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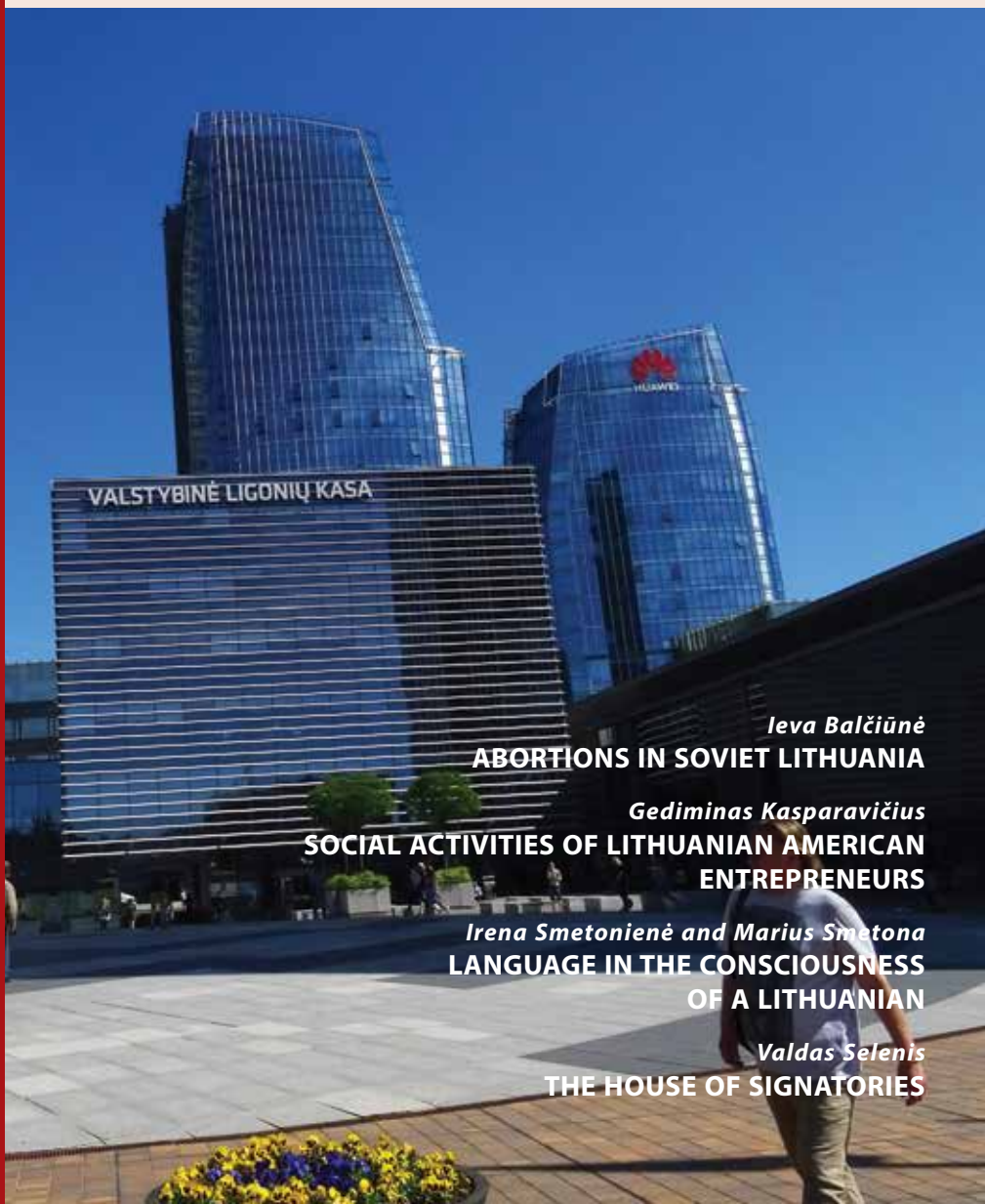

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The House of Signatories. Photo by K. Peikštienė. See article on page 69

Abortions in Soviet Lithuania 1955–1990: Social Context and Everyday Practices

IEVA BALČIŪNĖ

After 20 years of prohibition of abortions the Soviet Union canceled the legislation in 1955. Soviet authorities have already acknowledged that most of the cases of abortions were related to socio-economic reasons, not by post-war chaos and distress.[1] Despite the problems of illegal abortions, their social consequences and unjustified hopes of demographic decline, changes in abortion law were accompanied by propagandistic rhetoric about the Soviet women's right to decide whether they wanted to bear a child or not. Propagandistic statements about women's emancipation were compared to the West, where women did not have such privileges. Shortly after the cancellation of the ban, the demand for abortions in the Soviet Union exposed the tragic phenomenon of a massive number of abortions.

Researchers, who concentrate on family, women, gender, ideology, politics and everyday life issues in the Soviet Union have not escaped the topic of reproduction. Unsurprisingly, peculiar family planning measures and the 'abortion culture' in the Soviet world have attracted scholars' attention.[2] The issue is complicated and controversial, hence it can be approached from various per-

[1] Nakachi, *Replacing the Death*, 484.

[2] Karpov and Kääriäinen, *Abortion Culture in Russia*.

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spectives, such as: demographic and reproductive politics,[3] gender and women's studies,[4] sexual behavior and health.[5]

The main question examined in this article is how the Soviet Union's official pro-natalist policy coexisted and functioned in Soviet Lithuanian society together with legalized abortions? I analyze how propaganda portrayed the abortion practices; how they were perceived and applied in a everyday life context; the process of modernization (availability of the procedure and methods); official rhetoric about the women who sought family planning and the abortion itself; out of the system practices (illegal activities, their motivation and circumstances); main reasons for seeking an abortion; expressed moral convictions.

The sources used to analyze the aforementioned questions are: archival documents; Soviet propaganda literature, mass enlightenment brochures and articles; semi-structured qualitative interviews.

Modernization of the Procedure

Until 1955, there was a law in Soviet Lithuania prohibiting abortions without a doctor's prescription. The prescriptions could

[3] Vishnevskyj [Вишневский], *Демографическая модернизация России*: *1900–2000*; Avedeev A., *L'avortement et la contraception en Russie et dans l'ex-URSS*: *histoire et présent*; Randal A., *Abortion Will Deprive You of Happiness!*; Lutz, *Demographic Trends and Patterns in The Soviet Union Before 1991*; Denisov and Sakevich, *Birth control in Russia*: *A Swaying Population Policy*; Sakevich, *Что было после запрета аборт а в 1936 году*; Rivkin-Fish, *From Demographic Crisis to Dying Nation*: *The Politics of Language and Reproduction in Russia.*

[4] Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society-Equality, Development and Social Change;* Edmondson, *Gender in Russian History and Culture, Women and society in Russia and Soviet Union*; Denisova, *Rural Women in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia*; Du Plessix Gray, *Soviet Women*: *Walking the Tightrope*; Bridger, *Women in the Soviet Countryside Women's Roles in Rural Development in the Soviet Union*; Vishneva-Sarafanova, *Soviet Woman – a Portrait*; Heitlinger, *Women and state socialism*: *Sex inequality in Soviet Union & Czhechoslovakia.;* Buckley, *Women and Ideology in the Soviet Union.*

[5] Kon, *Sexual Revolution in Russia*; Stern M. and Stern A., *Sex in the Soviet Union*; Healey, *The Sexual Revolution in the USSR*: *Dynamics Beneath the Ice.*

only be written due to a woman's health being at risk or fetal malformation. However, it is not clear whether this was the only way to practice abortion until 1955. First, the documentation of legally performed terminations of pregnancies was incomplete. Secondly, there are written records of abortion usually only in secondary sources, e.g. epicrises of pregnant women. During the time when voluntary abortion practices were illegal, only the medical abortion cases of serious health complications or death were examined and documented. Most of the everyday abortion practices stayed in the shadows, in the criminal underworld, making those cases extremely hard to investigate.

After 1955, the ban of abortion was lifted and women could request the procedures for personal reasons. This was followed by institutionalization of the procedure. Since then, hospitals, maternity wards, women consultation centers and dispensaries in towns and villages gradually became accustom to perform modern medical abortions. Even special medical institutions, 'abortariums', were established, which specialized solely in abortion procedures.

According to the instructions released by the Ministry of Health, up until 1962, a medical commission consisting of three doctors had to consider applications for abortions. However, there are no records documenting such a commission's existence, which indicates the rarity of official considerations of the personal requests. Likewise, it is unclear what exactly had to be considered by the doctors. After 1962, the order was dispersed and applications for procedures eased; for example, underage girls could request abortions without their parents' consent. The published statistics do not show great difference in numbers of abortions before and after 1962, which shows a lack of systemic changes. Although it is difficult to indicate the dynamics of abortion numbers, what indicates change is the fact that over eight million abortions were done during the 1963–1965 period in the Soviet Union, reaching a peak in the statistics. Similarly, around 50,000 abortions were done in a year at the end of the Soviet period in Lithuania.[6]

[6] Williams, *Abortion and women's health in Russia and the Soviet successor states*, 137.

Abortions were performed by scraping uteruses, which could be done up until the 14th week of pregnancy. A modern "vacuum method" was introduced in the 1960s. It was less painful, could be done up until the 12th week of pregnancy, and became a dominant procedure in Lithuania. Both methods could be employed according to individual circumstances (e.g. duration of pregnancy) and available equipment at the medical institution.[7]

Legalized abortions became one of the most accessible and advanced medical procedures in Soviet Lithuania. According to the published statistics, 40,000–50,000 abortions were performed every year from 1955 to 1990.[8] If these numbers are true, there were twice as many abortions as there were births. Yet, considering the specifics of Soviet statistics, real numbers could be far greater.[9] Furthermore, unregistered procedures and illegal practices must be taken into account when comprehending possible numbers of voluntary abortions. As well as self-induced miscarriage, as they were officially registered as abortions.

According to Griffante (2019), in 1930, approximately 15,000 abortions were performed in an independent Lithuania.[10] Yet, it is not known whether these numbers take into account illegal abortions and deliberately induced miscarriages. Considering that voluntary abortion was illegal, and that Lithuania was a predominantly Catholic country, Griffante's suggested the number is unlikely high. However, war, the occupations, the continuing par-

[7] During the 70s–80s, gynecologists wrote a great amount of complaints to the Ministry of Health about poor working conditions and a constant deficit of necessary inventory, such as: gynecological chairs, microscopes, inspection tools (vaginal spoons, scales) and abortion equipment. This means that the available equipment dictated the methods of abortion.

[8] Williams, *Abortion and women's health in Russia and the Soviet successor states*.

[9] Ed. Bobadilla, and Costello, and Mitchel, *Premature Death in the New Independent States*, 157–58. Authors who analyze premature deaths, stress that the principles on which Soviet Union's statistical data are based did not meet the internationally acknowledged standards of statistics (e.g. the state did not register newborns who were smaller than 28 cm height and less than 1,000 grams, and who died during the 1st week of life).

[10] Griffante, *Children, Poverty and Nationalism in Lithuania, 1900–1940*, 108.

tisan war in Soviet Lithuania and the immigration of Soviet citizens raised the official number of abortions at least several times in ten years. This comparison supports the observation that these social phenomena (abortions) do not occur spontaneously; rather, they proliferate when living conditions in a country become similar to the countries in which the practices are a norm.[11]

Public Discourse

As already mentioned, Soviet reproductive politics in 1955 was manifested through modernization of the procedure, accessibility, and institutionalization. This was led by an official propaganda "anti-abortion" campaign, which implemented a new direction of discourse – educating women through threats about the consequences of abortions.[12] Such a narrative can be clearly seen in publications. Typical articles in the *Tarybinė Moteris* magazine (in English, Soviet woman) encouraged women to have more children – no less than three, preferably four. This magazine also informed about the dangers of abortion. It is important to note that 'dangers' were usually stressed when discussing the 1st pregnancy, since this would cause infertility and affect women's abilities to work by damaging her health.

The dangers of multiple abortions were also mentioned, which, as it was put, could hurt family relations, cause conflicts and become determining factors of divorce. I argue that the threats and warnings were made in order to uphold expected norms of behavior, not to demonstrate support for families and women's health. Articles in the magazines criticized abortions and stated that they signified egoism and materialism, which were incompatible with Soviet women's values. For example, in a typical anti-abortion campaign, a fictive female character expresses her remorse:

[11] Aveedev, *L'avortement et la contraception en Russie et dans l'ex-URSS: histoire et présent*, 140.

[12] Rendal, *Abortion Will Deprive You of Happiness!*, 17.

> I often think about those two, whom I did not let to see the world. […] Back then, I did not lack bread. I was such an egoist.[13]

The admission of being egoistic or preferring better living conditions to a bigger family is a recurring narrative in similar texts about family planning, the harms of abortion, or demographic issues. Another prevalent criticism of deciding to have less children was the assumed refusal to fulfill one's duty to the state. An excerpt from the article about demographics and family planning depicts a fictive woman who protests against her husband's views:

> You are ruthless […], living only for yourself and your pleasures. You have no patriotic and communal feelings […], instead of them (wanting/having more children – I.B.) you are suggesting vacation resorts and other nonsense.[14]

Officially, women could have three days off after an abortion. Likewise, from the 1960s, they could take a week of unpaid leave. Women's health problems following the procedure were frequent. Yet because women used to use these rights, educational institutions, social services, and textile factories faced many problems, for the majority of workers were women.[15]

Issues of reproductive health were seen as a demographic issue in the Soviet Union, hence, discussions about abortions did not consider the value of life itself. The public discourse saw new-born babies as something that brings happiness to mothers/families and covers the demographic loss. The overall anti-abortion rhetoric never focused on the unborn life as a value in itself. Furthermore, the non-physical health of a woman, in such articles, was usually described only as 'happy' or 'unhappy'. Psychological consequences caused by abortion were barely de-

13 Šadauskas, "Rytoj operacijos diena," 16.

14 "Demografija ir mes," 21.

15 Since women either worked in jobs where the pay was smaller or were paid less than men in general, they were greatly important regarding practicality. Shapiro, *The Industrial Labour Force*, 19; Vinokurova, *Reprivatising Women's Lives*: *From Brezhnev to Khrushchev*, 66; Lapidus, *Women, Work and Family*: *New Soviet Perspective, xxi.*

scribed at all or were very limited. For instance, women who experienced an abortion were described as 'defective' or 'incomplete'.[16] On the contrary, women who had children were characterized much more eloquently:

> Small children heal them [women – I.B.] from many illnesses – warts, nodes, posing in front of a mirror, being spoiled, laziness, bad dreams, fear of aging, boredom…[17]

Although the quote is taken from a satirical article, it reflects on common rhetoric and public discourse. The quote describes the knowledge spread in a society about women's health issues and so-called 'dangers' that women/families would face if they decided to control the number of children.

Anti-abortion Education and Family Planning Measures

Officially, obstetricians, pharmacists, lecturers, scientists and public activists had to be involved in an 'anti-abortion' campaign. However, the form of communicating the official anti-abortion message was very rigid. Despite ambitious plans to organize public lectures in towns and villages to 'educate' the public, the lectures were rare and usually given only to females.

These lectures, as well as publications and films, such as *Aborto žala* (Harm of Abortion) were based on moralizing rhetoric and did not carry any practical information about family planning. Authors and lecturers limited practical information by listing contraceptive measures, which, allegedly, were available in the Soviet Union, as this should prove to the listeners the evolving state of the social care system for families and women.

Moreover, lecturers could rarely explain how to use contraceptive measures, since not all of them, especially those working in the province, knew about the proper usage of them. The situation was the same at the women's consultation clinics, hospi-

[16] Šadauskas, "Rytoj – operacijos diena," 16.
[17] "Demografija ir mes," 21.

tals and maternity wards where 'educational' classes for the newly-weds had to be held. Then again, doctors who had the knowledge about the use of contraceptives sometimes tended not to explain how to use or prescribe them.[18] Because those doctors were aware of the unavailability and quality issues of the modern contraceptive measures in the Soviet Union, it can be stated that most of them chose not to prescribe contraceptives and explain how to use them in order to avoid personal responsibility.[19] Meanwhile, homemade folk practices such as washing one's vagina after intercourse with different solutions (e.g. lemon juice, potassium permanganate or boric acid) not only functioned as rumors but were often recommended by medical doctors. These practices were often presented as legit and less risky than new medicinal methods.

Additionally, the availability of modern contraceptives was problematic. Until the end of the Soviet period there was a shortage of remedies, and some of them (spermicidal creams, cervical caps or pills) were imported from other socialist countries, usually Hungary and Poland. Quantities of the remedies, however, did not meet the demand even in the countries of origin.[20] Therefore, the aforementioned contraceptives rarely appeared in the pharmacies in Soviet Lithuania. This means that women had difficulties either acquiring needed contraceptives in general or were unable to access them when in need.

Another issue was the extremely low quality of the contraceptives. Even the most popular Soviet Union-made IUDs (IUDs became available in Soviet Lithuania only in 1973) had multiple side

18 LCVA F. R-769, ap. 1, b. 3006, p. 37 (1965).

19 Kon, *Sexual Revolution in Russia*: *From the Age of the Czars to Today*, 183. Kon emphasizes the clash between progressive medical doctors and official Soviet medical discourse regarding harms of contraceptive pills. Province doctors possibly did not get enough information about the issue; Du Plessix Gray, *Soviet Women*: *Walking the Tightrope*, 15. Du Plessix Gray argues that doctors were not interested in promoting modern contraceptive measures, as they were concerned about the profit that they make from abortions.

20 Ignachuk, *"Conscious or unconscious motherhood?" Discourses about birth control and gender in state-socialist Poland (1958–1980)*, 12.

effects, including bleeding, pain, uterus damage.[21] They were also unsuitable for petite women or those who had not been pregnant.[22]

The statistics demonstrate that in 1975, of the 186 women from Garliava and Vilkija using Infekundin pills, one third experienced various health complications.[23] It is worth mentioning that pregnancy was classified as a 'complication' probably caused by the misuse of the pills. Such cases limited the desire to use pills and weakened both doctors' and women's trust.

Furthermore, condoms were highly unpopular, and men usually did not participate in family planning. One of the respondents who worked at women consultation clinics in the mid-1980s, explained that some men said that using a condom 'is the same as smelling a rose through a glass.'[24] Soviet condoms did have an unpleasant odor, color, were one-sized and unreliable, prone to breaking.

Medical contraception was not a rival to abortion (which was relatively affordable and effective) as a family planning measure. In the context of the lack of awareness about effectiveness, proper usage and side effects of pills, creams and IUDs, the medical abortion procedure was trusted, as well as explained for the society comparatively well through the "anti-abortion" campaign.

Everyday Practices in Medical Institutions

Although the institutional network of centers performing abortion was large, the demand was not met. Abortariums lacked specialists; gynecology students and obstetrics had to perform internships together with so-called 'abortmachers'.[25]

21 LCVA F. R-769, ap. 1, b. 7600, p. 127 (1975).

22 LCVA F. R-769 ap. 1, b. 7600, p. 230 (1975).

23 LCVA F. R-769, ap. 1, b. 7600, p. 127 (1975).

24 Interview no. 1, 2019 04 04.

25 The name was given during the period of illegal abortion in the Soviet Union (1936–1955) to the physicians and charlatans performing underground abortions. Later, the name became a part of slang and was applied to doctors working at abortariums, those who were insensitive regarding the matter or made money while outside the system, by doing abortions illegally.

Waiting for the procedures lasted from a few days to several weeks, for there was a shortage of employees. It was understood that women who were in the last weeks of pregnancy (12th–14th week) – when an abortion still could be done – could not wait for so long. Thus, women often searched for alternative ways of terminating pregnancies as soon as possible. Reacting to the problem, in 1970, the Ministry of Health released provisions for the hospitals on how to reduce the waiting lists. The provisions stated that medical institutions had to work on Saturdays and use gynecological chairs to hospitalize more women.[26] Long waiting lines led to more illegal abortions and included practices of 'blat'(corruption) and bribery within medical institutions. This created an opportunity for doctors and other personnel to make a profit outside the legal system.

It was possible to arrange procedures after work or during the night with physicians. Quite a significant amount of abortions happened at nights; women hid and bribed personnel for keeping procedures secret. The situation created undocumented abortions that were not included in the statistics. Moreover, while the conditions of legal procedures could be observed and controlled by the authorities, unofficial abortions were possibly performed under questionable conditions.

Nevertheless, only a small number of illegal procedures were examined by law enforcement. For instance, in the first half of the 70s, only 18 cases of illegal abortions in Vilnius were transferred to the prosecutor's office. In 1973, only 36 unofficial procedures ended up being investigated.[27] This shows that such cases rarely reached a trial.[28] The documentations included only cases marking women's death or denunciations of doctors.

Looking at the range of common illegal practices in medical institutions in Soviet Lithuania, one can see that not only doctors informed on their colleagues, but also that some of the doctors

[26] LCVA F. R-769 ap. 1, b. 4815, p. 55 (1970).
[27] LCVA F. R-769 ap. 1, b. 6850, p. 38 (1973).
[28] LCVA F. R-769 ap. 1 b. 4817, p. 55 (1970).

managed to escape any consequences. Abortariums, hospitals and other medical institutions performed illegal abortions and other unofficial procedures, such as abortions after the legal 14-week period or sterilization regarding physically and mentally disabled people (if requested by relatives).

One of the respondents, a former midwife, described the questionable practices:

> Even if someone was called for a 'five-minute-meeting', questioned about the procedure, still, all documents presented facts as they were suppose to be.[29]

Essentially, some doctors covered each other, for the existing system of the institution had to be kept as it was.

Bribes and financially expressed gratitude were culturally accepted behavior in Soviet society; however a bribe regarding an abortion usually had a specific aim. Officially, termination of pregnancy was free.[30] In reality, there were unwritten rules regarding abortion related bribes. Abortion bribes had to be provided in exchange for specific services and favors: e.g. anonymity, faster service, or suitable anesthesia. One physician who worked at a Vilnius abortarium in the late 80s described his experience of dealing with a regular bribe as follows:

> A woman walks in, which means that she'll be having an abortion, so she must pay the doctor. She's holding some money in her hand. I'm staring at her and she's trying to give the money to me, the money fell on the ground. Then the nurse picked it up and said to me I should continue my work, she'll take care of it.[31]

As mentioned before, one of the desirable services was adequate anesthesia. The procedure was so painful that the patient

[29] Interview no. 1, 2019 04 04.

[30] Kalmar, *Comparative perspective on Abortion policy in the People's Republic of China and Soviet Union*. Kalmar mentions that in Ukraine and Russia the procedure cost 5 rubles. However, there is no information about that regarding Lithuanian SSR; Randal, *Abortion Will Deprive You of Happiness!* Randal also states that the procedure was free.

[31] Interview no. 2, 2019 04 17.

needed a full anesthesia; however, as one interviewed doctor stressed, personnel used an analgesic 'Inovokain' for a vacuum method, which provided minimal anesthesia. Therefore, if a woman wanted to get adequate anesthesia or special pain-relieving gas (which started to be used in the 1970s), a deal with doctors had to be made.

However, inadequate anesthesia was only a part of the reality that women had to experience during the termination of pregnancy. The aforementioned doctor remembers his daily routine:

> 'One has to perform around 15 abortions every day [...] using a spiral and other tools. A nurse works together with me. She is upset because I am 'fresh'. So, it means that I will be slow, but all needs to be done fast. One puts on gloves, puts them into a bucket with a sanitizer. They push a woman through the door, she comes in, everything looks like a slaughterhouse. They push this woman to you, you lay her down, give her an injection and do it fast fast fast because another one is waiting outside the door.[32]

Similar descriptions of the procedure can be found in historiography, which published testimonies from other parts of the Soviet Union. For example, Du Plessix Gray (1990) presents a picture of an abortion procedure in a medical clinic in late Soviet Leningrad:

> queues of women waiting to terminate pregnancies; two doctors covered in blood performing abortions to seven or eight women at a time in the same room; doctors behavior being extremely rude and all the procedures are performed without any sort of anesthesia.[33]

There were other frustrations expressed by doctors:

> It was a severe trauma for me… psychologically… I couldn't understand how one could participate in such labors and rescue newborns until lunch time, but later… I cannot comprehend that.[34]

[32] Interview no. 2, 2019 04 17.

[33] Du Plessix Gray, *Soviet Women*: *Walking the Tightrope*, 19.

[34] Interview no. 3, 2019 04 19.

Abortions were an obligatory part of a doctor's job, hence, to refuse to perform the procedure was risky. The refusal could evoke suspicion toward the doctor's ideological stances and damage their career. However, there were some doctors who did refuse to perform abortions, and it seems that most of them were secretly religious:

> I remember when we worked at Kalnieciai and it was Good Friday. It was almost time to do the procedure, but everyone froze, and nobody did it. Maybe one sanitarian asked if we lost our mind.[35]

Attempts to talk women out of the procedure happened to, as doctors say, 'young, beautiful and healthy' women, and sometimes the doctors succeeded.

Moral duality was a constant concern for some doctors. Some chose to do abortions, although stating that they tried to evade them. Others made compromises with their troubled conscience by selecting days when they refused to perform their duty or choosing women who they tried to talk out of their decision. It is worth mentioning that such memories about successfully 'saved' women or the situation they were stuck in, were followed by tears of remorse.[36]

The Women

In the 1960's, the Ministry of Health released the mandatory provision to mark one's abortion motives, women's age, education, etc. This data demonstrates that the majority of women were married, aged from 25 to 35 years old, and the most common motives were: 'do not have a living space', 'already has a child', 'there are no child care facilities available', 'has to work',

[35] Interview no. 1, 2019 04 04.

[36] Such experiences manifest a moral trauma for the medical personnel. Putinaitė, *Nenutrūkusi styga*: *prisitaikymas ir pasipriešinimas sovietų Lietuvoje*; Gailienė, *Ką jie mums padarė*: *Lietuvos gyvenimas traumų psichologijos žvilgsniu.*

also the fear of child bearing, a violent husband or a bad relationship between family members.[37] These arguments show that reasons for terminating a pregnancy were both psychological and socio-economic.

However, the majority of Soviet society encountered problems like the lack of childcare facilities, waiting lines for getting an apartment for the family to live, widespread domestic violence and fear. Moreover, there is no evidence that the decision to have an abortion was more popular among lower-educated women or women from the provinces. Women who were applying for the procedure were different by social background and education, as my respondents confirmed: "simple women: workers, teachers, officers…".[38]

The most frequent visitors at medical institutions whose goal was an official abortion, were employed marital age women, who already had one or more children and a husband. This suggests that these women, according to the Soviet social norms, were ordinary and the decision often was made not because of extreme circumstances but rather as a "normal" family planning practice.

On the other hand, divergent decisions for termination of pregnancy could be based not on social status, economic welfare or education, but on maintaining a psychological comfort within the family, (mis)trust and (dis)respect in the relationship with a partner, moral or/and religious beliefs. One of the alternative expressions of the attitude towards abortion can be found in a testimony of a labor camp prisoner, Stefanija Kučinskaitė. Remembering habitual abortions at the labor camp, she emphasized her Catholic position toward this practice and called those who did not hesitate to perform abortions to themselves or others 'animal-like' [sugyvulėjusios].[39]

Taking into account the impact of religious traditions to the alternative approach toward abortion, I would argue that grad-

[37] LCVA F. R-769, ap. 1, b. 4817, p. 42, 43, 44, 112 (1970)

[38] Interview no. 1, 2019 04 04.

[39] Marcinkevičienė-Leinartė, *Prijaukintos kasdienybės*, 52.

ually increasing tolerance to abortion could be related to expanding sovietization. According to sociological data, later generations of the Soviet society were more inclined to abortion than earlier generations.[40] Therefore during the years of sovietization, even a larger part of society was sovietized. Women who were more affected by sovietization were more likely to form their attitudes and behavior according to the Soviet ideological standards and living norms. Consequently, this could lead us to finding the possible answer and explaining the line between different stances and actions that women chose to take. Not only the socio-economic circumstances and psychological state, but the excepted ideological norms and rate of involvement in Soviet life and socio-culture, could determine one's inclination towards the termination of pregnancy.

Shame and Hiding – Criminal Abortions

Despite an abortion being a habitual and recurrent procedure in many women's lives, publicly it was not seen as an innocent act. Considering the propaganda that claimed women's emancipation as opposing the situation in the West, and the reality in which women had to live, all this created an ambivalent state.

The 'anti-abortion' campaign and the official moralizing discourse together with limited rights to a private life, developed an atmosphere of shame and hiding. Trying to evade attention and ensure their anonymity, women pursued the procedure in other cities, bribed physicians to ensure their confidentiality, and put in efforts to organize their 'appointments' at night. However illegal abortions outside the medical institutions were also seen as a solution for some.

The case histories of women demonstrate that even on a deathbed, women did not want to admit that they had been pregnant and had had an illegal abortion. Usually only after

[40] Anderson, *Life course of Soviet Women*, 214.

interrogation, would they acknowledge undergoing such a procedure. These women rarely gave up the names of those who 'helped' them deal with their unwanted pregnancies. They described those people as 'some woman' or, e.g. 'citizen Zhenia'.[41] From cases of illegal abortions transferred for the prosecution, we can see that such kind of abortions often was a side-business for lower medical personnel or retired medical doctors.

Methods used for criminal abortions were either kept secret or rarely known by the women themselves. All they could say, was that they were 'injected with some sort of medicine' or 'given some drink.[42]

However, intentionally induced miscarriages (if investigated and proved) or abortions that women performed on themselves, were far less mysterious. Usually they were described in detail, e.g. 'jumped from the platform', 'injection of water with soap into uterus', 'took a hot tub bath, drank 10 mil. of quinine, boiled soap with 50–60 mil. iodine and injected it with a rubber douche',[43] 'put a spoke from a bicycle into the uterus',[44] etc.

These comparatively well-described actions show that those women who sought others to perform the procedure, actually could not have known who those people were and what exactly they were doing.

Criminal abortions often could be made based on trust and in absence of communication and personal information – both not provided and not asked for. Unfortunately, other common rules of communication (such as prices, contacts, etc.) between women seeking an abortion outside the legal system and those providing it, remains unknown.

The Soviet healthcare had the official strategic 'Fight against criminal abortions' campaign. Measures of this 'fight' included educational public lectures about the harm for women's health

41 LCVA F. R-769, ap. 1, b. 6869, p. 63 (1973).
42 LCVA F. R-769, ap. 1, b. 4817, p. 67 (1970).
43 LCVA F. R-769, ap. 1, b. 6869, p. 41 (1973).
44 LCVA F. R-769, ap. 1, b. 7600, p. 55 (1975).

and harsh penalties, such as imprisonment for those caught being involved in such procedures. However, in 1970 Jonas Neniškis, the chief gynecologist of Lithuanian SSR, released a provision stating that cases when women performed abortions on themselves or intentionally miscarried do not need to be transferred for the prosecution.[45] Importantly, unofficial abortion procedure remained illegal. Women could intentionally hide those officially responsible, knowing that they would be included in the investigation as well.

Therefore, this provision could have caused a statistical increase of allegedly 'natural miscarriages' on the illegal abortions' data and hide actual numbers of underground practices. This showed the allegedly 'successful' "anti-abortion" campaign implemented in Lithuanian SSR, and was an important part of the republics' reputation. For us, it makes the official statistics unreliable.

All in all, it suggests that the 'Fight against criminal abortion' campaign after 1970 was intended not to spread awareness of highly risky procedures and prevent women from damaging their health or for promoting the pronatalist direction of the country. Rather it was directed to curb the uncontrolled financial gain outside the system.

Conclusions

During the period from 1955 to 1990, medical abortion became an available and affordable procedure in Soviet Lithuania, due to the institutionalization, the newly introduced methods, and the easier terms for those seeking to terminate pregnancy. Women's gradual involvement in Soviet life and socio-culture together with socio-economic circumstances contributed to the increasing demand for the procedure. The procedure became both a habitual and recurring procedure in many women's lives.

[45] LCVA F. R-769, ap. 1, b. 4817, p. 50 (1970).

The official pronatalist politics public discourse was manifested in the Soviet time's 'anti-abortion' campaign articles, lectures and films. However a characteristic feature of the discourse was the peculiarly moralizing rhetoric intended to spread the Soviet worldview, promote the expected behavior for women, and implement Soviet life norms.

Modern family planning measures in Soviet Lithuania were scarcely available, and the issue was surrounded by ignorance. For these reasons and quality issues, 'folk' contraceptive practices and publicly well-described abortion procedures were understood and even encouraged as more effective, less risky and available measures.

The increased demand for pregnancy termination as well as the lack of space for performing procedures, shortage of doctors able to perform abortion, and equipment, contributed to harsh abortion procedure conditions in medical institutions. Women participated in the system of illegal financial gain that provided specific services such as suitable anesthesia or ensured anonymity.

Most of the women who sought the procedure were ordinary according to the Soviet social norms. A distinction between women's different stances was determined not only by psychological, socio-economic reasons, but also by moral or/and religious beliefs and, by one's rate of involvement in Soviet public life and socio-culture.

Despite the fact that most Soviet women came to hold abortions as a widely accepted contraceptive measure, its reputation remained negative. This created the ambivalent state and atmosphere of shame and hiding, which contributed to the illegal practices inside and outside the official medical institutions, criminal abortion practices, and self induced miscarriages.

Also, the official 'Fight against criminal abortions' campaign introduced after 1970 was intended to curb the financial gain outside the system rather than to protect women from risky procedures and possible health damage.

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Social Activities of Lithuanian American Entrepreneurs in the Late Nineteenth–Early Twentieth Century

GEDIMINAS KASPARAVIČIUS

Introduction

The abolishment of serfdom in the agrarian Russian Empire in 1861 was a step towards putting an end to its restricted class society. It was a chance for the residents of Lithuanian governorates, mainly those of Vilnius and Kaunas, not only to engage in new crafts, but also look for a job in cities, which, at the end of the nineteenth century, became small centers of industry, trade, and transport. For part of the residents who had financial resources this provided an opportunity to leave for more industrialized Western European states, and for those chasing the American dream – to the USA. At that time, America fascinated the rest of the world with its declared liberty and opportunities to get rich; on the other hand, the poor condition of the working class was a rather frequent phenomenon in the USA, which was probably best conveyed in the novel *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. In the late nineteenth–early twentieth century, America forged substantially ahead according to a number of economic indicators. The largest quantities of coal were extracted (in 1905 – 350 million tons), and steel and alloys of other metals for the construction of railways and cities produced; the company John Rockefeller

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Standard Oil Co., which held a monopoly in the USA, was a distinguished global leader according to its production of fuels (in 1904 – 54 percent), and Detroit became a global leader in the car industry: in 1908, the model T Ford created by Henry Ford rolled off the conveyor belt, changing the automotive industry. The success of Rockefeller and Ford could not be overlooked by ordinary workers, including immigrants from Europe (Jews, Germans, Brits, Irishmen, Italians, Poles, Hungarians, and other nations of the Russian Empire), who poured into the USA chasing their American dream.

The total number of the residents of ethnographic Lithuania who left for the USA between approximately the 1860s and 1914 is estimated at about 0.5 million. Some of them managed to set up their own business; according to Vincentas Liulevičius, by 1914, the Lithuanians had established 1,130 trade enterprises and owned 3,681 units of real estate in the USA, which at that time were worth 8,725,800 USD. The data of that same Liulevičius about one of the Lithuanians' largest colonies in Pennsylvania, the town of Mount Carmel, is indicative of the enterprise of the Lithuanians with respect to other nations. 640 Slovaks owned no business at all, 790 Ukrainians owned two stores and one tavern, 3,000 Poles eight taverns and seven stores, 300 Italians had established three stores and one tavern, whereas 766 Lithuanians owned six stores and thirteen taverns. These figures of one small settlement are part of a benchmark enabling us to realize that Lithuanians managed to quickly move away from the Russian Empire's traditional agrarian lifestyle and seize the opportunities that opened up for them in the new world.[1]

Immigrants from ethnographic Lithuania were characterized not only as enterprising businessmen but were also socially active; they founded societies, organizations, mutual aid institutions, and contributed to the activities of local parishes, thereby creating small islands of Lithuanity in the USA in the coal mining towns of Pennsylvania and later in other places of the USA as well. 275,000 first-wave immigrants participated in social activities in

[1] Liulevičius, *Amerikos lietuvių ekonominė veikla*, 41–84.

1899, including a fair number of entrepreneurs.[2] This active participation in social life was dictated by complex experiences of emigration, which made them cluster together into small groups and gradually adopt local living traditions in the USA.

The activities of Lithuanian American entrepreneurs in accumulating social capital in the activities of societies and organizations in the late nineteenth–early twentieth century have not been researched historiographically very much to date. No one has tried to answer the problematic questions about what societies were founded by Lithuanian entrepreneurs in the USA or to the founding of which societies they contributed, or how active they were in community activities. One of the first large entrepreneurs, Antanas Olšauskas, supported, organized, and otherwise contributed to public initiatives that increased the social capital of Lithuanians and encouraged their enterprise through his own example. He also participated in the national revival activities of the Lithuanians.

This article aims to present Lithuanian Americans' self-organization, activities in societies and civil organizations based on the examples of Antanas Olšauskas, Juozas Paukštys, Antanas Pajaujis, Justinas Mackevičius, Vincas Ambrazevičius, and other business representatives. Historiography has until now mainly investigated the economic activities of the Lithuanians in the interwar period[3]; however, some information on the figures of the Lithuanian diaspora who were active participants in social and cultural activities and were additionally engaged in economic activities before 1914, e.g., the bankers Antanas Olšauskas and Antanas Pajaujis, can only be found in publications dealing with the history of Lithuanian Americans, such as *Amerikos lietuvių istorija* (The History of Lithuanian Americans) compiled by Antanas Kučas.[4] The book lists and describes some of the institutions and companies owned by Lithuanians. The economic activities of Lithuanian Americans and details of their biographies about

[2] Michelsonas, *Lietuvių išeivija Amerikoje*, 268.

[3] Skirius, "Lietuvos ir JAV lietuviai verslininkai JAV 1930–1940 metais," 17–32.

[4] Kučas, Antanas, *Amerikos lietuvių istorija.* Boston: Lietuvių enciklopedijos leidykla, 1972.

their participation in public societies can be found in the book *Lietuvių išeivija Amerikoje* (The Lithuanian Diaspora in America) by the leftist historian Stasys Michelsonas.[5] Information of a similar nature is given in the book *Čikagos lietuvių istorija*[6] (The History of Chicago Lithuanians); it mainly presents the entrepreneurs of Chicago and its surroundings as well as the fields of their activities. Egidijus Aleksandravičius, who described the Lithuanian diaspora in his book *Karklo diegas*[7] and who wrote about the beginnings of the emigrants' capitalism in the USA,[8] also singled out the Lithuanian entrepreneurs who had been more actively involved in the social life in the USA. Some fragmented information, mainly about Lithuanian entrepreneurs' organization of their economic activities and their aim to aid their compatriots, was provided by Liulevičius in his book *Amerikos lietuvių ekonominė veikla*[9] (Economic Activities of Lithuanian Americans). In his book, the author mainly focused on the traces of Lithuanians in the areas of business, industry, a variety of different crafts, trade, agriculture, and finance in 1870–1977. Alfonsas Eidintas, in his book *Lietuvos Kolumbai*[10] (Lithuanian Columbuses) discussed the services and business ideas of persons who owned printing houses, sewing shops, stores or saloons, and their getting together into parishes or mutual aid societies.

It should be noted that the term "entrepreneur" used in this article refers to persons engaged in economic activities, representatives of minor industries, e.g., owners of printing houses, stores, founders of banks, saving and credit companies, owners of different service institutions who carried out their activities in the late nineteenth–early twentieth century.

[5] Michelsonas, Stasys. *Lietuvių išeivija Amerikoje*. South Boston: Keleivis, 1961.

[6] Ambrozevičius, Aleksas. *Čikagos lietuvių istorija*. Čikaga: Naujienos, 1967.

[7] Aleksandravičius, Egidijus. *Karklo diegas*. Lietuvių pasaulio istorija. Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2013.

[8] Aleksandravičius, Egidijus. *Verslo amžius 1918–2018. Lietuvių kapitalizmas valdžia ir verslininkai*. Kaunas: Všį Leidybos idėjų centras, 2019.

[9] Liulevičius, Vincentas. *Amerikos lietuvių ekonominė veikla*. Chicago: Pedagoginis lituanistikos institutas, 1980.

[10] Eidintas, Alfonsas. *Lietuvių Kolumbai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993.

Lithuanian American Entrepreneurs' Participation in Community Initiatives in the Late Nineteenth–Early Twentieth Century

In ethnographic Lithuania in the late nineteenth century, merchants–members of a guild or entrepreneurs holding a business license took an active part in local community affairs. For instance, a merchant of Kaunas, millionaire Abelis Soloveichikas and his wife belonged to a Kaunas charity society which took care of the poor of the city[11]; he also contributed to the funding of a telegraph line. The industrialist Mikolaj Rekosz was a contributor[12] to the Kaunas Firemen Society and other societies taking care of the city; the German industrialist Richard Tilmans was more than once elected to the City Council in 1897–1915 and attended to the maintenance of German Lutheran schools and the poorhouse, and was also a creditor of, and a contributor to, different construction projects in the city.[13] The engineer Petras Vileišis, the founder of a metal industries factory in Vilnius, donated money generously to support the cultural life of Lithuanians in Vilnius. Such a situation was caused by the inability of the Russian authorities to cope with economic and social issues in the State. On the other hand, it should be noted that sharing one's wealth accumulated with one's community sometimes had self-advertising purposes and was an opportunity to climb up the social ladder. Examples of community can be found among Lithuanian American entrepreneurs as well. For a person who lived at the turn of the nineteenth–twentieth century, participation in society activities and contribution to the well-being of their community with their donations was a common phenomenon in the USA. The British traveler-writer Stephen Graham, who had the opportunity to get closely familiar with the enslaved nations in the Russian Empire and also to see their life in free America, claimed:

11 Памятная книжка Ковенской губернии на 1898, 242.
12 Памятная книжка Ковенской губернии на 1902, 236.
13 Snitkuvienė, *Tilmansai ir jų palikimas Kaune,* 83.

> Eastern Europeans bring in patience, the ability to endure pains, but at the same time they bring in the spirit of anarchy which propels them into most remarkable actions with no particular reason, and they have a mystical piety, charitableness, much surfeit, a lot of love and humanness. They also bring in the Tartar commercial spirit and a taste for smart dealing and negotiating prices.[14]

It was not only Stephen Graham, but also some American citizens (especially those who observed the life of Lithuanians in the USA at close range) who paid attention to the gathering of Lithuanian emigrants from ethnographic Lithuania into charity and mutual aid societies. In writing about one of the largest Lithuanian colonies in Cleveland, a sociologist of Western Reserve University, Charles W. Coulter, claims in his book *The Lithuanians of Cleveland*:

> There are few people with such capabilities to self-organize themselves as the Lithuanians. Over many years, this instinct of the Lithuanians had been suppressed by Russia and thus, in free America, it bursts with unrestricted impetuosity. For almost any purpose, the Lithuanians have an organization here.[15]

According to the data of these organizations, societies and parishes, the priest Jonas Žilius carefully counted in 1899 that such emigrants from ethnographic Lithuania who took an active part in social activities numbered about 275,000.[16] They also included people engaged in business or trade who took sacrifice and empathy for granted. For instance, one of the first Lithuanian entrepreneurs in Pennsylvania, J. Paukštys, undertook organizing in Plymouth a St Casimir aid society to support the local Lithuanian and Polish miners in 1883. In 1886, Juozas Paukštys and Jonas Šliūpas were also among the founders of the Lithuanian Alliance of America (SLA) organization which has been active to this day. This organization, which functioned in the cultural

14 Gineitis, *Amerika ir Amerikos lietuviai*, 65.
15 Michelsonas, *Lietuvių išeivija Amerikoje*, 310.
16 Ibid., 268.

field, included entrepreneurs in very different areas: Vincentas Ambrazevičius from Elizabeth, the owner of a food store, Antanas Staniškis, the owner of a meat store in Shenandoah from 1917, Pranas Norbuta, who was engaged in trading in food in West Frankfort from 1905, Dominikas A. Barštis, who held a food store in Grand Rapids from 1903, Juozas Balčiūnas, who purchased a food store and a tavern in Chicago in 1913. There were more owners of taverns or saloons who were active participants in the SLA organization in the early twentieth century: Domicelė Dauskurdienė, M. Kauluk, Juozas D. Charna, Antanas Povilinskas, and the banker and politician Jonas Bagdžiūnas, who also owned a private bank in 1908–1920.[17]

At the end of the nineteenth–beginning of the twentieth century, one of the major purposes of donating among the émigré community was to support the Church. As many immigrants searched for a shelter in the new country, initially they had to join the Polish parishes; later, after the first Lithuanian parishes were established, they were able to aid not only the Church but their fellow countrymen as well. For example, on December 13, 1891, Vincentas Ambrazevičius organized the St Casimir's Society, one of the first mutual aid societies on the East Coast, in Elizabeth;[18] on April 6, 1892 – the Jogaila democratic political club; and a year later, on September 14, 1893 – the St. Peter and St. Paul Parish. Ambrazevičius was also the chair of the Church Building Committee. Juozas Elias (Elijošius) was a trustee and sponsor of the treasury of the Union of Lithuanian Roman Catholic Philanthropists founded in 1914. Well-off businessmen often held significant positions in the Board of different organizations and societies, mainly due to their visibility in the press, active participation in discussions, characteristics of a leader, and their social position secured by their wealth.

Antanas Olšauskas, a banker of Chicago, was a member of at least several societies and organizations too. In 1903, he was the treasurer of the Association of Lithuanian Patriots, at the same time

17 *Susisvienijimo Lietuvių Amerikoje auksinis albumas*, 282–299.

18 Sirvydas, *Vincas Ambrazevičius*, 2.

holding the position of the treasurer of the Martyr Committee; the Association of Lithuanian Patriots was founded with the purpose of aiding fellow countrymen who had suffered from the Tsarist government. In one year's time, the Martyr Committee sent over 1000 USD to Lithuania.[19] Olšauskas was also the originator of a generous idea to issue the Lithuanian Encyclopedia with his own money. He had set aside 40,000 USD for that purpose, but he did not manage to implement his intent. It should be noted that publishing of many books (Olšauskas had issued about 134 different publications with a total mintage of 210,000) was a loss-bearing activity. Doctor Jonas Kulis, who knew Olšauskas, claimed that

> the latter did all that because he felt a strong love for Lithuanity and wished that the Lithuanians would get enlightened as soon as possible. And he saw the spiritual rise of the Lithuanians, the educational progress of the Lithuanians, and their courage to run various businesses, and their lack of satisfaction with elementary works in a factory.[20]

Bridgeport in Chicago at that time had become the largest cultural and economic center beyond ethnographic Lithuania, which in part was due to the merits of Olšauskas. Contemporaries who saw this region before settling there and undertaking economic activities, noted the growth of Bridgeport. Olšauskas, upon settling there, not only took care of his businesses and built houses but also organized the St George Parish and the construction of its church in 1909 by contributing financially. The region's infrastructure was also Olšauskas' concern; taking an interest in local politics, he managed to exert pressure on local politicians through his personal influence. As a result, the Bridgeport community felt an interest on the side from the Chicago authorities, and the region itself had become one of the neatest workers' regions in Chicago. After World War I, in 1925, the following Lithuanian businesses already operated in Bridgeport around Olšauskas' bank: 11 real estate companies, 8 clothes stores, 7 butcher's

[19] Michelsonas, *Lietuvių išeivija Amerikoje*, 217.
[20] Jurgėla, *Antanas Olšauskas ir Lietuva*, 29.

shops, 7 restaurants, 6 pharmacies, 6 jewelry stores, 5 barbershops, 3 tailor institutions, 3 music stores, 4 stores of iron devices, 2 stores of electrical devices, 2 dress-making shops, 2 household goods stores, 2 ice cream stores, 2 printing houses, 2 car stores and service stations, 2 women's hat stores, one bank, one cinema theatre, one music school, one taxi company, one baker's store, one funeral home, one transport service, one flower selling institution, one shoe factory, and 23 institutions of white-collar professions (doctors, dentists, jurists).[21] Olšauskas was one of the first to start implementing business ideas in Bridgeport and it was with his help that many businesses renewed their activities in 1925 or Lithuanians set up their businesses by following the example of some of them. For example, Jonas Tananevičius, who worked with Olšauskas' printing house in 1898, later set up a printing house and a bank of his own.

Milda Theater built in 1915 can be considered one of the sponsor's largest contributions. It was modernly furnished, it had 1,200 seats for the audience, and its construction cost 250,000 USD.[22] Here, Antanas Olšauskas himself organized Lithuanity events and parties, provided the possibility for other Lithuanians to arrange cultural evenings there for free, and often even covered their expenses. Therefore, in the eyes of Lithuanian emigrants, he was the community leader, an example to be followed who sincerely helped local residents. The diplomat Bronius Kazys Balutis claimed:

> […] thanks to the mediation and help from this bank, hundreds if not thousands of Chicago Lithuanians acquired a home and paid it off under favorable conditions. […] It was a similar case with the first Lithuanian businessmen in Chicago. He himself would set up trade companies, would demonstrate that Lithuanians, too, could run them, and would then transfer them (also under favorable conditions) to other Lithuanians.[23]

21 Ibid., 34.

22 Ambrozevičius, *Čikagos lietuvių istorija*, 308.

23 Ibid., 26.

Justinas Mackevičius, one of the founders and a co-owner of the largest and most successful saving companies D.K.L. Gediminas, was also quite willing to help Lithuanian settlers in Bridgeport. According to Vincentas Liulevičius, he constantly aided Lithuanians' activities, financially supported Lithuanian organizations, churches, hospitals, the opera, and supported the Lithuanian press through his ads in it.[24] The Lithuanian press in the USA also constantly emphasized Mackevičius' charitable activities and donations for Lithuanian matters, e.g., by supporting the activities of the Lithuanian American Council.[25] Even the loner Lithuanian of Cleveland, A. Bartoševičius (Barto), who preferred to distance himself from participation in public societies, supported them financially, contributed to the establishment of the Parish of Cleveland Lithuanians with his financial support, and donated to the organization, The Union for the Liberation of Lithuania, and sponsored various cultural movements of Cleveland Lithuanians.[26]

According to Kazys Gineitis, such contributions by Lithuanians to their community was natural because:

> A Lithuanian American is not a miser. He works hard, but he does not hold a penny clenched in his palm, he will not refuse to acquire what he needs, he will not refuse to donate for a good purpose too.[27]

It is hard to tell how many of the donating traditions had been brought over from the Russian Empire as the charitable activities of businessmen (merchants) and other social groups in Lithuania manifested themselves through donating to the construction of hospitals, schools, and for the needs of poorhouses and religious needs. Sponsoring and charitable activities in the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century were a possibility for commoner entrepreneurs to establish themselves in

24 Liulevičius, *Amerikos lietuvių ekonominė veikla*, 41.
25 "Mirė Justinas Mackevičius," 4.
26 "Mirė A.B. Barto,' 3.
27 Gineitis, *Amerika ir Amerikos lietuviai*, 307.

the social environment as the elite, thereby expressing their financial superiority.[28] Certainly, in America, different factors operated, but the medium for community in the USA was even more favorable.

Such moral choices of immigrants in the late nineteenth–early twentieth century were largely conditioned by their religious education. Both the Protestant and the Catholic Church at that time expressed a clear attitude towards charity and sponsorship, while among Catholic Lithuanians, the Church was the begetter of their moral values. Church tenets considered private property and capital not just as a means to satisfy one's selfish ambitions. Capital and private property were to serve something, not only for satisfying one's own needs. According to the Catholic Church, property was to be used for common purposes. It was also the Church's philosophy that believers must not only donate their excessive wealth to another person in need but also be ready to use what is not their excessive wealth in order to help.[29] In the late nineteenth century, it was a commonly expressed attitude that wealth had become a means to only satisfy one's personal needs and to provide oneself with excessive luxury. According to A. Ambrulevičūtė, this could arouse one's feeling of guilt; hence, donation and charitable activities was a means to achieve both God's mercy and public recognition.[30] All these things did not vanish after moving over to the USA. During the First Congress of Catholic Lithuanians in 1906, the clergy decided to express its clear position obligating each Lithuanian to support Lithuanian tradesmen.[31] The Catholic Church in emigration also did not interfere in the business ideas of the priests themselves, which were orientated to noble intentions. A researcher of the history of emigrants, Antanas Kučas, presented the following story:

28 Ambrulevičiūtė, *Vilniaus pirkliai XIX amžiuje*, 349.
29 Samuel, *Katalikybė ir laisvė*, 136.
30 Ambrulevičiūtė, *Vilniaus pirkliai XIX amžiuje*, 349.
31 Kučas, *Amerikos lietuvių istorija,* 510.

> Wishing to help Lithuanians to acquire a home, the dean of the Mahanoy City Lithuanian Parish, priest Simanas Pautienius advised local Lithuanians to found a bank. Encouraged by him, people raised a capital of over USD 100,000 and founded a state bank – Merchant Banking Trust Co. – in 1902. Several Lithuanians were its directors, while the dean was its vice president.[32]

On the other hand, immigrants from ethnographic Lithuania could not but notice the charity of the Americans. That same Kazys Gineitis wrote:

> The great generosity of the Americans also shows that they are not so devoutly attached to money. Morgan has spent 8 million dollars to enrich American museums, Rockefeller gives tens of millions to American universities, Carnegie founds bookstores around the world, Vanderbilt establishes milk stations for the poor, etc. […] Many are skeptical about the donations of those gentlemen; allegedly, they "enjoy" dollars, want to get famous; this is the highest form of egoism. There is certainly much truth in these suspicions, but those who have lived in America have seen that not only millionaires are generous there. Ordinary citizens are resolute to give too. An American seems to give more willingly, more often, and more than a European with equal income.[33] […] A good businessman must also have good brains, a lot of imagination, and only those with above-medium abilities, those who can think hard, will usually be more successful. An American businessman is devoted to his work, body and soul. For him, this is almost everything. A European businessman only thinks about his life in the evening, when he will close his office and will come home to his wife and children. For him, business only seems to be a way to earn a living. For an American businessman, his business is always in his mind, he works uninterruptedly. Upon returning home, he reads business books, thinks about his affairs. A highly successful business comes at a great cost for him. There are many sanatoriums in America; his face begins to wrinkle, his intestine begins to digest badly, and, at

[32] Ibid., 513.

[33] Gineitis, *Amerika ir Amerikos lietuviai*, 73.

> the side of his Madame and his bright daughters, he often looks like a very miserable, tired, tawny poor man with little knowledge of other matters.[34]

Nevertheless, in America, the Europeans Lithuanian entrepreneurs took over not only the work ethics, the Protestant and at the same time venturesome devotion in creating businesses, but also the coming together into companies. In the USA, the view prevailed that with entrepreneurs coming together into small companies, it would be easier to hire employees, buy raw materials, get credit, and to protect property from authorities. Most importantly, this philosophy was to help earn higher profits. During the above-named Congress of Lithuanian Catholics in 1906, the clergy encouraged the Lithuanian businessmen in the USA to set up organizations that would unite them. The idea was only realized in 1920 when the Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce was founded. It was to help enhance the well-being of Lithuanian American entrepreneurs, and also to enter into financial matters with Lithuania, and improve the latter's economic situation. This idea was mostly realized owing to the businessman-politician Juozas Elias (Elijošius), who defined the ideological line of the Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce by his catchphrase 'Lithuanians with Lithuanians'.[35] Lithuanian American entrepreneurs also founded various companies in order to help their newly created State (the Lithuanian Americans' Trading Company, the Steamboat Company of Lithuania, and the American–Lithuanian Trade Company, Amlit). Before World War I and afterwards, they supported Lithuania not only politically but also with their financial donations that today can hardly be counted.[36] There were entrepreneurs who not only tried to establish companies in the newly founded Lithuanian State but arrived in it themselves to try to accomplish their intentions.

[34] Ibid., 76–77.

[35] Liulevičius, *Amerikos lietuvių ekonominė veikla*, 191–193.

[36] Liulevičius, "JAV lietuvių materialinė parama Lietuvai iki 1927 m."

Conclusion

Lithuanian entrepreneurs in the USA, as well as Lithuanians in their mother country, were actively involved in social life, and founded or contributed to the already operating societies. With their financial capital, they often managed to consolidate their leadership, which manifested itself through their political-social capital. Lithuanian entrepreneurs also contributed to the establishment of church parishes. This was dictated not only by the personal views of each of them, but also emigration difficulties, since for a long time the Church was at the same time a place for socialization. Businessmen donated money for cultural matters; and a variety of different events, operas, and performances were arranged owing to charity. Offerings were also allotted for mutual aid, the activities of societies, and to support their fellow countrymen in ethnographic Lithuania. They had developed this public-spiritedness while living in the American environment where there is a tradition of donating and supporting; however, a Church education and each man's ethical choice had a significant influence on this as well.

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Language in the Consciousness of a Lithuanian

IRENA SMETONIENĖ, MARIUS SMETONA

All humans have a deep-seated sense of the immense value of language. Sacred texts of various religions attest to the divine nature of language and consider it to be the principal power possessed by man. The character of a language is determined by biological preconditions, the development of articulatory setting, and, above all, the historical experience of the nation. Humans are intrinsically and instinctually attached to their native language. It is the fundamental link which unites the nation and is manifested on multiple levels, from daily everyday communication to philosophy, poetry, and prayer: the uppermost displays of the human spirit. Philosophers claim that humans would be unable to actualize their special identity and culture in the future if they did not have a recognized native land, language, customs, and national consciousness.

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In the *Dictionary of Lithuanian Language* (DLL), 10 lexical definitions of the word *kalba* (language) are provided:

> 1. A system of the verbal expression of thoughts; 2. Speaking, sharing of thoughts, conversation; 3. Oral or uttered thought, utterance, story, opinion; 4. Speech (an address delivered for a particular occasion); 5. Ability to speak; 6. Delivery of speech, voice; 7. A peculiarity or type of language; 8. Manner or style of expression of thoughts; 9. A dialect or subdialect; 10. Fig. a phenomenon reminiscent of language, something similar to language.

The provided definitions demonstrate that language tends to be defined as a system, an act of communication; the first, fifth and eighth definitions are illustrated by sentences taken from writings or dictionaries or created by language specialists. No living language examples are provided after the ninth definition either. While these definitions are formulated in a scientific manner, they are highly important because they shape modern man's understanding and perspective towards language; as a result, it is interesting to observe how much influence the dictionary definitions have today. Real-life use of language is also highly significant to the study, because it aims to uncover the concept's image within human consciousness. Only the second, third, sixth, and tenth definitions, illustrated by dialectal examples, may be pertinent to this:

> The dialectal examples exhibit certain signs of intelligence, consciousness, life, ability to speak, conversation and expression of thoughts, communication, manner of speech, an expressed or communicated thought, opinion or argument; language is understood by people as the native tongue.

Dictionary of Modern Lithuanian (DML) provides fewer definitions of the word *kalba*:

> 1. A system of verbal expression of thoughts; 2. Practical ability to express one's thoughts in words; 3. A type of system of thought expression; 4. A conversation; 5. Speaking publicly to an audience; 6. Non-verbal expression of thoughts.

Thus, there are fewer meanings and shades of *kalba* in the living language. Moreover, in the old writings, the noun *kalba* was used sparingly; it was more frequently utilized by the famous sixteenth century pioneer of Lithuanian Catholic literature, Mikalojus Daukša. Thus, the question arises whether the word itself was perhaps rather new in the Lithuanian language, or maybe there were other Lithuanian words that had the same meaning. One thing is clear: *kalba* is derived from the verb *kalbė-ti*.[1] Etymologist Janas Otrębskis claims that the word *kalba* itself consists of two roots that have similar meanings but different origins:

> Lithuanian *kalbà*, *-ōs*, *kal̃bą* 'Rede' resulted from heterogenic reduplication: **kal-bā*. The first component **kal-* is identical to the root **kal-*, which is seen in Slavic **kol-kolъ*: Russian *kolokol* 'Glocke', Greek *καλέω* 'rufen, nennen', Latin *calō*, *-āre* 'aus-zusammenrufen'. The second component of **kal-bā* is possibly based on ide. root **bhā-*: le. *bajać*, *bajȩ* 'fabeln, schwatzen' and *baśń* 'Fabel, Märchen', Russian dialectal *bajatь*, *baitь*, *batь* 'reden, sprechen', *basnь* 'Fabel, Märchen'; Latin *fārī* 'sagen', Greek *φημί*, Doric *φᾱμί* 'sage', to speak, to say.[2]

Thus, the word itself has old roots, and in order to understand the meaning of the examined concept it is necessary to look at the verb's etymology. In 1982, Wojciech Smoczyński claimed that

> Baltic *verba dicendi* represent several ide. roots. Lithuanian *kalbė́-ti*, *kalbù* have the root **kel(ə)-*, which is expanded by the element *-b-*. This is evidenced by, first of all, Latvian *kaļuôt* 'to chatter, to speak' and, second, by Greek *καλέω* 'I invite, call', Latin *calō*, *-āre*

[1] *kalbà* (language) 4 p.a. 1. 'mowa', 2. 'język', 3. 'przemówienie, mowa', 4. 'rozmowa', pl. *kalbos* (languages) 'słuchy, pogłoski' — drw. postwerbalny od kalbù, *kalbė̀ti* (to speak) 'mówić' (zob. s.v.). In: Smoczyński, *Słownik etymologiczny języka litewskiego*, 471. Also, Lithuanian language has the verb *kal̃bti, -sta, -o*, whose meaning is "to start talking". In fact, all words that signify speaking are related to the root *kalb-*. This will become evident during further analysis of synonyms of *kalba* and *kalbėjimas*.

[2] Lietuvių kalbos etimologinio žodyno duomenų bazė.

'I summon' Proto-Germanic *halōn*, *holōn* 'to call, to fetch, to summon'. He has discussed the etymology of this word in more detail in the latest edition of the dictionary (2016).[3]

There are plenty of synonyms for *kalba* that have been used and still are used in the Lithuanian language. One of them is *šneka*, which has 6 definitions in DLL.

A separate discussion is needed regarding the verb from which the noun is derived, i.e., *šnekėti*. According to the data of DLL, it has 5 meanings, and the first three of them have clear connections to *kalba* and *kalbėti*: "to use language while expressing thoughts, communicating with others, to speak"; "to speak, to say something to someone"; "to express an opinion about something". The other two meanings, while they do signify a certain language, are related to human speech and speaking in terms of personification: "to twitter, whistle, crow, cackle, cluck, oink, hum, etc." However, it is precisely these definitions that have an old source of meaning. According to Smoczyński, *šnekėti* has onomatopoeic origins: "Pochodzenie šnek- jest onomatopeiczne, podobnie jak w wypadku dn. snaken, snakken 'gadać, paplać' (⇒ nwn. schnacken 'gadać, gawędzić'), niderl. snacken ts., por. LEW 1018. Brak apofonii (šnak-, šnik-) zdaje się to potwierdzać".[4] Even though dictionaries do not include a definition of *šneka* as "twittering, whistling, gobbling, etc.", it is entirely possible.

Notably, in the current language (based on the data of the *Dictionary of Modern Lithuanian* (DML), the usage of *šneka* and *šnekėti* has been shrinking; they are used to express only several meanings: *šnekėti*: 1. to speak; 2. to twitter; *šneka*: 1. speaking, a conversation; 2. verbal communication, gossip.

Byla, another synonym of *kalba*, is defined in the *Synonym Dictionary* (SD) as 'stately, serious speech'; however, the examples provided by the *Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language* (DLL) show that, in the old writings, the dialects and the works written in the

[3] Lietuvių kalbos etimologinio žodyno duomenų bazė (EDB).

[4] Smoczyński, *Słownik etymologiczny języka litewskiego,* 1383.

late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the principal meaning of this word was not dissimilar from the usage of *kalba*: the first meaning of *byla* is explained using the synonyms *kalba*, *šneka*. The word *byla* does have other shades of meaning that diverge considerably from the main meaning. Significantly, DML and SD emphasize the solemnity and seriousness of *byla*, even though such a distinct meaning is not included in DLL, and the illustrative examples of the meanings do not demonstrate this solemnity either. DLL provides only the shades of the word's first meaning: speech, oration. *Prakalba* (speech) and *oracija* (oration) are described in DLL as separate words whose meanings are highly similar to those of *kalba*; some of them indeed do have shades of solemnity. Another synonym of *kalba* provided in SD is *žosmė*, which was used in the old writings and dialects. Evidently, three meanings of *žosmė* are identical to the meanings of *kalba* and the aforementioned synonyms. While the SD does not include it, the synonym *žodis* and its primary verb *žasti* are worth examining more closely. In the words of Daukantas, "every language is derived from words", thus the word *žodis* (a word) might be the closest synonym. Indeed, only the first presented meaning of *žodis* is its definition as a grammatical term; the next few meanings reveal that, in some contexts, *žodis* is a clear synonym of *kalba*.

Even though SD does not provide it, another synonym of *kalba* is the noun *liežuvis*: this is evident from no less than three meanings of this word. A modern speaker may think that this pertains to figurative meanings; however, in many languages, *liežuvis* (tongue) has the meanings 'an organ of language' and 'language': "In many languages, the same word signifies 2 concepts: "tongue", "language". Lithuanian *liežuvis* (influenced by the verb *liežiu* "I lick"), which is related to Latin *lingua* < *dingua* (because of the influence of *lingere* – to lick), Old Irish *tenge*, Gothic *tuggō*, Prussian *inzuvis*, Old German *zunga,* Old Slavic *języků* (for unclear reasons, the *d* was dropped from the beginning of the word) etc., all < ide. **dn̥ĝhwā-* (or similar)".[5]

[5] EDB, *liežuvis.*

Is Language Still Valued by the Lithuanian Youth?

As early as 2002, a question was posed on the online website apklausos.lt: "Is language the foundation of a nation's survival? Why?". The most recent observations were recorded five years ago; the questionnaires are no longer filled in. The responses demonstrate very clearly that there is an incredibly strong connection between nation and language; the state is close as well: *Language unites the nation; Without language, the nation collapses as well (Prussia). It is the unity which unites every member of a nation; Language, customs, and territory are required for a nation to survive. What is a nation without its own language; Because a nation which does not have its own language is not a nation; We would not be called Lithuanians if we did not have our own native and national language; Yes, language is a part of culture, thus it is the foundation of survival. Each language is unique in its own way; Yes. Without language, we would lose our identity; yes, no language, no state, etc.*

Since the questionnaire did not ask the respondents to specify their age, it would be too rash to come to any conclusions from the presented responses. Nevertheless, it is interesting to explore the extent to which these notions have survived in the youth's consciousness. A survey of university students we conducted in 2018–2019 (representatives of the humanities constituted 48 percent of all surveyed students, 52 percent were representatives of the exact sciences; 52 percent of all respondents were women, 48 percent were men) revealed that the respondents understand that language is more than just sounds, letters and grammatical forms; in addition to the expressions *sounds; sounds and their formations; sounds that create imagery*, they also specify *sign language; signs; body language.* In this case, we recognize that there is more than one type of language, there are also sign and body languages; thus, it is understood that, in order to communicate, one needs more than just linguistic factors. Several of the responses mentioned that *true language is not just the native one but also the working language*, where 'working language' is understood more widely than just English, German, or other foreign

languages; the recognition that language involves linguistic matters is complemented by programming languages.

Another important issue is the understanding that language is *the heritage of our progenitors which has been maturing, growing and changing for thousands of years and which allows us to be full-fledged citizens of Lithuania*. This makes it possible for the respondents to connect themselves to the nation and the state and even to draw attention to the fact that language is *the foundation of the nation* or *every nation's greatest asset*, *the symbol of unity* and *the mark of a true state*. In other words, the state and the nation cannot exist without language, which passes along not just the idea of identity itself but also *culture*, *traditions*, and, finally, *history*. However, such a perspective also has other aspects which lead to a purist approach towards language: *a real language is one which has been nurtured for many years and without foreign language words; a real language is a means of communication rather than new words in the dictionary or loanwords from other languages*. This erroneous view may have been formed as a result of several factors: first, blind patriotism; second, flaws in processes of education, when the focus is on grammaticality, but no explanation is provided as to how certain language peculiarities or words were created. Moreover, the presented responses imply that a real language is only one which is old, even though there are quite young languages in the world too. Nevertheless, one of the filled-in questionnaires included the statement that *a real language is one which can change as its usage changes and also retain a stable structure*; evidently, some people understand that language changes because of the changing environment in which it is used, as well as the users themselves. Generally, it can be claimed that this ambivalent perspective has been formed thanks to the discussion prevalent in the media and the social networks, where the language's saviors stand in one corner while the opponents of the standard language stand in the other one.

Interestingly, in recent times, as the propaganda war gained momentum, there have been very few people who remember that language is *the sharpest and the most dangerous weapon; a kind of weapon against others*.

Also of utmost importance is the understanding of language as a personal calling card: *language is the calling card of each person, as far as native language goes.* Judging from this sentence, we can note a gradually developed understanding that the way you are judged depends on the way you speak. However, the second part of the sentence is very ethnocentric, because it implies that one has to speak nicely and correctly in one's native language only, whereas in the case of other languages this is not necessary. Perhaps this is an instance of the view that foreigners would be happy about someone speaking their language and would not care about how it is spoken. Of course, this is partially true, but there is a very big difference between using slang and making grammatical or syntax errors. This attitude may have been encouraged by the creation of literary or film characters who often disregard linguistic norms, much like music artists who also neglect linguistic styles and norms. However, there is a lack of understanding that this has nothing to do with public speaking or self-representation.

Typically, the responses define language as a measure, a tool; an instrument; or, also not infrequently, as a method. Young people describe language as an object dedicated to understanding the world, communicating, and conveying information. One of the questionnaires included the following sentence: *language is dedicated only to communication and conveyance of information.* This kind of perspective eliminates the function of language as an artistic measure.

A large group of the respondents can be most accurately described by the following sentence: *it is not possible to convey emotions or feelings using any other language in the same way as in one's native tongue*. Another group of responses concerned native language and everything related to it. Students perceive native language as *one of the main distinguishing features of a nation; a natural characteristic of a person, which shows his identity and describes his history; one of the greatest virtues that I could have inherited from my parents, grandparents, and other progenitors.* Naturally, it is understood that native language is *what distinguishes all of us from*

other countries and people; an exceptional feature of a country; connection to traditions and roots; finally, it is *the identity of a nation or a citizen; part of the national consciousness.* The responses create a very close link between language and *homeland*, as well as *loving one's homeland*.

Sentences found in two questionnaires require a separate discussion. In the first sentence, doubt is expressed as to whether identity is masked in one's language, and the question is raised about the extent to which such type of identity is significant at all: *there is a part of our identity hidden in it, in the subtleties of its usage, but the importance and scope of this identity are very questionable*. This sentence is particularly important to the research, because it aims to demonstrate that, after all, language is highly important to the development of identity. Another sentence only reflects the idea of the response: *to me, language is not a characteristic of a nation's communication, because, as a representative of the young maximalist generation, I increasingly see the world as my nation*. The response itself implies that the world should have a single language so that there would be no differences and everyone would be equal at least linguistically, because language is a creation which divides us artificially into different nations.

Kalba in Paroemias

A paroemia functions simultaneously as a linguistic element and as a representation of traditional culture, as a rhetorical device and as a tool for dealing with social interaction; because of this, the usage of the word *kalba* in paroemias captures not just experiences but also a clear indication of what the nation considers language to be. In the online website http://www.aruodai.lt/patarles/, no less than 266 paroemias about language are provided. In paroemias, the usage of *kalba* reflects the meanings specified in dictionaries, but there are certain shades that make it possible to form an opinion about language, about how it is assessed, and what its role is in the life of the nation (community). For instance,

evidently, when people talk about different things, language does not become a communication tool and is not comprehensible; language becomes an instrument of evil, because it is related to darkness, especially when the speaking person says one thing but thinks something else; you can judge a person's intellect, education and maturity from the way he uses language; nevertheless, people of shared mentality can communicate the most easily; the expressed thought must be short and clear, it will only be received positively if uttered in a normal volume and tone; if the language used does not reach the listeners' or conversation participants' hearts or minds, it is empty; language can cause negative emotions; however, pleasant language has the opposite effect. It does not take a lot of hard work in order to use language, but when you have learned it, you will find a way out in all situations, because language is superior even to thought.

Shades of *kalba* in Lithuanian Literature

Lithuanian writers have discussed language, including its beauty and meaning, many times. Indeed, literature is highly important in terms of the understanding of *kalba* which it instills in us; literature provides us with knowledge about the entire world and helps us form our value systems and views.

In fiction, *kalba* is used to signify all meanings provided in DML; however, the nuances of the meanings enrich the concept with additional shades. To writers, *kalba* is primarily associated with the native language; thus, unsurprisingly, it is beautiful and reminiscent of a bird's singing if it comes from a loved one's lips, and, on the whole, it is given by God, so we have a kind of duty to protect it, even though this protection would be limited to simple little shacks. Typically, the word *kalba* simply signifies communication, verbal expression of thoughts. Still, even in such cases, language can be different each time: it may provide pleasure, create a comfortable environment for communication, generate tension between the speakers and a friendly atmosphere

later, it may break the communication down entirely, especially if someone is at a loss for words; the addressee may find it understandable or completely incomprehensible. Good language not only provides the listener with delight but can also raise the speaker's self-worth. Thus, all powers of language are revealed in literature: both positive and negative. Naturally, since literature utilizes all means of linguistic expression, *kalba* in it is more than just a human trait. In literature, everything accessible to human senses can speak: trees, phenomena, etc.; even greater significance is applied to the language of animals, particularly those that have sacral links with people.

The Concept of *kalba* in Modern Journalistic Texts

Journalistic texts are special because they reflect the shades of meanings that have been encountered in the youth's responses; this is because they both share a mutual connection: journalistic texts seek to reflect modern life, in which young people are active participants, while the texts themselves have a strong impact on the process of the development of the youth's worldviews.[6]

Significantly, compared to the illustrative examples of dictionaries, paroemias, and literary discourse, journalistic texts introduce new collocations: *mano kalba* (my language), *derybų kalba* (language of negotiations), *metinė kalba* (annual speech), *įkvepianti kalba* (inspiring speech), *kūno kalba* (body language). Even though it is claimed that language is primarily a means of communication, because humanity has not found a better way to communicate yet, while humans are social creatures and therefore must interact, we also observe more of a scientific consideration about language here. Language is not just a means of communication, but also a means and expression of thinking,

[6] This was especially evident during analysis of the concept of Europe. See K. Rutkovska, M. Smetona, I. Smetonienė. *Vertybės lietuvio pasaulėvaizdyje*. 2017, 176–197.

which is inseparable from our soul and which promotes development of intelligence. Greater responsibility for one's words is also noted: one must prepare for the speech; regardless of whether it is an ordinary annual report or a brief speech, it has to be informative and impactful because, as emphasized by young people's responses, language reveals much more than just what we want to say. Journalism is more closely related to youth because it involves more body language, special types of language, artificial intelligence, etc.

Of course, journalistic writings, especially patriotic ones (alkas.lt, propatria.lt, etc.), discuss language's place in the country and the connection between language and nationality, which has been evident both in the dictionaries and the questionnaires. There is a strong focus on the native language; it is "mine", because it is the person's first language; moreover, it is the language of the nation which the person considers himself to be a part of, the language of his country. It is the basis of all of the nation's values, a part of the nation's system, therefore a country is safe as long as it nurtures its language.

A natural question emerges: are all considerations of language in publicistic writings positive, as it would seem from the examples and their interpretations presented here? Notably, this discourse does include critical ideas, but only when the writings concern the norms of Lithuanian language, nurturing it, language policies, and the relationships between nation and language or between nation and state. However, there are no negative thoughts in the discussions of language in general, therefore no negative considerations have been included in the analysis.

Kalba According to Lithuanian Philosophers

A special role in this discourse should be attributed to the nineteenth century writer Vydūnas, the great Lithuanian humanist who was the most prominent cultural figure of Lithuania Minor. He was the first Lithuanian philosopher who provided a very

clear explanation of the inseparable connection between the three concepts of *kalba* (language), *tauta* (nation), and *valstybė* (state), as well as their importance to Lithuanians.

Vydūnas' considerations reveal the link between language and thinking – language and thought affect one another, one does not exist without the other, "thus, there is harmony in language". Language emerges from human consciousness; however, only humans have the ability to make systematic sounds of which speech consists; therefore, the word requires the flesh, too. The power of language is enormous: it is the manifestation of humanity's might, thus this power must come only from pure thoughts and from the understanding of one's duty to humanity; only then can it work miracles.

Language is the most important factor of communication, but interaction raises language to a higher level; in other words, language develops together with the person and the community that surrounds him. Language is more than just communication, it is also the conveyance of scientific and global knowledge or art, a tool to determine one's values. According to Vydūnas, humans communicate using their entire bodies, they can mark or draw something, hence "for this reason, every art object is a language."[7]

Vydūnas is concerned not just with philosophical deliberations on language, but also with its ability to convey a person's emotions and views. These ideas are closely connected to the youth's claims that language is a person's calling card, an expression of his emotional amplitude.

Vydūnas recognized the significance of learning other languages, he even thought it was beneficial, but the benefit manifested only if one "has comprehensively used his own language to enrich oneself internally".[8] If you know your own language very well, then "foreign language reveals its inner treasure very differently" and "seemingly opens another granary inside of it".[9]

[7] Ibid., 276.
[8] Ibid., 139.
[9] Ibid., 140.

One may assume that teaching a foreign language is not so easy, it requires a lot of effort. However, Vydūnas made another important point: the native language also needs to be learned, and only then it will reveal the riches that are hidden within it. Only by using your native language, do you describe everything you feel, think, and know. Only the native language preserves what the progenitors have created and passed along to the future generations. Still, Vydūnas opposed an untidy language filled with loanwords, because "words taken from other languages very rarely make one's thought clearer".[10] Users of mixed language face even greater obstacles, because words reflect one's consciousness, and they have to deal with concepts that came from different consciousnesses. In his view, "language demonstrates very clearly what is already foreign and what is not worthy of it"[11]; all it takes is to listen to oneself closely. If there is no connection between the consciousness and the language, the person's whole life is unraveled, because "everywhere where languages are mixed with one another, virtuousness declines".[12] Vydūnas highlighted the situation of language and its users when a foreign language is imposed on a person. In such a case, "there is only one condition, namely, to awaken within one's self the true person who would express himself in the inborn language, who would sanctify and strengthen it".[13]

No less valuable were Vydūnas' considerations about language as a measure of a nation's uniqueness. Using the German word *schmeckt* as a specific example, he claimed that language shows the idiosyncrasy of a nation's thinking and worldview:

> The presented picture also demonstrates one of the major differences in the spirit of Lithuanian and German languages. In German, action comes first, whereas in Lithuanian, it's the status, the situation, the relationship.[14]

10 Ibid., 147.
11 Ibid., 149.
12 Ibid., 149.
13 Ibid., 152.
14 Ibid., 149.

Thus, to Vydūnas, language is a means of expressing one's thoughts and feelings, of communicating, an exceptional human characteristic, a reflection of consciousness, a national identity.

Similar understanding of language was also shared by Antanas Maceina, who was one of the creators of Lithuanian Christian philosophy, a poet, author of works of religious and cultural philosophy, and professor at universities in Kaunas, Freiburg, and Munster. Particularly important are his ideas on specific speakers, when that speaker speaks in his native language. To Maceina, language is also a means of discovering the world; he is concerned with the connection between language and nation, as well as the significance of the native language, because it reveals the virtuousness of a person as a member of a nation.

Maceina's teacher, philosopher and pedagogue Stasys Šalkauskis, who was the last inter-war Rector of Vytautas Magnus University, placed even greater significance on the relation between language and nation, with one specific language in mind: Lithuanian. To Šalkauskis, language is so important as a phenomenon of collective consciousness that it separates one nation from another and shows the nation's individuality, the distinctiveness of its thinking and worldview. He emphasized that the Lithuanian language can express not just complex philosophical ideas but also feelings, because of its richness: "this same innate richness, this same flexibility, this same ability to adapt to the most varied shades of meaning".[15] In his discussion of the language's richness and expression possibilities, Šalkauskis highlighted its country-folk origins: "this language owes almost nothing to intellectuals"[16]; however, he did admit that intellectuals adapt the language for the needs of civilization and therefore they actually are the true driving force of language development. Another distinct characteristic of Lithuanian language is its archaic nature: "it has preserved – and with great care,

[15] Šalkauskis, *Raštai*, 45.

[16] Ibid., 47.

which cannot be said about other Indo-European languages – the pure features of the shared original language."[17]

Another twentieth century philosopher, editor and cultural figure Juozas Girnius, who was born and raised in Lithuania but spent most of his life abroad, mostly in the U.S., where he devoted himself to philosophy, Lithuanian culture, and the homeland, saw language as a social phenomenon. To Girnius, language is a social fact; it belongs exclusively to the person as a spiritual individual, it is a means of communication and conveyance of information. Girnius expressed socially and politically significant ideas about language: he claimed that while language is important in the support of a nation's internal cohesiveness, it cannot be equated with nationality: "history has attested that all the great nations have been formed as an amalgam of various linguistic groups". [18]

Considerations about language by today's philosophers and political scientists are mostly focused on the state of the native language. Their ideas show a clearly identifiable link between nation and language; they argue that language is the basis for the dissemination of the Lithuanian worldview; it is related not just to the specific nation but also the place where people live, and for this reason it must be nurtured. Moreover, language is the strongest kind of weapon to fight an occupation and preserve one's Lithuanian identity. Language is discussed from a political perspective: it is a part of the state's policies. Just like the inter-war philosophers, they see language as the spirit of the nation and consider the native tongue to be the only means of expressing one's thoughts, as you can use other languages only to hold a conversation, but not to think. Without language, the state would not exist, language is the mark of our identity, it needs to be nurtured, because a person who loses his language also loses the ground under his feet. Language unites people who share a territory and a historical fate.

[17] Ibid., 48.
[18] Girnius, *Raštai*, 33.

Conclusion

After conducting the concept analysis[19], which served as the basis for this article, it can be claimed that, for a Lithuanian, *kalba* is:

– **a means of communication and conveyance of information**. By communicating, a person can not only convey information but also express an opinion, convince someone, and spread an idea. Communication also reveals the quality of language: if the aim is to convince, influence, or inform, the language has to be clear and understandable, uttered in a normal tone and volume, otherwise it will be misunderstood, it may cause tension among the conversation participants, create an unfriendly atmosphere, or terminate communication completely. Lithuanian youth is starting to see language as a tool or instrument which is like a key to the door of communication, career, and learning about the world. A new understanding of language has emerged: the working language. Language is primarily associated with the native tongue, it is also perceived as an element which unites language users, homes, and parents; thus, communication covers both the narrower and the wider circle of communication participants.

– **expression of consciousness and thoughts**. Language is recognized as simply a method of expressing one's thoughts in dialectal examples, literary discourse, and publicistic writings; this meaning is also specified in the dictionaries. However, philosophical discourse places special emphasis on the connection between language and consciousness: language emerges from the human consciousness; words reflect the consciousness; if there is no link between consciousness and language, the person's whole life is unraveled; language demonstrates the distinctiveness of one's thinking and per-

[19] A detailed analysis of the concept of *kalba* and the peculiarities of this concept's development can be found in the monograph *Kalba. Tauta. Valstybė*. See I. Smetonienė, M. Smetona, K. Rutkovska. *Kalba. Tauta. Valstybė*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2019.

ception of the world. Language and idea affect one another, cannot exist without one another, which is why language is characterized by harmony.

– **sign of identity**. Language is a part of national identity and culture, which helps us to pass along our customs, no matter where we live. It is the language of the nation of which the person considers himself to be a part, the language of the country, the state, the foundation for all of the nation's values. To the young people living in Lithuania, it is a part and basis of identity, homeland, unity with fellow Lithuanians, freedom, and even history, a kind of symbol or heritage of the previous generations; because of this, language has to be protected. This heritage is perceived as a characteristic of a true state or country or as the wealth of a person and, in turn, of the entire nation. Language unites people who share a common territory or historical fate.

– **a system**. In this case, a system is understood slightly differently from the dictionary definition: it is not just a system of words and sounds, but also body language and signs; moreover, language means programming languages and artificial intelligence.

– **a trait of human culture**. Or, in the words of Lithuanian youth, a trait of human culture and social stratum, i.e. a sort of calling card. As evidenced by the other parts of the concept as well, judging from language one may identify the level of a person's intellect, education, or maturity; language promotes development of intelligence.

– **a sign of life and health**. Language is one of the traits of human life, while the ability to articulate and pronounce words is a measure of health. While this may not be the central element of this concept but rather a peripheral consideration, it nevertheless is also significant to the concept's analysis.

– **non-human language**. This is also peripheral, because this shade of meaning may only be encountered in a specific type

of texts. For instance, since literature employs all capabilities of linguistic expression, language in it is not used exclusively by people. Speaking is possible for everything that can be perceived by human senses: trees, phenomena, animal language, which is particularly singular, especially by animals who have a sacral relationship with humans.

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Translated by MARTYNAS GEDVILA

Alex Meidunas is a graphic artist and illustrator that enjoys the starkness and clarity of line drawing. A graphic artist differs from a graphic designer in that the graphic designer's drawing is to facilitate content, whereas a graphic artist's main intention is to facilitate an idea or story. Line art or line drawing is an image that consists of distinct straight or curved lines placed against a plain background, without gradations in shade, to represent two-dimensional or three-dimensional objects. Line art emphasizes form and outline, over color, shading, and texture.

Alex was born in Baltimore, MD of a Lithuanian born father who immigrated to the USA after WWII. His mother is a Lithuanian-Brazilian born to Lithuanian parents in Sao Paulo; the parents met at a Lithuanian festival in the States and married shortly after. The family moved to Sao Paulo in 1972 and returned to the USA in 1975. His primary language was Lithuanian, followed by English and a smattering of Portuguese.

He studied Business in a community college and went on to receive a BFA in Fine Arts at York College of Pennsylvania. His imagery is influenced by Lithuanian symbolism, folklore, myth, and history. He resides and works in Hershey, Pennsylvania and has remained active in the Lithuanian-American community.

Before the development of photography and halftones, line art was the standard format for illustrations to be used in print publications, using black ink on white paper. Using either stippling or hatching, shades of gray could also be simulated. Color can be added to support the context of the situation or scene.

Rimas VISGIRDA

Alex Meidunas. *Off To Spain We Go.* 2014. Ink, 12″×16″. Photo by the artist

Alex Meidunas. *Lapas.* 2008. Ink, 8″×10″. Photo by the artist

Alex Meidunas. *Kukurūzų koncertas.* 2015. Ink, 11″×14″
Photo by the artist

Alex Meidunas. *Ol' King Corn* (*arba Kukurūzų karalius*). 2015. Ink, 11″×14″. Photo by the artist

Alex Meidunas. *Kukurūzų krepšinis.* 2015.
Ink, 11″×14″. Photo by the artist

Alex Meidunas. *Rescue Wings.* 2013. Ink, 12″×16″. Photo by the artist

Alex Meidunas. *Švilpukas.* 2014. Ink, 8″×10″. Photo by the artist

Alex Meidunas. *Geležinis vilkas*. 2015. Ink, 11″×14″. Photo by the artist

The House of the Signatories: How a Historic Building Became a Symbol of Independence

VALDAS SELENIS

In the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, Vilnius, the old capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was transformed by the Russian Empire from the political, economic and cultural center of a unified country into a regional center on the western fringes of the Empire.[1] The czarist government tried to minimize the importance of Vilnius. It closed the university because it thought that Polish thinking had strong roots in the city. The importance of Vilnius as the historical capital of Lithuania and also as an important city for Lithuanians was emphasized in the newspaper *Auszra*, which Jonas Basanavičius began publishing in 1883. Basanavičius maintained that Vilnius was the most frequently encountered topographical name in Lithuanian songs. However, Kaunas was still often cited as a potential center for the Lithuanian national movement. The Lithuanian conference in Vilnius, known as the Great Conference, which took place on November 21–22, 1905 (December 4–5 by the old calendar), was the most important undertaking to encompass all Lithuanian political movements, and it solidified Vilnius as a Lithu-

[1] Mačiulis, Staliūnas, *Vilnius – Lietuvos sostinė: problema tautinės valstybės projekte* (*XIX a. pabaiga–1940 m.*), 11.

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anian center. With the beginning of the First World War, an important charitable organization was established in Vilnius – the Temporary Lithuanian Committee to Aid War Victims. Two and a half years later, six of its members became signatories of Lithuania's Declaration of Independence. On July 5, 1915, this organization, which had become an association, moved its operation to a house which belonged to a merchant named Karolis Kazimieras Štralis (Karol Kazimierz Sztrall) and which by coincidence was to become the House of the Signatories – a symbol of the independence of modern Lithuania. In this article we shall examine the history of the building which became this symbol.

The Architectural Features of the Building

The House of the Signatories, a branch of the Lithuanian National Museum, is a building which was established during the period of historicism.[2] Its main facade is in the Neo-Renaissance style. The facade faces Pilies Street, while the south facade of the east building faces Literatų Street. Four buildings surround an enclosed yard, which has an entrance from Pilies Street. The east and southeast buildings have three stories, the north building – two stories. The house plan is irregular. The rooms are large and transitory. The second story is the most ornate: pairs of side windows with Corinthian order pilasters and entablatures make for a harmonious composition. Niches under triangular pediments contain sculptures symbolizing agriculture and fishing. The niches under rectangular windowsills have decorations in relief. A cornice separates the first and second stories. Round niches between the side windows of the third story contain male busts done in the classical style (one on the left is of the Roman Emperor Caracalla). Doors and entrance openings have Neo-Baroque metal gratings (the original gratings were manufactured in the factory of Petras Vileišis). The ceilings of some of the rooms are decorated with moulded rosettes and cornices.

[2] Venclova, *Vilnius. Vadovas po miestą*, 93.

Features of the History of the Building

Brick houses were being built on Pilies Street from the end of the fifteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth century. The south building at Pilies Street No. 26 was a two-story structure, and it had vaulted cellars. In accordance with the prevailing tradition of the time, it stood with its back to the street. A fragment of the pediment of this building has survived in the attic. The building most likely had pediments on its side facades as well. The Gothic building on Pilies Street was constructed at the end of the fifteenth century. It was squeezed in between buildings which were already standing there. Architectural research permits the assumption that the building was reconstructed after the fire of 1539.[3] No information is available about who its owners were.

The house was first mentioned in the royal charter of April 18, 1645, in which Jokūbas Arnoldas Škotas (Jakób Arnold Szkot), the mayor of Vilnius, exempted the house from the requirement of housing lodgers. In about 1699 the house belonged to a medical doctor, probably the son of Škotas.[4] The tax registry list of the Lithuanian Metrica of 1690 notes that this large brick house of Sokolowski (in actuality – this was the house of Škotas) belongs to Novacki. In the 1719 tax lists of the magistracy jurisdiction there are references to the house belonging to the Dominicans of Minsk. The house registries of 1730–1733 indicate that the Škotas house belongs to Mrs. Jurčevičius (Jurczewiczówa). She most likely was only a temporary tenant. Fires in 1748 and 1749 devastated the house, and it was subsequently rebuilt as a three-story structure. The account of B. Jachimavičius (Jachimowicz) calls it the house of the Chapel of the Body of God. A third story was added when the house was rebuilt after the fires. Father Šimakovskis (Szymakowski) was then the proprietor of the building, but until 1795 it still belonged to the Chapel of the Body of God. It later came into secular hands, namely into the hands of Pranciškus Stankevičius (Frantiszek Stankiewicz).

[3] Jurkštas, "*Štralio namas,*" 206–207.

[4] Ibid., 206–207.

In 1806 the house had nine large and three small rooms. It was assigned to houses of Category I and belonged to Simonas Kliukovskis (Simeon Kliukovskii), who operated a cafe and a tavern in it.[5] After his death, his sons Vincentas, Aleksandras and Jonas Kliukovskis, as well as the children of Jonas Kliukovskis inherited the house. On January 18, 1863 they sold the three-story brick house they had inherited to a landlady named Petronėlė Selevičiova for 7,000 silver rubles. From 1851 on, a merchant named Henrikas Kaskė (Henrych Kaske) rented the building.

The White Sztrall Confectionery

Karlas and Juzefa Sztrall (Kazimierz Karol, Józefa Sztrall) bought the house in the second half of the nineteenth century. The confectionery of Karlas Sztrall operated out of the house. The confectionery took up ten rooms, a basement, and a storage room, and it had two kitchens. The cafe was called The White Sztrall.

Kazimieras Štralis (Kazimierz Karol Sztrall, 1859–March 13, 1927) was the son of Karolis and Juzefa from Tyszki.[6] In 1897 he became the head of the oldest Catholic brotherhood of foreigners in Vilnius, located by the Church of St. Anne. The famous photographer Stanislawas Filibertas Fleury was the treasurer of this brotherhood. K.K. Štralis was a merchant. In 1889 he began working in the commercial taxation department of the city council. In 1893 he rebuilt his residence at No. 30 Didžioji Street according to a plan designed by architect Aleksiei Polozov. He redesigned the house at No. 2 Pokrovskaja Street (now Literatų Street) according to the plan of architect Antoni Mikulski and attached it to the house on Didžioji Street. The building took on Neo-Renaissance forms. The yard became enclosed and very elevated. In 1893–1895, according to the plan of the same architect, the

[5] Čaplinskas, *Vilniaus gatvių istorija: Pilies gatvė*, 63.

[6] Szostakowski, "Ród Sztrallów jako znany ród kupców wileńskich I mecenasów kultury," 13–17.

window frames and door frames were redone, arches were removed and flat ceilings were installed, new stairs were installed inside, and the wooden stairs in the yard of the gallery were replaced with fire-resistant ones. New metal balconies were installed on the street facade of the building. The year of the reconstruction – 1895 – was noted on a metal weather vane over the mansard roof. After the reconstruction, a restaurant began operating in the house. It took up three rooms, a kitchen, a storage room and a cellar. The address of the restaurant was listed as No. 10, since the two Strzall houses shared the same numeration from 1897 on.

Up to 1920, the address of the Strzall house was No. 30 Didžioji Street. Some street names were changed in 1920. Part of Didžioji Street from Cathedral Square to what is now St. John's Street was renamed Pilies Street, as it had been called in earlier times, while the numeration of the remaining part began at St. John's Street. At that time the telephone number of The White Strzall was 457.

After the death of Strzall the house was inherited by his sister Anna Kusojć (1861–1938). After her death, it was inherited by her husband. As early as 1848 there was a grocery store in this house. A firm in the name of K. Strzall was established in 1883. The local inhabitants called it The White Strzall or The Postal Strzall. The confectionery occupied two halls. It became famous for its sweet rolls, caramel candy, cakes, tea and coffee. Merchants, lawyers, doctors, and priests from the provinces were regular customers. In 1939, once the war began, Polish actors who were looking for work established the cabaret Ksantypa there. Its founder and master of ceremonies was Janusz Minkiewicz.[7] The confectionery was in operation until 1944. The last attempt to continue the K. Strzall tradition occurred at the end of December, 2001, when the short-lived restaurant Baltasis Štralis opened its doors.

[7] Szostakowski, "Ród Sztrallów jako znany ród kupców wileńskich I mecenasów kultury," 13–17.

There were 14 numbered apartments in the building managed by Strzall and later by Anna Kusojć. Ten of them were leased. The five-room apartment on the third floor was leased for public functions. The Temporary Lithuanian Committee to Aid War Victims chose it as their center of operations.

Rapolas Mackonis, a writer, journalist, and resident of Vilnius in the period between the two World Wars, devoted several pages of his memoirs to the confectionery of Strzall. They are worth quoting at length:

> In turn, let us visit The White Strzall. This was the least known of Strzall's three cafes. It was famous for its delicious pastries and cakes. No one refuses these delicacies, but there weren't that many fans of them in Vilnius. This category of customers consisted first of many small or large landowners from different provincial locations, richer old-fashioned pastors and a few merchants, lawyers and doctors. You should have seen them eating The White Strzall sweets. It was a real symphony of true sweet-tooth aficionados performed with great devotion. The difference was that instead of string and woodwind instruments (an allusion to The Red Strzall – note by V.S.), what you heard was lip-smacking.
>
> – Och, panie dzieju, co za słodycz. Buty zdjać i palce lizać. Paniestarszy (at that time waiters were called this – V.S.), bądź pan łaskaw jeszcze porcyjkę.[8]
>
> – Ma pan hrabia rację. Jak żyję smaczniej szych rzeczy nie konsumowałem. Ja też poproszę o dodatkową porcję.[9]
>
> The White Strzall was also convenient in that the second hall had only one window, which looked out on a dark yard, and the hall was always lit. The hall indeed looked romantic; cooing couples of various ages often sat on soft sofas along its walls. However, neither aristocratic women searching for amorous adventures nor the daughters of Corinth[10] frequented this cafe. This was a place to go with your seasonal or permanent heart throb,

[8] Oh, mister, it's wonderful, how sweet. So sweet that I want to take off my shoes and lick my fingers. Waiter, be a good man, bring me another portion.

[9] You are right, count. I have never eaten a tastier morsel in my life. I will also ask for another portion.

[10] This expression was used for prostitutes (V.S.).

where you could pour out the inexhaustible emotional font of your wounded or even your sound heart. In the cozy, dimly-lit hall no one would disturb you.

Often members of the clergy visiting Vilnius from distant parishes would stop by. Perhaps that is why this cafe was also known as The Priestly Strzall.

During the years of German occupation, Sruoga, Krėvė and I, and at times Janušytė, would come together in precisely this hall, a location hidden from people's eyes, to complain and to console ourselves.

I regret that I did not come to know Liūnė Janušytė very much. I first met her in Palanga long before the war. I had already read her books *Korektūros klaida* (A Proofreading Error) and *Ant ko ir pasirašau* (On What I Place My Signature), and so we had something to talk about. At that time, Janušytė was the only really Bohemian woman in the Lithuanian Bohemian community. She was young and attractive. As she herself said, she did not lack admirers (which I believe), but at the same time she admitted without hesitation that she was more inclined to choose an admirer according to her own tastes.

As we sat in some Palanga cafe, I vigorously urged her not to give up writing, since apart from her and Gricius, we don't have anyone else. However, Janušytė only listened with one ear as she shot glances at elegant men.

During the occupation, Janušytė and I met a few times at The White Strzall cafe. Unfortunately, I cannot recreate the conversations we had as we drank cups of ersatz coffee. There is no way to recreate these conversations because given the atmosphere of those times we were not inclined to tell jokes, anecdotes even less.

I met her for the third and last time when I returned to Vilnius. She insisted that I visit her. She said she knew how to make extra strong coffee, and that there would be some cognac too. I promised to come, but I didn't…

I return to my topic.

Now that many years have passed, I simply cannot determine which house was the one in which The White Strzall operated for several decades. I just know that the entrance was from Pilies Street, opposite the beginning of St. John Street. But which door

is the right one (there are several here), I cannot tell. And how can a man discover this, when all the entrances have been redone in the same style.

Another characteristic fact should be mentioned here. A considerable group of Polish refugees lived in Vilnius during the period of German occupation. Each one of them had to make a living somehow. The temporary inmates of the Lithuanian capital came upon a hard way to make a living in The White Strzall cafe. A semi-literary cabaret named Ksantypa began to operate there on the initiative of a few former actors. Unemployed actors and actresses would display their acting and singing skills there in the evenings. The evening program was quite spicy, as visitors related (personally, I did not witness it). Poles are masters in this genre, and cabaret buffs had much to admire there. It is not surprising that those Cafe-Chantane evenings had many Lithuanian visitors, who rolled in with dripping saliva and eager eyes.[11]

Lithuanian Committee to Aid War Victims

The Temporary Lithuanian Committee to Aid War Victims began operating on October 13, 1914, when Piotr Veriovkin, then governor general of Vilnius, ratified the association. In 1915 The Lithuanian Society for Mutual Aid joined the association. On June 22 (July 5), 1915, the Lithuanian Committee to Aid War Victims moved to No. 30-2 Didžioji Street (currently No. 26 Pilies Street), as the newspaper *Viltis* reported in its 1915 no. 138 edition. Thus, Lithuanians had already rented apartment No. 2 on the third floor of the building by July 5, 1915. When the German occupation of Vilnius began in September of 1915, the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Committee to Aid War Victims consisted of the following: Martynas Yčas – chairman, Antanas Smetona – deputy chairman, Stasys Šilingas – secretary, Jonas Kymantas – treasurer, and members Emilija Vileišienė, Fr. Kazimieras Olšauskas, Fr. Juozapas Kukta, Fr. Povilas Dogelis, An-

[11] Mackonis, *Iš kavinės į kavinę. Atsiminimai,* 13–15.

tanas Vileišis, Petras Leonas, Jonas Basanavičius, Fr. Vladas Jezukevičius, Donatas Malinauskas, Juozas Balčikonis, Antanas Žmuidzinavičius, Jonas Mašiotas, Augustinas Janulaitis and Mykolas Sleževičius.[12] When the German occupation of Vilnius began in September of 1915, the Central Committee split into two parts: Martynas Yčas headed the Central Committee which had withdrawn to Russia, while Antanas Smetona headed the Vilnius chapter. The Vilnius Committee helped refugees from all of territorial Lithuania. It established free dining halls, workshops, and shelters for the aged and children. Fr. Pranas Bieliauskas was in charge of the Vilnius municipal chapter. In 1915 the chapter operated 47 shelters and 11 dining halls. In 1919 it had 10 shelters and dormitories, which housed 700 people, consisting of 650 children and 50 old people. The Committee received financial aid from U.S. Lithuanians, from various Russian institutions and through Lithuania's churches.

The activities of the Committee were weakened because of the policies of the German government of occupation, political changes, the war situation, and the arbitrariness of administrations which kept being replaced. Frequent food inspections, and evictions from lodgings caused considerable hardships.

The activities of the Committee stabilized in the first half of 1924. In 1925 it had in Vilnius seven shelters and dormitories, where 661 individuals resided, and a professional school with sewing, shoemaking, and weaving workshops. It operated a laundry, a bakery, and two farms, which provided food products to the people living in the dormitories. In addition, there was one shelter in Seinai.

On February 14, 1926, the provincial authorities demanded that the Committee change its statute and its name. On December 31, 1926, it was registered as the Lithuanian Charitable Society. According to the new statute, the Lithuanian Charitable Society had to provide material support to Lithuanian students and to this end had to establish and maintain profitable institutions.

[12] "Lietuvių draugija nukentėjusiems dėl karo šelpti," 158.

According to the records of Lithuania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Lithuanian Charitable Society, before it was abolished, operated a center, seven dormitories which housed about 400 students, five handicraft workshops, a store and a dining hall in Vilnius. From the end of the 1920s on, the Lithuanian Charitable Society acquired several buildings in which it established shelters, dormitories, workshops, and centers for other societies.

On November 20, 1937, the activities of the society were banned by order of the chief municipal officer of Vilnius. The Lithuanian Charitable Society during the long time it was in existence accomplished a very important task: it ensured that the activities of Lithuanian organizations in Vilnius had a material foundation.

Fr. Juozas Kukta was head of the Society from 1918 to 1922. J. Basanavičius headed it from 1922 to 1927. Fr. Pranas Bieliauskas headed it from June 29, 1927 to September 20, 1937. On November 20, 1937, the activities of the society were banned by order of the chief municipal officer of Vilnius.

The Interior of Apartment No. 2

Historian Raimundas Klimavičius analyzed the inventory list and noted that there were six bookstands in the Committee's room: one large and two small ones were made of oakwood and one large and two small ones were made of alderwood.[13] A small office desk which had one drawer stood next to the far wall. There was an electric desk lamp with a green glass hood on the desk. On the right side of the room there was a leather sofa. The ends of its cylindrical armrests were decorated with metal lion heads with rings in their jaws. There was also a couch. In the middle of the room, placed somewhat by the wall which had windows, was a large office desk with two drawers. Two thick

[13] Klimavičius, *Neįminta XX amžiaus Lietuvos istorijos mįslė. Vasario 16-osios Akto pėdsakais*, 46–48.

books lay on the desk: one was an atlas, or a book in which press clippings could be pasted, and a smaller book which was a Russian-German and German-Russian dictionary, compiled by Pavlovski. On the desk next to the larger book, there was an inkstand containing two inkwells, a stone board, and a desk bell. Seven Thonet[14] chairs, of which there were 24 in the building, stood by the desks and along the far wall as well on the right side of the sofa. An electric chandelier of four lights, as if for a dining room, hung from the center of the ceiling and illuminated the room. A group photograph of the members of the Central Committee of the Society to Aid War Victims, framed with dark borders, hung on the wall above the bed.

Meetings of the Council of Lithuania

The Council of Lithuania met in this house seven times, in the office of Antanas Smetona, on the premises of the Central Committee.[15] It is said that the landlord of the building responded favorably to his tenants, and Grudzińska**,** the proprietress of the confectionery, even though she was Polish, often brought coffee and snacks for the Council members when they were working.[16] The first meeting of the Council took place on February 12, 1918, and the historical last meeting took place on February 16, 1918. It was on that day that the Declaration of Independence was signed. As we look at the facade of the building from what is now Pilies Street, we see a balcony on the third floor with two windows on each side of it. The rooms on the other side of these windows were used by the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Society to Aid War Victims as its headquarters. These premises

[14] Michael Thonet (1796–1871), a German-Austrian furniture maker, known as the inventor of cafe chairs made out of undried wood. They were made by moistening the wood, bending it and letting it harden into bent forms and designs.

[15] *Lietuvos Valstybės Tarybos protokolai 1917–1918*, 204–213.

[16] Pn., "Čia gimė Lietuvos laisvė," 7.

The room of the signing

were known as Apartment no. 2. They could be entered through a stairway from the inner courtyard. The office of the Committee was in the room to the right of the balcony, while the office of the chairman was on the left. The memoirs of the signatories refer to this room as the room of the Chairman of the Lithuanian Committee or simply as the office of Antanas Smetona.

Povilas Dogelis, a priest and secretary of the Lithuanian Committee, notes an interesting fact in his memoirs. Before the Council moved its meetings to the premises of the Committee, it would meet at the Lithuanian Scientific Society located in the house of Jonas Basanavičius.[17] There the attendees regularly were cold, since Basanavičius almost never heated his office. The members therefore decided to meet in the premises of the Committee. But for the frugality of J. Basanavičius, today the House of the Signatories might not be at No. 26 Didžioji Street, but rather at no. 19 Aušros Vartų Street.

[17] Klimavičius, *Neįminta XX amžiaus Lietuvos istorijos mįslė. Vasario 16-osios Akto pėdsakais,* 49.

After the 16th of February, 1918…

After the end of the First World War and the Polish occupation of Vilnius, the work of the Lithuanian Society to Aid War Victims was continued in these premises until 1928 by the Lithuanian Charitable Society.

In 1928, Povilas Karazija, a well-known public activist, lived in this apartment with his wife Uršulė Bernotavičiūtė and their children. Povilas Karazija obtained his teacher's license in St. Petersburg in 1908. From 1908 to 1915 he taught at elementary schools in Šančiai, Vidiškiai and Kurkliai. During the First World War he attended courses for Lithuanian teachers in Voronezh and worked in the Lithuanian Committee for War Refugees. In 1918 he returned to Lithuania. He taught at the Vytautas Magnus High School and at the teachers' seminary in Polish-controlled Vilnius. Karazija was one of the founders of the Lithuanian Teachers Union. He edited the newspapers *Vilniaus aidas* (The Echo of Vilnius) (1924–28) and *Vilniaus žodis* (The Word of Vilnius) (1929–39). He was chairman of the Lithuanian Teachers Union from 1926 to 1928. Karazija was one of the founders of the Cultural Society for the Vilnius region, and from 1935 on he was its chairman. In 1936 he was banished from Vilnius and moved to Warsaw. In 1937 he was deported to Independent Lithuania. From 1938 to 1949 he worked in the Vytautas Magnus Cultural Museum.

In 1931 Antanas Krutulys, a teacher at the Vytautas Magnus High School, and his wife Zofija moved into this building.[18] Antanas Krutulys taught singing at the Vytautas Magnus High School in Vilnius from 1919 to 1941. He headed Lithuanian choruses and an amateur theater troupe, and he organized the Lithuanian cultural life of the city and the surrounding areas. In 1940 Krutulys briefly was the mayor of Vilnius. He was one of the founders of the Vilnius Art Museum. From 1948 to 1967 he worked at the Juozas Tallat-Kelpša Music School in Vilnius. Kru-

[18] Čaplinskas, *Vilniaus gatvių istorija: Pilies gatvė*, 68.

tulys prepared a valuable theatrical and musical chronicle of the Vilnius region. It covered the years 1900 to 1940.

In 1932 Vincas Žilėnas moved into this house. From 1935 to 1939 he was editor of the newspaper *Vilniaus žodis*. From 1938 to 1939 he was appointed official correspondent of the newspaper *Vilniaus žinios* in Poland, and from 1939 on he was the paper's general representative in Vilnius. From 1952 to 1973, Žilėnas was the head of the History and Ethnography Museum.

In 1940 the Strzall cafe was nationalized and assigned to a national trust, which operated a confectionery and a factory there. The restaurant of Aleksandr Žaporoščenka continued to operate in four of its rooms. In 1940 an artisan, M. Minkowski and his family moved into the apartment where the Declaration of Independence had been signed. After the Second World War, the house was remodeled.

The Path Towards Becoming a Museum

Three specialists of different nationalities – Filibertas Tamoševičius, a Lithuanian, Oleg Kasperovič, a Pole, and Nikolaj Zinovjev, a Russian restorer – recreated the memorial plaque from the original gypsum model designed by Petras Rimša.[19] Two architects, the brothers Algimantas and Vytautas Nasvytis, and Aidas Rimša, the custodian of the gypsum model, took an abiding interest in the progress of the work. The bronze plaque weighed about 100 kilograms. It was fastened to the wall of the building on February 16, 1989. On the wall, seals were placed on the original holes into which metal fasteners had been driven so that the plaque could be fastened onto the wall on February 16, 1940. Everything was done with precision, to within a millimeter.

On May 20, 1992, the first City Council of Vilnius for newly re-established Independent Lithuania decided to establish The House of the Signatories of the Declaration of Lithuanian Inde-

[19] Jankauskas, "Redakcijos paštas. Pasitinkant Vasario 16-ąją."

pendence (a center of history and culture) in this building. Olivier Novikas, a businessman living in Paris, offered assistance for the restoration of the house. He established a joint Lithuanian-French company. A contract between the administration of the city of Vilnius and the corporation Apasionata was signed on June 23, 1993, but the assistance offered through this contract was not used.[20] The instrument for the sale and purchase of the building was signed on January 30, 1998. However, various deficiencies in work done by builders had to be corrected on more than one occasion. It was difficult to maintain the House of the Signatories. That is why the municipality transferred the building to the Ministry of Culture in May of 1998. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania took over the House of the Signatories from the municipality at the end of 1997. The museum was opened on February 16, 2000. The head was Jūratė Černiauskienė, and the head of the museum section was Erika Kuliešienė. On June 26, 2002, the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania issued Order no. 236 concerning the reorganization of the House of Signatories of Lithuania's Declaration of Independence. The order sought to energize the work of the museum of the House of Signatories of Lithuania's Declaration of Independence, to create an exposition which would reflect the history of Lithuania as a country, to use the premises for museum expositions in a more reasonable manner, and to make a more rational use of budgeted government funds. The reorganization took the form of consolidation: on October 1, 2002, the House of the Signatories of Lithuania's Declaration of Independence became part of the National Museum of Lithuania.

During the years 2003 to 2020, thanks to the efforts of Birutė Kulnytė, director of the National Museum of Lithuania and Meilutė Peikštenienė, head of the House of the Signatories exposition which belongs to the National Museum of Lithuania, the exposition expanded to take up fourteen rooms and halls on two stories of the building. The exposition includes the office where

[20] Čaplinskas, *Vilniaus gatvių istorija: Pilies gatvė*, 69.

Lithuania's Declaration of Independence was signed, a room dedicated to two signatories of the Declaration of Independence – Petras Klimas and Jurgis Šaulys, who were diplomats of the Republic of Lithuania, a memorial room dedicated to the "national patriarch" – dr. Jonas Basanavičius, a memorial room dedicated to professor Mykolas Biržiška, and other rooms. Various events and cultural evenings take place as well. The House maintains a working relationship with The Relatives of the 16th of February Club and with The 11th of March Signatories Club. There are frequent excursions for visitors and educational events for students of various ages, such as the following: "The Stories of Jonas Basanavičius", "National Reawakening and Jonas Basanavičius", "From the Great Lithuanian Seimas of Vilnius to the 16th of February", "The Circumstances under which the February 16th Declaration was Signed" and others. On January 31, 2020 a competition took place to create historical "memes" dedicated to participants in the national reawakening movement. It attracted the interest of many students. Of course, there is a certain seasonality – the House of Signatories gets its largest number of visitors during the months of February through April. During the summer, Lithuanian emigrants from the United States, Australia, Germany, Canada, and other countries come to visit. Sometimes there are relatives of signatories among these visitors.

Some exhibits in the House of Signatories immediately catch the attention of visitors. In the Jonas Basanavičius memorial room one can view a patented invention by the American inventor Thomas Edison (1847–1931), a phonograph, which he demonstrated as a technological miracle at a meeting of the Lithuanian Scientific Society in October of 1909. In the memorial room one's eye is drawn to an owl (*strix bubo Linnaeus*), whose unfortunate life came to an end as a stuffed animal perched on a wardrobe. Basanavičius guessed that when he was living in Bulgaria, a neighbor who was worried about the fate of his chickens, had shot this predator bird near Basanavičius's house in Varna.[21]

[21] Basanavičius, *Mano gyvenimo kronika ir nervų ligos istorija,* 172. Raila, *Lietuvystės Mozė. Jono Basanavičiaus gyvenimo ir ligos istorija,* 127.

Badges of Lithuanian organisations in the USA

The memorial room also contains the metal walking stick of Basanavičius, which has a stiletto installed in the handle. A Bulgarian craftsman from Lom Palanka made it for him, and he brought it back to Vilnius. On August 4, 1887, Alexander Manoilov had fired a shot at the doctor, leaving a bullet in his back[22], and so the doctor was forced to take safety precautions.

The adjacent room is dedicated to the aid that U.S. Lithuanians provided to the national movement. Displayed in this room are the flag of the Lithuanian Alliance of America, which was brought from the archives of this organization in New York, and pins of U.S. Lithuanian Catholic organizations, brought by Basanavičius to Vilnius in the autumn of 1913.

A historically valuable Swiss Zenith Company watch, which belonged to Aleksandras Stulginskis, is displayed in one of the rooms devoted to the biographies of signatories. Stulginskis, a signatory, who later was chairman of the Constituent Assembly of Lithuania and Lithuania's second President, purchased this

[22] Basanavičius, *Mano gyvenimo kronika ir nervų ligos istorija,* 124.

watch in Vilnius in the beginning of 1918 for 18 ostmarks to replace a watch of the same firm which he had lost. This watch ticked in the pocket of A. Stulginskis during the signing of the Declaration of Independence on February 16th, and later when he was in exile in the Krasnoyarsk Siberian work camps, only it had been remade from a pocket watch into a wristwatch. In the exposition one can also see a leather briefcase with a name on it. U.S. Lithuanians gave it as a gift to Jonas Vileišis in 1920 while Vileišis was working to have Lithuania recognized as an independent country.

The Jurašaitis photo studio is recreated in one of the halls. Portraits of the twenty signatories of Lithuania's Declaration of Independence hang on the walls. They were painted by the artist Rimgaudas Žebenka.

The previously mentioned Thonet-style furniture is displayed on the third floor. This furniture belonged to the family of Povilas Karazija, a famous cultural and public figure from the beginning of the twentieth century. The Karazija family lived in this apartment from 1928 to 1938, when its members were exiled to Warsaw and later to Kaunas.

On display in the room where the Declaration of Independence was signed, is a gold pen, which the intelligentsia of Ukmergė presented to President Antanas Smetona on June 13, 1933 on the occasion of his name day, in his native village of Užulėnis. The pen has an engraved dedication: "To the Great Wielder of the Pen and National Leader, His Excellency the President Mr. Antanas Smetona, on his name day, in Užulėnis, 1933.VI.13. The People of Ukmergė." Chankelis Aranovičius, a jeweler from Kaunas, was the one who fulfilled the commission of the people of Ukmergė. The pen is 31.5 cm. long and weighs about 184 grams. This pen had been kept in a room of the Presidential Palace in Kaunas dedicated to gifts received by the President. The President took it with him on June 15, 1940, when he left Lithuania. The American Lithuanian Cultural Archives, which had preserved the pen in safe-keeping, sent it to the House of the Signatories.

We note that a very similar gold-colored pen is depicted in the large painting (2.70 m. × 3.75 m.) entitled "Signatarai" (The Signatories), which Petras Kalpokas painted for the 1939 World's Fair in New York and which is now displayed in the Hall of Events in the House of the Signatories. It is likely that after the artist visited the President, he got the idea of how to depict the important moment when the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Conclusion

As the century after the signing of the Declaration of Independence on February 16, 1918, progressed, the House of the Signatories of the National Museum of Lithuania gradually became a place of historical remembrance and a symbol of Lithuania's independence. In the period between the world wars the founders of the Lithuanian state, who found themselves in the temporary capital – Kaunas, would on occasion remember this house, but the people who had lived there, with the exception of its owners, knew nothing of what had happened there. On February 16, 1940, Independence Day was celebrated by this house for the first time, and a memorial plaque was installed. During the soviet period, any attempt to remember independence was suppressed. It was only after 1990, when Independent Lithuania was again being created, that the building was remodeled and a museum was established in it. The building became a symbolic location of remembrance, even though at first it was proposed that only the room where the Declaration of Independence was signed be memorialized with an exposition. Few countries have museums dedicated entirely to the fact of a declaration of independence. Latvia and Estonia do not have such a museum. The most famous building in the world analogous to the House of the Signatories is in the United States – Independence Hall in Philadelphia. It has become a natural annual tradition for Lithuanian citizens to commemorate the 16th of February by the House of the Signatories.

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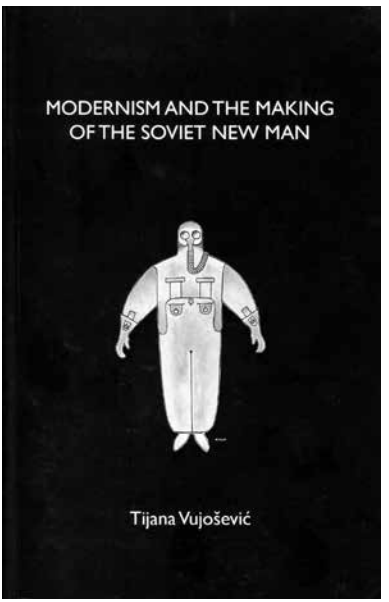
Translated by RIMAS ČERNIUS

Soviet Modernism Scrutinized



Tijana Vujoševič
Modernism and the Making of the Soviet New Man

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017, 193 pp.
ISBN 978-1-5261-1488-4

The history of Soviet art and architecture has been a subject of numerous books published in the Western world. Western scholars seem to have been especially interested in the enigma of the Soviet cultural turnabout – a vanguard society that hailed Modernism imediately after the October Revolution of 1917 and soon was repressing the aesthetics of Modernism in almost all the arts by turning to what is known under the label, Socialist Realism. This turnabout, however, turned out to be transient, since soon after WW II and the end of Stalinism, Soviet artists and architects set their eyes back on the Modernism raging in the West. After several waves of suppression in later periods, Modernism finally took over and the fall of the Soviet regime merely legitimized

varieties of Modernism and Post-modernism that were already ripe in the territory of the former empire.

More recently, Soviet Modernism became a subject of another wave of studies conducted both by Western and ex-Soviet authors. *Building the Revolution: Soviet Art and Architecture* by Maria Ametov (2011), *Landscapes of Communism: A History Through Buildings* by Owen Hatherley (2016), *Soviet Salvage* by Catherine Wadworth (2017), *Reframing Russian Modernism*, edited by Irina Shevelenko (2018), *In Search of Russian Modernism* by Leonid Litvak (2018), *Moscow: A Guide to Soviet Modernist Architecture* by Anna Bronovitskaya et al. (2019) – these are just a few of the recent titles indicating the growing interest in the origins, development, and fate of modernism during the Soviet era.

Tijana Vujoševič, a junior professor at the University of Western Australia, recently added another title to this rapidly expanding list of readings on Russian and Soviet Modernism. Rather than being one more piece of writing, however, her book provides a quite novel and very useful intepretation of Soviet art and culture that played its role in forging Soviet Society and its values. Vujoševič notes that the dominating view of some (mainly) American art and architectural historians who insist that utopian ideas of Soviet art might be used for "resisting" contemporary capitalism, ought to be resisted. She emphasizes that a huge number of Soviet vanguard modernists continued their activities throughout the early Stalinist era and accordingly contributed to bringing art to life. Thus their activities had serious and undeniable political consequences: as Vujoševič suggests by building her views on some recent scholarship – vanguard aesthetics was ideologically as totalitarian as the Stalin regime itself. So the naive innocence of the Soviet vanguard utopia seems to be out of the question.

Modernism and the Making of the Soviet New Man provides ample material for further reconsideration of stale views and innaccurate concepts. Modernism played its role in constructing the Soviet vanguard Society no less than a return to Classicism in the form of Socialist Realism. Many Soviet early modern artists

were conscious of their vanguard roles not only as artists but also as ideologues providing their service to the totalitrian machine. Rather than opposing and questioning the regime, vanguard artists embracing Modernism turned into auxiliaries of the Communist ideology and way of life by contibuting to the indoctrination of Soviet society. In the first two chapters of the book, Vujoševič focuses on the birth of the new man after the victory of the October Revolutioin, and draws parallels between the Russian scientist, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, who worked on developing visions of how people will live and work in cosmic space in the future and the aspirations of Soviet vanguard artists who embraced the idea of creating a new type of human being – a Soviet man. Drawing on a variety of sources – writings of early Soviet artists, newspapers, and other documents, she emphasizes connections between Soviet ambitions to dominate in the space age and vanguard artistic imperatives. Chapter II provides an interesting discusion of how Aleksey Gastev – a former futurist poet who became a Soviet bureaucrat supervising the so-called Central Institute of Labor, turned out facilitating social engineering by inspiring a number of Soviet modernists like theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold who fell prey to the ideas of body-machine and house-machine (the latter also bearing some associations with Le Corbusier's concept of mechanisation of urbanity and urban living).

Chapter III is focused on the Soviet house, and the author discusses various concepts and projects of efficent organisation of life under the Soviet regime. Among other aspects, she provides an insightful discussion of parallels between Villa Savoy – a Western modernist paradigm for a contemporary living house and far more ascetic Soviet projects that nevertheless represent the mechanisation of home life in the Soviet space. Well-documented with primary sources, this part of the book provides fresh insights into how the Soviet system came into being and how it engineered the lives of the ordinary citizen. Chapter IV is no less interesting and it provides a detailed account on the institution of the bath-house (bania) that was central to ordinary

life in Soviet cities. The author provides an excellent account of the socio-cultural and architectural development of this institution by using literary and documentary sources.

Particularities of Soviet life are further analysed in the last two chapters where Vujoševič discusses how the image of Soviet women was forged and how much it was related to shaping Soviet female identities. The movement of socially minded women is give special attention and demonstrates the complexity of Soviet ordinary life as well as its relation to the ideological narrative. "Matters of life and death, and the willingness to sacrifice oneself to the socialist cause, depended on how much one believed in a fantastic representation of the social system, which described it not in ethical or political terms but in aesthetic terms – as a beautiful and harmonious world. One of the most totalizing and totalitarian projects in modern history was the art project and, in that sense, skin deep", notes Vujoševič (p. 150). The concluding chapter gives a no less interesting and accurate account on how the Moscow metro was built and what role was played by the art and design.

The book is not aimed to be impressive in its length; however, being brief, it provides a good, even excellent narrative on the making and progress of Soviet modernism, adding more than a bit to current scholarship focused on the legacy of Soviet art and architectural modernism. It might be read in other ways too, for example, as the cautionary tale about the role and fate of the aesthetic and social vanguard. In any case, it provides a lot of fresh insights and valuable comments on the relationship between art and society in an era that has now luckily become history.

ALMANTAS SAMALAVIČIUS
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ABSTRACTS

IEVA BALČIŪNĖ

Abortions in Soviet Lithuania 1955–1990: Social Context and Everyday Practices

This article analyzes the question how the Soviet Union's official pro-natalist policy coexisted and functioned in Soviet Lithuanian society together with the legalized abortions? Drawing attention to the everyday life practices and analyzing official policy and propaganda discourse, the article discusses how the ambivalent state of the system contributed to the wide spread illegal practices. Further on, how the systemically uncontrolled "folk" contraception, self-induced miscarriage, and both medical and underground abortion became habitual and recurring in many women's life. It is argued that the 'anti-abortion' and 'fight against criminal abortion' campaigns were not directed to prevent harmful practices but rather to curb uncontrolled financial gain and uphold expected norms of behavior of the Soviet citizen.

IRENA SMETONIENĖ, MARIUS SMETONA

Language in the Consciousness of a Lithuanian

Language is the foundation of nationality, a part of culture which helps us to pass along customs, no matter where we live. It is the language of the nation of which the person considers himself to be a part, the language of his country or state, the basis for all of the nation's values. To a Lithuanian, language is:

– **a means of communication and conveyance of information**. By communicating, a person can not only convey information but also express an opinion, convince someone, and spread an idea. Communication also reveals the quality of language: if the aim is to convince, influence, or inform, the language has to be clear and understandable, uttered in a normal tone and volume, otherwise it will be misunderstood, it may cause tension among the conversation participants, create an unfriendly atmosphere, or terminate communication completely. Lithuanian youth is starting to see language as a tool or instrument which is like a key to the door of communication, career, and learning about the world. A new understanding of language has emerged: the working language. Language is primarily associated with the native tongue, it is also perceived as an element which unites language users, homes, and parents; thus, communication covers both the narrower and the wider circle of communication participants.

– **expression of consciousness and thoughts**. Language is recognized as simply a method of expressing one's thoughts in dialectal examples, literary discourse, and publicistic writings; this meaning is also specified in the dictionaries. However, philosophical discourse places special emphasis on the connection between language and consciousness: language emerges from the human consciousness; words reflect the consciousness; if there is no link between consciousness and language, the person's whole life is unraveled; language demonstrates the distinctiveness of one's thinking and perception of the world. Language and idea affect one another, cannot exist without one another, which is why language is characterized by harmony.

– **sign of identity**. Language is a part of national identity and culture, which helps us to pass along our customs, no matter where we live. It is the language of the nation of which the person considers himself to be a part, the language of the

country, the state, the foundation for all of the nation's values. To the young people living in Lithuania, it is a part and basis of identity, homeland, unity with fellow Lithuanians, freedom, and even history, a kind of symbol or heritage of the previous generations; because of this, language has to be protected. This heritage is perceived as a characteristic of a true state or country or as the wealth of a person and, in turn, of the entire nation. Language unites people who share a common territory or historical fate.

- **a system**. In this case, a system is understood slightly differently from the dictionary definition: it is not just a system of words and sounds, but also body language and signs; moreover, language means programming languages and artificial intelligence.
- **a trait of human culture**. Or, in the words of Lithuanian youths, a trait of human culture and social stratum, i.e. a sort of calling card. As evidenced by the other parts of the concept as well, judging from language one may identify the level of a person's intellect, education, or maturity; language promotes development of intelligence.
- **a sign of life and health**. Language is one of the traits of human life, while the ability to articulate and pronounce words is a measure of health. While this may not be the central element of this concept but rather a peripheral consideration, it nevertheless is also significant to the concept's analysis.
- **non-human language**. This is also peripheral, because this shade of meaning may only be encountered in specific type of texts. For instance, since literature employs all capabilities of linguistic expression, language in it is not used exclusively by people. Speaking is possible for everything that can be perceived by human senses: trees, phenomena, animal language, which is particularly singular, especially by animals who have a sacral relationship with humans.

VALDAS SELENIS

The House of the Signatories: How a Historic Building Became a Symbol of Independence

The article is focused on a historical house, located on Pilies Street in Vilnius, Lithuania. The house which belonged to a merchant Karol Kazimierz Sztrall coincidentally became an important symbol of the independence of modern Lithuania. It was the venue where The Council of Lithuania met and finally declared Lithuania's independence on February 16, 1918. The author discusses the history of the building and activities associated with Lithuanian organisations that operated in Vilnius in the first half of the last century.

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FRONT COVER: A View of Europa Square in Vilnius
Photo by Almantas Samalavičius