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Editor of this Issue
M. G. Slavenas

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Diana Šarakauskaitė

Gone with the wind my Veisiejai gone

...I say: *Oh Mother*
and I think of you my home
of those who died moved left never returned
how it hurt this ritual
and here I am
the house reviewed door frames moved
hammering sounds rafters restored...
different curtains flags different smells
replaced uprooted mothers fathers
streets are renamed redrawn
family cradles disintegrate like nets
it doesn't hurt anymore
as if I had never been here before.

mine is only the lake still mine
in its reflection the reflection of the sky
in the sky the reflection of the lake
clouds on the waves my face in the sun
converging melting into the path of the moon
into mother and father into their sky their depth
let me be the roots are too deeply set
in fresh-water springs hidden from sight
under layers of lamb-soft sludge
settled on stone and shells
inextricably entangled with deep-water fish

golden down silver feathers glisten and gleam
in the sun of the moon I return to primal form
there is no name to which I could respond if called
I float from a distance cautiously like a dragonfly
On fragile edges of thought not waking the child
sleeping inside not waking
the little Veisiejai girl on the lilac road
she would cry and cry
and choke on her sobs
if she knew that the town is gone
as if it had never been.

* * *

and if I am not and my sight is not
I will read the landscape by touch
and sense your lives your formless graves
your sagging rumpled houses lopsided alleys
my town the town where Judita V. composed
… *Veisiejai, we can tour you like Venice…*
my house among the four winds
a place pierced by seven swords
the ground leveled flat by wagons and whips
flogged trampled upon blown away
abandoned to fires and purified

such is my town its beauty its history of horror
trees quiet ghosts once shouldering the skies
lie prostrate on the ground
people turn in a circle always all of us interlocked
we who were born in those times and survived
in this place at the edge of paradise
which throbs with the rhythm of hearts buried alive
in the ground on which I once drew squares
and hop-scotched unaware
of bodies buried underneath
with cut-out stars and severed body parts
and aborted lives

or the well into which we children leaned
giddily yelling our names
and in return heard moans of the dead
who were dumped there and left to drown

then came the sixties regional holidays
the heavy drinking retching Russian curses
all of it in my youthful
romantically colored drawings
even the handles on which
my slobbering moribund neighbors
hung themselves
plunged in the daily swill of cheap wine
not able to bear the past
when the sod was raised by
groans underground

my little town my cradle rocked by winds
I have never seen a landscape
more peaceful than yours
the linden trees the people no other place
where my soul resounds in a thousand voices
as I pass women widows waiting in terminals
dried bread crumbling in their totes
breaking it eating it pigeons surround them
all of them sharing it

widows sainted mothers forced to walk
to the square where mutilated bodies
of their sons lay on display
pigeons soldiers of peace obese with tiny heads
and bulging bellies squatting demanding to be fed
at funerals and weddings bloodlines merge
on earth and in the ground
and who killed whom will never be known

* * *

I wish I could ask oh Lord
if now they reside in your house
dressed in the robes of their finest years
or did they come to you just as they were
in the square their shame
covered only by Magdalene's hair
St. Magdalene my Saint
from the altar in the Veisiejai church
she washed the fratricidal hands with her tears

who of you daughters and sons
were heroes or doves?

Translated by M. Gražina Slavenas

From Diana Šarakauskaitė, *Medžiai mano tėvai, eilėraščiai.*
Vilnius: Homo liber, 2009.

The Reformation in Lithuania: A New Look
Historiography and Interpretation

INGĖ LUKŠAITĖ

Introduction

The Reformation began as an intellectual construct aimed at reforming the faith, with various groups forming their own specific ideas and doctrines about the "true faith" and "true church," and in its course continued to alter the organization of the Roman Catholic Church and evolved new structures of society. Although it was, first of all, a movement that changed religious beliefs, in many countries religious doctrines became linked with political and social processes, thus strongly influencing the history of culture. The European political and ecclesiastic élite, either supporting the Reformation or opposing it, either disseminating its ideas or formulating counterarguments, completely reshaped Europe's political map and set the stage for the modern era. This transformation marked the advancement of European society into the early modern age.

In Lithuania, it encountered a complex situation which, in turn, determined its course. Studies about the Reformation in Lithuania are complicated by the fact that it involved a Lithuanian nation split in two and residing in two different countries under very different governments and political and social conditions. In the sixteenth century, the majority of Lithuanians resided in the multiethnic Grand Duchy of Lithuania, constituting a ruling stratum but comprising a minority

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in the population at large. The other, smaller, portion of ethnic Lithuanians lived in the neighboring Duchy of Prussia (also referred to as Lithuania Minor or Prussian Lithuania), which at the time of the Reformation, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, was populated by Lithuanians, ethnic Prussians and descendants of other Baltic tribes. Both states shared a long border, close cultural ties, and a history of political and military conflict. Neither encompassed the entire Lithuanian nation. Lutheranism, the first phase of the Reformation, reached both states at the beginning of the sixteenth century simultaneously but followed diametrically different courses due to their different political situations.

Prussia was originally the home of native Prussian tribes which were conquered and colonized by the Teutonic Order in the thirteenth century after protracted warfare. In 1525, Duke Albrecht of Brandenburg, the Order's last Grand Master, accepted the Lutheran faith, dissolved the order and reorganized the territory into the Duchy of Prussia, a vassal state of the Kingdom of Poland. The Reformation was thus from the start supported by its ruler. The young Lutheran scholars exiled from the Grand Duchy in the 1640s as heretics were welcomed by Duke Albrecht and encouraged to spread the Gospel among the Lithuanian inhabitants of his realm by creating a written form of Lithuanian. The resulting translation by Martynas Mažvydas (Martinus Mosvidius) of the Catechism (*Catechismusa prasty szadei)*, printed in Königsberg, East Prussia, in 1547, was the first book printed in the Lithuanian language.

By the end of the century, Duke Albrecht's evangelization efforts were successful, and the Lutheran faith became the official state religion. After 1701, the Duchy was incorporated into the Prussian-Brandenburg kingdom and its church history must be studied within the framework of German history.

Conversely, in the Grand Duchy the Reformation never reached the status of a state religion. After the initial setbacks, it burst upon the scene in the 1550s, and Lutheranism was superseded by Calvinism and Antitrinitarianism (Arianism), all three competing with each other. By 1557, Calvinism gained

the upper hand and remained the strongest among the other Evangelical churches. Its sudden success was determined by the active support it received at the highest levels of government and society and overall favorable conditions: the relative ineffectiveness of the Roman Catholic Church and the traditional coexistence of several religions under legal guarantees for freedom of worship specified in the Lithuanian Statute. Most important was the sympathetic attitude of the young monarch Sigismund II Augustus who, reversing his father's position, showed a lively interest in the new teaching and allowed all sides to engage in an active exchange of ideas without the use of force. In 1557, the Calvinists founded the Lithuanian Evangelical Reformed Church under the name Unitas Lithuaniae, independent from its sister church in Poland and utilizing an organizational and ecclesiastical structure that provided for self-governance and proved very resilient against growing adversity in the future. After the Union of Lublin, the Roman Catholic establishment, supported by a succession of elected kings, gained absolute power and eventually turned all other religions into "dissident" minority churches.

In Lithuanian history there are not many other phenomena that have evoked so many conflicting and emotional reactions and have been so variously interpreted and understood as the Reformation. On the other hand, there is now a tendency among cultural historians to view it not just as a religious but also as a social and cultural movement. This perspective allows us to view it within the framework of Lithuanian history and determine if and how it impacted Lithuanian culture and cultural advancement toward the modern era. The most important criterion for determining the impact and duration of the Reformation in Lithuania should be its viability, its power to create and shape societal processes. From the mid-1500s to the mid-1600s, this power was felt in many areas of society. Indeed, a comparison of the state of Lithuanian written language, the system of education, and the overall mindset of the educated segments in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the beginning of the sixteenth century with that a century later demonstrates

that with the advent of the Reformation many new cultural processes were set in motion and continued through much of the seventeenth century and even longer. Viewed from this perspective, the Reformation emerges as a cultural force that left a deeper impact on the history of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy than previously admitted.

Sources

Primary sources on the early period of the Reformation in the sixteenth century are scarce. Most were destroyed during religious confrontations or found their way into other archives or personal collections, leaving the researcher with a wide field of unsystematic and fragmentary evidence. In general, they can roughly be classified into Protestant, Catholic, and foreign holdings. Protestant sources consist of church archives, documents by administrative bodies (synods, collegiums), official state documents, privileges and decrees by the King of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania, parliamentary decisions, and so forth. Most of them have been published.

The archives of the Catholic Church can fill many gaps. They comprise records of administrative and ecclesiastical provincial synods, decisions of diocesan synods in the Grand Duchy, archives of archdiocesan and diocesan chapters, records of individual Roman Catholic churches and parishes, and family archives of prominent members of the Catholic Church. Of special importance is the *Codex Mednicensis* (Medininkų kodeksas), the document collection of the Žemaitija (Samogitia) Archdiocese, and the reports of the Lithuanian bishops to the Holy See. Additional insight into the intellectual and social climate and mentality of the times can also be gleaned from religious polemical literature and random books and brochures, some of them one of a kind and scattered all over.

Since the Reformation manifested itself in so many different areas of cultural, social, and religious life, its course, as a part of a broad European phenomenon, attracted the attention of governments and religious and lay societies in neighboring states. The Gdańsk (Danzig) archives in the manuscript reposi-

tory of the Polish Academy of Sciences library, and the manuscript collections at the Kurnik Library, near Poznań, yield additional information lacking in Protestant archives. Prussia's secret state archives comprise documents of the États Ministerium and include a portion of the Prussian duchy's chancellery documents, East Prussian folios and Duke Albrecht's letters. A portion of the latter has been published. A valuable collection of documents about the early period can be found in the *Urkundenbuch zur Reformationsgeschichte des Herzogthums Preussen,* compiled by Paul Tschackert in 1890. Walter Hubatsch offers a listing of various minor chronicles in his *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirchen (*1968).

The internal affairs of the Evangelical Reformed Church are recorded in the minutes of its annual synods. Although the Church was founded in Vilnius in 1557, its early holdings before 1611 were destroyed during the religious riots of that year and what is available today are the minutes from 1611 to the beginning of the twentieth century. They have been published as *Monumenta Reformationis Polonicae et Lithuanicae. Acta synodów... 1611*-1625. Also published are the synodal records of the first joint Lithuanian and Polish Evangelical Reformed Church as well as a listing of provincial Arian synods in the Grand Duchy *as Akta Synodów różnowierczych (1921).* Individual congregations in such places as Vilnius, Biržai, Kaunas, Kelmė, Kėdainiai, Papilė and Salamiestis have their own holdings.

Best preserved are the archives of the Vilnius Lutheran Church, but here too its sixteenth-century holdings available at the Lithuanian State History Archives comprise only single documents. The Vilnius Mokslo Draugijos fondas consists of holdings formerly at the "Aušra" Museum, the Kernavė Manor, the Vilnius Basilian Monastery, the M.K. Čiurlionis Museum and some other institutions; it includes writings by prominent individuals and miscellaneous records of churches and congregations in various localities.

The richest source on the course of the Reformation in the Grand Duchy are the holdings amassed by the famous Radvila (Lat. Radvilius, Pol. Radziwiłł) family, which played such

a crucial role in its spread as patrons and supporters as well as its most formidable adversaries later. After the partition of the Commonwealth, the Nesvizh (Nesvyžius) archives were dispersed among other branches of the Radvila family. In the nineteenth century, an epistolographic collection was moved to St. Petersburg. In the twentieth century, the bulk was transferred to Warsaw and some of it to Minsk. The small portion which remained in Vilnius dealt mostly with property disputes and debts. The archives of the staunchly Protestant Biržai and Dubingiai branches of the family, containing some of the oldest documents, were incorporated into the collections of the Tiškevičius, Plater and other prominent families.

Interpretation

From the very beginning, all early texts on the Reformation in Lithuania were written by religious adherents and reflect the religious beliefs of their authors at the time. Every early work represents either one or the other side of the religious dispute, and this division along party lines set a precedent for subsequent centuries, continuing even into the second half of the twentieth century.

In the early seventeenth century, as the Catholic Restoration was gaining strength in the Grand Duchy and the Reformation began to weaken, Protestants felt an urgency to write down its history and preserve a record for posterity. These histories are mostly chronicles about events and accomplishments of prominent figures, catalogues of published books, and miscellaneous information destined to augment or even replace the archives and libraries that were being destroyed by religious opponents.

Most supporters of the Reformation in the Grand Duchy seem to have viewed the unfolding events as an organic part of a broader process emanating from the European churches. Their writing falls between historical source material and historical interpretation. The works of the Calvinist Andreas Wengerscius (1679), the Antitrinitarian Christophorus Sandius (1684), the Arian historians Andrzej and Stanisław Lubieniecki (1685),

and the Lutheran Christian Gottlieb Friese (1786) adhere to the tradition of theological polemics. Catholic historiography, on the other hand, had as its mission to record the success of the Roman Catholic Church in its "good versus bad" battle against the Reformation and to influence and shape public opinion accordingly. The classic example of a meticulous record is by Vilnius University professor Albertas Kojelavičius-Vijukas (Albertus Wiiuk Koialowicz) (1650). Jesuit historians Jan Poszakowski (1745) and Stanisław Rostowski (1768) produced a long-lasting model for future historians by formulating the argument that the Reformation in Lithuania was a temporary digression and a foreign phenomenon imported from abroad and alien to the Lithuanian mentality. Over time, the belief that a true Lithuanian had to be Catholic became deeply entrenched in the popular mentality and affected the attitude toward other religions for centuries to come.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the influence of Positivism introduced a new approach to the study of history. Historians were challenged to examine and describe the Reformation movement "as it was" by focusing on specific social and political issues without polemicizing. Favorite topics at that time were attempts to analyze the causes for the collapse of the Commonwealth and the demise of the Reformation. On the Protestant side, Walerian Krasiński and Józef Lukaszewicz placed the blame on the ultra-conservatism of the Catholic establishment which, in its zeal to destroy the Reformation, supported the powerful patronage system, blocked reforms, and proved detrimental to the functioning of the state. On the Catholic side, Maurycy Dzieduszycki (pseudonym MJA Rychcicki), Julian Bukowski, Stanisław Zaleski and others blamed the Protestants for having supported elected monarchy which led to anarchy and the collapse of the state. Dzieduszycki, moreover, questioned the depth of religious conviction of the early reformers, ascribing to them political motivation and expedience. This argument set another precedent for future historians.

Around the turn of the century, a sizeable number of Polish, Russian and German historians (among them Alexander Brueckner, Nikolai Kareev, Nikolai Ljubovic, Henryk Merczyng, Wacław Sobieski, Theodor Wotschke, Wincent Zakrzewski) went beyond religious considerations, viewing the Reformation as a social movement and examining its relationship with sixteenth century class reforms. Basing their judgments on official state documents, court decisions and parliamentary and epistemological records, they faulted the Catholic establishment for weakening the throne, expanding the privileges of the self-serving nobility and maintaining an antiquated social system which crippled the state. The Reformation, on the other hand, was not deep enough to affect real social changes and the reformers failed to establish leadership and lacked a clear political program.

In the nineteenth century, with the onset of the rise of European national movements, Lithuania's neighbors began to develop national historiographies. In Lithuania, then a part of the Russian Tsarist Empire, the most essential preconditions for professional historiography did not exist. The only work on the Reformation was *Žemaičių vyskupystė* (Samogitian Diocese) by Bishop Motiejus Valančius (M. Wołonczewski), published in 1848. Conversely, in Lithuania Minor (or Prussian Lithuania), then part of the German Empire, German and Prussian-Lithuanian historians (Adalbert Bezzenberger, Georg H. F. Nesselman, Friedrich Kurschat (Kuršaitis), Vilius Gaigalaitis) were at liberty to analyze primary sources in Lithuania Minor which were inaccessible to Lithuanian authors, form societies and publish their findings in historical journals.

The situation changed drastically at the end of World War One in 1918, when Lithuania was able to reestablish its independence. Ansas Bruožis, Vydūnas, and Vincas Vileišis were the first to connect the Reformation with literacy in the native language, premised on the conviction that Lithuania Minor was inseparably linked to the Grand Duchy. New research in the 1930s (Johannes Bertuleit, Victor Falkenhahn, Ernst Fraenkel, Kurt Forstreuter, Jurgis Gerulis (Georg Gerullis), G. and H. Mortensen

and some others) provided new insights and created a basis for further investigations. In 1930, Vaclovas Biržiska tried to systematize these findings in almanac form.

As a professional historiography began to develop in interwar Lithuania, the Reformation became a serious topic for research. Respected Catholic historians Juozas Purickis, Simas Sužiedėlis and Zenonas Ivinskis assessed it from the traditional Catholic standpoint. This trend was continued in emigration by Rev. Rapolas Krasauskas and Antanas Musteikis.

While Lithuanian historians basically agreed on the onset of the Reformation, there were differences concerning the end date which fluctuated between the arrival of the Jesuits (1565), the Union of Lublin (1569), and the Sandomierz Synod agreement (1570). According to this periodization, the rise and fall of the Reformation occurred within a short, clearly defined period without any impact beyond one of these dates. All subsequent cultural developments were assigned to the Counter Reformation. This approach prevailed in Lithuanian historiography throughout most of the twentieth century.

Analytical research by Lithuanian historians before World War Two was severely hampered by the fact that they lacked access to essential sources in Polish-occupied Vilnius, Poland, and in the Byelorussian SSR. Z. Ivinskis alone was able to expand the archival base through his research of documents in the Vatican.

After World War Two, Lithuania again lost its independence and became the Lithuanian SSR. Europe's interest in Lithuania waned. Due to the Cold War, Soviet Lithuania's historians had no access to the Königsberg archives, without which no serious new research was possible. Notwithstanding the discouraging circumstances, historians found ways to circumvent official censorship. In the 1960s, Juozas Jurginis included the Reformation in his study of the Renaissance and humanism in Lithuania (*Renesansas ir humanizmas Lietuvoje*) and edited the translations of several relevant sources: Mykolas Lietuvis's *Apie totorių, lietuvių ir maskvenų papročius* (1966) and Abraomas Kulvietis's *Tikėjimo išpažinimas*. In 1987, Alfredas Bumblauskas

researched the Reformation from an economic perspective for his doctoral dissertation, documenting evangelical congregations replacing previous Catholic parishes.

Since political censorship did not permit research of national culture or cultural ties between Lithuania Minor and Lithuania Major, historians focused on literary rather than religious accomplishments. In the sixties, they produced monographs on such important figures of the Reformation age as Martynas Mažvydas, Jonas Bretkūnas, Stanislovas Rapolionis, S. B. Chyliński and others, while the LTSR Knygų rūmai (Lithuanian SSR Book Institute) compiled a useful bibliography (*Lietuvių literaturos istorija*). The social theories and attitudes of Andrius Volanas, members of the famous Radvila family and other leaders of the so-called Radical Reformation (Simon Budny, Peter Gonezijus) were given special attention. Jonas Palionis and Zigmas Zinkevičius (1977) provided an overview of the cultural processes in the sixteenth century.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, Jūratė Trilupaitienė (1985) and Dainora Pociūtė (1995) presented new approaches to cultural processes during the Reformation era in both the Grand Duchy and Prussia. Domas Kaunas (1996) published a history of Lithuanian books in Prussian Lithuania. Vacys Vaivada documented the network of evangelical congregations in Samogitia in his dissertation *Reformacija Žemaitijoj* (1995).

In the last decade of the twentieth century and thereafter, Lithuanian historians were finally free to investigate the hitherto neglected connections between the Reformation era and national culture. Previously, older Polish historians Kazimierz Hartleb (1935) and Kazimierz Kołbuszewski (1935), basing their findings on Polish sources, established the view that the Reformation had strengthened Polish culture in the Grand Duchy and had a detrimental effect on the development of the Lithuanian language. A similar argument was advanced by Henryk Wisner in 1975. However, recent research by Lithuanian historians proves otherwise. My own findings, based on all publications printed in all languages within the entire

Grand Duchy, indicate that the Reformation, although slowly and unevenly, introduced and facilitated the development of spoken and written languages of all ethnic groups comprising the Grand Duchy. For Lithuania, the printing of the first books in Lithuanian resulted in a new attitude toward the native language, accorded it status, and began to diminish the existing diglossia between the written and spoken languages. It made it possible for the vernacular, not only of the Lithuanians, but also of the Poles, Byelorussians, and Ukrainians, to be disseminated in the form of the written word, enabled those languages to enter the church and the press, and gradually affected the future course of all national cultures. One could mention here that Martynas Mažvydas himself had dedicated his translation of the Protestant Catechism to all Lithuanians in the geographical areas where Lithuanian was spoken, not just in the Duchy of Prussia. His writings suggest his understanding that the ties that bind a nation are territory, language and ancestry.

Another area that needed revision was the tendency among all Reformation historians to treat the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as a unit, applying events and conditions in Poland to Lithuania by analogy, without separate research. This practice was set in motion in the nineteenth century by Polish historians who began to refer to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as Rzeczpospolita Polska, i.e., the Polish Republic, an abbreviation of the official name of the confederation created in 1569, at the Union of Lublin, between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, which was Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów, i.e., the Republic of Two Nations. The incorrect terminology entered into Polish and European historiography and persisted. We now know that the Reformation in Lithuania took a different course than it did in Poland and that the two should be treated as separate movements. J. Łukaszewicz, W. Sobieski and H. Merczyng, who researched seventeenth century primary sources, were among the first to notice that it ended sooner in the Polish Kingdom than in Lithuania and that Protestants were playing a role in Lithuanian society into the middle of the seventeenth century.

Relying on primary sources in the Prussian archives, Theodor Wotschke, studying the onset of Lutheranism in Lithuania, made a similar observation in 1916. At the time, however, these findings had no effect on the prevailing usage.

New research by contemporary Polish and German historians (Marcel Kosman, Henryk Merczyng, Gottfried Schramm, Janusz Tazbir and Henryk Wisner) focused on previously overlooked aspects and reached new insights. For the most part they concurred that the Reformation had deeper roots in Lithuania than in Poland and lasted longer. Stanisław Kot emphasized its role in bringing the culture of the Grand Duchy closer to Western Europe and Tazbir determined that it was an important factor in strengthening Lithuanian separatist tendencies. A new positive value was placed on the religious tolerance of the sixteenth and part of the seventeenth centuries, which was highlighted as a singularly unique feature when contrasted to the bloody religious wars in other countries. The evidence of the Protestant presence in the first half of the seventeenth century led to a revision of the previously established end date. For Schramm, the turning point was the crushing of Zebrzydowski's Rebellion in 1607. Kosman chose 1596, the Union of Brest, which demonstrated the ruler's resolve to unify the state under Catholicism. Others linked it to the expulsion of the Arians (Antitrinitarians) in 1658, which altered the religious composition in the country. In general, historians began to move the end of the Reformation in Lithuania to the middle of the seventeenth century.

In contemporary European historiography there is a new methodological trend to examine historical events as a chain of multiple interrelated phenomena rather than separate single events. Following this approach, we may decide to view the Reformation and the Counter Reformation in the Grand Duchy together as one continuous interrelated period of church and social reforms beginning in the first quarter of the sixteenth century and ending in the middle of the seventeenth. Thus the course of the Reformation could be divided into the following stages: 1) 1530-1549, early Lutheranism and criticism of the

Catholic Church; 2) 1550-1569, sudden spread of Calvinism; formation of other Protestant denominations; the weakening of Catholic power; 3) 1570-1609, equilibrium between the Catholic and Evangelical churches; 4) 1610-1650, active implementation of the Tridentine reforms; the rapid decline of the Reformation; decisive victory of the Counter Reformation, or Catholic Restoration.

Periodization of the Reformation in Lithuania Minor, of course, follows a different path due to the completely different historical and political situations. Since religion was organized and supported by the state, its course depended on the policies of the government and was connected with developments in the German states. W. Hubatch, in his major work on the Evangelical Lutheran church in East Prussia, views 1525 to the 1550s as the period of its formation as a state church and the 1560s to 1600 the strengthening of Lutheran doctrine. We could periodize its course in the Duchy of Prussia as follows: 1) the 1520s, the beginning of the Reformation; the formation of the country's Lutheran evangelical church 2) 1530s-1560s, the growth and strengthening of the Evangelical Lutheran Church 3) 1570s-1610, the establishment of Lutheran orthodoxy in the church. By then the Reformation movements in in Prussian Lithuania and in the Grand Duchy were taking different directions and their interaction dwindled.

Revaluation

Rather than focus on the traditional adversarial aspects, we may try to look at the Reformation from a different angle and evaluate its impact above and beyond religious reform as an energizing cultural force propelling Lithuanian society toward the modern age. Its role was twofold: 1) it initiated and mobilized forces to track innovations abroad and assimilate or newly create them for Lithuania; 2) it presented an ongoing challenge and competition to the Catholic establishment to review, revise, and modify its previous attitudes and practices and copy or adapt these innovations for their own use.

Using these criteria, our research shows that the competition between Protestant and Catholic churches resulted in significant cultural and social changes and advances during the so-called third period when, according to indirect evidence, the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Reformed Church were about equal in number and power and created a state of equilibrium. As long as neither was in a position of dominance and able to subdue the other by use of force, the Reformation functioned as the source and guarantor of the modernization of culture.

The active response by the Catholic elite indicates that, within a relatively short period of time, the changes initiated by the Protestants had already become part of a new mindset. From the last quarter of the sixteenth century until the first quarter of the seventeenth, the rapid renewal of culture and society in the Grand Duchy was the result of the interaction between the two churches, causing a virtual leap toward modernization. It lasted about one hundred years.

Let us focus our attention on what a century of the Reformation meant to Lithuania. We can mention many innovations, either introduced by the reformers directly or evolving indirectly once they were set in motion. They enriched Lithuania's culture, widened horizons and set precedents in such areas as literacy, printing and publishing, translation and compilation of Scripture and hymnals into the vernacular, their use in church services, better training of the clergy, improvements in education, expansion of primary and secondary schools, establishment of middle schools, founding of the university, new value placed on scholarship and, last but not least, provisions for a legal basis for religious rights.

The teaching of religion was linked with literacy in the native language and in order to spread the Gospel, the reformers had to make the new teaching available to all social classes by means of the written and printed word. The young Lithuanian reformers in Prussia were not numerous but inspirational and resourceful. The resulting translation and publication of the Mažvydas Catechism are breakthrough achievements in

Lithuanian culture. To be sure, some writing in the Lithuanian language was already taking place in monasteries, but unlike printed matter, these handwritten manuscripts were available only to a limited number of enlightened members of the clergy. The publication of the Catechism was a definite challenge to the stereotype that spoken Lithuanian was not suitable as a written language. It proved the usefulness of literacy and eventually stimulated both churches to promote writing and printing in Lithuanian as well as translations and compilations of religious books.

In the Grand Duchy, printing was a neglected area and the introduction of the new printing technology was a significant break with previous inertia. The Reformation aroused a strong demand for the printed word and ushered in a tradition of printing and publishing activity. In 1553, Mikalojus Radvila the Black (Nicolaus Radivil; Mikolaj Radziwiłł) founded his printing house in Brest and published the famous Brest Bible, the first complete Calvinist Bible translation into Polish. In the period between 1553 and 1575, all printing houses were in the hands of the Protestants, and for another generation various versions of the New Testament, the Gospels, and other books necessary for Evangelical services were translated and published in Polish or the other languages of the realm. Polish, Old Church Slavonic and Latin were deeply entrenched as written forms of discourse, and translation and printing of texts in Lithuanian did not find an immediate echo. It took another generation before the leaders of either church realized the significance of religious literature in the Lithuanian language. At the end of the century, this resulted in a virtual publishing war. Catholic and Reformed catechisms and postillas in Lithuanian translation appeared almost simultaneously: in 1595 and 1599, a Catholic catechism and postilla, both translated by Mikalojus Daukša, in 1598, a bilingual Calvinist catechism compiled and translated by Merkelis Petkevičius (Malcher Pietkiewicz) and the Calvinist "Morkūnas" postilla, compiled, translated and published by the first Lithuanian professional master printer in Vilnius, Jokubas Morkūnas (Marcovius; Markovicz) in 1600. In

the seventies, the Jesuits founded their own press in Vilnius and began to print Catholic religious literature. Following directives established by the Council of Trent, they were realistically assessing the changes set in motion by the reformers and the advantages of the vernacular. By the first half of the seventeenth century, Catholics were already leading with more books and more variety in content.

In Prussia, Lithuanian theologians continued with their translations, adding Gospels and hymnals and raising the written language to a higher literary and grammatical level. The culmination of these efforts was the Lithuanian Bible, completed by the Lutheran pastor Jonas Bretkūnas (Johannes Bretke; Bretchen) and his associates in 1579-1590, although at the time it remained unpublished. In the Grand Duchy, it took another century before S. B. Chyliński translated a Calvinist Bible and then succeeded in publishing parts of his translation in London in 1660-1662. The largest Lithuanian publication in the seventeenth century for use in Lithuanian evangelical congregations was *Knyga nobažnystės krikščioniškos*, published in Kėdainiai in 1653 in the printing house of Jonušas (Janusz) Radvila. The synod did not make a policy decision on publishing in Lithuanian until the middle of the century, when it was already a minority church. At that time, the Counter Reformation was reaching its culmination and interest in the use of Lithuanian had begun to wane, leading to a neglect of the native tongue, decline in book publishing, and an overall impoverishment of written Lithuanian. However, at least for a century, the Reformation can take credit for introducing and stimulating publications in Lithuanian, which laid the foundations for its development in the future.

The first Lutheran theologians had attained a high degree of education in order to interpret the truths of their faith and carry out theological disputes with their opponents. They produced the first original theological writings in the Grand Duchy. These works interpreted theological theories from abroad and included elements of original argumentation. In 1542, Abraomas Kulvietis (Culvensis) defended his Lutheran faith in *Confessio*

fidei. In 1544, Stanislovas Rapolionis (Rapagelanus) – by that time a professor at the new Karaliaučius (Königsberg) university—published his doctoral dissertation *Disputatio de ecclesia et eius notis*, an interpretation of Luther's arguments.

In the fifties and sixties, Calvinists and Arians began to publish their theological arguments and interpretations as well as correspondence with the founders and other intellectuals in Europe. In 1556, Mikalojus Radvila the Black published *Duae epistolae*, his response to the Papal nuncio Aloysius Lipomani (Lipomanus). A decade later, in 1565, Andrius (Andreas) Volanas wrote to the Bishop of Kiev, explaining Calvin's interpretation of the Trinity (*Epistola .. de S. Trinitate*). In 1592, Volanas published *Meditatio in epistolom divi Pauli apostoli ad Ephesios*. There were also numerous texts by Antitrinitarians. Their writings show an intense involvement in the new teaching and a depth of theological knowledge. The spirited theological disputes with members of the Catholic faculty attest to the vibrant intellectual climate of the time.

Another idea first formulated by A. Kulvietis was the need to raise existing educational requirements for the clergy. In the belief that erudition and proficiency in conducting intellectual discourses were prerequisites, the leaders of the Reformed churches were very conscious of a need for trained theologians. They created a nucleus of educated individuals, well-versed in many areas of theology and scholarship, by sponsoring gifted young students to complete their studies at Western universities, among them Andreas Volanus, Jonas Abramavičius (Jan Abramowicz), Adomas Rasijus (Adamus Rassius) and Venclovas Agrippa (Wenceslaus A. Lithuanus). All of them played a role in Lithuanian culture, presenting critiques of the existing social system and advancing ideas on improving and modernizing it according to Western standards. This too sparked polemics.

Public discussions about books and publishing led to a new interest in compilations and publications and stimulated a demand for books. Books were an expensive commodity. The young king and the reformed scholars at his court set an

example for intellectual discussions and interest in books. The spread of books not only among the élite families of the higher nobility but also among the middle and lower gentry, city dwellers and even peasants in reformed communities was an unprecedented novelty. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the library of Abraomas Kulvietis held one hundred books; the collection amassed by the nobleman Salomonas Rysinskis (Rysinius; Rysiński) in Vilnius, during the last quarter of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, reached one thousand books. The holdings at Evangelical libraries in Vilnius, Kėdainiai and Sluck and other schools and churches numbered up to a few hundred books. As a result, there was an increase in the number of educated individuals earning their living by intellectual work: compiling libraries, teaching at schools or working in publishing. Patronage of book publishing brought prestige.

The rivalry between Protestants and Catholics was especially intensive in education and produced a broad new system over a relatively short period of time. In the first decades of the Reformation, the reformers attempted to introduce an educational system following Central and West European models, including the establishment of a university. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, they were leading in the foundation of elementary schools in their congregations and maintained a secondary school in Vilnius on the estate of Radvila the Black, founded in 1558. Their schools in Kėdainiai and Sluck gained the status of a higher school after 1625 and continued for several centuries. In 1648, the Lutherans opened separate boys' and girls' schools. Catholics developed and maintained their own network of parish schools. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was not unusual to have two religious schools side by side.

The efforts of the Protestants to establish a university in Vilnius were less successful. After A. Kulvietis's aborted attempt in 1642, Protestant leaders submitted three requests (two in 1561-1565 and one in 1588), but their petitions were rejected. Their idea, however, served as a strong incentive to Bishop

Valerijonas Protasevičius (Valerian Protasewicz), who charged the newly arrived Jesuit Order with the founding of a Jesuit Collegium (1569).

The bishop's willingness to provide the necessary seed money for the Jesuit college and to support it in the future is indicative of a monumental change in attitudes toward education within the course of some thirty years and a direct result of a process begun by the reformers. Remember, J. Vilamovskis's petition to open a school in Vilnius in 1537 had been turned down because of an alleged lack of potential students and A. Kulvietis's insistence in 1542 that the Church use its wealth to support education was deemed heretical at the time!

The new college soon had five hundred students and was reorganized into the Academy of Vilnius. Control over the highest education in the country passed into the hands of the Jesuits, who ran it in accordance with the rules practiced at other Jesuit colleges in Europe, although the special situation in the country prompted the Vilnius University faculty and graduates to become proficient in religious disputes with Protestant theologians. Vilnius University quickly became a magnet for the most active intellectual minds of the time and remained an important center of innovation until the middle of the seventeenth century. Protestant students were also accepted and strongly encouraged but not forced to convert. As long as the faculty and administration subscribed to the principles of religious tolerance and open-mindedness, Vilnius University functioned as a center of creative learning and scholarship. However, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the university was thrust into the religious battle against the Reformation and turned into a force of conservatism not conducive to change, innovation, questioning, or impartial analysis. Indeed, a look at the cultural scene during the second half of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century demonstrates an overall decline of creative new ideas and the onset of intellectual and cultural stagnation.

The first signs that the equilibrium between the Churches was undergoing disruption were the serious religious outbursts in

1611 and 1639 in Vilnius, resulting in the destruction of the Reformed school and church by mob action and their forced relocation beyond the city walls. Assaults on evangelical Churches occurring repeatedly in other cities and even on the private holdings of the nobility show that supporters of the Roman Catholic Church were ready to use violence against their religious opponents.

The ascendancy and dominance of one religion over all others occurred in the second half of the seventeenth century. The Roman Catholic Church, spearheaded by the Jesuit Order, began to gain in influence and preponderance. Its efforts were substantially aided by the university, the expanded network of schools, the press, and the royal court. After the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the elected kings Stephen Bathory and especially the Vasa kings were staunchly Catholic and used their power to enforce a uniform one-crown-one-church society. Though legal provisions for religious equality were still valid, Sigismund Vasa removed Calvinists from high office and severely restricted the expansion and maintenance of Reformed churches. In 1632, construction of new Evangelical church buildings in royal cities was prohibited and services strictly limited. Infractions were severely punished, including prison terms. Among the public, discriminatory and intolerant attitudes toward "dissident" religions became the norm.

In 1656, to celebrate the Catholic victory over the Reformation, King John Casimir (Jonas Kazimieras) dedicated the country to the Virgin and proclaimed it "The Land of Mary," a designation that still exists. To reinforce the new status, in 1658 Parliament adopted the decision to banish the Antitrinitarians (Arians) from the realm of the Commonwealth unless they converted. In 1668, conversion from Roman Catholicism to another religion was prohibited. In 1669, another law was passed specifying that future kings had to be Catholic.

Repressive laws and practices were especially injurious to the Protestant nobility. In the course of forty years, the rights enjoyed by non-Catholics were severely restricted and new legislation placed them in the position of an unwelcome alien

minority. They had to forgo almost all opportunities for political advancement, lose status and influence and be pushed to the margins of society unless they converted to Catholicism.

Until the middle of the century, the Evangelical Reformed Church no longer expanded but still preserved its structure and a network of about two hundred congregations. However, with the decline of the Biržai and Dubingiai branches of the Radvila family, they began to diminish and fragment into small groups and solitary parishes. After the ravages and economic devastation of the wars with Russia and Sweden in 1654-1655, the Church was unable to restore them. Our research indicates that the Reformation in Lithuania was effective as a creative social, religious and cultural movement from the mid-1500s to the mid-1600s, when its influence was felt in many areas of society. After that point, its role as a formative power and a cultural force weakened to such an extent that the middle of the seventeenth century must be regarded as the end of the Reformation as a movement with impact on cultural developments. Since the second half of the seventeenth century, the Evangelical Reformed Church has functioned as a minority Church.*

Adapted for **Lituanus** *by M. G. Slavenas*
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* M. G. Slavenas, "Die Evangelisch-Reformierte Kirche Litauens 1915-1940." *Journal of Baltic Studies.* Vol. 32, no. 1, 2002; Vol. 33, no. 3, 2002; Marija Gražina Slavėnienė, "Lietuvos Evangelikų Bažnyčia 1915-1940." In *Lietuvos evangelikų bažnyčios. Istorijos metmenys.* Arthur Hermann, ed., Baltos lankos: 2003.

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE GULAG

TOMAS KAZULĖNAS

Tomas Kazulėnas, author of this article

Gintautas Alekna, guide of the expedition

Introduction

The history of deportations and imprisonment – with the suffering caused by the hardest slave labor, homesickness, exhaustion, starvation, and death – is slowly fading into oblivion. The future, however, is built on the foundation of the past, and the association *Lemtis* (Destiny) has made it its mission to preserve Lithuania's historical heritage for the future and to honor those who suffered and succumbed in Siberian camps during the Soviet occupation. Cooperating with other educational institutions sponsoring similar projects, *Lemtis* has recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary. During this period, the association has organized more than twenty expeditions to numerous labor camps in Siberia that held prisoners from Lithuania. Association members also participated in eight additional expeditions. Travel in Siberia and other Russian regions – by plane, train, automobile, all-terrain vehicles or on foot – covered more than 350,000 kilometers. More than 500 deportation locations and 350 cemeteries and gravesites were visited and documented.

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The 2009 expedition took place from August 31 to September 13. Its leader was Gintautas Alekna, an experienced guide, photographer and cinematographer, who had organized previous expeditions to prison and exile sites in Siberia. This was his twenty-ninth trip. Other members were Gražina Žukauskienė, on her tenth expedition; Tadas Kvasilius, a graduate student of history at Vytautas Magnus University on his third trip; Artūras Kvasilius on his first expedition; and this writer, Tomas Kazulėnas, a graduate student majoring in cultural heritage preservation at Vilnius University, on his third trip. This time we traveled to the Komi Republic and visited cemeteries in the areas of Vorkuta, Abez, Inta, Pechora, Kortkeros and Syktyvkar, cleaning them up and repairing and restoring memorials erected after the reestablishment of Lithuania's independence by volunteers to honor Lithuanian prisoners and deportees buried there during the Soviet era. We also visited several Lithuanians residing in the area and met with members of the Russian Memorial Association, a Russian human rights organization that is dedicated to recording and publicizing human rights violations.

Vorkuta was the largest center of the Gulag camps in the European part of the USSR and served as administrative center for a large number of smaller camps and subcamps, among them Kotlas, Pechora, and Izhma (modern Sosnogorsk). Many Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians were imprisoned throughout this vast expanse of the Gulag, with a heavy concentration of them across the northern part of European Russia, including the Komi Republic prison camps of Kotlas, Ukhta, Inta and Pechora that surround Vorkuta. Entire families were brought here during the first deportation in 1941 or later and forced to work in timbering and railroad construction. Other Baltic nationals were deported to the Ust-Ukhta group near Vorkuta, with about thirty camps, and the Ust-Vym complex of twenty-two stations on the Vologda-Kotlas-Ukhta railroad line. In 1941, the prisoner-built railroad connected the town and the

labor camp system around it to the rest of the world by linking Konosha and Kotlas, and the camps of Inta.

Although much on this subject has been written, researched and analyzed, one feels upon arrival in Russia that there is a tendency to minimize or totally ignore the history of the Gulag. It seemed to us that a deeper understanding and critical evaluation of the past was lacking among the local population. On the other hand, many people we met were unwilling to talk and appeared fearful and insecure, apparently still shackled by a fear that should have disappeared by now as a mechanism of control, but has not. It seems too difficult for them to break free. Deeply embedded in the mindset and actions of this society is a lack of initiative and confidence along with feelings of helplessness and passivity, a mentality which had been fostered by the Soviet government. The system had robbed its people of its best characteristics.

Vorkuta – Tragic Past and Dismal Present

Vorkuta is situated in the Komi Republic of the Russian Federation, to the west of the Ural Mountains, in the northeastern region of the European part of Russia, 110 kilometers north of the polar circle, 1,200 km from Moscow, in one of the least hospitable environments on earth – deep within the Arctic Circle. Most of the territory is covered by dense forests and mosquito-infested swamps. In the 1930s huge coal reserves were discovered in the area of Vorkuta and prisoners were shipped by the hundreds of thousands to perform slave labor in this Arctic region of the USSR under unimaginably harsh conditions. The trains that brought prisoners to Vorkuta returned filled with coal. The labor-camp sites were initially carved out of the untouched tundra and taiga by the prisoners themselves, and later towns sprang up around them. Vorkuta was an important transit station in the Gulag Archipelago. It served as an administrative center for a large number of smaller camps and approximately 132 subcamps, among them Kotlas, Pechora, and Izhma.

Vorkuta is the largest of the camps. The name is familiar to many throughout the world. It is associated with prisons,

slave labor camps, crippling work in the coal pits, unbearable suffering, degradation, brutality, starvation and death. Lives of survivors were damaged beyond repair. Historians say that, out of more than two million deportees between 1932 and 1954, about 20,000 or more prisoners (known as *zeks*) had perished in the camps around Vorkuta of maltreatment or malnutrition, and approximately one million were executed. The exact number will probably never be known. The name has become a metaphor for the Gulag, a place of evil built on human skulls and mass graves.

The deportees and political prisoners from the Baltic States would reach their destination in about a month. They were transported in cattle cars without the most basic comfort, under unsanitary conditions with starvation rations of food and water. They were labeled enemies of the people and mistreated by the guards. Many of them perished during the journey. To the prisoners, the train tracks were like gates to hell from which few returned.

The railroad system in Russia works well and railroads are the main mode of transportation, but this two-day trip made us feel that Vorkuta is very far from other centers of civilization. It is surrounded by coal mines and pits built by the bare hands of prisoners. The primitive camps were also built by the prisoners themselves. There are no towns in the vicinity, only swamps and rivers. The tundra reigns supreme. It stretches as far as the eye can see. The climate is harsh. During the eight-month polar night, the wind howls and the temperature plunges to minus fifty degrees Celsius. During the few short summer months the sun is not able to penetrate the ground which remains eternal ice. In summer, the air is filled with dense clouds of mosquitoes and tiny black flies. Geography and the harsh climate made it an ideal place for prisons and slave labor. Escape was impossible.

Our train trip from Moscow to Vorkuta lasted two days. We noticed how far we had traveled by the changing time zones, the changing landscape and changing temperatures. We left Vilnius on the last day of summer: the sun was shining, the thermometer read twenty degrees Celsius. As we approached

the polar circle, the landscape turned to autumn and eventually to wet snow. Indeed, we were going north, to where the earth ends and the vast Arctic Ocean begins.

The grandfather of one member of our expedition was imprisoned in Vorkuta, where he did the backbreaking work Vorkuta is known for. Now we were walking in his footsteps. The difference was that we had come here voluntarily. We were trying to understand and visualize the life of the prisoners, but we were only visitors. Can we ever fully understand what they experienced? Their homesickness, the craving for minimal comforts, a normal meal, a good night's sleep, soap and a shower, for a warm room? Where did they find the strength to retain human dignity in the face of so much cruelty and injustice?

Under Nikita Krushchev, after Stalin's death, steps were taken to begin the destruction of the Gulag system. The poorly built camps were torn down and burned, or they were scavenged by poor peasants in the area. Work in the mines continued, but for pay. Most of the prisoners moved away, but not all were permitted to leave. There were also those who remained of their own free will. Among them were many deportees and prisoners from Lithuania who stayed on in this town north of the polar circle because they had nowhere else to go, or because they were not welcome back home, or because their spirits had been broken.

Life in Vorkuta is bleak. Not that long ago, for about several decades, it had a population of 240,000, but now, this number has shrunk by about half, and only half of those lead productive lives. In the evening, we met Mr. Kalmykov, the chairman of Vorkuta's Memorial Association, who told us many interesting facts about Vorkuta's past and its residents. We found out that the city sits on layers of coal about one kilometer thick and that there was enough coal to provide work for the next two hundred years. Today, however, almost all of the former coal mines are closed and the city is dying.

According to Memorial's estimates, of the approximately forty thousand people collecting state pensions in the Vorkuta area, thirty-two thousand are trapped former Gulag inmates

or their descendants. With such a large percentage of the population unemployed or surviving on government pensions or subsidies, there is no life there now, only ghosts of former lives. The city is visibly shrinking and in the process of disappearing altogether. Does it have a future? It could become a tourist destination with a historical research center. But history is consciously and deliberately destroyed here. It lingers in people's memories, but for how long? Some of the old folks we met remember the horrible past all too well, but they refuse to rummage through the ashes of history.

When we arrived, it was just the beginning of September, but the weather had already turned against us. It poured steadily for three days. On the first day, we visited the principal coal mine, also known as Kapitalnaya, but almost everything there had been demolished, removed or leveled. We saw only the remnants of barracks surrounded by strands of barbed wire and a partially destroyed monument dedicated to this coal mine. Five years ago, we were told, there was still a central building on this location, serving as a reminder of the past, but it had since been destroyed. It is doubtful that former prisoners would be able to recognize this place which had left so many wounds and scars on their hearts and robbed them of the best years of their lives.

The original inhabitants of this area are the Komi people. Over one million people live in the present Komi Republic, representing more than seventy different ethnic groups. Russians comprise the largest population group (58%), followed by the indigenous Komi (23%), who have an ancient culture and a language that belongs to the Finno-Ugric group of languages. The official languages in the republic are Komi and Russian. The Komi were once great warriors. They are now known as an industrious and honest people, generally engaged in cattle breeding, hunting, and woodworking. Waterways were their main means of transportation and communication. Since the fourteenth century, the Komi territories have been incorporated into the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church. For several centuries, the Komi were divided and fought against

each other, thus gradually destroying their ethnic identity and the will for statehood. With Russian settlers colonizing their lands, the Komi lost much of their own customs and culture. Russian replaced the Komi native language, which is written in the Cyrillic alphabet. Today it is difficult to tell the difference between the Komi and their Russian neighbors. Yet the spirit of the Komi people is still alive and efforts are made to foster their history and traditions.

Silent Witnesses to the Past

We visited the former Yur-Shor settlement which is not far from Vorkuta. By the cemetery of the Twenty-ninth Mine is a large monument, the largest of all memorials erected in memory of Lithuanian prisoners who perished here. It was designed by the Lithuanian sculptor Vladas Vildžiūnas and the architects Rimantas Dičius (Lithuania), Vitalij Troshin (Russia), and Vasilij Barmin (Russia). This monument has by now become a symbol for all Vorkuta prisoners. Here also are buried the participants of the famous Vorkuta Uprising.

This memorial consists of huge granite blocks, two-and-a-half meters high. On top of the blocks stands a three-meter-high bronze sculpture of Christ. It is surrounded by several meters of high iron columns, joined by open arcs. Against the backdrop of the endless tundra, with its palpable sensation of vast space, it leaves an indelible impression. We felt all alone and forlorn in this immense land.

Compared to other countries, Lithuania built more symbolic memorials and tombstones for their dead than anyone else. Most were built in the 1990s, soon after the reestablishment of independence, when the preservation of the historic past was of special significance and fostered national awareness and unity.

Two kilometers from the cemetery, we found the location of the famous Vorkuta Uprising, perhaps the only one in Gulag history. It housed a majority of political prisoners, including many from the borderlands and western areas which had

resisted a Soviet takeover. During the first days of August 1953, the workers organized a protest against the unbearable working conditions and inhumane treatment by guards and went on strike with the slogan "No bread – no coal." With the rebellion spreading, army units were called in and the uprising quelled by gunfire. About sixty prisoners were killed, among them eleven Lithuanians. About three times as many were wounded and left unattended and without medical help. The strike was somewhat successful in improving the conditions. By the late fifties Vorkuta was closed down.*

Today, this tragic area is also overgrown with grass and brush. Most of the signs that bore witness to its horrible past have been obliterated. We recognized it only by the barbed wire – the only clue left to judge the dimensions of the camps. Reinforced concrete posts were holding the barbed wire, bits of concrete pavement, and overgrown paths were still visible in some places. Everything is sinking into the tundra, doomed to decay and decomposition, as the government intended.

On our way back, we stopped at the international cemetery at Severnyj. At the entrance rises an impressive fairly new monument to Hungarian prisoners. We again found several Lithuanian markers. Although it was already September, we were still under constant attack by the tiny black flies that all prisoners remember as a scourge. Their bites left red itchy marks all over our bodies. It was impossible to evade them.

We also passed the Fortieth Mine, called Vorkutinskaya, which is still operating, producing about eight hundred tons of coal every twenty-four hours. On the other side of the road rose a monument built by Poles. These crosses scattered throughout this vast area reminded us that we were walking on an endless killing field. But among the local population, we found no support for our expedition, or interest in it.

We stayed in Vorkuta for three days and the rain never stopped. Although we were prepared for bad weather, this

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* For additional information on the Vorkuta Uprising see Latkovski, L. "Baltic Prisoners in the Gulag Revolts of 1953" in *Lituanus* Vol. 51:3 and Vol. 51:4, 2005.

relentless downpour was very disabling. Nevertheless, we continued with our exploration as best we could. We found one more graveyard in a somewhat secluded tundra region near an extremely tall metal cross that was visible for several kilometers. Its top, rising high above the horizon, showed us the way like a guiding star. It was a memorial cross to Ukrainian victims. The graves were already overgrown. Only the wooden crosses were still trying to reach the sunlight, to be visible and to bear witness to the past. We again found Lithuanian names. It was a very strange sensation to look at them in the middle of the tundra so far from their homeland. It seemed somehow intimate and familiar.

When the sun finally appeared, the city, which had seemed hopelessly dismal, dirty, and gray, lit up and became much more inviting. We took a walk along the central street, which is still called Lenin Street. Many streets here have retained their Soviet names. Lenin Street is different from the others: it is broad and wide, obviously built for parades. We also encountered Stalinist-style buildings with bombastic slogans such as *Vorkuta, the strong hands of the miners protect you; Vorkuta celebrates the Day of the Miner*. We visited the central post office to buy a few postcards. The confused reaction of the postal clerk demonstrated that in this city foreign visitors were rare, and no one was interested in souvenirs. Nevertheless, after some hesitation, she disappeared for about ten minutes and returned with a few thin packages of dust-covered postcards. The date on the back was 1992! It is difficult to describe their substandard quality when compared to the shining western postcards that we are used to. They were quaint antiques finally having found a buyer after seventeen years.

Early the next morning we took the bus to the cemetery in Oktiyabirsk. There all markers bore the same date of death: 1964. Unexpectedly we came across a fairly new man-sized oak cross with a Lithuanian inscription: "To the memory of Lithuanian deportees." It was dated September 5, three years before. By a strange coincidence, exactly three years before, another group of Lithuanians had been in this very place! When we

returned to the bus, a few local passengers stared at our video equipment and asked: "Are you from Hollywood?"

Abez – Settlement on the Arctic Circle

After a week in the inhospitable lands of Vorkuta, we left this most northern point of our expedition by train before five o'clock in the morning. Our new destination was Abez settlement, situated on maps on the line shown as the Arctic Circle, once had the status of a major city. It was an important site when the railroad line to Vorkuta was being built. There had been seven prison camps around Abez with approximately twenty thousand inmates who laid the railroad tracks through the swamps with their bare hands and built a large bridge across the Usa River. On the train, every seat was taken by locals on their way to pick mushrooms or berries in the surrounding forests. They were lugging homemade boxes and huge baskets and reminded us of photos of Vietnamese peasants taken during the Vietnam War.

In the middle of the last century, about thirty thousand people lived in Abez. Here too, with the dismantling of the camps, residents left the area. Now only seven hundred remain. There is a school in Abez with eighty-three students. The school janitor, Vasilii, with a powerful smell of liquor on his breath, kept pointing to a poster of Dmitrii Medvedev and tried to convince us that the Baltic nations were Russia's enemies. We did not respond. It is useless to argue with a drunk.

In Abez, as everywhere else, we were warmly met by volunteers at the local Memorial Chapter. Mr. Lozkin, the chairman, was a calm person and a dedicated researcher of history. We visited and tidied up the Memorial Cemetery marked by an impressive monument called "The Flaming Cross" (*Liepsnojantis kryžius*), erected in 1992, dedicated in four languages "to those who did not return." About 150 Lithuanians are buried in the cemetery at Abez. Among them are the remains of Levas Karsavinas, a professor and famous philosopher and art historian who lived in Lithuania from 1928 to 1949. His grave is marked as Number 11. Not far from his grave is

buried another famous Lithuanian, General Jonas Juodišius. We cleaned up their gravesites, cut down some branches and bushes, lit a candle and paid our respects in silence. This cemetery has been granted the status of a Memorial Cemetery, but everything is neglected and a part of it is already gone.

In Abez, we went shopping for a few items. New shipments arrive sporadically because the only means of transportation is the railroad. The town has three stores, all of them privatized. One was still government-owned, but it recently burned down. Shopping in Russia is always an adventure. In the store, the choice of goods was very limited by our standards, yet the young sales woman was trying to convince us that she had plenty of everything. In general, we found that the locals in Abez were also avoiding contact and conversation with foreigners. People were obviously still in the grip of the fear that had controlled their lives for fifty years. The only pleasant sight in this gloomy place was the river Usa, with unharnessed horses peacefully grazing on its banks, creating a quiet, tranquil, unspoiled atmosphere.

The Paradox of Inta

After Vorkuta, the densest network of labor camps and coal mines was located in Inta. This city, like many other cities in this area, was also built by prisoners. Several thousand Lithuanians were imprisoned here. Fifteen years ago, the city had seventy thousand inhabitants, but this number has since shrunk to about forty thousand.

The train trip to Inta lasted almost twenty-four hours, and little did we know that we would spend another twenty-four wakeful hours after getting there. When the train stopped in Inta after midnight, we learned that the town was still about seven kilometers away. The bus did not run at that time. Locals used various means to get there – some hitchhiked and risked getting a ride in cars aggressively driven by young men, others simply walked. We decided to take the risk and hire a cab, which took our entire group to a hotel in town. We could barely wait to get to our rooms and get some sleep, but the manager

took one look at our foreign passports and quoted a price that we were not able to pay. No pleading on our part changed his mind. We had no choice but start the new day without a rest.

In Inta, we visited the Memorial Cemetery Vostochnyi, where Lithuanians and Latvians had erected their crosses. Sixty Lithuanians are buried here. The Latvian cross is unique because it was erected in 1956, the first attempt in the entire Soviet Union to memorialize and honor the victims of political repression.

When we arrived at the cemetery, we were surprised to find a group of students there from a neighboring school. We had a pleasant chat with the teacher who told us that there was another camp close by (Russians call these camps *lager*). The teacher insisted that we come to her school, visit the school museum, and meet the principal. It turned out that the principal's father was Lithuanian. The mayor's wife was also Lithuanian! The friendly welcome we received from them cheered us up and made us for a while forget the sleepless night we had to endure because of the city's inability or unwillingness to accommodate foreign tourists.

While waiting for the bus to take us back to the railroad station, we met two nice little girls who obviously lived in extreme poverty. One wore torn shoes, the other had a threadbare backpack on her shoulder. Yet they were chatty and unafraid to carry on a conversation with us. They wanted to know where we came from and begged us to take them with us. There was nothing we could do for them except trying to cheer them up with a few pretty pictures from Lithuania. For a long time we saw them through the windows of the bus waving to us.

In Pechora, which we reached by train, we discovered, in the middle of the town, the administration center of the former camp. The remains of the camp were still visible: rows of barbed wire, guard towers and collapsing barracks. We were not able to get information about Lithuanians living there.

Visiting Lithuanian Settlers

We traveled another night by train to Syktyvkar, the capital of the Komi Republic, and from there to the town of Kortkeros, the next destination on our itinerary. Our goal was to visit several Lithuanians. One of them was Irena Šeškūnaitė. She was in poor health and had already forgotten how to speak Lithuanian. Her family history is tragic. She was deported from the town of Šiluva as a child, together with her parents, grandmother and brother. Her father was shot dead in one of the railroad stations along the way. They endured extreme hunger, and her grandmother starved to death. On the collective farm, her mother tried to steal a bucket of potatoes from the general store and was sent to prison. Irena and her brother were placed in a children's home, where they grew up. After having served their time, they managed to reach Lithuania, but their relatives were so unwelcoming that they had no choice but to return to Russia. There, Irena met and married Aleksas Mingėla, a Lithuanian from the village of Barstytis, in the Seda region, whose family had also been deported in 1941.

In Kortkeros we met Anatolijus Smilingis, who is well-known among the locals for actively and energetically organizing the building of memorials for the Gulag victims. He works at the local Center of Culture and organizes trips to the ethnographic museum, which he himself established. His wife is a Komi. She is involved in preserving her own nation's customs and cultural heritage.

Anatolijus, together with his parents and sister, was also deported in 1941. His father was separated from them and sent to a labor camp in the Krasnoyarsk region, where he was executed in 1942. Anatolijus worked with his mother and sister in the forests cutting trees for lumber. They were starving, and his mother too was convicted for theft and sent to prison for stealing a few handfuls of oats. She died half a year later, leaving him and his sister orphaned.

We next looked up Vaclovas Zubis, whom we found working in his garden. He looked happily surprised to hear a

Lithuanian greeting but had difficulty expressing himself in his mother tongue. Vaclovas and his parents were deported from Vėžaičiai in the Klaipėda region in 1941. He too had married a Komi and had three children. Vaclovas told us that he was the founder of the local hunters club and that the surrounding forests housed a wide variety of bears.

Vaclovas took us to see Genutė Rekošaitė (Golysheva), who met us at the entrance to her home. Upon hearing our greetings, she began to cry and made no attempt to hide her nostalgia. She had not spoken Lithuanian since 1982, but was still fluent in the language and used many authentic expressions that had been current in her time. Her life history paralleled that of thousands of others who had remained in Siberia or some other place where they had been exiled or imprisoned. Genutė and her family came from the village of Žaiginiai in the Raseiniai region and, after her parents died, she married a Komi. Like so many others, Genutė had to work in the forests cutting down trees. Later, she was assigned to mowing hay. She told us that there had been another cemetery in Ust-Lokchim, which had since decayed. Out of some four to five hundred Lithuanians who had lived in Ust-Lokchim, about sixty were buried in the old cemetery. Later, a road was built through it and garden plots established.

The last monument we saw was in Ezhva. This too bore an inscription in several languages and was dedicated to the deportees of 1941. The surrounding air was heavy with a dense, pungent odor from a nearby celluloid plant; the plant was built by prisoners.

We spent the last day before our two-day train journey back home in Syktyvkar, the capital city of Komi. We were invited to the local TV station to talk about our expedition. The program director was very interested in our work, asked many questions, and wanted to show the entire interview on the main channel.

As we look back on our expedition filled with unforgettable sights and memories, we are aware that the graveyards

we visited will not last forever. Thousands of innocent victims lie buried, and they should never be forgotten. It will be up to us to keep their memory alive.*

Translated by Daiva Barzdukas

* An earlier version and articles by other authors on other expeditions are available at www.lemtissibiras.lt

Members of Lemtis *by a monument in Ezhva*

Members of Lemtis *with Anatolijus Smilingis (second from the right) and his wife in Kortkeros, Komi Republic*

Tundra

Cemetery in the tundra

Abez Memorial Cemetery

Vorkuta, 2009

The Prague Declaration of 2008 and its Repercussions in Lithuania.

Historical Justice and Reconciliation

VIOLETA DAVOLIŪTĖ

On June 14, 2011, Lithuanians hung black ribbons on their national flag and laid flower wreaths on railroad tracks to commemorate the mass deportations that brought the first year of Soviet rule to a close. On this day in 1941, thousands of Lithuanians, mostly women and children, were taken from their homes, driven onto cattle cars, and transported by rail to far-off territories in Siberia and Kazakhstan. Those who were lucky enough to survive starvation and the brutal conditions in the camps would carry a deep sense of injustice for the rest of their lives. To commemorate the seventieth anniversary of this event and of the anti-Soviet uprising that followed, the Lithuanian Parliament, or *Seimas*, declared 2011 as the Year to Commemorate the Defense of Freedom and Great Losses. And just one week later, another significant date was noted. June 22 marked the seventieth anniversary of the Nazi invasion of the USSR, which sparked the first acts of collective violence by Lithuanians against the local Jewish population. The notorious massacre at the Lietūkis garage in Kaunas, among others, was followed by the mass killings organized by the Nazis and carried out by Lithuanian collaborators that same year. For this

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reason, the *Seimas* also declared 2011 as the Year of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust in Lithuania.

Lithuanians were thus called upon to commemorate the tragic events that took place seventy years ago, during which they were in turn the victims of deportation, heroes of an anti-Soviet uprising, and collaborators in the Holocaust. The concentration of so many traumatic events in a half-year period has long confounded efforts to understand and work through the past. Indeed, as the traumatic events of World War II recede into history, the controversy over their legacy seems to increase. And in spite of the significant efforts at reconciliation between the Lithuanian and Jewish communities that have been made since 1989, it is clear that much work remains to be done.

The Ghosts of the Past

Today, the Jewish population of Lithuania is tragically small, a mere sliver of the community of over two hundred thousand that lived there until 1941. But in spite of their almost complete destruction during the Holocaust, the historical legacy of their age-old presence nurtures a growing interest in their culture and identity.

Not surprisingly, Jewish-Lithuanian relations remain fixated on a number of unresolved problems from the past: financial compensation for individual, communal and religious property confiscated during the war, the prosecution of Lithuanians who took part in the Holocaust, the preservation of Jewish cemeteries and other historical sites, and Holocaust education and commemoration. And while each of these issues is being addressed with greater or lesser degrees of success, a genuine reconciliation between the Jewish and Lithuanian communities would hinge on a breakthrough in what remains a highly contentious debate over the legacy of World War II.

As with the other nations of Central and Eastern Europe that suffered both Nazi and Soviet occupations, Lithuania has not yet come to terms with the tragic legacy of those years. Neither, for that matter, has Western Europe become fully aware of the specific nature and legacy of the war fought on Germany's eastern front.

Soon after the end of World War II, Western Europe and the Soviet Union arrived at a broad consensus about its significance: the war brought about terrible suffering and the incomparable tragedy of the Holocaust; 1945 marked the victory of good over evil and the beginning of a new era on the continent. Victory Day (be it May 8 or 9) could be celebrated by all Europeans, both west and east. Or so it seemed at the time. But when Lithuanians and other "New Europeans" stepped out from behind the Iron Curtain after 1989, the disclosure of the secret portion of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact dividing Europe, the brutalities of Soviet totalitarianism, the repression of active resistance and the indifference of the Western Powers – didn't fit within the frame of the West's preconceived narrative and the relatively simple Cold War perspective. Westerners, until then, knew little about this "gray" section of Europe, and the differences in historical perspective again divided Europe into two parts. Moreover, Soviet-era limitations on the freedom of speech and inquiry isolated Lithuanians from the long and hard debates over the Holocaust and collaboration that took place in every Western country in the 1960s and 1970s. As a result, when Lithuanians began after 1989 to revise the official Soviet interpretation of the war and the postwar era, they focused on their own suffering at the hands of the Communists.

These years also marked the first time the Holocaust received official recognition in Lithuania, and the role of Lithuanians in the Holocaust began to be debated among the broader public. During Soviet times, the specific character of the Holocaust as the genocide of the Jews was ignored. Memorials and monuments raised at Jewish mass killing sites generically noted the sacrifice made by "Soviet citizens." This also included the Paneriai (Ponary) site near Vilnius, where some 70,000 Jews were killed next to 20,000 Poles and 8,000 Russians. Thus, the Vilna Gaon Lithuanian State Jewish Museum was established in 1989. The first official admission of Lithuanian involvement in the Holocaust was made in 1990 in the *Declaration on the Jewish Genocide in Lithuania*. In 1994, September 23 was declared the National Memorial Day for the Genocide of Lithuanian Jews, and it has been commemorated every year since.

In 1994, President Algirdas Brazauskas delivered a speech to the Council of Europe and a public apology to the Israeli Knesset, on March 1, 1995, where he openly admitted the involvement of Lithuanians in the Holocaust, asked for forgiveness, and promised to bring war criminals to justice. Efforts at reconciliation were institutionalized in 1998, when President Valdas Adamkus established the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, with a mandate to establish the truth of the crimes of the Nazi and Soviet regimes, commemorate the victims, and educate the public.

Divergent Memories

However, these steps could all be described as top-down initiatives and had a limited impact on the attitudes of the population at large. Meanwhile, natural expression and popular rituals of collective memory remained sharply divided between the Lithuanian and Jewish communities.

After the first deportee memoirs began to be published in massive runs in 1986, Lithuanian families engaged in a widespread effort to commemorate the loss of relatives who suffered the killings and deportations of the Soviet era. The first open commemorations began in 1987, and thousands of Lithuanians made pilgrimages to Siberia and Kazakhstan, erecting crosses and monuments at former prison and forced labor camps. Many took a further step and brought the remains of former prisoners and deportees back to Lithuania for reburial, often accompanied by large processions down the streets of Lithuanian towns.

Meanwhile, a separate wave of commemorative travel to the sites of the Holocaust in Lithuania and elsewhere in Eastern Europe began as well. Visitors from Israel, America and Western Europe took advantage of the removal of Soviet-era travel restrictions to visit the towns and villages in Lithuania where their Jewish ancestors had lived. More often than not, they were shocked to see that cemeteries and memorial sites were completely neglected, overgrown with grass and weeds,

sometimes without even a plank showing the way to the site of a mass killing.

The complete lack of information concerning Lithuania's Jewish past stood in stark contrast to the abundant detail concerning ethnic Lithuanian heritage. Regional tourist guides from the 1990s carefully document the location and cultural significance of every ancient stone or brook of folkloric significance as well as every cross and monument to the resistance and deportations across the land but contain virtually nothing to recall that entire communities of Litvaks had ever lived in this or that town.

In this context, it is not surprising that Jewish visitors might have little interest in the history of the Lithuanian communities or much sympathy for the complexities of Lithuania's post-Soviet predicament. Interaction between the communities of memory was minimal or completely absent. And as the vectors of collective memory continued to diverge, practical efforts to redress the wrongs of the past encountered numerous obstacles.

From May 1990 to the spring of 1991, the Lithuanian state rehabilitated wholesale about 50,000 individuals who had been previously convicted for acts relating to anti-Soviet resistance. The amnesty was rushed, with little oversight, with the result that hundreds who may have participated in perpetrating the Holocaust were among those who had their civil rights restored. The process was then reviewed, and over one hundred individuals subsequently had their status of repressed persons revoked.

Equally charged with controversy was the procrastination and ineffectiveness in prosecuting and convicting Lithuanians involved in the Holocaust. In 2001, largely at the instigation and prodding of the United States, the Lithuanian courts convicted Kazys Gimžauskas, former deputy chief of the Vilnius Security Police, of war crimes. During the German occupation, Gimžauskas issued orders to arrest Jews who were then turned over to the Nazis. However, at 91 years of age and with severe health problems, he was ruled unfit to serve out his sentence.

This remains the first and, no doubt, the last conviction of a Holocaust perpetrator in Lithuania.

The restitution of property confiscated from Jews during the war was another area of much disagreement over the years. Restitution to individuals was restricted to Lithuanian citizens, disqualifying the majority of Holocaust survivors who had since become citizens of Israel, the USA, or other countries. The restitution of religious and communal properties has also suffered, but it has finally seen some progress in a proposed law on compensation that is now making its way through the Lithuanian Parliament.

A New Approach to Reconciliation

In the mid-1990s, a new formula emerged for addressing the legacy of World War II that sought to encourage the awareness and recognition of both Nazi and Soviet crimes as the civic duty of all Lithuanians. The establishment of the above-mentioned International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania was the focal point of this effort.

While the mandate of the commission was similar to that of the existing Genocide and Resistance Research Center – establishing the truth of the crimes of the totalitarian regimes, commemorating their victims, educating the current populace about them – the commission was structured in a way that ensured the Holocaust in Lithuania received as much attention as the crimes committed by the Soviet regime.

Indeed, the Genocide and Resistance Research Center, established in the context of Lithuania's struggle for independence from the Soviet Union, has long been criticized for its one-sided approach to the past. The Genocide Museum, which it administers, is located in the building that alternately served as the headquarters of the Gestapo and the KGB. However, the museum is focused exclusively on the crimes of the Soviets, making virtually no reference to the Holocaust. Confused foreign

visitors are given the explanation that the "Jewish Museum," dedicated to the Holocaust, is just a few blocks away.[1]

By way of contrast, the international commission was established in the context of Lithuania's integration with European structures and values. The membership of the commission is truly international, with as many members from abroad as from Lithuania, including several leading representatives of Jewish communities in Israel the UK and USA. The inclusion of Yitzhak Arad, a representative of Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel, was seen as indicative of the commission's commitment to a balanced approach.

For the purpose of conducting research into historical crimes, the commission was divided into two sub-commissions: one for the Soviet occupations, chaired by Professor Liudas Truska of Vytautas Magnus University, and one for the Nazi occupation, chaired by Emanuelis Zingeris, a member of the Lithuanian Parliament.

In addition to supporting research and publications, the international commission has invested significant efforts into educational programs designed to promote public understanding and awareness. It established a network of Holocaust education centers across Lithuania and launched a number of innovative programs, such as a learning module for Lithuanian schools, where students now learn about their Jewish neighbors and the communities that once lived in their area.

A Common European Memory

Similar developments took place throughout the region during the late 1990s, with institutions analogous to Lithuania's international commission established in Estonia, Latvia and Central Europe. Over time, politicians from these states joined forces to promote a balanced approach to the historical traumas of

[1] This situation is not unique to Lithuania, and can be found in other East Central European capitals. Budapest, for example, also has a separate museum for the Holocaust, and the "Horror House" dedicated to the crimes of the communist regime.

the twentieth century at a pan-European level. But if the thrust within Lithuania was to seek a balance in favor of greater recognition of the Holocaust, the emphasis at the European level was to secure greater recognition among West Europeans of the distinct history of East European nations under Communism.

Thus, on June 2-3, 2008, participants at an international conference hosted by the Czech government issued the Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism, which calls on Europeans to recognize the crimes of the former Communist regimes as deserving of the same kind of condemnation and commemoration as the crimes committed by the Nazis. It included demands for Communism "to be dealt with in the same way Nazi crimes were assessed by the Nuremberg Tribunal" and for European textbooks to be overhauled so that children could learn and be warned about Communism and its crimes in the same way as they have been taught to assess the Nazi crimes. The idea gained support; the text was debated at the European Parliament and underwent a number of changes. It was ultimately approved by a large majority in the spring of 2009 as a resolution of the European Parliament entitled "On European Conscience and Totalitarianism." For East Europeans, the name change captured the fact that Eastern European countries had also suffered under Nazi occupation.

A similar text, called the "Vilnius Declaration," was adopted on July 3, 2009 by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which urged all OSCE members to take a "united stand against all totalitarian rule from whatever ideological background" and condemned "the glorification of the totalitarian regimes, including the holding of public demonstrations glorifying the Nazi or Stalinist past."

Most recently, the basic thrust of the Prague Declaration, including a recognition of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes and the importance of a "collective memory, shared and promoted, where possible, by us all," was articulated in the Stockholm Program, a document approved by European

Union heads of state, which serves to outline EU priorities in the area of justice and home affairs and guidelines for the years 2010-2015.

Cracks in the Wall

But the Prague Declaration has a number of detractors as well. First, some members of the European Parliament objected to the equation of Stalinism and Nazism and the implied equivalence of fascism and communism. Russia advanced similar objections in the framework of the OSCE discussions, especially in regard to the implication of Soviet responsibility for starting World War II. Relatively few EU nations have accepted the proposal to criminalize the denial of the crimes of communist regimes in the same way that the EU outlaws "hate speech" directed at ethnic groups and, by extension, denial of the Jewish Holocaust. For some, the inclusion of both Nazi and Soviet crimes under the banner of totalitarianism implied an unacceptable comparison and moral equivalence.

The most iconic and hotly debated aspect of these efforts has been the proposal to make August 23, the day of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939, an official European day of commemoration for the victims of totalitarian regimes. The most sustained criticism of the Prague Declaration came from associates of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, an organization devoted to bringing Nazi war criminals to justice. Efraim Zuroff, the head of the Center, called the EU resolution a "Red-Brown" manifesto and said the ideas it represents are insidious: "If communism equals fascism," he said, "then communism equals genocide. This would mean that Jews also were involved in genocide, because among Jews there were many communists."[2]

While such critics support the need to promote a greater awareness of the crimes of Communism, they object to the holding of joint commemorations for the victims of totalitarianism. In the same interview, Rabbi Abraham Cooper asks with bitter irony how such a joint commemoration would take

[2] "Interview: Efraim Zuroff", The Jewish Chronicle, 4 February 2010.

place: "A moment of silence for Jewish citizens butchered by the Nazis and their local collaborators, followed by a moment of silence for these victimizers, later turned into 'victims of Communism?' "[3]

Professor Dovid Katz, a scholar and editor of a website dedicated to the historical legacy of the Holocaust in the Baltics, has coined the term "Holocaust obfuscation" to describe the method and motive behind the Prague Declaration. An example he includes is the allegation that, since many Communists were Jews, Jews are responsible for Communist crimes, or even that the mass murder of Jews in Eastern Europe was some kind of reaction to "Jewish communism." He would also extend the scope of "Holocaust obfuscation" to include the "inflation" of the definition of genocide to include the crimes of Communism, or even the notion of "totalitarian crimes" used in the Prague Declaration which, he says, implies an "equivalence" or a "parallelism" between the crimes of Communists and the crimes of the Nazis.[4]

Surely, the authors of the Prague Declaration, not to mention all those who voted in support of the resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism, or the OSCE's Vilnius Declaration, would object to the claim that they were diminishing or obscuring the significance of the Holocaust. From their point of view, Dr. Katz's argument reaches too far since the scope of his definition of "Holocaust obfuscation" lumps irrational anti-Semitic ideas together with legitimate and well-meaning efforts to seek recognition for the crimes of Communism.

One's Own Worst Enemy

The question of motivation is at the heart of this debate, and the absence of trust is clearly one of the main obstacles to a genuine reconciliation between the two communities of memory – Lithuanians and Jews. The critique of the Prague Declaration made by associates of the Wiesenthal Center boils down

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[3] Ibid.

[4] http://www.holocaustinthebaltics.com/2009SeptDovidKatz3Definitions.pdf

to the assertion that Lithuanians and other East Europeans are pursuing a "hidden agenda" of covering up the involvement of their populations in the Holocaust and to obfuscate the responsibility of those who collaborated with the Nazis by posing as victims of Communism. In this light, the ongoing manifestations of anti-Semitism in Lithuania are not just shameful but dangerous to Lithuania's pursuit of historical justice and reconciliation.

In 2008, the Prosecutor's Office of Lithuania decided to investigate the killing of Lithuanian civilians by Soviet partisan units fighting against Nazi forces in Lithuania and issued summonses to several prominent Lithuanian Jews who were members of these units as well as ghetto escapees. To be sure, they were to be questioned as witnesses, not as suspects, but the mere fact of connecting Holocaust survivors – including Yitzhak Arad – to war crimes caused an international scandal, followed by loud publicity in the Lithuanian media. The investigation involving Arad was quickly closed, but the summonses to others remain in force. Technically, the prosecutor's office is justified to work on the principle that all allegations of crimes against humanity deserve investigation, but questions of procedural justice also come into play, and the attempt to single out Holocaust survivors has come to be seen in a political light.[5] Unfortunately, Lithuania's dismal record of prosecuting Lithuanian war criminals has left it with little sympathy or credibility internationally.

More recently, the Lithuanian justice system has made a mockery of the attempt of the *Seimas* to outlaw the propagation of totalitarian values. In 2008, Lithuanian legislators banned the public display of Soviet and Nazi symbols, but on May 19,

[5] On December 3, 2009, a number of US Congressmen wrote to PM Kubilius asking for his assistance "in helping us to understand the sudden energetic pursuit of investigations into the activities of Jewish partisans, particularly in contrast to the failure of Lithuanian prosecutors to develop any cases against Nazi collaborators since Lithuania's independence in 1991." Letter on file at http://www.holocaustinthebaltics.com/2009Dec3USCongressProtestsOnMargolis.pdf.

2010 a local court in Klaipėda effectively legalized the display of Nazi symbols. It accepted the argument that the swastika predates the Nazi regime, could be found in Lithuanian folk art, and so is not covered by the legislation. Since then, Nazi flags have been raised in Vilnius with impunity. The use of Nazi symbolism at public rallies is strictly controlled in Germany.

On top of that, Lithuania's mainstream media have provided a steady stream of anti-Semitic commentary. In January 2009, the *Respublika* newspaper published a racist and homophobic front-page article asking "Who Controls the World," with a grotesque caricature of "the Jew" and "the Gay" holding up a globe. On November 14, 2010, the popular weekly *Veidas* published an article by a mid-level official of the Interior Ministry that described the Nuremberg trials as the "biggest farce in history," providing a "legal basis to the legend about the six million purportedly murdered Jews." The official promptly resigned and the magazine apologized.[6]

Finally, on March 11, 2011, as Lithuanians celebrated the twenty-first anniversary of the reestablishment of their country's independence, a large crowd of radical nationalists made their way up the main street of the capital city, chanting "Lithuania for Lithuanians." Pretty girls in folksy clothing waved Lithuanian flags while young lads bearing swastikas on their arms made the Hitler salute. It would be tempting to describe them as marginal malcontents, but the group included a number of prominent figures, such as a Member of Parliament from the governing Homeland and Justice Party and a staff member of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center. About six hundred Lithuanians put their names to an internet petition calling on the authorities to condemn and dissociate themselves from the march. Prime Minister Kubilius and President Grybauskaitė both criticized the march as misguided

[6] The passage reads as follows: "Svarbu ir tai, kad Niurnbergo procese teisinį pagrindą įgavo legenda apie 6 mln. neva nužudytų žydų, nors iš tiesų teismas neturėjo ne vieno A. Hitlerio pasirašyto dokumento apie žydų naikinimą (šio dokumento, jeigu jis egzistavo, iki šių dienų niekas nerado, nors pažadėta net milijono dolerių premija)."

patriotism, but they took no further action. Instead of restricting such parades to a more remote location, as has been the case for some labor groups and the gay and lesbian community, the authorities have allowed this group to hijack one of the most significant memorial spaces in the capital, right in front of the Genocide Museum.[7] Indeed, these parades have now been held for four years in a row and have already become something of a tradition.

Manifestations of blatant anti-Semitism are disturbing enough, but the passive attitude of the authorities, bordering on complicity, is truly worrisome. In these days of extreme cuts to public spending that would have easily toppled the governments of Greece, Spain or practically any other Western European state, one can understand the instinct of Lithuanian officials to lie quiet as extremists channel popular frustration towards Jews, homosexuals, Lithuanian emigrants, and the "tolerast" community of liberal intellectuals, pitting one social group against the other and indulging in a self-serving mythology of the past.[8] At best, the March 11 rallies suggest that a great deal of work remains to be done in the area of education. At worst, and if they are left unchecked, such rallies threaten to destroy the foundation on which Lithuania has based its attempts to come to terms with its past by a small but vocal minority of extremists. The space for reconciliation, already scarce, is disappearing from sight. As Šarūnas Liekis, a Yiddish-studies

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[7] For example, last year the Vilnius city council forbade labor unions from demonstrating in front of government buildings, allowing them only a space in an industrial area near the Siemens arena. Similarly, the gay and lesbian community had their request for a parade denied in 2009, and granted in 2010 only under intense pressure from the diplomatic community in Vilnius. Even then, the parade was restricted to a remote street on the north bank of the river, and the handful of marchers was completely encircled by an overwhelming police presence that included a dozen horse-mounted officers and a helicopter flying overhead.

[8] *Tolerastas* is a newly-coined term of abuse frequently employed in the Lithuanian blogosphere that combines "tolerance" and "pederast" to describe liberals in Lithuania.

professor from Vilnius, recently complained to the *Economist*, "We are squeezed between two Talibans."[9]

Overall, the Prague Declaration and the strategy of seeking recognition and promoting awareness of the crimes of both Nazi and Soviet regimes has gained broad acceptance.[10] Recent historical works such as *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* by Yale Professor Timothy Snyder have done much to raise awareness of the specific nature of the wartime experience in this region of Europe. It is a pity that the success of the Declaration in securing greater recognition for Eastern Europe's distinct history has been tarred by scandal. The hijacking by extremists of Lithuania's national holiday is disturbing, especially in light of the passive attitude of the authorities. Most importantly, the grotesque symbolism of a racist rally being held in front of the Court of Appeals, a building once used by the Gestapo and the KGB and which now houses the Genocide Museum, threatens to upset the cultural, legal and political edifice upon which Lithuanians have based their efforts to address the traumatic legacy of the Second World War.[11] Such manifestations of extremism and the tenor of racism and intolerance becoming the norm of public discourse are a tragic threat to the process of healing and dialogue so desperately needed in this much-abused part of Europe.

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9 "Old wounds: Clashing versions of Lithuania's history and how to treat it," *The Economist*, 10 February 2011.

10 For details, see the Report of the EU Commission to the European Parliament and Council, "The memory of the crimes committed by totalitarian regimes in Europe."

11 The vocal participation in the rally of staff from the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre, a taxpayer-funded organization educating the public about the Nazi and Soviet occupations of Lithuania, has damaged the credibility of this organization and the contribution it has made over the years to the cause of historical justice and awareness.

The Classical Sculpture of Vitolis Dragunevičius (1927-2009)

STASYS GOŠTAUTAS

Sculpture Students of The École des Arts et Métiers around 1947. From left to right: Vitolis Dragunevičius, Juozas Pivoriūnas, Ramojus Mozoliauskas, Antanas Mončys ir Vladas Petryla.

Most of us are familiar with many of the names of the generation of sculptors, painters, and ceramists from the École des Arts et Métiers in Freiburg who emigrated to the USA and contributed their art to the Lithuanian and American communities here. Their talent and training greatly influenced post-World War II Lithuanian émigré art. Of the 129 students from the Freiburg group, eight have died in the course of the last decade, starting with Elena Urbaitytė-Urbaitis (1922-2006), Albinas Elskus (1926-2007), Sandra Laucevičiūtė-Čipkuvienė (1922–2009), Vytautas Ignas (1924-2009), Juozas Mieliulis (1919-2009), Vitolis Juozas Dragunevičius (1927-2009), Janina Monkutė-Marks (1923-2010) and Ramojus Mozoliauskas (1925-2010).

The École des Arts et Métiers was founded and directed in post-World War II Germany by Vytautas K. Jonynas in Freiburg, under the French flag, in the French Zone of West Germany. The professors were established Lithuanian masters, such as Viktoras Vizgirda, Algirdas Krivickas, Adomas Galdikas, Adolfas Valeška and others, all of them refugees from Lithuania who found themselves in Displaced Persons camps in war-torn Germany. In this school, an entire new generation of Lithuanian artists was born. More information about this unique school that lasted only four years, from 1946 to 1950, can be found in an art catalogue compiled by Victoria Kašuba–Matranga and published in the 1980s.*

Vitolis Dragunevičius, gifted sculptor and figurative draftsman, made his living in the United States as a designer and fabricator of religious monuments and statues and spent all of his creative life striving for artistic perfection. Commercial art kept him from doing what he would visualize, because religious sculptures and cemetery monuments had to be done according to standard rules and the specific desires of his clients, and there was not much room left for artistic freedom. Vitolis demanded more of himself than the Florentine masters he admired.

Vitolis was born in Utena, Lithuania, in 1927. When he was seventeen years old, he found himself with other refugees from Lithuania in a Displaced Persons camp in Hanau, West Germany, and two years later moved to the French Zone to enroll in the École in Freiburg. He had received a box of oil paints from the United States and was eager to study painting, but since the painting classes were filled he was offered the opportunity to study sculpture instead. He gave his treasured paint set, with some regret, to Vytautas Ignas–Ignatavičius, with whom he remained a lifelong friend. A portrait bust of Ignas

* Catalogue for "Refugee Artists in Germany, 1945-50. Lithuanian Artists at the Freiburg École des Arts et Métiers," University of Illinois at Chicago, May 18-June 8, 1984 and Čiurlionis Art Gallery on January 18-27, 1985.

made by Vitolis can be found today at the ALKA Archives and Museum in Putnam, Connecticut.

At the Freiburg École, his teachers were Aleksandras Marčiulionis and Teisutis Zikaras. His colleagues were Antanas Monèys, Vytautas Raulinaits, Balys Grebliūnas, Juozas Pivoriūnas, Ramojus Mozoliauskas, and Vladas Petryla, who, thanks to Marčiulionis's pedagogical talents, enlivened the panorama of the émigré sculptors in this country.

Vitolis won a scholarship to continue his studies with Antanas Monèys in Paris, but the arrival of a US visa changed his plans, and he left for Hartford, Connecticut, to join his parents. After two years in the US Army, he continued his studies at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where sculpture was taught by Hubert Yencesse – the well-known designer of Olympic medals. Since the army would not pay for his studies there, he used his own savings and temporarily stayed with Vytautas Kasiulis, his drawing-design teacher from his Freiburg days. On January 18, 1954, he wrote to his future wife Gražina Krasauskaitė, herself a graduate of the Hartford Art School: "Today was the opening of Kasiulis's art show with hors d'oeuvres and champagne. It is his tenth show in Paris. Too bad, the gallery was too small and could not hold more than sixteen paintings. The pictures were interesting thematically, unique, colorful, and as you have noticed, elegant. It is pleasant to see a Lithuanian artist represent himself so well in Paris." On June 12, 1954, he writes about Arbit Blatas: "He is from Lithuania. His paintings are colorful, with strong interesting themes." (Blatas's widow Regina Resnick, a mezzo-soprano at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, donated 340 of his works to the Lithuanian Art Museum).

After finishing his studies in Paris in 1954, he spent several months traveling to Rome, Milan, Venice, and Florence, where he learned to admire Michelangelo and Donatello. His studies in Paris and travels through Italy matured him as an artist. He returned to the United States on the *Andrea Doria*, which, incidentally, sank only a year later near Nantucket, Massachusetts.

Many interesting letters to his future wife survive from his stay in Paris and his trips to Italy.

While in Paris, Vitolis spent a great deal of time at the Louvre with a sketch book in hand. He was charmed by the miniature Greek sculptures, their graceful poses and perfection of form. Since his days in Freiburg, he had greatly admired the two great French sculptors of his day, Aristide Maillol (1861-1944) and Charles Despiau (1874-1946), Rodin's assistant. His favorite was Maillol. Vitolis's widow remembers that, whenever he visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he always stopped to reconnect with Despiau's portrait of the Madonna and never tired of explaining the subtleties of line and the beauty of form in the portrait.

Neither time nor hard work tired Vitolis. In 1957, he and his wife Gražina moved to Barre, Vermont, to join a company called Rock of Ages Monuments, where he learned to work in hard granite, a skill necessary for monument production. For fifty years he maintained studios in the Bronx and Westchester County, New York. He made bronze portraits of V. Valiūnas and his sons, V. Vebeliūnas, B. Rauckienė, A. Pakštienė, and others. Among these, the best known are the heads of Nijolė Ulėnienė and his wife Gražina.

Vitolis collaborated with Albinas Elskus and Vytautas K. Jonynas, who had their studios in New York, by sculpting large religious cemetery monuments in Rye Brook, New York, and Greenwich, Connecticut, but he did not keep a record of the many religious sculptures he created for churches and cemeteries. He was in that respect like Viktoras Petravičius, who also did not keep a record of his works, but unlike Viktoras Vizgirda, who kept a diary. Like many sculptors, Dragunevičius mounted very few exhibits. In 1955, he exhibited his sister's portrait at the Boston Arts Festival. He participated in a group show at the Galerija in Locust Valley on Long Island, proving to be an excellent craftsman and an outstanding sculptor. Besides group shows, as far as I know, Vitolis had only one one-man show, in 1970, at the Židinys Gallery in New York, professionally photographed by Vytautas Maželis. There, among

portraits, Vitolis exhibited his abstract stone compositions. The stones came from the shore of Maine, where his artist friend Pranas Lapė had a summer cottage and studio. Round or oval in shape, naturally polished by the Maine surf, they were beautifully arranged on a variety of pedestals.

Modern simplicity interested Vitolis as much as Greek art. He was open to and appreciative of all movements and schisms, but preferred to stay with classical beauty. In spite of the fact that he lived most of his creative life in New York during the era of Pop and Op, conceptual and minimalist art, Vitolis remained a true follower of Maillol, the Catalan from Paris, a classical sculptor who made some forays into abstraction. The Neo-Dada and Fluxus movements of his countryman Jurgis Mačiūnas did not attract him.

Vitolis lived in Mamaroneck, New York, with his wife, two daughters and three grandchildren and is buried in Saint Xavier Cemetery on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. It would be best if his archives and art works were transferred to Lithuania for preservation for posterity.

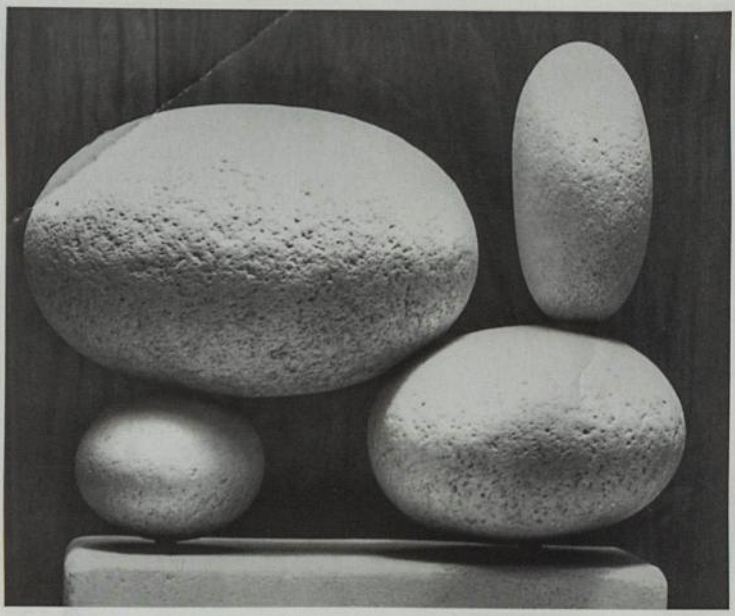
Vytautas Ignas, plaster sculpture, ALKA Archive in Putnam, Connecticut.

Nijolė Ulėnienė, bronze, 1963.
Photo by V. Maželis

Kęstutis J. Valiūnas, bronze,
c 1965. Photo by V. Maželis

Andrius Valiūnas, bronze. c 1965.
Photo by V. Maželis

Abstraction, Granite, New York, c 1970.



Abstraction, Maine stones, 1970.

UNDERGROUND
A Conversation with Antanas Sileika About his Latest Novel

EVA STACHNIAK

EVA STACHNIAK: For me, Underground *is one of the rare Canadian novels which delve into the stories from behind the former Iron Curtain. It begins with the poetic evocation of the borderline that "weaves around the middle of Europe." How significant is this borderline for you, a Canadian writer with Lithuanian roots?*

ANTANAS SILEIKA: The borderline at the center of Europe has been critical for me for most of my life. In effect, there were two borderlines in Europe – first there were countries such as Poland and Hungary, which existed in the "other" Europe, and then there were places such as the Baltics or Ukraine which did not seem to exist at all. I felt for decades until the late eighties that I did not exist because I came from a place that did not exist. It is the region that the historian Timothy Snyder, in his new book, calls *Bloodlands*. It covers the approximate geography of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at its height. I am fascinated about what Snyder and others such as Norman Davies and the late Tony Judt have to say about this region that had the most dramatic history in the twentieth century. No one in the West was interested in it. But now they are. And

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EVA STACHNIAK is a Canadian author and journalist. *Underground* (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 2011) is the latest novel by Antanas Sileika about the Lithuanian anti-Soviet underground resistance in the 1940's based on true events .

I have access to that world because I have the language and the background.

In my childhood, this was extremely confusing because my parents were filled with the melancholy of loss that their generation of refugees suffered from. I was embarrassed by my origins because I came from a pre-multicultural generation, one whose ethnicity was complicated by invisibility. The strongest resonance I ever found in my reading came from English translations of Czesław Miłosz, whose *Issa Valley* and *Native Realm* I read and reread. I know about that place, but I am not of that place. I am close and I am far.

English speakers who have no difficulty distinguishing Irish North and South, Scottish, English and Welsh and all the tensions among them cannot tell the difference among a Russian, Soviet, Byelorussian, Pole, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian, to name just a few. To them, all except Poles were Soviets and all Soviets were Russians.

Many Canadian writers despise historical novels. I belong to a transition generation. I was born here, but I still feel as if I am the survivor of the shipwreck that was my parents' lives upended by WW2. I belong nowhere, but my job is to consider my parents' past in Lithuania and my children's future here.

I think of Milan Kundera's *Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. Perhaps if you cannot forget, there can be no laughter.

E.S.: From the Lithuanian perspective, for me, Underground *is a haunting tale of doomed love, tragic choices forced by history, and ultimate sacrifice. From the Canadian perspective it is also a story of a legacy that arrives at our doorstep and demands that we do something with it. Your publisher calls it an "untold story of the battle that continued long after Second World War." When did you become aware of this particular "untold story" and how?*

A.S.: Some early partisan material appeared long ago in the fifties, in particular the story of Juozas Lukša, who fought, fled through Poland to Paris, fell in love, married, flew back to Lithuania with the help of the CIA in 1950, and was betrayed and killed there in 1951. His story is the rough superstructure of

my novel. New information has appeared after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the opening of archives, and the publication of many memoirs. I thought I would write about what we did *not* know, at least in the West: the grinding partisan war that dragged on for many years after the war ended in the West.

If one is to speak of the twentieth century, one must speak of war. Here, in Canada, we look at the war and postwar through a Churchillian framework of fighting the good war and winning it. We who live here, and especially those with not much Eastern European background, are easy moralizers about the past because we are either ignorant or we have not been tested. I wanted to introduce a different perspective, to enlarge our sense of the postwar, to make more complex "the good versus evil" picture.

E.S.: Toward the end of the novel Lukas and other characters are very bitter about being forgotten, swept under the carpet of post-war history. There are so many betrayals in the novel, including the hovering betrayal from Kim Philby and others like him.

A.S.: The partisan story was complex and long, with boats sent in through the Baltic by the British, double-agents infiltrated into the movement, and many terrible personal stories, some of which I introduced into my novel. I learned, for example, that a very popular children's writer named Kostas Kubilinskas, the Lithuanian equivalent of Dr. Seuss, became a Soviet collaborator and betrayed and shot fellow partisans. I incorporated him in my book. Kubilinskas could have been a character out of *Captive Mind*.

E.S.: There are also the complications of telling a story from an external, "other" point of view… the conflict between the romantic national myth and attempt to see a more universal story in it.

A.S.: The superstructure of my novel follows the true story of Juozas Lukša, who fought, went out to Paris, fell in love and married, and returned to fight for Lithuania, which he called, as a metaphor, his "first wife." This is the most romantic of Lithuanian true stories: the man who gave up peace to fight for

his country. But when I came to the story, I realized we live in different times. We no longer believe in big causes as much as small ones. Therefore in my novel, Lukas goes back to his actual first wife, not to the metaphor of his first wife. And before that, he went into the partisans not because of his patriotism but because of his useless, frightened brother, in order to protect him. It all becomes personal in my novel. Lithuanian patriots may hate me for this change to an iconic story.

E.S.: When I closed your novel I wanted to think about Luke Zolynas. I wanted to know what he makes out of this story of a half brother he now has to acknowledge. I wanted to know what impact this discovery will have on him… Can you speculate on this a bit, in the best tradition of gossiping on our characters???

A.S.: In America in particular, people are encouraged to think of their destinies as if they were masters of them, but Europe, and Eastern Europe in particular, teaches that your personal destiny exists at the whim of history, which might just as easily crush you as elevate you. Luke Zolynas will find his life become more complicated. He will find that the past as he understood it was sand, not stone. But there will be some happiness too. He and his half brother survived because of the actions of their father, whose own life was tragic but whose children's lives became somewhat normal, even if one son was luckier than the other. That generation is an example of what might happen to us under the same circumstances – some would be broken and some would survive. Some would be lucky and others not. I think Luke Zolynas is a stand-in for me and others like me who become aware of the past accidentally. We need to remember the indifference of history, which is a little like the elements that might sweep us away. We need a little humility. Also, somewhat against my will, a certain theme of resurrection has crept in. Memory is a seed that may bloom again as a weed or a flower. Sometimes the dead do rise again, or if not the dead themselves, those who remember them.

BOOK REVIEWS

Juozas Lukša. *Forest Brothers: The Account of an Anti-Soviet Lithuanian Freedom Fighter: 1944 – 1948*. Translated with an Introduction by Laima Vincė. Budapest–New York: Central European University Press, 2009.

Juozas Lukša's memoir of anti-Soviet underground resistance in the postwar years was the first ever published, and it remains one of the most vivid depictions of what went on after the Soviets swept back into Lithuania in 1944.

The Lithuanian partisans fought the returning invaders as best they could, usually employing guerilla tactics. After three years of bloody resistance battles, Lukša escaped through Poland in 1947 in a vain attempt to solicit Western help, but he became stranded in Paris. There, he met and married Nijolė Bražėnaitė, only to return to Lithuania for the CIA in 1950. But the resistance was in its final years, and in this melancholy twilight of the partisans, Lukša was betrayed by a former comrade-in-arms and killed in 1951.

Juozas Lukša's memoir and biography are extremely popular – they have appeared in five editions in Lithuanian, the final one exquisitely footnoted (though with too many errors in pagination). His story was made into a feature film in Lithuania and is being made into a documentary in the USA. The memoir was abridged and translated into Swedish, and into English in 1975. I used elements of the Lithuanian version in my own novel, set in the partisan resistance.*

Now we have a new translation of Lukša's memoir from Laima Vincė, and it is a welcome addition to the growing body of evidence about the resistance, not only in Lithuania but throughout the so-called "borderlands" of the former Soviet

* Antanas Sileika, *Underground*. Toronto: Thomas Allen and Son, 2011.

Union, consisting of parts of Poland, Belarus, the Ukraine, Estonia, and Latvia.

Although Lukša's memoir is far from perfect – its structure and time sequences are confusing – it is an excellent mosaic of first- and second-hand accounts of various crimes visited upon the locals by the Soviet occupying forces: robbery, murder, dispossession and deportation.

In response to this violence, Lithuanian men first gathered into bands in the forest to escape Soviet conscription or arrest and then began to fight back with any means they had: an underground press, sabotage, assassination, and finally pitched battle. Over time, the number of Soviet collaborators began to rise and the resistance situation, as we now know, became entirely hopeless, although it did not seem that way to the partisans at the time. Many continued to hope for rescue from the West.

So here we have the most romantic of stories – the biography of a hero who sacrificed his love and his life for his country. While Juozas Lukša was undoubtedly both romantic and heroic, this new translation appears at a time when a great deal more information about the partisans and their context has come out, and our own attitudes are more skeptical now than they were during the Soviet occupation.

Certain aspects of the partisan mind-set might seem peculiar to some of us now, as demonstrated in such moments as the atom bomb party, when the partisans danced with delight to hear of the atomic weapons dropped on Japan. We have learned to deplore the twin atomic explosions, but to the partisans it seemed as if the Americans finally had a knockout punch against the Soviets. It was peculiar to them that the Americans chose not to use it.

The cruelty inflicted upon the partisans by the Soviets and their collaborators was quite horrifying. In one case, provocateurs captured a partisan and buried his head in an anthill. Captured partisans were tortured by many other horrible means. Frequently, their grotesquely mutilated bodies were

tossed onto the marketplaces as examples to the locals, and those who identified the bodies were themselves deported.

For their part, the partisans did not hold back and employed violence of their own. For example, they burned a house with phosphorous grenades so the collaborators inside suffocated in the basement; they attacked the homes of Soviet settler families who moved onto the properties of deported citizens; and they planned elaborate assassinations. Most dramatic among these assassinations was the infamous "engagement party," in which a partisan pair masquerading as an engaged couple invited local communist functionaries to a party, only to shoot five of them dead after dinner. The accordion player, wounded in the throat, was found by the authorities fleeing across a bridge. Unable to speak, he wrote out the story of what had happened, and the police went on to photograph the scene. The grisly photo of the carnage appears in the Lithuanian version of the book, but not in this translation.

The partisan delight at killing enemies stands as a strong corrective to the romance of Lukša's story. Traitors were hunted down and liquidated. The violence of the occupation bred the violence of the resistance, it is true, but the violence remains appalling.

When I stopped at a Marijampolė museum in 2009 to look at its partisan history displays and to visit the scene of the engagement party assassination, the director, upon learning that I planned to write about the partisans, cautioned me against humanizing their enemy. He said that, if I went that route, I would be doing an injustice to those who died defending their homes, their families and their country.

He had a point, but one can't help remembering that many of the partisans' victims were civilians. In his recent study of the partisan resistance, Alexander Statiev, in *The Soviet Counterinsurgency in the Western Borderlands*, goes so far as to claim that the partisan war was a form of civil war. This statement is exaggerated – there would have been no partisan war without

the Soviet occupation, but it does stress that most losses were civilian losses.

In *Partizanai tada ir šiandien*, Lithuanian historian, Bernardas Gailius, goes beyond defending the partisans. He makes the point that, by their actions, they demonstrated the resistance of the Lithuanian nation against the Soviets. He would call the resistance a war rather than an insurgency, and an extension through war of the policy of the legitimate Lithuanian government.

Yet in Lithuania itself, any online newspaper article about the partisans prompts dozens of comments, most of them negative (one might argue that newspaper commentators do not reflect the general population). These commentators claim the partisans were killers and thieves. Defenders of partisans say the killers and thieves were *agents provocateurs* planted by the Soviet regime, or a few men gone bad. The fact remains that, in Lithuania itself, the subject causes occasional controversy because, in some smaller towns, virtually all the inhabitants were touched by the partisan war. As a friend said to me of Merkinė, a town in the south of Lithuania, "Only two types of people live here: those whose parents suffered under the Soviets and those whose parents caused the suffering."

This partisan story is mostly unknown in the West – all the more reason to be grateful to Laima Vincė and her publisher for retranslating one version of it.

However, even among the few in the West who do know about the partisans, the subject is sometimes controversial. The Jews who survived in Lithuania and the East were rescued by the Soviets. To them the Soviets were saviors. On the other hand, some of the Soviet counterinsurgency operatives in Lithuania were Jews. At least two of them, Nachman Dushansky and Aaron Greisas (the latter not identified in the translation as a Jew, although he is identified as such in the original) are named in this text, the former surviving long enough to flee to Israel after Lithuania's independence and the latter killed by partisans.

There have been all sorts of intemperate accusations on this score. Juozas Lukša is identified in some Jewish web sites as a Nazi collaborator (unsubstantiated) and he was depicted as a criminal in a Soviet piece of disinformation called *Vanagai iš anapus,* published in the Soviet Union in 1961. Extremists on the other side make exaggerated claims about Jews as Soviet operatives and collaborators.

What it meant to be a "collaborator" in Lithuania is a fraught subject as well because it was not just Nazis who killed Jews there. Some Lithuanians were involved too, and whatever their actual number may have been, even one was too many.

In other words, controversies swirl around Lukša and the partisans, and while we need not take these controversies too seriously, we cannot let them pass unremarked upon.

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One of the strengths of the fifth edition of the Lithuanian version of this memoir, carried over in Vincė's translation, is the addition of extensive footnotes that humanize the victims Lukša writes about. Thus we read the following in Lukša's original text:

> A few days later I met my friend, who went by the code name of Uosis (Ash Tree).* He was a partisan. He had come to Kaunas to retrieve a printing press...

The two exchange some information about partisan life, and Uosis is described as optimistic and determined. He is a minor player in the story, but even minor players had lives important to them and their loved ones. Timothy Snyder, in his recent and magisterial *Bloodlands*, points out that we need to remember the humanity of every single person who suffered in World War Two. In a Vincė translation footnote, we read the following additional information about Uosis:

> *Algirdas Varkala, 1927 - 1948. March 18, 1948 he was retreating from the enemy when he was shot in the leg. He shot himself to avoid being taken prisoner.

In other words, most of the people mentioned in the memoir had histories and fates that play out in the footnotes, making their lives all the more vivid and tragic.

On the matter of the translation itself, the text reads easily enough – the sentences are fluid. A stickler might argue that the tone is somewhat American (the partisans sometimes sound like Marines in basic training) and the phrasing is not always felicitous with the original.

For instance, the 1975 translation by E. J. Harrison reads:

> A lone Red Army trooper appears and turns his hard-ridden nag into our yard. The animal is unencumbered by either saddle or bridle – a length of rope around its neck apparently serving the purpose of both.

Vincė writes:

> The first Red Army soldier appeared at the rear of our barn on the back of a tired, old nag. A pair of pants slung over the nag's back served as a saddle and stirrups.

The Lithuanian original names neither rope nor pants, but a hobble tossed over the back of the horse. Since hardly any modern person knows what a hobble looks like, one can see the need to change the word, and one can see the different strategies of Harrison and Vincė, including a change of verb tense.

We should cut Vincė some slack on this issue – scrupulous precision would have made for a bumpy translation.

This rich trove of partisan memoirs, histories, articles, and archive material has barely been translated into English. *The Diary of a Partisan* (Lionginas Baliukevičius), a document found in KGB archives, is a welcome exception, but there are more books awaiting translation, among them Adolfas Ramanauskas's *Daugel krito sūnų* and the late Liūtas Mockūnas's *Pavargęs herojus*.

And there are many more books being written about the context of the resistance. In addition to the ones mentioned above, the late Tony Judt's *Postwar* and the more focused *The Lands Between*, by Alexander Prusin, are worth looking at.

First-hand accounts from other countries should be looked at as well, including the chilling Polish-language *Egzekutor,* by Stefan Dąmbski.

The controversy about the partisans is not likely to go away any time soon, but if we hope to come to a balanced judgment, we will need to study all the sources available and thoroughly thrash out the different interpretations of them. Laima Vincė has made an important contribution to this ongoing project of remembrance and clarification.

Antanas Šileika

❖ ❖ ❖

Dalia Leinarte, editor and author. *Adopting and Remembering Soviet Reality: Life Stories of Lithuanian Women, 1945-1970.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010. ISBN: 978-90-420-3062-6.

This work consists of ten interviews with Lithuanian women who recollect the post-Stalinist era, two introductory chapters and a conclusion by the author and editor, Dalia Leinarte. We learn that her purpose in collecting these interviews was to analyze the subjective beliefs of her interviewees. Many of them, she notes, seemed to suffer from "historical amnesia," i. e., omitting seminal historical events, contradicting themselves and in general altering the past.

Originally, Leinarte had divided the interviewees into three groups. The first remembered this time with nostalgia and contrasted it with the "consumerism and soullessness" of the present; the second group recalled their lives as completely painful and difficult under Soviet occupation. Women from the third group were seen as creating a "new memory of their personal life during the Soviet era."(15) Insisting they were going to convey "how it really was," in reality they skipped over that period of time. Leinarte decided not to include these interviews.

Dalia Leinarte is a professor of history and the chair of the Center for Gender Studies at Vilnius University. The author of several books and numerous articles, she is thoroughly versed in Western scholarship, which makes her the foremost historian of Lithuanian women. Basing the sections she authored on the journalism of that era, as well as other materials, Leinarte creates an oral history that shows how the Socialist state transformed Lithuanian women's values, beliefs, and identities. Even though it may be impossible for the reader to feel what the period was like, Leinarte comes close to recreating "what it was really like." This is in part due to her open-ended style of interviewing, which allowed the women to tell their stories without the author imposing her own biases. Leinarte concludes that, as Soviet propaganda took hold, the narrative of women became mundane, but it is that very dreariness that makes this book interesting. This scholarly work draws the reader into a voyeuristic world without the sex. The lives of these ten women are simply fascinating.

The author blames Soviet propaganda for the negative changes in women's lives, although some of the same changes took place in Western societies too. For example, Leinarte attributes the financial necessity of "two working hands" to the effects of Soviet propaganda. But the same attitude also appeared in the West. Without a doubt, mass media influences our lives, whether in the form of commercial advertising or political propaganda. Some of the assertions Leinarte makes are therefore dubious because they are typical of changes seen in any society that urbanizes. Most of the women came from villages and settled in larger cities, where they changed from peasants into Soviet citizens. Additionally, the recollected stories of the postwar era dealt with poverty and the shortages of goods and services, something that cannot be merely attributed to Soviet propaganda. Leinarte seems to disbelieve statements by some women that they did not internalize Soviet values, even when, in fact, those same women perceived themselves as nonparticipating victims of Soviet occupation.

Marija Popova, who came from a small peasant family, said that her father had been badly beaten by the forest brothers. She unapologetically remembers that "...all of my patriotic and nationalistic ideas had already been trampled." (136) She felt a sense of belonging through the Communist Party. (129) Communism gave her opportunities for advancement. In general, she recounts with pride how she and her second husband, Fedotovas, helped build socialism. Leokadija Diržinskaitė, a Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the highest ranking woman of those interviewed, also recounts the opportunities the Party gave her. More surprising are the comments of an orphan, Anita Šlegel, who reflects on the humanity of the Soviet system: "My most beautiful memories are from those times." (177) She names the tutors and principals from the orphanage who were so kind to her and had turned the orphanage into a genuine home for children rather than merely a state-run institution. (180) Leinarte asks: "When did the food improve at the orphanage?" and Šlegel responds, "The food was never bad... We weren't deprived." (181) But Šlegel does admit that her orphanage may have been better than others because it was in Vilnius. Aušra Dilienė, whose husband belonged to the upper echelons of the Communist Party, asserted that "everyone tried to help each other in a friendly way, and democracy was widespread in Lithuania." (169) She further states: "Our life then was a zillion times better than today's business people's in independent Lithuania..." (171) Another woman recounts the difficulties of loving and caring for an alcoholic husband. As pathetic as her story seems, she does not blame the Soviet system for her woes. Nevertheless, Leinarte maintains that Soviet expectations necessitated that a woman stand by her man. In another woman's story, Leinarte concludes that, because of her occupation as a barmaid, she was "the only woman among all those interviewed who did not depend on others and was in full control of her private and family life." (107) Later, that same woman makes a snide remark: "There wasn't as much useless stuff as today, now that we have

everything..." (114) Some of the women's problems seem unavoidable. For instance, one recounts the difficulties of raising a handicapped child during the postwar era and criticizes the lack of state care and support for her and her child. She also admits to heavy drinking before the birth of her special needs child "because life seemed so meaningless." (77)

None of the women had much knowledge about sex before marriage. They seemed reluctant to discuss it beyond the generalizations that now, under independence, women have become more promiscuous or, conversely, that today, with more information, attitudes about sex have become healthier. Prior to the sexual revolution in the late sixties and early seventies, Western women had, and sometimes still do, many of the same attitudes that Leinarte's women have. Although Leinarte argues that Soviet propaganda de-emphasized romantic love and changed women-wives into women-workers, none of the interviewees seems to have become a stereotype of a woman shot-putter or bricklayer. None complained of losing their femininity.

Even though many of the women agreed life was better under the Russians, an attitude that is still prevalent in post-Soviet Lithuania, Leinarte seems to disregard this fact and optimistically concludes that "former 'ordinary Soviet people' will not pass on their Soviet experiences to future generations." (200) It "... no longer has a place... in this world." (16) The interviews, however, tell another story.

The series "On the Boundary of Two Worlds: Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics" published by Rodopi, of which *Adopting and Remembering Soviet Reality* is Volume Twenty-Four, is probably the best, most serious, and scholarly body of work ever produced in the English language about the Baltic States. However, because many of the authors in this series are not native English speakers, their works, much like Leinarte's, are often marred with writing errors and some ambiguity in meaning because of awkward grammar or inappropriate word choices. The original Lithuanian version,

Prijaukintos kasdienybės [Adjusting to the Daily Routine: this reviewer's translation], published in 2007, has none of those flaws. For all of its shortcomings *Adopting and Remembering Soviet Realities* is an original work of scholarship that one can only hope becomes part of a larger work on Lithuanian women. Dalia Leinarte has prepared herself well to write the grand narrative about Lithuanian women.

Virgil Krapauskas

❖ ❖ ❖

Algis Lukas, editor. *Lietuvių kultūrinis paveldas Amerikoje: Lithuanian Cultural Legacy in America.* Silver Spring, MD: Lithuanian American Community, Inc., Cultural Affairs Council, 2009.

Lithuania celebrated its millennium in 2009: it was first mentioned on 14 February 1009 in the medieval Prussian manuscript *Quedlinburg Chronicle*. Millenium festivities were held in Lithuania and abroad. As part of the celebrations, the Lithuanian American Community of the United States published a commemorative color photo album, edited by Algis Lukas. It celebrates Lithuanian immigration to and accomplishments in the States. Eleven synoptic articles by the editor and various other authors frame hundreds of photographs that depict Lithuanian-American achievements. The glossy oversized book is bilingual, providing both Lithuanian and English versions of the commentary.

In the introduction, Lukas states that the album focuses on architecture and real estate. (10) It also includes sections on art, sculpture, and wayside shrines. Other publications, Lukas explains, have documented Lithuanian literature, art, music, theater, folk dances, and folk art in the United States (10); the bibliography does not provide references for these. The editor cautions that the tome is neither an encyclopedia nor a reference

work. (10) It stands as a representative selection of notable Lithuanian-American creations.

The most important and interesting article is Dr. Ramūnas Kondratas's historical overview of Lithuanian settlement in the United States. It is a wellspring of information in brief about Lithuanian life in both the colonies and the states. For openers, he presents four notable early Lithuanian immigrants, namely, Alexander Carolus Curtius (headmaster of the Latin School in New York, 1659), Thaddeus Kościuszko (a Revolutionary War hero), Alexander Bielaski (a Civil War hero), and Henry Korwin Kalusowski (Henryk Korwin Kalussowski), a Civil War participant and later diplomat.

Kondratas divides Lithuanian immigration into three waves, according to the traditional historiography: the late 1800s to World War II; the postwar period to the restoration of independence; and the current post-independence period. He narrows these broad time spans to 1870-1930, the 1940s, and the ongoing one since the late 1980s. His article documents the major undertakings of each group of immigrants, generally focusing on churches, cultural centers, schools, organizations, and publications. It notes Lithuanian-American achievements in business, law, government, medicine, theater, film/TV, and especially sports. The prevalence of Lithuanian-owned bars – mentioned several times – acts as an informal barometer of Lithuanian rest and recreation in the United States For example, there were 2,500 of them by 1916 (p. 22).

The book has chapters on the Lithuanian Embassy (by Ambassador Audrius Bruzga), cultural centers (by Danutė Bindokienė), and youth camps (by Dr. Romualdas Kriaučiūnas). One chapter is dedicated to art (by the editor), and another one to monuments and shrines (Dr. Milda B. Richardson). These emphasize sculpture, monuments, stained glass, mosaic, and religious art. From the pictorial record, post-World War II Lithuanian-American art echoes many traditional Lithuanian folk art motifs. The most popular Lithuanian object d'art seems to be the *koplytstulpis* or way-side shrinë. It has received the UNESCO designation of Masterpieces of Intangible Heritage.

The book concludes with an homage to select Lithuanian cemeteries, out of the many scattered across the country.

Three chapters focus on churches, chapels, convents, and monasteries (by the editor and Rev. Antanas Saulaitis, SJ). However, no Protestant, Old Catholic, or Jewish establishments are included. For example, Lukas states that, in 2001, Chicago had three Lithuanian parishes and that, nationwide, only thirty-five churches or chapels conducted services in Lithuanian (85). These data omit the two Lithuanian Lutheran churches and one Lithuanian Reformed congregation in Chicago, all still conducting services in Lithuanian. Furthermore, the oldest functioning Lithuanian parish in Chicago is the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, founded in 1910. Granted, a group of Lithuanian Lutherans who emigrated to Texas in 1852 (21) is mentioned elsewhere in the book. In addition, there were thirteen Lithuanian National Catholic churches, spread from Chicago to Boston. Providence of God Lithuanian National Catholic Church in Scranton, PA, is the sole survivor, with Mass now said in English to Lithuanian descendents. Finally, Kondratas lists famous Lithuanian-American Jews and their achievements (27). Nevertheless, Lukas omits the Lithuanian Jewish synagogue and school in Cleveland as well as its Chicago branch. Telshe Yeshiva (the Rabbinical College of Telshe) was founded by Lithuanian Jewish refugees from Telšiai who miraculously survived the holocaust. In spite of such oversights, the book includes some formerly Lithuanian churches, such as the Spanish-language Holy Cross Church in Chicago. (100-101)

Two major themes – schools and organizations – crisscross the entire volume. There seem to be as many schools as churches, if not more: parochial schools, high schools, the ubiquitous Lithuanian cultural Saturday schools, church Sunday schools, and the Endowed Chair of Lithuanian Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Lithuanian-language education from kindergarten through a doctoral program deserves its own chapter in a book on the Lithuanian legacy in the USA. Likewise, various Lithuanian-American organizations are ever-present, but the diffuse approach makes it hard to track any

one of them. What is needed is a chapter on organizations such as the Lithuanian Alliance of America, the Knights of Lithuania, the Lithuanian-American Community, the Lithuanian Catholic Federation *Ateitis*, and the Lithuanian Scouts, to name only a few. After all, these groups made possible many of the other achievements in the album.

Lukas and the other authors have selected a wealth of information and photographs for this album. There must be ten times as much archival material that had to be left out. The indexes reference the photographic sections only and are limited to objects, architects, artists, and place-names. The articles are not indexed, nor are other names (organizations, schools, publications, other people, etc.). Although church architects are routinely named, the names of pastors are not. Yet, the building and reconstruction of churches is normally associated with their pastors, because they raised the donations to fund them.

With its many color photographs, the book is an exemplary album of Lithuanian heritage in the United States. The oversized layout and superb formatting make it appealing to the eye and attractive to the reader. It takes a snapshot of Lithuanian-American life and accomplishments. This admirable contribution to Lithuania's millennial celebration is a fitting addition to Lithuanian coffee tables from coast to coast.

Vilius Rudra Dundzila

❖ ❖ ❖

Daiva Markelis. *White Field, Black Sheep: A Lithuanian-American Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Daiva Markelis's *White Field, Black Sheep* is an entertaining and humorous life story written in masterful English prose. It is not so much an individualistic autobiography of the author as a literary memoir of her childhood community. She reflects on her growing up and coming of age during the 1960s and 1970s in the sheltered Lithuanian neighborhood of Cicero, Illinois. Urban

and adult problems always lurk below the surface, breaking through when least expected. The author focuses on them as an adult.

The author is a first generation Lithuanian-American. She spoke Lithuanian at home and learned English at school. Her life swings in a dialectic between her Lithuanian heritage and American environs. This undercurrent not only propels her story forward but also contributes to the major conflicts of her life. Her father's broken English and her mother's insistence on correcting the English of American advertising slogans serve as two iconic poles in this ongoing pendulum. At the same time, the author journeys from a seemingly disoriented self, through childhood, puberty, and young adulthood towards psychological maturity as an adult Lithuanian-American woman.

The childhood chapters of the book are written with a charming naïveté with glimpses of her grown-up perspective. The young Daiva learns that her parents are "DPs" (displaced persons), but she thinks that they grew up in tepees (TPs). Her father teaches her Lithuanian riddles with loving patience. The title of the book is one such riddle. Lithuanian Catholic nuns, themselves from an earlier generation of immigrants, forbid Lithuanian at school. Ironically, Hispanic children now learn in their native Spanish at the same school. Of course, school ubiquitously pervades Daiva's childhood, bringing friends, budding romance, and priest-want-to-bes. Instead of watching cartoons or playing soccer, Daiva and her sister spend their Saturdays attending Lithuanian cultural school – in addition to *daily* Lithuanian classes.

Markelis provides insight on the nuns' conflict with a new generation of immigrant children. The nuns themselves are children of an earlier generation of Lithuanian immigrants. They come from working-class backgrounds with meager educations. In contrast, their new pupils are children of a highly-educated middle class (26). Their houses are filled with art and books. The children begin school already reading Lithuanian children's books, but they do not know English.

With innocence and laughter, Daiva navigates between

Halloween, Thanksgiving (i.e., pizza delivery) and Kūčios (Lithuanian Christmas Eve). Summers mean scout camp: *Lithuanian* scout camp. The campers make a show of speaking Lithuanian out loud to camp leaders for merit points. Markelis successfully recreates the entire world of her childhood, with its foibles and follies, in literary form.

An infamous neo-Nazi march in Cicero against African-Americans catapults the young Markelis into the world of adult realities. This is the turning point of the book. Work, depression, alcohol, religion, spirituality, sexuality, marriage, divorce, remarriage, and – especially – remembrance of things past become the new shifting foci of the book. The narrative shows how *tempus fugit*. The episodic nature of childhood, with its concrete details, gives way to broad strokes of adulthood, with its recurring themes and challenges. This includes the taboo subjects – for the Lithuanian community – of alcoholism, drug addiction, and sexual harassment. The author questions the holier-than-thou airs of Lithuanian cultural superiority in the United States. With her gift for *belles lettres*, she tells, narrates, and describes events without editorializing.

Particularly noteworthy are *Santara-Šviesa* (Unity-Light) gatherings, which she initially critiques as a "carnival." They become the adult replacement for scout camp and a long-desired escape from Lithuanian *Catholic* culture. With her parents, she finds her place among Lithuanian artists, academics, and other self-proclaimed intellectuals. They gather annually for a weekend of papers, poetry, performances, and partying too. Markelis meets her Lithuanian academic mentors here.

The author's maturation brings her into new relationships with her parents. She starts to befriend and admire her father toward the end of his life. Like her, he has literary talent of his own.

Throughout the book, the mutual affection between Daiva and her mother grows into a deep love. Daiva navigates her mother-daughter conflict through piano lessons, (not) learning to cook, and her own literary experimentation. Their mother-daughter roles reverse as Daiva nurses her ailing, dying

mother. The humor between them never dies. The book ends with a loving homage to her mother.

Markelis's book contributes to a legacy of Baltic literary memoir in exile. A generation earlier, the Latvian Agate Nesaule's *A Woman in Amber: Healing the Trauma of War and Exile* (1997) treats the immigrant experience with similar gusto, finesse, and cathartic therapy. Markelis does the same for the children of these immigrants. Not surprisingly, both are professors of English and creative writing.

Markelis gives a very realistic snapshot of Lithuanian-American life. In my own childhood, I encountered the same personalities, scenarios, and conflicts as Markelis, but in the Marquette Park Lithuanian community of Chicago. It's as if "the names were changed to protect the innocent." I couldn't put the book down: I read it with great interest in a few evenings. The book has garnered a well-deserved reception from Lithuanian-Americans and other readers. That the University of Chicago Press has published Markelis' *first* book attests to her creative talent.

Vilius Rudra Dundzila

❖ ❖ ❖

Ruta Sepetys. *Between Shades of Gray.* New York: Philomel, 2011.

Much has been written in the Lithuanian press about Ruta Sepetys's novel *Between Shades of Gray*, a fictional account for young adults about the deportations to Siberia of thousands of people from the Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and the book's incredible success. In April of this year, Sepetys came to the Lithuanian World Center in Lemont, Illinois, for a book signing and a talk about her accomplishment.

In discussions of World War II, Balts have often, with disappointment and anger, questioned why so little attention is

paid to the crimes that Stalin committed against the Baltic nations and, for that matter, all of Eastern Europe. Maybe the time has finally come. Maybe what was needed was someone to present these historical events in an interesting way. Indeed, the book appeared on the *New York Times* Children's Chapter Books Bestseller List for four weeks. Major US newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, the *LA Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal* reviewed it favorably. The book has been scheduled for publication in twenty-six countries and has already appeared in the UK, Italy, Lithuania, Taiwan, Germany, the Netherlands, Finland and Slovakia.

Sepetys is energetic, warm, sincere and engaging. She immediately joked about how difficult it is to have such a Lithuanian name, yet not speak the language and not have ever participated in the activities of the Lithuanian community. Perhaps this is exactly what helped her to tell this story of deportations, helped to give voice to "those whose voices were extinguished."

Sepetys's opening comment, "It is not the book that made the New York Times Bestseller List. Lithuania made the bestseller list," speaks volumes about the person she is. Her unpretentiousness and ease is captivating and a bit surprising. She stressed many times that "this is a common history–our history." Almost every Lithuanian attending the event could probably tell a story of their family's or a loved one's fate during this period. She urged the attendees to write down these stories because "the ground has been broken.'

Sepetys spoke about how she was initially determined to question the survivors in Lithuania about their experiences and had prepared a well thought-out interview. At first, she could not understand why she was not getting the answers she expected and survivors were hesitant to answer her questions. An associate working with her suggested she invite them to talk about their experiences and just listen. This enabled her to hear, to realize what it must have been like for them, and

to understand how it is possible to endure such horrific experiences and yet preserve one's humanity.

Sepetys also spoke about the "worst decision of her life"– spending twenty-four hours in a former Soviet prison where the frightening experience of a prisoner is recreated. The oppressive environment was felt immediately as the "prisoners" endured the demeaning and cruel, sometimes violent, treatment of the guards and interrogators. She admitted that she very quickly realized that she was a coward – a few rough blows from the guards, and survival became first and foremost in her mind. While this experience was short-lived compared to what the deportees endured, this understanding helped her write a book in which people are not judged, actions are not black or white, and the spectrum of human behaviors is revealed. It also forces the reader to ask himself, "What if..."

It is sometimes simple to condemn others for their actions. However, until we actually find ourselves in extreme situations, we cannot truly know how we would behave and what we would be capable of doing to save ourselves and our families. On the other hand, people who commit horrific acts sometimes show unexpected kindness. Perhaps what is best about this book is that it was not written in anger or bitterness. Rather, the reader feels profound anguish and compassion, as if hearing the plea, "Look what happened to us."

"There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."* There is always hope. On the cover of the book, there is a small bud coming up through snow surrounded by barbed wire. Countless atrocities have been committed in the course of human history against which men were helpless. Fate cannot be chosen or controlled, but it is possible to survive and to live. Even love is possible.

Shades of Gray is written for teen and young adult readers in impeccable style. Adult readers will also find the book gripping. The chapters are short; flashbacks are in italics. The

*Leonard Cohen, "Anthem," 1992.

author succeeds in telling a story that does not leave the reader indifferent. The topic and events are horrifying. We naturally turn away from disturbing experiences, but Sepetys skillfully uses language and precisely chooses words that draw the reader in. Readers feel the pain of the characters' experiences, and their fate matters to them. Many will wipe away tears.

It is the age of electronics and the e-reader. The e-reader is more practical to carry than a book. The font can be enlarged to a comfortable size. The built-in dictionary is useful. However the e-book will never replace a real book. Ruta Sepetys's *Shades of Gray* is everything a real book should be. It is inviting, pleasing to pick up, hold and turn the pages. The characters matter because they are familiar. Each one may be one of us. Finally, this heart-wrenching story can be heard and remembered.

Rasa Avižienis

ERRATA
Lituanus, Volume 57:2 (2011)

On p. 31, bottom, the author's name should be **MIKHAIL** not MIKKAIL.

On p. 74, first paragraph should be "**events** like Holodomor" not "places like Holodomor."

ABSTRACTS

Violeta Davoliutė
The Prague Declaration of 2008 and its Repercussions in Lithuania.

Overall, the Prague Declaration of 2008, promoting awareness of the crimes by both Nazi and Soviet regimes, has gained broad acceptance. However, it also resulted in mounting criticism about the implied moral equivalence of fascism and communism and the decision to commemorate all victims of both regimes on the same day, thus supplanting the existing Holocaust Day and even enabling former Nazi collaborators to pose as victims of communism. This controversy is of special relevance to Lithuanians because 2011 is the 70th anniversary of the tragic summer of 1941 during which they were in turn victims of deportation, heroes of an anti-Soviet uprising, and collaborators in the Holocaust. The entanglement of so many traumatic events has long since confounded efforts to work through the past and is presently causing a resurgence of chauvinistic politics, seriously threatening the process of healing and dialogue.

Tomas Kazulėnas
In the Footsteps of the Gulag.

This is a personal account of the 2009 expedition sponsored by the Association *Lemtis* to Vorkuta, Abez, Inta, Pechora, Kortkeros and Syktyvkar in the Komi Republic in order to document cemeteries and gravesites and repair and restore memorials erected after 1990 by volunteers in honor of the Lithuanian prisoners and deportees buried there during the Soviet era. Vorkuta was the largest of the Gulag camps and served as the administrative center for smaller camps and subcamps. The name Vorkuta has become a metaphor for the Gulag, a place of evil built on human skulls and mass graves. Lithuania built more symbolic memorials and tombstones for their dead than any other country. By the late fifties, after Stalin's death, Vorkuta was closed down. (For information on the Vorkuta Uprising see L. Latkovski, "Baltic Prisoners in the Gulag Revolts of 1953" in *Lituanus* Vol.51:3 and Vol. 51:4, 2005).

Stasys Goštautas
The Classical Sculpture of Vitolis Dragunevičius (1927–2009)

A review of the life and work of Vitolis Dragunevičius (1927-2009), another graduate of the Freiburg art school "École des Arts et Métiers," founded and directed by Vytautas K. Jonynas. During its five-year history (1946-1950), the school produced an entire new generation of émigré artists.

Ingė Lukšaitė
The Reformation in Lithuania: A New Look. Historiography and Interpretation

Approaching the Reformation not just as a religious but also as a social and cultural movement, the author attempts to place it within the framework of Lithuanian history and examine if and how it influenced Lithuanian culture and cultural advancement toward the modern era. This article offers a historiographical overview and discusses changes and cultural processes set in motion by the reformers and posing a challenge to the Roman Catholic establishment to change its own practices. As long as none of the competing churches resorted to the use of force, the interaction between them in the Grand Duchy successfully propelled Lithuanian society toward the modern age. This process lasted about one hundred years, leaving a deeper impact on the cultural history of the Lithuanian Grand Duchy than previously admitted.

Eva Stachniak
***Underground*. A Conversation with Antanas Sileika About His Latest Novel**
Antanas Sileika discusses his newest novel *Underground* about partisan warfare against the Soviets in occupied post-World War II Lithuania.

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