. Heroic in its grand indifference to life and death, the pagan position is nonetheless a dead end, an intransigent negation of historical change and of the future.

The novella depicts not merely the clash of antagonistic cultures, but also their gradual synthesis upon contact, a blending of two world views. For instance, the Teutonic knights, masters of the land, become confused and temporarily powerless in the pagan environment, a development symbolically suggested at the beginning of the story when snow covers their mantles and obliterates the black crosses on them. The discipline of the Order weakens, and one by one the knights break their vows of chastity. The future amalgamation of the two cultures is foreshadowed by the "half-German" girls mentioned at the end of the story. The underlying assumption here is the Hegelian notion of historical progress through a synthesis of opposing forces. For Agnes Miegel, the German contribution to this dialectical movement lies in the positive shaping of a formless, chaotic "wilderness" into a cultivated, ordered land.<sup>7</sup> Faced with the inevitable dialectic of history, Agnes Miegel's Prussians must choose between heroic self-annihilation or life-affirming amalgamation with the new order.

A younger contemporary of Agnes Miegel, Alfred Brust (1891-1934), included ancient Prussian folkloric elements and superstitions in his expressionistic dramas and novels.

<sup>7</sup> In Agnes MIEGEL's poem "Urheimat" (Ancient Homeland) the civilising deeds of the German settlers are likened metaphorically to their taming of a wild beast (*Gesammelte Gedichte*, 72). Inge MEIDINGER-GEISE in *Agnes Miegel und Ostpreussen* (Würzburg: Holzner, 1955) emphasises with obvious approval this aspect of Miegel's historical view: the German settlers are "Bändiger der Dunkelwelt" (tamers of the dark world, 130).



• Lithuanian philosopher Vydūnas. - Portrait by J.Zikaras (*Liet. Encikl.*)

Disillusioned with Western culture, which he saw as decadent, materialistic and dehumanised, Brust searched for an antidote in the agrarian culture and spirituality of Eastern Europe. He was influenced in this direction by his teacher in Tilsit (Lith.: Tilze), the Lithuanian dramatist and philosopher Vydūnas (Vilius Storasta), as well as by his experiences in Lithuania and Latvia where he was stationed during World War I.

In Brust's novels the search for spiritual redemption led his fictional characters to discover their ancient Prussian roots. For instance, in *Festliche Ehe* (Festive Marriage, 1930) two lovers recognised each other as descendants of the Old Prussians by their family names and by their ability to pronounce words from the Old Prussian language. They prepared for marriage by ritual purification in a woodland spring sacred to the pagan Prussians. The magical powers of Old Prussian sacred rivers, hills and groves were still there, according to Brust, if one learned to awaken them. The novel *Eisbrand* (Icefire, 1933) depicts human suffering and redemption in terms of a cosmic struggle between the West and the East. The Eastern victory over the West is achieved by an invasion of millions of sacred horses that have been bred by the East

Prussian hero Eisbrand. It is clear that Brust viewed East Prussia, because of its non-germanic heritage, as a part of Eastern Europe.<sup>8</sup> Thus the triumph of Eisbrand and his horses can be interpreted as a spiritual reversal of the Teutonic conquest.

Brust saw in history a profoundly ironic process: the subjugated Prussians have ultimately revenged themselves on their German conquerors by proving that their "blood" was the stronger element in the resultant cultural mixture.<sup>9</sup> Brust was not concerned with a historical portrayal of the Old Prussians, as were Werner, Miegel, and the majority of the writers on this subject. Rather, he wished to show the contemporary relevance of the Old Prussian legacy.

At first glance it appears paradoxical that the most significant treatment of the Old Prussians in German literature occurred after their homeland was incorporated into the Soviet Union, after their descendants were forced into exile, and the remaining traces of Old Prussian geographic names deliberately obliterated. The image of the Old Prussians in the poetry of the East German writer Johannes Bobrowski (1917-1965) must be seen in the context of the general theme which he had set for himself, namely the relationship of the Germans to their East European neighbours. In explaining how he came to this theme he wrote: "I grew up near the Memel, where Poles, Lithuanians, Russians, Germans lived together, and among all of them the Jews. Since the days of the Teutonic Order, a long history of misfortune and guilt has been entered in my people's ledger."<sup>10</sup>

Bobrowski's commitment as a writer was to further ethnic understanding and reconciliation. Alfred Brust's works exerted a lasting influence on Bobrowski. The two men had met each other

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<sup>8</sup> Horst DENKLER, ed. "Nachwort", in Alfred BRUST, *Dramen: 1917-1924* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1971), 288.

<sup>9</sup> In Brust's novel *Die verlorene Erde* (The Lost Earth, Berlin: Horen, 1926) the reader is presented with a treatise on Prussian "blood" which, in its disregard for biology and genetics, reads much like other speculations of the time on the mystique of "Blut" (62-63).

<sup>10</sup> Johannes BOBROWSKI, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 4 (Berlin: Union Verlag, 1987), 335.

shortly before Brust's death in 1934.<sup>11</sup> Like Brust in World War I, Bobrowski served with the German army in the Baltic during World War II, remaining in Russia for five years as prisoner-of-war.

Bobrowski began to develop his special theme in the poem, "Pruzzische Elegie". He called it a song "bright with angry love - but dark, bitter with grieving"<sup>12</sup>; dedicated to a people whose destiny has never been celebrated in song. The poet describes how the fate of the Prussians struck him in the blood as a child: in the forests of the homeland he shuddered before sacred groves, sacrificial stones, grave-mounds. In the songs of old women he perceived a faint "call from the dawn of time". The poem then moves to its climax - a passionate lamentation:

*People  
of the black forests,  
of slowly flowing rivers,  
of treeless lagoons, of the sea!  
People  
of nighttime hunts,  
of herds and summer fields!  
People  
of Perkunos and Pikollos,  
of wheat-crowned Potrimpos!  
People  
like none other, of joy!  
like none, none other, of death.*

Like Herder, Rhesa, and Brust before him, Bobrowski condemned the violence done by the Teutonic Knights in the name of Christ. He perceived in the subjugation of the Prussians the first link in a chain of Germanic guilt, culminating in the crimes of Hitler's forces in Eastern Europe.

A significant example of Bobrowski's later poetic style is the poem "Gestorbene Sprache" (Dead Language) in which he used a number of Old Prussian words. Here the spirit of the dead

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<sup>11</sup> Bernhard GAJEK and Eberhard HAUFE, *Johannes Bobrowski: Chronik-Einführung-Bibliographie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1977), 10 and 19.

<sup>12</sup> *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 1, 33-35.

Prussian language inhabits the world of natural objects, like in Baltic folklore, where the dead often turn into trees, birds, and other living things. A mysterious voice speaks with the sound of beating wings, like a bird, and four Prussian words become audible: "laurio" (sea), "warne" (crow), "wittan" (willow tree), and "smordis" (berry alder).<sup>13</sup> Although the "I" of the poem recognises the other voice, the Prussian one, to be his "brother", he refuses to listen. The voice then gains in intensity and urgency.

The message it brings is contained, like a folkloric riddle, in the four Prussian words, and the reluctant listener finally understands their meaning. The first part of the message is a complaint: "The crow has no tree," followed by the prophecy that the listener, too, will see his tree perish. In Baltic folklore and mythology trees were inhabited by spirits, thus their demise could be linked to the destinies of individuals and of families.

Bobrowski created a mythical East European landscape which he called Sarmatia, a world of pastoral peace repeatedly disrupted by aggressors (wolves, birds of prey, Teutonic Knights).

Old Prussian mythology plays a significant role also in Günter Grass' novel *Hundejahre* (Dog Years, 1963). The first part of the novel entitled "Frühschichten" (Early Layers) is set in pre-war Danzig steeped in myths, legends, local folklore and superstitions. However, Grass' approach to myth differs from Bobrowski's<sup>14</sup> - rather than create or recreate myths, Grass wants to reveal in *Hundejahre* the dangers of mythical thinking, especially for Germans. The myths evoked in the novel are to be understood as dangerous evasions and distortions of reality. Part of the historical

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<sup>13</sup>*Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 1, 26. I am basing the translation of the Old Prussian words on the glossary prepared by Vytautas MAŽIULIS (*Prusu kalbos paminklai*, Vol. II, Vilnius: Mokslas, 1981). Although some critics have explained the poem in more general terms, as the voice of nature speaking to the human conscience (cf. Brian KEITH-SMITH, *Johannes Bobrowski*, London: Oswald Wolff, 1970, 22-23), I believe its theme is more specific: homelessness and death are the common destinies of the Old Prussians and their "brothers", the post-war German exiles from East Prussia.

<sup>14</sup> With tongue-in-cheek impishness Grass introduced in *Hundejahre* a Bandit Bobrowski and mentioned a poet Bobrowski who still celebrates the little river Szezupe in dark song. *Hundejahre* (Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 1968), 63.

flotsam which the swollen Weichsel River brings to the surface and into the present are the Old Prussian gods: "fire-red Perkunos" - god of thunder, "pale Pikollos" - god of death, and "laughing, youthful Potrimpos" - god of fertility.

In her ballad "Schlafende Götter" (Sleeping Gods) Agnes Miegel spoke with romantic nostalgia of the gods whose names have been forgotten, who wait in the hope that mankind will remember them again with sacrifices and prayers. In *Hundejahre* Grass stripped away the aura of romanticism from these primitive Prussian gods. Very much alive, they lurk in the hearts of his twentieth-century characters as impulses to violence, irrational hatred and aggressive sexuality. In following the traces of the Old Prussians in German literature, a number of authors were discussed who, with the exception of the Danzig-born Grass, were all East Prussians. While nineteenth century authors portrayed the Old Prussians in somewhat stereotypical roles as either diabolical barbarians or heroic victims, in more recent works the Old Prussians and their fate have become prophetic symbols mirroring our own historical experience.

Renewed popular interest in the Old Prussians in West Germany since the 1970's appears to be one aspect of the wave of concern for disenfranchised minorities. In the last decade, a steady stream of popular and scholarly books have been published on the Old Prussian culture, history, and language. Among the most influential of these has been Heinrich Gerlach's *Nur der Name blieb* (Only the Name Remained, 1978), a polemical revision of the history of the Teutonic conquest from the point of view of the Old Prussians. The image of the heathen Prussians in German literature has shown considerable evocative power from the Romantic period to the present. However, it is uncertain whether it will survive in German literature beyond the present generation of exiles from Germany's former eastern territories.

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# Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant: Problems and Prospects

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## Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the issues surrounding Lithuania's nuclear power plant, Ignalina, summarising technical aspects of the plant, its environmental impacts and risks, and options for continued use or closure of the plant. We were fortunate in being able to inspect the plant in November 1994. The operating staff offered to answer any questions, but difficulties with language (communication was from English to Lithuanian and then to Russian because most of the staff are Russian speaking) and, possibly, less than totally frank replies on controversial matters meant that some issues remained unresolved. To the non-expert eye at least, the flickering fluorescent lights, corrosion on pipe joints, and patched sections of concrete, together with a seemingly blasé attitude toward risks, contributed to a general sense of unease. We left with a deep sense of concern over the possible future of this huge reactor.

The authors are not the only visitors to be concerned. The description of a visit to Ignalina by Tony O'Donoghue, an engineer from Canada, is uncannily similar to the authors' experience. One of his concerns was the quality control and maintenance of concrete strength. 'Structures in general looked sloppy and poorly built [which]...gives one the very unsettling feeling about the actual work and development of the reactors themselves' (O'Donoghue 1991:5). Scandinavian nuclear experts who inspected Ignalina in 1992, were 'horrified by the low level of safety and called for urgent improvements' (Anon.1992:11). Scientists with the Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate, SKI, announced that they were not satisfied with the 'safety culture at the plant' (Jeziorski 1992:3).

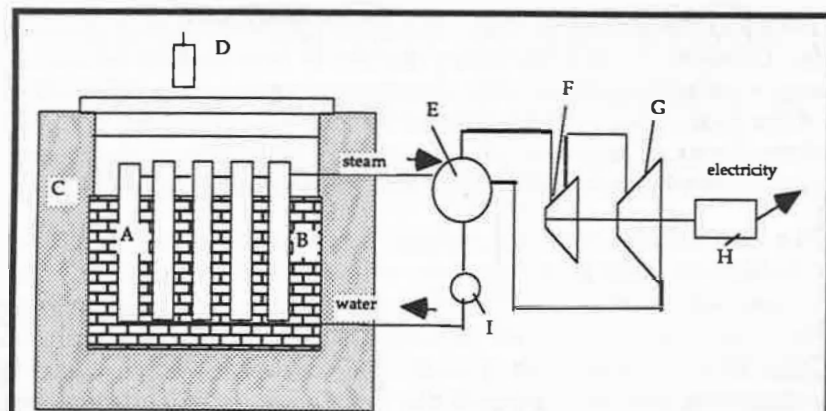
The Ignalina nuclear power plant is a legacy of the Soviet Union's nuclear programme. It is the largest of 16 plants of the same type in Russia and the Ukraine. The first reactor was commissioned in

1983 and the second in 1986. Its size is far greater than is necessary for Lithuania's own electricity needs. It was built to service the region rather than the country, thus increasing the mutual dependence of the former Soviet Republics, reflecting the centralised control of these States. The power plant is located in the east of the country, close to the borders with Latvia and Belorussia (Figure 1).

The two RBMK reactors making up the nuclear power plant at Ignalina are large by comparison with other reactor designs. Each is designed to generate 1500 MW (electricity). For safety reasons, the plant is not run at full capacity having a total rated output of 2500 MW. To put the size of this enormous power plant in perspective, the total output of the Tasmanian hydro-electric system in 1994 was 1015 MW (average).



The basic design features of the RBMK reactor are: it is graphite moderated (which means it uses carbon rods as one of the main control mechanisms for the rate of the nuclear reaction); it has no containment pressure vessel (i.e. there is no 'second line of defence' against leakage of radiation in case of an accident); and it uses a direct cycle boiling water process for generating electricity (this provides good efficiency). Figure 2 illustrates the basic features of this design of reactor.



**Figure 2:** Schematic sketch of Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant.

**A** - The reactor is driven by a lattice of fuel assemblies each consisting of rods of uranium dioxide fuel, control rods, and cooling water channels (the water is converted to high pressure steam through the heat given off in the nuclear decay of the uranium).

**B** - The reactor core contains the lattice of fuel assemblies. It is graphite and is roughly 7 meters high and 12 metres diameter.

**C** - The core is surrounded by a biological shield of concrete, sand, water and steel, which absorbs radiation escaping from the core.

**D** - Above the reactor is the refuelling machine which can be operated remotely to replace individual fuel assemblies once the uranium dioxide is 'used up'.

**E** - The high pressure steam from the reactor is separated from water which is carried out with the steam. The 'dry' steam passes through a high pressure turbine (**F**) and then a lower pressure turbine (**G**) before returning, via a condenser, to the steam separator. The turbines drive the electrical generator (**H**). Water from the steam separator is pumped, at high pressure, back into the reactor.

When discussing environmental aspects of nuclear power generation it is difficult to avoid reference to the reactor disaster at Chernobyl in 1986. It is particularly relevant in this case because the Chernobyl reactors are of the same design as the Ignalina (i.e. RBMK), but smaller. The number 4 reactor at Chernobyl which exploded had a rated electrical output of 1000 MW. The boiling water reactor design has some features which make it safer than other designs

(Nero 1979). Under normal operating conditions the physical processes taking place in the reactor tend to slow the reactor if something goes wrong, but under conditions of low power it is possible to get sudden 'excursions' (i.e. rapid power increases) which are difficult to control. The Chernobyl reactor was undergoing tests at very low power to check on safety aspects of the reactor under those conditions. The resulting explosion was caused by a combination of operator errors and safety design faults. It was not a nuclear explosion but a steam explosion. The tragic outcome was a large release of radioactive material. Worley and Lewins (1988) provide an interesting summary of the accident.

One might argue that the lessons learnt from Chernobyl and the safety improvements being made at Ignalina make a repeat accident nearly impossible. But the extraordinary sequence of events leading to the Chernobyl explosion were unforeseen by those most closely linked to the operation of the reactor and so no-one can say with complete certainty that a similar accident (or some other accident based on a different chain of events) could not occur at Ignalina.

Major accidents are not the only risk associated with nuclear power plants. There is a small, but measurable, release of radiation under normal operating conditions and minor accidents occur with alarming frequency. Some of these cause increased radiation leakage. Reports in *The Baltic Independent* indicate that there have been several accidents of varying causes in the last few years. There were at least three in 1992 and also in 1993 ranging from small fires, to broken cooling pipes, to a leak of radioactive gas. According to Genadij Lipunov, deputy head of the inspection commission in charge of monitoring nuclear safety in Lithuania, the incident on 15 October 1992 involving a leak of radioactive gas could have caused a major accident had the plant not been shut down. It was closed for ten days (Jeziorski 1992:3).

Paškauskas and Sadauskas (1993) describe some of the scientific work being carried out in the vicinity of Ignalina which illustrates the ongoing problem associated with nuclear power in this area. 'Though the concentration of the investigated radionuclides in [Lake Drukšiai] sediments have not yet reached the maximum permissible levels, they are quite close' (Paškauskas and Sadauskas 1993: 3). Some of the other immediate environmental impacts of Ignalina are discussed in Banks (1991).

Another serious issue that must be resolved in the near future is the problem of waste storage. Previously, waste was transferred to Russia but since the restoration of independence it has been stored on site. Viktor Shevaldin, the General Director of the plant, said that around 98% of the storage capacity has been filled. Therefore, the plant will have to close very soon or start using outdoor facilities. He argues that such containers will provide a 50 year respite before storage options need to be considered. 'It will be a problem to be solved by our children' (Hindahl 1995).

There have also been some fears of sabotage following threats to the plant in October 1994. A threat was delivered to the German Ministry of Environment which seemed to be connected with the release of underground criminal, Boris Dekanidze. This sparked concerns that Ignalina was indeed a possible terrorist target.

## Options

A decision to end nuclear power or at least close down those reactors which have serious design faults, such as the RBMKs, is ultimately dependent on values. While it is often argued that the closing of plants such as Ignalina is not economically feasible, our research demonstrates that, if there was a commitment to do so, it would be possible to end nuclear power in Lithuania (see Banks and Todd 1994). A commitment to end nuclear power, although economic problems must be considered, requires a certain perspective of the trade-offs. What the government, or the people who elect that government, view as most important in terms of the risks involved with generating power from RBMK reactors or from nuclear power in general will ultimately affect the course that is taken. Interviews with politicians, greens, academics, and other citizens revealed a high level of concern regarding the continued operation of Ignalina, yet a general feeling of hopelessness prevailed. Most people seem to be convinced by the arguments of the Ministry of Energy that Lithuania could not afford to close down Ignalina.

The time-frame for the inevitable closure of the existing reactors in Lithuania has been the topic of various reports. In 1993, a World Bank study was prepared in conjunction with the International Energy Agency (IEA) for the group of the seven richest nations (G-7). The report outlined ten scenarios based on varying retirement dates together with fast or slow economic reform forecasts. In terms of the retirement of the reactors, early shut-down was set at

1995, mid-term shut-down in the year 2000 and 2010 for the longer term (World Bank 1993:21-8). Since Ignalina is still running at the time of this article, the years 1996 and 1997 should now be seen as possible early retirement dates. This was the year suggested by Démarcq in 1993 who argued that it was not feasible to shut-down immediately whereas 1997 (as a low nuclear option) provided time for upgrading replacement facilities and developing alternative supplies (Démarcq 1993:7).

The *National Energy Strategy* for Lithuania, prepared in 1993 by independent consultants in conjunction with the Lithuanian Energy Institute, recommended that since there is not sufficient demand to justify two reactors at Ignalina, that only one reactor remain in operation. It was therefore suggested that the oldest unit (number one) be decommissioned in 1996 and not re-started unless long term export contracts are negotiated. It was also recommended that the second reactor be upgraded while the first is still operating. The possibility of a new reactor is also considered if the RBMK were decommissioned (IC Consult et al., 1993 p. 100). While the Lithuanian Energy Institute and its advisors should be commended for recognising the need to close the oldest reactor and upgrade the second, all suggestions assume that having no nuclear power is not an option.



• John Todd and Amanda Banks contemplating the future of Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant.

The respondents in a survey of experts from government, academia, and employees from the plant conducted by the Institute of Philosophy, Sociology, and Law considered nuclear power to continue to play a major role in electricity production in the future. Despite airing strong concerns about environmental impacts and safety problems, the average of all answers suggests that nuclear power will make up 48% of electricity production in 2013, 44% in 2033, 39% in 2053, and 35% in 2010 (Morkūnas et al. 1993:6). Amongst such experts and officials, there was an impression that Lithuania must have nuclear power and therefore (despite some research and pilot projects into alternative sources) the assumption was that Ignalina would continue to operate. For example, plans for a third reactor were discussed at a Baltic energy summit in November 1992. The deputy Energy Minister, Saulius Kutas, said 'I think Lithuania must use nuclear energy' (Jeziorski and Oll 1992:6).

The problem with running the reactors to the end of their planned 25 year life (2010) is that the reactor channels must be replaced between 15 and 20 years after commissioning (2004 for unit 1 and 2007 for unit 2 at the very latest with 2000 being more appropriate for unit 1) (Démarcq 1993:10). Other sources have elected similar years for absolute closing (see PROMENT LTD 1994)<sup>(1)</sup>. The Government of Lithuania made a commitment to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) not to replace the channels which would involve serious risks as a procedure alone, as well as prolonging retirement thereby extending safety risks (Arturas Klementevičius, Lithuanian Energy Institute pers. comm. November 1994). The agreement not to replace the existing channels reduces the life of the reactors leaving only 5 years (with a maximum of 9) until the oldest unit must be shut-down. This is not a question of values. This is what must be done.

Five years is not very long in terms of long-range planning. A decision must be made to seriously develop alternatives, including

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<sup>1</sup> It has been estimated that decommissioning will be completed 5 years after closure (PROMENT LTD 1994:7). Other sources point out that decommissioning is not complete until after isolation with the final stage left until 100-135 years after shutdown. This is to ensure radiated equipment has time to "cool down" leaving less radioactive waste and exposing workers to lower levels of radiation during demolition (Motluk 1995:6).

the rehabilitation of the thermal power plant at Elektrenai, so that these can be put into place during that time. It has been over five years since Lithuania declared its independence from the Soviet Union, seven years since public protests were successful in halting construction of the third reactor at Ignalina, and almost ten years since the accident at Chernobyl. If a decision regarding the future of Ignalina is delayed then risks will increase, less time will be available for securing alternatives, and more finances will be spent on improving safety. Money might be better spent on the alternatives. As discussed earlier, 1995 was once seen as an early closure date (and even 1993 in other reports) yet the reactors have continued to run for five years whilst a decision is being made.

Given the almost nonchalant way in which experts referred to the idea of maintaining nuclear power with no definite answers to the issue of waste disposal nor the costs involved in decommissioning and construction of a new reactor (if nuclear is actively pursued), it is feasible that the IAEA agreement might be broken. How could the Government be held to it? If Lithuania has not prepared itself well for alternative sources of energy, when that ultimatum arrives, it might be ignored with the excuse being that Lithuania cannot abandon nuclear power because it has no other alternatives<sup>(2)</sup>. Rather than risk the running of even more unsafe RBMK reactors, it is possible that the IAEA and governments of surrounding countries would grant a reprieve so that the channels could be replaced.

Further problems exist if the channels are allowed to be replaced. The costs of the replacement is estimated to be US\$100m further increasing the costs involved in retaining nuclear power. The complicated procedure, which requires the unit to be shut down for several months, has only been carried out once before in Russia at Leningrad 1 (also known as Sosnovy Bor 1). The channels at Ignalina are different owing to the higher power density of the 1500 MW reactor cores. So, in effect, a comparable procedure has not been performed in the past (Démarcq 1993:10).

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<sup>2</sup> The continued construction of further units at the Kruonis Hydro-accumulation Station, which stores electricity from Ignalina at periods of low demand, also suggests a planned future for nuclear power since the station is far less efficient when used in conjunction with electricity generated by the thermal plants.

The option of building a new nuclear reactor after the retirement of the existing reactors is complicated by economic and environmental issues. Nuclear power requires large investment which is unlikely to be available within Lithuania. Traditional sources of capital outside Lithuania might also prove difficult to obtain. According to Inesis Kiškis, Regional Environmental Specialist with the World Bank in Lithuania, grants and loans are not made available from his organisation for building nuclear reactors (pers. comm. December 1994). Even if such loans could be acquired, it would mean further indebtedness for the Lithuanian Government with the benefits of the credits remaining in foreign hands. In addition, in order to meet such liabilities, governments often need to cut other funding, usually in the social (education, health, welfare) or environmental spheres (Fink et al. 1993:9).

### Western Involvement

Western involvement in the nuclear programme initiated in the Soviet Union has increased since the Chernobyl accident in 1986 and, further, since the breakdown of communism in the region in 1990/1. Funding has naturally focused on upgrading safety and improving training and management. However, a report by Friends of the Earth found that twice as much government money was spent on completing nuclear plants than on increasing safety and three times as much if private investment was also included (Jenkins 1992:3). Western involvement has tended to prolong the use of nuclear power in the region by upgrading safety (a necessary process in the short term) and by signing long-term contracts which give incentives to continue running unsafe reactors in return for much needed hard currency (Jenkins 1992:15).

Meanwhile, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has been accused of assisting the Soviet Union in covering up the consequences of the Chernobyl accident (Fink et al. 1993:9). According to its statute, the main objective of the IAEA is to promote the use of nuclear energy throughout the world (Fink et al. 1993:6). Therefore, it was in the interests of the organisation to avoid restrictions on the use of nuclear power following the accident. The opening up of EEC and FSU has provided the nuclear industry with an opportunity to reverse the declining trend in its world market (Jenkins 1992:5). Thus, concern over the risks of nuclear power from Soviet designed reactors in the region

is as much a concern over the continuation of the industry as any altruistic concern regarding the serious risks to people and the environment. For example, comments made by the chairperson of the Hearing before the Committee on Energy and Natural resources in the United States Senate on the 'Safety of Soviet Designed Nuclear Powerplants', J. Bennett Johnston, tend to support such a perspective. The Hearing was held in June, 1992 in Washington DC. In the concluding discussion, J. Bennett Johnston said,

the threat is not only to the people of the Soviet Union or Ukraine or wherever in Eastern Europe or otherwise that these reactors are located, but to the whole of Europe which receives the plume and also to the countries which have an extensive nuclear industry such as the United States, France, and Japan...[where] nuclear energy might be terminated as an effective option if you have another Chernobyl....Even though these reactors are totally different from those in the West and certainly in the United States, in effect, we have at risk a multi-hundred billion dollar industry in this country (Johnston, 1992 p. 69).



• A campaign logo used by the Lithuanian Green Movement

Despite numerous reports outlining the serious design faults inherent in the RBMK reactors as well as documented problems with the quality of Soviet materials and construction, the direct action required to reduce the risks to millions of people in the region are yet to be taken. Safety improvements cannot bring the RBMKs (and the

older VVERs) up to Western safety standards (Boyle and Froggart 1993:3). There seems to be some arrogance amongst the nuclear organisations and their supporters in that, through their indirect promotion of expanding the nuclear industry and, in particular, the delay in facing up to task of decommissioning unsafe reactors, they condemn countries like Lithuania to a risk they are not prepared to have in their own countries.

Aid has been bilateral such as the Swedish Government's provision of US\$1.6m per year for three years for research and safety upgrades (Jenkins 1992:17). Swedish concern, following inspections from SKI and news of a minor accident during a visit from the King and Queen in 1992, led to a further pledge of 40 million kronor also for safety improvements. Denmark, fearing impacts in their own country if an accident occurred, provided DKK 2.8 million for safety systems between 1990 and 1993. Then, in 1994, a one year project 'Co-operation and Technical Assistance in the Field of Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection' was initiated by the Danish Ministry of the Interior. The aim was to increase preparedness for an accident by installing monitoring stations for early detection of an emergency situation. The German government has also provided assistance in the control of processes in the reactors. Not all such assistance has been from concerned neighbouring countries. Japan is funding training programmes in the areas of nuclear safety, accident prevention, and re-processing of nuclear waste. (Hindahl 1995; MEP 1994:18; Anon. 1993:5; Anon. 1992b:3).

There has also been commitments and/or provisions of multi-lateral funding from the G-7 and G-24 groups, the EC Commission (US\$1.3 billion), and the International Nuclear Safety Fund which was established by Sweden, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, UK, and Canada. A grant of 33 million ecus was given to the power plant for safety upgrades from the fund in March 1994. The project was prepared in close co-operation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Lithuanian Government, and Ignalina management. The EU PHARE programme which funds environmental projects in East and Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union began a similar project in 1994 with a budget of 50 000 ecus (MEP 1994:18; Anon 1994; Rosendahl 1993:7).

This is by no means an exhaustive account of money invested in the safety improvements of Ignalina. But it shows that a significant amount has been spent so far on improving the plant. Had Ignalina been shut down before now, much of this investment could have been directed toward developing alternative energy sources. Boyle and Froggart argue that the investments have been a waste of resources given that the World Bank/International Energy Agency report points to low nuclear as the least cost option. They add that the Chernobyl accident cost around US\$300 billion plus 40 000 lives (to say nothing of other environmental impacts). This is juxtaposed to a cost of US\$1-3 per capita to phase out RBMKs and develop alternatives. They suggest that this is rather "cheap insurance" (Boyle and Froggart 1993:2-3). Of the Baltic States, Lithuania receives the most international support for environmental projects. However, if Ignalina is excluded, it has received the least funding (Swedish EPA 1995). This might suggest that other important environmental projects have missed out on support.

## Conclusion

The decision on whether or not to include nuclear power as a source of energy is ultimately based on a value judgement. It is the opinion of the authors that it is not feasible for any environmentally sensitive energy policy to include nuclear power. As well as the long term disposal problems, polluting discharge, and potential for disaster, the economic efficiency of nuclear power is questionable. There are, however, more serious concerns for Lithuania because of the problems associated with RBMK reactors. For engineering reasons, Ignalina must be shut down within ten years because it will have reached the end of its life. The exact year for decommissioning is a matter of values (what priority one gives to the risk vs energy trade-off) as well as economic and social considerations.

The preferred option of the authors is to close Ignalina in 1996 (unit 1) and 1997 (unit 2). The closing would indeed be expensive and would require further investment to upgrade the Elektrėnai thermal power station, including environmental measures to reduce emissions. The investment required to keep Ignalina running until 2004 and 2007 (or 2010 if channels are replaced) might be better used on developing the necessary alternatives. There are also social problems associated with the loss of employment to the

5000 or so workers and their families living in the town of Visaginas (formerly Sniečkus) which was built to service the plant. We do not claim there will not be such problems. The aforementioned survey indicated that 65% of respondents believed it possible to develop light industry in the town, while 53% pointed to the micro-electronics industry and 48% suggested the development of reserves and forests (Morkunas et al. 1993:11). But, as we have argued elsewhere (see Banks and Todd 1994), in terms of energy requirements, it would be possible for Lithuania to survive without nuclear power by improving energy conservation and efficiency, increasing prices, and through the use of renewable energy sources. This would require foregoing export revenue yet Belorussia has already failed to pay for supplied electricity which contributed to the virtual closure of Elektrėnai power plant. Thus, Ignalina currently supplies a large percentage of Lithuania's electricity but it would also be possible to run Elektrėnai back at full capacity (1800MW).

There should also be concern that if Ignalina is kept operating until the very end of its available life (particularly if the channels are replaced), Lithuania might lock herself into a nuclear future. The possibility of building a new reactor has been discussed in Lithuania but the capital costs are enormous. It is imperative that the government acts quickly (the last five years seem to have slipped by) to develop suitable alternatives otherwise Lithuania might well face another energy crisis at the time of decommissioning.

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• A view of Kruonis Hydro-accumulation Station showing the construction of the fourth unit (see page 37).

- **Leonas Urbonas, *Under the Capricorn*.** 1963, Oil, 182 x 122 cm.



## Leonas Urbonas

*Leonas Urbonas is a colourful and passionate Lithuanian artist, now living in Sydney. At different times in his life, he has been a painter, sculptor, book illustrator, landscape artist, essayist, philosopher, lecturer, orator, clairvoyant and faith healer. He has held more than forty solo exhibitions in Australia, the United States and Canada. He has participated in many prestigious group exhibitions and competitions. He has been awarded at least eleven major art prizes.*

*Urbonas was born on 19 April, 1922 in the district of Zarasai, in North-Eastern Lithuania. His father owned a small farm of five hectares of swampy land and, despite the supplement of his shoemaking trade, could barely earn enough to feed his family of four children.*

*Urbonas's childhood memories, however, are not of hardship but, rather, of his father's enthralling winter tales of ghosts and the spirits who, the children believed, were surrounding them, of family singing, of picturesque lakes and forests, of snowfields transforming the landscape into strangely beautiful vistas.*



Urbonas completed his high-school studies in Zarasai, in 1941. Three years later, he joined the wave of refugees fleeing West. He studied art in Hanau (1945-46) and then, at the State Academy of Creative Arts in Stuttgart.

In 1948 Urbonas migrated to Australia and, on completion of his work contract in Queensland's sugar cane plantations, he took a job in a factory at St.Peters in Sydney. He joined the Sydney Contemporary Art Society in 1958.

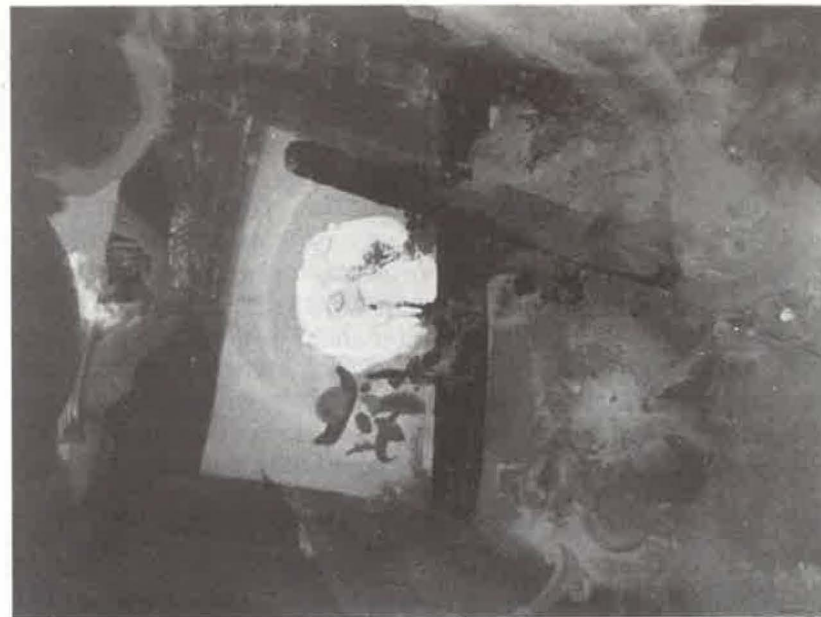
From the beginning of his artistic career in Australia in 1958 to the present time, Urbonas's work has undergone a number of changes. Four partly overlapping periods can be identified:

- 1958 to the end of the sixties - a searching period;
- The seventies - a biomorphic period;
- The early eighties - a sonorous period;
- From the mid-eighties on - an abstract sculpture period.

*The first period* was a time of searching for an individual style. Although Urbonas was familiar with abstract art, especially through his teacher Willi Baumeister in Stuttgart, he did not practise it until he came to Australia.

In 1963, Urbonas painted his first three large works. One of these was *Under the Capricorn* (shown on Page 45). Urbonas gradually developed a painting technique requiring a new approach and new tools. He made full use of artistic accident to convey his predominant theme: the metaphysical journey from darkness to light. This is particularly obvious in his 1965 painting *June* (reproduced opposite, on Page 47) where Urbonas introduces a lit opening in the midst of darkness. His 'soulscapes' echoes the vestiges of the meditative aspects of Lithuanian mythology.

*The second period* was a biomorphic period during which Urbonas was striving to reconcile biological processes with cosmic events. He painted ecstatically, producing a further three hundred works. Paintings such as *The Birth of an Inimical Planet* (Page 47) reveal the artist's preoccupation with passion and blind desire which he transposes to an outer world.



• Leonas Urbonas, *June*. 1965, Acrylic, 55 x 70 cm.



• Leonas Urbonas, *The Birth of an Inimical Planet*. Acrylic, 1974, 91 x 121 cm.

During the *third period*, Urbonas learned to say more with less. The artist used his virtuoso technique more deliberately and achieved subtle and amazingly varied textures. The spiritual serenity, so vehemently sought, had been found.

*The fourth period.* During the eighties, Urbonas's pictorial output decreased as he concentrated on the establishment of his Aras Art Centre. He also turned to sculpture - creating abstract works in two basic media: found objects and stone. Some of Urbonas's later work is based on the 'total-art' concept, e.g., the skilful blending of boulders, river stones, cement pedestals, the music of flowing water and reflections in ponds. One such example is his Singing Wall.

Genovaitė KAZOKAS.

The above article is an abridged extract from Dr. Kazokas's doctoral thesis, *Lithuanian Artists in Australia, 1950 - 1990*. It was the first PhD thesis on a Lithuanian topic accepted by the University of Tasmania (in 1994), after the establishment of TUU Lithuanian Studies Society at this University in 1987.



• *Right:*  
**Leonas Urbonas,**  
**Singing Wall.**  
1985-1990. Sandstone  
boulders, granite stones,  
cement and slate.  
500 x 800 cm.

## World Bank in Lithuania

**Arturas RAČAS**  
Vilnius

It is tempting to judge the World Bank's success in Lithuania in terms of loans: the \$60 million loan already taken by the Government; the two loans that have just been signed. But, says Lars Jeurling, the Bank's Resident Representative in the Baltics, 'lending is not the key. The key is if the Government can move ahead with its reform programme, whether we lend them the money to do so or not. Indeed we cannot lend money unless there is an element of progress.'

On 6 January this year, Lithuania had been a World Bank member for 30 months. Together, the Government, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank oversaw the reintroduction in 1993 of Lithuania's pre-war currency, the litas, and a drop in inflation from 1,021% in 1992 to 39.8% from January to November 1994.

According to its founding charter, the World Bank aims to raise the standards of living in recipient countries using money from international capital markets. In Lithuania, says Mr. Jeurling, 'the major priorities are macro-economic stabilization, financial reform, privatization and the social safety net. A lot has been achieved in terms of stability, so we are now moving onto the other reform areas.'

The World Bank is in some ways like a commercial bank, with an obligation to balance its books. It finances its lending by borrowing in world markets and its founding charter says that projects therefore have to be economically viable - all loans have to be repaid, with interest. Understandably, Lithuania has been cautious about borrowing until its economy shows definite growth. All loans must be approved by parliament, which authorises the Government to sign an agreement.

## Projects under Preparation

- Enterprise/financial restructuring - banking and financial reform, and private enterprise.
- Private agriculture development - private farms and reform of prices, taxation, and legislation.
- Social security - a new social insurance and assistance system.
- Energy efficiency and housing development - development of the private housing market and insulation improvements.
- Klaipeda geo-thermal demonstration - to establish the value of indigenous energy.
- Transport development - maintenance of roads and modernisation of Klaipeda port facilities.
- Energy 2 - to follow up the first energy loan.

So far three World Bank loans have been signed, one of which has come into effect. This first loan, worth \$60 million, was a rehabilitation loan used to bring in vital imports such as fuel, and for advancing overall reform. Mr. Jeurling describes this loan as an 'exception' not to be repeated. Most of the money has already been disbursed by the Lithuanian Government, which has 17 years to repay, with a five year grace period at the start. The interest rate is reviewed twice a year and currently stands at 7.10% plus a 0.25% annual commitment fee.

On 27 January two further loan agreements were signed by the World Bank and Lithuania's ambassador to the US. One, totalling \$26.4 million, aims to reduce Lithuania's dependence on Ignalina nuclear power station and imported fuel by upgrading the other power stations and improving the efficiency of electricity transmission.

The other loan is for environmental schemes around the port of Klaipeda. The Bank is lending \$7 million of the \$23.1 million cost, with additional funds from the Government, Sweden, Finland and EU-Phare. The loans are for 17 and 23 years respectively at a variable interest rate, currently 7.23%.

To help the Government with its reforms, the World Bank has a number of other loan projects in the pipeline (see box) and is preparing in-depth reports on topics ranging from social insurance to agriculture. 'Hopefully, the reports are precursors to projects,' says Mr. Jeurling.

But, desirable though the projects are, the Government continues to be wary of overburdening the country with debt. At present, Lithuania's debt service ratio (the proportion of debt covered by export income) is low compared to that of other countries, according to Mr. Jeurling. 'Lithuania's debt service could be higher, but it is wise to be conservative, particularly when it is unclear where the money should be invested. Lithuania has to be careful if it needs loans simply to cover current imports.'

*Arturas RAČAS is a journalist in Lithuania. This article, sourced to the U.N. Bulletin in Lithuania (No. 6, 1995), appeared in Baltic News, No. 7/1995 (April 1-15).*

# Jaužinios

Australian Lithuanian Youth Association Magazine

The Australian Lithuanian Youth Association publishes a quarterly magazine "Jaužinios".

Jaužinios is run solely by volunteers for the deployment of Lithuanian culture, news and information in Australia and around the globe. It is partly written in Lithuanian but mostly in English to promote our nationality to non-Lithuanian speaking associates. The editorial committee welcomes contributions of written and pictorial content of any such information.

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Australian and World Lithuanian Youth News

# What is the Measure of Man?

**Isolde I. POŽELAITĖ-DAVIS**  
Adelaide

Vladas Požela was born in Steigviliai, county of Šiauliai (Lithuania) in 1913, one year before the outbreak of World War I. He was the eldest son of Jonas and Rozalija Požela, who had four children: Stasė - deported by the Soviets to Siberia where she died in 1953; Vladas who became a priest; Vytautas who migrated to the USA after the second World War; and Bronė, who remained in Lithuania and who had the pleasure of seeing her brother being awarded a great honour by the State of Israel, the medal of The Righteous of the Nations.

In his youth, Vladas was a diligent student and seminarian. After his ordination on 2nd May 1937 at the Cathedral Kaunas, he served at St. George's church in Šiauliai, as prison chaplain and as chaplain of the Technical and Economics High Schools in the same city.

During the German occupation of Lithuania from mid-1941 to 1944, he was able to save many unfortunate Jews who were persecuted by the Nazis on the grounds of their religion and race. His compassionate nature, as well as his priestly vows, made it imperative for him to risk his life to save others. Many people testified to this effect. Here are some of their testimonials.

- As early as 1970 Benjamin Fuchs, now residing in Israel, wrote to the newspaper "Jura" testifying how the prison chaplain saved him and 23 other prisoners on death row by smuggling a metal saw into their cell.
- Marija Javnaitė-Voronova showed tremendous courage in testifying at the Reverend Vladas Požela's trial in which the communist authorities had brought trumped up charges against him. She recalled how the prison chaplain brought them ropes, showed how to knot a ladder and urged them to escape, taking

advantage of the great disarray caused by nightly bombardments of the city and prison.

- Mrs Fanny Giar Meškauskienė, formerly Aleksandravičienė, recalled how the priest saved her and her husband. She was denounced by her neighbours for being Jewish and was put into prison. Her husband, who played the cello in the radio orchestra, was given the choice to repudiate his wife or to go to prison. He chose the latter. The prison chaplain brought him a cello, organised a small orchestra, in which, incidentally, the noted German composer Schaefer also played. Thus, until the priest could get forged Lithuanian identity papers for Fanny Giar, husband and wife could at least see each other, for the orchestra performed in the Women's prison block. Those who have survived those nightmarish times testify that "the chaplain's orchestra was like a lighthouse beacon to a sinking ship in the night, the only consolation for downtrodden souls who had lost all hope to ever be free again."

## Smuggled Bread

Others testified that the chaplain, while in charge of the prison chapel and library, had installed a secret hiding place behind some shelves where he brought food daily for the prisoners weakened from starvation. They further testified how he smuggled bread into prison cells by carrying it in the deep pockets of his cassock.

There is also another testimonial in his archive that sounds quite improbable, but is nevertheless verified by eye witnesses. It is about how he saved a little Jewish girl, who was close to death. Seeing the wan looking child, he took it in his arms and shouting loudly in German "Make way, make way! The child has typhoid fever", ran through the prison gates. Thus he was able to get her out of prison, for he had correctly guessed that the German guards would be loath to approach and to question him for fear of catching the disease themselves.

There is also a letter signed by Lithuanian Jews, Dr F. Gurvičienė and two noted writers, M. Jelinas and I. Meras. It was the Cultural Jewish Association of Lithuania that was instrumental in collecting the documents necessary to effect Father Vladas Požela's exoneration, that is the confirmation of his innocence and



• **Father Vladas Požela, with his youngest sister Bronė, in 1988.**

compensation for his unlawful imprisonment in the gulags of Vorkuta.

Father Vladas Požela did not keep any money awarded as postwar compensation. He used the 6,000 roubles to give some long overdue dignity to the site of a Jewish genocide near his present parish, a place where 9,000 people were massacred during the German occupation of Lithuania. It should be noted that the Speaker of the Israeli Kneset, David Shilanski, a survivor of this terrible massacre along with eight members of his parliament, came to thank Father Požela personally for having shown a worthy example of "Love Thy Neighbour".

The life of Father Vladas Požela was not an easy one. Detained by the KGB in 1946, he spent 2 years in the dungeons of the Kaunas and Vilnius prisons. Arrested on trumped up charges he was sentenced to 25 years hard labour and deported to the Vorkuta slave-labour camps. His unbearable suffering lasted 11 years in the coal-mines surrounded by gulags, where people from the Baltic countries, German prisoners-of-war, Ukrainians and others were dying in hundreds because of harsh climatic conditions, starvation and long working hours. Finally, when after Stalin's death in 1953 prisoners were gradually freed, he too was allowed to return to his native Lithuania. A passport picture from that time shows an emaciated, gaunt face in which the eyes shine with a quiet determination. They seem to say: "The Lord has allowed me to survive to complete my work on earth."

Father Vladas Požela also showed great courage in signing several petitions sent by the Lithuanian clergy to Soviet leaders: to Brezhnev in 1982, to Andropov in 1983 and to Gorbachev in 1986. His name and his courageous activities are more than once mentioned in the *Chronicles of the Lithuanian Catholic Church*, a clandestine resistance publication during the Soviet occupation.

Now that independence is restored in Lithuania, what is this 82-year-old priest doing? He simply continues to care for his flock in the small wooden church in Kuziai. There are always many visitors to his modest presbytery where he lives without any of the comforts with which one would expect him to surround himself. Some come for advice, some for solace, and others to unburden their misfortunes.

He has long forgiven the evil deeds, the humiliations and indignities of his tormentors. As a distant echo, he recalls the inhuman treatment meted out by the sadistic examining magistrate, Sarkisjan. And he remembers Galicin, a man who had not completely lost his humanity. He remembers the courage that the elderly priest Stasiulis demonstrated while being interrogated, and the fortitude shown by Bishop Ramanuskas of Telšiai, as he endured his martyrdom at the hands of the KGB without a word of complaint. And he remembers the eyes of those unfortunate innocents, whose only "crime" was that they were Jews.

*"What is the measure of man?"*

A rhetorical question can have many answers. However, I heard at least one answer from a cab driver in Šiauliai. I asked him to take me to Kuziai at a rather late hour. "Why?" he asked. "I have to see my cousin, the parish priest Vladas Požela." I replied. "Lady," he responded "to see Father Vladas Požela I'll drive you at any time of the day, or night."

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# Conscripts for the Soviet Empire

**Algirdas MAKAREVIČIUS**  
University of Technology, Lae (P.N.G.)

*At the height of its expansion, the Soviet Union ruled over more than 100 nations. These nations differed extremely in their racial backgrounds and in their sizes, ranging from 129 million Russians to 1,000 Orochi and 500 Yukagirs. Compulsory service in the Red Army was used as a "melting pot", to reduce these ethnic differences. Here is an eyewitness report by a former conscript.*

The armed forces of the former Soviet Union were the largest in the world. Until recently, the Soviet Union had about 5 million people under arms. They were composed of five service branches: the ground forces (army), the naval forces, the strategic rocket forces, the air force, and the air defence forces. Most of the armed forces were under the direction of the Ministry of Defence, but the KGB also had several hundred thousand enlisted men in such services as the Border Troops, which were equipped with patrol boats, helicopters, aircraft, trained dogs, etc.

There was also a vast paramilitary organisation known as DOSAAF (Vsesoyuznoye Dobrovolnoye Obshchestvo Sodeystviya Armii, Aviatsii i Flota SSSR, or All-Union Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Army, Air Force and Navy of the USSR). Among other functions, DOSAAF provided military training and Soviet-patriotic indoctrination for schoolchildren. Of great importance also was the GlavPU SA i VMF (*Glavnoye Politicheskoye Upravleniye Sovetskoy Armii i Voyenno-Morskovo Flota*, or Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy), an agency of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee, whose task was political supervision and indoctrination of the military forces.

The armed forces so dominated the economy that over two thirds of all Soviet industrial enterprises were required to produce goods for the military, and all the forces had first-priority claim to the

very best industrial technology, raw materials, research facilities, and skilled manpower available in the Soviet Empire. The low overall growth rates of the Soviet economy directly resulted from this syphoning off of economic resources from the civilian to the military sector.

The Soviet Union stationed more than 45 full-strength divisions of its ground forces in Mongolia and along the contested border with China. Another 30 divisions served in the Central and East European Communist-block nations. Soviet forces have primarily served in the block nations as an internal police force.

## Conscripted

In the Soviet Union military service was compulsory for all male citizens: two years in the army or three years in the navy. I was conscripted into the Soviet Army in the autumn of 1978.

I remember everything as if it were yesterday. My parents saw me off at the recruitment place in Kaunas, Lithuania. I was not allowed to say goodbye to them. While I was waiting, some 15 more young people arrived. All of us were carefully searched but nothing dangerous was found: no sharp things, no alcohol, no drugs. Our passports were taken away from us. An hour later, the back door was opened and I saw a bus. Soldiers were standing in two lines between the bus and our door leaving space in the middle. We were ordered to run into the bus one by one.

The big iron gate of the yard opened and I saw a crowd of people in the street. They were our parents, friends, relatives. The militiamen (Soviet police) helped the bus to go through the crowd and we went to Vilnius.

Most of the young people slept during the 2-hour journey. I could not fall asleep. I was thinking, thinking ...

In Vilnius my hair was cut. Later I was rushed to the doctor's. They examined me very formally and wrote down that I 'was fit for service as a soldier in the Soviet Army'.

## No Food or Water

Later I was taken, by the same bus, to the Vilnius barracks. Nobody provided me with food or water and there were no beds to sleep in. I slept on a wooden floor in a big hall. To tell the truth, I could not sleep because of the constant noise: there were more than 300 young people there. I spent three days and nights in the barracks.

On the third day the 'minders' arrived and they started to line us up every hour. I felt like a slave whose future would be determined by the slave-trader.

I had been told by a recruitment officer in Kaunas that Lithuanians with a university education would serve only within the boundaries of Lithuania or, at the worst, Latvia or Estonia. And for only 1.5 years. But it was a lie. I saw a group of Lithuanians with a university education chosen for service in submarines for a full two years.

At last my 'minder' arrived and I was taken to the Vilnius airport. The plane took me to Moscow. Then I was taken to the other



• Russian troops training for biological warfare.

- Photo: Der Spiegel.

Moscow airport. And just before boarding a gigantic plane I was told that it was going to fly to Chitta, a city in Siberia, close to the Soviet-Chinese border, i.e. thousands of kilometres to the East from Moscow.

The flight lasted for about 9 hours. It was 10 degrees below zero in Chitta with very little snow. I was taken to the barracks and a uniform was issued to me. My service in the Soviet Army began. But I (as well as hundreds of other soldiers) still had no bed for sleeping and nobody gave me food. I slept on the floor for about a week. I ate the food which I had taken with me from Lithuania. A week later I was shown a bed in the barracks but when I woke in the morning I found my boots had been stolen. Next night I was ordered to go and work in the laundry - to sort out dirty linen. I worked until 4 a.m., without a break: I had to get up at 5.30 a.m. The following night I was on guard duty out in the open and my face was frozen.

Each morning I was awakened by a sergeant's wild scream and everybody had to get up and dress in 45 seconds. When someone was too slow he was kicked by other sergeants. All of them screamed and cursed hysterically threatening to kill him.

One morning the senior sergeant lined us up and delivered 'a nice speech'. He explained the rules of behaviour - how obedient we must be and what we were not permitted to do, and finished his speech with the following words, 'You will be taught here how to kill. Killing will be your profession. Forget your homes, forget your parents. Remember, you are not people. You are Soviet soldiers'. And, as a matter of fact, there was a lot of truth in what he said. I was not treated as a human being during all my service in the Soviet Army.

I spent the whole month in Chitta. One morning, to my surprise, minders arrived again and I (together with several hundred other soldiers) was taken to the building adjacent to the barracks, which was also fenced. I was kept there for about a week. There were no regular meals; soldiers were fed only once a day, and, what was worse - all soldiers were often lined up outside in cold weather and made to stand still for hours. Both during the day and during the night. My bag which contained food from Lithuania had been confiscated by an officer.

## Preparing for China

One night the soldiers were ordered to get on the trucks. The trucks moved on in an unknown direction.

Two days later, early in the morning, the trucks stopped at Borzia, a small town right on the Soviet-Chinese border. The barracks were surrounded by a high fence, with barbed wire on top, and we marched up to a box-shaped five-storey building, very similar to the blocks of flats built all over the Soviet Union for Soviet civilians.

It was an artillery division. The commander of the division once said that 'the soldiers to serve in Borzia were chosen as the best ones as it was a very important military strategic zone for the whole Soviet Union', and a few months later he stressed that 'if, in case of war with China, our soldiers in Borzia can survive for twenty minutes, their mission will be fulfilled. Therefore every soldier will have to study the Soviet military art, mainly the art of destroying the enemy's tanks'. Destroying tanks was my major subject. The biggest enemy for the Soviet soldier had to be a Chinese soldier. Soldiers had been told many times that the Chinese were very cruel and if war broke out they should be killed ruthlessly. Not every Russian soldier understood that it was ordinary military propaganda and most probably Chinese soldiers were told similar stories about people living in the Soviet Union.

Soldiers and sergeants were not allowed to leave the territory of the barracks and there were rumours that there was increased radiation in Borzia due to the uranium mines located underneath the town. Criminals who were sentenced to the death penalty worked there. They worked and died a slow death.

• To be continued.

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## Reflections on Lithuania *after four months' teaching at VMU*

Jenny MALLICK  
Hobart

"Did you have a marvellous time?" people asked me when I first returned from teaching in Lithuania. 'Marvellous' is not quite the word to describe the four months I spent in Kaunas - extremely interesting and, in regard to the teaching at the Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), both inspiring and rewarding. But it is impossible to deny that for most Lithuanians life is extremely hard and, apart from the lucky few who may be able to make a better life for themselves in the foreseeable future, is likely to remain so for a long time to come.

In fact, the overwhelming feeling I brought away with me was one of depression at the lot of the average person there and an overwhelming awareness of what bad luck they had had to be caught between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia during World War II; and then, at the end of the war, to have been so blithely designated by the West as 'belonging' to the USSR.

In his book on the Cold War, *The Cruel Peace*, Fred Inglis quotes from Churchill's memoirs the uninhibited cynicism with which Churchill recorded the Allies' final carve-up of Europe in February 1945<sup>1</sup>; and how, after having jotted down on a sheet of paper the various percentages to be accorded to the different allies, he had had second thoughts.

"Might not it be thought rather cynical if it seemed we had disposed of these issues, so fateful to millions of people, in such an off-hand manner? Let us burn the paper."

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Inglis, *The Cruel Peace: Living through the Cold War*, Aurum Press, Great Britain, p.xix



"No, you keep it," said Stalin.<sup>2</sup>

Many times as I looked at the strained, gaunt faces of the middle-aged and old women battling their way onto the overcrowded trolley buses, dressed in their worn and shabby old clothes, or saw the depressing line up of women outside either of the two markets in Kaunas holding up their wares in the hope of attracting a buyer, I found myself hoping that there was an after-life so that Stalin and whoever else could be deemed responsible, could somehow be made to pay for the sequence of social and economic events that was set in motion there half a century ago.

## Equal to Denmark

When one considers that before the outbreak of World War II, Lithuania was a prosperous country with a level of economic development and social sophistication equal to that of Denmark's, it is nothing less than tragic to see the conditions under which the average Lithuanians, usually through no fault of their own, struggle to eke out an existence for themselves now, 50 years on. It is true that some (very few and then usually by foul rather than fair means) have become rich since Independence. Because they have money, they can buy the unprecedented variety of goods from the West now available in Lithuania. However, most people are very much worse off and the best they can do - as the cornucopia of Western Capitalism flows into the country - is to look at it.

"I belong to a lost generation", one woman with whom I had become friendly in Kaunas, said to me sadly. And I have to agree with her. Her father, a doctor and a leading citizen in one of the smaller towns in the north, was sent to Siberia in 1940 with the first batch of exiles and had died there. As a consequence of his fate, her mother, a trained high school teacher, was unable to work in her profession as she had to keep her identity hidden in order to protect herself and her small daughter from the same fate. So, until Stalin died, Virginija and her mother had lived in poverty in a single room leased them by a relative.

<sup>2</sup> Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol 6: Triumph and Tragedy: (London: Cassell, 1954), p.198



• Children at a Lithuanian school: no computers, but keen to learn.

Photo: Lietuvos Aidas.

After Stalin died and things became somewhat easier for the relatives of those murdered or exiled, Virginija was able to enter Medical School, though she did have to lie on her form and say her father had died in Lithuania when she was a child; otherwise, she would not have been accepted. She qualified as a doctor specialising in the treatment of TB. Because she never joined the party, becoming a manager was as high as she could aspire to in her profession, despite her ability and capacity for hard work (Directorships were, of course, political appointments!). In her late forties, just at the point at which she had to a large extent overcome the disadvantages of having been the child of a member of the First Republic's intelligentsia, she had reached a degree of professional status and was, by USSR standards well off, Independence was declared.

## Savings Lost

With the devaluation of the rouble that followed, her savings disintegrated and skyrocketing inflation and the inability of the government to pay reasonable salaries to its professional employees, her future prospects are unpromising, to say the least. (Virtually all the University staff in Lithuania have second jobs, as a University salary only provides enough to feed a family, not

service a flat.) Her pension will be too little to enable her to keep the flat she lives in and, for the time being, any spare money she earns before retirement goes to provide for her daughter and two grandchildren. Her daughter is married to a teacher who has had to give up teaching, as have virtually all male teachers who have to support a family. A teacher's salary of 150 litas a month is barely enough to service a family flat, let alone buy food. He is now in 'business' and travels to Poland two or three times a week to buy goods which he sells at a small profit when he returns.

'I chose the wrong area', Virginija said ruefully. Doctors who specialised in TB are particularly badly off - though an increase of 30% in the disease in 1994 ensures them of plenty of work! - because unlike doctors who can charge the 'new rich' to jump the queues for treatment, TB patients are the homeless, drug addicts and alcoholics and make no such offers. At a TB hospital in the south near the Polish border, all the male doctors were working part-time as customs officials - a very lucrative occupation since traders who go to Poland regularly to buy goods to resell in Lithuania have now to pay US\$50<sup>3</sup> a time to cross the border in order to avoid a three-day wait. A doctor's salary is 300 litas a month and whereas 300 litas is sufficient for one person to live in relative comfort, it is not sufficient to service a two-bedroomed apartment *and* buy food for a family.

A friend of Virginija of the same age is an architect working for a government department and her salary is so low that she has to do ironing in her spare time at the hospital in order to afford her share of the cost of sharing a two bedroomed apartment with her daughter and son-in-law.

"I'm not free." (Meaning of course free in her mind.) "My mother was free and I can see that my daughter will be, but I know, I never will be," another woman I got to know, said to me. Jūratė is a musicologist and a lecturer at the Institute of Music in Vilnius. She told me that, since the cost of living had gone up, she had the sense that she might soon be in a position where she couldn't get enough to eat. She found herself becoming interested in, almost obsessed with, food; she had begun to think about it in a way she never had before. The staff at her Institute had just heard that the

<sup>3</sup> The exchange rate is approx. 4 litas = US\$1

Institute might have to close for the next semester as it had completely run out of money. It could no longer afford to heat the buildings or to pay staff salaries or student grants. "What will you do?" I asked her. She had no contingency plans at all - how could she have when there is no likelihood that she would get work anywhere else anywhere? There just is no money around except for those in so called Business or for those like the various levels of mafia who prey on the business people. Even the smallest little roadside stall has to pay protection money.

## Medical Crisis

The stories of these two women are repeated over and over again in the lives of middle-aged or retired professional people. A doctor's pension is 150 litas, a teacher's even less and the old age pension is 85 litas! Of the forty-five doctors who worked under Virginija in Kaunas, only four were under the age of 65. A number of them were well into their seventies, of which a good few were already too senile to properly monitor the drugs they prescribed. They cannot retire because that would mean giving up their apartments.

For obvious reasons, there was no rush on the part of newly qualified doctors to get into TB hospitals - in fact, many graduates from the Medical Institutes go into 'business' or, if they have the right connections, lucrative occupations like Customs! The same scenario is repeated in the field of education. One of the great tragedies in Lithuania at the moment is that, because of the lack of funding for education, the high standard of education of which the country was justly so proud, is being whittled away and undermined.

The few visits I made to the country were equally depressing. The people on the farms south of Kaunas seemed to be particularly poor. There was evidence of abject poverty in the villages I passed through and, where there did seem to be some cultivation going on on farms, I quite often saw old women calf-deep in mud pulling horse and plough behind them. A number of people told me that the farmers were even poorer last year than the year before and that they had been unable to sell their grain that year because the government had imported grain from Canada.

Stalin's enforced collectivisation succeeded in completely destroying the agricultural base of the country in three years and it would seem that the last two governments since Independence have succeeded equally quickly in destroying what the Soviets developed in its stead! Apart from one obviously rich man (a banker and the father of one of my private students who was kind enough to drive me around to see the country), no one had any confidence that the present government was doing anything whatsoever to improve the situation. Virginija took one look at the car he drove and said darkly, "Corruption." It seemed the general view that, if anyone wasn't poor, they were, by definition, corrupt.

The only time I felt the blanket of depression that seemed to shroud the country, lift, was when I was at the University or in the company of the students. I found it hard to judge their optimism that life was, and would continue to be, good. Perhaps it will be better for them and they know it, perhaps it is just the optimism of youth and inexperience, or perhaps they are so much of an elite group that they are bound to succeed even in a failing situation. (Vytautas Magnus takes only one of every ten students who apply for entry and those applying are already drawn from a select group of very high achievers as only 5% of the population get to attend University.) Whatever the reason, their zest for life, their love of



• Students of the University of Vilnius greeted Germany's Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker (left), during his visit to Lithuania last year.

- Photo: Lietuvos Aidas.

learning and capacity for hard work together with their lively charm and ironic humour made teaching them a delightful and rewarding experience as well as an enormous relief after the general gloom seemed to pervade the rest of the country.

## Hope for Future

The University itself, and particularly the English Department which I was able to become reasonably well acquainted with, also provided some hope for the future as they showed just how much can be achieved by the dedication and generosity of a few individuals. Re-opening only six years ago, (the University was closed during the Soviet era) and functioning on a shoe-string budget, it has achieved a remarkable amount. The students work under conditions which most students in Australia would find completely untenable; extremely (although, compared to six years ago, greatly improved) poor library facilities, student accommodation which has four students to a room and sixty students to one kitchen, and perhaps what struck me most of all, the need to do most of their reading (due to the absence of sufficient texts) crowded together in reading rooms where they sit shoulder to shoulder studying in absolute silence and with enormous concentration the photostatted material that lecturers have made available in limited numbers.

I fear, Virginija and Jūratė are right - they do belong to a 'lost generation'. No matter how hard I try, I cannot get myself to believe that this for them will get better in the near future, if at all. I only hope that the optimism of the young people I taught there, will not prove to be unfounded; and that somehow Lithuanians will manage to rise above the manifold problems that the last fifty years have bequeathed them for no reason other than that of their geographical position and the political fate they were allotted by the Super Powers in 'The Cruel Peace' of 1945.

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## Heart-to-Heart : Lithuanian and American Sisters

**S. Barbara VALUCKAS, SSND**  
Pilgrimministries (U.S.A.)

The large conference room in the Kaunas Seminary was freezing cold, its tiny radiators hardly up to the task of warming its cavernous space. Hard wooden chairs in concentric semi-circles seemed to huddle together in the front corner near one of the radiators creating an atmosphere of hopeful expectancy. The American Sisters who had arranged the chairs pulled their coats and scarves more tightly around them as they waited to see if anyone would come to the theology classes they had prepared.

The team of American Sisters were in Lithuania as a part of the Rising Sun Project sponsored by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office to Aid Eastern and Central Europe. The project took its name and guiding image from the well-known



• Two members of the Rising Sun team - (left to right:) Sister Carolyn Mruz, OSF and Sister Joan Klaas, CPPS - receiving thank-you gifts from Sister Albina Pajarskaitė, President of the new Conference of Lithuanian superiors.

shrine in Vilnius, the Dawn Gate. This image captured the hopes of the Lithuanian Sisters to enter energetically into the new day that was dawning for Lithuania as it lived into its first years of independence reclaimed.

After fifty years of underground existence that included imprisonment, official harassment and continuous surveillance by the KGB, the Sisters of Lithuania emerged strong and resilient but also in need of support, healing, and knowledge. Their need resonated strongly within the hearts of Sisters all over the world. The Rising Sun Project was one of many responses of the American Church to the needs of the Church in Eastern and Central Europe. After months of dialogue with the Lithuanian Superiors, the presence of a team of American Sisters in the "sala" of the Kaunas Seminary was a concrete sign of a new beginning.

Yet, there was a bit of anxiety on both sides. The American team had no assurance that what they had prepared would be helpful to their Lithuanian counterparts because of the cultural and historical differences that had formed them. The Lithuanian Sisters had heard a lot of propaganda about the "wild" American Sisters and were not quite sure what to expect. Both groups had to gamble on what they knew they had in common, their dedication to the Church of Jesus Christ as vowed women religious.

The gamble paid off. The seats began to fill up as the Lithuanian Sisters, aged 18 to 80, arrived. Both teachers and participants had to keep their coats, hats, and gloves on throughout the seven hours they spent together each day in the "sala" for a week. But the cold could not dampen their eagerness once the process began. It was not a one-way communication but a true sharing of experiences as the Sisters from different sides of a large ocean discussed the Vatican II theology of the Church, the meaning of the sacraments in today's world, and the theology and spirituality of religious life. All of the classes were grounded in the official documents of the Church, which form part of a rich, shared tradition.

By the week's end, not even the cold air could diminish the warmth of the sisterly affection that had grown with each day's sharing. Everyone had become a teacher and a learner as the American and Lithuanian Sisters spoke of their experiences, their feelings and values and their hopes for the future of the church and

for religious life. During the evaluation, the Lithuanian Sisters said, "Please come back to us. We are so grateful not only for what you taught but for the example of your love, joy, and collaboration across congregations. We even liked your jokes because they made us laugh and we haven't had a lot to laugh about for a long time."

For their part, the American Sisters had to admit that they were frequently moved to tears when they heard the stories of what their Lithuanian Sisters had endured for the sake of the Gospel. They were astounded at the fidelity of the Sisters to their vows and to the Church over decades when they knew virtually nothing of what was happening in the rest of the world.

In the end, there were no Lithuanian and American Sisters. There were only sisters.



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*In 1985, Barbara was elected to province leadership and served as Provincial Councilor and Provincial Leader. Most recently, Barbara spent six months of her sabbatical year in Lithuania. While there, she taught English as a Second Language on national television, served as a consultant to the newly-formed Catholic Television Center, and working in ongoing formation with the women religious of Lithuania.*

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## Summer in Lithuania, 1994

**Jennifer RAKAUSKAS**  
University of Queensland

I visited Lithuania with my husband during June and July 1994 to attend the *Dainų Šventė* (Song Festival) and spend time with relatives. Our last trip to Lithuania had been twenty years previously, so we expected this visit to be quite a different experience, which it was. On this occasion we were able to see a lot of the country without restrictions.

### The Countryside

We were fortunate: the sun shone the whole time we were there. We travelled around Lithuania in a borrowed car which, in spite of having seen better days (and roads), ran like a charm. Colour predominated, with the proliferation of brightly coloured wild flowers dotting the beautiful green landscape. Haymaking was at its height, and there were family groups everywhere, hand cutting and stacking the sheaves in rows across the fields, or loading the hay into horse-drawn carts.

Impressions of the countryside varied from place to place, and with each experience. We picnicked and swam in the national parks of *Aukštaitija* among the beautiful lakes, forests and castle mounds. We swam in the Baltic Sea, until we discovered that we were sharing our space with raw sewerage! The *Kuršių Nerija* was alive with tourists, and provided a different "feel" from other parts of Lithuania. Apart from the unusual sight of three cows sunning themselves on a lonely stretch of dunes near Neringa, we found the beach at Palanga to be more crowded than the Gold Coast, where we live. We noticed that there was not a beach hat or sun shelter of any description anywhere in sight, and came to the conclusion that "Slip, Slop, Slap" has not reached Lithuania yet!

One of the most delightful experiences for me was picking wild strawberries in the forest, and tasting their exquisite sweetness.

## Tourism

We have all heard about the lack of facilities and services which bedevil the newly independent eastern European countries, so I will only add that in many places they are really trying. We visited the usual tourist spots - *Rumšiškės*, *Raganų Parkas*, The Hill of Crosses, Trakai, the old restored towns of Vilnius and Kaunas, museums, cathedrals and so on, but one experience stands out because it was so different.

There is a most unusual and innovative bee museum near Ignalina where we looked, listened and learned the finer points of bee keeping in Lithuania since the Middle Ages. The tour was conducted by a cross between a *vaidila* and *pasakininkas* - a real philosopher, dressed in white robes and carrying a shepherd's crook. He interspersed his spiel with old yarns, myths and tales to the delight of all present, especially the children, who were the focus of his attention. The tour finished with afternoon tea (made with strawberries, of course) seated under the trees by a running stream, and served by his wife, equally at home in her long white robes, too.

## Dainų Šventė

As an ethnomusicologist currently studying the Lithuanian song tradition in Australia, this was an important part of my visit to Lithuania. We were in Kaunas for the opening of the Festival, and joined the parade of participants from the War Museum to *Dainų Slėnis* where the concert was to be held. There was a very festive air as we followed the musicians and singers in the march through the city, stopping at the many wayside stalls to examine the wares for sale. With many visitors from overseas, business was brisk, especially with amber and Lithuanian handcrafts.

The ensuing programme was most exciting. This was the culmination of months of practice and preparations, and we could feel the air of expectancy as the choristers filed into the stands, dressed in a variety of regional national costumes. Men, women, children, some not even born in Lithuania, combined together to fill the air with singing, and they sang their hearts out! There were so many children involved, and I was told they attend choir

practice every week, as children in other parts of the world attend scout meetings or ballet lessons. What a wonderful future for Lithuania's song heritage!

I was interested to discover that the idea for the Song Festivals had been born at the end of 1923 when a committee was formed, and the first performance enacted in August 1924 (O. Narbutienė, 1994: 15-17). The incentive had apparently arisen when a group of composers and musicians met to discuss the repertoire for a forthcoming concert. There were many problems to be overcome, the two largest being the fact that nobody had the experience of organising a festival on such a large scale, and the members of the choirs were more enthusiastic amateurs rather than professional singers. After a lot of debate, it was decided to call the festival *Dainų Diena* (Song Day) and hold the event in the army parade ground in Kaunas.

## Grand Choral Plan

In February 1924, conductors of choirs around the country were notified of the grand plan, and requested to prepare a serious selection of songs for performance, and not to include people who had no ear or voice. The main attention was to be paid to the artistic result - not an easy task for most conductors. However, with the help of consultants, such as J. Naujalis and S. Šimkus, two of the prime movers of the idea, provincial choirs were visited, checked and advised.



• Combined Australian Lithuanian choir: it sang in Lithuania last year.  
- Photo: P.Pranauskas.

Ninety-seven choirs participated. They all had to buy their own special clothes, and pay for everything although the rail fare was provided at a concessional rate. Then another movement arose in Kaunas with the suggestion that the Song Day be held in conjunction with the opening of the Agricultural and Industrial Show and the University suggested that all participants would be able to visit the exhibition of artworks due to be opened a few days prior to the festival, at half price. Two operas "Rigoletto" and "Carmen" were also to be produced at the same time.

There were to be 6,000 seats available for the festival and would cost from two to eight litai each. Standing room would cost 1 litas, so the tickets were certainly not cheap! The Mayor of Kaunas asked people to spruce the town up, dress for a holiday, and be hospitable to the visitors and billet them, where possible.

For many, it was to be their first visit to Kaunas, and they arrived by train, boat and on foot, dressed appropriately for the occasion. After the first rehearsal, they all went out into the streets in festive mood, singing in small groups as they walked along. The streets were full of people, and reading the statistics we find that there were 40,000 visitors to the Agricultural and Industrial Show, 60,000 to the Song Festival, with 80,000 travellers on trains alone, thus placing the magnitude of the event into perspective! (O. Narbutiene, 1994: 16).

The participants gathered together at the War Museum, and marched through the city streets, carrying flags, to the accompaniment of the army band to the concert venue. President Stulginskas presented gold and silver medals to those important people who had organised and were conducting the choirs. The only drawback was that it rained all through the night after the first day's performance, and the ensuing day's concert was postponed until the Monday. This spoiled arrangements for many who had to return home or to work by then, but nonetheless it did not dampen the enthusiasm, as there were still 3,000 voices left to sing!

## Too Big?

Although most of the songs were harmonised *liaudies dainos* (folk songs), there were some more complicated works included. Some

of the songs were sung together and some were sung by separate choirs. The most popular conductor was Stasys Šimkus, as his temperament appeared to put some fire into the singers and create an atmosphere which involved the listeners as well. Since then, there have been thirteen more festivals (none were organised during the war), making the latest *Dainų Šventė* in 1994, the fourteenth.

At the latest festival, choirs of Lithuanians came from ten countries to take part, as well as approximately 880 different song, dance and musical ensembles from all parts of Lithuania. There were fifty-six groups from Klaipėda, sixty-eight from Kaunas, and one hundred and eight from Vilnius (*Dainų Šventė* 1994: 124-168). Some people are of the opinion that the festival is now much too big, especially for combined events, and they would like to see concurrent events around the city being performed by much smaller groups throughout the days of the festival instead. It will be interesting to see if there are some changes made in the future.

The other huge events on other days, the *Ansamblų Vakarai* (Ensemble Evening) and *Šokių Diena* (Dance Day) were equally as impressive. The *Ansamblų Vakarai* appealed to me because it embraced so much of the history and culture of Lithuania in its presentation, creating an atmosphere, not so much of display, but a sense of experiencing the essence of the culture.

## Overview

Fine weather, festival fun, folklore combined with the wonderful hospitality, love and friendship we were afforded, made our journey to Lithuania a very special time. I quote the mayor of Kaunas, Arimantas Račkauskas, during our visit with him, "I am a positive person, and I am confident of Lithuania's future, but no matter what, we must remain positive, and know that it can be done!" My point of view exactly.

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

## REFERENCE:

Narbutiene, Ona, "Pirmoji Dainų Diena", in: *Dainų Šventė*, Ed. N. Kvaraciejūtė. Vilnius: Spauda, 1994.

# Learning a Language

J.J. SAUERWEIN

To learn a language out of books  
Exacts a teaching toll,  
For many books must be consumed.  
Does any reach the goal?

But language learning comes with ease,  
If sweetened with song's bliss.  
By far the simplest method, though,  
Is having girls to kiss.

How I learnt Lithuanian  
So fast and without woe?  
Did it come easily to me?  
Now, that you'll never know!

*English translation by Greg. TRIFFITT  
(University of Tasmania).*

## Kalbu mokslas      Sprachenlehre

Kas knygom's kalbą nor' išmoks,  
Jam daug daug mokslo reik,  
Iš knygų daug tur paskaityt.  
Tai tikt neina veik?

Tas kalbą jau lengviau išmoks,  
Kurs gird' dainas dainuot,  
Bet dar lengvesnis mokslas koks -  
Mergoms ją nubučiuot.

Kaip aš dabar lietuviškai  
Veik išsimokinau?  
Ar man ir puolė taip lengvai?  
Tai tik tau nesakau.

Wer Sprachen aus Büchern lernen will,  
Der braucht der Lehre viel,  
Muss viele Bücher durchstudiern,  
Kommt der denn je ans Ziel?

Die Sprache lernt man leichter ja,  
Wenn man's mit Liedlein süsst.  
Am allerleichtesten ist's da -  
Wenn man die Mädlein küsst.

Wie ich denn Litauisch gelernt  
So schnell und ohne Müh?  
Ob es mir leicht gefallen sei?  
Das - sage ich dir nie.

## Book Review

### Sauerwein Revisited

**FRANZKEIT, Alfred (?1994), *Jokubas Skliutauskas: Sauerwein-Gedichte*. Ratingen, Stadionring 32: Verlag Ewald Hein/Melina-Buchverlag. 143pp.**

German readers now have a wonderful opportunity to learn more about Dr Georg Julius Justus Sauerwein (1831 - 1904), a polyglot German writer, editor and campaigner for Lithuania Minor. In this new volume, Rev. Alfred Franzkeit has published his German translations of Sauerwein's Lithuanian poems, together with the originals. The book also offers a background sketch of Sauerwein's life, taken from an essay by Jokubas Skliutauskas.

Sauerwein was born in Hannover; studied in Goettingen and Vienna; and travelled widely to satisfy his thirst for foreign languages. According to his nephew, Rev. Bauer, Sauerwein knew 46 languages, some of them rare and exotic. He was certainly fluent in Lithuanian: he wrote articles, brochures and poems in this ancient tongue.

Sauerwein became a frequent visitor to Lithuania Minor after the 1870-71 war, and lived for longer periods in the villages of Silininkai and Lazdynai. The Prussian government's policy of the day was against all national minorities, and Lithuanian language studies were removed from the schools. Sauerwein set out to reverse this trend. He urged the local Lithuanians to preserve their language, customs, national dress and everything Lithuanian.

It has been suggested<sup>1</sup> that Sauerwein's mother was Lithuanian. This has not yet been confirmed. It is known, however, that his father was a teacher of ancient languages and an influential minister of religion in the town of Gronau.<sup>2</sup>

- Based on a review in *Mitteilungen aus baltischem Leben*, No.3, Sept. 1994.

<sup>1</sup> *Mitteilungen aus baltischem Leben*, Vol.40, No.3, September 1994, p.27.

<sup>2</sup> *Lietuvių Enciklopedija*, Boston: LEL, 1961, Vol.26, p.532.



## A Guide to the Immigration Maze

GODDARD, Jane and Arthi PATEL, *The Immigration Kit: A Practical guide to Australia's Immigration Law* (4th Edition). Leichhardt, NSW: The Federation Press, 1995. - RRP.\$60.00.

Australia's immigration laws are complicated and they continue to change frequently. Keeping up to date presents a major challenge not only to the legal profession, but also to migration agents, community workers and ordinary "People in the street".

The Immigration Advice and Rights Centre in Sydney is to be congratulated for producing an excellent answer to this problem. The Centre's *Immigration Kit*, a 533-page book co-authored by Jane Goddard and Arthi Patel, explains Australia's current immigration requirements in an easy-to-follow style. Divided into eighteen chapters, the book covers all classes of migration programs: family, economic, refugee and humanitarian, and others. It then proceeds to the changes of status, citizenship, and rights of permanent residents. Limited-term stays are described in chapters on temporary workers, students, visitors and other temporary visas. The authors conclude their fine work with a wealth of information on general visa requirements, unlawful non-citizens, cancellation of visas, review of migration decisions and a comprehensive list of 'referrals' (useful contacts).

I liked the authors' extensive use of cross-referencing. This meant that a lot of information was recorded only once, but was made available to the reader whenever and wherever it was needed. For example, Page 163 has twelve such extensions to other parts of the book, thus avoiding duplication and saving plenty of paper.

The present volume is the 4th edition of *The Kit* since 1986 which attests to its popularity. It is accurate to March 1995. I recommend it to every practitioner, legal and otherwise; to people interested in migration; and also to collectors of good cartoons.

\* Simon R.P. TAŠKŪNAS, B.Com., LL.B.(Tas.) is a practising lawyer with the Hobart firm Simmons Wolfhagen.

### The Red October

The daring submarine commander in Thomas Clancy's book *The Hunt for Red October* was not a figment of the writer's imagination. The thriller story was based on the real-life adventure of Jonas Pleškys, a Lithuanian navy officer who in 1961 sailed a Soviet submarine, complete with its crew, to Sweden. A film was later made under the same title, but with many details changed. It starred Sean Connery.

Jonas Pleškys was born on March 10, 1935, in Tverai, Western Lithuania. His parents were farm labourers. They had seven children; one of them, Eugenija Pleškytė, later became famous in Lithuania as a stage and film actress.

Jonas went to school in Žarėnai and Telšiai. His parents were deported to Siberia in 1948. The children managed to escape this "ethnic cleansing", but they were branded "politically unreliable". As such, Jonas was refused admission to any of the universities or other institutions of higher education in Russian-occupied Lithuania.

After compulsory draft into the Soviet armed forces, Jonas Pleškys quickly made his mark as a highly gifted and resourceful man. His superiors, although still distrustful, sent him to the Higher Naval Academy in Leningrad.

In 1961, at the age of 26, Jonas Pleškys was given the command of a Soviet submarine. One day, on a surveillance trip across the Baltic Sea, he decided to take the big risk. He rigged his submarine's compass and took his ship and men to Sweden.

Soviet agents searched for Jonas all over Europe, while he hid in Sweden. A death sentence was passed in his absence in Vilnius (the capital of occupied Lithuania). However, Jonas Pleškys managed to slip through the Soviet net and went to the United States to live.

For some time, Jonas taught at Stanford University. Then, he worked for a private naval company. He travelled to a number of other countries. In 1991, he had to leave work prematurely when doctors discovered a cancerous growth in his head.

Jonas returned to Lithuania during the summer of 1992. When asked what he wanted to see most of all, he said, "All I want to do, is to go for a walk in the fields and meadows where I used to run about as a boy." He talked of going back to Lithuania to live, but his poor health put a stop to that.

Jonas Pleškys died in Oakland, California, on April 14, 1993.

*Based on a report by Donatas JANUTA in Lietuvos Aidas.*

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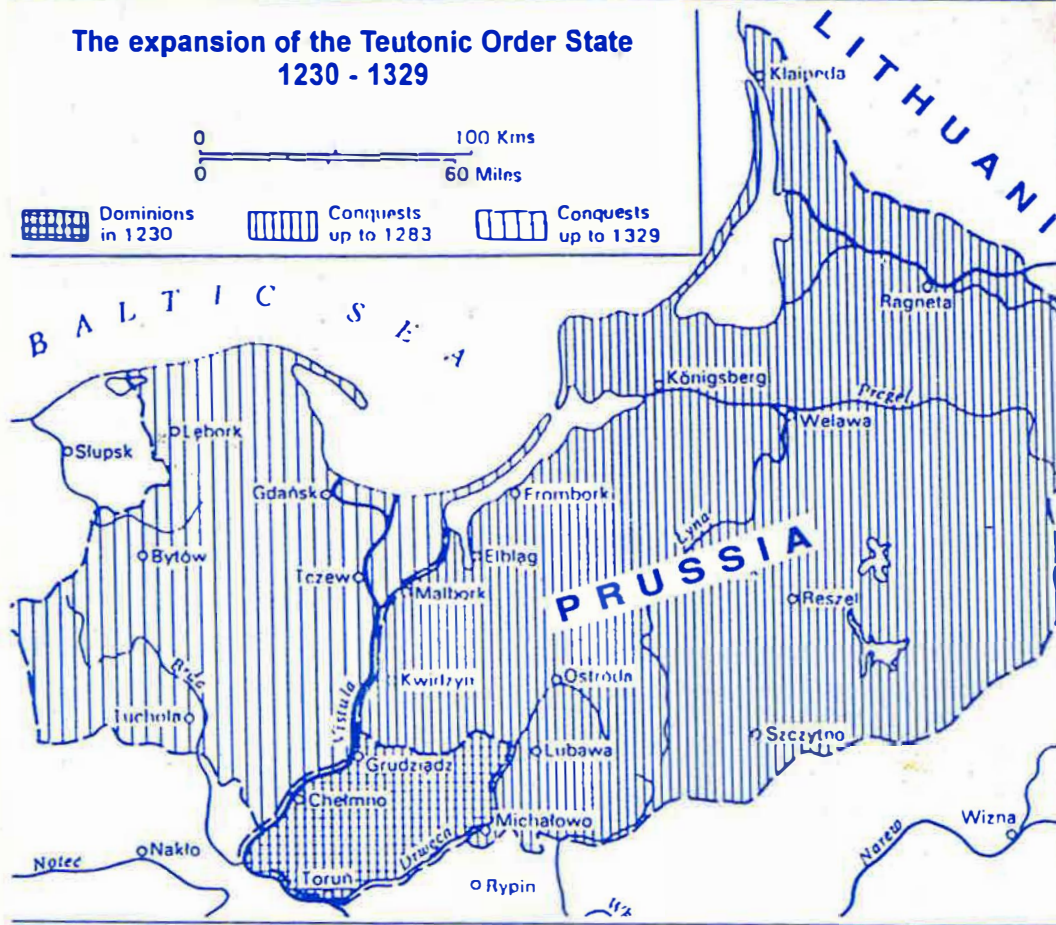
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