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Algimantas Jankauskas
**WILL THE WORLD RETURN HOME?
TRACING ROMUALDAS OZOLAS'
POLITICAL THOUGHT**

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**POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURE
IN LITHUANIA – FROM GLOBAL
TO VERNACULAR**

Ieva Mediodia
ART

Gediminas Kasparavičius
LITHUANIA'S FIRST NAVAL SHIPPING COMPANY

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Visos mūsų padėios - tai mūsų.
Visos mūsų dabartys - mūsų.
Kومه mūsų baigėmės?

Vilnius
1987.03.11

R. Ozolas

Romualdas Ozolas with his own capture and signature.
See article by Algimantas Jankauskas

Will the World Return Home? Tracing Romualdas Ozolas' Political Thought

ALGIMANTAS JANKAUSKAS

On Self-Perception of Occupied Consciousness

The fifty-year-long occupation that led to the national uprising in 1941, the longest post-war armed resistance in Europe, and mass deportations and emigration left deep scars in the occupied consciousness, especially for the Soviet-era generations. The occupation of 1940 not only destroyed the sovereign state of Lithuania, but also launched an experiment unprecedented in the history of this civilization, the purpose of which was to eradicate the Republic of Lithuania as an “obsolete” cultural and civilizational entity with no historical perspective. We talk about the Soviet occupation as a “civilizational rupture,” which effects are still felt, especially in the field of political philosophy.

Romualdas Ozolas was one of the few philosophers who understood the scale of this great drama and who, even in the post-war intellectual wasteland, was able to find the points of resistance that shaped how he viewed and thought about the world. It was not an easy task for his generation and even more difficult for later generations. Ozolas accurately diagnosed the situation:

The Soviet school had failed to present to them [later generations – D.C.] Lithuania as the idea of a place of being; [instead] they were controlled by the idea of an inhumane Stalinist Soviet man, a stand against and liberation from which demanded an enormous amount of spiritual work; many people never started it and those

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who did, failed to accomplish it even today, because the liberation from that monstrous idea meant the restoration of true principles of a normal human worldview and its unfolding into a new outlook created independently.¹

The home of Ozolas' parents became a place for the philosopher (and politician) himself, surrounded by uncertainty and lies, to seek certainty: the "home of Lithuania's parents is a place that we call homestead."² The perception of ones' own land as the sole reliable place of true being shaped his worldview's fundamental postulate which was: "The world is where a man who created it lives."

Because of Ozolas' great personal efforts (intensive studies of the history of philosophy, ethnographic expeditions and initiatives in Soviet journal *Kultūros barai*, a trailblazer in those times), he managed not to identify with the Soviet reality, but reflect on it. "I originate within you. I am within myself and I live in us – family, nation, and world. But in them only to the extent that I am real to myself," this entry in Ozolas' manuscript attests to the degree of freedom of a man who opened a window to an independent vision and perception of the world.

The philosopher and politician understood very well the importance of the self-perception of occupied consciousness for liberation. He wrote, "The most terrible problem of occupied consciousness is that the reality of occupation can and does appear to consciousness as a true reality."³ Ozolas discussed the ways in which occupied consciousness is manifested in his 1983 article "Pasaulis yra čia" [The World is Here], which became "an introduction to *Sąjūdis*, the Reform Movement of Lithuania." In it, he refers to occupied consciousness as a "departmental world" arising from "culture of analogies."⁴ Such a vision of the world is inauthentic. It is empirical and eclectic in its nature and forms

¹ Ozolas, *Pasaulis grįžta namo*, 42.

² Ibid., 48.

³ Ozolas, *Išsivadavimas*, 7.

⁴ Ozolas, *Atgimimo ištakose*, 531–534.

habits of imitation and adaptation. In the words of Ozolas, “only three things constitute real life: an apartment, a collective garden plot, and graves.”⁵ According to him, historically the captivity of empirical thinking finally established itself in the habits of the “generation of great moral indifference” developed in the late Soviet era. The late Soviet-era generation, separated from the classical thought and moral traditions, shrewdly exploited the mentality of adaptation, becoming the victor of the post-communist transformation and the successor of nomenclature traditions after the restoration of an independent state.

Ozolas envisioned the path of liberation from occupied consciousness as a fundamental change – the new Revival, the aspiration of a human to return to his/her true self through the goal of national unity. “Our main slogan now, in my understanding, is this: Through socialism to nationalism,” Ozolas wrote in his diary when the hope of creating a more human life – socialism with a human face, had failed after the Prague Spring.⁶

His determination and commitment to Lithuania had drawn the moment for taking action closer. In the late Soviet period, Ozolas engaged in active educational cultural activities that directly led to the establishment of the Reform Movement. Together with other people, who cared about Lithuanian history and culture, he founded and implemented an ambitious publishing program devoted to the world and Lithuanian philosophical heritage. In various series, approximately 200 books were published in multi-thousand print run.⁷ The poor and one-sided Soviet Lithuanian space of ideas was replenished with authentic texts of the most famous philosophers of the world and Lithuania. The boundaries of freedom in public life were expanding, and the ranks of like-minded people were growing. The national publishing program marked the beginning of the “intellectual movement” that paved the way for the liberation of society.

⁵ Ibid., 553.

⁶ Ozolas, *Supratimai*, 262.

⁷ For more, see: Ozolas, *Nacionalinės leidybos sistemos metmenys*, 26–33; Rybelis, *Romualdas Ozolas – leidėjas ir filosofas pavergtoje visuomenėje*, 16–22.

Ozolas advocated the principle of a free man in academia as well. It is unusual for a person having no traditional educational degrees and titles to leave a trace in Lithuanian academic culture. One of the traces was the philosophy journal *Problemos* with its non-standard articles, which was very important in Lithuania during the Soviet era. Ozolas, together with his fellow philosophers, Bronius Genzelis, Jonas Repšys and Kristina Rickevičiūtė, also inspired by the Prague Spring, began to waken the academic community, bringing together those interested in philosophy. They later became an important intellectual force of *Sąjūdis*. In 1973–1989, Ozolas gave lectures on the history of philosophy at Vilnius University that were very popular and well-attended by students. He perceived the history of philosophy as a way of thinking about life as one lives it, and the search for real human existence. In an era of ideological philosophy, his teaching led to the liberation of young people and moral self-determination.

From Cultural to Political Action

Gorbachev's *perestroika* that "paused at Ašmena," reached Lithuania at the beginning of 1987. The Lithuanian Liberty League and activists from the Catholic underground responded with the rally of August 23. For many participants, *Sąjūdis* started on that day. They were the first heralds of freedom. People who worked in the field of culture gathered in heritage protection groups around the then famous *Kultūros barai* and the Thomas Mann seminar, and formed other informal assemblies.

"Moscow is stirring and boiling, the Caucasus disturbances drew blood, and here (in Lithuania) time and things have stalled and stagnated into a limpid jelly. Enough of cultural events, one has to switch to politics," Ozolas wrote about the start of 1987.⁸

In February 1987, Ozolas and Prof. Bronius Genzelis formed a discussion club "*Kultūra ir istorija*" [Culture and History] as

⁸ Ozolas, *Tikiu, nes žinau*, 70.

part of the society “Žinija” [Science], the very first club initiative in the country. “It is hard to be human, [it is] even harder to be a nation”, Ozolas outlined as a fundamental task of the national revival in one of the club’s first meetings.⁹ Topics on historical consciousness, national educational school ecology, and state sovereignty were discussed in the club. Ozolas’ lecture “The Strength and Weakness of Our Culture” which he delivered on November 18, 1987, was one of the most significant pre-*Sąjūdis* documents asserting the idea of land as the only reliable and true place. He defined the goals of liberation from the occupied consciousness: First, the necessity to historicize one’s presence; secondly, the necessity to concretize one’s presence; and thirdly, the necessity to ethicize one’s presence.

Liberation required a new vocabulary. Ozolas began creating it before the establishment of *Sąjūdis*, introducing to the public the concepts of *Dora*, *Protas*, and *Dvasia* which were erased during the Soviet era and therefore foreign to the “generation of great indifference.”

Dora [Morals] is a constant experiencing of being; not doing things that would cause one to lose oneself; it is an obligation to one’s own secure existence.

Protas [Mind] is the ability to decide how a man can be in the world so that his life would be moral.

Dvasia [Spirit] is the unifying force of all human powers (sense, will, thinking, and faith), manifested in the acts of self-creation – self-persuasion and self-expression.¹⁰

For Ozolas, these were the postulates of a public awakening and part of the new national revival program. The three words became the starting points for conceptualizing the national resurgence movement and drafting the movement’s fundamental documents. “*Sąjūdis* is a movement of the people of Lithuania for the revival of their spirit, culture, and nature. The main goal of *Sąjūdis* is to create a new public consciousness, to cultivate

⁹ Ozolas, *Pasaulis grįžta namo*, 36–37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 44–45.

new relationships and a new way of life, and to form a new policy,”¹¹ – Ozolas defined the Reform Movement.

Ozolas was one of *Sąjūdis*’s initiators, organizer of the June 2 and 3, 1988 meetings, and chairman of the first meetings of the Steering Group. Ozolas’ dedication, integrity, insightfulness and ability to find solutions to difficult situations earned him the title of the Reform Movement’s authoritative leader. In the popular weekly *Atgimimas* which he founded and edited, issues of the identity and ideology of the movement were purposefully discussed.

“I Was a Laborer of the Republic” or Ozolas in Politics

Ozolas was one of the few Lithuanian politicians who had a vision of the Lithuanian state, and who consistently asserted and remained faithful to it. He noted that states are created primarily so that ethnos (an ethnic group) can assert and defend itself. Ethnos becomes a nation only when it creates a state to assert and defend itself. The state is a fundamental tool for an ethnic group to develop its creative powers and create conditions for the realization of human rights and freedoms guaranteed by our civilization.

For Ozolas, the March 11th Lithuania had remained a sovereign state, ensuring the vitality of the nation. He envisioned Lithuania as a national, civic and democratic state which builds community by consensus. The purpose of such a state is to preserve, strengthen, and consolidate the Lithuanian nation in the world, which would guarantee it a safe and secure life in its historical homeland. “Not Lithuania in the world, but the world in Lithuania” was Ozolas’ political credo which he tried consistently to implement while holding various important political positions.

¹¹ Ibid., 95–96.

"I was a laborer of the Republic, driving the process forward since the birth of Sąjūdis; I was a balancer in the rebuilding of the State, in its First Government and then the Seimas, where I formed a centrist party,"¹² – Ozolas summarized his contribution in politics. The summary contains the decisive activities of the establishment of Sąjūdis and the restoration of Lithuania's independence, as well as Ozolas' principled position regarding the May 23, 1992 resolution ("the Constitution comes first, and only then the President"), endorsed by the public: some of the most important Lithuanian laws (National Security Framework, Public Information Framework and Farming Law), intense discussions and decisions made in the Eastern Lithuania Commission (later Regional Committee), war against corruption (inquiries into the Šleževičius' bank deposit matter and the privatization of the Mažeikių nafta), an initiative to set up the National Bureau of Investigation (by example of the American FBI), support for Valdas Adamkus in presidential elections, concern for Baltic unity, solidarity with Chechnya and Ukraine, authentic research material and thoughts on the history of the restored Second Republic of Lithuania (7 books), and notes about Lithuania's role in the European Union (4 books), which still have not been adequately put into use.

Ozolas was deeply convinced that centrism should become the ideological backbone and the guarantor of stability in a post-communist divided society, which was been trying to liberate itself from the occupied consciousness. He put much effort into formulating an ideology of centrism. For Ozolas, the point of reference for centrism was not an individual, but "a person whose actions (in relation to oneself, surroundings, and other human being) create what we call the human world."¹³ He always imagined the Centrist party as a party of national interests, an organization of statesmen and organizers of state life, no matter the political agenda. That is why, as the wave of globalization

¹² Ozolas, *Supratimai*, 592.

¹³ *Centrizmas Lietuvoje*, 106.

drove centrists into the fringes of politics, Ozolas personally felt political failures. He resisted as much as he could the attempts to destroy centrists as an independent political force.

Remaining loyal to the idea of the independent state declared on March 11, Ozolas critically accepted the integrative changes in Lithuania's statehood and decided to defend the position of "Europe without unions." In defense of his standpoint, he used the following argument: Although the state was restored, it had not been embedded in the minds of its citizens. Lithuanians had not yet become a political nation and a political entity capable of managing itself and withstanding the challenges of globalism. Ozolas was not against membership in the EU in principle, but was convinced that the remnants of occupied consciousness and the tendency towards political subservience would lead Lithuania to a policy of obedience and conformation. In 2002, when asked about the main problem of Lithuania, Ozolas replied that "we are still seeing ourselves through the eyes of others."¹⁴

For him, Lithuania's Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2030" was the epitome of a conformation policy. The idea of the document that Lithuania is everywhere where a Lithuanian citizen lives, and that in the "shrunk" world of communications one can still be in touch with his state and enjoy the full life of a citizen while living in another country, was in principle unacceptable to Ozolas. He viewed it as a strategy of voluntary self-destruction. For Ozolas, the return of emigrants to their homeland and to living in Lithuania was the only real strategy for national survival. He was equally critical of the precondition for the implementation of this strategy, namely, the legitimization of dual citizenship.

Disagreement with the official European integration policy, pushed Ozolas to the margins of politics. In the spring of 2012, Ozolas quit politics and returned to publishing and editing, leaving us his important testimonies about Lithuania's role in the EU.

¹⁴ Ozolas, *Pasaulis grįžta namo*, 74.

Ozolas' Political Testament: "Nationalism is Real Humanism"

"I am a nationalist!" – Ozolas declared in his political testament "Nationalism is Real Humanism" (2014), nearly three decades after the Lithuanian state was restored.

Globalization is an essential aspect of the modern world and the overall increase of interactions between people and nations and its consequences. That is a factual reality. Ozolas embraced these changes, but at the same time he understood the opportunities and threats of globalization. Globalism is a real threat to Ozolas. For him, what promotes globalization, undermining nation-states and consolidating the positions of global players, i.e. international corporations, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations, and erasing traditional collective identities and norms of behavior from people's minds is a radical doctrine.

The opposition between globalism and nationalism became the central axis of Ozolas' political thinking and concern at the sunset of his life. To him, nationalism was an alternative to the twenty-first century world that surrendered to the ideology of globalism that was exhausted. For Ozolas, September 11th was the symbolic boundary of the global world. On the third day after the attacks, the philosopher noted that the events in the US marked the beginning of the "civilization war"¹⁵ and the end of Francis Fukuyama's "the end of history." The meaning of 9/11 as the boundary of the modern world, which has predetermined the great divide between globalism and nationalism in a contemporary world, is becoming increasingly realistic today.

What is globalism for Ozolas? How did it become an ideology that took over the world? Where is its destructiveness and anti-humanity? These and other issues are the focus of Ozolas' political testament.

For the philosopher, globalism is the ideology that generates profits without limits. The starting point and criterion for progress in globalism is "not the individual but the statistical individual."

¹⁵ Ibid., 62.

It is no longer acculturative, no longer ideological. His essence is the irresponsibility of freedom from which unrestrained egoism and voluntarism are born. "In fact, this is a man without God, god to himself."¹⁶ Ozolas noted that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in June 2004, is a document that had legitimized the status of a "physical human being." The statement of the Declaration which states that "All human beings are born free and equal and should be treated the same way" represents a subject who has no obligations to others, because he becomes the starting point to which the Other is subordinated.

Ozolas was convinced that the provision of the Declaration should have been supplemented by the establishment of the law of nations. Back in 1995, the philosopher declared and defended the following thesis: "the new logic of world development urgently requires the rights of the nation to be immediately consolidated and guaranteed in international law, in the same way as human rights have been guaranteed until now."¹⁷ Today we lack the continuation of discussions about whether the world, having acquired such tools, would be more capable of resolving protracted and emerging conflicts. Focus on a "physical human being" and abstract human rights leaves behind the opportunities of exploring safer and more sustainable forms of coexistence for the world.

The consumerist lifestyle promoted by globalization, commercialization, and domination of corporations has impoverished the majority of society, creating an opportune financial regime for the political manipulation of the masses that has engraved itself in the individual's existence, destroying his autonomy, and breaking natural, social, and spiritual relationships.

On many occasions, Ozolas emphasized the harmfulness of releasing capital from liability to its place of origin and legitimizing its relocation anywhere in the world. Legally liberated from its responsibility to the community (the municipality or the state) on whose territory it operates, capital can at any time be relocated to a more profitable place. Following this globalist

¹⁶ Ibid., 227.

¹⁷ Ozolas, *Atgimimas*, 15.

strategy, Communist China became the biggest winner of globalization. For Ozolas, the company Williams International represented the case of the defeat of the Lithuanian state against corporate capitalism. "Liberated capital enslaved the human being," – Ozolas acknowledged the destructiveness of globalism and its antihuman nature.¹⁸

Can nationalism be an alternative to globalism? The answer is yes, if nationalism is understood as "the pursuit of a nation's independence, unity and identity," as it is understood by the most prominent contemporary researchers of nationalism;¹⁹ if we duly appreciate the organic link between nationalism and modern democracy and realize that cosmopolitan democracy is impossible without nations;²⁰ if we manage to overcome the stereotype of nationalism as an aggressive and dangerous source of instigator of discord and other evil, and in the case of Lithuania, as the fright of "bourgeois nationalism" that still prevails in the occupied consciousness.

For Ozolas, nationalism is "humanism of a man of national culture" that can authentically express itself as an "ideology of the creating of a national culture" and "nationalism in culture." In this sense, the nation advocated by nationalism "is the union of natural and social origin, and the most important entity in history."²¹ It is the nation which through its territorial, historical and cultural unity brings together "physical people" into a self-governing community, embodying the natural identity of the "human person" through communality. In this sense, for Ozolas, nationalism is real and not abstract humanism.

Drawing the guidelines for the preservation of Lithuanian-ness and Lithuanian nationalism in the context of a confrontation between globalism and nationalism, Ozolas remains faithful to the postulate of "the world is here" which he formulated already in 1983. He wrote that

¹⁸ Ibid., 235.

¹⁹ Smith, *Nationalism*, 9.

²⁰ Manent, *A World beyond Politics?: A Defense of Nation-State*, 57.

²¹ Ozolas, *Pasaulis grįžta namo*, 235.

the current orientation of the Lithuanians towards ‘the world’ [must be] erected on the idea which prevailed during the national liberation movement that one can enter the world fully only through the nation and the human being of the nation.²²

Is it a lonely stand? Some, because of the cultural changes that have been taking place due to globalization, would agree. But in today’s global world, signs of the “world returning home” are mounting, confirming the insights Ozolas voiced decades ago. Whatever the enthusiasts of globalization say, today’s world still operates as a world of nations.

Instead of the Last Chapter: Let’s Read Through Ozolas

Ozolas’ diverse experience in academia, culture, and society as an ideologue of *Sąjūdis* and creator of the newly restored Lithuania, resulted in his rich philosophical, cultural, political, and journalistic legacy. Having a profound understanding of the complexity of nation- and state-building and vast publishing experience, Ozolas carefully documented and considered the major events of the national revival and state-building. Much of his legacy can be found in his books and collections. Ozolas’ published legacy consists of over two dozen books that can be divided into diaries and political journalism. His conceptual legacy is an authentic and comprehensive narrative of the latest history of Lithuania, based on his original insights which span the dawn of *Sąjūdis*, the building of the state of March 11th, and to the detailed notes on Lithuania’s life and role in the EU. Abundant political journalism, speeches, and interviews (nearly two thousand bibliographic records) can be also found in the recently published bibliographic index of Ozolas’ works.²³ Let us read these works carefully and discover Romualdas Ozolas.

²² Ibid., 256.

²³ Ozolas, *Bibliografijos rodyklė*.

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Postmodern Architecture in Lithuania – From Global to Vernacular

MARTYNAS MANKUS

Introduction

Recent discussions in the professional and public sphere regarding preservation of the objects of postmodern architecture have demonstrated a broader interest in the legacy of the architecture of the second half of the twentieth century. After being widely explored in the historiography of Western architecture, postmodernism has only just started receiving adequate attention in the Eastern and Central Europe. Since the phenomenon of postmodernism was created beyond the borders of the Soviet world, the so-called “cultural logic of late capitalism” crossing the boundary of the Iron Curtain is to be considered a consequence of globalisation. On the other hand, this global trend was synchronised with the vernacular expression of architecture: local pursuit of identity, attention to context, and the handing down and continuation of architectural traditions. The text aims to uncover the significance of postmodern architecture in Lithuania in the context of the trend’s peak period: the final decade of Soviet rule.

Postmodern Architecture in Lithuania – From Global to Vernacular

On 26 March 2017, the former building of Traffic Police headquarters in Vilnius (architects Kęstutis Pempė and Gytis Ramu-

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State Automobile Inspection in Vilnius, architects Kęstutis Pempė and Gytis Ramūnis, 1985. Demolished on 26 March 2017. Photo from the archive of Kęstutis Pempė

nis, 1985), an object with clear features of postmodern architecture, was demolished. The owners of an office centre developed in its place did not want to integrate this object into the future complex of buildings. The architect community sought to preserve the building and there was no shortage of discussions in the public space.

In the West, postmodernist architecture was on the rise during the period of 1970–1980; its conceptualisation entered the canons of the history of architecture and history in general. At around the same time, such examples were also noted in the countries of the so-called Eastern Bloc (including Lithuania). Its importance and popularity are attested by architectural projects (buildings and unrealized objects). Taking into consideration that, before this point, the canon of architectural history had only included postmodernist examples from the USA, Western Europe, and Japan, how should we interpret the fact that a phenomenon was thriving in Eastern Europe which was analogous

to its Western counterpart? If postmodernism indeed is the “cultural logic of late capitalism”, as argued by Fredric Jameson, or the architecture of Reaganism, as claimed by Mary McLeod, then what would be its equivalent in the Soviet (socialist) Eastern Europe? In 1972, after the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe building complex, which symbolised the borderline between modernism and postmodernism for architecture critic Charles Jencks, the construction of Lazdynai and other modernist micro-districts was completed in Vilnius (two years later, the authors of Lazdynai construction were awarded the Lenin Prize for their work). Soviet publications presented postmodernism as a foreign phenomenon but simultaneously noted that it could be useful to the local architects as well. This did not imply an invitation to imitate the Western colleagues but rather signalled that certain architectural values had become globally significant to both capitalist and socialist industrial world. Finally, if postmodernism was a reaction against modernism, the question arises whether in the Soviet world this reaction was incited by dissatisfaction in the political regime, or is it more adequately interpreted as reconciliation and adaptation?

Postmodern Architecture in Lithuania: Inspirations and Practice

The expression of postmodernism in the Lithuanian architecture of the 1970s was influenced by a wide variety of artistic, socio-cultural, historical, and political factors. From the chronological/artistic perspective, postmodern architecture of Lithuania signifies the transition from the trends of late modernism and regionalism (which is illustrated by the works of Vladas Stauskas and Gytis Tiškus) as well as irrationalism (Romualdas Šilinskas, Gintautas Telksnys) to a constructivism-based attempt at updating the expression of modernism (Algimantas Alekna, Leonardas Vaitys). Socioculturally, this time period was in sync with the processes of relative liberation and the revival of nationalist struc-

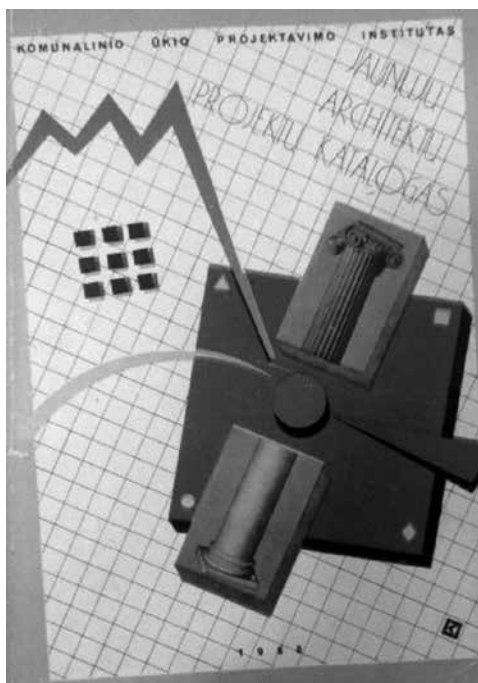


Summer house of the Institute of Physics of the Academy of Sciences, Preila, architect Gintautas Telksnys, 1978–1985. Photo by Norbertas Tukaj

tures (the processes of increasing consumerism and westernisation). Historically, according to historians Romualdas Misiūnas and Rein Taagepera, the postmodernist expression evolved during the period associated with the rebirth of national culture, centralisation, the following of the West, the peak of stagnation, and, finally, the national revival.¹

The key themes of postmodernist architecture are considered to be the placement, history, and significance. Its principal characteristics, such as contextualism, historicism, ornamentation, usage of metaphors and symbols, and double coding, have been observed in both the Western and the socialist architecture. From the chronological viewpoint, of the first objects in Lithuania to possess features of postmodern architecture, the most frequently mentioned ones were the “major” works: *Arka* (1979) by Romualdas Šilinskas (entrance to the healthcare building complex in Palanga), early interiors by Algimantas Šarauskas

¹¹ See Misiūnas and Taagepera. *The Baltic States; The Years of Dependence*.



*Cover of the catalogue
of projects by the young
architects from the Institute
of Planning Public
Economy, 1984*

and Gintautas Telksnys.² These were indeed the first objects that stood out because of their innovations in terms of aesthetics, space, and colour. The ideas of postmodernism were important to an entire generation of architects who were born between 1950 and 1965. The older architects within this group were introduced to postmodernism after having already started their professional activities. The younger architects encountered representations of postmodernism during their study years (from ca. 1975 to 1990) and it gave a powerful impetus to their early work. In the 1980s, when postmodernism was on the rise and its trends spread to Lithuania as well, postmodernist architecture achieved dominance. One possible illustration of this dominance can be found in the catalogues of projects

² See Mačiulis, "Naujasis manierizmas."

developed by young Lithuanian architects during the 1980s, which contained almost no works without historicist references typical of postmodernism, even though the economic conditions prevented the completion of many of these objects. Thus, evidently, by the late 1980s, postmodernism had become a practically predominant presence in the Lithuanian architecture. On the other hand, it turned into the zeitgeist: the spirit of the times, the prevalent style which was not necessarily consciously chosen by the architects.

The understanding and theorizing of postmodernism in Lithuania has a certain specificity to it. In the West, postmodernism began as a critical discourse, which later turned into practice. In many Eastern Bloc countries, as well as Lithuania, a reverse process was observed. When the first examples of postmodernism appeared in Lithuanian art (architecture, visual arts, literature) during the 1980s, they emerged in a vacuum of theoretical discourse. Translations of theories by Western authors and publications by Lithuanian scientists appeared only after 1990. The initial gap between the scientific discourse and the social existence and artistic expression has been summarized succinctly by sociologist Vytautas Kavolis:

In Lithuania, there is already a fight against postmodernism, which has not been seriously tested here yet, it is not sufficiently authentically sensed yet, <...> postmodernism has not yet reached enough of Lithuania, and yet there are already cries about fighting it, as though it was a threat.³

It is concluded that culture seems to “have a head start” on social processes. In the twenty-first century, based on even the most cautious evaluations and the understanding that postmodernism is not necessarily a radically new period and the extent of its transformations is debatable, it nevertheless has to be acknowledged that obvious cultural and social changes have been observed in the concepts, practices, and the discourse.

³ Kavolis, *Kultūros dirbtuvė*, 20.

The Peculiarities of Vernacular Architecture

Some of the key themes of postmodern architecture are said to be the place, the context, and the tradition, whereas one of its most significant characteristics is the return to the traditional forms typical of vernacular architecture.⁴ Every particular location is characterised by the summation of inherent traits that are typical to it and that are a part of the local urbanistic, cultural, and social context. The trends of regionalism and contextualism, which are associated with the honouring of this space, as well as the echoes of the environment's qualities, are claimed to be some of the essential characteristics of postmodern architecture.

The expressionless nature of Lithuania's late-era Soviet urbanised environment during the 1960s and '70s, which is associated with functionalism, resulted in the new pursuit of suggestiveness in architectural expression. One of the trends was the search for regional peculiarity, which was considered to be a potential method to achieve architectural uniqueness after the peak modernisation period had passed and the number of typical or recurrent projects decreased. Combinations of silhouettes, shapes and materials related to regionalism were perceived to be the most suitable for the non-urban context: resort towns, small towns, farms and natural environment, for the search of local identity and harmony with the established context. Accordingly, regionalist expressions have been the most noticeable in such typology of objects as vacation places, Houses of Culture, vocational and general education schools, dispensaries, forestries, pioneer camps, etc.

Drawing a parallel between the examples of Western and Lithuanian (postmodern) regionalism, a particularly noteworthy one is the Strėva resort in Trakai District (by architect Kęstutis Pempė, 1974–1975). The expression of the objects (spatial composition, which divides the complex into smaller volumes, wood finishing, multi-level interior layout) is reminiscent of the 10-flat

⁴ See Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*.



Strėva Summer House, Trakai District, architect Kęstutis Pempė, 1974–1975

building of Sea Ranch Condominium (1965) by the prominent US postmodernist architect Charles Moore. To summarize the influence of the trends of regionalism, their presence in Lithuanian architecture can be described as the following: 1) traditional silhouettes of various types with sloped roofs, which sometimes are transformed into formants of the building's expression (a rowing base in Birštonas, a culture centre in Punia, a healthcare complex in Juknaičiai); 2) many objects are characterised by a combination of finishing elements: red bricks and tiling, sometimes wood, stonework; 3) distinctive interpretation of a sloping wall/roof (Helios cinema in Vilnius, Trakai Culture Palace, Aukuras resort in Šventoji). Such an expression sought primarily to echo the forms of amateur architecture in the environment. Apart from this, individual objects are characterised by metaphorical form outlines: imagery of castles or fortifications (the aforementioned examples that used the interpretation of the wall/roof) or daily life objects (Vėjopatis villa in Pervalka, which is reminiscent of an upside-down boat, coffee shops Klumpė, Kubilas, etc.). The trends of architectural regionalism stand out in the resort areas of Lithuania: Palanga, Neringa, and smaller towns.

The sociocultural reasons which led to the expression of vernacular tradition in architecture are connected to the pursuits of

uniqueness and national identity. The look back at the ethnographic history, which is related to nonconformism and scepticism towards modernization, replaced the progressive and futuristic impulses of socialist realism. British journalist Anatol Lieven described the broader cultural situation of the time as follows:

<...> after Stalin's death, and Khrushchev's 'thaw' in the 1950s, there was a tangible literary move, especially in Lithuania and Latvia, towards folkloric themes and imagery. It was accompanied by a great, if covert, internal philosophical reaction against positivism as exemplified in its most grim, coarse, and ultimately discredited form by Soviet Marxism-Leninism.⁵

Such tendencies, which are on the borderline between professionalism and amateurism, often veered towards sentimentally ethnographic forms and, in their own way, continued the interwar pursuits of a "national" style. This informal cultural tendency, the escapist return to traditional values, has been described by cultural historian Violeta Davoliūtė as the rustic turn. It was expressed as "the return to the rural, pre-modern identity roots" and is best perceived as "a local, peripheral, and simultaneously very strong expression of "returned memory".⁶

The dichotomy of the concepts of regionalism and globalism has been often utilised as a method for illustrating the tensions of various time periods and cultures. Buildings and architecture are indeed suitable instruments for the construction of a fictional collective identity and the support of regional separatism, while the Soviet system managed to promote and adopt the tendencies of regionalism and contextualism. Centrally planned economy based on the principles of regional specialisation was reflected in the cultural dimension via the definition of socialist realism: "national in form, socialist in content". Such an expression was, naturally, particularly typical of the Soviet era. According to cultural historian and critic Almantas Samalavičius,

⁵ Lieven, *Pabaltijo revoliucija*, 130.

⁶ Davoliūtė, *The Making and Breaking of the Soviet Lithuania*, 125.

judging from the experience of independence, the traditional elements of culture and various forms of ethnoculture are much less significant to society under the conditions of freedom than during a period of an occupation/colonisation <...>. If it weren't for the sovietisation, ethnoculture would probably not have been revived to such an extent.⁷

During the Soviet period, architecture based on ethnographic silhouettes, forms, and elements was seen as a counterweight to the supposedly soulless modernism, which followed the principles of functionalism.

Historicism and Heritage Tradition

One of the strongest and most evident features of postmodern architecture is historicism. References to historical styles are to be perceived both as an independent approach of raising awareness of history and as one of the forms of contextualism. One of the dimensions of historicism in architecture is the return of history to the field of tradition. The nostalgic and retrospective trend of historicism is not new in architecture: it has been observed that postmodern historicism in Lithuania was at least the third wave of historicist architecture during the twentieth century. The first one, which occurred at the junction of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, is associated with the ideas of romanticism. The objects of social-realist historicism built during the post-war period (the railway stations of Vilnius and Kaunas, the Vilnius Airport, the Martynas Mažvydas Library, the so-called Scientist District in Vilnius, etc.) are inseparable from the ideology and politics of totalitarianism. The third wave of postmodern historicism is connected to the rising historical awareness and increasing attention to context.

Analysis of the application of historical forms in the architecture of Lithuania cannot sidestep the wider historical aspect of

⁷ Samalavičius, *Kaita ir tęstinumas*, 101.

the urbanist regeneration of the city. During the post-war, optimism and a frequently radical transformation of urbanist structures were typical of both the socialist and the capitalist countries. The subsequent period of reflection brought the realisation that disrespecting the heritage also means the destruction of culture, which was primarily manifested in the aspirations of performing urbanist regeneration while retaining the existing historical urbanist structures and upholding the principle of re-creation when reconstructing buildings.

In Lithuanian architecture, interpretation of historical forms was based not only on the generalised heritage of architectural history but also on the original local architectural tradition of interwar modernism. A particularly noteworthy case is the post-modern architecture in Kaunas, which, apart from other influences, was also based on the authentic historical heritage of the city. Interpretations of interwar architecture during the late Soviet period are highly evident in many projects by Kaunas architects, such as an administrative building on Gertrūdos Street (architect Regimantas Padvarskas, 1985) or a residential building on Vasario 16-osios Street (architect Vaidotas Kuliešius, 1989). One of the best examples of this “Kaunas-ist” architecture, the building of Alytus City Municipality by Saulius Juškys (1985–1986, implemented in 1987–1989), is characterised both by traditional composition of the complex (the object forms a proper mini-block of the town) and by the design of the building’s plasticity itself (the graphics of the interiors, the spatial composition with the tower). The artistic orientation toward interwar modernism is the most evident in the complex’s tower, which had a sloped roof during the competition, but later it was replaced by a stair-shaped one reminiscent of the tower of the Vytautas the Great War Museum (architect Vladimiras Dubeneckis, 1937). The strongest example of postmodernist architecture in Lithuania is considered to be the Mykolas Žilinskas Gallery in Kaunas (architects Eugenijus Miliūnas, Kęstutis Kisieliūsis, Saulius Juškys, 1981–1989). This building could also be seen as a case of a reference of historical architecture. According to its architects, even



Mykolas Žilinskas Art Gallery in Kaunas, architects Eugenijus Miliūnas, Kęstutis Kisielius, Saulius Juškys, 1981–1989. Photo from the archive of Saulius Juškys

though “no individual style of the past was attempted to be copied”, the object nevertheless

had to be academically serious, the selected forms had been tested by history <...> without singling anything out in the long-term history of architecture, the aim was to find the compositional measures that were the least obsolescent.⁸

The porticus of the main entrance and the spatial composition of the complex are clear references to the Acropolis of Athens as a cultural signifier.

At the time when modernism was clearly referring to values related to novelty and modernity, postmodern historicism was more concerned with the reconstruction of history. In Lithuania during the 1980s, history as a cultural imperative of architecture reflected the society’s involvement in the wider movement of heritage protection of the time. Opinions on cultural heritage were publicly and actively expressed by people from the field

⁸ Cit. *Statyba ir architektūra*.

of culture: historians, art critics, writers. In the late 1980s, heritage protection activities became particularly widespread and public polemics started to involve not just abstract deliberations but also specific criticisms of certain decisions. For instance, infrastructure projects were questioned: such as the construction of garages near Vokiečių Street, the planned highway through Rasos Cemetery, the route of Narbuto Street through Žvėrynas in Vilnius, or the planned tunnel under the section of Žaliakalnis known as Ažuolų Hill in Kaunas. Several smaller projects were met with public protests as well: for example, the Communist Party Committee's extension to St. Gertrude's Church in Kaunas, or the cinema on Tilto Street in Kaunas. The aforementioned cases are related to the aims of preserving the objects of cultural heritage while drawing attention to the damage of the city's historical sections during the Soviet era. General attention to history became "an alternative to technocratic lunacy" (a term coined by Antanas Buračas) while the approach to historicism itself in the 1980s became the central element of architectural expression in a historical environment. In the words of Salvijus Kulevičius, who researched the heritage protection movements of the time, "heritage turned into something more than just a metaphor for culture. Similarly, historicism was presented as the cornerstone principle of the treatment of heritage".⁹

Double Coding and Consumerism

Postmodernism emerged as an anti-elitist trend which was favourable to pop culture, and postmodernists questioned whether a work of art could simultaneously be both elitist and populist; or, according to Umberto Eco, "The real problem at stake then was, could there be a novel that was not escapist and, nevertheless, still enjoyable?".¹⁰ Postmodernism's response to such

⁹ Kulevičius, "Per praeities palikimą į ateitį," 207.

¹⁰ Eco, "Postilė Rožės vardui," 542.



Square of the Sundial in Šiauliai, architects Algimantas Černiauskas, Remigijus Jurėla, Algis Vyšniūnas, sculptor Stanislovas Kuzma, 1981–86. Photo from the archive of Algimantas Černiauskas

a question was the so-called double-coding: the combination of contemporary or other (usually traditional) means of expression which enables the communicative powers of architecture. Double coding defines the possibility of “reading” a work (of literature, art, architecture) on at least two levels: elitist and popular.

A Post-modern building is <...> one which speaks on at least two levels at once: to other architects and a concerned minority who care about specifically architectural meanings, and to the public at large, or the local inhabitants, who care about other issues concerned with comfort, traditional building and a way of life.¹¹

Such an approach gave rise to the symbolism of architecture, as it generated associative forms and constructed entire spatial narratives. An exceptional example of such a constructed narrative in Lithuania was the Square of the Sundial in Šiauliai (architects Algimantas Černiauskas, Remigijus Jurėla, Algis Vyš-

¹¹ Jencks, *The Language of Post-modern Architecture*, 6.

niūnas, sculptor Stanislovas Kuzma, 1981–86). The complex was dedicated to the 750th anniversary of the Battle of Saule. In the early 1980s, after the architectural competition, whose terms did not indicate a specific proposed location, the winning project was the aforementioned one, which was implemented near Lake Talkša. The strict geometrical composition of the Square of the Sundial is urbanistically based on the formation of the central axes and the emphasis of their intersections; it connects the square to the city centre and the adjacent recreational and memorial areas. Symbols that establish a kind of *genius loci* make up a composition with the orientating column: the little chapel, the sculpture of the archer, and the amphitheatre. Their semantics (time – sun – archer) is a metaphorical reflection of the history of Šiauliai. The project uses a collection of objects that possess historicist references: the classic composition of a sculpture on a column, a chapel based on the proportions of the Parthenon, an amphitheatrical space. Semantically, this space forms a new historical narrative of a city destroyed in a war by utilising archetypal imagery (a pillar, a road, a gate) and searching for a specific notional language (time, sun, archer).

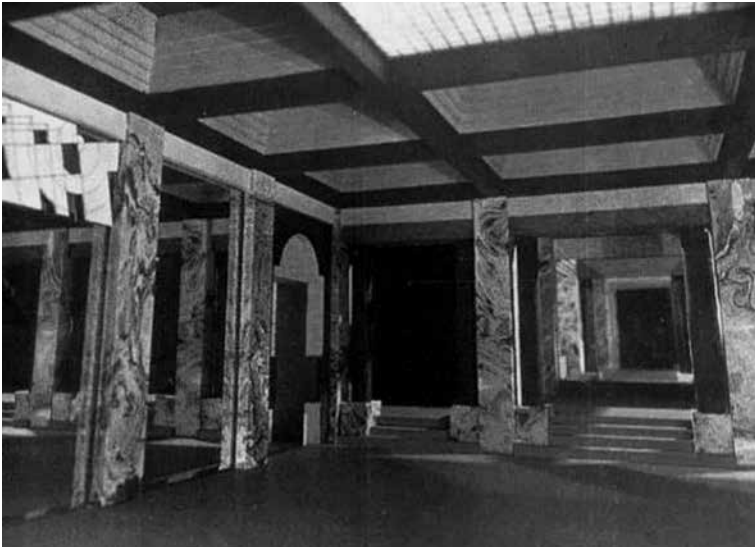
Looking at the case of double coding, it bears a striking resemblance to the so-called Aesopian language, which constructs a dual outline of a work and encodes ideas that oppose the regime. This concept, which is widespread primarily in literature but does not belong to its universal categories, is typical of communities where the public discourse is censored. Double coding in architecture can also be interpreted in the case of, say, historicism: only an interested minority (architects) can recognise and appropriately interpret the references to historical styles. However, double coding can also be characterised by the political aspect common to Aesopian language, as an attempt to evade ideological environment; in this respect, the postmodern double coding principle is particularly fitting for the Soviet space. The aforementioned Square of the Sundial in Šiauliai could also serve as an example of such an ideological circumvention. Certain elements of the complex were created while balancing between the aim to con-

struct symbolic meanings and the striving to simultaneously have an official justification. For instance, according to the authors, one detail of the decorative complex, a chapel designed on the northern axis of the composition, was selected associatively because of the city's old cemetery located nearby (it is the resting place of philosopher Stasys Šalkauskis and other renowned individuals), but this argument was not communicated publicly for ideological reasons. In order to preserve the architectural idea, when the authors presented the project to the city's government, they offhandedly called this element "a summerhouse" (*besedka* in Russian), which is analogous to the objects in Russia.

A distinctive example of double coding is the Molėtai Hospital building (architect Audrys Karalius, 1986–1990). The composition of its facades is a direct reference to the building of Vytautas the Great War Museum in Kaunas. The building's spatial composition was a significant detail as well: according to the author, the object was intentionally designed in the shape of the layout of the double cross of Vytis (which was forbidden during the Soviet era). The architect also claimed that these elements of the building were immediately "read" by the colleagues, who later helped coordinate and implement the project.

It is difficult to say whether the society of the time managed to "read" and evaluate the hidden meanings, therefore such a practice does not necessarily have to be perceived as an architectural resistance. However, it is reminiscent of the attempts to disrupt the previously dominant expressions by coding meanings that were understandable to an informed public, and the post-modern architecture of the late Soviet period was characterised by subversive aspects.

The stabilised and growing economy during Leonid Brezhnev's Era of Stagnation prompted the birth of Soviet consumerism. After admitting that encouragement of consumption is a necessary element of modernisation, the government started concerning itself with the improvement of the population's domestic and material status. One of the forms of this concern and the experimental typologies of the time was the interiors of pub-



*The interior of Astorija restaurant in Vilnius, architect Algimantas Šarauskas, 1983.
The cover of Statyba ir architektūra magazine, 1983, No. 7*

lic buildings. These smaller-volume and cheaper objects were the first works by the young generation of architects. When designing them, it was possible to experiment more daringly. At the time, there was a widespread interest in the interior of the Astorija restaurant in Vilnius (architect Algimantas Šarauskas, 1983), which was decorated in vivid colours and with various historicist motifs. [Illustration – The interior of Astorija restaurant] The restaurant was located in a historical building (currently a hotel) which had its own historical décor, and the central element of its interior was the contemporary generalized interpretation of a historical dictionary: the columns became the pillars, capitals became the cubes, and the gables became the triangles. The interior also had matching original and slightly extravagant furniture by designer Jonas Gerulaitis, which was comparable to the postmodern aesthetics of the *Memphis* group. Monotonous Soviet environment became a convenient setting for the ingenuity and decorativeness of postmodernism, as well as

for the demonstrative aesthetics of excess, refinement, and pseudo luxury. However, this hybrid and sometimes eccentric and pretentious expression could also be seen as the harbinger of the coming political and economic transformations.

Conclusion: Socialist Postmodernism?

As a result of the state of the Cold War between the East and the West, the architects of the Soviet world lived in a sort of informational and cultural exclusion. They did not have the opportunity to participate fully in the global discourse of architecture and the spread of cultural and aesthetic ideas usually only took place with the help of a number of foreign publications that were available in the Soviet space. However, the discussed examples reveal a distinctive socialist form of postmodernism.

Since the phenomenon of postmodernism was created beyond the borders of the Soviet world, its spread in the Eastern Europe is considered to be the consequence of globalisation. On the other hand, this global trend was in sync with the local search for identity: the attention to the local context, the expression that followed the local traditions. In the words of Anatol Lieven,

The anti-modernist tendency, present in any case in the Baltic peasant and folkloric-romantic tradition, was considerably strengthened by the fact that everything ugly in modern society could now be seen not as the consequence of general economic and social trends, but as yet another evil consequence of alien rule.¹²

The local searches for identity in architecture were strengthened by the global trends.

In the Soviet world, postmodernism was first called “the new architecture” and unofficially considered to be an innovative and progressive phenomenon. The professionals of architecture saw many of the Western artistic and cultural trends as advanced, and the Baltic states, which were dubbed “the inner abroad” of the

¹² Lieven, 131.

Soviet Union, accepted these trends as the integral part of the European tradition. Nonetheless, the postmodern architecture, which displayed nostalgic historicist tendencies, should be treated as a symbolic orientation to other eras of the past. Alignment with the classical (past) artistic systems makes it possible to interpret postmodernism as a conservative trend as well. For this reason, the postmodern architecture of Lithuania is to be perceived less as a radically new trend and more as expression which is characterised by takeover and continuity of the architectural tradition.

The development of postmodernism in the Soviet environment is inseparable from the unified criticism of architecture resultant from industrialisation. The Soviet modernisation program sought to build a unified spatial-social structure which would be universally recognized and identified. The fundamental intentions and ambitions of the socialist city concept were a total transformation. The architecture affected by postmodernism attempted to mitigate such a project of total modernisation (by enriching the modernist expression) or to propose an alternative to it (by rejecting modernism).

Since architecture is labelled as one of the “hard” arts (such as film), it is practically unable to survive without economic support and thus is integrated tightly into the infrastructure of the state. As a result, when discussing architecture in the Soviet environment, special significance is held by the ideological vector, which determines the necessity, hierarchy, and even artistic expression of the objects. Obviously, postmodernism was not a part of the official architectural doctrine and was associated with the trends of subjectivism, informal culture, non-ideologized work, or, in a wider sense, the opposition to the Soviet modernisation. On the other hand, postmodernism functioned within the boundaries of what Alexey Yurchak defined as the “profound internal displacement” of the Soviet everyday life, which was capable of combining seemingly incompatible things. Modernisation was the necessity of the era, which would have befallen the agrarian state of Lithuania even without the presence of the Soviet regime. Nerija Putinaitė observes that “there were forms

of resistance during the Soviet times that were partially directed against the Soviet order and that had emerged generally as a reaction to the overall situation of the epoch or the person as an existential being”.¹³ Because of this, postmodernism can be understood both as resistance against the Soviet modernisation and as the attempt to transform, improve, and humanize it.

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Translated by MARTYNAS GEDVILA

¹³ Putinaitė, *Nenutrūkusi styga*, 287.

Ieva Mediodia

Ieva Mediodia was born in Kaunas, Lithuania. She was drawn to colors and learned to appreciate nature and art through observing her mother, who was an artist. She attended a High School of the Arts in Kaunas, and went on to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vilnius, where she earned a BFA in painting in 1993. In her last year at the Academy, she had a painting class with the New York artist Kes Zapkus and was inspired to study art in the United States. She left Vilnius in 1996 to study painting at Hunter College, New York, and earned an MFA in 2001.

Since graduation, Annina Nosei, a noted NYC gallerist has helped Ieva achieve international recognition and participation in numerous exhibitions internationally. She has mounted over 14 solo exhibitions in France, Italy, Lithuania and the USA; notably the Gallery Vartai, Vilnius, and The Museum of Contemporary Art in Washington, D.C. Her work can be found in public and private collections internationally including Lewben Art Foundation and MO Museum, both in Vilnius.

Her awards include an Individual Grant from the Lithuanian Council for Culture; a Graf Travel Grant to Pompeii from Hunter College; a Westerly Trust Grant, London; and a Soros Foundation Grant for an exhibition in Lyon, France.

In 2004, she learned of neurogenesis, which led to her current philosophy. In part, her statement explains “I have envisioned a subliminal map in process – thoughts and feelings which pass through my mind in the form of electrochemical signaling between neuronal synapses are translated into outbursts of appropriate color and the development of macro-microcosmic structures...”.

Ieva was a co-founder of SLA307 Art Space in NYC which provides exhibition opportunities for artists. SLA is the acronym, in Lithuanian, for the Lithuanian Alliance of America, the oldest Lithuanian-American organization, founded in 1886.



Ieva MEDIODIA
Lossless Compression,
acrylic and mixed media
on linen, 75" × 26",
photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Lunar Basin*, acrylic and mixed media on urethane and linen, 42" × 48", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Tempest Discharging*, acrylic and mixed media on Mylar, 36" × 36", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Glitch*, acrylic, polymer medium, ink and airbrush on canvas, 48" × 48", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Neurula*, acrylic, polymer medium, ink and airbrush on canvas, 48" × 48", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Offline*, acrylic, ink and mixed media on canvas, 48" × 48", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA
Pulse Enable,
acrylic and mixed
media on clear
acetate, 40" × 80",
photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Recomposition*, acrylic, acrylic polymer medium, ink and airbrush on canvas, 60" × 100", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Dipole Moment*, fluid acrylic, urethane and mixed media on canvas, 39" × 59", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Red Room*, latex paint, acrylic medium on canvas, 39" × 60", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Technoself*, latex paint, acrylic medium on canvas, 56" × 44", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Flicker*, acrylic and mixed media on urethane and canvas, 39" × 59", photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Migratory Neurogenesis II*, installation view at CAC in Vilnius International Biennale, photo by the artist



Ieva MEDIODIA. *Biomorphic Automata*, installation, Annina Nosei Gallery, Chelsea, NYC, photo by the artist

Lithuania's First Naval Shipping Company

GEDIMINAS KASPARAVIČIUS

Introduction

Soon after Lithuania declared its independence on February 16, 1918, governmental administrative agencies (ministries) began to be established. They were created to manage the social, agricultural and economic condition of the country. One of the areas to be managed was transportation. The Ministry of Transportation was entrusted with these matters. This ministry had to organize rail transportation, maintain roads and waterways, and supervise the operation of civil aviation and the postal service. Later, after the Klaipėda region was annexed to Lithuania in 1923, it was entrusted with managing and administering the seaport of Klaipėda.

However, the work of the newly created ministries was greatly hampered by a difficult financial situation, by the harm caused by the First World War, by ongoing battles for independence and by territorial disputes with the League of Nations. Frequent changes of government in Lithuania also impeded the job of re-establishing government agencies. The government formed by Augustinas Voldemaras on November 11, 1918, lasted only until December 26th¹, when it was replaced by a new government headed by Mykolas Sleževičius. The Sleževičius government ruled until March 5, 1919. Such a complicated situation forced officials of the Lithuanian government to look for more effective means of re-establish-

¹ The government headed by Augustinas Voldemaras lasted from November 11, 1918 to December 26, 1918.

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ing the country's agriculture and transportation system. Earlier, individuals had joined into associations which created social capital. Later, individuals tried to follow the example of these earlier associations in establishing companies with private and government capital. Lithuanians from the United States offered a helping hand and donated large sums of money to help establish Lithuanian companies. These companies were established to assist the development of the country's economic life, including transportation. The American-Lithuanian trading company Amlitas became the bus transportation company, while the Steamship Company of Lithuania became the water transportation company because this company was created with American-Lithuanian money which had been kept in the Agricultural Bank.²

Historiography indicates that the Steamship Company of Lithuania was the first Lithuanian naval shipping company. Its goal was to establish a Lithuanian fleet and to organize river and sea transportation. This enterprise began operating on February 1, 1919, and stopped operating at the end of the 1930s when it was liquidated. Historians have written primarily about the company's activities during the period of 1921 to 1926, when the Steamship Company of Lithuania became the first sea transport enterprise funded with Lithuanian capital. Romualdas Adomavičius, a historian at the Lithuanian Sea Museum, wrote extensively about this period of the enterprise's existence. In his book *Jūrinis savarankiškumas. Lietuvos jūrų prekybos laivyno istorija (1921–1940)*³ [Sea Independence. The History of Lithuania's Sea Commerce Fleet (1921–1940)], he analyzed the beginnings of the operation of the Steamship Company of Lithuania. Adomavičius wrote in detail about the company's sea transport activities, and he emphasized its contribution to the formation of sailing traditions in Lithuania during the interwar years. However, he did not analyze the major activity of the enterprise – navigation on rivers, which took place on the inner waterways of Lithuania

² "Kas atsakingas už 100.000 dolerių," 1

³ Adomavičius, *Jūrinis savarankiškumas*, 2013.

during the period from 1920 to 1926, as well as later. The year-book compiled by Juozas Darulis⁴ provides fragmentary data about the first Lithuanian naval shipping company, and such data can also be found in works by other authors who wrote about the development of Lithuanian transportation. For example, there are short references to the establishment of this company in the monograph *Transporto raida Lietuvoje* (The Development of Transportation in Lithuania) by Albinas Gulbinskas and other authors⁵, and in the monograph *Transporto raida* (The Development of Transportation)⁶ written by Albinas Jurkauskas. Jurkauskas mentions the establishment of the company, but he did not conduct any detailed research into its activities. Historian Alvydas Surblys provides more information. In a scholarly article, he analyzed the contributions Martynas Yčas made to the establishment of enterprises funded with Lithuanian capital which operated during the interwar years in Lithuania, as well as the role he played in the establishment of the Steamship Company of Lithuania.⁷ However, Surblys, like other authors, described only the beginning years of the enterprise, when Yčas was active in it, namely up to 1923, when Yčas left the company.

The sources relied upon in my study can be divided into a few groups. The sources most used were documents from the Central National Archives of Lithuania, kept in the following collections: 923, 383, 384, 656, 1059. These are documents of the Cabinet of Ministers, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the Ministry of Defense, and of the Ministry of Transportation, and various documents of the Board of Roads and Waterways, which contain information about the Steamship Company of Lithuania, its formation and its activities, the results of its activities, its financial accounts, its administration, its ships, and the problems which the company encountered.

⁴ *Lietuvos Respublikos vandens transporto valdymo, veiklos ir plėtros 1918–2008 metais metraštis*, 2009.

⁵ Gulbinskas, *Transporto raida Lietuvoje*, 1983.

⁶ Jurkauskas, *Transporto raida*, 2003.

⁷ Surblys, "Martyno Yčo ekonominės veiklos Kaune pėdsakais," 2006.

The study also surveys documents from the national archive of the Kaunas region. In addition, I relied upon sources from the Sea Museum of Lithuania. This Museum holds the naval archive of Captain Romanas Vilčinskas-Vilkas (1911–1998). His archive (7934 (1)) contains a registry of most of the sea vessels and riverboats that sailed under the Lithuanian flag in the interwar period. Captain Vilčinskas-Vilkas began collecting materials when he was a high school student. He left Lithuania in 1944 but devoted his whole life to research into the maritime affairs and the naval fleet of Lithuania.

The Creation of the Steamship Company of Lithuania

Nineteen prominent public figures from the areas of public affairs, culture and business signed the agreement creating the Steamship Company of Lithuania on February 1, 1919, in Kaunas.⁸ Inspired by idealism, they believed that every citizen should be able to play a role in the creation of the country, and most importantly, they understood that a modern country needs a means of water transportation and its own fleet of ships.

<...> As Lithuania enters into economic freedom, it will become essential for her to have relations with the world at large, either by transporting its goods to others, or by transporting goods from others to Lithuania, and that we can accomplish only by making use of someone's ships.⁹

The geopolitical situation also incited such ideas to appear in the public sphere, as the Versailles peace conference was taking place at that time. There the fate of Klaipėda as a region separated from Germany was being decided, as well as the Hamlet-like dilemma for Lithuania – to be or not to be a sea country? This dilemma was solved in part by the group of 19 individuals assembled in Kaunas, who did not wait for a favorable decision

⁸ Adomavičius, *Jūrinis savarankiškumas*, 64.

⁹ "Lietuvai reikalingas yra turėti prekybinis laivynas ant jurių," 16.

by the League of Nations regarding the Klaipėda region, but decided to establish a company for the organization of river and sea transport in Lithuania. The proponents of this initiative were representatives of various professions, public figures, politicians, cultural figures, teachers, doctors, soldiers. They included Saliamonas Banaitis, a signatory of Lithuania's Declaration of Independence, Jonas Šimoliūnas, the Minister of Transportation, Martynas Yčas, the first Minister of Finance, Jurgis Alekna, the first Minister of Health, Vilius Gaigalaitis, a public figure from Lithuania Minor, Konstantinas Račkauskas, a lawyer, Jonas Raupys, a land-surveyor, Jonas Šliūpas, from the group associated with the newspaper *Aušra*, Liudvikas Stulpinas, the first Lithuanian naval captain, Rokas Šliūpas, from the group associated with the newspaper *Varpas*, Tadas Šulcas, an engineer, Jonas Kaunas and others.¹⁰ It is very interesting that in this group of organizers there was no one associated with sea transport except for L. Stulpinas.

The founders of the company succeeded in providing an initial capital sum of 500,000 marks for the Steamship Company of Lithuania (listed in other sources as 300,000 dollars)¹¹ on their own, without government assistance. At that time those who wanted to join the company as shareholders were required to make a payment of 5,000 marks, which guaranteed one vote on questions of company management. The by-laws provided that no founder could have more than five votes.¹² Today there is no accurate information about the amounts each of the 19 founders contributed. However, based on the first elected board of directors, it can be surmised that President Yčas, Vice-President Banaitis, and Treasurer Račkauskas provided the largest sums.

¹⁰ Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės įstatai, LCVA (Lietuvos Centrinis Valstybės Archyvas), f. 387, ap. 4a, b. 536, l. 12.

¹¹ 500 tūkst. markių suma nurodyta: Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės įstatai, LCVA, f. 387, ap. 4a, b. 536, l. 12. 300 tūkst. dolerių suma nurodyta: LCVA, f. 387, ap. 4a, b. 536, l. 57.

¹² Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės įstatai, LCVA, f. 387, ap. 4a, b. 536, l. 12.

Speaking of finances, it should be noted that American Lithuanians made very significant contributions to the company as it took its first steps. The money provided by American Lithuanians towards the initial capitalization of the company went first to the Agricultural Bank, which was being established in 1916, and later it found its way to the Bank of Commerce and Industry headed by Yčas. Part of this money – \$61,700 – was lent to the Steamship Company of Lithuania in 1919. A year later, as the company treasury was being augmented, a significant amount of aid was received again from American Lithuanians – about \$46,500, which was designated for the purchase of sea vessels. The company's "general agent" Šliūpas was the one most responsible for obtaining this aid. In 1920 he traveled throughout the United States and encouraged purchase of company stocks. In a correspondence intended for Lithuanian societies and organizations he wrote:

In times past the Lithuanian nation paid little attention to the importance of the sea, and even less to commerce, and that is why life in Lithuania fell into a slumber. Jews, Russians, Poles or Germans accomplished what Lithuanians failed to accomplish. When foreign nations ruled Lithuania, Lithuanians were not even allowed to be administrators in their homeland. They were oppressed by commerce and industry so as to prevent the Lithuanian nation from becoming enlightened or prosperous. <...> I call on everyone to work together even if they hold different beliefs or belong to different parties. This is not a political issue. It is only a question of ensuring Lithuania's economic rebuilding as soon as possible. Whoever supports the wellbeing, enlightenment and freedom of Lithuania, let him now take part in the Steamship Company of Lithuania by providing financial support <...>.¹³

It is not surprising that Šliūpas's appeals to the patriotic feelings of immigrants ensured the success of his rhetoric. American Lithuanians at that time felt an obligation to help their homeland

¹³ Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės generalinis agentas J. Šliūpas, LCVA, f. 656, ap. 1, b. 610, l. 4.

as it took its first steps into independence and to help its burgeoning business initiatives. Perhaps the possibility of taking part in the management of the company attracted many of them, since they were promised one vote in decisions affecting the company for every five shares of stock purchased from agents or from the company agency in Scranton, Pennsylvania. (The price of one share was \$33.00.)

However, the most important factor which influenced immigrants to contribute to the company's capitalization was the belief that this company would shorten the distance between immigrants and their historical homeland and would strengthen their ties with it. Of course, the Steamship Company of Lithuania was designed to make personal travel between the United States and Lithuania easier, but it was also designed to facilitate commerce between the United States and Lithuania.¹⁴ Starting in 1920 efforts were made with the help of immigrants to realize the old idea of establishing a regular line of transportation between Klaipėda and New York. High expectations were placed not only with this company, but also with the Commerce Company of Lithuania, headed by Yčas. The mood of the immigrant press was generally optimistic, as it was believed that the activities of these two companies would ensure that a way of reaching Lithuania directly would be achieved very soon:

A large transatlantic ship should have been purchased a long time ago, and it should have been in use already to transport American Lithuanians and produce to Lithuania. The heads of the Commerce Company of Lithuania realize this clearly and are working to this end. Their transatlantic ship will soon sail across the ocean. But much has been accomplished already. A year ago, no one even talked about the possibility of sending things to Lithuania.¹⁵

Unfortunately, dreams of a transatlantic line failed to materialize: while ships for sea-coast travel were purchased, these

¹⁴ Adomavičius, *Jūrinis savarankiškumas*, 65.

¹⁵ "Ko Lietuvai reikia?" 3.

ships did not unite Europe and North America. Current research into the documents of the company makes clear that none of the Lithuanians living abroad who had obtained stocks ever participated in the management of the company. Naturally, the whole situation disappointed Lithuanians living in the United States. They accused Yčas of having wasted the \$100,000 he had collected in the United States.¹⁶ After these events, immigrants no longer participated in company matters. In 1923 scandalous reports appeared in the press, which accused Yčas and Šliūpas of disappearing without informing their fellow Lithuanians in America about the status of the company. Most probably it was due to these scandals that Yčas at least formally left the board of the company in 1923.

Water Transport in Lithuania in 1919–1920

On February 1, 1919, at the meeting with the government of Lithuania to establish the Steamship Company of Lithuania, a concession was signed whereby the company was granted the right to transport passengers and freight on the inner waterways of Lithuania, specifically the Kaunas-Klaipėda-Kaunas route, and on the Baltic Sea for a period of ten years. In addition, according to this contract the company had to buy or build ships, had to enlarge the riverbed of the Nemunas, and had to build wharfs and warehouses.¹⁷ Why were such gigantic undertakings entrusted to a company that had just been established and which had practically no experience in the area of water transport? In 1919 the Ministry of Transportation would have been hard pressed to ensure regular transportation on rivers and even less on the Baltic Sea on its own, given the geopolitical situation and other factors. One such factor was that institutions for the organization of water transport did not exist. Such institutions were being created at about the same time as the Steamship Company of Lithu-

¹⁶ "Kas atsakingas už 100,000 dolerių, kuriuos Amerikos lietuviai sudėjo," 1.

¹⁷ 1919 m. sutartis, LCVA, f. 386, ap. 1, b. 3, l. 73.

ania. For example, the Board of Roads, Waterways and Harbors was established at the end of 1918, and the Kaunas Waterway Region was created as an adjunct to this Board on March 15, 1919.¹⁸ The Region was required to clean and manage rivers, to mark them with signs, and to keep beaches and seashores clean. The Board later supervised the operation of ships, ferries, and water mills, and their mechanical upkeep. It also supervised passenger and freight navigation and oversaw timber-floating operations.¹⁹ Thus, the Kaunas Waterway Region took over some of the functions which had been the province of the Steamship Company of Lithuania, for example the job of cleaning the riverbeds. In general, the activities of the Steamship Company of Lithuania were mostly commercial (passenger and freight transport). This company did not perform any technical, water engineering tasks in Lithuanian waters. The one exception was that owners of steamships which navigated the Nemunas had to have wharfs constructed. That is why before each navigation the boards of steamship companies and the owners of other steamships united into syndicates and took steps to ensure that wharfs be constructed, and later they had to maintain these wharfs.²⁰

Another reason why so much activity was envisioned for the company in its agreement with the Lithuanian government was the fact that for all practical purposes all water transport had been destroyed during the war. In 1919 Lithuania acquired from the Germans the winter port of Kaunas, whose construction was incomplete, the port of Kalnėnai, the dredging machine *Nemunas No. 1* (Nemuno Pirmoji), twelve residential buildings, a few warehouses, a number of pontoons, barges and other items for the sum of 1,593,542 litas.²¹ Complaints to the Minister of Transportation submitted by subdivisions of other ministries attest

¹⁸ Krakauskienė, "Kauno vandens kelių rajonas," 2.

¹⁹ Kasparavičius, *Upių laivyba Lietuvoje 1919–1940 m.*, 4.

²⁰ Ibid., 39.

²¹ Žinios apie vandens kelių bei jų turto stovį nuo prieškario iki 1927 m. pasirašė, inž. Vandens kelių tarnybos viršininkas, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 93, l. 20a.

to the complicated situation during the years 1919 to 1920. In June of 1919 the Germans were still stealing ships from the rivers of Lithuania.²² Local police officers were not able to maintain order in the port of Kaunas, and in fact they even engaged in reselling various goods and cargo and in taking bribes.²³ The Minister of Transportation reacted to these complaints, but he sadly acknowledged that he could not control ships sailing under the German flag. In addition, there was a shortage of waterway patrol officers and workers.²⁴

As to the most important part of the infrastructure – ships, it can be said that the German Kaiser's occupation government and the First World War caused significant harm to the Nemunas fleet, and the effects were especially felt during the years 1919 to 1920. Before the First World War there were four steamships with Russian names sailing in Lithuania, as well as 22 private steamships.²⁵ The cargo fleet consisted of about 70 barges of various tonnage. They could transport several thousand tons of cargo from the Kaunas district to Prussia in a single voyage.²⁶ Besides these passenger and freight ships, four motorboats and various types of machinery used on waterways sailed on the Nemunas. The machinery included two dredging machines (*Nemunas No. 1* and *Nemunas No. 2*), six manual and two steam cranes and two fireboats.²⁷ In those days a total of 114 ships made up the river flotilla: 26 of them were steamships, 70 were barges, four were motorboats and 12 were boats used by waterway workers. German artillery destroyed two steamships – *Planeta* and *Perkūnas* – in the beginning of the war. In addition, as Russian

²² 1919-06-12, Bendrų reikalų departamento raštas Susisiekimo Ministerijos vandens kelių skyriui, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 20, l. 7a.

²³ 1919-06-13, Bendrų reikalų departamento raštas Susisiekimo Ministerijos vandens kelių skyriui, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 20, l. 8a.

²⁴ 1919-07-15, Susisiekimo ministro atsakymas Bendrų reikalų departamentui, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 20, l. 8a.

²⁵ "Lietuvos vandens keliai," 3.

²⁶ Gulbinskas, *Transporto raida Lietuvoje*, 62.

²⁷ Žinios apie vandens kelių bei jų turto stovį nuo prieškario iki 1927 m., LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 93, l. 20a.

forces withdrew from Kaunas, the command was given to sink all steamships. However, the owners of only 12 steamships obeyed the command. Once the Russians had left, a large number of these ships were salvaged and successfully repaired, but the ships *Kęstutis*, *Planeta*, *Ventys*, *Kurjeris* and *Kovna* remained sunk in the depths of the Nemunas during the entire interwar period and were grim reminders of the war.²⁸

In 1919, as the Germans withdrew from Kaunas, they transported to Germany the following steamships: *Brest*, *Rusalka*, *Grodno*, *Perkūnas*, *Birutė*, *Goplianas*, *Kometa*, *Zaria*, *Venera*, *Svietlana*, *Joroslavna*, *Vytautas*, *Express*, *Čempion*, *Rekord*²⁹ and, according to archival data from the Sea Museum, *Naděžda*.³⁰ The dredging machine *Nemunas No. 2* (Nemuno Antroji) was transported to Germany. The naval manual and steam cranes were destroyed. Three motorboats were sunk, and one was transported to Germany. In 1927 the directors of the Kaunas Waterway Region calculated the war damages to be 4,518,245 litas.³¹ This sum included not only the aforementioned ships, but also wharfs, piers, embankments, and water-level fixtures damaged during the war. The extent of damages suffered by private shipowners is unknown. According to archival documents from the Sea Museum, the ships *Grodno*, *Kometa*, *Zaria*, *Rusalka* and *Naděžda* did not return to Lithuania after 1919, and their fate is unknown.³²

Such a complicated situation forced the Lithuanian government to engage in organizational activity jointly with the Steamship Company of Lithuania. However, the company only began its commercial operations in the beginning of 1920, since it failed to obtain permits to operate on rivers until May 25, 1919. How-

²⁸ Ibid., 4.

²⁹ "Lietuvos vandens keliai," 3.

³⁰ Nemuno laivai prieš 1919 m. Lietuvos jūrų muziejaus (LJM) laivų skyriaus dokumentų saugykla, nr. 7934(1), l. 160.

³¹ Žinios apie vandens kelių bei jų turto stovį nuo prieškario iki 1927 m. pasirašė: inž. Vandens kelių tarnybos viršininkas. LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 93, l. 20a.

³² Nemuno laivai prieš 1919 m. Lietuvos jūrų muziejaus (LJM) laivų skyriaus dokumentų saugykla, nr. 7934(1), l. 160.

ever, the more serious problem, which hindered the start of operations, was the lack of initial capital. This problem prevented purchase or rent of ships. Current research into archival documents reveals that the directors of the company expected much greater help from the Lithuanian government when the company encountered financial problems in 1919–1920. A correspondence sent in February of 1920 to the Minister of Finance, Commerce and Industry, aside from a request to permit commencement of operations, added the following suggestion:

It would be helpful to know whether the Government of Lithuania wishes or is able to actively support our company. We do not seek a monopoly, but as we begin our work, which is unfamiliar to Lithuanians, we think we will have a more realistic chance of success if the Government were to support our enterprise to whatever extent and in whatever manner it can.³³

However, as mentioned above, it was not the Government of Lithuania but Lithuanians living in America who provided aid. It was thanks to them that the first ships were purchased.

The Steamship Company of Lithuania – The Beginnings of Operation

On March 23, 1920, a little over a year after the company had been established, the first river steamboat, named *Rambynas*, was introduced to the public. This ship was welcomed ceremoniously at the Kaunas passenger quay:

The first Lithuanian steamship purchased by a company of Lithuanian mariners sailed into Kaunas, where a large throng of people welcomed it joyfully with music. The directors of the company were given a Lithuanian flag to adorn the steamship as it arrived in Kaunas.³⁴

³³ 1920-02-12 Finansų, Pramonės ir Prekybos ministrui, LCVA, f. 923, ap. 1, b. 86, l. 117.

³⁴ "Kauno kronika," 2–3.



Steamship Byruta, later renamed Eglė, belonged to the Steamship Company of Lithuania – 1915

Soon thereafter the company purchased two more river steamships – *Eglė* (originally named *Birutė*)³⁵ and *Rūta*. Additionally, the company most likely had rented or purchased the steamship *Reinholdas*, which was designated in the registry of Kaunas companies for 1923 as belonging to the company.³⁶ *Reinholdas* had been built in Elbing, Germany, in 1912. The ship was 84.3 meters long and could carry 320 passengers.³⁷

However, the pride of the company and its most powerful riverboat was the aforementioned *Rambynas*, which had been

³⁵ Steamship *Eglė* – built in 1913 in Königsberg, Germany, 40.02 m, width – 2.7–3.8 m, draft – 0.45 m, height unspecified. Lift capacity – 22,000 kg (155 passengers). 1926. Santrauka žinių apie laivus, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 38, l. 57.

³⁶ 1923-10-12, Garlaivių savininkų sąrašas. KAA (Kauno apskrities archyvas – Archives of the District of Kaunas), f. 219, ap.1, b 200, l. 72a.b.

³⁷ Steamship *Reinholdas* built in 1912 in Elbing, Germany. Length 84.3 m, width – 5.2–9.69 m, draft and height unspecified. Boiler built in 1912, lift capacity – 48,000 kg, hold – 320 passengers. 1920-03-26, garlaivio “Reinholdas” techninė apžiūra, pasirašė komisijos KVKR viršininkas inž. T. Šulčas, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 38, l. 2a.

built in Kiev (Ukraine) in 1912. It was the only steamship at the time which had a three cylinder steam engine, and, according to Captain P. Levandauskas, could haul six barges, even though official documents specified it could haul four.³⁸ *Rambynas*, according to registration papers from 1920,³⁹ could carry as many as 800 passengers (later the figure was decreased to 400), and it was listed as a passenger-freight steamship with first and second class cabins. However, because of its mechanical power it was used mostly to haul barges. In the 1930s an electrical generator was installed in the ship, which brought passenger service to a higher level and, most importantly, permitted the ship to sail at night. The crew of the *Rambynas* consisted of the ship captain, his assistant, a machinist and riverboat sailors, a total of seven to eight crew members. Generally, the crew would be employed in this and other steamships from early spring to the beginning of winter, when the Nemunas would freeze over. A riverboat sailor would work up to 16 hours a day. The watch at the helm would be relieved every two hours.⁴⁰

The steamship *Eglė* was smaller.⁴¹ Its crew consisted of five members (ship captain Juozas Šulys and four river sailors). The ship was 40 meters long, and it could carry 250 passengers. It was only used to transport passengers. *Eglė* had been built in Königsberg, Germany, in 1883. Captain Levandauskas described this ship in letters to R. Vilkas-Vinčinskas and especially noted its unusual construction:

³⁸ 1986-05-13 P. Levandausko laiškas R. Vilkui-Vilčinskui. Lietuvos jūrų muziejaus (LJM) laivų skyriaus dokumentų saugykla, nr. 7934(1), l. 12.

³⁹ Steamship *Rambynas* – built in 1912 in Kiev (Ukraine). Length 47 m, width – 5.85–11.75 m, draft – 0.60 m, height unspecified. Boiler built in 1912, lift capacity – 48,000 kg, hold – 800 passengers. 1920-04-01, garlaivio “Rambynas” techninė apžiūra, pasirašė komisijos KVKR viršininkas inž. T. Šulčas, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 38, l. 9a.b.

⁴⁰ 1986-04-12 P. Levandausko laiškas R. Vilkui-Vilčinskui. Lietuvos jūrų muziejaus (LJM) laivų skyriaus dokumentų saugykla, nr. 7934(1), l. 12.

⁴¹ Steamship *Eglė* – built in 1883 (Germany). Length 40.0 m, width – 3.85–7.0 m, height – 4.5 m, lift capacity – 35,000 kg. Hold – 255 passengers. Sąrašas garlaivių esančių Kauno vandens kelių rajono žinioje 1931 m., LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 264, l. 10a.

Eglė (formerly the *Biruta*) was somewhat smaller than *Balanda* or *Vytis*. The lack of windows in the back is interesting. Maybe this was a so-called 'hold' where bags and boxes of various goods could be stored. Generally the hold was directly at the back of the engine section and was windowless.⁴²

The least amount of information is available about the hauler-steamship *Rūta*, which was constructed in Kiel, Germany, in 1877.⁴³ Most likely it was little used because its mechanical condition was very poor (it was very worn down). In 1926 the ship was sold in Tilsit for 18,700 litas due to financial problems and its mechanical condition. There it was cut up for scrap metal.⁴⁴

After the first year of the company's operation, as an addition to the river steamships sailing between Kaunas and Klaipėda, two barges, *Fridrichas* and *Luizė*⁴⁵, were purchased to transport cargo on the Nemunas. These ships, whose capacity was several hundred tons, were constructed of wood and were designed to haul construction materials and other cargo. They navigated mostly the Kaunas-Klaipėda-Kaunas route.

Usually such ships did not have a motor. They were carried from Kaunas to Klaipėda by the current. From there, steamships would tow them back to Kaunas. There were two cabins on the barge apart from the hold: one was in the front, the other in the back of the ship. The 'skipper' and his assistant lived in them, two persons total. It is interesting that barges which belonged to Germans usually had a bedroom and a kitchen at the back of the ship where the owner and his family lived. Additionally, cargo ships of this type had a mast, which was used like a crane to load and unload cargo. Sails were hoisted on the mast when the weather was favorable, and in this way, with the help of the wind, the ships returned to Kaunas.

⁴² 1986-01-30. P. Levandausko laiškas R. Vilkui-Vilčinskui. Lietuvos jūrų muziejaus (LJM) laivų skyriaus dokumentų saugykla, nr. 7934(1), l. 20.

⁴³ Vilkas, "Lietuvos laivynas ir jo likimas," 14–15.

⁴⁴ 1927-02-25 d. Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės susirinkimo protokolas, LCVA, f. 387, ap. 1, l. 35.

⁴⁵ Later the ships may have been renamed *Mėta* and *Antis*.

In 1921 the activities of the company were divided into two areas: 1) passenger and cargo navigation within Lithuania and 2) sea navigation. The headquarters of river navigation was in Kaunas, at No. 6 Aleksotas Street. A symbolic location, but it was chosen most probably because the company headquarters was only about a minute away from the main passenger quay of the city of Kaunas, through which a considerable number of passengers and light cargo would pass, and where at a later time company ships would be moored. It was only later, in about 1923, that the company headquarters was moved to Laisvės alėja 15.⁴⁶ Saliamonas Banaitis, the vice-president of the company, was the one primarily in charge of river transport operations, even though a new board president was elected every year or so. It is clear that Banaitis had one of the strongest voices on the board. In 1930 he had 43 shares in the company out of a total of 214.⁴⁷ Yčas and Count A. Tiškevičius headed the sea section (the Klaipėda branch), which operated for a short time. The company's sea operations headquarters was in the Union Hotel in Klaipėda.⁴⁸

The company entered the field of sea navigation in the beginning of 1921 when it purchased two sea vessels. These were the motorized sailboats *Jūratė* and *Kastytis*, which had been built in 1920 in Kiel, Germany, by the Germaniawerft company of Friedrich Krupp. It is interesting that prior to the sanctions imposed on Germany in 1920, this company had built mostly warships, cruisers, submarines, etc. In the 1920s for a short time it switched to building civilian vessels. However, when the Nazis came to power in 1933, it quickly returned to building warships. *Jūratė* was officially welcomed on February 4, 1921.⁴⁹ Lithuania's first sea captain Liudvikas Stulpinas and Martynas Yčas and his wife were in attendance. The captain of the *Jūratė*, the first sea

⁴⁶ Surblys, "Martyno Yčo ekonominės veiklos Kaune pėdsakais," 122.

⁴⁷ Only Fr. Žilius had more shares than Banaitis – 125 shares and 25 votes. Meanwhile Banaitis had 8 votes. 1930-05-31 Lietuvos garlaivių akcinės bendrovės dalyvavusių visuotiniame susirinkime susirinkusių akcininkų sąrašas, LCVA, f. 387, ap. 4a, b. 536, l. 2.

⁴⁸ Adomavičius, *Jūrinis savarankiškumas*, 67.

⁴⁹ "Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovė," 2.

vessel to sail under a Lithuanian flag, was 34-year-old Juozas Andžejuskas. He had been one of the founders of the Lithuanian Army and a volunteer who had participated in battles for Lithuania's independence. Unfortunately, he died in Latvia in 1937 under tragic circumstances.⁵⁰ The company wanted the captain of the ship and the crew to be Lithuanian, but it was not able to achieve this goal completely. According to Kvietkauskas, who served on a ship belonging to the company for a short time from 1924 on, after Andžejuskas resigned, the captains of both sea vessels were foreigners, and most of the crew members hired were foreigners, since there were no experienced Lithuanian sailors. This occurred even though Lithuanians were given hiring preference.⁵¹ To better understand the situation in 1924, I must share the narrative Kvietkauskas gave in 1936 in the journal *Jūra*:

<...> One evening in June of 1924, as I was supping at the Hotel Rytas restaurant, I overheard three gentlemen at the next table engaged in a lively conversation about the sea. Since everything that concerns the sea is close to my heart, I focused on overhearing it. I understood from what I overheard that they were talking about an unfamiliar captain of a Lithuanian ship which was due to sail for Sweden in the next few days. A Lithuanian captain, a Lithuanian ship – was this a dream or reality? <...> The next day after work my first goal was to find the ship and her captain and to do everything I could to get permission to sail on it. I found the ship. The words “Jūratė” were written on its stern in bold letters, and under that was the port of registration – Jurburg (Jurbarkas). <...> I did not find the captain on the ship, but that evening I met him on shore. <...> I went up to him and presented my request politely but directly.

“Mister, don’t think that a sailor’s job is as easy and beautiful as it is described in novels,” the captain warned me after he heard that I earned a good salary. He thought that I should not be seeking the hard life of a sailor.

⁵⁰ “Tol. Laiv. Kap. Juozas Andžejuskas,” 115.

⁵¹ Kvietkauskas, “‘Jūratė’ ir ‘Kastytis’ pirmieji Lietuvos vėliavos nešiotojai,” 17.

"I am not afraid of hardships. The harder, the more interesting. I have already seen some things (I remembered the battlefields of the war for independence.) All I ask is – take me on."

"But all the places are taken. I don't have a place for you to sleep."

"If you don't have a place for me, I will sleep on deck," I insisted without knowing if that was possible. "I will work for my food." And I did not stop until the captain gave in and agreed to take me on.⁵²

The second vessel, *Kastytis*, reached Klaipėda on March 11th. The navigation and expedition firm of E. Krause serviced both ships. Both ships were registered at the port of Jurbarkas because at that time Lithuania did not have a seaport. *Jūratė* and *Kastytis* were ships built according to the same construction plan and so were identical. They could hold about 200 tons of cargo. Their length was 30.2 meters, their width – 6.78 meters, their draft – 2.22 meters.⁵³ However, they were built from steel of poor quality which had accumulated during the war years.⁵⁴ Another problem was that the ships were designed to be used only in coastal waters and large rivers. On the other hand, there were plans that the firm of Germaniawerft would build four more ships of similar size. Perhaps it was thought that the first two ships would essentially satisfy all the company's needs. According to documents submitted by Banaitis in 1929 to the Ministry of Transportation and Foreign Affairs⁵⁵, the company paid the shipbuilder Germaniawert 2,050,000 gold pieces for these ships on February 15, 1921, and on September 5, 1921 paid an advance of 2,200,000 gold pieces for the other four ships. It is not known why the shipbuilder did not fulfill the order in 1921. According to historian R. Adomavičius, a three-mast schooner named *Pa-langa*, which was 34.2 meters long and could carry 290 tons, was built for the company, but it did not reach its intended purchas-

⁵² Ibid., 17.

⁵³ Adomavičius, *Jūrinis savarankiškumas*, 66.

⁵⁴ Adomavičius, "Trispalvė jūrose 1921–1940 m."

⁵⁵ 1929 m. raštas Susisieikimo ministrui, LCVA, f. 383, ap. 4, b. 28, l. 59.

er.⁵⁶ Probably that happened because the remaining balance had not been paid. According to Banaitis, in 1924 the Germans offered to complete the order, but the Lithuanian company was suffering difficulties and was unable to expand its fleet of ships. The Germaniawerft company did not return the down payment, and so the Steamship Company of Lithuania went to court in an effort to recover the advance it had paid. Unfortunately, the company did not succeed in recovering the money.⁵⁷

The Steamship Company of Lithuania – Operation During the Years 1920–1926

The company officially began to operate on inner waterways in 1920. The ships *Rambynas*, *Eglė* and *Rūta* navigated between Kaunas and Klaipėda, stopping at smaller towns along the Nemunas. Today it is hard to determine accurately how many passengers and how much cargo the company's ships transported at any given time period. In 1920, all ten ships that were sailing on the Nemunas at the time transported 124,000 passengers and 18,130 tons of cargo.⁵⁸ As to ships belonging to the Steamship Company of Lithuania, only the shipping statistics for 1930 have survived. That year the ship *Rambynas* transported 112 tons of cargo and 4,397 passengers. Meanwhile, the ship *Eglė* transported 18 tons and 35,509 passengers. In 1930 only the steamship *Planeta*, which belonged to Danilevičius, transported more passengers.⁵⁹ It is very difficult to obtain precise information about company operations without yearly accounting reports, since navigation seasons varied to a great extent. One year was more successful, while other years were not as successful, as we shall see. Seasonal weather conditions and steamship competition ordained different outcomes.

⁵⁶ Adomavičius, *Jūrinis savarankiškumas*, 66.

⁵⁷ 1929 m. Raštas Susisiekimo ministrui, LCVA, f. 383, ap. 4, b. 28, l. 14.

⁵⁸ Moravskis, "Vandens kelių transportas," 6–7.

⁵⁹ 1930 m. Žinios apie garlaivių apkrovą, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 257, l. 6.



Rambynas at the Kaunas passenger wharf

While researching competition that went on between steamships, what jumps out is that the company's ships operated not only on the Nemunas, but sailed to Königsberg and Danzig as well, as noted by company documents from the period of 1920 to 1924. It is unclear whether this is true. However, on the other hand, its likelihood is demonstrated by the trips other ships, mostly barges belonging to Germans, made on the Nemunas. Most of the owners of these other ships, while they were actively operating ships on the Nemunas shipping lane belonging to Lithuania, listed Tilsit, Labiau, Königsberg, or other smaller towns in East Prussia as their residence.⁶⁰ Thus, it is likely that in the first years of the company's operation, steamships of the Steamship Company of Lithuania were able to transport cargo and passengers to East Prussia and could become competitors of German shipowners. One of the stated principal goals of the company supports this supposition, namely the goal of expanding the reach of Lithuanian business into the whole region, including neighboring Germany. It is an entirely different matter whether the steamship

⁶⁰ 1926 m. Garlaivių, motorinių valčių, baidokų patikrinimo aktai, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 38, l. 15.

company could have had much success in East Prussia, since owners of ships owned by Lithuanians wrote many notes to Lithuania's Ministry of Transportation or to the heads of Lithuania's government complaining about a German monopoly of the transportation of Lithuanian cargo on the Kaunas-Klaipėda-Kaunas route.⁶¹ This situation was mostly the result of shipowners from Lithuania not being well-organized. In addition, owners of German boats were supported by the German government, which provided financial stipends to shipowners to encourage them to operate in Lithuania. In letters to R. Vilkas-Vilčinskas, J. Levandauskas emphasized that competition between owners of Lithuanian steamships was a natural occurrence. According to Captain Levandauskas, small groups of ships were divided mostly into two groups: in one were Lithuanian shipowners, in the other – local Jews. Prominent Jewish businessmen like Kaplan employed somewhat non-traditional methods of competition. They would give ship passengers free tickets, and sometimes they even treated them to beer.⁶² According to archival documents, the Steamship Company of Lithuania also participated actively in a small business war with local Jews. The company cooperated with several other shipowners, J. Jasinskas and S. Gerulaitis, the owners of the steamships *Aksena*, *Vaidila*, and *Palanga*. The owners would charge passengers who rode their ships reduced fares in the beginning. For example, in 1924 the trip from Kaunas to Jurbarkas on one of these steamships cost only one litas, whereas normally the cost would be five to ten litas.⁶³ Even though financial indicators for the first few years of the company have not survived, it is clear that this rivalry did not bring in large profits for the company. However, according to information found in the June 1922 issue of the newspaper *Tėvynės balsas*⁶⁴, it can be asserted that the first

⁶¹ Kasparavičius, *Upių laivyba Lietuvoje 1919–1940 m.*, 41.

⁶² 1983-02-16 P. Levandausko laiškas R. Vilkui-Vilčinskui. Lietuvos jūrų muziejaus (LJM) laivų skyriaus dokumentų saugykla, nr. 7934(1), l. 20.

⁶³ Garlaivių konkurencija. Skelbimas. LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 173, l. 178.

⁶⁴ "Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės pranešimas," 4.

steps in internal water transport in Lithuania, even though they did not bring large profits, did avoid losses.

A somewhat different situation arose in the sea transport sphere. The managers of the company were very optimistic once they acquired the ships *Jūratė* and *Kastytis* in 1921. Company president Yčas wrote the following to the company's general agent Šliūpas, who was collecting funds in America:

Yesterday the first ship sailed from Stockholm for Klaipėda. The others will be transferred to us upon conclusion of construction on December 15, January 5, February 15, March 1, and April 15. Payments must be made on those dates. Keep up your efforts so that in the spring we may be able to purchase two more passenger ships for the America line. Their construction is planned. Once the fleet is installed in Klaipėda, the issue will resolve itself. Our affairs on the front are going well. The Poles have been soundly defeated. <...>⁶⁵

This telegram leads one to think that subsequently the company in all likelihood did not pay the sums agreed upon for the remaining ships, and so these ships did not make their way to the company. It is also clear that a complicated geopolitical situation hampered the operation of the company, including strained relations with Poland and the fact that up to 1923 Lithuania did not have a seaport. Consequently, sea vessels were rented out to foreign companies. According to historian R. Adomavičius, ships which sailed between the ports of Sweden, Denmark and Norway rarely stopped at Klaipėda since they did not have any cargo to pick up there.⁶⁶ In 1923, after Lithuania had annexed the Klaipėda region and geopolitical tensions had subsided, *Jūratė* and *Kastytis* would stop in Klaipėda with cargo every week. *Jūratė* sailed the route between Tallinn and Klaipėda; *Kastytis* sailed the Danzig (Gdansk)-Copenhagen-Klaipėda route. Due to technical limitations and other factors, these ships were

⁶⁵ 1921 m. Lietuvos laivyno vėliava jau ant jūrų, LCVA, f. 648, ap. 1, b. 1, 3a.

⁶⁶ Adomavičius, *Jūrinis savarankiškumas*, 66.



Rambynas during the period of competition

not able to carry large quantities of goods, especially since it was dangerous to make long, stormy voyages with vessels of their type. Competition with large foreign companies was unsuccessful for these reasons. The company managers were also disappointed that three years after their construction the ships needed repairs and for this reason failed to bring a profit and created serious financial problems. The company's petition for financial aid from the Lithuanian government speaks to these problems. In a petition sent on October 10, 1924, the company asked the Lithuanian government for a two-year loan of 50,000 litas. It cited the steamship company's accomplishments for the benefit of Lithuania (since it was the only company operating in that sphere). It was also hoped that the company would be exempted from paying taxes.⁶⁷ The Lithuanian government refused the loan, and so the company was forced to solve its financial prob-

⁶⁷ 1922-10-22, Raštas Lietuvos Ministrui pirmininkui, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 49, l. 21

lems by mortgaging its riverboats with the Bank of Lithuania. On November 11, 1924, the company borrowed 75,000 litas at 10% interest, and the steamships *Rambynas* and *Eglė* were mortgaged to guarantee the loan.⁶⁸ This loan almost caused the company to “go under”, since in the beginning of 1925 the company ship *Kastytis* ran aground and sank. The same year the company decided to sell *Jūratė* for 60,600 litas because of the debts that had accumulated. Consequently, the company stopped operating on the seas. However, those years were significant for Lithuania, a small country without naval traditions. Thanks to the company, from 1921 to 1925 sea vessels flying the flag of Lithuania appeared in Baltic ports like Helsinki and Stockholm and were symbolic ambassadors, serving to remind everyone how important the Klaipėda region and access to the Baltic Sea were for Lithuania. When *Jūratė* and *Kastytis* docked in foreign ports, the press of those countries took note of their arrival and informed local readers about the complex position Lithuania had been in before it recovered the Klaipėda region. The Steamship Company of Lithuania also played a significant role in training independent Lithuania’s first sailors. This training began in Kaunas in 1923. This company, which had been financed with Lithuanian capital, felt a responsibility to the country and accepted 12 students to work on its sea vessels and thereby gave these students the chance to gain knowledge and experience.⁶⁹ However, after failing to obtain more aid from the Lithuanian government and after losing its sea vessels, the company had to reorganize its activities and confine its operations to the inner waterways of Lithuania. Archival documents reveal that between 1920 and 1923, profits from ships totaled 153,753 litas, and in 1924 the profits totaled 75,152 litas.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ 1924-11-11, Paskolos raštas, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 257, l. 44.

⁶⁹ Ibid., l. 43.

⁷⁰ 1926-05-04, Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės susirinkimo protokolas, LCVA, f. 387, ap. 1, l. 49.

The Steamship Company of Lithuania – its Operation After 1926

In 1926 it was decided that the Steamship Company of Lithuania should be reorganized. First, a meeting of all shareholders was set for May 4, 1926. Archival documents from the meetings that took place that year reveal with considerable accuracy the complicated situation in which the company found itself. In addition, errors made by the management of the company during the years 1920 to 1925 were revealed at this meeting. The audit commission (Raupys, Gaigalaitis, Banaitis) listed these errors. Naturally, measures to stabilize the company's financial status were adopted. At the May 4, 1926 meeting of the board, engineer A. Macijauskas, the president of the board, who had been the president of the company for the previous two years, gave an account of the company's activities in 1925–1926. This account provides interesting information and gives a realistic appraisal of the company's activities from 1921 to 1925:

The company's sea vessels have been responsible for large company losses ever since they began sailing. Large debts were incurred because of these losses, and these debts carried large interest rates. The sea vessels put the company into a very precarious position. *Kastytis* sank near the shores of Sweden during a storm, while the ship *Jūratė* was sold for 60,600 litas, and this sum was used to defray the heavy debts.⁷¹

Macijauskas further revealed that on December 29, 1925, the company rented the steamships *Rambynas*, *Eglė* and *Rūta* to the Eisenstadt brothers, who lived in Jurbarkas. The lease was for two years, and the company was to receive 48,000 litas. In addition, the lessees of the *Rambynas* agreed to make major repairs costing 10,000 litas. Disagreements arose among the eight shareholders who attended the meeting (out of 528 shareholders). It became clear during the meeting that other Lithuanian companies were substantially indebted to the company for transportation

⁷¹ 1926-05-04, Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės susirinkimo protokolas, LCVA, f. 387, ap. 1, b. 32, l. 140.

of cargo. Many misunderstandings were due to the fact that detailed accounts of the operation and finances of the company from 1920 to 1924 had not been provided. Entries into the accounting book were initiated practically during the meeting itself. Eventually, the meeting was postponed to May 11th. Eleven company shareholders attended this later meeting. They were informed that the current board had supplemented the documentation in the company's books and had completed a list of creditors and debtors. It surfaced that from 1923 on, the Steamship Union of Lithuania had incurred a debt totaling 6,848 litas to the company. It was decided to try to recover this amount from the Steamship Union in court. The other debtors who had not paid the company for transporting cargo were not enumerated. The net worth of the firm was listed as 390,052 litas, but there was a net loss of 10,049 litas for the year 1925. No additional figures were provided.⁷² It was stated that during the years 1920 to 1924 the board did not keep accounts responsibly and conducted operations unrelated to the operation of the Steamship Company of Lithuania. For example, the company board lent large sums to the construction company *Eglynas* and other unnamed companies and engaged in buying and selling stones, sugar and other items. Such careless activity by the board may have contributed to the difficult financial situation of the company. It was decided at the meeting to try to recover these loans amicably if possible, but if this was unsuccessful, to seek legal redress in court.⁷³ At the meeting the board was accused of leasing *Rambynas* and *Eglė* for too small a sum. One competitor, the Steamship Union of Lithuania, which was indebted to the company for the aforementioned sum, offered the company 60,000 litas to have the company's ships stay inactive in dock for two years. Macijauskas explained that this offer was accepted for several reasons. First, it was accepted in order to save the steamship *Eglė*, since bailiffs were trying to impound this ship. 5,000 litas had to be paid before December 31, 1925, but the Eisenstadt brothers could

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.



A barge. Two similar ships – Luizė and Fridrichas, which belonged to the Steamship Company of Lithuania

pay the sum in advance all at once. The offer was also accepted because from its inception the Steamship Union of Lithuania was a competitor to the Steamship Company of Lithuania, was indebted to it from 1923 on, and did not appear to be a reliable partner.⁷⁴ At the conclusion of the meeting a decision was made to take out a loan for a sum of between 10,000 and 15,000 litas in order to pay all that was owed to company workers and to cover government taxes and small creditors. Analysis of this meeting makes clear that the financial status of the company was stabilized, but that debts remained, even though they were not substantial under the circumstances.

On February 25, 1927, five stockholders (Stulpinas, Vokietaitis, Macijauskas, Garalevičius, Morkūnas) met and declared that the company was in a more precarious financial position than the year before. Since the company's activities had been halted, the value of the company's stocks fell, and expenditures were required to cover various other problems plaguing the company

⁷⁴ Ibid.

(amortization of the steamships, credits and others). There was a total loss of 61,933 litas. Income from lease of steamships (24,000 litas), from stocks sold and from debt payments received totaled 50,076 litas. The decision was made to sell the steamship *Gulbė* for 18,900 litas because its condition had deteriorated and because the sale, it was hoped, would improve the company's financial status.⁷⁵ The only positive note was that despite these financial problems, the company's net worth stood at the relatively substantial sum of 375,480 litas.⁷⁶

I was unable to locate in the archives any minutes of meetings or any accounting documents of the Steamship Company of Lithuania for 1928, but based on the trends of 1927 (the lack of operation), one can surmise that they must have been similar. However, the leased steamship *Eglė* made a name for itself in other writings relating to the activities of naval officials (inspectors) on the Nemunas. The company board must have been especially worried when in the fall of 1927 the steam motor cylinder of the *Eglė* broke. This resulted in a substantial financial loss. Fortunately, no one was hurt.⁷⁷ A naval inspector noted a somewhat unusual situation which occurred on June 17th, when sea captain J. Šulcas was fined because the ship's national flag was discovered soiled with soot. According to inspector J. Kaujančius, the captain who had been reprimanded swore at him and threatened him.⁷⁸

With the start of the 1929 navigation season, the Steamship Company of Lithuania returned to Lithuania's inner waterways. According to board president Šliūpas, the return was complicated because of competitors in river travel. The small steamship company, which had two steamships, had to compete with steamship syndicates established by several owners. For this reason, the company suffered substantial losses at the beginning of the

⁷⁵ 1927-02-25, Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės susirinkimo protokolas, LCVA, f. 387, ap. 1, b. 32, l. 35.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ 1927-09-06, Ponui Kauno vandens kelių rajono viršininkui, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 173, l. 25.

⁷⁸ 1927-06-16, Laivybos prievaizdas J. Kaujančas, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 177, l. 60.

navigation season. However, competition ended when the steamship owners agreed to join all 18 steamships into one group. It was agreed that profits would go into a common till, which would be used to maintain and administer wharfs. It was also decided that fuel for the steamships would be purchased with funds from the common till. This was an economic hardship for small steamships like *Eglė*, which had to help defray the costs of fuel for large steamships. In a single navigation season, the Steamship Company of Lithuania would spend about 3,000 litas for fuel.⁷⁹ In addition, every year it had to pay the government about 1,500 litas as a steam boiler fee and a waterway tax.⁸⁰ In 1929, after almost a decade of complicated operation, the company had a modest profit of 4,134 litas. At the yearly meeting to review accounts, which took place on May 30th, it was also noted that the net worth of the company was 358,203 litas.⁸¹

There was no shortage of navigation competition in 1930 either. In winter, with the start of navigation season a few months away, steamship owners agreed to divide themselves into two groups and to sail in alternating two-week shifts. It was also agreed that each owner would buy his own fuel. However, local Litvaks began to compete without paying heed to the agreement, and this spoiled a relatively successful spring. Opasnov, the owner of three steamships (*Vytis*, *Balanda*, and *Aksena*) demanded that the agreement from the prior year be reinstated, as it was more advantageous to owners of multiple steamships. No one accepted Opasnov's proposal. That is why the 1930 navigation season turned chaotic. The biggest winners in this competition were passengers, who took advantage of cheap fares in large numbers, but the competition burdened even them since the ships became very crowded.⁸² Unfortunately, I have not been able to find financial

⁷⁹ 1925 m. Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės balansas, LCVA, f. 387, ap. 1, b. 187, l. 49.

⁸⁰ Duomenys pagal: Žinios apie vandens kelius bei jų turto stovį. Garlaivių baidokų, motorvalčių stovis ir žinios, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 93, l. 26.

⁸¹ 1930-05-30, Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovės susirinkimo protokolai, LCVA, f. 387, ap. 1, b. 38, l. 5.

⁸² "Garlaiviai tebekonkuruoja," 2.

data, which would accurately show the results of the company's operations. In 1930, in an effort to compete more successfully with owners of other ships, steamship *Eglė* was furnished with a buffet, which Ona Medvedevaitė leased. The lessee was also allowed to sell alcoholic beverages.⁸³ This decision was made in an effort to attract passengers by providing a more comfortable trip. In 1930, besides the *Eglė*, buffets operated on the following steamships: *Planeta*, *Balanda*, *Aksena*, *Lietuva*, *Venera*, *Laisvė*, *Kometa*, *Palanga*, *Prezidentas*, *Kęstutis*. On these ships you could purchase snacks and drink a glass of beer, which made the six-hour trip from Kaunas to Jurbarkas less tedious.

The owners of ship buffets had to observe set requirements for hygiene and cleanliness. The cashiers and waitresses had to wear white coats or at least white aprons⁸⁴, since naval inspectors systematically checked ship buffets. Shipowners allowed buffet owners to establish buffets on board, and the buffet owners paid them rent. These buffet owners had to assume all responsibility for infractions associated with the buffet. The prices for buffet items were standardized. For example, a bottle of beer cost 0.55 litas, a glass of liquor (250 ml) cost 2 litas, scrambled eggs and sausage cost 1.50 litas, various snacks cost from 0.10 to 0.50 litas.⁸⁵

However, even these measures did not help the Steamship Company of Lithuania become strong. The company board came up against competition in inner waterway transport, since each year there were more and more steamships on Lithuania's rivers. (In 1920 there were 10 steamships, in 1930 – 24.) The board decided to lease the ships that belonged to the company. For a while Kostas Batūra leased the *Eglė* and the *Rambynas*. Then in 1937 the Lithuanian Baltic Lloyd company rented the ships of the Steamship Company of Lithuania. After a few years this company purchased the *Eglė* and the *Rambynas*. When the Soviets occupied Lithuania in 1940, this company owned 32 riverboats.

⁸³ 1930-03-04 Sanitarinė apžiūra, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 21.

⁸⁴ 1932 m. Nemuno garlaivių laikytojams ir pardavėjoms, pasirašė Rajono viršininkas, LCVA, f. 1059, ap. 1, b. 88, l. 74a.

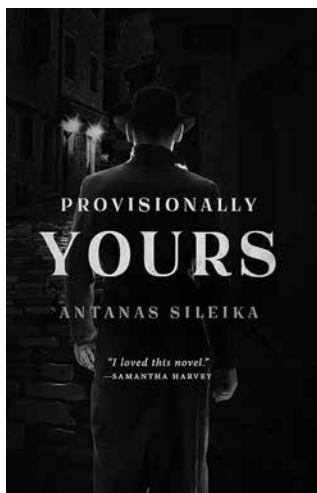
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Translated by RIMAS ČERNIUS

BOOK REVIEWS



Antanas Sileika
Provisionally Yours
Windsor, Ontario: Biblioasis,
2019, 272 pp.
ISBN 978-1771962858

Antanas Šileika's novel *Provisionally Yours* takes the reader into the midst of chaotic life of the newly emerged country of Lithuania after WWI. The country depicted on the map on the front endpaper of the book has just lost its capital Vilnius to Poland and is nervous about the Klaipėda region. The new government is feverishly forming its cabinet; agents are recruiting people who are not properly trained, some of them coming straight from the farms. The tax system does not function properly yet and the transportation department is nonexistent. To a foreign diplomat who happens to settle in this country at that time period, the place seems "like a cross between the Middle Ages and a comic opera." (p. 89)

But the reader should not be worried about getting caught in a web of historical complications. Soon after we are familiarized with the scene, the main character of the book – Justas Adamonis – emerges, and the moment he steps out of the train in his native Kaunas, the "provisional capital," the action starts rolling.

Adamonis is the head of military counterintelligence and is a successful man in his profession; he manages to deal with all the

difficulties thrown at him extraordinary well. Readers will soon recognize Adamonis as a version of the well-known iconic figure of James Bond with his talent for adventure, risk, and attractive women. Even the choice of a name for his secretary, Miss Pinigelis (*pinigėlis* means “little money” in Lithuanian) is an obvious allusion to Ian Fleming’s Miss Money Penny. Nevertheless, behind the James Bond-like figure beats a real heart: as the author acknowledges in his afterword, his protagonist Justas Adamonis was inspired by a real-life person, Jonas Budrys, the chief of Lithuanian counterintelligence between 1921 and 1923. (p. 280)

Other real-life characters emerge: the Lithuanian reader can easily recognize the prominent Lithuanian naturalist Tadas Ivanauskas in the passionate collector Lukiewicz and General Konstantinas Žukas in the military intelligence chief Michael Landa, as well as others. (p. 282) These characters act, are entangled, or participate in many historic events such as the saccharine scandal or the Klaipėda revolt. But the author does not linger long on historical complexities or their accuracies, nor does he try to unravel the mental composition of his characters. Rather, being faithful to the idea of creating the great Lithuanian action hero, he focuses on protagonist’s actions and procedures and his unquestionable loyalty to the new country of Lithuania.

This book can be read as a thriller and a love story. Nevertheless, there is more to it than just entertainment. This book is a spark of memory, ignited by Šileika’s pen and imagination, of those who worked in the operations behind the scenes, whose lives were led in the shadow in order to serve the young country and its people. Jonas Budrys’ story found its way into literature in this particular vision of him as a version of the iconic James Bond (NB their initials!), and we as readers are let into this dangerous, invisible world both to admire and to remember him. The title *Provisionally Yours*, a form of valediction, can be interpreted in many ways, but in this light, it can be placed on Adamonis’ (or his original Jonas Budrys’) lips and speaks to us, readers: because of the nature of work the protagonist is doing – the risks he takes and the losses he must embrace – he serves us faithfully, anonymously, and, maybe, till death.

DAIVA LITVINSKAITĖ

ABSTRACTS

ALGIMANTAS JANKAUSKAS

Will the World Return Home? Tracing Romualdas Ozolas' Political Thought

Despite philosopher, publicist and politician, Romualdas Ozolas' (1939–2015) considerable merits to the State of Lithuania and his rich and profound philosophical, cultural, and political legacy, he still remains inadequately appreciated and his works inadequately read. Recent geopolitical changes and increasingly evident boundaries of global development have brought to the fore, decade-old or even older Ozolas' insights. The threat of globalism, the preservation of the foundations of European unity, its identity and historical memory, the problems of transforming people into a resource and displacement issues, which up until now did not exist in the minds of many, are evident today. Ozolas' philosophy of "the world returning home" has become a reliable point of resistance for the contemporary world.

The article looks back at the origins of Ozolas' philosophy of "returning home" and the "postulates" that lent his theory and practice a sense of certainty.

MARTYNAS MANKUS

Postmodern Architecture in Lithuania – from Global to Vernacular

Recent discussion in professional and public spheres regarding the legacy of postmodernism indicate that a more general interest in the architectural legacy of the second half of the last cen-

tury has grown. Previously widely discussed in the West, architectural postmodernism is now of interest to the architectural discourse in Eastern and Central Europe. The author of the article analyses the specific cultural context in which architectural postmodernism came into being in Lithuania. He attempts to outline the importance of this architectural and aesthetic phenomenon during the last decades of dependence when Lithuanian architects were searching for new forms and ideas.

GEDIMINAS KASPARAVIČIUS

Lithuania's First Naval Shipping Company

This article describes The Steamship Company of Lithuania (*Lietuvos garlaivių bendrovė*), independent Lithuania's first naval shipping company, which was founded on February 1, 1919, in Kaunas. The company was created to organize river and sea transport in Lithuania and also to connect New York and Klaipėda by way of a transatlantic navigation line. The article examines the activities of the Steamship Company of Lithuania in organizing water transportation from 1919 to 1936. It describes the problems the company encountered and the contributions Lithuanians in America made to help establish the company. It describes the ships which belonged to the company as well as the individuals who contributed most towards the creation of the company and the functioning of its transport operations.

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Monument to Frank Zappa in Vilnius. Sculptor Konstantinas Bogdanas

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FRONT COVER: A view of Vilnius Old Quarters with the Cathedral of Theotokos

Photo by Almantas Samalavičius