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Soviet ideology-based communication becomes a metaphor for Soviet life itself, page 30. Pages from the newspaper Naujas Rytas, *founded in 1945.*

An Overview of the Emigration Processes of Lithuanians

DAIVA DAPKUTĖ

Migratory movements of populations (both forced and voluntary) are not a manifestation of modern times only. People have been migrating within countries as well as beyond their borders since ancient times. This process is not a characteristic of a single geographic sphere or culture, but of all humankind. The history of the Lithuanian nation is no exception.

There has already been a great deal spoken and written about the migration of Lithuanians, its causes, and its extent. This issue is becoming ever more relevant against the backdrop of the flow of emigration from Lithuania, a flow that has not ebbed for several years. Actually, emigration is not a clear-cut process, so it is not easy to assess and requires greater attention and study. When discussing the stereotypical images of emigration in the Lithuanian consciousness and employing the history of Lithuanian migration to compare the different waves of emigration for this article, there is a desire to pause at several questions that cause anxiety among Lithuania's residents and come up constantly when deliberating the problems involved in modern-day emigration. For one, is the current wave of emigration the greatest in Lithuanian history, considering all we know about Lithuanians scattered around the globe? For another, is it possible to stop or limit emigration? And finally, is emigration nothing more than an irretrievable loss to Lithuania?

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Is it possible Lithuanians only know how to love their homeland from afar, once they have lost it?

Globalization processes currently offer opportunities to learn foreign languages, see the world, shake off the fear of the "other," and become involved in an intercultural dialogue. It becomes more and more difficult to define borders and boundaries in the world today. Meanwhile, the categories of departing and returning become difficult to describe. Even the concept of "home" changes rapidly, along with our lifestyles and values. Ties to the land where one was born and one's own roots were important to the older generations and earlier waves of emigration, who formed an image of Lithuania-as-home that reflected their nostalgia. The saying "home is where you hang your hat," would be more typical for today's emigrants or migrants. Finding people who live in one country and work in another is becoming quite common in the European Union (especially in the border regions between France and Belgium, and Germany and Italy). It is also true for those Lithuanians who have changed jobs and residences and lived in more than one country. "We are the cosmopolitans. It's fine for us here and over there. Our home is Lithuania and America," says Rokas Beresniovas, one of the founders of the Global Leaders of Lithuania, a social network.[1] This is especially characteristic of the younger generation. Continual migration and living in more than one country is becoming a readily acceptable manifestation that our consciousness is able to grasp. Modern communication technologies and the Internet permit living far from Lithuania while retaining contacts with those left behind and never distancing oneself from life there. Indeed, perhaps it is not even worthwhile to talk about emigration in the twenty-first century. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to simply talk about the processes of migration or employ the term applied by sociologists more and more often – transnationalism.

Nonetheless, the word "emigration" has been stirring up a great many emotions, discussions, anxieties, and even

[1] Krapavickaitė, "Idėja: suburti emigrantų protus."

resentments in Lithuania for a number of years. This word provokes people in the country's interior, and politicians frequently use it as a tool. The word "emigration" is constantly used in a negative manner, as in "a dying Lithuania," "an extent of emigration that is startling Europe," "an irretrievable loss to Lithuania," "the danger of national extinction," and other similar phrases that the news media emphasize nearly every day. It is not the process of emigration that prompts apprehension – that is an unavoidable matter – but the demographic problems, i.e., the low birthrate and the aging population. These have become complicated problems for the state. Some lament:

> Obviously, we are giving up as a nation. We are falling out of the game in the world and leaving – walking out. We are living in a country that will no longer exist in a hundred years.
>
> We have two choices: either we face extinction with dignity with our heads held high like the defenders of Pilėnai did, or we become concerned about how to put a stop to this leave-taking.[2]

The voices heard less frequently note that every phenomenon has its benefits as well as shortcomings. It is the same with emigration. They say it cannot be explicitly judged in a negative manner and try to bring out the positive features about emigration: a large portion of earned income is transferred to and invested in the country, the unemployment rate is lower, and new experiences are gained.

A lack of information is probably one of the most important problems that prevents recognizing the process of emigration from Lithuania. There is an insufficient amount of reliable data about the precise extent of emigration, its directions and trends, its potential changes, and the emigration-inclined attitudes in Lithuania at the current time.

A new stage of emigration, which has been continuously rising and falling and causing anxiety, began once Lithuania regained its independence. Not a single town or village can be found in Lithuania that has not had people leave. According

[2] Ivaškevičius, "Galime oriai išnykti."

to the 2010 statistical data, every tenth resident of Lithuania (about 11 percent) has left to work abroad for more than six months of the year, about 40 percent had a family member who has left, and about 80 percent, i.e., nearly every resident, has acquaintances who have left.[3] A saying going around Lithuania is that the only people who do not emigrate today are the totally lazy (those supported by the state) or pensioners. Therefore, whenever statistical indicators and the news media blow one bubble after another about the rising tide of emigration, no one doubts that it could be otherwise. Meanwhile, no one has taken a count of how many Lithuanians have actually left to seek their fortunes elsewhere, and probably no one ever will. The 1990-2010 data from the Lithuanian Department of Statistics show that some 615,000 residents have emigrated,[4] and, it is said that this number is possibly much higher. The most widely employed indicator of emigration is the number who have declared their leaving and social questionnaire surveys. Unfortunately, neither indicator is comprehensive because, for one reason or another, many people do not declare their leaving. Meanwhile, although social surveys ask people how many persons have left some specific household, there is really no specific starting point for evaluating the extent of emigration. A good example is the sudden surge of "emigration" in April of 2010, when 2009 income declarations were almost due. According to a new law, payments for the newly Obligatory Health Insurance had to be made; thus even those who had left long ago were prompted to officially declare their emigration to evade this payment.

Lithuanian communities abroad can only guess at the number of arrivals of their fellow countrymen. This generally reflects the number of their countrymen who participate in the functions of the community, so these guesses reflect a distorted view. Lithuania's diplomatic offices do not have more accurate information about the number of emigrants in their countries,

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3 Kniežaitė, "Emigracijos lyderių dešimtmetis."

4 Lithuanian Department of Statistics. *Dėl oficialios tarptautinės migracijos statistikos.*

and the data of the relevant foreign country can only supplement the existing statistics fragmentally. It seemed this question might be answered by the 2011 census, despite the obvious distrust in the psychological mindset of Lithuanians, which makes them tend to conceal their data and precludes revelation of a true picture. The census results shook society up. What seemed to cause the greatest anxiety was that the nation would no longer have three million inhabitants. However, with a push on the statistics, those three million were still found.[5] The forecast, though, was not much better: the numbers of emigrants would grow. The numbers gathered by questionnaires are definitely no source of joy; most respondents relate their desire to go abroad for at least a short time, or to emigrate. The Internet is overwhelmed with anonymous commentaries and urgings to emigrate from Lithuania as quickly as possible. A survey conducted by Grafton Recruitment, a company for selecting personnel, reports that as many as 70 percent of Lithuanians would leave the country for an indeterminate time if working and living conditions abroad were excellent.[6]

How should such a phenomenon be understood? Is Lithuania's economic and political situation, i.e., the "push factors" (demographic, economic, political) at fault, that such huge numbers of the population are determined to leave their country for a shorter or longer time? Indeed, in the past, the usual phenomenon was for emigration to take place from impoverished, economically deprived countries to economically stronger ones. Actually, economic migration is not restricted to impoverished countries; even residents of affluent and economically strong countries leave for other countries in quest of a better life. The examples of Germany and Italy these days clearly attest to this. Economic aspects are usually accentuated when discussing Lithuania's ever more rapid emigration, citing, for example, "the difficult economic situation" and "once

[5] According to the advance data on the 2011 Census of the Population and Housing, there were 3,054,000 permanent residents in Lithuania on March 1, 2011.

[6] "70 proc. lietuvių emigruotų, jei tam būtų tinkamos sąlygos."

Lithuania's economy is on the upswing, the problem will fade away." Other researchers have noticed that the reasons for today's emigration do not always lie with money alone. It would be difficult to explain on the basis of this factor alone why Lithuania's rate of emigration exceeds that of its neighbors, Latvia or Estonia, by several times, when these countries are not economically stronger. In addition, the same sort of emigration is noticeable in social classes that are now enjoying significantly better life conditions. At times, the "heritage of the rootless Soviet person" is used as an explanation, with the consolation that the new generation will mature and make everything all right. However, time is ticking on, and the now mature generation of independent Lithuania is not only failing to stop the flow out of the country, but is actually reviving it.

Is emigration determined by strong "pull factors"? Such factors include the policies of foreign countries (e.g., attracting experts into West European countries and, earlier, the especially attractive "green card" into the United States, tolerance towards illegal immigration and the like), economic and cultural possibilities that are nonexistent in Lithuania and, last but not least, a vision of the Western world that remains strongly rooted in the Lithuanian consciousness. Possibly, the secret of it lies yet elsewhere. Lately, researchers have been hinting more and more often at psychological reasons for emigration, which are difficult to explain and define. These may constitute the sort that could conditionally be called "matters of fashion." ("If others can, why can't I?") Another may be a failure to comprehend one's own identity.

Does all this possibly lie in the Lithuanian *character*? This issue comes to the fore when looking at the history of Lithuanian emigration – after all, Lithuania has consistently been one of the countries in East Europe providing the most migrants (in relation to its population) since the end of the nineteenth century, according to the calculations made by Fainhauz, in which Lithuanians ranked third by population (following Poles and

Slovaks) of East European groups in Pennsylvania.[7] Only certain periods, during wars or for other reasons (like the Iron Curtain during Soviet times) limited the numbers of emigrants; however, once such obstacles disappeared, the flow of emigration would ensue again.

Is it possible that migration is a normal characteristic of Lithuanians? Could it be that we are not familiar with the national character of Lithuanians? Perhaps they are not the sedentary agricultural workers we imagine them to be, or that schools implanted in our collective consciousness. Could it be that the urge to travel, to get to know new places and new countries, was never foreign to Lithuanians? After all, Lithuanians did not only travel the well-worn path to the land of dreams, the United States, or to the economically strong countries, but they also reached more exotic lands, such as China, Cuba, Chile, and the Philippines. What do we know about these people? In school we continue to tell our children stories about the Lithuanian-Americans Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas and their flight from New York to Kaunas in 1933, or about Tadeusz Kosciuszko,[8] a leader of the 1794 Polish-Lithuanian Insurrection and, once in a while, we mention his participation in the United States War for Independence. Then, in 2002, Lithuania discovered Ignacy Domeyko,[9] who had graduated from Vilnius University and went on to become a world-renowned scientist,

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7 Fainhauz, *Lithuanians in the USA*, 21.

8 Tadeusz Kosciuszko (1746-1817), a famous fighter for the independence of the state of Lithuania-Poland, is considered a national hero in Poland, Belarus, and the United States. He participated in the battle for American independence (1776-1786) and he was one of the main leaders of the 1794 Polish-Lithuanian Insurrection.

9 Ignacy Domeyko (1802–1889), a famed geologist and mineralogist, participated in the 1831 Insurrection. When it failed, he left for France and, in 1838-1889, lived in Chile, where he worked in geography and mineralogy and researched the nature of Chile. There he discovered reserves of gold, copper and coal, and established a network of meteorological stations. He served as rector of Santiago University in Chile for many years and was named an honorary citizen of Chile.

mineralogist, and the long-term rector of Santiago University, as well as an honorary citizen of the Republic of Chile. Quite a few are aware of Matas Šalčius,[10] Lithuania's travel correspondent, and of American actor Charles Bronson,[11] who was of Lithuanian descent. However, only one or another Lithuanian will have heard about the biologist who lived and worked in the Philippines, Pranciškus Baltrus Šivickis;[12] about the missionary who had worked in faraway Brazil, Father Aleksandras Bendoraitis (1919-1998); or about the Lithuanian émigrés who had established Ijui Town in the Rio Grande do Sul State of Brazil in about 1888.[13] A great many similar stories can be told. How many more people like these travelers can be found? Or, are they known at all? Why is it they do not fit into the image of the Lithuanian nation that has been developed and created by our society? Maybe Lithuania was always a nation of travelers. The current situation could attest to this. According to the data of companies engaged in tourism, tourists from foreign countries are more familiar with Lithuania and know more about it than Lithuanians do. For Lithuanians, it is just the opposite: they are very familiar with Western European countries, tourist centers, and resorts.[14] Often, even people who have a difficult time making ends meet will spend their hard-earned money on vacations in Western Europe, prompted not just by a desire to see the world, but also for psychological reasons ("if others can,

[10] Matas Šalčius (1890-1940) was a renowned journalist, writer and traveler from Lithuania. In his travels, he visited Western European countries, Balkan lands, the Near East, and South America.

[11] Charles Bronson – Kazys Bučinskis (1921-2003), a popular actor in westerns, was born into a Lithuanian family living in Pennsylvania.

[12] Pranciškus Baltrus Šivickis (1882-1968) was born in Lithuania and emigrated to the United States in 1906, where he completed his education. Several years later (1922-1928), he lived in the Philippines, where he was a professor at the University of Manila. In 1928, he returned to Lithuania and accomplished a great deal in science and education there.

[13] Saulaitis, "Beglobių gydytojas."

[14] Žvirblytė, "Lietuva – lietuvių turizmo podukra."

why can't I?") and by not wanting to lag behind their neighbors, friends, and relatives.

Different social, historical, and even psychosocial examinations of Lithuanian society might be able to provide answers to these questions. None exist as yet, however. Therefore, we must admit we do not know very much about that part of our nation scattered over various countries.

A brief pause to examine the history of emigration will make it clear how we look as a "nation of emigrants" in a historical context. Is the current emigration truly of a type that never existed before now?

Conceivably, the beginning of emigration by Lithuanians could be traced to between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the Grand Duchy took on imperialistic features. Nevertheless, it is unlikely anyone would name these movements as the prehistory of Lithuanian emigration; this concept is more generally applied to events in modern times. Seventeenth-century migration has not been examined more widely, either. This was usually motivated by religious conflict (for example, when Lithuania's Protestants were forced out due to the terror of the Counter Reformation). There were additional exoduses after the division of the Republic of Lithuania and Poland and after the 1831 and 1863 insurrections, which doomed Lithuanians to emigrate to France and other countries.

Nevertheless, it was not until the intersection of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that largely economic reasons marked Lithuania as a nation of émigrés. Economic conditions (a surplus of labor and the weak development of manufacturing) encouraged the migration of the population to cities and regions with stronger industries, first to Latvia and other Russian provinces. Over 300,000 Lithuanians lived in different provinces of the Russian Empire between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.[15] Part of

[15] In 1897, approximately 300,000 émigrés from Lithuania resided in various provinces of the Russian Empire. From 1897 to 1914, about another 74,000 Lithuanians left cities of the Russian Empire. Vaitiekūnas, *Lietuvos gyventojai*, 279, 295.

this population returned to live in Lithuania in the early twentieth century, once the country established its independence. The migration of Lithuanians to the United States grew in the 1880s. Although economic reasons prompted most Lithuanians to leave, certain ideological and political motives also played a role. These were evasion of service in the Czar's army, the Czarist policy of Russification, the growing Lithuanian nationalist movement, war, and other reasons. This massive emigration continued until World War I. Researchers note from 300,000 to 500,000 Lithuanians arrived in the United States between 1868 and 1914.[16] Fewer ended up in Great Britain – only 4,000 Lithuanians went to England and about 8,000 to Scotland. Even fewer went to Canada – about 4,000, and only singular individuals reached South America.

Emigration negatively affected any possible growth in the population of Lithuania. Until World War I, more than 500,000 Lithuanian nationals emigrated from Lithuania, or some 25 percent of its residents.[17] The number of residents decreased so much that, at the end of the nineteenth century, an outcry was raised that the nation of Lithuania would soon cease to exist – everyone would emigrate except the old people, who would die out, with no one left to tend their graves.

> All the young ones will go off, and only the old folks will be left, so who will look after their heads and manage their properties?

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[16] Until 1899, the immigration offices of the United States did not separate out the Lithuanian nationality when they registered immigrants. Thus any count of how many Lithuanians arrived prior to 1899 is guesswork. Even after 1899, the numbers of Lithuanian immigrants are not accurate, because there was no singular national consciousness. Lithuanians often wrote themselves in as Poles (according to religion) or as Russians (according to the empire from which they emigrated). According to the official statistics of the Bureau of Immigration of the United States of America, 252,594 people from Lithuania arrived to the United States from 1899-1914. Kučas, *Amerikos lietuvių istorija*, 86.

[17] The population of the Lithuanian province (Vilnius, Kaunas and Suvalkai) was about 2.7 million, according to the census data at the end of the nineteenth century. Vaitiekūnas, *Lietuvos gyventojai*, 85.

> – Naturally, it'll be foreign tribes. ... We're being doubly tortured: by the strangers and by our own: The strangers, when they'll be printing our language and looking at us as enemies of another faith and, although only a small nation, we ourselves are splitting into two parts, one of which is toiling at home, while the other disappears into some foreign corner.[18]

Meanwhile, the Lithuanians who became affluent abroad started their own businesses, established presses, published books, built churches, and set up schools and political and cultural associations. Émigrés settled in for the long term, acquired tremendous cultural and economic strength, and had the ability to affect considerably the cultural, moral, political, and economic life of Lithuania.

Another large wave of emigration hit during the period of Lithuania's independence (1918-1940), when over 100,000 residents withdrew from the country. Despite its emigration being markedly less than during the prewar period, Lithuania was still a leader in terms of the extent of its emigration compared to other European countries.[19] At that time, the temptation of its "New World" changed U.S. immigration policy. Quotas were introduced in 1921, effectively halting immigration from Lithuania, so Lithuanians headed elsewhere, especially to South America (Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay). Shipping companies, emigration bureaus, and devious agents drew a picture of this distant, unknown land as an Eldorado – a land of dreams. South American policies and the "free" passage greatly tempted Lithuanians. (Actually, an émigré paid for the trip after employment in the country of immigration, usually working for holders of large estates or owners of *fazenda* coffee plantations, who paid the shipping lines in advance for the travel expenses incurred by émigrés.) We now know only too well what this dream land, this Eldorado, turned out to be in reality.

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[18] SZ...is , "Tyla, geresnė byla," 168.

[19] 1926 was a year of upswing in emigration by Lithuanians. For every 10,000 in population, there were 46.5 émigrés: the most popular destinations were Ireland, 101; Estonia, 21.7; Poland, 16.9; Germany, 10.3; and Spain, 20.4. Ruseckas, *Pasaulio lietuviai,* 236.

World War II broke off the relations Lithuania had formed with its diaspora. As the war was coming to an end, over 60,000 political refugees fled Lithuania for the West. Political reasons, i.e., the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, caused this massive emigration. Although the number of Lithuanians who then withdrew from the country is small compared to the earlier waves of emigration, the change in Lithuania's population was huge, after adding the numbers of casualties and exiles during the war and postwar periods. The shift in population was especially harsh because Lithuania lost a major portion of its intelligentsia.

A comparison of these historical flows of migration with the current emigration can make it seem that there is "nothing new" going on, if the volume of Lithuania's emigration was always large. Perhaps that is why Eurostat data show that Lithuania leads the EU in the number of migrants per 1,000 of its population, surpassing Latvia and Estonia by several times and even surpassing Poland.[20] Furthermore, Lithuania's negative balance of migration has led for the past ten years in a row, whereas the other countries constituting the top five in migration keep changing. Since, as Audra Sipavičienė, manager of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Vilnius, states, "We are constantly a leader,"[21] it can be boldly forecast that this characteristic of Lithuania will persist into the future.

Frequently, discussions urge that emigration must be fought and its processes must be stopped by all means. But is it possible to stop or to curtail emigration? Were there ever any attempts to fight or restrict migration? Were there any effective means to do this?

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[20] In 2008, the balance of migration per 1,000 residents of Lithuania was -2.3; of Latvia, -1.1; of Germany, -0.7; of Poland, -0.4; and of Bulgaria, -0.1. Now these numbers are even greater, because the data provided by the Department of Statistics indicate that the negative balance of migration for Lithuania continues to increase annually: in 2008 it was -4.7 and in 2010 it was actually -23.7. Lithuanian Department of Statistics, *International migration.*

[21] Kniežaitė, "Emigracijos lyderių dešimtmetis."

Emigration was officially prohibited from the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, when Lithuania was a part of Czarist Russia. Although only a small percentage of people emigrated legally at that time, illegal emigration was a mass occurrence. Conditions for emigrating secretly were especially favorable: a far-flung network of agents (constituting a profitable business) was well developed. People were encouraged and then organized to cross the border for carriage to the United States and other countries. Residents near the borders provided compensated assistance for border crossings. Neighboring countries had their interests, too, and the shipping lines of Germany and England brought in huge profits.[22] Not only did they fail to stop emigration, but some nations actually promoted it in various ways. Studies by the historian Alfonsas Eidintas reveal that the struggle of the Czar's administration to restrict emigration and its propaganda against emigration proved fruitless.[23]

The negative opinions regarding emigration voiced by most of the leaders in the national rebirth of Lithuania at the time, such as Jonas Basanavičius, Jonas Šliūpas, Vincas Kudirka, Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas and others, had no influence either. Attitudes against emigration continued to strengthen, however. The Lithuanian press urged Lithuanians to remain in their homeland and not leave for the United States. Émigrés were urged to return to Lithuania with their savings. They were told they would become denationalized in the United States and scattered among many cities; the younger generation would no longer understand their past, and the third generation would speak only English. On the one hand, priests were encouraged to talk people out of emigration during their confessions; while on the other, they provided the migrants with Catholic literature, so they would not be lonely and forlorn in a foreign locale. Lithuanian political groups, especially the Catholic stream, published literature that urged readers not to emigrate and warned them about the weary journeys, the difficulties and

[22] Eidintas, *Lietuvių Kolumbai*, 20-27.
[23] Ibid., 16-18.

potential misfortunes.[24] Despite all the warnings about the dangers and losses inherent in emigration issued by the national rebirth activists and other distinguished people, the reality was different: the tempting image of the West and the New World never faded from the consciousness of Lithuanians. However, there was a quite different reality awaiting village people with little education (illiterates made up 53 percent of Lithuanians who arrived in the United States in 1899-1914[25]). All that awaited them in the foreign country was grueling labor in the mines of Pennsylvania or the slaughterhouses of Chicago, a fate that differed radically from what they had imagined or hoped for. Life was much harder than it had been in Lithuania for a number of years. Nevertheless, only the First World War stopped the flow of emigration to the United States.

The Soviet period is even more interesting and demands far more research. The Iron Curtain was probably the most successful barrier to emigration for Lithuanians. Only a very small percentage left the country one way or another, legally or illegally. The official negative outlook of the Soviet Union toward the West and emigration was indoctrinated from an early age: emigration was treason against the homeland, and émigrés were collaborators with the Nazis or some foreign secret service. Nonetheless, the myth of the West and the Free World continued to form and gain popularity in the consciousness of ordinary people, which often also contained a silent envy of Americans and of those with relatives abroad. The incongruity of this is especially noticeable during the Soviet period: a distrust of everyone everywhere, especially arrivals from the West, existed alongside a mystical and tempting fantasy of the West and the Western life style. Jokes on this topic were especially popular,[26] and efforts were made to make use of even the

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[24] Ibid., 48-50.

[25] Fainhauz, *Lithuanians in Multi-ethnic Chicago*, 21

[26] One example: "Question to Armenian radio show: 'What should you do if the Soviets open the border for a short time?' Answer: 'Climb up a tree as quickly as possible to avoid being stampeded by those running to the West.' "

slightest possibility to emigrate legally (marriage to a foreigner, a chance to work abroad, tourism). Perhaps research on Soviet consciousness would reveal the longing, the nostalgia for the forbidden West, the vision and the dream of it, all of which are so difficult to explain. To a large extent, this led to the rather large wave of emigration from Lithuania that arose as soon as the thaw began during 1988-1990.

A comparison of the emigration processes and policies of the 1918-1940 republic and today's Lithuania shows that, once again, one would have to say, "There's nothing new." Emigration has not been regulated or controlled, not then and not now: it is simply not of concern to the government:

> Even the large states treasure the people of their nation, but tiny Lithuania squanders thousands of its own, and perhaps imagines there will be a sufficient population anyway.[27]

> We must begin saving our own people; if we throw our own citizens about in all directions, then the age of the Lithuanian nation will not be very long.[28]

> It is time we understood that not looking after emigration matters by means of the state apparatus is a policy of pure loss.[29]

> Until the state and the nation create significantly better employment circumstances and opportunities for earnings by powerful and focused efforts, it is will be very difficult to say if our land has truly lost by allowing thousands of émigrés go abroad on behalf of those who remain at home. And never mind patriotism: one who is poor and hungry does not fill with patriotism in any country.[30]

Make no mistake. These quotes do not come from politicians today. They are from politicians and intellectuals of interwar Lithuania. The processes happening today are very similar to those of interwar Lithuania: a growing wave of emigration, government indifference, and an attitude that it is a process that cannot be stopped or regulated.

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[27] K. P., "Lietuvos valdžia ir išeivija," 2.
[28] K. P., "Naujoji Lietuvos emigracija," 2.
[29] Šalkauskis, *Lietuvių tauta*, 61; Pšibilskis, *Kazys Pakštas*, 267.
[30] Pakštas, *Baltijos respublikų politinė geografija*, 52.

The processes for return immigration during this period also bore a great resemblance to today. Kazys Pakštas was probably one of the first scholars in interwar Lithuania to ascertain, "We will not return our émigrés to Lithuania."[31] The discussion of earlier efforts to bring back our émigrés and the reasons why they do not return included: poor economic conditions, personal/family circumstances, the social policy of the country, the foreignness of the home society ("they won't accept me"), and the like. Most thought it fun to return for vacations and talk about how Lithuania is developing and becoming more beautiful, but not to stay. Interestingly, even earlier (during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) the majority of economic émigrés went off to the United States or other countries "for just a short time," with plans to earn some money and establish themselves in a better way back in Lithuania. Some succeeded in saving money over several years and returning; most, however, remained abroad, adjusted to the foreign country, and became immigrants. Even during the most severe global recessions, when the lives of émigrés in South America were more difficult than in Lithuania, the percentage of returnees was not very great. Based on historical experiences, it has to be admitted that most émigrés will never return. Reemigration was never very large (20 percent at best[32]), no matter what the economic and political conditions might have been.

All that is left in this case is to agree with some commentators on the Internet:

> With all due respect, dear sir, the process of people and of nations packing up and moving has been constant throughout the entire history of humankind. Your lamenting is more than funny, especially during these 'times of a shrinking world,' when traveling to another country in the world and making contact with it is fast and easy. This acts the same as the law of communicating vessels in physics. If you know the means to stop that law, then it is worthy of the Nobel Prize. Good luck![33]

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[31] K. P., "Inteligentija," 2.

[32] Eidintas, *Lietuvių kolumbai*, 32.

[33] Internet commentary by Marilė beneath the Ivaškevičius article, "Galime oriai išnykti."

It is possible to spend considerable time discussing and deliberating whether or not emigration is merely a nonrecoverable loss to Lithuania. Historical studies have revealed that a particular viewpoint on émigrés has unfolded when it was necessary to fight to reestablish the country or to defend it from international dangers. As the independent state was forming, the country's foreign policy made other kinds of efforts, and the expectations from émigrés were different. Émigrés performed an especially important role during the time the modern Lithuanian state appeared in 1918, as attested by the rather comprehensive works by Vincas Liulevičius, Alfonsas Eidintas, Gary Hartman,[34] and other authors. The government of Lithuania understood the influence that its émigrés had, and encouraged a return of capital from the United States to Lithuania, even though such efforts quite frequently ended up in bankruptcy or were nationalized after the Soviet occupation.

The significance of political émigrés grew again after the loss of independence in 1940. What about the work done by Lithuanian communities in various countries of the world at reestablishing Lithuania's independence after 1990? To date, neither historians nor political scientists have adequately evaluated or even attempted to describe the contributions made by émigrés to the case for liberation, and what political, cultural, moral, and material benefits these brought to Lithuania. Currently, the International Organization for Migration provides data about monetary transfers made by private persons into Lithuania. Meanwhile, researchers on migration are currently directing attention to the economic benefits from emigration and its influence in Lithuania.[35]

There is a very serious need for psychosocial analyses of Lithuanian society which would not only help to understand the actualities in Lithuania and the problems of its communities, but also the relationship of émigrés with their country. The odd and painful relationship of the new émigrés with Lithua-

[34] See Liulevičius, *Išeivijos vaidmuo*; Eidintas, *Lietuvių Kolumbai*; Hartman, *The Immigrant as Diplomat*.

[35] Kašinskis, "Migrantų piniginių pervedimų tendencijos," 35-54.

nia is obvious in the statements made in Lithuania and abroad. Lithuania sometimes seems like a country that does not love its own people.

Who can answer where the pessimism and the overly negative view of life in Lithuania come from? Why are Lithuanians inclined to paint a picture of Lithuania in especially gloomy colors? An impression forms that Lithuanians do not even know how to take pleasure in Lithuania's gains and in what they have. They do not feel free and happy in their own country, and they try to find that elsewhere, in a foreign land. Comments on the Internet explain how bad it is in Lithuania and express a need to run from Lithuania as fast as possible. Along with that, the Lithuanians remaining in the country are forming a negative outlook toward émigrés. Hostility, casting blame, condemnation, and misunderstanding are not rare. The predominant portrait of the emigrant in public discourse is that of a blue-collar laborer cursing Lithuania while yearning for the cheaper services there, a criminal émigré devoid of citizenship.[36] Society itself encourages separateness as more and more public statements increase the gap between fellow nationals (those remaining in Lithuania) and strangers (the émigrés).

Researchers into postcolonialism today would explain this situation by the common traumatic experiences of war, the Soviet period, and postcolonization. According to this theory, people do not know how or are unable to love their children, so they unwittingly push them out into the world. And since the children sense this rejection, they feel forced to leave. Theories of postcolonialism would probably also help to explain why people feel like strangers in Lithuania – not just those who have emigrated, but also those who have remained. The view forming in the public sphere is that, for some reason, the sons or daughters who wind up abroad and then let us know they've left for a long time suddenly become dear to our country. Various events held in Lithuania by the World Lithuanians provide yet another pretext for politicians and high-ranking

[36] Dobrynina, "Emigrantų diskurso analizė."

government officials to say a word on the issue of emigration, on the new visions being developed for rallying together the people scattered throughout different countries, and on how to lower emigration and increase the numbers of those who return. These speeches are becoming eerily similar to one another. Meanwhile, paying tribute to the émigrés has quite often had a negative impact on those left behind. "Assertive young minds, young people who are active, creative, and responsible and have initiative are needed in Lithuania," Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė declared in 2011 at the World Lithuanian Symposium on Arts and Sciences, praising Lithuanians abroad who have not lost contact with their homeland.[37] Meanwhile, what about the assertive young people with initiative growing up in Lithuania? Addressing this question, a reporter for the *Kauno diena* daily newspaper writes:

> Everyone who has crossed over the boundary separating an émigré from a local becomes one of our own – in other words, the kind of person who has not merited any special caresses from governmental entities. [...] In what way are the graduates of universities and colleges in Lithuania inferior to the Lithuanians living abroad that they do not ever receive the sort of exceptional attention from the state that the state has seized upon to show émigrés?

So asks this journalist, concluding that one of the bigger problems is not the residents' qualifications, patriotism or morality, but the way the state views them: "You only become beloved when you pack your suitcases."[38]

This is not the opinion of one journalist. There are more and more expressions of dissatisfaction with the existing situation. Of course, this outlook also attests to a problem in the society – the waiting for praise, encouragement, and awards from the government while still continuing to be afraid to change something, afraid to take the initiative, to act or to start a business. It is much easier to sit around and complain about how bad it is in Lithuania and how nothing will change. "It's

[37] Juodelienė, "Nemylimi."
[38] Ibid.

impossible to live in our country. There aren't any opportunities here. A person is forced to fail. And there's nothing you can do about it..."[39] This is heard everywhere in Lithuania, on TV broadcasts and in the pages of newspapers, on the streets, in bars and marketplaces, during chats with shots of whiskey in hand as well as during serious discussions. Matters regarding the role of the state and what is a civil society are not discussed. It is not mentioned that a state does not change on its own; that it is changed by people who have the perspective, purpose, and income to implement a goal.

The results of research conducted by David Bartram, a scholar from the University of Leicester, appeared in the Lithuanian press late last year and caused quite a reaction.[40] It revealed that there is no country in which émigrés feel as happy as the citizens born in that country do. His research turned attention to the painful identity crisis suffered by émigrés, including Lithuanians. They feel like strangers that no one is expecting in the foreign country, while nostalgia for the land of their birth continues to grow. Perhaps we only learn to love Lithuania from afar. In other words, are we able to understand and evaluate only what we have lost? After all, even those who, according to public discourse and announcements in the media, are disappointed and dissatisfied with Lithuania, who don't want to hear anything about it, very often do not forget where they came from and maintain contact with Lithuania and the people close to them who have remained there. Once settled in some London or Chicago filled with multicolored nationalities, Lithuanians tread paths to the local Lithuanian grocery stores and Lithuanian-managed health treatment facilities and haircut salons. They gather with their own kind and even participate in commemorations of Lithuania's national holidays (which they never did while living in Lithuania). They pull out their national symbols more often than just during basketball championships. It would seem that only while abroad one

[39] Neverauskas, "Viskas iš karto ir dykai?"

[40] Gudavičiūtė, "Lietuvių klajūnams"; Pečkaitytė, "(Ne)tobulas emigrantas."

learns to enjoy and to be happy, to value and to understand. Whether we like it or not, one conclusion works its way into our minds. Maybe it truly is necessary to emigrate for a short while to begin to understand what one has and what one has given up, and to begin the return home.

Instead of conclusions

The ever more active recent discussions on emigration reveal the growing extent of emigration as well as the latest search for a Lithuanian identity. To date, some of the traits of the collective memory and historical consciousness formed in Lithuania's schools often contradict the realities of globalization. The concepts of an archaic Lithuania wafting ethnosocial visions formulated at the end of the nineteenth century (the Lithuanian language, the moss-covered hut, Vytautas marching to the Black Sea, and the grandness of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) are implanted into the minds of young people to this very day. For this reason, Lithuanians often live in their history, remembering the grand times of the Grand Duchy with undisguised joy, but then have a tough time coming to terms with the thought that we are a nation of merely three million people. Our collective consciousness still does not contain a vision of the Lithuanians who lived in various countries of the world since olden times, who achieved a great deal and are renowned in the history of the lands where they lived. Perhaps that could explain our outlook on emigration and our relationship with émigrés, on what is "our own" and why, and what is "foreign" in the imaginations of Lithuanians. Why does one of our own so quickly become rejected as a stranger? Perhaps that is what causes our inability to understand one another.

In conclusion, I'd like to go back to where I started. Maybe this entire issue of emigration is made overly meaningful. Maybe it is simply a natural process that needs to be assessed soberly regarding all its privileges and weaknesses. After all, Lithuanians spent fifty years living in an entirely closed society, seeing nothing and comprehending nothing. That is why they are still unable to tolerate different races, religions, or

sexual orientations. In this respect, emigration is good simply for the reason that people leave to see the world and widen their awareness. Their outlooks change, and they actually learn a foreign language. Therefore a desire to limit, stop, prohibit or condemn simply widens the gap from reality and causes animosity and an inability to understand one another within Lithuanian society. It could be the opposite. Openness and recognition could change a good deal – understanding, tolerance, the outlook on oneself and on others, and, finally, the outlook on Lithuania itself. "People need to run around in the world to understand how good it is in Lithuania. I've lived in four countries over ten years. Now I live in Lithuania again, and I'm high on it, but I don't know how long that will last... But, after all, that's what life is all about!"[41]

Translated by Vijolė Arbas

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[41] Internet commentary by the Corpis on August 3, 2011 following an interview with Dr. Darius Udrys, who was born in the United States but has returned to Lithuania.

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Building Soviet Reality with Language and Metaphor

DAVID O'ROURKE

By way of truth in packaging, I should begin by stating that this essay rests on ten years of work in the former Soviet Union, much of it with dissidents, deportees, and members of the Lithuanian armed resistance to the Soviets. I have never met or spoken with a former official of the Soviet regime. Furthermore, at the same time that I began working in Eastern Europe, I was also starting a manuscript on the use of metaphor in promoting slavery, specifically the establishment of chattel slavery in Central and North America by the first generation of English and Spanish settlers. So I went to Eastern Europe with a developed interest in the use of state-sponsored metaphors to establish control over subject populations.

The Soviet government was ideologically based. It developed and made wide use of public media to proclaim the regime's superior nature and lofty goals. My interest here is in the link between their ideology and the proclaimed message, which addressed all aspects of national life. That link was inclusive enough, I believe, to see it as a new national metaphor. I describe metaphor at the start of the manuscript mentioned above, subsequently published. So, to begin, I will quote from that description:

> Metaphors can be seen as patterns of meaning that peoples use to explain life to themselves. Societies can have systems of collective memory and thought, image and symbol, that explain

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who they are and why they do what they do. ...Metaphors can function as linguistic bridges. They are images in a symbolic language that connects us with a living framework of beliefs and explanations that are convincing and satisfying enough to help us make sense of life.[1]

I am principally a writer, but for reasons I will explain, I shifted to producing a documentary film. The camera observes and records. It does not evaluate. So I found myself observing the function of state-created language rather than evaluating it. And what I concluded was that the Soviet system of pervasive, ideology-based, state communication was really a metaphor for Soviet life itself. But it was a powerful metaphor. It was powerful because it turned personal experience on its head. And it required acceptance of that new reality, if the individual wanted to survive.[2]

Spending months with victims of state power raises questions. What happens to people when they are progressively taught to mistrust their instincts, mistrust their culture and history, their own human experience, and mistrust all the metaphors that have explained life for them and their people for generations? What is it like to be presented, often under coercion, with a new complex of state-generated images and explanations that tell them who they are and what they are to do? And further, what happens to people when these same state-generated ideas and images begin to change, sometimes radically, without warning, and without explanations, and change for reasons they are told that are good for them and to their benefit?[3]

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1 O'Rourke, *America's First Settlers*, 8–9.

2 Richard Pipes traces the start of Lenin's use of terror to mid-February of 1918. In response to his fear that the German armies were going to crush the new socialist government, Lenin authorized the new security police, the Cheka, to execute suspected enemies, spies or resisters "on the spot," without mention of trials or hearings. (*A Concise History*, 173). In his major work, *The Great Terror*, Robert Conquest shows the development of and key role of state terror from the start of the Soviet regime up to the Stalin purges of 1936–1938.

3 "Communist propaganda strove, and to a surprising extent succeeded, in creating a fictitious world side by side with the world of everyday experience and in stark contradiction to it, in which the Soviet citizens were required to believe or at least pretend to believe." Pipes, *A Concise History*, 313.

Just as a documentary begins with a story line, so my interest in these issues and questions has a history. In 1999, I went to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. While there, I was recruited to teach a semester course at Vilnius University in the practice of family therapy. Interestingly, the social work courses were all offered as part of the curriculum of the faculty of philosophy. Lithuania, like the other Baltic republics, had been occupied by the Soviets soon after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of August 23, 1939, when Hitler and Stalin divided Eastern Europe between them. And the occupation was followed in short order by incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia into the USSR as member Soviet republics, but with rule directly from Moscow.

Back in 1999, Vilnius was still showing the effects of fifty years of Soviet occupation. The historic center was not the lovely Polish baroque city it is today. I was living in the center of the city, on Lukiškių aikštė, Lenin Square during Soviet days. Very early one summer morning, just after arriving there and still on California time, I was awakened by the bright summer sun and went out in search of an open café. Nothing was open; not a soul on the streets. So I wandered around for a while in the summer light.

Just across the square from the house where I was living is a turn of the century Beaux Arts building dating from czarist days. I had been told it was the old KGB headquarters, obviously an intimidating presence. Out of curiosity, I went and peeked in the window of the big double door into the dimly lit foyer inside. As I turned to leave, I instinctively tugged at the bronze door handle, and the door slid open. So I went into the high-ceilinged foyer, looked around, and saw a small, painted door on the far side. It too was unlocked and led to an unlighted stairway going down. I fumbled for a light, turned it on, and went down to the basement. I realized immediately that I was in the old KGB prison, seemingly untouched since the Soviets had fled a few years earlier. Corridors with grim, dark cells, heavy steel doors, some strange cells, apparently designed for torture, still intimidated. Off to the side, there was even one room with a dirt floor, which I found out later was where they shot people. I wandered around alone and in silence for about two hours. It was a very unsettling experience. My Lithuanian friends, of course, were incredulous that anyone would have

willingly gone into a prison that, for fifty years, all of them were desperate to stay out of.

To jump ahead. I realized soon after that what I had seen and experienced was a story that needed telling. And, as a writer, chose to tell it. That plan grew from my intended photo essay into collaboration with a colleague on a documentary film. And the story itself grew into a picture about the Soviets use of state-sponsored terror in their occupation of Lithuania and the Baltics. We filmed interviews with political dissidents who were exiled to Siberia, prisoners of the KGB, members of the armed resistance who had survived their prison terms, slave workers in the Gulag, deportees to the Arctic Coast, even deported children.[4] For political and social background, we interviewed historians from the Hoover Institute and Vilnius University.[5]

Like many Westerners, we were unaware how quickly after the start of the 1940 occupation the Soviets began to impose a different and inclusive view of truth, history, and reality on the nation. And it was a two-part effort. Not only was a new view imposed, the existing one had to be destroyed. Lenin had, on more than one occasion, said that you do not negotiate with your enemies – you exterminate them. The enemy was not, or even principally, individuals. Rather, it was a whole people's history. The Soviet occupiers were able to begin imposing the new metaphor in the Baltics so quickly because, as our historians

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[4] Latvian documentary filmmaker Dzintra Geka has produced several well-researched films on the deportation of children to Siberia. *2003 Siberian Diaries* is a four-part story depicting both the lot of deported children in Siberia and the unwillingness of neighbors and relatives to receive them after their release as adolescents or adults. The fact of their deportation left them with an exile-imprinted status as "enemies of the people," any contact with whom could itself be a crime. A second Dzintra Geka documentary, *Once There Was Siberia,* tells the story of the children deported to Siberia on the night of June 14, 1941, when approximately 30,000 people considered capable of resisting the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were rounded up and deported.

[5] These interviews and incidents are in the documentary film produced by this writer and Ken Gumbert, *Red Terror on the Amber Coast.*

explained, by 1939 they already had twenty years experience in Russia developing and perfecting the process.

The process was direct and coercive. A month after the initial armed occupation, a newly married young government worker in Kaunas, a major city, was called to an obligatory meeting. He was anticommunist, a reserve military officer, and had been distraught to see the Soviet occupation forces marching down Kaunas's main street just days earlier. But his new in-laws had just been arrested and taken away by the secret police in their first roundup, to no one knew where. The purpose of the meeting, it turned out, was to cheer the brilliance of Comrade Stalin in liberating Lithuania from the forces of reaction without firing a shot. They were ordered to cheer, he said, and he joined in the cheering with everyone else. The cheering went on and on because no one wanted to be seen as the first one to stop cheering.

A second example, from a school in a small village, indicates the extent of the imposed changes. The interviewee described how the newly appointed teacher told them to tear out certain pages in their history book, pages about national history.

> We were told that they were untrue and it had never happened. But of course we knew that they were true, and that it had happened. But we tore them out because the teacher told us to.[6]

Václav Havel notes in his published letters that there is a great difference between ordinary military dictatorship and the Soviet's ideology-founded system.[7] The difference is the Soviet's directive notion of history. History for Marx and the Soviet theorists was more than a record or analysis of what had happened. History was the lens looking into, even the embodiment of, an inevitable force directing where reality would go.

The difference was not just theoretical. It came to have great political importance because of Lenin's deep contempt for reformers.[8] Reforms and reformers sapped energy from

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[6] Both these examples are from filmed interviews in the possession of this writer.

[7] Havel, *Open Letters*, 135.

[8] The principle guiding Lenin was a dictum Marx had pronounced rather casually in 1871. ...Analyzing its failure, Marx had concluded that the Communards had committed a fundamental mistake in taking over instead of liquidating the existing political, social, and military structures." Pipes, *A Concise History*, 118.

revolution and revolutionaries. Reforms for Lenin were pointless, effete, and especially time-and energy-wasting games. As a Marxist, he believed that history has an inevitable direction, and the direction was clear. So you seized power. You imposed the inevitable social order. And lest anyone doubt you meant business, you used state-sponsored terror to eliminate the pointless alternatives, along with their supporters, to the new social order. As part of the new state metaphor you also had to use the state-controlled media to make the use of terror visible and prominent.

The Paris Commune failed, Marx said, because after its initial victory it compromised with the existing system. You do not compromise with capitalist systems – you exterminate them.[9] For someone intent on constructing a new national metaphor, the business of extermination lends itself to useful images that are both compelling and memorable. Given the great importance of religious and imperial images in Russia before the Revolution, creating new, opposite, and equally compelling images became a basic tool for the new Soviet regime.[10]

Lenin's revolutionary goals were born to urban Western intellectuals and envisaged a revolution among industrial workers. Great Russia – the Empire's central land of Russian speakers – was a region whose people were a rural, semi-literate peasantry, deeply steeped in a long-established culture. They were tied to the ancient rites of the Russian Orthodox Church, at least as they supported village life and the seasons, albeit with little respect for the clergy. Newly freed from serfdom, they had little sympathy for reforms that would take away the gains they had made in recent generations. Their revolutionary

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9 Ibid.

10 Figes, *A People's Tragedy*. Figes describes very well the social and national diversities of Russia and the peoples before and during the revolution. From the intransigence and incompetence of the czar; the diversity of the peoples within the empire, the majority of whom were not Russian; the great gap between the intellectuals, the military, the gentry, and the peasants; and the increasing reliance on the Ministry of the Interior to stem by repression any moves toward change, we see a nation moving toward complete collapse. In that picture we also see the challenge that lay in Lenin's plan to impress his socialist revolution on the nation and the role that state terror inevitably played in it.

goals went little farther than advancing the peasants' control over their land and promoting their own sense of village life. That life and all its traditions and values were communicated wonderfully well from generation to generation. The peasants were illiterate, but their metaphors were masterfully communicative. So the clash between the urban Bolshevik regime and the peasantry was more than a clash of wills. It was a clash of mutually exclusive metaphors for life and identity.

The clash came very quickly. Lenin's new government was quickly forced to wage war with the peasants in order to confiscate their grain crops. The chaos ushered in by the collapse of the Czarist system and the popular uprisings left Moscow and St. Petersburg short of food. The peasants refused to let go of their stored grain. Without it, Lenin feared he could soon be facing revolt in the cities from hungry mobs. He sent armed men to confiscate the grain.[11]

But he also set up a propaganda machine designed to demonize any resisters. Ordinary peasants could be – and were – pictured as greedy landlords, wreckers, enemies of both progress and the people. That the images bore no relation to reality was irrelevant. The images became the reality – that was their purpose. This new, propaganda-created class of rural exploiters was then peopled, often randomly, by unlucky individuals who were publicly charged and tried, and then publicly and visibly punished for their crimes. Whether there was, or was not, a crime was again irrelevant. Their crime and guilt were necessary, just as the existence of their artificially created class was necessary, to the new world of state-created truth.[12]

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[11] Lenin opened a war against the peasantry. As Figes writes, the Bolsheviks convinced themselves that "unless they extended their power to the countryside and launched a crusade against the grain-hoarding peasants" their revolution would be destroyed by starvation. To prevent that they declared that all surplus grain would henceforth be the property of the state. *A People's Tragedy*, 615.

[12] Pipes quotes a May 1918 decree of the Central Committee "...we must confront the question of ...creating in the village two contrasting and hostile forces..." Lenin chose to demonize farmers who resisted the confiscation of their grain as kulaks and, in an exhortation, decreed "Merciless war against these kulaks!. Death to them." Pipes, *A Concise History*, 206, 208.

In a land of almost universal literacy and instant communication, where truth is verified by reference to some kind of observable reality, it is not easy to appreciate the role of images in a land where most are semiliterate and communication is very limited. And when the images are the creation of the state, designed to eradicate the old culture and remake it with the state's own visions of reality, language itself takes on a new meaning. When the new language is accompanied with universal, state-sponsored terror, then the eradication of the old metaphors and the imposition of the new ones have much help. Language begins as an official state act. It becomes a means whereby intellectual reflection can be grounded in people from the outside. It does not rise with spontaneity from within the individual.[13]

Earlier, I mentioned that I had been asked to teach a semester course in the practice of family therapy. In a few months, my students would receive their master's degrees in social work and then go out to work in schools and hospitals around the country. Schooled until recently within Marxist theory, they were becoming interested in how family therapy was practiced in the United States. I knew that unemployment, alcoholism, verbal and physical abuse within the household, and drug use in the villages were not rare. And I presumed that they could well be the only professional person in their setting with any training in these issues. My goal was to prepare them to deal with the effects these situations could have on the students in the schools where they would be working. But it was clear to me early on that my approach and their expectations were very different.

So I asked them, if you had troubled students what would you do? I received the same answer. They would administer the prescribed psychological tests to determine the student's personality type. And then, once you understood the personal makeup, you would select a procedure described in the texts to fit that personality, which could bring about a change in the

[13] At the start of his chapter "Culture as Propaganda" in *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime*, Pipes quotes Joseph Brodsky: "But then that was precisely the goal of the whole enterprise: to uproot the special spiritually to the point of no return for how else can you build a genuinely new society? You start neither with the foundations, nor with the roof; you start by making new bricks." 282.

student's behavior. There was no reference to issues beyond the person. And it sounded like good Marxism to me.

Since I had been asked to teach from an American perspective, I decided to risk it. I told them that, from our point of view, there is no such thing as personality. Personality is an abstraction, a heuristic model. Only people are real. And what you should try to do is help the students deal with the real problems of life in a dysfunctional family. Only about half the students, I suspect, had any idea what I was talking about.

Havel wrote about life in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 80s. He wrote that the inner aim of the Soviet system "is not the mere preservation of power in the hands of the ruling clique, as first appears. Rather... self preservation is subordinated to something higher, to a kind of blind automatism which drives the system. ..."[14]

I was teaching students who looked and acted like the university students I see in Berkeley. But I was left with the suspicion that I was talking with the heirs of fifty years of state-controlled Soviet communication, backed up by police intimidation. In Havel's words, was fifty years of exposure to that blind automatism, which had shaped social communication since before they were born, still at work? I did not know. Can state-created and state-imposed metaphors designed to repress spontaneity be changed by a new social openness to spontaneity? I think about these questions, but I have no answers.

[14] Anne Applebaum asks whether or not the Soviet leaders actually believed in what they were doing. "The relationship between Soviet propaganda and Soviet reality was always a strange one: the factory is barely functioning, in the shops there is nothing to buy, old ladies cannot afford to heat their apartments, yet in the streets outside banners proclaim the 'triumph of socialism'..." But whether it was belief or stratagem, it was carried out, and it was effective. Applebaum, *Gulag*, 23.

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Negotiating Official Lithuanian Participation for Chicago's Second World's Fair

SALVATORE DE SANDO

An Overview of the Fair: A Brightly Lit Art Deco Affair

During the years 1933 and 1934, Chicago hosted its second World's Fair. Known as the Century of Progress International Exposition, the Fair celebrated Chicago's centennial in a spectacular display of diverse exhibits developing the theme of human progress. The fairgrounds spanned a section of Lake Michigan lakefront immediately south of the city's downtown. Centrally located, the Fair attracted visitors from all over Chicago, the United States, and the world. A significant amount of foreign participation occurred, despite the ongoing worldwide economic depression. During both years of the Fair, a variety of Lithuanians participated, and they contributed to the Fair's economic success while drawing attention to Lithuanian culture. This study analyzes why the government of Lithuania did not successfully organize an official Lithuanian building at the World's Fair in 1933.

From 1928 until 1934, Lithuanian participation was negotiated locally, nationally, and internationally. During this process, multiple proposals for official Lithuanian participation were considered. These proposals included a Lithuanian house display in the European village, a separate Baltic village display (with Estonia, Finland, and Latvia), and an independent Lithuanian building. Ultimately, no permanent Lithuanian structure

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or pavilion was built, although two separate Lithuanian Days were hosted at the Fair.

Participation in a World's Fair was not a trivial pursuit, as evidenced in the variety of enthusiastic international participants and their projects. At the Century of Progress, many European states sponsored the construction of buildings to showcase national culture. Belgium, England, France, and Switzerland built model villages in a large outdoor exhibit named Old Europe. Other nations built independent free-standing buildings, including the Czechoslovak, Italian, Polish, and Swedish pavilions. Other nations chose to construct restaurants in place of large and costly buildings. In the case of Lithuania, official national participation did not happen, but Lithuanians living in the United States did produce multiple ambitious Fair events. Documented elsewhere, successful international Lithuanian cultural events will be better understood after a review of previous failures like this case in Chicago.

Designating a Linchpin: Contacting Consul Kalvaitis

Given that the Lithuanian Consulate in Chicago was at 608 S. Dearborn Street, Consul Antanas Kalvaitis could not have been much more accessible, both figuratively and literally. Communications between World's Fair planners and Kalvaitis began with a written request for a list of leading Lithuanian newspapers to contact for promoting the Fair.[1] Within two weeks, Kalvaitis recommended *Lietuvos Aidas, Rytas, Lietuvos Žinios,* and *Trimitas*.[2] In gratitude, the Fair's planners sent Kalvaitis pamphlets related to the Fair and many subsequent mailings.[3] [4] Over a year later, Consul Kalvaitis brought up Lithuanian participation at a Lithuanian Economic Conference held in New York on June 9, 10, and 11, 1930.[5] While collecting the Fair's bulletins, the Consul still needed practical information about it. By May 20th,

1 Streyckmans to Kalvaitis. January 25, 1929.
2 Kalvaitis to Streyckmans. February 6, 1929.
3 Lohr to Kalvaitis. January 28, 1930.
4 Streyckmans to Kalvaitis. February 19, 1929.
5 Kalvaitis to Streyckmans. May 20, 1930.

Fair representative Major Felix Streyckmans had failed to provide adequate information in regards to space, terms, and payments. Days after Kalvaitis met with Streyckmans to see model plans, Fair Manager Lenox R. Lohr sent a four-page summary of the Fair's policies. Although the document was primarily informative, and despite Lohr misspelling Streyckmans's surname in the letter's opening sentence, Lohr's response read like a carefully crafted sales pitch. Lohr's letter presented multiple options for official Lithuanian participation in the form of hosting a building on the fairgrounds.

Citing the benefits of official Fair participation as "advancing commerce, desire for travel and good will between the nations," Lohr's language appealed to Consul Kalvaitis by pointedly referring to the primary responsibilities of a Consul. While Fair planners failed to keep the Lithuanian Consul updated on concrete information, the correspondence often features gracious language and enticing hints at the benefits of participation. And yet, with less than three years left until the Fair's opening, the government of Lithuania had not officially declared its intent to participate.

Official Lithuanian Participation "In Principle": Organizing Local Lithuanians

As the executive chairman of the Committee on Co-Ordination of Nationalities, Major Felix Streyckmans was responsible for involving international participants in the fair. The purpose of the Nationalities Committee was to attract foreign participation through coordination with local representatives. An interesting and complex topic in itself, the Committee featured many subcommittee sections headed by local immigrant community leaders. The Lithuanian Section was headed by Chairman Joseph J. Elias, who served as an intermediary between the Fair and the Lithuanian government. Another Lithuanian Section member and the Secretary of the Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce of Chicago, Joseph Varkala, spent time in Lithuania seeking government interest in participation.[6]

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[6] "Lithuania." No Date.

The Lithuanian Section's work yielded results. The Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Dovas Zaunius, wrote to Elias that the Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary of Lithuania to the United States, Bronius Kasimir Balutis, was "empowered to conduct all matters pertaining to the Fair in close contact with the Lithuanian Section of the Chicago World's Fair Committee."[7] With official Lithuanian government endorsement of the Lithuanian Section, this meant that the Lithuanian government "agreed in principle to take part."[8] From this point forward, however, miscommunication hampered Lithuanian efforts.

The English translation of Zaunius's letter was dated October 31, 1930. Although Elias was the first member of the Committee to receive an official appointment by his representative nation, Elias did not share knowledge of his appointment with Fair officials until months later, and Consul Kalvaitis would confirm it even later.[9] On February 27, 1931, Elias mailed a translation of Zaunius's letter to Streyckmans, and he requested a date to discuss exhibit options on behalf of the Lithuanian government.[10] On March 6, during a lunch meeting at the Fair's Administrative Building, Elias informed Fair officials that Lithuania accepted the invitation to participate and the officials cited him claiming that "probably half a million dollars will be spent."[11] Further, Elias was attributed as claiming that a Lithuanian farmhouse would be recreated in the Old Europe section of the Fair, and each farmhouse room would display arts, crafts, fabrics, amber and more.[12] While waiting for further information from Consul Kalvaitis and Chairman Elias, Fair officials contacted diplomatic representatives in Lithuania.

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7 Zaunius to Elias. Kaunas, October 31, 1930.

8 Ibid.

9 Streyckmans to Sewell. March 2, 1931.

10 Elias to Streyckmans. February 27, 1931.

11 "Lithuania." 3/18/31.

12 It is possible that this proposal owes its origin to a Lithuanian exhibit at the 1900 World's Fair in Paris. (See: Kriaučiūnas, "Lithuania at the Paris World's Fair.")

Seeking Diplomatic Intervention in Lithuania: Working Around Local Lithuanians

Months earlier, during the end of December 1930 and early January 1931, World's Fair officials contacted American diplomats in Lithuania. Chargé d'affaires ad interim Hugh S. Fullerton became the Fair's primary American diplomatic contact. While acting on behalf of the Lithuanian Foreign Office, Chief of the Press Bureau Magdalena Avietėnaitė became the Fair's primary Lithuanian government contact. In February, American Minister F. W. B. Coleman had informed the Fair that not only would the Lithuanian government be unable to fund an independent Lithuanian pavilion, but collaboration between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania would not happen either. There was, however, a "supposition" that Lithuanians in Chicago would "collaborate with Mr. Balutis and the Foreign Office in whatever may be done."[13]

By July, Streyckmans was concerned that the Lithuanian government had not formally contacted the Fair to officially declare their intent to participate.[14] This concern was felt despite Kalvaitis's plan to mention the issue of official Lithuanian participation upon his arrival in Lithuania. Streyckmans continued to lose faith in Kalvaitis.

By August, miscommunication between Consul Kalvaitis and Avietėnaitė worsened the situation. According to Avietėnaitė, Kalvaitis gave the impression that the Fair would host a Palace of Nations with free ground space for foreign governments. Up until August, Avietėnaitė planned to raise about $50,000 in Chicago and again in Lithuania.[15] Finding her options more limited than she supposed from her information, Avietėnaitė continued to communicate with Estonia and Latvia, with the hope of including Finland as well. In Lithuania, she would promote savings clubs, and in the United States she

[13] Coleman to Sewell. February 10, 1931.
[14] Streyckmans to London Office. July 8, 1931.
[15] London Office to Director of Exhibits. Inter Office Correspondence. August 13, 1931.

secured 50 percent railway discounts for Fair attendees.[16] Notably, she encouraged the Fair to consider granting Lithuania free space on the fairgrounds. In light of her favorable impression on Deputy General Adviser to the Fair, Major O. J. F. Keatinge, her request was genuinely considered.[17]

With less than eighteen months until the World's Fair opened, the time available to produce a Lithuanian exhibit was running out. While Fair planners still sought Lithuanian participation, the Lithuanian government had still not made an official response.

In a correspondence between Major Keatinge and American Chargé d'affaires Hugh S. Fullerton, Keatinge wrote:

> [i]n any case, a definite reply to President Hoover's invitation is entirely unnecessary at this stage, but merely an implication of the government's intentions, official or unofficial.[18]

Fullerton cautiously advised Fair planners that "[t]he economic depression is very severe in the Baltic States ... but Lithuania is in a more favorable position than the other Baltic States ..." and he added:

> I think there is a distinct sentiment in favor of some kind of participation in the Exposition and that the enthusiasm on this score with Lithuanians in America will not be overlooked.[19]

Only two days after Fullerton's initial response, the Chargé d'affaires' previous optimism had faded. After an interview with Avietėnaitė, Fullerton revealed "...that the Lithuanian Government is seriously considering abstaining for financial reasons," and he added:

> [t]his attitude is a source of personal disappointment to members of the Government, but a policy of rigid economy in anticipation of possible economic depression in Lithuania is possible.[20]

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16 Ibid.

17 Keatinge to Streyckmans. Inter-Office Correspondence. 17th August, 1931.

18 Keatinge to Fullerton. 19th January 1932.

19 Fullerton to Keatinge. January 25th, 1932.

20 Fullerton to Keatinge. January 27th, 1932.

Without further explanation, Fullerton observed that:

> [i]t seems that the attitude assumed by Estonia and Latvia has influenced this country considerably, and that also very little support is anticipated in a financial way from Lithuanian residents in the United States.[21]

Citing a conversation with Avietėnaitė, Fullerton commented that in terms of available finances:

> ...the limit which the Government at present felt it could go would be a very few thousands of dollars – which would have to be employed, I assume, for exhibits and their transportation.[22]

While Fullerton could not officially speak for the government of Lithuania, his personal insights and his carefully chosen statements were revealing. At that time, it appeared that Lithuanian participation would be limited to an unspecified low-cost display of national culture, if any representation were to officially occur at all. Also, Fullerton referenced Estonian and Latvian official participation as a determining factor in the Lithuanian government's decision. Perhaps most striking is that the Smetona government may have been willing to contribute a substantial sum of money, "a very few thousands," wrote Fullerton, although the sum of money was far short of Joseph Elias's claim. However, no correspondence further illuminates any of these observations.

An Abeyance Request Made in Vain: Streyckmans's Failed Trip to Kaunas

By February 11, 1932, coinciding with Major Streyckmans's arrival for a European tour and a full fifteen days later, Keatinge responded to Fullerton asking:

> ...to request the Lithuanian government to defer any final decision until they have given Streyckmans an opportunity of explaining the excellent facilities which are offered by the Exhibition to foreign governments participating there.[23]

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21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Keatinge to Fullerton. 11th February 1932.

Keatinge's response does not mention the limitation of the Lithuanian Government's finances, and his delayed response undermines his urgency.

Major Keatinge's office was in London, and while it is difficult to approximate the speed of European mail delivery, it can be suggested that Keatinge's correspondences were sent at a slower rate than letters from Fullerton. Given the dates on each letter, the initial exchange from Keatinge to Fullerton took six days. However, between Fullerton's last letter and Keatinge's response there is a two-week lag. For the already limited Lithuanian effort, Keatinge's slower correspondences cost planners more time. Keatinge's slow response, combined with his request to Fullerton to seek deferment of an official Lithuanian Governmental rejection of participation, seems counterproductive. Essentially, Keatinge asked a favor from Fullerton, while not prioritizing correspondence with the American diplomat. It seems that Lithuanian participation was desired, but was not a high priority for Fair planners. This lack of priority meant slower communication, and this wasted yet more of the planners time.

In a comparatively fast response of six days, Fullerton confirmed his intervention. As he wrote:

> ...upon behalf of the Minister, that this Legation is urging upon the Lithuanian Foreign Office the deferral of any definite action with respect to Lithuania's participation in the Chicago Exposition until the arrival very shortly of Major Streyckmans..."[24]

Keatinge's response was slower to arrive, and it brought more unfortunate news: Streyckmans would not arrive after all. Citing "urgent private business," Keatinge informed Fullerton that Streyckmans was returning to the United States. Surprisingly, Keatinge cites Streyckmans's claim that "...he has reasons for hoping that some financial support will be forthcoming from persons of Lithuanian origin."[25] No further information is provided. Again, Keatinge had asked Fullerton to urge

[24] Fullerton to Keatinge. February 17th, 1932.
[25] Keating to Fullerton. April 7th, 1932.

the Lithuanian government to leave their decision in regard to participation in "abeyance until the situation is cleared up."[26]

At this time, it seems that Lithuanian participation was further limited by the speed of mail delivery and the speed of correspondence writing. As seen in the case of Keatinge's communications with Fullerton, the speed of return letters was unpredictable. Even worse, in the case of the Fair planners' allegations regarding correspondence with Avietėnaitė, a letter (however late it was sent) might not be successfully delivered.[27]

With less than eighteen months before the Exhibition's scheduled opening, Keatinge wrote to Fullerton:

> [a]t the time that I saw Miss Avietenaite in August last, she was most enthusiastic about participation in the Exhibition and when I returned I wrote her a letter dated 23rd September giving her further details which she required. I have never had an acknowledgement to this letter, and I am therefore now writing to ask if you would be so kind as to have enquiries made as to the possibility of Lithuania's participation at Chicago.[28]

The extent of Keatinge's concern about Lithuanian participation is unclear, but his concern that his letter should have been answered is clear.

Final Fair Proposals: Multiple Offers and Multiple Recipients

In April of 1932, World's Fair planners tried other avenues to attract official Lithuanian participation. The Fair's Director of Exhibits Colonel John Stephen Sewell wrote to Fullerton to inform him that:

> National Governments participating are free to charge admission and to let concessions in areas assigned to them without giving the Exposition a share of receipts.[29]

This meant that if the Lithuanian government erected a building on the fairgrounds, the operators could charge an admission fee to recoup the construction and maintenance costs.

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Keatinge to Fullerton. 19th January 1932.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Sewell to Fullerton. April 21st, 1932.

Meanwhile, W. S. McHenry of the Fair's Department of Concessions wrote to Consul Kalvaitis to suggest that Lithuanian planners should consider participating in a planned "Bazaar of European merchants, in which [the Fair] offer[s] small but attractive shops at very low prices for the sale of merchandise and light foods characteristic of their country."[30] Notably, "[e]ach shop will have one or more workmen in costume, actually making the articles which are offered for sale."[31] Without directly addressing the Lithuanian government's concern about funding, the Fair's planners tactfully suggested options for generating revenue on the fairgrounds. Still, the problem of start-up capital for official Lithuanian participation was unaddressed by the planners.

By September 1932, official Lithuanian participation did not look promising. Still, Fair planners continued to solicit an official response from the Lithuanian government. As a representative from the Fair's Foreign Participation Division, Charles H. Thurman wrote to Consul Kalvaitis informing him that not only could the Lithuanian government charge additional fees, but "the space within that building will be at the disposal of the Government or its appointed representative."[32] This meant that the Lithuanian government could rent building space for "its various departments, theatrical entertainments, or for the display of handicraft and domestic arts," and should not neglect the consideration that:

> any revenue resulting therefrom [would] accrue to the Government. The Exposition would receive no revenue whatever from such participation beyond the additional visitors such features might bring.[33]

However, this would not be enough for the Fair's planners to secure Lithuanian governmental participation in the final months leading to the opening of the Fair.

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30 McHenry to Kalvaitis. September 6, 1932.
31 Ibid.
32 Thurman to Kalvaitis. September 8, 1932.
33 Ibid.

Conclusion

The Chicago World's Fair opened on May 27, 1933 with no official Lithuanian building, village, or exhibit at the Century of Progress Exhibition. Part of the problem was that the Fair's planners were unable to resolve the funding issues facing the Lithuanian planners. On multiple occasions, the Fair's planners failed to resolve the Lithuanian government's concern regarding start-up capital for a building. Yet, the planners continued to suggest to different Lithuanian representatives that there were options for making money through charging admission or renting space. Worse, Lithuanian representatives were seemingly bombarded with requests and advice from multiple Fair planners. In April 1932, Sewell's letter to Fullerton and McHenry's letter to Kalvaitis sent mixed messages. Sewell attempted to secure a Lithuanian building proposal through an American diplomat, while McHenry attempted to secure a Lithuanian exhibit proposal through the Lithuanian Consul in Chicago. Also, the Fair's planners continued to request that the Lithuanian government abstain from officially declining participation, while simultaneously proposing insufficient means for funding a Lithuanian building. While it had earlier seemed possible that local Lithuanian investors would contribute, by 1932 this no longer seemed feasible.

Fortunately, Lithuanians in the United States did collaborate to organize two separate nationality days at the Fair. In 1933 and 1934, like many other national groups without official buildings on the fairgrounds, Lithuanians hosted special two "Lithuania Days." Funded by local Lithuanian organizations, these national culture events were not without planning problems of their own. However, these performances at least did occur, and some Chicago newspapers reported attendance figures in the thousands.[34] [35]

[34] "Lithuania to Have Its Day at Fair."
[35] "Lithuanians Plan Fete for 50,000."

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Vilnius

KLEMEN PISK

1. The Saw

I might have made it down to the city gate and Mary of the Gate of Dawn, had Algirdas Martinaitis not prevented me with his composition *Gija*. Algirdas had called me on the phone in the morning and said, "You can't walk to the end of Aušros Vartų Street without running into the Philharmonic. If you arrive early enough, quickly walk down to the Madonna and kneel there and cross yourself as much as you like. But if you lose track of time and are late to the concert because of Our Lady of the Gate of Dawn, you better not dare stand before my face."

Because my punctuality failed me and I was already short on time, I turned right instead of starting toward the city gate.

I entered the Philharmonic, which I had, in fact, run into. I eventually made my way through the vaulted hallway to the goddess of fire, Gabija (I had read her name on her nametag). She checked me off on the VIP list and let me into the large concert hall. I took my seat in the front beside an old lady whose wide build forced me to lean to the left. I had to contort myself somewhat if I wanted to prevent shoulder contact. Hunched over like this, I waited for the string musicians to pick up their stringed instruments, the wind musicians their wind instruments, the percussionists their percussions, and so on. I waited

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to hear the latest creation of Algirdas, the composer who bore the same name as the Grand Duke of Lithuania, who, historians say, was buried in the fourteenth century according to pagan traditions, together will all his jewelry, weapons, animals, and servants.

As Algirdas the duke swore by paganism, so too did Algirdas the composer cultivate affection for pre-Christian traditions. He was a Lithuanian Stravinsky; at least that is what Moscow critics nicknamed him during the time when the *Sovietų Sąjunga* still ruled with a firm hand in these regions. Algirdas's ballet *The Sun*, from the late eighties, did not speak about the sun as a celestial body, but about the sun deity, the goddess Saulė, who is wooed and proposed to by Moon, who, after marrying her, prefers however to escape to Dawn, until the god of thunder, Perkūnas, punishes him and cuts him in half. Algirdas found the basic motif in a folk song that leading ethnographers thrust under his nose. While the local public was enthusiastic, the firm hand of Moscow ridiculed: "What are you thinking, polytheist, trying to revive old folk culture? Would you like to undermine the foundations of *perestroika*?" But because the Lithuanian national consciousness was fearless at that time and events were turning in a now familiar direction, the ballet became of some interest in the early nineties and experienced more than a hundred encore performances, even a few abroad. Perhaps the former world champion of chess, Mikhail Tal, watched it in Riga and later the same day suffered a heart attack and passed away. He was found on the sofa next to a chessboard, stiffly clutching a pawn to his chest in one hand and Latvian citizenship in the other.

I waited, curious and hunched over, to see what would happen, what Algirdas would offer this time, for he hadn't uttered a word about his new work to anyone. There wasn't any further detail written in the program; but we knew that it was an orchestral work and that a soloist on a saw was in store for us, which was causing considerable speculation and reservation among the audience, from what I could decipher from their conversations: *"Pjūklas, taip taip, labai įdomu, pjūklas (?!)* –

keistai!" (A saw, yes, yes, very interesting, a saw (?!)– strange!). So a soloist on a saw, some folkloristics again, I thought to myself; again an emphasis on the primitive and the rural, on customs and habits. I thought of Beštrov Tonček from the village of Žiganja Vas, who always reached for his saw at village festivals and coaxed howling sounds from it. Therefore I imagined the saw in a folkloric light. I had seen its widespread distribution throughout Europe: from Gibraltar all the way to Nordkapp, from Malta to Svalbard, from the Urals to Iceland, from Cyprus to Novaya Zemlya, from Lampedusa to Franz Josef Land. I had seen the smartest monkeys play on it, and I had even seen Laplanders bend it according to the rules of their pentatonic scale. The saw: the tool of carpenters, lumberjacks, and woodworkers, who animate the tedious hours with folk art, transforming the saw from a tool into a musical instrument. Bravo, Algirdas, I thought to myself. As always you have managed to look beyond the average composer's horizon; as always you have bitten into the artistic surplus. I know well that you will charm us, you who have never yet disappointed. I can hardly wait for my ear to hear you and my soul to experience you.

The work began with a powerful atonal eruption, with an explosion. All that remained after the devastation was a thick cloud of wind instruments, supplemented by a mild, but fairly discordant, violin base. Gradually, the rhythm slowed and the tense atmosphere relaxed. The composer afforded the audience a moment of rest; he let them breathe, but it did not last long. The kettledrums boomed and the cymbals struck unexpectedly. As I glanced around the concert hall, I saw frightened people. But perhaps that was also the composer's intention – to sow horror.

Before the start of the second movement, a surprising musical instrument was brought on stage. It turned out that Algirdas did not have an ordinary hand saw in mind, but an electrical circular saw, which the soloist switched on and off. He even laid thick logs on it, causing the small particles to fly about the concert hall, and we listeners sitting in the front were given an unpleasant shower. Quite disgruntled, we immediately started

removing the sawdust from our pants, jackets, cleavage, and hair. (The soloist on the saw – whom I got a better look at, once I had cleaned out my eyes – very much resembled Markič.)

I glanced back toward the balcony and caught sight of Algirdas laughing wickedly and contentedly. It now became clear to me why he did not want to sit in front, next to me, even though it would have been proper for him as the author of the composition to sit with the distinguished guests. He made fools of us and mocked our refinement. Oh, how could I have been so naïve! I had imagined a romantic folk musician with a bending saw. I had mistakenly created in my mind that pleasant howling, but here he offered me a modernly equipped carpenter, who could teach a dog to mew if he were to lay it, instead of a log, on the saw. The circular saw wailed, and Algirdas laughed. Not only did he laugh, he howled like a cat on a circular saw.

2. *Black Heifers*

After the concert, Algirdas invited me to dinner, but, because I was already scheduled to be somewhere else, I turned down socializing with the musicians, which I did not regret anyway. I know how exhausting it can be at such gatherings, when a person must play the role of a balanced individual, even though it is clear that he has wandered in among the greatest of madmen. Not that I consider myself an eccentric, since whoever looks on himself in that way is certainly not an eccentric, but merely an ordinary buffoon, a comedian. So many times, though, I have tried my best to conceal my comedic nature, which, frankly, I am ashamed of. But some tactless person has always shown up and ruined everything, leaving me no other solution than to try to explain, justify, and resolve the incident with comedy. I prefer to speak in general terms because concrete descriptions are needless, and it would also be tactless to speak here of all the nonsense I have been forced into, not so much of my own will as in defense of my honor. In short, some people truly lack tact and do not know what is appropriate and what is not. Someone might be genteel, dressed according to the latest fashion, and

full of nice manners, but emptiness and darkness rain from his mouth. (The inverse is also possible, as well as two remaining combinations that combinatorics permits.) He is weak linguistically, but not so much in the sense of correct pronunciation as much as in the sense of content. There are many nitpickers in the world who are bothered by individual words, merely a letter, spelling, or a phoneme, instead of dealing with the semantics of sentences, paragraphs, and entire texts. But I should be honest that, many times, I myself have been that nitpicker, that morphologist. It is obvious that there is a certain special attraction, a certain pleasure, hidden in forms. People admire nature more for its form than for its informational value or functionality. They exploit functionality, but take pleasure in form, and then marvel why form collapses. This sounds rather ecological, and if I were a true ecologist, I would have refused dinner at Algirdas's out of protest that his vile artistic impulses cause trees to be chopped down.

I had arranged to meet up with Agnieška Olšauska (allow me to write her name by the rules of Lithuanian orthography) in a friendly pub in the middle of Castle Street. It is located right there, when you, my fellow traveler, set off from the Philharmonic straight past the Church of St. Casimir, where the Soviets hosted their Museum of Atheism for twenty-three long years. Then, suddenly, you see City Hall on the right, and you are already on Great Street. After that, you continue past the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas. You stand there for a little while and marvel why the Soviets did not prefer to play host in a more familiar environment. If you are interested in pictures, you can stop by Chodkevičius Palace. When you exit the gallery, you just cross the road and there you are: on Castle Street. Waiting for you on the right is the pub, where you go in, order a Lithuanian beer, and watch the waitresses, who would certainly become successful models, actresses, singers, and television hostesses in Slovenia. When the waitress addresses you politely, you see that well-bred people still exist in the world – and you say to yourself that beauty is not valued very much in Lithuania, thank God.

The waitress had just served me a beer when Agnieška appeared in the pub. She was late, as is appropriate for a lady, and allowed me to hang her fur coat on the coat rack.[1] As a representative of the living Polish minority in Lithuania, Agnieška spoke Polish, though not like Poles speak it in their homeland. She mauled a dialectal Polish, articulated strange phonemes mercilessly, conjugated verbs and declined nouns in unexpected ways, and even had intonation in certain words, presumably under the influence of Lithuanian, where the acute and the circumflex are the rule. And that is why Agnieška said, for example, *muost* instead of *most* (when she told her story of rushing across the bridge to a recording session), *kmiel* instead of *chmiel* (when she explained what Lithuanians make beer from), *zvionzac* instead of *związać* (when she complained that some malefactors in the entertainment industry wanted to tie her hands), and *jodajka* instead of *czarnulka* (when she told the joke about the black heifer). I listened with interest to the interesting forms of the Vilnius dialect and concentrated more on her pronunciation than on the content.

"Oh, Agnieška," I said delightedly all of a sudden during our chat. "You're a living example of how palatal shibilants turn into sibilants, and how neuter-gender nouns get feminized. You're also an excellent example of how double consonants conflate into single ones. When you said *vina,* instead of *winna,* when you were talking about a feeling of guilt, that's when I noticed it. And when you kept talking and said *a* for the word-final unstressed *e* – you can imagine – it truly hit home for me, and I really concluded that there's something to the thing Franciszek Sławski explained to me during his lifetime, but I hadn't entirely believed him. I wanted to hear it with my own ears and go, that's right, go to your marshy land. And that's why I'm here now in front of you, I – your student... I implore

[1] According to etiquette, I should have waited for Agnieška in front of the pub, but Agnieška herself ordered me to wait for her inside. I say this just so someone does not suspect that I have an unrefined character.

you, one more time, please tell me one more time what Lithuanians make beer from!"

"From *kmiel*!" Agnieška replied.

"What did you go across when you were rushing to the recording session?"

"Across the *muost*."

"What kind were the two heifers that were knitting on the tree?"

"What kind? *Jodajki*, of course."

I should explain why I even met in the pub with Ms. Olšauska. We had probably met each other earlier, but it is also possible that we had not. And if we had not, I had likely been informed beforehand about her appearance and must have recognized her merely by some descriptions, by her hair, eyes, breasts, backbone, calves, thighbones, shinbones, and thyroid. It is entirely possible that we were on a date because I had won a prize on some show – dinner with Ms. Olšauska – but it is also possible that she had won a prize, and that I was, in fact, the prize, while she was the prizewinner.

In short, we met up because I wanted to listen to her, and she wanted friendship; because I desired morphological analyses, and she desired Aunt Liz's jam; because I craved cabbage lentils, and she craved minority and nationally conscious happiness; because I liked to eat bread made from whole-grain flour, and she wanted to have bilingual children....

"Agnieška, have you received any awards for your work? Do you have any international honors? Do you meet the top criteria?" I asked her, full of the kind of arrogance only a Slovene artist can bring from his homeland. I was a poet and I liked pure rhyme, feminine paroxytonic, but sometimes I flirted with impure assonance too. When I was able to shake off some arrogance, I also listened to others – then I became truly excited that there are so many creators and designers, so many performers and copyists, so many poets and thespians, so many improvisers and scenic designers, so much performance and body art, so many lighting technicians and make-up artists, so much passive voice and so many participles, so many Hittites

and Tocharians, so many Markičes. I respected the fact that a person actively produces something and that he indeed works on something he gives permanence to. If a person does something, that in itself is positive. If, on top of that, a person is still young, then that is very near perfection.... Every idea of a young man gives me joy. If only I was able to shake off some arrogance. I respected activity in every form, but most of all I respected the creativity of old Aunt Polpetka, who cooked the best lentils my tongue had ever tasted. I loved them with turnips or without, regardless of whether or not I had thrown off arrogance beforehand.

"My success story," Agnieška answered, "began the year before last, when I made an appearance on a reality show on commercial television. From then on I had no peace from people. Men on the street gawked and shouted at me, strangers called me on the phone in the middle of the night, and the paparazzi were constantly on duty in front of my house. I knew, though, that it pays to strike while the iron is hot, and I decided to set sail into musical waters and build a singing career. I hired a songwriter and spent a lot of money on him to write me a song that stayed at the top of the charts for at least seven weeks. Unfortunately, he recently stopped writing for me and chose some other female singer. And so my fame has almost completely disappeared. Once again, I have to prove myself to people. I would love to sign up for Eurosong! I would need to find another songwriter, but there aren't a lot of good ones, and I want the best because, for me, only winning counts!"

I shook off some of my arrogance.

"Hmm, well perhaps I know the right man for you," I said, thinking of Algirdas. "I know of an excellent composer!"

"What kind of music does he write?"

"Atonal dodecaphonic avant-garde."

"Oh, really? What's his name?"

"Algirdas Martinaitis. Haven't you heard of him before? He's a famous Lithuanian composer."

"I really wouldn't know. Has he ever participated in a Eurovision Song Contest?"

"Probably not. But he is a fearless, daring man. He dares to do a lot of things that his colleagues never would. I can guarantee you that he would try. For him, too, winning is the only thing that counts."

"That's the kind of man I need. What kind of music did you say he writes?"

"Atonal dodecaphonic avant-garde."

"Is that more dance, trance, or techno?"

"Well, it's hard for me to say. You have to hear it. I'll get you tickets for his concert – on the floor!"

"And how much does he charge?"

"If he sees a muse in you, he'll work for you for free," I winked.

"Oh, there are still romantic men in the world! And when will you introduce me to him? I'm very late, you know. The competition for the Eurovision Song Contest will be over soon."

"We'll go there right now. Algirdas organized an after-concert party, and everyone is already there."

"Won't that be impolite?"

"Agnieška," I exclaimed, "you're a musician, for crying out loud, and all kinds of kindred spirits are there: atonalists, dodecaphonists, neoclassicists, and neo-baroquists."

"Where does Algirdas live?"

"Not far from here, in Užupis."

"Are you going to call a taxi?"

"No, we're walking."

"Oh, we'll have to go across the *muost*!"

"That's right, across the *muost*!"

3. Across the *Muost*

The Vilnia is the river from which Vilnius got its name. It is very tiny and powerless if you compare it to the mighty Neris. The Vilnia, however, does not care for mightiness, but puts its trust in technique. (The Vilnia reminds me of Markič.) Which is to say it meanders skillfully among the tiny houses; it knows exactly which path to take so as not to flood the streets. At this

point, it is worth asking which came first, the chicken or the egg. The egg, it seems to me, since chickens developed from proto-chickens. For the chicken to have arisen, the proto-chicken must have laid a mutated egg. I am not a paleontologist, who could prove the existence of proto-chickens; nor am I a hydrologist, who could explain why the Vilnia is so meandering. But I can confirm with great certainty that the Vilnia is a twisted, winding, undulating vine whose core neither an unwinder nor a roller can get to. As the Vilnia leisurely, but completely, rolls through the landscape, so the clucking hen incubates her eggs: at first very calmly, but in the end, successfully and cackling with pride. As the Vilnia weaves, so the poet weaves his wreath of sonnets. As Valjevo is the Serbian Vilnius, so Vilnius is the Lithuanian Valjevo. People can laugh as much as they want. This interpretation is probably true.

The city arose due to a strange combination of circumstances. It occurred in the Year of Our Lord 1320, when the Grand Duke Gediminas returned home toward nightfall, fatigued from a tiring hunt through the forests above the Vilnia's basin. Those regions were not yet inhabited then. Gediminas was so tired that he could not keep his eyelids open. His wife could not even convince him to have a little fun in their short, antique bed before going to sleep. He lay down to rest and saw in his dreams a howling iron wolf. When he awoke, the first thing he did was ask his wife, "Laima, what does a howling iron wolf mean?" His wife did not know. Then he asked his squire, who likewise shrugged his shoulders as he cleaned Gediminas's bows and arrows, halberds and spears, swords and sheathes. When his handmaid Lok could not explain the complex wolf symbolism, he finally summoned the wizard Lizdeika, who first wisely stroked his gray wizard beard and then, even more wisely, said: "The iron wolf means that here will stand a solid castle, around which a great city will grow. The wolf's howling means that a good reputation about the city will spread through the entire world." The wizard Lizdeika probably did not know that Vilnius would one day be included on the UNESCO World Heritage list, but his prediction

was absolutely correct, and therefore we can count him among the world's most successful interpreters of dreams. But the interpretation of the dream was in fact a hint to Gediminas that it was high time to start construction. Perhaps the iron wolf actually meant and said something else, but the cunning wizard tailored it to his own interests. If the wizard were born today, he would probably be a skilled lobbyist. Perhaps the iron wolf portended that Algirdas the composer would be born one day and would write the symphony *Iron Filing*. Instead of a log he would put the iron wolf on the circular saw; instead of sawdust, filings would whizz around the concert hall; and the wolf would howl like a cat in heat.

Agnieška and I came to the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which stood on the bank of the Vilnia next to the famous bridge (*muost*). We stepped onto it and started to walk across. I observed Agnieška and saw her with my own eyes crossing not the bridge, but the *muost*. I do not know if I am capable of explaining the difference between my crossing and hers. It simply defies being explained by objective logic. It is a matter of energy, feeling, and unique experience. It is that dialect-ness which nearly all collectors of national artifacts and folk songs crave. It is, in fact, folkloric eroticism or dialectological orgasm; the insanity of the dialectal that shocks the dialectologist; the dialect-ness that has to be experienced in person and not on a recording (for instance, on cassette tapes). With her dialect, Agnieška was immersed in a whole. She not only spoke it, but she also lived it. Her dialect was her way of being and moving.

We transitioned suddenly from dialect-ness to the-other-side-of-the-river-ness, because we were by now on the other side of the river, in Užupis, which means just that: *už-upis* = the other side of the river. The Republic of Užupis welcomed us. The musically inspired angel on Užupis Street, blowing into some kind of angelic trumpet, welcomed us. He stood on a tall pillar and looked toward Riverfront. Once the inhabitants of either side of the river were in conflict with each other because they could not agree whom the river's water belonged to. The

Lord of the Waters came and urinated into the river. The water was no longer drinkable, and they stopped quarreling. The Lord of the Waters came up with a Solomonic solution to the problem.

"Did you know that I went to Užupis Gymnasium?" Agnieška said, and pointed out the building on the left side of the road.

"Do you mean you were educated in Užupis?"

"Yes, and when the school recently commemorated its fiftieth anniversary, they invited me to sing at the celebration. Everyone remembered me well, and the principal told me that he had always been convinced that I have a marvelous voice, but he had never thought that I would become such a successful singer and build a great career. I sang them the song 'I Am Finally Free.'"

"You definitely have to tell that to Algirdas. You have to make it clear to him that you're not just another singer."

"If he follows the media even a little bit, then he has certainly already heard of me. They took my picture for the cover of *Moteris*."[2]

"What an original name for a women's magazine! I remember when they built a theater in my native city. They didn't know what to name it, and then they decided that it would just be called The Theater. So I've decided that, if I ever have a son, I'll name him Son, and if it's a daughter, I'll name her Daughter. Perhaps I would prefer to name him Sūnus and my daughter Duktė, so that it would sound fancier, more Lithuanian. Where I'm from, it's not unusual for a person to give his child a foreign name, even though that child doesn't have any foreign roots at all. I know a Jeanette who doesn't have even the slightest roots of foreignness in her, not even as much as a piece of ginseng candy contains ginseng. Despite that, she has a French-sounding name because, perhaps, it seemed fancy to her parents. Where I'm from, some children learn English as early as preschool, although my acquaintance says that he would love

[2] Lith. *moteris* = woman.

to shove the parents of those children in jail with pedophiles, arguing that it's an equally serious sin."

"But children at that age are very receptive to foreign languages!"

"You're right, but why do children have to learn English of all languages? My son, if he's ever born, will learn Tocharian instead. And as an adolescent he can chase Tocharian girls if he wants. Or I'll go to a second-hand bookstore and buy him a Hittite grammar, one that reeks of moldiness, has coffee spilled on the hundredth page, and has an antique smell to it!"

4. The Workbench

Algirdas opened the door and looked at us with surprise at first, but then with kindness. Presumably, he was amazed that I had dared come to his after-concert party. After all, I had declined an invitation and apologized a few hours earlier. But because I am a man of tact, and apologizing is nothing foreign to me, I presented an exceptionally sound, well-argued apology that needed no verbal explanation. I was leading a being of angelic proportions and diameters by my side: Agnieška with an accentuated side arc, a woman with an amazing front view and a heavenly top view. Algirdas happily dimensioned her with his eyes. He drew imaginary dimension lines on her body. (Algirdas looked like Markič, my technical education teacher in elementary school.)[3]

[3] Now that nostalgia for Markič has seized me once again, it is proper to say a few words about him. He was a tall, slender man, whom we students feared like the devil fears holy water. He always let us know that technical education is the most important subject in school. Whoever did not submit to his strict rules quickly fell into his disfavor. He invited the best students into his office, where they got to admire his masterpieces on the workbench. On the other hand, the rest of us had to make pencil sharpeners for hours and hours out of sandpaper that Markič ordered in huge quantities from some company in exchange for a commission. Markič never raised his voice. He just looked at you with his glassy eyes, and you already knew that you needed to shape up. In extreme cases, he calmly pulled on your ears with a gloomy look on his face. Markič knew how to squeeze every droplet of handicraft out of the most

"Algirdas, allow me to introduce Ms. Olšauska," I said, somewhat interrupting his dimensioning.

"You probably recognized me," Agnieška said, then allowed Algirdas to kiss her hand. "I'm Agnieška, from the television show, the reality show. Everyone watched it. Have you read anything about me? There was a great deal said and written about me."

"Of course I know who you are!" affirmed Algirdas enthusiastically. "I avidly cut out articles about you, and I have almost all your appearances recorded on video cassettes. And the last time I saw you was at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Užupis Gymnasium, when you sang 'I Am Finally Free.' I stood in the middle of the crowd and applauded you loudly, but you probably didn't notice me."

"I'm so embarrassed that I don't know who you are, even though you are, as I hear, an acclaimed composer," Agnieška said.

"You know," Algirdas replied, "I don't even consider myself a composer. That's how others speak of me. I'm just a man who recently moved from Riverfront to Užupis, although I still haven't been taken out of the Riverfront registry! I still have to collect a few papers and then the Užupis secretary will see me. Will she see me in the municipality's main reception office? No, she can't see me there because they're renovating right now. Will she see me in the stuffy little room on the ground floor? No, she can't see me there either. It would be too stuffy, you know."

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untechnical child, like I was. Dimensioning was his great passion. After explaining to us with millimetric precision the secrets of drawing an arrowhead, he piled work on us up to the top of our heads and even several times over – preferably on long Friday afternoons. While we were dimensioning feverishly, he fixedly read magazines like *Life and Technics*, *Radar*, *Defense*, and *Team*. In his cabinet, Markič hoarded a lot of pencils of varying hardness (H, HB, and B), and he hung a large wooden compass for drawing on the blackboard on a special stand. He seemed then considerably advanced in years, but if I think hard about it, he had to have been around twenty-seven years old, which is even younger than I am now.

Algirdas made an excellent impression on Agnieška with his modesty.

He invited us inside. There were half-consumed glasses and ashtrays full of cigarette butts on the table, but there was not a living soul anywhere.

"Where is everybody? Isn't there a party here?" I inquired while glancing at the empty parlor.

"Uhh, we had a fight as usual," Algirdas said and waved his arm. "At the very beginning the atonalists got in the neo-classicists' hair. Then the cacophonists added their two cents and started to prepare my piano. The neo-baroquists even encouraged them! They wanted to tune my most precious Steinway to quarter tones just so some young budding talent could perform his work for a prepared piano on it! I barely stopped them. Just when it seemed that the situation had calmed, an acrimonious debate flared about who will get an award this year, and a terrible jealously arose. The debate about awards became increasingly political. I couldn't stand it anymore, so I shooed everyone home early. I may feel sorry now, but I can't watch as professional colleagues sling mud at each other under my own roof. And this is supposed to be a party on the occasion of the premiere of my concert! I'm already accustomed to this, but I don't know if I'll keep socializing with my colleagues. I will rather look for friends in other artistic genres; for example, thespians, poets, or lighting designers."

"Lighting designers are a good choice, and I definitely recommend them," I said. "They aren't completely sure about their artistic mission. That's why they don't yearn for awards."

"Lighting designers?" said Agnieška. "Aren't they lighting technicians?"

"Oh, God forbid that a lighting designer hears you!" Algirdas exclaimed. "They really don't yearn for awards, but they are very sensitive."

"I admired a lighting designer once," I said dreamily. "He was like my second father and knew a lot about everything. Whether he had to aim the beam of light into the sky or into the ground, he could create visible things out of invisible ones.

He was the great lighting technician of lighting techniques, the true master of true mastership."

"I knew a master of the Lithuanian dialect pop song," Agnieška said. "He wrote songs for me for a long time, yet he wrote very few of them. He didn't want money, but I often had to sit on his lap because that would tremendously inspire him, as he himself claimed. Studying my body also would supposedly give him special power, as he himself claimed. At first, I was naïve and humored his requests. But one day he started to try to persuade me to pose nude for him because he could compose more easily like that, as he himself claimed. I didn't fall for that. I told him to his face what he deserved and broke off all contact with him. I'm always blunt, even if people don't like it."

"Well, I understand the man, and I also understand you somehow, or at least I'm trying to understand," Algirdas joked. "What's his name? Perhaps I know him."

"Vitas Gerulaitis."

"Hmm...Isn't that the tennis player?"

"Yes, but this one doesn't play tennis. They're namesakes purely by coincidence. He's not even related to him. I'm amazed that you don't know him, since he is the doyen of the Lithuanian dialect pop song."

"You know, I socialize mostly in atonal circles. I don't have any friends or acquaintances on television. They don't like me much because I'm crazy. Despite the fact that I've gotten a lot of awards, they've only recorded one of my concerts for television – *Concert for the Prepared Fly*."

"Last year I participated in a dialect pop-song festival. Gerulaitis wrote an excellent song."

"I'm sorry I didn't watch. Please sing an excerpt for me."

"What, sing right now?" Agnieška charmingly smiled.

"Yes, Agnieška, be courageous. There's nothing to fear," I encouraged her.

Agnieška cleared her throat and began to sing: "You drive down our street everyday, you watch where I walk to,

what I do... just to see where I live, if I've got a man, you're so cool, just scared of girls."

"She sings beautifully," Algirdas enthusiastically whispered to me.

"Indeed," I quietly agreed. "But the lyrics charmed me even more. It's so dialectal."

"You and me could be a tight couple, ooh, a tight couple. Me and you, look at you, man, get movin'! Come over tonight, take me to a crazy club so I can show you what's hip, what a freakin' good party's like."[4]

"Bravo, excellent!" Algirdas applauded. "When I stood in front of Užupis Gymnasium and listened to you, my knees hurt like hell because I have problems with my bones, but despite that I persevered. You were worth it!"

"I'm glad that you like my singing. That's precisely why I came here, isn't it?" Agnieška said and looked toward me.

I explained to Algirdas why I had brought the young talented lady to his apartment in the first place: "As you already know, Agnieška was unexpectedly left without her personal songwriter. The selection for Eurovision is getting close now. So I thought of you."

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[4] Agnieška was actually singing in dialectal Lithuanian, but I thought it proper to translate her lyrics into colloquial American English. The lyrics that Agnieška sang went like this in Lithuanian: *Važiavai kiekvieną dieną mūsų keliu, / žiūrėjai į mane, kur vaikštinėju, ką darau. / Tam, kad pamatytumei, kur gyvenu, / ar jau turiu vaikiną, / tu gi esi super vaikinas, bet bijai merginų. // Tu ir aš galėtuva tikrai neblogai padykti, / ua neblogai padykti. Tik tu ir aš, prašau, vaikinuk, pasiskubink truputį! / Ateik šį vakar, / nuvarysiva į kokį gerą klubą pasitūsinti, / ten aš Tau parodysiu, kas tai yra cool ir kas tai yra šaunus tūsas.* Besides slang expressions, such as *nuvarysym*, *cool*, *vaikinuk*, the lyrics contain a lot of dialectological surpluses. If we analyze the original, we see some ancient vestiges, for instance, the use of the dual (*galėtuva*), which has disappeared in Standard Lithuanian. And precisely because of the dual, the commission placed this pop song in the Lithuanian Dialect Pop-Song Festival. Agnieška did not win an award, but she did charm the leading Lithuanian linguists, at least those who could take a break from writing in-depth linguistic treatises long enough to sit down in front of the television.

"You thought well. This isn't beneath my honor. I like to take on crazy things! Because I'm crazy, you know."

"That would be hard to dispute," I concurred with delight.

"So, Mr. Algirdas, could you write a song for me?" Agnieška asked cautiously, yet femininely.

"Of course I could!" consented Algirdas.

"Thank you, that makes me very happy," Agnieška said, "But we're late, you know."

"When do you need the song?"

"Today. The deadline is tomorrow."

"Can you wait five minutes?"

"You'll write the song that fast?" Agnieška said with surprise.

"I studied music. Notes aren't Greek to me."

"But I would like to go over some things with you first. I want you to write a song for my soul."

"I see into your soul better than you do," Algirdas said and sat down at the piano. "And I'm not just going to write a melody, but lyrics too. I already have an idea!"

"But what will my song talk about?"

"It will talk about Markič."

"About whom?" Agnieška said with bewilderment.

"Excuse me for interfering," I intervened in the conversation, "but which Markič are you referring to?"

"Which one? Your former technical education teacher, of course!" Algirdas exclaimed.

"How do you know that he taught me technical education? That was more than twenty years ago."

"How do I know? Markič told me himself. He recently arrived in Lithuania. Do you remember the soloist on the circular saw?"

"Unbelievable, what a coincidence! I thought he looked like him."

"Markič has really mastered the circular saw. He has distinguished himself as an excellent soloist. He even remembers you, you know. He told me that you were making trouble one

time, and he pulled on your ears and said to you: 'Grow, grow, grow.' And you did grow – and look, perhaps you have him to thank for the fact that you're a tall, upright man."

"I don't like to remember that incident."

"Excuse me, but why should I sing about Markič now? I don't understand that." Agnieška wondered aloud.

"Because Markič is worth it," Algirdas answered. "He's simply worth expressing in poetry and setting to music. He's worth being touched by lyric poetry. He's worth being praised in song by the vocal chords. Markič is a big, big challenge because he's personified poetry and music at the same time."

"But how will I be able to really get into the lyrics when I don't know Markič at all?"

Before Algirdas had time to answer her, the doorbell rang.

"Wait here. I'm going to open the door," Algirdas said and hurried toward the door. "Well, look who's here!"

I would not have believed my own eyes, if I had not rubbed them and come to my senses. My former technical education teacher had stepped into the room. I had not seen him in twenty years, and now we had run into each other a whole 1,480 kilometers from home (road distance). But I had sensed Markič for a long time. I just knew that he would show up sooner or later. I had had a vision that Markič would appear soon. I knew that he must come, for he had been adumbrated and portended. In fact, he had been foreshadowed and metaphorically hidden behind the bush, like some kind of silent allusion that only here and there peeks out from an artistic work. He had appeared to me not only in my dreams, but every time I was tackling something technically challenging. When I was changing a flat tire, his imaginary dream voice encouraged me like a teacher, and he advised me how to handle the jack and where to put it. When I was assembling a chair, he helped me decipher the complicated instructions, called my attention to some irregularities, and suggested a different, better solution with respect to a screw that was hard to install. When I was putting up a tent, he held up the support poles so I could calmly drive in

the pegs. When I was replacing a chain on a bicycle, he checked whether it sat well on the sprocket... But those had been only visual and auditory hallucinations. Now he had come and had revealed himself in all his physical presence. Markič was really in the room. He was, he stood, he moved, and he maintained a calm expression on his face, just as he had twenty years ago. As if an invisible force had lifted him from behind his home workbench and had carried him to the north, to the wild Lithuanian marsh.

"Now you can't make excuses anymore that you don't know him, Ms. Olšauska," Algirdas burst out laughing. "This is him! This is Markič!"

After Markič kissed Agnieška's hand, which seemed to be in considerable disagreement with his simple technical nature, he turned toward me and stared. Both of us were silent for a moment. Nothing else came to our minds in that unique moment but to keep silent and stare.

"They're coming to their senses," Algirdas explained to Agnieška. "To run into someone after all these years, it's, how should I say, romantic."

"Mr. Teacher, Mr. Teacher Markič," I finally found the courage to say after a few moments of lyric silence. "I'm very happy that you showed up. Ever since you disappeared from my life, my handicraft has really deteriorated. When I was in a bind, I always remembered you and imagined how you, the one who always knew the solution, would act in that situation."

"Didn't you once call me 'Comrade'?" Markič smiled serenely. "And now – Mr. Teacher. Please."

"True, but times are different now. You too addressed me informally at one time."

"We can also address each other in third person, if the mister so desires."

"Rather not. The custom of addressing someone in third person has died out," I said. "Say, Mr. Markič, how are you and your technical pencils, and what's going on with the sharpeners? Is your home workbench still standing?"

"Oh, please," Markič smiled serenely. "You really haven't

followed my work till now. Technics is history for me. I was through with dimension lines once and for all twenty years ago. I sold my home workbench too. I do linguistics now."

"Markič is one of the foremost Indo-Europeanists of today!" Algirdas said proudly, as he patted Markič on the shoulder.

"I came to Lithuania to research vestiges of the dual in some Samogitian dialects," Markič said seriously. "I'd had enough of elementary school brats. I have academic ambitions now."

"Markič is writing his second doctoral dissertation in Baltology," Algirdas added.

"Wow, I can't believe it!" I exclaimed. I could not comprehend that my former technical education teacher had become a Baltologist.

"You can't believe it? Wait, wait!" Algirdas said. "Markič, decline a personal pronoun in the dual!"

Markič shot off like a cannon: "*Mudu, mudviejų, mudviem, mudu, mudviem, mudviese*!"

"Did you hear that? Markič, conjugate the verb 'to carry' in the conditional dual!"

"*Neštuva, neštuta, neštų*."

"Markič, the present active participle!"

"It's formed with the suffix *-nt-*!"

"Markič, the future passive participle!"

"*Būsimas, būsimo, būsimam, būsimą, būsimu, būsimame*!"

"Markič, what about orthography?"

"The comma sometimes jumps in front of *which, when, because, that*, and *if*!"

There are people who will always be out of my reach. If I had once seen a technically well-versed expert in Markič, he now outdid me in the field that I was convinced I had truly mastered – linguistics. No matter how hard I had studied and analyzed declension and conjugation patterns for hours on end, in comparison to Markič, I was just an ordinary memorizer, not capable of an in-depth scientific synthesis, who cannot put together a measly doctoral dissertation from the pile of information he has. I was ashamed. Once again I was ashamed,

just like twenty years ago, only this time, not of my manual, but rather of my intellectual abilities. Markič is a genius, and I will never be his equal.

"I admire you," I said, "Now even much more than before! But did you really give up all your former hobbies? At one time, you said that you couldn't imagine life without *Life and Technics*!"

"Ha," he laughed serenely. "I stopped subscribing to *Life and Technics* twenty years ago. Now I subscribe to completely different journals: *Indouralica, Baltoslavica, Baskogalica, Keltoferica, Srbolužica.*"

"Which journal do you like the most, if I may ask?"

"*Srbolužica.*"

"I thought so. So do I."

"Well, it's nicely illustrated."

"I admire you more and more as well, Mr. Markič," Agnieška spoke up after a long time. "Fifteen minutes ago I still couldn't imagine singing a song about you, but now I very much want to. You truly are worth expressing in word and setting to music. If anyone is worth that, it's you."

"I told you so," Algirdas happily affirmed, "I know exactly whom I want to dedicate a song to and who deserves it at all."

"You're going to dedicate a song to me?" Markič asked astonished.

"Whom should I dedicate it to, if not to you? Should I dedicate it to Anne-Sophie Mutter? I'm not Penderecki."

"Okay. Dedicate it to me."

Algirdas sat down at the piano and earnestly started to compose, and we could only stand speechless and admire the artist in action. He played through the scales, tried out various combinations of chords, muttered the melody line to himself, and made the song increasingly complicated. It would be hard to say that there was anything explicitly pop in the song. After all, Algirdas belonged to the dodecaphonic avant-gardists. Sending that kind of song to Eurosong might seem strange to some; however, Eurosong had to be revived, it needed fresh-

ness, something shocking that would shut the mouths of writers of simple tunes and finally elevate the Artist on a pedestal, someone who comes from the world of true music and true scores. Countless plagiarized songs have been heard before. Stealing has been going on lengthwise and across, along and crosswise, vertically and horizontally, obliquely and zigzag, in circles and squares. Eurosong not only had nothing in common with music, it was a crime against humanity, something like the Holocaust or abortion. Only Algirdas could cleanse it of sinfulness. With an in-depth approach to music, he could restore its reputation; he would raise it from blasphemy to the level of symphony.

The song about Markič sounded heavenly. He finished it in five minutes, honing the lyrics just a little by saying the individual verses aloud. Algirdas's vision of Markič was captured in impure rhyme with a paroxytonic clause, in caesurae and diaereses, oxymora and synecdoche. For example: "I am Markič, I live among the roots" (an example of an oxymoron. It is in fact clear that it would be difficult for such a giant to live among roots, but the cleverness of this verse is hidden in Indo-European roots, in seeking ancient roots and origins, in etymological reconstruction).[5]

[5] As I later learned, Markič was the one who first called attention to the mistaken etymology of the Slovene word *bogomolka* [*praying mantis*]. Linguists rather superficially supposed that it was a German calque of the expression *Gottesanbeterin*. They thought that it simply referred to an animal that, because of the posture of its front legs, prays to God. Markič demonstrated, however, that such an explanation does not hold up. He came to his ingenious discovery by accident, when he was leafing through a dictionary of the Northern-Samogitian Lithuanian dialect and found that the expression *busbulvinė* for a special subspecies of the praying mantis that is also simultaneously the northernmost among the representatives of the praying mantis genus. *Busbulvinė* literally meant "that which will be tuberous," which is possible to explain by the fact that dead praying mantises clump together, resembling some kind of tuber. And the feminine form of tuber was *gomoljka*. The Lithuanian *bus* is the third-person future tense of "to be," and *bulvinė* means "tuber," therefore it was a Slovene calque of the Lithuanian expression

When he had filed off the details, Algirdas played and sang the song for us from beginning to end. If the angel on Užupis Street could have strained his ears, he probably would have joined in and blown into his trumpet. He, too, was likely a committed dodecaphonist; at least he seemed that way at first sight.

Markič liked the song. Not in the way that he had once liked technical pencils, sharpeners, and the most modern workbenches; not in the way that he had once liked being an expert in handicraft. He liked the song almost to the same extent as the dual in some Lithuanian dialects. Markič yearned for conjugations and declensions, for declining and conjugating, for nouns and verbs, for participles and perfectives. He also yearned for nostalgia, and this song certainly aroused nostalgia. The melody awakened in him a 5,000-year-old Indo-European memory. A melody that raises consciousness and invigorates, a melody that can be the only savior of Eurosong. Markič, Agnieška, Algirdas – they can save Eurosong from Eurosong elements.

"But how can I sing the lyrics 'I am Markič,' if I'm not really Markič?" Agnieška asked. "That will seem pretty strange to the audience."

"It's a role-playing song," I expertly clarified. "That means that the author and the performer aren't identical with the lyric subject."

"But people won't know that," Agnieška frowned.

"Sure they will! Every remotely experienced critic today has heard of the role-playing song!" I said, growing upset. "I knew a poet with a huge butt who wrote a verse about 'his little butt.' Did any critic therefore accuse him of delusion? No, no, indeed no one, because they understood it as a role-playing

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"it will be a tuber." Markič supposed that we Slovenes took the word from the Lithuanian in approximately 1500 B.C., in the time of the most intensive Balto-Slavic contacts. The original form of the Slovene word therefore had to be *bogomoljka*, which Markič also proved, and even the Freising Fragments mention the word: "If our ancestor had not sinned, praying mantises would have eaten him."

song. And that's how it will be with this song you're going to sing. Everyone will know that you're not Markič, and qualifying for Eurosong is a sure thing because there has not yet been a role-playing song on Eurosong."

"I know that people in favor of the role-playing song will certainly be sitting on the judges' panel," Algirdas affirmed. "There won't be a judges' panel at all; there's going to be televoting instead!" Agnieška exclaimed.

"Do you really believe in telephone voting?" I asked and burst out laughing.

"Look how naïve you are," Algirdas said, shaking his head.

"Televoting," I said, "was thought up for money. It seems like people are deciding, but they actually aren't. It's interesting that today more people believe in televoting than in God."

"Please, stop with the televoting! How can you occupy yourselves with such a mundane thing?" Markič said, becoming agitated.

"What about doing business in sandpaper and collecting a commission? Isn't that mundane?" I poked at him.

"Sandpaper is history. Now I sell score paper," Markič answered.

"Look," Algirdas exclaimed and waved his score in front of my face. "Markič brought me first-rate score paper. He brought so much of it that I can live to be a hundred and twenty years old and I won't use it all up."

When I inspected the score paper more closely and turned it toward the light, I noticed a manufacturer's name impressed in it that had been well known to me in my youth: *Slavc & Žmavc*. The same company that made the sandpaper made the score paper as well! My head became incredibly overwhelmed. And then it became clear to me, as if I were some kind of assistant detective from a German series, that the tragedy of Markič's existence is hidden behind this.

No matter how much Markič felt like a Baltologist, or how much money he received from various institutes just so he could pursue Baltology, so he could seek self-realization,

confirmation, and fulfillment, and regardless of his linguistic activities, he still did business in paper. I do not think it could be otherwise, because I cannot imagine that he could live off Baltology, and what fool would do that? Oh, God forbid that I insult Baltology and Baltologists, who will never admit that things are going badly for them. God forbid that I look condescendingly on this noble community, which I am trying to enter myself. Yes, I would really like to see them accept me into the elite, but it is necessary to acknowledge that nowadays you must, if you want to realize your life's vision, perform a lot of dirty work, in quotation marks or without them. My neighbor, for example, went to the factory in the morning to load tires so he could assemble a glider in the afternoon. Markič sold paper in the morning so he could be a Baltologist in the afternoon. He did this for Baltology itself, as well as out of pure and genuine love for the Baltic languages – for the two that are still around and the one that is no longer around (Old Prussian).

"Mr. Markič," I said, "now I can finally ask you: Who are Slavc and Žmavc?"

"They are my cousins, who established the family company. They have a lot of forests and can therefore manufacture a lot of paper. Žmavc[6] was once a well-known Slovene skier who took sixteenth place at the Olympic Games. I have one more cousin, Skumavc.[7] He trained in ski jumping. We're not on good terms with him and we haven't spoken in several years, because he moved into our grandfather's house without buying us out."

"And how do Slavc and Žmavc view your linguistic revival?" I asked curiously.

"They see profit," Markič answered. "They're very adapt-

[6] Gregor Žmavc (1957), Slovene skier. From 1976 to 1983 competed in the World Cup in the slalom and the giant slalom, a participant of the Olympic Games in Lake Placid. Greatest success: seventh place in a competition in Schladming.

[7] Dare Skumavc (1962), Slovene ski jumper. He was a member of the Slovenian National Team for two years. Greatest success: thirtieth place in Obersdorf (1981). Personal record: 146 m (Planica, 1982).

able, and no work is too much for them. Now they're making a special etymological paper designed for the reconstruction of Lithuanian words. I'm going to offer it to my Baltologist colleagues and to other Indo-Europeanists as well."

"Skumavc has a son who also skis, right?"[8] I asked, when I remembered that we had gone to the airport a few weeks ago, right before my departure to Lithuania, to welcome our young skiers, one of which was a young Skumavc. I held in my hands a poster that read: "Our dear young skiers, we are happy that you delight us with your marvelous results."

"Yes," Markič said, "he has a son. He'll achieve a lot more. Have you heard of his daughter, Špela Skumavc, yet?"[9]

"No."

"How haven't you?"

"Well, I just haven't."

"But how is that possible?"

"Just is."

Forceful howling coming from the courtyard suddenly interrupted the lively conversation. At first, it howled in intervals, then more frequently and loudly. It sounded quite terrifying, and we stood dumbstruck in horror and exchanged frightened glances.

"What's that?" Agnieška shrieked.

"Oh no, the iron wolf!" Markič exclaimed.

"Let's run!" Algirdas called out and began running through the room.

"Where to? If it's outside, then we can't go out. Is there a side door? What if we lock the door and stack furniture against it?" Markič was asking in a panic.

Then wild knocking sounded at the door.

"The iron wolf, he's knocking on the door..." Algirdas said in amazement.

Agnieška burst into tears.

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[8] Miha Skumavc (1988), eighteenth at the World Youth Championships in the super giant slalom.

[9] Špela Skumavc (1985), Slovene biathlete, gold medal at the World Youth Championships in the biathlon.

"Ouch, ouch, help!" was heard behind the door.

"It's a person!" I exclaimed. "I'm opening the door."

"Don't open it. It's the iron wolf imitating a person!" Markič said.

"Yeah, sure," I said and hurried toward the door.

"Don't open it; don't open it, for the sake of Baltology and for our sake!" Markič yelled. Algirdas hid behind the piano. Agnieška dove onto the couch and trembled.

I courageously opened the door, and look! I was not mistaken. A little old man with a gray beard stood in front of the door. He was barefoot and blood was dripping from his heel.

"I was going past your house and stepped on a nail, and now it hurts. Ouch!" were the first words the little old man uttered.

"Please come in, we'll pull it out for you immediately," I said and invited him into the house. "Algirdas, do you have any pliers?"

"I do," Algirdas said and peeked out from behind the piano.

"Why are there so many nails in front of your house?" the little old man asked with a moan.

"I know why," Algirdas said, "because last week we were practicing with Markič for the concert and were sawing boards. There were a lot of nails in them, and we took them out. And we'll do the same for you."

He brought the pliers and instantly pulled out the nail with them. The old man bellowed like a wounded bull, and Agnieška dressed his heel.

"I don't know why you walk around barefoot. If you would wear shoes, this certainly wouldn't happen to you," Algirdas said.

"Because," the little old man replied, "I'm a kind of guru. And a guru must always walk barefoot around the world to be in contact with Mother Earth."

"We thought you were the iron wolf," Agnieška said and burst out laughing.

"I'm not the iron wolf. My name is Dievas. I travel around on my vessel. From time to time I descend from the sky and

wander among simple people, among peasants. And that is why I came to you."

"But we're not peasants, we're intellectuals," Markič declared.

"Oh well. I get it wrong sometimes. I intended to participate in the everyday life of peasants. This time, let it be the everyday life of intellectuals, whatever that may be."

"I intend to participate in the Eurovision pop-song festival," Agnieška said. "I wandered in among the intellectuals by chance."

"You're also an intellectual, just a woman," Algirdas comforted her. "My ex-wife also signed up for Eurosong once, even though she lectures in Ancient Greek Literature at the University of Kovno. That's how you women are: you constantly have to be in the center of attention."

"Tell me, what's the life of an intellectual like? I would be happy if you could demonstrate it to me, so that I can visualize it," Dievas said.

"Markič will best explain it to you. He had to go through real hell in life to reach the level of intellectual," Algirdas said.

"You know," Markič began, "I once lived the calm life of a technical education teacher. I thought that I had realized my life's mission and that I would retire as an educator. But a guilty conscience suddenly began knocking on my door. I said to myself: 'Markič, will you really end up like that? You have to make something of yourself; otherwise you don't deserve to be alive at all.' So I began studying Baltology and Indo-European linguistics. I finished my studies in record time, and soon after that I submitted my doctoral dissertation. I had become an intellectual. And now I live the life of an intellectual. I no longer look at beautiful women when I walk down the street, but think about serious linguistic problems instead."

"I still like to look at beautiful women, even though I consider myself an intellectual," Algirdas said. "Because I'm an artist, beautiful women inspire me. When I feed myself on their beauty, I obtain creative power. There's no force more powerful than creative power."

I did not know what to say, but I felt obliged to speak up

and illustrate my intellectual essence: "The Lithuanian *dievas* is related to the Latvian *dievs* and also to the Old Prussian *deivas*, and they all come from the Indo-European *deiwos*, which the Greek *Zeus* comes from too."

Everyone there applauded me, but Markič condescendingly frowned: "Where did you read that? Everyone can boast of the discoveries of others, but a true intellectual comes to his own conclusions. Allow me to explain to you where the name *praying mantis* derives from...."

Markič gave the explanation, and an even more thunderous applause followed. I felt exactly the same as twenty years ago – like a small and helpless boy.

"I see that the life of an intellectual is quite thrilling," Dievas said. "You all have a rich and diversified spiritual life. So, you deserve the best. And the best that I can offer at this moment is to take you with me, if, of course, you want to go."

"Where?" Algirdas asked.

"To Heaven," Dievas replied. "But don't worry, not for good, just for a trip. For a short glimpse and then back."

"How will we get there?" Markič asked.

"I'll take you, on my flying workbench!" Dievas said, and burst out laughing.

"On a flying workbench?" we said with amazement.

"Yes. Master Perkūnas remodeled it, and now it serves me well."

"This will be interesting!" Algirdas said with enthusiasm.

"Let's go, let's go!" Markič urged.

"May I come along too?" Agnieška asked and looked at us tenderly, seeing that we had somehow forgotten about her.

"But you have to get to the studio as soon as possible to record the Eurovision song," Algirdas said, and offered her his score. "The deadline is tomorrow; the competition will be over soon."

"I've changed my mind. I've finished my pop-song career. Thank you, Mr. Algirdas, for the marvelous song; nevertheless, I think that it's better that I dedicate myself to intellectual pursuits."

"Well, alright, come along," Dievas said.

5. Heaven

After old Dievas switched on the flying workbench, we sat on it to be taken to Heaven, our reward. We took off and climbed higher and higher toward the sky. Although it was night, we saw the lighted city below; for the times of power outages had long since passed. We flew over St. Anne's Church and Gediminas's Hill, where the castle with the tower stood. We flew over the cathedral beside the tall belfry. We flew across the Vilnia and then the mighty Neris. The top view of the ancient city, shrouded in the night-time silence, was outlined below us; the buildings became increasingly smaller, the houses changed into small houses, and the cars were like toys we played with as children. With great speed the workbench pierced the first layers of clouds, and then we got cold. I pressed myself against Agnieška Olšauska. The wind completely disheveled her hair; her hair covered her eyes. I was hugging her with one arm, and with the other I was holding the workbench's iron frame that probably once served as a vise for clamping plywood or some other type of wood intended for processing. Algirdas and Markič were positioned in the front directly behind Dievas, who skillfully controlled the unusual vessel. They laughed playfully, excited about the wild voyage to the land beyond.

All of a sudden, it began to thunder fiercely. Lightning bolts shot out of the clouds, and we found ourselves in the middle of a terrible storm. In an instant, we were soaked to the skin. The workbench became unsteady and rocked wildly across the sky.

"Perkūnas is angry," Dievas said. "He becomes jealous if I transport peasants on his workbench."

"But we're intellectuals!" Markič yelled.

"Now, you explain that to Perkūnas!" Dievas screamed. "Peasant, shepherd, sports commentator or intellectual – he can't tell the difference."

One of the lightning bolts struck the workbench's metal undercarriage, and big sparks shot from it. Our electrified hair stood up, and Agnieška's looked especially terrifying because it extended almost a meter in width and height. The workbench

shook, and we nearly fell off, but fortunately we grasped the frame in time. We were being tossed across the sky. We were losing altitude and screamed in fear. The workbench eventually steadied, but it sounded like the engine was seizing. We were losing altitude, and an indescribable panic engulfed us.

"Uh oh, it's dying!" Dievas screamed. "What are we going to do?"

"Oh no, oh no," Agnieška cried.

"Markič, you're an expert on workbenches. Fix it!" Algirdas exclaimed.

"I haven't dealt with workbenches in more than ten years," Markič lamented.

"Try anyway, perhaps you'll succeed," Dievas said and yielded the pilot's seat to him.

Markič made his way to the front and occupied the post. He did not have a lot of time to recall his former technical knowledge. First, he tried to stabilize the control handle, which was moving unrestrained in every direction. He pulled pieces of chewing gum from his pocket and wedged them under the handle. Then he opened the hood and checked the fuel flow. The heavenly manna, of which there was still sufficient in the fuel tank, propelled the workbench. Markič lay bent over the engine and closely studied the fuel injection device.

"The vacuum valves have broken. We'll have to make an emergency landing!" he screamed.

"Oh, Holy Virgin of the Gate of Dawn! Oh no!" Agnieška cried and clung to me tightly.

"Where will we land?" Algirdas asked with a frightened tone.

"Wherever we can!" Markič answered and tried with great difficulty to shift the handle.

The workbench spiraled increasingly lower among the old buildings, and Markič tried to tame it like an unruly horse.

"Watch out, watch out, there's a school there! We're going to crash into it!" Dievas warned him.

"I'll try to land alongside the river!"

"Turn already, we're going to smash against the school's façade."

"Oh no, we're going to fall onto the roof!"

"We're going to break to pieces!"

With considerable speed we fell onto the building that stood beside the school. Fortunately, the workbench was equipped with a flexible spring system, so the landing was not too hard; but we were thrown from the vessel anyway. We lay dizzy from the blows, each of us on a separate end of the flat roof. We slowly came to our senses and began to look around.

"The river is below. Do you hear it rushing?" I said.

"I know where we are!" Algirdas determined. "On Petras Vileišis Street. The Gymnasium is next door and the statue is below. Do you see them?"

"Look at that, we must have landed on the Lithuanian Language Institute," Markič concluded.

"Unbelievable!" I exclaimed. "We were bound for Heaven, and now we've landed here!"

"I still can't believe that it ended so well," Agnieška said. "I thought we were going to die."

"Forgive me for not being able to take you to Heaven," Dievas said sadly.

"Another time, Mr. Dievas," I said and patted him on the shoulder.

"But..." Markič spoke up.

"Yes?"

"As a matter of fact..."

"Markič, what would you like to say?" Dievas asked.

"Perhaps... this is our Heaven," Markič said. "At least I think so. What about you?"

"We do too, we do too!" we agreed almost in unison.

"If that's the case, then there is no reason for sadness," a cheered-up Dievas said. "Come, I'll treat you to heavenly manna!"

This was Heaven! There were no television hosts and sports commentators, no song competitions, no Eurosong and no dialectal pop song; there were no skiers or skiing, no Skumavc and no Žmavc, no Špela Skumavc, and no Beštrov Tonček

from Žiganja Vas. There was only pure, perfect Baltology and Baltological truth. There were morphological analyses and ancient word roots. The roof of the institute was simultaneously our semantic base and derivational plane. We, the participants of verbal action, converged and diverged around the roof, and each pecked at his own lump of heavenly manna. Day began to break.

"Markič, the moon is setting and dawn is lighting the sky," a poetically disposed Algirdas said.

"Indeed," Markič agreed and likewise stared at the dawn on the horizon.

"Each night brings with itself restlessness and intoxication," Dievas said with satisfaction.

"Look over there, in the distance!" Agnieška exclaimed and tugged me by the sleeve. "The *kmiel* that Lithuanians make beer from is growing over there!"

"Oh, you're right!" I said with excitement. "What a lot of hops!"

"It's such a beautiful morning," Agnieška said quietly. "I have never experienced such a marvelous sunrise."

"And *jodajki* are grazing over there. Look!" I said. I pointed out the black cows in the distance and hugged her. In that moment, I thought the cows looked like a herd of mighty brontosauruses.

Translated by Shay Robert Wood

The Lithuanian National Gallery of Art

ERNESTAS PARULSKIS

The Newest State-Sponsored Institution of Lithuanian Art Traces its Beginnings to the Museum of the Revolution

The main features of the building housing the Lithuanian National Gallery of Art (LNGA) in Vilnius were originally designed in 1968 for the Museum of the Revolution. The building had been designed by two recent graduates of the State Art Institute in Vilnius, Gediminas Baravykas and Vytautas Vielis, who had won the design competition. Construction started in 1971 and was completed in 1980. The initial architectural idea changed slightly during the decade of design and construction, but the building retained two main characteristics of the Lithuanian architectural style of the 1970s: the use of simple and clearly defined forms, and the careful placement of the structure in the natural environment. The architects gracefully pitched massive rectangular stone volumes on transparent glass walls and beautifully integrated the museum into the right bank of the Neris River.

The Museum of the Revolution's existence was brief. In 1991, its exhibits were placed in storage at the Lithuanian National Museum, and ownership of the building was transferred to the Lithuanian Art Museum. Since 1993, the Lithuanian National Museum used the building to exhibit shows of Lithuanian folk art and a collection of art donated by the Lithuanian-American sculptor Vytautas Kašuba (1915-1997). These and some other temporary art exhibitions continued through

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1999, when the building was closed due to its poor physical condition.

In 2002, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved a project to establish the National Gallery of Art in the building of the former Museum of the Revolution. A year later, an architectural competition for reconstruction and expansion of the building was announced. Eight Lithuanian architects participated in the competition. The winning proposal, by Audrius Bučas, Darius Čaplinskas, and Gintaras Kuginis, retained the original structure of the building, but added new space and new materials. The new ensemble synthesizes the modernist architecture of the sixties with new technological advancements of the twenty-first century.

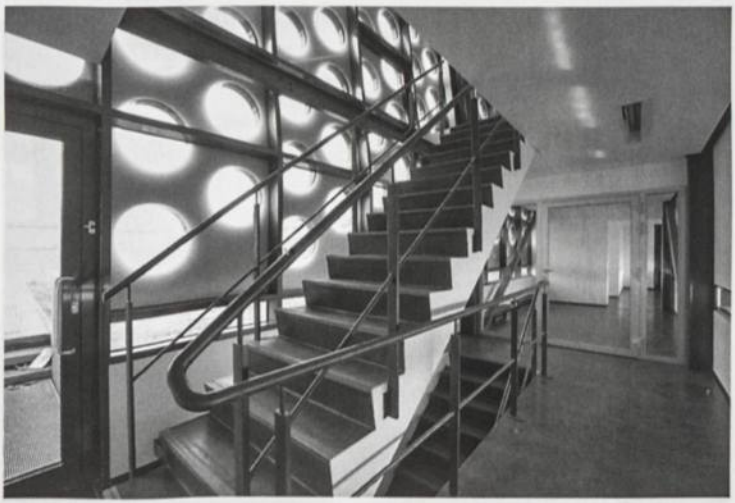
New structural elements, such as the new exhibit hall and wings reminiscent of an advertising screen, integrate the building into the rapidly changing urban environment on Konstitucija Avenue, representing a modern, dynamic, knowledge-based society and culture. The LNGA opened its doors to the public in 2009.

The gallery contains ten rooms for permanent display and two for temporary exhibitions. The total exposition area is over 35,000 square feet. The permanent display presents approximately 450 works by major Lithuanian artists. These are paintings, sculptures, prints, and photographs encompassing the period from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present day. The exhibition is structured by combining chronological and thematic approaches. On the one hand, the permanent display presents a narrative of historical development, which can be analyzed by reflecting on the different aspects of the exposition, along with special temporary exhibits. On the other hand, each exhibit highlights its specific relationship with place and time. The gallery bases each visual narrative on a specific "core problem," which is often based on the politics of the time. The viewers are encouraged to look at art through a political prism. Explanatory texts describe the artists on different ideological sides and the means they had used to achieve their artistic goals.

The Lithuanian National Gallery of Art building before reconstruction, around 1999

Structure after restoration
Photo by Vaidotas Aukštaitis

The temporary exhibit rooms of the LNGA are equipped with the latest equipment and are used for complex exhibitions involving large-scale mixed media projects. For its 2009 debut, the LNGA presented one of the biggest projects under the Vilnius: European Capital of Culture 2009 banner, an international exhibition named Dialogues of Color and Sound: M. K. Čiurlionis and His Contemporaries. Each year, the LNGA mounts several temporary exhibits of Lithuanian and international art, which are often accompanied by film screenings, lectures, and educational weekends.



The interior of the screen-like structure.
Photo by Raimondas Urbanavičius

BOOK REVIEWS

Julija Šukys. *Epistolophilia: Writing the Life of Ona Šimaitė.* University of Nebraska Press, 2012. 217 pages. ISBN 978-0-8032-3632-5. Hardcover, $24.95.

Ona Šimaitė, a hero of the Holocaust, would seem to be a likely subject for a biography, but in Julija Šukys's lovely book we soon discover just how difficult it can be to reconstruct the life of a woman who dedicated herself to looking after others.

Šimaitė's efforts to help those trapped in the ghetto of Vilnius during the years of German occupation led to her 1944 arrest, interrogation, torture, and deportation to Dachau. She never returned to Lithuania, living out most of the rest of her life in France, working at times as a servant. She was an obsessive letter-writer, but in her letters she rarely touched upon the war years or the time she spent in the camps. Although Šimaitė had been recognized as one of Yad Vashem's "Righteous Among the Nations," the memoir she had written at the time of those events was lost. Despite numerous urgings, Šimaitė apparently never attempted to rewrite it, and the significance of this silence is one of the themes explored in the book.

Šukys weaves this unusual biography out of her own quest to learn more about Šimaitė and the era she lived through, together with the sometimes homely details of life Šimaitė left behind in her letters and journals. As Šukys travels through Europe and Israel tracing Šimaitė's path, occasionally bringing her young son along, she explores further questions about women's life-writing and her own struggles to find the time to write. Along the way, we make further excursions into the lives of the people Šimaitė corresponded with, including the tragic

end of the poet Kazys Jakubėnas; the mysterious suicide of the young, successful editor Tayda Devėnaitė; and Šimaitė's niece Aldutė, whose diagnosis of schizophrenia provides a sidelight into mental illness in the Soviet Union.

The book includes two maps, twenty-four illustrations, and a bibliography.

Elizabeth Novickas

Antanas Sileika. *Underground: A Novel*. Thomas Allen, 2011. 310 pages. ISBN 978-0887627361. Paperback, $24.95.

Sileika's historical novel recounts the love story of Lukas and Elena, two members of the Lithuanian resistance during the first years of the Soviet occupation. The author has adeptly woven real settings, events, and characters into an absorbing story of fictional history. At different times, the book reads like a war journal, an espionage thriller, a heart-wrenching romance, or sometimes a well-written history book. The author researched the subject matter and consulted with historians in producing his historic fiction.

The novel opens with Lukas and Elena's engagement party in Marijampole (Lithuanian names are spelled without diacritics), where they courageously assassinate several local Soviet officials. The novel then switches to the chronological narrative of Lukas, from his student days through his life in the underground. After their wedding, their partisan cells conduct a daring daytime offensive against Soviet rule in Merkine, where Elena is killed. Lukas tries to move on with his life. He even considers leaving the resistance. That would be impossible, given his *persona non grata* status to the Soviets, due to his many underground missions. His dilemma is relieved when he is sent abroad to coordinate communications efforts with the Western powers. In Paris, he falls in love and marries Monika, a war refugee. He receives word that Elena is still alive and returns to Lithuania to find her. He smells a trap and manages to escape his handlers. An elaborate search uncovers a disfigured Elena, who feigns amnesia after a terrible accident, and their infant son. The penultimate chapter depicts their nostalgic reunion, in spite of their star-crossed fate. The novel then

jumps forty years to the fall of the Soviet occupation. Lukas's two sons—half-brothers who do not know about each other—by his two wives find each other in Canada and Lithuania. They piece together the tragic end of Lukas's life.

The plot is a historical narrative from a third person singular point of view, with frequent historical background commentary. The first and last chapters are exceptions: the opening scene is the engagement party ambush, while the last chapter skips four decades to Lukas's grown children. The partisan attack chapters capture the reader's imagination with unnerving excitement, while most of the novel proceeds calmly through the story line. The narrative tone sympathizes with the partisans and berates Soviet collaborators, reflecting the sympathies of the underground and Lithuanian national sentiment.

Lukas is the protagonist, the only fully developed character in the book. He studies literature before joining the resistance. In contrast to the other partisans, he is well-educated and lacks a military background. He uses his real name in the underground, not a pseudonym. This reveals his honesty: he must be true to himself and cannot feign falsehood. He is a trustworthy and loyal Lithuanian patriot. He is also concerned about the well-being of his comrades-in-arms. He has a knack for detecting double agents and either escaping or eliminating them. His interests include poetry. This symbolizes his Lithuanian spirit, i.e., all Lithuanians are poets at heart. Consequently, he pursues romance with Elena during the most unlikely of times. Lukas's decision to return to Lithuania and search for Elena, in spite of his second marriage, discloses the depth of his love for her. The Lukas character is loosely based on the life of partisan Juozas Lukša (he escaped to the West on a diplomatic mission, fell in love and married, and returned to Lithuania only to be betrayed and executed).

Elena is stunningly beautiful with the disarming naiveté of a country woman. Her life in the resistance transforms her into a heroic freedom fighter. Careful and secretive, she, like many women, is a courier of letters and newspapers. The Mariampole attack precludes her from returning to civilian life, so she becomes an armed member of the underground. Through

her, Sileika pays homage to all the forest sisters who fought in the resistance.

Lakstingala is Lukas's friend, comrade, and commanding officer. He mentors Lukas at all crucial moments of his life: joining the resistance, maturing as a member of the underground, marrying Elena, going West, and finding Elena again. He is just as trustworthy and loyal as Lukas. His military training has freed him from the civilian considerations that sometimes influence Lukas. He serves as the brains of the unit and facilitates communications with other cells. Decades later, he helps to bring the two half brothers together.

Monika is a bit of a mystery. She sweeps Lukas off his feet. Unlike other refuges, she is well-situated and can travel. She is studying to become a nurse. Lukas begins to suspect that she, through her uncle, may be an agent of the Lithuanian government-in-exile. Their goal: to draw Lukas into alliance with the French and American governments, rather than the Swedish or English ones. These spy-vs.-spy intrigues are addressed all too briefly and are not successfully resolved in the novel.

The setting for most of the novel is the forest bunkers and camps of the resistance, with occasional clandestine trips to the town of Merkine in south central Lithuania. The freedom fighters collect supplies, meet relatives, or conduct missions there. Lithuania is home: the towns, farmsteads, and especially the nearly impenetrable forests are all familiar terrain. In contrast, Lukas's trip to Sweden and Paris with a visit to Bavaria is disorienting, reflecting his inner confusion after Elena's death. Abroad, he is a fish out of water, but begins to find his place once again with Monika. Likewise, his son Luke shares a similar ennui of alienation in Canada, the only country he knows.

The prose is flawless, but the dialog is sometimes stilted. It does not sound like flowing English, or Lithuanian, or Lithuanian in translation. For instance, Lakstingala's admonitions to Lukas sound unnatural:

> All right, this is better than I thought. I have a lot of men who can pull a trigger. These camps of full of farm boys, but there a damned few men who can handle a pen or a typewriter. Mind

you, everyone needs to be able to fight. But I want you to be sure about what you're doing. (37)

At times, the prose lapses into extended historical asides. They provide rich and interesting background details for the story, but they make the narration choppy. For instance, Chapter 1 opens with a romp through the Eastern Borderlands between the Iron Curtain, Hapsburg lands and Czarist Russia. Chapter 2 scrambles through Lithuanian history – the Teutonic knights, Swedish wars, Czarist partitions and Napoleonic marches – in establishing the setting for the village of Rumsiskes, Lukas's home. Later chapters have extended historical digressions about the postwar Soviet regime. These are indeed useful to the story. Some authors have experimented with other solutions to similar challenges. For example, Manuel Puig in his *El beso de la mujer araña* (Kiss of the Spider Woman) uses footnotes in his novel for background information.

The historic events of the novel grant it overall verisimilitude, while some of the details stretch the imagination. For example, Lukas and Lakstingala survive countless daring attacks and betrayals unscathed, while all of their comrades die. Lakstingala miraculously evades capture as a partisan leader until the Soviet Union collapses. Elena is rescued from a Soviet prison hospital, pregnant, where she was tortured. Disfigured, she hides in Merkine, undetected, but is eventually deported to Siberia. Their companion, Lozorius, becomes a double agent, but cannot betray either Lukas or Lakstingala, so he commits suicide.

Underground is Sileika's third novel and fourth volume of fiction. The narrative complexities, intrigues, and refined narrative style all demonstrate his maturating skills as an author. The novel is an easy and interesting read about a fascinating period of Lithuania's history. The effortlessness reading conceals the complexity of the writing and editing. The novel should be translated into Lithuanian for the audience in the homeland. Likewise, a screen adaption of the novel could present this period of post-World War II history to a broader international audience. It would add to the growing genre of filmography about the Soviet era.

Vilius Rudra Dundzila

ABSTRACTS

An Overview of the Emigration Processes of Lithuanians
Daiva Dapkutė

This article reviews the stereotypical images of emigration in the Lithuanian consciousness and compares these images at different periods in the history of Lithuanian migration. Several common questions regarding emigration are addressed, including whether the current wave is the largest in Lithuanian history, whether is it possible to stop or limit emigration, and whether emigration is nothing more than an irretrievable loss to Lithuania. The article discusses attitudes towards émigrés and the emigrant's relationship with the homeland, and frames the discussion within today's global interactions as a search for a Lithuanian identity.

Negotiating Official Lithuanian Participation for Chicago's Second World's Fair
Salvatore De Sando

In the history of Lithuanian national cultural events for international audiences, critical analyses of these productions are lacking. Chicago's second World's Fair is the case study, and this project examined official Lithuanian participation in the A Century of Progress International Exposition to show how non-Lithuanians experienced and perceived collaboration with Lithuanian leaders. This project used the University of Illinois at Chicago's collection of administrative records from A Century of Progress, with a primary focus on external and internal official correspondence. Ultimately, unreliable Fair representative leadership and frequently delayed Lithuanian correspondence unnecessarily extended the dialogue for commitment from the Government of Lithuania. Further, this research outlines early professional relationships between Lithuanian community leaders in Chicago and Lithuania.

Building Soviet Reality with Language and Metaphor
David O'Rourke

In this essay, the author explores the use of metaphor in Soviet Lithuania as a symbolic bridge to create a framework of beliefs and explanations that help make sense out of life. The Soviet system of pervasive, ideology-based, state communication was in essence a metaphor for Soviet life itself. Although this powerful metaphor turned personal experience on its head, it required acceptance of that new "reality" if the individual wanted to survive. The writer questions how easily state-imposed metaphors designed to repress spontaneity can be changed by a new social openness.

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