

Lithuanian Papers

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A STRAW GOAT - One of a number of traditional animal figurines featured in Lithuanian festivities.

This journal is published by the LITHUANIAN STUDIES SOCIETY (LSS) at the University of Tasmania. The Society is a non-profit group of students devoted to making people aware of Lithuania and its heritage. The Society encourages graduate research, at the University of Tasmania and elsewhere, on all topics linked with Lithuania. The Society offers two scholarships every year and, in addition to Lithuanian Papers, publishes books on Lithuania and its people.

Why do we call it Lithuanian Papers ?

This journal is the only English-language Lithuanian periodical in Australia and in the Southern hemisphere. It has been published annually by the Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania, since 1987. At first, and until last year, Lithuanian Papers appeared “on paper” in the traditional A5 format: a total of 27 volumes were produced. Starting this year (2014), the journal will continue on the Web.

But why is it called Lithuanian Papers? Because the journal has been primarily meant to be a collection of research papers connected with Lithuania and its people. It all started in 1987, when the Lithuanian Studies Society introduced fortnightly lunchtime lectures at the University of Tasmania, on a wide range of topics connected with Lithuania. Some lectures were given by the University’s members of staff (Professor Rose, Dr Jan Pakulski, Dr Sergio Montes, Rev John Doyle, SJ); others were presented by visiting speakers, graduate students and invited guests.

It soon became apparent that many original papers had emerged from this lecture programme, and that it would be a great pity to lose the newly gained knowledge. Although short of money and resources, the Society decided to publish the best papers, chosen from each year’s presentations. And so, the Lithuanian Papers were born. The size of the annual journal soon grew to 72 pages and, by 2011, was read by 3,000 subscribers in 29 countries spread across all continents. Over 225 authors have contributed 275 original articles; all - without an exception - have generously donated their services.

Professor Alec Lazenby, who was the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Tasmania at the time, wrote in 1988:

“The programme was not only of obvious interest to those members of the University with Lithuanian connections, but I believe, of considerable educational value to the whole University... This is an admirable project; it will enable the culturally enriching influence of the Society to be extended to many members of the University...”

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Lithuania fears a new Russian invasion

John MAŠANAUSKAS

Melbourne

FOR several years after Lithuania was annexed by the USSR in World War II, thousands of so-called “forest brothers” waged a guerilla war against the Communist invaders.

Based on the fact that Lithuania remained Soviet Russian-occupied for half a century, it may be thought that the resistance, brave as it was, was ultimately futile.

Yet the deeds of the forest brothers have not been forgotten as a trip through the Lithuanian countryside confirms.

Every so often you come across an official sign on the road indicating that a significant battle against Soviet forces took place at a nearby site.

Until relatively recently, these sites marked with plaques to honour the anti-Communist fighters were mainly of historical interest. But they have taken on a certain resonance as Lithuanians contemplate a fresh threat from Russia hot on the heels of its intervention in eastern Ukraine.

On a recent visit to Lithuania, the homeland of my parents, I was struck by the depth of anxiety about Russia’s intentions. This is despite Lithuania and its fellow Baltic republics of Estonia and Latvia being members of the European Union and the Western military alliance NATO.

Flying into the capital Vilnius from Germany, engineer Vytautas Kairionis summed up feelings in the region.

“Russia is intervening in Ukraine first and we hope that we won’t be next, but we have to be ready,” he said. “There will be some sort of attempt for sure. Maybe not over the next year but over the next few years.

“Everyone is worried, everyone has a Plan B, but so far no one is seriously contemplating it.”

While the chances of an imminent Russian incursion appear slim, people are unsettled by ominous signs coming from their big neighbour to the east. Russia recently sent Lithuania a diplomatic note demanding that the Government track down the culprits who defaced a Soviet war memorial in Lithuania with an image of a Ukrainian flag.

This sort of demand evokes memories of the destabilisation of Lithuania by the Soviet Union in the lead-up to the country's forced incorporation into the USSR in 1940. There followed a brutal repression, including the murder of innocent civilians and the deportation of tens of thousands of people to Siberian labour camps, from which many never returned.

Arturas Paulauskas, the Lithuanian Parliament's national security and defence committee chairman, said there was good reason for his country to once again feel threatened by renewed Russian aggression in the region.

"Now occurring is an intensive propaganda and cyber war, and we see every day that Russia is trying to consolidate and unify the Russian-speaking community here," he told the Herald Sun. "It doesn't want non-Lithuanians living here to integrate into mainstream society, it wants them to be oppositional and under its influence."

Mr Paulauskas pointed to a Russian military build-up in the Kaliningrad region which borders Lithuania as evidence of President Vladimir Putin's scare tactics.

"We're not overdramatising the situation — a sober analysis shows that the threat is there, and it's growing," he said.

"Everything that's happening shows that the seemingly peaceful situation here is quite fragile."

Lithuania abolished compulsory military service some years ago, but the current political situation has sparked a flood of volunteers joining the homeguard organisation Sauliu Sajunga.

Prof Benediktas Juodka, the Parliament's foreign affairs committee chairman, said that his own son, a lawyer, had signed up.

"He goes every weekend into the bush, stays overnight and does I'm not sure what there," he said.

"I'm very impressed by this wave of patriotism, which is being driven by educated and professional young people. It shows that whatever happens we will defend our homeland."

Lithuania, a country of only three million, has security guarantees on the basis of its NATO membership, with US President Barack Obama recently reaffirming the pledge to the Baltic States during a morale-boosting visit to the Estonian capital Tallinn.

NATO has stepped up operations in the region, including the extended deployment of fighter jets as a show of force. But Lithuanians are only too aware

that ultimately, they must be responsible for their own defence.

Mr Paulauskas, who temporarily served as the nation's president during a political crisis in 2004, said there was no doubt that help would come in the face of Russian aggression.

“But we have to be prepared to defend ourselves,” he said.

Mr Juodka said that NATO had “gone to sleep” after the Cold War, but the Ukraine conflict had reinvigorated the organisation.

“Nowhere in the world is 100 per cent safe, but after the Ukrainian tragedy I think that Europe has realised the need to strengthen its defences,” he said.

Hopefully, Vytautas Kairionis will not have to execute his Plan B, which involves heading straight for the Polish border in the event of a Russian invasion.

Millions of his countrymen are also clinging to that hope.

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Help for Ukrainian Children

Fifteen children and their two teachers affected by the unrest in Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions will live and study in Lithuania for one year. The first seven 14-year-olds arrived in Lithuania on 29 October, 2014. They will live and study at the Vilnius Lithuanian House until 1st September next year.

„We are proud that Lithuania can help children who were affected by the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine. We hope that such initiatives will help children to continue their education and seek knowledge; we hope that they will get to know Lithuania better, and that their newly formed friendships will strengthen Lithuania's relations with Ukraine,“ said Lithuanian Ambassador in Kyiv, Mr Petras Vaitiekūnas.

The Ukrainian children will be educated in a separate class, with Russian as the language of instruction, just like in their own schools in Ukraine. The Ukrainian language will be also taught as a separate subject.

Lithuania has allocated 330 000 litas for the education of Ukrainian children.

- Public Information Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuania.

Closing of Lithuanian Churches Abroad

Regina NARUŠIS

Cary, IL. USA

The Catholic Church is governed by the Code of Canon Law which sets the norms of the ecclesiastical community to bring order into its life. Under Canon 515, Section 2, “the Bishop alone can establish, suppress or alter parishes...after he has consulted with the council of priests”. An appeal is available through ecclesiastical channels, normally to the Bishop, then to the Congregation for the Clergy and finally to the Vatican, the time line of which is strict and short, and requires the retention of a canon lawyer.

The closing of Lithuanian churches in the United States which were built by the Lithuanian immigrants has provoked emotional reaction and even civil litigation. But, Lithuanian Catholics must understand the hierarchical structure of the Church. It is not and never has been a democratic institution but a strict authoritarian system predicated on comprehensive Canon rules. Almost all churches belong to a Diocese, headed by the local Bishop. Civil law does not usually apply in the church realm. Often seen personal attacks on the pastor or bishop are unseemly, inappropriate and counterproductive.

Even though the Church closure decision that is reached by the Bishop, Archbishop or Cardinal, may seem to some to be wrong, the only way to approach those in authority is with respect, if one is to find satisfactory resolution of the issues. “Only in the spirit of love and community is it possible to find resolutions of the often complex issues facing the Lithuanian parishes.” according to Archbishop Tamkevičius, President of the Lithuanian Catholic Bishops’ Conference.

The best ways to save the parish is through regular attendance at church services and supportive involvement in the church ministries where

parishes have parish councils and various committees. In Diocese which have various councils and committees, involvement in these institutions demonstrates the Lithuanian parishioner's commitment to the church. Regular attendance at church services shows that there is a real need for a Lithuanian house of prayer and demonstrates that it is an active parish. For example, 15 years ago St. Andrew's parish in Philadelphia saved its church from closing by being a committed and active parish.

Once there is talk of closing a parish, a unified effort of parish committees working together with the pastor on presenting one voice, with support of the local organisations is essential. St. Peter's Lithuanian church parish in Boston succeeded in keeping their Church open in this manner. St. George's parish in Bridgeport, Connecticut stayed open with the help of the Argentinean Brothers, according to Msgr. E. Putrimas, Lithuanian Bishop's Conference Delegate for the Apostolate of Lithuanian Catholics Living Outside of Lithuania.

There are several other possibilities to avoid future closures:

1. Designation of the Lithuanian church as a heritage site. Unfortunately, to date, there is no list of agreed upon sites between the government of the U.S.A and the Republic of Lithuania on the Protection and Preservation of Lithuanian Culture heritage properties in the United States. We can assume that if such an agreement existed, the Historic Lithuanian Church of Our Lady of Vilnius in Manhattan, N.Y. (Aušros Vartų Marijos Church) if it had been listed in the Agreement would have gone a long way in saving it. That church was founded and built in 1909 by the first wave Lithuanian Americans. Municipal, state or country government designation of the church as a heritage site may help save the older parishes from closing.

2. When constructing a new church facility inserting in the deed restricted property rights or if such restriction already exists not relinquishing it. The deed to Our Lady of Vilnius Church in

Manhattan, N.Y. originally designated the owners to be several individual Lithuanians. However, later when the Lithuanians found it hard financially and practically impossible to operate the church facility, they transferred the property to the Diocese, which was a mistake because the deed to the Diocese did not restrict what could be done with the property in the future. The Diocese closed the Church. The parish church of ST. George in Bridgeport, Connecticut which was not closed, primarily because the deed restriction stipulated that upon closure of the Church , ownership of the property would pass to the city.

3. Establishing a Lithuanian Catholic Mission by formal agreement with the Diocesan Bishop, such as was established by the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Lithuanian Province of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1989, which founded the “Blessed George Matulaitis Lithuanian Catholic Mission” in Lemont, Illinois. Similar proposal was suggested by a legal counsel in 2004 to save the St. Peter’s Lithuanian parish in Boston, however it would have meant the establishment of a Lithuanian Catholic mission and the transfer by way of sale of the property to a non-for-profit U.S. corporation for the use of a Lithuanian Catholic Mission under Auspices of the Lithuanian Bishops’ Conference for the Pastoral Care of Lithuanian Catholics Outside of Lithuania, however the problem was resolved by other means. In December of 2013 a new Lithuanian Catholic mission was established by the Decree of Cardinal George pursuant to the Agreement between the Archbishop of Chicago and the Lithuanian Bishops’ Conference for the Pastoral Care of Lithuanian Catholics in northern Illinois- called the “Our Lady of Siluva” Lithuanian Catholic mission parish. This was the effort of my Lithuanian American Community Waukegan/Lake County chapter and Msgr. E. Putrimas, the Delegate of the Lithuanian Bishops’ Conference for the Pastoral Care of Lithuanian Catholics Outside of Lithuania. The first Mass was celebrated by the new Lithuanian mission on December 15, 2013 on the grounds of the Santa Maria del Popolo Parish in Mundelein.

In the United States, and elsewhere, some Lithuanian Catholic Churches have been closed. It is likely that many others will be closed

due to changing parish demographics. When attendance at a church dwindles, when there are fewer baptisms, weddings, catechizations and donations diminish some of those churches will be closed. Bishops in Lithuania have no authority over Bishops in other countries or any other bishop anywhere. Bishops are appointed by the Holy See to deal with the affairs of his Diocese. Msgr. E. Putrimas, as Delegate of the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference for the Pastoral Care of Lithuanian Catholics Outside of Lithuania possesses only the ability to make suggestions, mediate and facilitate dialogue. Msgr. Putrimas has used all of the means available to him to assist us, Lithuanians living outside of Lithuania. The responsibility is left to each Lithuanian to actively participate and to encourage other Lithuanians to become active and financially supportive of the Lithuanian parishes.

Regina G. F. NARUŠIS, J.D. (Illinois) is the past president of the World Lithuanian Community (WLC), a member of the Lithuanian American Bar Association, member of the Joint Seimas/WLC Commission, a member of the Diocese of Rockford Finance Council and a member of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre. She has been awarded, by the Pope, the Order of St. Gregory the Great, for service to the Catholic Church.

Nijolė Sadūnaitė

by Sister Michaela BAUMANN

Donauwörth / Germany

EDITOR'S NOTE:

During the second Soviet occupation of their country (1944-1990), the Lithuanians developed their national resistance in several forms. One of these was the underground press. The KGB, the Soviet secret police, was out in full force trying to eliminate this "anti-Soviet activity". Some suspects were imprisoned, but the "the voice of dissent" could not be silenced.

Nijolė Sadūnaitė, a 36-year-old Lithuanian woman, was arrested on August 27, 1974, because the KGB found a single page in her typewriter

that belonged to the banned Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. She was finally tried on June 16-20, 1975, found guilty of “anti-Soviet propa-ganda” and sentenced to a total of 6 years: 3 years in a strict regime camp, followed by another 3 years of exile in Siberia.

During her trial, however, Nijolė bravely stood up to her judges and denounced the Soviet tyranny and falsehood. Later, in Siberia, she continued to help those worse off than herself.

A transcript of Nijolė’s court speech was smuggled out to the West. As her case became known, a number of Nijolė’s support groups were formed in several countries. This is the story of one such group, hitherto little known.

My first introduction to Nijolė

It must have been toward the end of 1975 when a simple small brochure came into my hands. It was published by pro fratribus society. The sub-heading of the booklet read, “An initiative on behalf of our persecuted fellow Christians”.

As I leafed through it, my eye stopped at the full-page photo of a young woman. The caption under the picture ran, “Nijolė Sadūnaitė, condemned to 3 years in a strict regime concentration camp, plus another 3 years in exile”.



Nijolė Sadūnaitė 1969

Here was a lovely face and a name that sounded so unusual to me, at the time. Nor could I readily detect any particular nationality from

her name. What had condemned this woman into prison? What law had she broken?

Little by little, I discovered more details. The Soviet authorities had made a surprise search of Nijolė's living quarters and found a copy of issue No.11 of the Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church (LKB Kronika). Well, well! This must be the Baltics, where it all was happening. Or, more precisely, Lithuania. During the Soviet probe, they discovered a lone page of the LKB Kronika that was still hovering in Nijolė's typewriter.

Her "crime" was obvious: Nijolė wanted to type up a copy of the LKB Kronika and so help in this bulletin's dissemination. Naturally, this was strictly prohibited in the USSR, and Lithuania was then a part of it. What Nijolė was reproducing, was a banned Catholic underground bulletin - a publication that was constantly reporting on the injustices suffered by Lithuanian Christians. The Chronicle also kept revealing the cases of discrimination, malpractice by superiors and breaches of human rights. The only possibility of opposing these ills was to make the facts known inside the country as well as abroad.

There was hardly anything else that the Communist regime shunned more than publicity about the true conditions within its mighty empire. At the time, however, it was more than Nijolė's picture, as published in *pro fatibus*, that impressed me. I was moved by her final speech at the end of the Soviet court proceedings. It reminded me of the bravery of the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen, "This is the happiest day of my life... It means that I am being tried because I love our people and desire the truth... My fate is an honourable one: not only have I fought for human rights and justice, but I am being punished for doing so... I will gladly lose my freedom for the freedom of others; and I am willing to die so that others may live."¹

¹ cf. The Trial of Nijolė Sadūnaitė, June 1975, in: BOURDEAUX, Michael, *Land of Crosses: The struggle for religious freedom in Lithuania, 1939-78*. Chulmleigh, Devon: Augustine Publishing Company, 1979, pp.282-288; esp. p.287.

Finally, Nijolè also pleaded with the court: “[I have one last request...] free all prisoners [now in gaols and labour camps] and all those who have been taken to psychiatric hospitals for fighting for human rights and for justice.”²

I was deeply moved by this first encounter with Sister Nijolè. I simply found it impossible to return to my daily routines. Since the address of Nijolè’s concentration camp was also listed, fortnightly mail started to flow immediately from Donauwörth to the Mordovskoy ASSR, that is, to Mordovia.

In those days, I was in charge of a J-GCL-Group.³ It consisted of eight to twelve girls, aged about 15 to 16. They met regularly to meditate on readings from the Holy Scripture, to discuss current questions and to have some fun in their free time.

Of course, I could no longer remain silent about my interest in Nijolè and her situation. So, my girls soon learned of my concern with Nijolè Sadūnaitè. Just like me, my girls were perplexed by what had happened to her. They admired Nijolè’s courage and fearlessness. And we asked ourselves, how would we behave under persecution, when it is not always very easy to be an open witness to our faith, even in our own country?

Then the question arose: What can we do to help her? Of course, we could pray for Nijolè. We did this, at every meeting of the group. What else? We must keep on telling people what was happening - at a place not so far away from us. It must become known! Before long, it was suggested that we should adopt the name of the courageous witness

2 Ibid.

3 Jugend der Gemeinschaft christlichen Lebens = The Youth of the Christian Life Community, a Catholic lay movement.

of the faith, because this name, unknown locally, was bound to bring about curiosity and enquiries. The J-GCL-Group “Nijolė” was born.

It was an unforgettable moment when a postcard arrived from Siberia. Nijolė must have received at least some of our mail while she was in the Mordovian camp; but she obviously could not reply to us until she reached Boguchany, her place of imprisonment in Siberia. Our group was ecstatic. The next step was a letter to the Editor of a newspaper (Neue Bildpost = The new illustrated mail). Our letter described our experiences and quite a few newspaper readers responded by contacting us. This showed to us that there were some people in Germany who did know about Nijolė.

We also passed on what we knew, to our parish. Our local priest at the time was sympathetic to our concerns, and we were allowed to have frequent divine services for Nijolė and for the persecuted Christians in Lithuania. We already had contact with an existing “Nijolė Sadūnaitė Committee” in Bochum (Germany) and we knew the priests of the Lithuanian St.Ulrich parish in Bad Wörishofen.

So, we combined our goodwill with our enthusiasm and, under the direction of the Lithuanian community, we organised a solemn memorial mass in the Cathedral of Cologne. It was a lasting experience that deepened our ties to the Lithuanian Catholics even more. Prelate Kazimieras Senkus, who was living in Stuttgart at the time, taught my girls several impressive Lithuanian songs. They sang them with devotion - in Cologne as well as elsewhere.

However, time marched on. The girls passed their final examinations at our school and scattered away in all directions, seeking their further professional education. “Nijolė Group” disbanded. However, I was no longer left alone, and my quest was all alive.

“Nijolė-Group” - A prayer-and-action circle for persecuted Christians
In the course of the J-GCL-Group’s activities, a fine circle of friends was formed, embracing people who were interested in Nijolė. Mail

came from all over Germany, also from Switzerland, Austria and even the USA. My correspondence grew beyond all bounds. I could hardly cope, because I still had my direct work responsibilities. I tried to solve this problem with circulars in which I transmitted all important news from Lithuania.

Eventually, it became apparent that Nijolė's tragic case was not the only one. Before long, it was Nijolė herself who appealed for help to other well-known Lithuanians. These people had been gaoled or exiled because of their courageous allegiance to their faith or because of their professions and social status. Should we simply say "no"? For me, that was impossible. I needed support, and I soon found it in (Mrs) Diethild Treffert, a great journalist and the editor of Tagespost (The Daily Mail), a multiregional newspaper that had a regular column, "Faith in the East". It carried good articles that described current and concrete cases of persecuted Christians in Lithuania and elsewhere.

With our parish priest's agreement, I was allowed to invite Diethild Treffert to speak to our congregation. This was strengthened by the fact that our Diocesan Bishop, Dr Josef Stimpfle, had published a long article in the bishopric magazine, letting people know that the Church of Lithuania lay very close to his heart.

Mrs Treffert's lecture was received very favourably by our audience. You could feel during the subsequent discussion that people were deeply upset and were sincerely willing to help. This finally led to the establishment of "Nijolė's Group: a prayer-and-action circle for persecuted Christians". It was a core group of about ten highly motivated adults; they were often joined by further interested persons. We met once a month for a communal rosary in our convent, for an exchange of information and ideas, and for a discussion of our most topical initiatives on behalf of the persecuted Christians.

These were supplemented by other activities. Masses were said; the Lithuanian Bishop Antanas Deksnys took part on one occasion. During Lent, the open Way of the Cross was staged on our local Calvary Hill,

or in Münster during bad weather; or we exchanged arrangements with other groups who shared our aims.

By this stage, some duplications of our group had come into existence. For example, Sister Benigna Kaiser's group in Oleking, or Margot Bauer's group in Augsburg.

It finally became possible to send parcels to Nijolė's place of exile in Siberia, by pre-paying the Soviet customs charges at the forwarding end. As usual, Nijolė thought more of others than herself, and she told us what was needed the most. She widely shared our donated goods with others. She gave us the names of the families of other imprisoned, exiled and needy fellow Christians in Lithuania. We were soon able to send them entire truckloads of clothing and food. Two Lithuanians, Mr Buda and Mr Skeirys, took charge of these deliveries for us and attended to everything to our great satisfaction.

Nowadays I can only wonder, how the money we needed was always there. Nijolė and other prisoners - about whom I regularly reported in my circular letters - had won over so many friends who gladly gave gifts and entrusted us with their donations. It was an incredibly moving, busy and blessed time.

Nijolė Sadūnaitė returns home

The term of Nijolė's imprisonment gradually expired. She returned home in July 1980. What great joy! - you would think. No, you are wrong there. There was no chance of Nijolė regaining real freedom upon her return.

There was no end of strife. Our premonitions were not favourable, because we had received no mail from Nijolė for months. Three of the parcels we had sent her came back. When our forwarding agents lodged a protest, Moscow replied that the consignee was a *persona non grata*. The sending of parcels had to cease, they said. In future, they would not be returned, but confiscated.

Unfortunately, our "free" Nijolė was under constant surveillance by

the KGB⁴ and was repeatedly interrogated. Also questioned were all the other persons who spoke to her or visited her. Foul play against Nijolė's brother and her family started once more. Eventually she had to disappear from sight. She had to continue hiding for five years, before the KGB men seized her again, in her brother's flat.

Summons and grilling followed once again. On one occasion, she was offered tea that contained dissolved drugs. The effect was violent. She had to sign some kind of declarations, although she was not in a fit state to read them. Actually, she was no longer able to control herself. It was only because she was so widely known in Lithuania and abroad that she was not arrested again.

The *Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church* provided some more or less regular information on the events in Lithuania, and Sister Nijolė was not the only one affected by them.

The *Chronicle* kept arriving by secret ways in the West. It was translated into German and published by the Meeting House of Institutum Baltikum e.v. in Königstein im Taunus. This work had to cease because of various unfavourable circumstances, such as the loss of the translator. Fortunately by coincidence, I was able to meet up again with Mr Babinskas from Nürnberg. He had carefully followed the developments in his native country. With our combined forces and great determination, we revived the translation work and the *LKB Chronicle* again went ahead. In this way, our authentic source of information was retained.

We visit Sister Nijolė and other friends in Lithuania

After a year or more, an opportunity arose for another Catholic nun and myself to join a tourist group travelling to Vilnius. The group consisted of former Klaipėda residents, Baltic Germans and several Lithuanian married couples. This became possible because, since 1988, the city of Klaipėda (Memel) and a few other "cracks in the wall" had become accessible to Western tourists.

4 Soviet secret police.

Unforgettable experiences and impressions have lingered on. It would be going too far, if I were to relate every interesting episode encountered by us. What brought us the greatest joy, was meeting the people who had long since become our friends. It started at Vilnius railway station when Nijolė made herself known with a “multi-coloured non-transparent poster”. Next, we were in each other’s arms. Robertas Grigas was also there, interpreting for us; and Ričardas Repšys drove us around. Julius Sasnauskas and his sister Leonora had come, too. We visited Jonas Sadūnas (Nijolė’s brother) and his family. Jonas produced a note-book in which he had recorded all our letters and parcels. We visited Plumpa-Pluiras’ family; Antanas Šeškevičius, a Jesuit father with long experience in Siberia; and Bronė Kibickaitė, Nijolė’s sister nun. We caught up with Liudas Simutis at work in a factory. His wife and five children were at home, in an apartment that was too small for them, by far.

We attended a Mass in pouring rain in Gediminas Square, in front of the Vilnius Cathedral. The service was conducted by Father Jonas - Kęstutis Matulionis, with a tiny concrete wall serving as the altar. The site was chosen because the adjoining cathedral had been converted into an atheistic museum; and because a group of Christians had gathered in front of it. These Christians were staging a hunger strike and were seeking the release of other prisoners (such as Viktoras Petkus or Sigitas Tamkevičius who is now an Archbishop).

So far, I have said nothing about the two priests Alfonsas Svarinskas and Jonas Kauneckas, nothing of Valerija Bungardaitė who had helped Nijolė so much with her knowledge of German, and nothing about Jadvyga Bieliauskienė who had returned from exile just a short while before. These persons, and others not mentioned here, had life

experiences that would fill a gripping book describing the brilliant witness of faith in Lithuania. Their experiences included suffering of all kinds, prison terms, exile, starvation, frost and other shortcomings. However, they had also encountered the proximity of God, precisely in their most difficult situations.

Sister Nijolė visits us

None of us would have thought it possible. Yet the day did come - 27th September, 1989 - when our beloved sister Nijolė really sat in our midst, in the town of Donauwörth. Nijolė came with Mrs Alina Grinius who was the news reader in the Lithuanian Section of Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe in Munich. On many occasions Alina had also broadcast news about our existence and our activities for Lithuania. She now served as the interpreter between us and Nijolė, although the latter's face expressions and gesticulations were so lively that you could guess what she was saying. On this evening, the sparks of joy were twinkling in the eyes of all sisters in our convent. What a beautiful memory!

Our local newspaper booked Nijolė for the next day, to write an authentic article on our beloved visitor. In the afternoon we took Sister Nijolė for a walk around our little town of Donauwörth and showed her our local churches. For several past days, our posters in prominent spots of the town had been inviting people to an evening meeting. Nijolė was no stranger here; so, the parish hall was pretty full when she stepped on to the speaker's platform.

Before starting her address, Nijolė was warmly welcomed by the host, the parish priest Schmid and by Franz Strobel, a particularly committed member of our prayer-and-action circle. Attentive silence reigned when Nijolė spoke about her life: she delivered an impressive witness of faith. During the round of questions that followed, it was clear that she had succeeded in winning over the hearts of her audience.



*A more recent photograph
of Nijolė Sadūnaitė*

Likewise, our doors opened for other visitors to come from Lithuania. We heard speeches by two Lithuanian priests who had experienced the KGB persecution, Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Jonas Kauneckas, as well as Jesuit Father Antanas Šeškevičius and two persecuted Christians from the USSR and Rumania.

Understandably, the topic of the *Persecution of Christians* will not desert me for the rest of my days, especially as this persecution is spreading to more and more countries. Christ taught his followers straight down the line, from the very beginning. Read Luke 21, 12-19.⁵

5 12 “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake.

13 “But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony.

14 “Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer.

15 “For I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.

16 “You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.

17 “And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake.

18 “But not a hair of your head shall be lost.

19 “By your patience possess your souls”.

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Let us pray for all who have to suffer because of their faith. Let us do everything that can help these victims. Let us try and deliver a brave testimony of our own faith, wherever our turn may come.

Translated from the German by Algimantas P. Taškūnas
Sister Michaela Baumann is a school teacher and a Roman Catholic nun in Donauwörth / Germany.

The Impoverishment of the People

Vladas TERLECKAS

University of Vilnius

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION:

Lithuania is a small self-governing European republic, on the Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. Lithuania is at least 1,000 years old. It is approximately of the same size as Tasmania; it has a population of three million.

During and after World War II, Lithuania's neutrality was ignored by both sides; and the small ancient country suffered three consecutive occupations by major powers: Soviet Russia (1940-41), Nazi Germany (1941-44) and again by Soviet Russia (1944-1990).

All these foreign occupations inflicted deep wounds on the local population. In 1941 and in 1944-53, for example, the Soviets deported a total of 127,000 persons to various parts of the Soviet Union. 55,350 of these deportees were children under the age of 16. Similar numbers of other native people were persecuted, jailed and killed.

The Lithuanians would not accept this foreign rule. For nine years (1944-1953) they formed secret military units in their forests and fought guerilla-style warfare against the foreign invaders. Finally outnumbered and defeated on the battle-field, the Lithuanians had to give up their armed resistance. They turned to passive resistance and underground press.

In the meantime, the Soviets systematically destroyed all key aspects of the Republic of Lithuania, as an independent state. In this chapter from his recent book, Professor Terleckas reviews the economic damage.

In Lithuania, the very fact of occupation caused economic difficulties in the country and spread panic among the public. Urban residents, and the occupying army in particular, started buying and storing various commodities. The Soviet soldiers were mainly buying meat products, women's clothing, shoes, fabrics and watches. They were amazed at the variety of choice, the quality and low prices of the goods.

Modern Russian historians (e.g. Yelena Zubkova) have also recognised that the standard of living was higher in Lithuania than in the USSR: “[...] the quality of products and the wide range of consumer goods on offer was the source of constant surprise”*. Feverish consumer response to occupation and the reluctance of businesses to replenish their stock amid fears that shops would be confiscated led to shortages of basic goods. The government started rationing products to be sold and registering the buyers; storing the goods acquired was banned and liability for such acts was introduced.

Depositors started panicking as the banks introduced restrictions on deposit withdrawal. By 1 October 1940, 30 per cent of deposits had been withdrawn from savings banks alone.

As early as 18 June Dekanozov demanded that the rouble be in circulation in the country. It was supposed to facilitate the supply of Lithuanian commodities to the occupying army. The Soviets negotiated from the Bank of Lithuania a large interest-free loan of 38 million litas to meet the army needs. The litas was weakened and the introduction of the rouble postponed.

Under pressure from Dekanozov, the so-called People's Government and the leadership of the Bank of Lithuania instructed the central banks of Western countries to transfer to the Soviet national bank the gold reserves that Lithuania had deposited in them (around 8 tons). Only Sweden complied with the request, while the British, American and French governments blocked the Lithuanian reserves in gold and foreign currencies.

* Зубкова Е. Прибалтика и Кремль. Москва, 2008, с. 66.

In the autumn of 1940, the economic situation of the entire population of Lithuania worsened as consumer goods prices increased twofold. In October 1940, foodstuff prices went up by 25 per cent and the prices of other commodities were raised by 50 per cent, in some cases resulting in a twofold price increase. In the month of November, prices were raised by 20 to 200 per cent. Fabrics, shoes and meat and dairy products witnessed the sharpest increase. In parallel, taxes for blue and white collar workers were raised.

The minimum living wage soared by 159 percentage points in 1940 to 1941, while workers' wages increased by only 147 percentage points. In June 1940, an unqualified worker in Kaunas and Vilnius earned 188 per cent of the minimum living wage; in a year's time the figure dropped to 111 per cent.

Similarly, a white-collar worker earned 200–210 per cent of the minimum living wage in 1940 to 1941 and later saw the figure reduced to 90–120 per cent. In the period from 1936 to 1937, one employed person in Lithuania could maintain 3.8 family members with his or her salary; in 1941, the figure went down to 2.6 family members.

The whole situation was particularly detrimental to farmers as the buying prices for their produce were raised by 10–25 per cent and at the same time, they had to pay from 1.5 to 4.9 times more for industrial goods.

Savings also suffered. When introducing the rouble in Lithuania on 25 November 1940, an arbitrary rate was set for the exchange of the litas into the rouble, and the litas was depreciated by 5 to 6 times its value, consequently depreciating the value of all deposits. In the spring of 1941, all deposits above 1,000 litas were confiscated.

Farmers' income and quality of life in general suffered due to agricultural taxes in kind and an increase in land tax. The rates of taxes in kind were extortionate, and the government paid 5–10 times less for the produce than the market price. Many farmers were unable to

comply with the exorbitant tax in kind obligations. In May 1941, only 23.5 per cent farmers paid the required amount of this tax. Accused of allegedly deliberate tax-in-kind avoidance, 1,100 farmers were taken to court; some of them eventually lost their farms, while others were sent to forced labour camps.

The pecuniary land tax for the year 1940 was raised 1.5–3 times in 1941 for the richer farmers (those who owned 30 hectares and more or managed farms of 10–30 hectares and hired labour). Farmers falling within this category had to pay a rate 9 times higher than that levied on poorer farmers for the year 1941. The regime was taking away 30–50 per cent of agricultural produce from farms. Such a tax policy was intended to impoverish farmers and facilitate the establishment of kolkhozes (collective farms), as well as to supply the Soviet army with food products and replenish USSR food reserves. In 1941, farmers had to give 360,000 tons of grain to the regime, out of which 312,000 tons or 87 per cent were destined for USSR reserves. For the sake of comparison, in 1939, a year of regular yields, Lithuania exported as little as 85,000 tons of grain, while a major share of the yield was to cover farmers' and local market's needs. The head of the local Communist Party, Gedvilas, pleaded with the Kremlin to leave more grain for the Lithuanian population and to pay more for the grain taken away, at least not less than to the other republics, but in vain. Dairy and meat products were also transported to the USSR with no regard for local needs. Only the much larger republics of Russia and Ukraine were supplying USSR reserve with larger amounts of these products.

Out of the agricultural produce left in Lithuania, a considerable share went to the Soviet army and the repressive structures. During the last 6 weeks of 1940, the latter received 226 tons of meat, while the population of the 5 largest cities in the country had to make do with 378 tons of meat between them. Such a policy caused a food crisis in Lithuania, and historically low food rations had to be introduced. People were particularly offended by the propaganda which attempted to picture the occupiers as well-meaning aid providers. The regime

resorted to the following tricks: trains, either empty or carrying water melons and sunflower seeds and running through Lithuania, featured slogans saying “Aid to Starving Lithuania”. Trains continually taking away food from Lithuania were unmarked, however.

The illusion that the housing situation would improve for workers which the propaganda had created was soon dispelled. Houses of more well-to-do residents were confiscated and apartments were distributed primarily to the Red Army officers, NKVD staff and the leadership of party and Soviet activists. By 1 October 1940 alone, around 11,000 rooms had been allocated to the Soviet army officers. The surface area of the housing available was insufficient to cover such needs and accommodation had to be rationed (not more than 9 square metres per person). Surplus surface area was confiscated. Former business owners, pensioners and the unemployed were being driven away from the cities, and farmers were also banned from moving into urban areas. It is estimated that the damage inflicted on the Lithuanian economy and population in 1940 to 1941 amounts to 2 billion litas. Experts put the damage at 2.9 billion US dollars (based on the prices of the late 20th century).

*The above extract is an authorised extract from Vladas Terleckas’ recently published book (in English), **The Tragic Pages of Lithuanian History**. This book may be ordered directly from the publishers in Lithuania. Price 30 Australian Dollars (including postage), or may be paid in equivalent currency. E-mail address for orders:*

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The 1974 Baltic Decision Revisited

Algimantas P. TAŠKŪNAS

University of Tasmania

An abbreviated version of this paper was presented at the 16th Australian conference of AABS (Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies, inc.), held at the University of Melbourne on 29 September, 2012. Further research of the topic is still continuing.

Introduction

In July, 1974, the Australian Labor Government recognized, de jure, Soviet sovereignty over the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The decision provoked extensive protests and demonstrations headed by the Baltic communities. The issue remained alive in Australia for 17 months, until a newly elected Liberal-Country Party coalition reversed the decision in December 1975.

This event should now be a compulsory history lesson for every Baltic citizen, because it was the most significant political decision affecting every Baltic person in Australia.

Throughout this paper, the Australian Government's de jure recognition will be referred to as The Baltic Recognition or, as The Baltic Decision.

The Research so far

The Baltic decision has prompted at least four major research studies, so far (Dunsdorfs, 1975 and 1982; Waldren, 1993; Shuey, 2004, Märtson, 2011); as well as more than a dozen significant papers by Peter Boyce, Edgars Dundorfs, William J. Hough, John Knight, Paul Öpik, Ann Tündern-Smith, etc.

Collectively, this material has provided an insight into an important topic. However, there are still some gaps in the published knowledge:

1. The significance of international recognition for states.

2. Previous recognitions of Baltic independence.
3. The role of the Australian Communist Party.
4. The Baltic recognition was by no means spontaneous.
5. Post-1974 reactions.
6. Contemporary Baltic media.
7. The invisible hand of the Adversary.
8. Why did the Australian Lib.-CP coalition “sit on the fence” for more than a year?
9. Andrew Peacock’s advisory board.
10. The originators and the main players in Baltic Recognition.

1. The Significance of International Recognition

When a new state is established anywhere in the world, it has to be **recognized** by other states. Recognition is of two kinds: *de facto* and *de jure*. Recognition does not come automatically: it often has to be lobbied, and even fought for.

2. Baltic Recognition

When Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania declared their independence toward the end of World War I, foreign recognition did not come easily. For example: The Entente powers⁶ did not grant *de jure* recognition to Estonia and Latvia until 26 January 1921. The US followed even later, in 1922. Similarly, Lithuania had to wait for British and French recognition.

Two decades later, after the Soviet Union annexed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in mid-June, 1940, the League of Nations condemned those forcible seizures of territory.

Western non-recognition became an important peaceful weapon in the Baltic peoples’ subsequent struggle for freedom, over the following 51 years.

3. The Communists in Australia

After World War 2, many Baltic refugees chose to migrate to Australia because they wanted “to get away from the Communists as far as

⁶ France, Britain, Japan, Belgium, Italy. The US did not grant recognition until 1922.

possible”. How wrong they were. They landed in a country with some 24,000 card-carrying Communists (Alexander, 1976, p.185). Many of them were active and influential in trade unions, media, universities, social groups and even churches.

From the start, Communist organizations and individuals attacked the Baltic “New Australians”, accusing them of being Nazi collaborators and killers of Jews. These anti-Baltic campaigns continued until the collapse of the Soviet Union, 45 years later.

With a few exceptions, most Baltic newcomers neither joined Australian anti-Communist movements, nor participated in anti-Communist party-political activities.

We have no reliable data about the Baltic immigrants’ voting patterns during their first 25 years in Australia (e.g., Popenhagen, 2012, p.186 had to rely on anecdotal data). It is true, however, that the Australian Balts, when suddenly faced with the 1974 Recognition, found themselves “on the outer”. That is, they had no direct Parliamentary representation or other influential connections.

4. Getting closer to Russia

A keen observer of the Australian political scene in the 1960s and 1970s might have seen the early warning signs that ultimately led to the 1974 Baltic Recognition.

After World War II, many Australians felt indebted to Soviet Russia, because the Russians were seen as having sacrificed 20 (or 27) million lives, to save Australia from the Nazis. That would explain why the postwar Baltic immigrants telling stories of Soviet cruelty were treated with suspicion by some Australians. To such people, being anti-Russian could be seen as being pro-Nazi.

Australian Communists and certain foreign visitors cashed in on this

Nazi myth and kept accusing Balts of being Nazi collaborators.

Australia's conservative LCP⁷ Government (from 1949 was vigorously anti-Communist (Gill, 2007, p.23), but not all-powerful. For example, it tried to ban the Communist Party, but did not succeed. Menzies' anti-Communist stand was reinforced by the Petrov Affair of 1954 and by the 1963 expulsion of the diplomatic spy Ivan Skripov.

Nevertheless, **Australian politicians saw China, and not Russia, as the main danger.** Mr Paul Hasluck, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, was quoted as saying that the USSR might even become a counter to perceived Chinese expansionism (Greenwood and Harper, 1974, p.343).

The diplomatic missions of the Soviet Union and Australia, withdrawn after Petrov's defection in April 1954, were fully restored by July 1959 (Gill, 2007, p.236). In 1964, Mr Hasluck became the first Australian minister to visit Moscow. A trade mission and a most-favoured-nation treaty followed in 1965 (Gill, 2007, p.238). The Soviet presence increased in the Indian Ocean (Millar, 1978, p.344). And so on.

5. Post-1974 Reactions

The Australian government made its Baltic recognition decision early in July, 1974, but kept it secret from Parliament and the nation for a whole month.

Once the de jure recognition became publicly known on August 3, 1974, the Australian Balts and their supporters promptly reacted with peaceful demonstrations, protest meetings, petitions, letters to the editors, and other political events. It was a mish-mash of public activities - loud and colourful, but not adding up to a clear and definite strategy.

At the same time, Government spokesmen and a few politicians unsuccessfully tried to sell the "advantages" of the de jure recognition

⁷ LCP = Liberal-Country Party.

- such as family reunions, settlement of estates and easier travel.⁸ Anyone familiar with the Soviet system could see, however, that these promises were unrealistic.

The peaceful struggle to reverse the Baltic decision continued throughout the Commonwealth, for the next 17 months. While the Australian Balts were in the forefront of many activities, they were also backed by other interest groups and by sympathetic individuals. But who were these supporters? How did the Baltic cause benefit from their backing? **All this needs more independent research.**

All along, the confrontation was not between two uniform, clearly defined power blocks. A few actors could be seen as participating - at least for some time - “on the wrong side”, such as Brian Harradine before his expulsion from the ALP.

During this challenging time, the Australian Balts had no democratically elected spokesmen. The Baltic Council of Australia tried to assume this role; but, because of its structure, the BCA could only speak for less than a half of Australian Balts who happened to be financial members of their national groupings.

Tasmania had a mixed Australian/Baltic association named HELLP. Consequently, its membership had a different and broader membership base.

After a while, a shadow of suspicion appeared over the national Baltic Council. An informal ad hoc network of personal contacts was then created, linking all States of Australia by telephone.

Other active participants in the “anti-recognition front” included the DLP (Democratic Labor Party), some Right-wing trade unions (or their leaders), the Friends of the Prisoners, and various other interest groups and individuals.

An analysis of this wide range of participants is needed to understand

⁸ Senate Hansard, 1974, pp.781-782.

the dynamics of this long chain of events.

Not everything went smoothly. From time to time, the Baltic activists had to face false allegations of thuggery, negative legal opinions of de jure reversals and the invisible hand of the Adversary.

* * * *

The major turning point in this campaign came unexpectedly, and almost by accident. It was the confrontation between Prime Minister Whitlam and Matriculation college teacher Tom McGlynn, at a pre-election meeting held in Launceston (Tasmania) Matriculation College on 26 June, 1975.⁹ The Federal seat of Bass¹⁰ had been vacated by the resignation of the Hon. Lance H. Barnard, and a by-election was to be held on 28 June to fill the vacancy.

About 600 College students were present at the meeting; most of them were of the franchise age. One of the students, John Horak, asked the Prime Minister, why the Australian Government had recognized the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. The PM replied that the Baltic States had been independent for only 20 years and that they lost their independence in 1939 (?). Mr McGlynn commented from the audience that this was not on the free volition of the Baltic States. The Prime Minister then shouted, twice, that the Baltic States were all Fascist in the 1930's. Mr McGlynn objected, by saying, "Your history is all wrong, Sir". On learning that Mr McGlynn was a teacher, the PM shouted, "You are a disgrace to your profession".

On the next day Mr McGlynn invited the Prime Minister to apologize for the insult. In the absence of an apology, he sued Mr Whitlam. It took the Prime Minister 44 days to publish an apology, pay Mr McGlynn his legal costs and 205 dollars damages. He donated the whole amount to the Baltic News bulletin.

This incident brought three benefits to the Baltic cause:

⁹ This description of the confrontation and its aftermath is tentative and follows Dunsdorfs (1982), op.cit., pp.312-317. - The present version is inadequate and is to be reviewed after consultation with Mr McGlynn.

¹⁰ The electorate of Bass comprised the towns of Launceston, Scottsdale and St.Helens the north-western rural areas of Tasmania and Flinders Island.

(1) **The Baltic recognition issue** suddenly moved to the forefront of the Australian Federal politics. The teacher vs. PM confrontation took over the front pages of the national media.

(2) It affected the nation's **voting** patterns. Four days later in Bass, the swing from Labor was 17.5 per cent, while only a four per cent cent swing was needed for the Liberal Party to win Bass.

(3) The long (44 days') **delay** to Mr McGlynn's case kept the Baltic issue alive that much longer.

* * * *

It was not until 20 August, 1975, that Opposition Leader Malcolm Fraser, finally made a clear and unconditional promise to reverse Mr Whitlam's Baltic decision when next in Government.¹¹

The occasion was the launch in Canberra of Edgars Dunsdorfs' book, *The Baltic Dilemma, Volume I*. This book was the most comprehensive documentation of the Baltic recognition, available at the time: it played a significant part in getting the recognition reversed.

6. The Baltic media

Mass media have been playing an ever growing part in Australian politics. The Australian Balts realized soon after the 1974 Recognition that no one was really speaking for them. At that stage, there was only one English language Baltic periodical, *News Digest International*, published in Australia. This journal was little known and had limited circulation.

The Australian Balts reacted promptly. New periodicals began to appear: *Baltic Herald* (Sydney), *Baltic Review*, *Baltic News* (Hobart). Books and pamphlets were printed and reprinted.

Researchers have so far paid insufficient attention to the important part the Baltic media played, - not only during the 17 months of the Australian Baltic Recognition (1974-75), but also in the 15 years that followed. While the other Baltic newspapers ceased publication by 1978, *Baltic News* continued to appear four times a year, right up to the restoration of the independence of three Baltic Republics in 1990.

¹¹ Dunsdorfs (1982), op.cit., p. 316-320.

During that time, the Invisible Hand of the Adversary made at least three attempts - to stop the Baltic News, or at least reduce its circulation.

In 1983, the Australian ABC-TV decided to produce a programme on Baltic News. A script was written, the filming done, and editing completed. But the programme was never screened. The ABC management black-balled the story, forever.

7. The invisible hand of the Adversary

Throughout the Baltic campaign of 1974-75 and thereafter, the invisible hand of the Adversary remained active. This is where the existing studies of the Baltic Decision are lacking so far: they should have at least acknowledged the “invisible hand’s” existence.

Three decades later, when Australian security papers were released after the usual 30 years’ embargo, it was revealed that at least one prominent leader of the Baltic action in 1974-75 had frequented to the Soviet Embassy.

8. Why did the Lib.-CP coalition “sit on the fence” for more than a year?

Australian Balts and their supporters tirelessly pursued their anti-recognition activities, for 17 months (1974-75), because neither of the two major Australian Party blocks - the ruling Labor Party and the Liberal - Country Party opposition - would meet their request.

In private meetings with Baltic leaders, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr Snedden) promised to reverse Labor’s Baltic decision; but he would not publicly confirm this commitment, nor issue a media release.

On 6 October, 1974. Mr Snedden addressed 1,000 demonstrators at Doncaster. He told them that he confidently expected the next Liberal-Country Party Government to reverse the Whitlam Government’s recognition... [but only on the condition] that **he would first make sure no individuals were harmed**” (The Age 7/10/74, quoted in Dunsdorfs, I, 256-57).

Six months later, on 14 April, 1975, the Shadow Minister for Foreign

Affairs, Mr Andrew Peacock, wrote ,

“... Immediately upon return to Government, **we will commence discussions** with the Soviet Union, seeking a review of the de jure recognition with the aim of restoring mere de facto recognition”.¹²

Mr Fraser repeated the same statement when writing to Mrs Looever a month later, on 15 May, 1975,¹³

During that year of uncertainty, some Australian lawyers argued that “such important public decisions as de jure recognitions could not be rescinded and reversed” (Dunsdorfs, II, p.318). In the event, subsequent events showed this argument to be null and void.

On 21 March, 1975, Malcolm Fraser replaced Snedden as the Leader of the Opposition (Dunsd. II, 302). There is no evidence that this leadership change had a direct effect on the Baltic recognition question. However, Liberal-CP foreign policy was taking shape, and the Baltic question was part of it.

9. Andrew Peacock’s Advisory Board

This brings us to the most important part of this discussion.

The Whitlam Government’s de jure Baltic recognition of 1974 was reversed by the next Federal Government in December 1975, **on the advice of the Liberal Party’s External Affairs advisory group.**

During the Whitlam era [in 1974-75], shadow Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock had established an informal advisory group, to help the Liberal Party develop a revised policy platform.

The consultative group agreed that most key foreign policy initiatives of the Whitlam government should be honoured. The group considered,

¹² Quoted in Dunsdorfs 1982, p.309.

¹³ Ibid.

however, that the Liberals should promise to de-recognize Soviet incorporation of the three Baltic republics. John Knight and Peter Boyce were the principal advocates of such reversal.¹⁴

The Liberal-CP. Opposition accepted this recommendation and the recognition could be reversed quickly after the change of Government in 1975.

10. Who were the principal players in the Baltic Decision?

Australian foreign policy was markedly changed and re-arranged, after the Whitlam Labor government came to power in December, 1972. At first, until November, 1973, Whitlam himself was the Foreign Affairs minister. He presided over new initiatives, while the Department of Foreign Affairs grew (1972-75). The new Head of Department, A.P. Renouf, was “a man of his [Whitlam’s] choice” (Hawker et al., 1979, p.215). When Whitlam surrendered the Foreign Affairs portfolio to Senator Willesee in November 1973, Whitlam continued to take a close interest (Hawker et al., 1979, p.214). It is little wonder, therefore, that many subsequent changes and innovations in foreign affairs were attributed to Gough Whitlam and often carried his name. Mr Whitlam has not denied that the formal buck stopped with him as Head of State. However, he has repeatedly blamed the then Australian Ambassador in Moscow, Sir James Plimsoll for initiating and promoting the Baltic decision.

So, who was to blame? Who were the prime movers behind the Baltic decision? It has been suggested that Alan Renouf, head of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs during the period under review, was active in the promotion of the Baltic recognition. In one of his subsequent books,¹⁵ Estonian researcher Tonis MÄRTSON has

14 BOYCE, Peter (2010). The reversal of Whitlam’s recognition. Lithuanian Papers, Vol.24/2010, pp.34-35.

15 RENOUF, Alan (1979), The frightened country. South Melbourne: The Macmillan Co. of Australia.

recently introduced a new idea. He claimed in his Master's thesis that the initiative was Soviet one. While no such evidence is available here, we are looking forward to a further Martson's novel idea.

Conclusion

The Baltic decision of 1974 was the most significant political decision to affect the Australian Balts, in their lifetimes. Remarkably, its importance is still not appreciated by many - and even by some who should know better.

For example, the latest 299-page volume on "Australian Lithuanians"¹⁶ dismisses the Baltic Decision lightly, in one-and-a-half paragraphs. According to that account, Lithuanians travelled to Canberra and protested. After nationwide outcries, Snedden promised to reverse Whitlam's decision and this was done after the change of government in 1975.

If only all politics were that simple...

Algimantas P. (Al) TAŠKŪNAS, OAM, PhD (Tas.), is the Editor of this journal. New e-mail address: al.taskunas@gmail.com

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The Baltic Decision received regular exposure in the Australian daily press, while it remained current, i.e., from August 1974 to December, 1975. The following are typical examples of such reporting:

* Censure over Baltic States move. *The Canberra Times*, August 5, 1974.

* 1500 protest at Baltic recognition. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 20, 1974.

Books and Periodicals

* ALEXANDER, Fred (1976), *Australia since Federation* (3rd edition). West Melbourne: Thomas Nelson.

* *Baltic News* (Tasmania), an English language bulletin published by HELLP (The Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples

¹⁶ POPENHAGEN, Luda, (2012), *Australian Lithuanians*. Sydney: UNS Press, p.99.

Association); [and later, by the Baltic Research Foundation] in Hobart, Australia. There was no connection with the newsletter of the same name published in the US. Baltic News (Tasmania) was established in March 1975, specifically to publicize the situation in the three Baltic States, and to fight for the reversal of Whitlam's Recognition. When this was achieved, the bulletin continued campaigning for Baltic independence until the end of 1990. A total of 68 issues were published.

* BETHELL, Nicholas (1974), *The Last Secret: The delivery to Stalin of over two million Russians by Britain and the United States*. New York: Basic Books.

* BOYCE, Peter, The Reversal of Whitlam's Recognition. *Lithuanian Papers*, No.24/2010, pp. 34-35. - Emeritus Professor Peter Boyce is one of Australia's leading Political Scientists and former Vice-Chancellor of Murdoch University, Perth. In this paper, he describes Peacock's consultative group that played an essential part in the termination of Whitlam's Recognition. This group, and the author of the paper himself, were the key factors that were often overlooked, and not fully appreciated, by many.

* DUNSDORFS, Edgars (1975), *The Baltic Dilemma: [Part 1]*. The case of the de jure recognition by Australia of the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. New York: Robert Speller and Sons, 1975.

* DUNSDORFS, Edgars (1982), *The Baltic Dilemma: Part 2*. The case of the de jure recognition by Australia of the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. Melbourne: Baltic Council of Australia,

1982.

* KNIGHT, John (1979). The Baltic States: Foreign policy and domestic response, 1974-78. *The Australian Journal of Politics and History* (1979), p.35.

* MÄRTSON, Tonis (2011). Recognition of Annexation of the Baltic States by Australia. *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, 2011, 1 (135), pp.65-84 [Abstract, pp.82-84:].

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* ÖPIK, Paul, TÜNDERN-SMITH, Ann (2006), Renouf's role in recognition: Foreign Affairs head was key player, wanted history to recognise him! *Meie Kodu*, 22 February, 2006.

* RENOUF, Alan (1979), *The frightened country*. South Melbourne: The Macmillan Co. of Australia.

* SHUEY, Madeleine (2004). *Australia's 1974 recognition, de jure, of Soviet sovereignty in the Baltic States*. University of Tasmania, B.A. Honours thesis (History).

* SHUEY, Madeleine (2004). The Quest for the Truth, Lithuanian Papers, No.18/2044, pp.57-59. This report on her incisive research includes reference to her two interviews with Mr Whitlam himself.

* WALDREN, Stephen, (1993) *Lithuania: The Impact of the Stimson Doctrine*. Sandy Bay, Tas.: TUU Lithuanian Studies Society. - 32 pp. Monograph - Although Lithuania is shown in the title, Mr Waldren's thorough analysis actually refers to all three Baltic States, and the author does say so in several places in his study. ISBN 0 85901 5475.

Was Neutrality the Appropriate Answer?

Two years ago, we published an article by Mr Audronius Ažubalis, the then Foreign Minister of the Republic of Lithuania (LP 26/2012, pp. 17-20).

Mr Ažubalis argued that, although the free Lithuania of the day had declared neutrality well before the start of World War II, this policy was ineffective. Some further thoughts on this topic have since appeared in The Lithuanian Tribune and are quoted below.

More than seven decades later, on March 28, 2001, a debate dedicated to the seventh anniversary of Lithuania's membership in NATO was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vilnius, during which Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Audronius Ažubalis noted that the country's policy of neutrality seven decades ago was not successful and the people of Lithuania paid a high cost. As a result, Lithuania could not repeat this mistake today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported.

“Quite often the word ‘neutrality’ is associated only with positive things. It is believed that ‘neutrality’ means some exclusive self-sufficiency, impartiality, and, especially, nonparticipation, i.e., a refusal to take part in a war between other powers. Due to this misconception seven decades ago, we had a very painful experience: three occupations of our country in four years and the resulting tragedy of the people of Lithuania,” Minister Ažubalis said.

The Minister also stressed the paradox of neutrality - whether it was possible to be free of commitments, the duty to defend human rights and respect to the self-determination of peoples and countries. Neutrality is an even greater global illusion today than it was in 1939, he said.

According to Minister Ažubalis, NATO is primarily the alliance of common values. So, Lithuania's goal to join NATO that was first officially recorded in 1994, was completely natural. “Of course, membership has

not solved all of our security problems: the most pressing ones today are in the energy sector. However, NATO could perhaps expand its activities. The Energy Security Centre that was opened in Vilnius on January 14, 2011 is the best example of this,” he said.

At the debate, historians, political scientists and diplomats analyzed the differences between the Lithuanian foreign and national security policies in 1930-1940 and in 1990-2011. Two research works were presented: Lithuania in 1938-1939: Neutrality Illusions by historian Algimantas Kasparavičius and 1939 - The Year That Changed Everything In Lithuania's History by historian and political scientist Šarūnas Liekis.

Ack.: The Lithuania Tribune <http://www.lithuaniatribune.com>

Lithuanian Studies in Tasmania

The University of Tasmania (UTAS) does not have a separate teaching Department of Lithuanian. Instead, extensive Lithuanian Studies have been pursued in Tasmania for more than a quarter of a century, in a novel co-operative arrangement between various UTAS Schools and the Lithuanian Studies Society.¹⁷ The studies have proceeded along five successful avenues:

(1) ***Individual postgraduate research*** on Lithuanian topics in various parts of the University of Tasmania - such as the Schools (or former Departments) of History and Classics, English, Education, Commerce, Law, Environmental Studies, International Relations, Psychology etc. A candidate satisfactorily completing approved Lithuanian research in these fields is awarded the University's Master's or Ph.D. degree. There are also opportunities for further study and research in Lithuania.

(2) ***Honours*** dissertations on approved Lithuanian topics, completed in various Schools of the University. Two ***scholarships*** are offered annually: \$5,000 Lithuanian Honours scholarship, and \$2,000

¹⁷ Full details of this arrangement, and the nine reasons that led to it, are set out in the book by TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas P., 2005, Lithuanian Studies in Australia. Hobart, Tasmania: (Published by TUU Lithuanian Studies Society), pp. 122-141. ISBN 1 86295 272 8.

V.Patašius scholarship for Lithuanian studies at Honours or higher level.

(3) Lithuanian *Language courses*: Beginners, since 1992; Advanced, since 2011. Research of the Lithuanian language is also active at UTAS.

(4) Australia's largest *Lithuanian Library*, with 1,000+ Lithuanian titles in English, plus 600 books in other languages. This unique collection has been donated to J.Janonio High-school in Šiauliai.



Six senior Lithuanian academics visited the Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania, in August 2014. During their 8 days' stay, they were formally received in the Tasmanian Parliament (pictured).

Tasmanian students have now reverted to their own University's other resources.

(5) Refereed English-language *journal Lithuanian Papers*, reporting on all fields of Lithuanian studies. The journal has been published annually since 1987. In addition to Tasmanian and Australian researchers, Lithuanian experts from all over the world are regularly invited to write for the *Lithuanian Papers*.

Twelve successful dissertations and eight major research reports - all

on different Lithuanian subjects - have been completed at UTAS so far¹⁸ .

Theses Completed at the University of Tasmania, 1990 - 2013

PH.D.

1. KAZOKAS, Genovaitė E. (1992), *Lithuanian artists in Australia, 1950-1990*. PhD thesis (History).

2. BANKS, Amanda J.(1997), *Political, economic and social reform in Lithuania: Implications for the environment*. PhD thesis (Geography and Environmental Studies).

3. TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas P. (2002), *Developing a framework for Lithuanian Studies in Australian universities*. PhD thesis (Education).

Honours

4. BANKS, Amanda J. (1990), *Lithuania's environmental problems*. Grad.Dip. Env.St. Honours thesis (Environmental Studies). Published as a monograph by TUULSS in 1991. – ISSN 1031-3958.

#5. TAYLOR, Sarah (1998). *Development of the conservation movement in Lithuania*. B.A. Honours thesis (Sociology).

6. BOAS, Erika (1999), “*Leading dual lives*”, Lithuanian Displaced Persons in Tasmania. B.A. Honours thesis (History).

#7. FLANAGAN, Kathleen (2001), *Creating Lithuania: The historiography of Lithuanian nationalism, 1863-1985*. B.A. Honours (History).

#8. ROZENTALS, Darien J. (2003), *The illusion of space: Writing cities and reading their monuments* [with reference to Vilnius and Užupis, in Lithuania]. B.A. Honours thesis (English, Journalism and European Languages).

#9. SHUEY, Madeleine (2004), *Australia's 1974 recognition, de jure, of Soviet sovereignty in the Baltic States*. B.A. Honours thesis (History).

#10. JANSEN, Claire (2007), *19th century Lithuanian poet Antanas Baranauskas and his Forest of Anykščiai*. B.A. Honours thesis (English, Journalism and European Languages).

#11. PEYPER, Audrey (2012), *Crusading Chivalry and The*

¹⁸ Further details are available on request.

Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, B.A. Honours thesis (History).

#12. MURPHY, Stephen (2013 -), *Lithuanian Anzacs in World War I*. B.A. Honours (History, 2013).

Other Major Research Reports

13. WALDREN, Stephen, 1993, *Lithuania: The impact of the Stimson doctrine*. Major research paper (Law). Published by TUULSS in 1993. ISBN 0 85901 5475.

14. TAŠKŪNAS, Simon R.P., 1997, *Torrens title system for Lithuania?* Major research paper (Law/Commerce). Presented as the Section Chairman's address, at the International Conference on Property Valuation and investment in Central and Eastern Europe, Vilnius Gedimino Technical University, Feb. 6-7, 1997.

15. TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas, 1998, *Nereikalingų svetimžodžių rinkinys* (A collection of [1,200] unnecessary foreign words [in Lithuanian]). Published by LSS., Sandy Bay, Tas., 1998. – ISBN 0 85901 786 9.

16. TAŠKŪNAS, Vincas (1998), *The Church in occupied Lithuania: An alternative political order?* Major research paper presented at the 16th AABS conference on Baltic States at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, USA, June 19-21, 1998.

17. GROSS, Kate Elizabeth and ROZENTALS, Darien Jane, 2004, *Letters from the Outside: The history of the Friends of the Prisoners*. - Published as a separate book by TUU Lithuanian Studies Society, ISBN 1 86295 1470.

18. TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas, 2011, *Teaching Lithuanian to Anglo-Saxons*. A 108-page report on the joint research at the universities of Vilnius and Tasmania, in 2011.

19. TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas, 2012, *The 1974 Baltic Decision Revisited*. Major paper presented at the 16th AABS Conference, at the University of Melbourne, 29/9/2012.

20. PEYPER, Audrey, 2013, *Teutonic Order Corporate Identity, ~~The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle and Lithuania~~*. - Published in Lithuanian Papers Vol.27/2013.

Research Books Published by LSS, 1991 - 2005

Winner of UTAS Lithuanian Honours Scholarship

Winner of V.Patašius Scholarship

Research Books Published by LSS, 1991 - 2005

- * TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas P. and DOYLE, John W.,(eds.), 1991. *Lithuania: A View from Australia: A Bicentennial selection of essays.* (LP.Vol.2. Sandy Bay, Tas.: TUU Lithuanian Studies Societ. ISSN 1031-3958.
- * BANKS, Amanda J., *Lithuania's environmental problems: Cultural and Political Aspects.* (LP,Vol.3). Sandy Bay, Tas.: TUU Lithuanian Studies Society, 1991. ISSN 1031-3958.
- * TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas P. and DOYLE, John W., (eds.), 1991, *Lithuania at the crossroads: Selected readings.* (LP.Vol.4.) Sandy Bay, Tas.: TUU Lithuanian Studies Society. ISSN 1031-3958.
- * TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas P. (ed.), 1992. *Lithuania in 1991: Selected readings.* (TUULS Book No.5) . Sandy Bay, Tas.: TUU Lithuanian Studies Society, ISBN 0 646 09792 X.
- * WALDREN, Stephen, 1993. *Lithuania: The impact of the Stimson doctrine.* TUULS Book No.6. Sandy Bay, Tas.: TUU Lithuanian Studies Society. ISBN 0 85901 5475.
- * TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas, 1998. *Nereikalingų svetimžodžių rinkinys* {A collection of unnecessary foreign words, in Lithuanian}. Illustrations by Kev Bailey. Sandy Bay, Tas.: TUU Lithuanian Studies Society. ISBN 0 85901 786 9.
- * TAŠKŪNAS, Algimantas P., 2005, *Lithuanian Studies in Australia: The case for low-demand language and cultural courses in higher education.* (Monograph). Hobart, Tasmania: Tasmania University Union Lithuanian Studies Society. ISBN 1 86295 2736 (paperback), ISBN 1 86295 272 8 (hard cover).

Other Major LSS Publications

- * LITHUANIAN PAPERS (1987 – continuing): Annual journal of the Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania. Vols. 1-27. Average 72 pp. each. ISSN 1031-3958.

* GROSS, Kate Elizabeth and ROZENTALS, Darien Jane, 1993. *Letters from the Outside: The history of the Friends of the Prisoners*. Sandy Bay, Tas.: TUU Lithuanian Studies Society, 1993. ISBN 1 86295 147 0. Tasmanian / Lithuanian Titles by Other Australian Publishers

ANGUS, M., 1975. *The world of Olegas Truchanas*. Hobart: OBM Pty. Ltd. (*The original publisher of the first edition*). This selection of Lithuanian artistic photographer Olegas Truchanas's work has been published, and re-published in eight editions.

TARVYDAS, R., 1997. *From Amber Coast to Apple Isle: Fifty years of Baltic immigrants in Tasmania, 1948-1998*. Hobart: Baltic Semicentennial Commemoration Activities Organising Committee.

KAZOKAS, Genovaitė. *Lithuanian Artists in Australia, 1950 - 1990*. Melbourne: Europe-Australia Institute, 2003. The contributions of Tasmanian Lithuanian artists, in the all-Australian context, are detailed in this book. The entire work is based on Mrs. Kazokas's successful Ph.D. thesis, completed at the University of Tasmania in 1992.

Further Academic Achievements

Co-operation with Lithuania and with Lithuanian Experts Abroad

During the first 27 years of its existence (1987-2014), LSS established contacts with 42 academics in Lithuania and with further 225 Lithuanian experts in other countries. LSS commissioned and published at least one original paper written by each of these 225 colleagues. They are listed by name in a separate document titled *Lithuanian Papers, Bibliography 1987 - 2013*.

A total of 275 original articles have been published in the Society's journal, *Lithuanian Papers*, to date (*see separate Bibliography*).

Language Teaching

LSS started teaching Lithuanian in Tasmania in 1992. Classes for Society members were initially conducted by Algirdas Makarevičius, a visiting Lecturer of Languages from Kaunas Technical University (Lithuania).

As sufficient new beginners, mostly non-Lithuanians, continued to enrol in subsequent years, Lithuanian languages classes continued annually, and this tradition has been maintained to the present day. Two lecture streams, the beginners' and advanced classes, started in



Part of the 2013 Lithuanian language class at the University of Tasmania, photographed with Juratė Reilley, a visitor from Geelong (front row, centre).

2011. They are currently taught by Regina Krutulytė-Share and Dr Algimantas (Al) Taškūnas.

Original Conference Papers

See additional Bibliographies and Indices for the list of other papers contributed by LSS members at AABS/Australasia and overseas conferences.

Address for enquiries and donations:

TUU Lithuanian Studies Society (LSS)

Post Office Box 777, SANDY BAY, Tasmania, 7006.

Australia.

Phone: (03) 6225 2505

A Lasting Gift of Art

The origins of Wollongong City Gallery date back to 1951 with the formation of the Illawarra Art Society. The Society was formed by a group of local people interested in promoting art and culture in the region. This interest was further fostered with the appointment of local artist and potter Ivan England into the Society in 1954.

The Illawarra Art Society began a program of lectures, exhibitions and competitions and in 1956 held the first acquisitive prize. The intention of this prize was to initiate and develop a Wollongong City Art Collection. Over the years these competitions attracted not only local and regional artists, but also artists from around the state.

By the early 1970's the need for a gallery to house, conserve and display this growing collection began to gain attention. Council agreed that an interim gallery space could be formed on the mezzanine floor of the Council Chambers. However, it was soon apparent that a more permanent location was needed to accommodate the expanding collection.

In 1974 the Gallery Society was formed with the express purpose to "promote the establishment of a Gallery and raise money on its behalf." A role the Gallery Society continues to this day in the form of the Friends of Wollongong City Gallery.

In 1976 Bob Šredersas, a local Lithuanian art collector, donated his collection of paintings, drawings and antique china to the City. This gift gave the final impetus to the Gallery gaining its own site.

This site was the old Hughes, Whetton & Reilly building on the corner of Burelli & Keira Streets, Wollongong. Although this location was always

seen as an interim site due to the inadequate design, display and storage facilities of the building, it opened its doors as Wollongong City Gallery in 1978 and remained so for 13 years, until the Gallery's relocation to its present site, the old Council Administration Building, in 1991. This building was designed by Reginald J. McGoffin in an austere, stripped back classical style; it is a perfect example of early 1950s Australian civic architecture. With its dramatic curved façade, Wollongong City Gallery retains a unique floor plan said to evoke the shape of a stylised jewelled crown designed to commemorate the recent coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

Today the Gallery is recognised as one of the most innovative Regional art museums in Australia. The Gallery presents a diverse program of high profile exhibitions as well as exhibitions by local and regional artists and community groups. The Gallery also presents an ongoing schedule of innovative and varied Education and Public Programs that enhance the program and provide access to the Gallery's exhibition program and collection.

Wollongong City Gallery

Corner of Kembla and Burelli Streets, Wollongong

Postal Locked Bag 8821, Wollongong, NSW 2500

Phone +612 4228-7500 Fax +612 4226-5530

Email: gallery@wollongong.nsw.gov.au

<http://www.wollongongcitygallery.com/about/Pages/default.aspx>

Another Quiz

When we published our first Quiz two years ago, readers welcomed it enthusiastically and asked for more. So, here is another Quiz.

1. The predominant religion in contemporary Lithuania is:

- (a) Eastern Catholic
- (b) Lutheran
- (c) Roman Catholic
- (d) Pagan

2. At various times since 1252, Lithuania's largest Baltic port has been known as:

- (a) Klaipėda
- (b) Memel
- (c) Neu Dortmund
- (d) All of the above

3. What is the approximate distance, as the crow flies, from London to Vilnius?

- (a) 1,250 kms
- (b) 1,730 kms
- (c) 2,450 kms
- (d) 3,300 kms

4. The first Lithuanian ruler to unify the Lithuanian state was:

- (a) Mindaugas
- (b) Gediminas
- (c) Jogaila
- (d) Vytautas

5. At the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the Republic of Lithuania was:

- (a) neutral
- (b) an ally of Poland
- (c) an ally of the USSR
- (d) an ally of Nazi Germany

6. The most popular national sport in Lithuania is:

- (a) tennis
- (b) soccer
- (c) basketball
- (d) boxing

7. Litas was the pre-1939 currency unit of:

- (a) Latvia
- (b) Lithuania
- (c) Lebanon
- (d) Belarus

8. Lithuania is a country of lakes. How many Lithuanian lakes are 0.5 ha or larger?

- (a) 1,400
- (b) 1,830
- (c) 2,450
- (d) 2,830

The **ANSWERS** will be published in the next Issue.

BOOK REVIEW:

Speaking for those who could not tell their story

Children of Siberia: Memoirs of Lithuanian Exiles

Supplemented translation of the Lithuanian edition

compiled by I.K. Aras and V. Zavadskis, illustrations by M. Zavadskis, translated by Ž. Gimbutas>

Published by Naujasis Iankas, Kaunas, Lithuania, 2013.

Hard cover, section sewn, illustrated, 325 pages.

Available from the Lithuanian Studies Society, University of Tasmania, P.O. Box 777, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7006. E-Mail: al.taskunas@gmail.com

Recommended Retail Price \$24.95 + Postage \$5.05.

When I was growing up in suburban Australia in the 1960s I heard about new Australians who had lived in concentration camps. These people included 'Balts' (Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians), Poles, Germans and 'White' Russians. To a young child the words 'concentration camp' seemed to mean something made of steel, cold and hard and deadly. No adult would really explain to me what happened in a camp, and I overheard only a few snippets of information about the people concerned. Later in life, I would meet and become better acquainted with different men and women who had been deported from their homelands. Most were silent about their experiences and the lives of their families. Some expressed bitterness towards the Russians; while others would relate a brief story from their memories, which, to a young Australian sounded so extreme and alien as to be incomprehensible. Years later, when visiting the post-Soviet states I remembered Al, Bianca, Helen, Endel and Alex, and felt I had to learn more. If only the English version of *Children of Siberia* had been in my back-pack.

The memoirs of sixteen Lithuanian child survivors of Soviet deportation to Siberia speak for those people who could not or would not tell their story. Although the memoirs are clearly told by adults, the voices relating the past resonate as the voices of children, clear, simple and unsullied by intense emotion and politics. Sixteen very different personalities who, despite the deprivations and misery of their experiences in the labour camps do not talk with animosity or venom. However, there is a general feeling that their losses must never be suffered by future generations.

Faith, education and language were fundamental to a quality of life beyond mere physical survival. Some of the exiles were sustained by the strength of their Christian faith. Felling timber, working in lumber yards, fishing and other manual labour did not foster a child's education, yet parents and the children themselves made an effort to learn and study. Maintaining the Lithuanian language was the other mainstay of existence.

In their observations and recollections, most of the children do not try to make sense of their situation which leads to a objective, and clear telling of their story. The survivors mention people and places by name, which are very important details in a memoir, especially for researchers, family historians and genealogists. The index of people and places (so often missing in many books) is indispensable. Such details render this book a source of information for people investigating their family history. Especially so today, as the surviving deportees are aging and dying without relating their memories. The voices of the *Children of Siberia* speak for those people.

It is remarkable that the book is so well illustrated with photographs of the young deportees and their families. The publication of those images from the 1940s and 1950s adds to the value of this little book. The black and white wood or linocut illustrations are stark and severe but most eloquent, and effectively convey cold, hunger and miserable conditions. These pictures enhance and elevate the text.

Children of Siberia suffers from the maps on the end papers being in

Lithuanian, although the places of exile are clearly plotted in relation to Lithuania. A simple black and white map showing the relative location of the main cities and the places of exile would have been of more use. Another criticism is that some of the American English will possibly grate with Australian readers. For example, the annoying use of the word 'gotten'.

A good introductory Foreword gives an overview of Soviet system of labour camps and their context within the communist system of government. It includes a brief outline of the Soviet occupation of Lithuania following the division of the Baltic states between Hitler's



A long journey in cattle wagons to the unknown...

Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union and gives the numbers of people imprisoned, murdered and deported. The accuracy of those staggering numbers is rarely disputed owing to the meticulous records maintained by the Soviets. The Foreword is complemented by a comprehensive Afterword which expands to cover the history of Lithuania in brief, aspects of Russian history and the use of Siberia for exile and internment. The final paragraph brings that historical, geographical and political review up to date with reference to Lithuania's reliance on Russia for gas, and Russia's construction of nuclear power plants near the border with Lithuania. No doubt the Lithuanians are watching current (February-March 2014) events in Ukraine with great interest and some trepidation.

***Marion Hercock is an Adjunct Research Fellow in the School of Earth and Environment.
University of Western Australia***

Lithuania - Main Facts

Location: in Europe, on the Eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. Lithuania borders Poland (103.7 km) and Kaliningrad (290 km) to the southwest and west; Latvia to the north (610 km); Belarus to the east and south (653.5 km) and 99 km along the Baltic Sea.

According to the National Geographical Institute of France (1989), the geographical centre of Europe is situated 24 km North-West of Vilnius.

Area: 65,300 square kilometers (25,212 sq. miles), about the size of Tasmania or West Virginia. Distribution: 54% agricultural lands, 30% forests, 2% roads, 3% developed lands, 4% water, 7% other.

Time: GMT + 2 hours or AEST less 8 hours. When it is 12 noon in Vilnius, it is 11.00 a.m. in Stockholm and Frankfurt; 10.00 a.m. in London; 5.00 a.m. in New York; 8.00 p.m. in Sydney and Hobart.

Population (2010): 3,281,000 and decreasing. Distributed (2007) between urban 66.67% and rural 33.3%. Women make up 53.3% of the total population. Average life-span 73.1 years. Literacy rate: 98 per cent.

Capital city: Vilnius (2010 population 560,000).

Other largest cities (by population): Kaunas 348,600; Klaipėda 182,800; Šiauliai 125,500; Panevėžys 112,000, Alytus 66,800.

Ethnic groups: Lithuanians, 81.6%; Russians, 8.2%; Poles, 6.9%; Byelorussians, 1.5%; Ukrainians, 1%; Jews, 0.1%; others, 0.7%. Altogether, people of 115 different ethnic backgrounds live in Lithuania.

National language: Lithuanian, an ancient Indo-European language of the Baltic group. Lithuanians use a Latin-based alphabet of 32 letters.

Form of Government: Parliamentary republic. – Lithuania has been a member of the European Union and NATO since 2004.

Head of State: President (Ms. Dalia Grybauskaitė, re-elected for 5 years in 2014).

National assembly: Seimas (parliament), consisting of 141 members who are elected for 4-year terms. The Chairman is sometimes referred to as “Speaker”.

Religion: Predominantly Roman Catholic (estimated 80%). A number of other religions are also practised: Lutheran Evangelical, Reformed Evangelical, Russian Orthodox, Judaic, Old Believers, Sunni Muslims,

Karaims (Karaites), etc.

Population density: 51.0 per 1 square km.

National currency: Litas (abbreviated LTL), equals 100 centas.

Chief Products: Agriculture, forestry, fishing, light industry.

GDP (2008): LTL 92,016 mil., at current prices.

GDP per capita at 2008 prices: LTL 27,555.

Current account balance, compared to GDP: 3.8%.

Greatest distances: East-West 373 km, North-South 276 km.

Highest points: Aukštojas (293.8 metres), Juozapinė (292.7 metres), Kruopinė (293.4m).

Major rivers: Nemunas (937 km, 475 km of which is in Lithuania), Neris (510 km, 234 km in Lithuania), Venta (343 km).

Largest lakes: Drūkšiai (4,479ha), Dysnai (2,401 ha), Dusia (2,334 ha). Deepest lake: Tauragnas (60.5 m). Longest lake: Asveja (21.9 km). Altogether, there are over 4,000 lakes in Lithuania. Of these, 2,830 are larger than 0.5 ha, covering a total of 880 sq.km.

Visitors: About 3.5 million tourists visit Lithuania every year.

Climate: Temperate, between maritime and continental. Mean annual temperature is 6.7 degrees Celsius. Average January temperature in Vilnius is -3.8 degrees Celsius; July average, 18 degrees Celsius. Annual precipitation, 744.6 mm. Humidity, 78%.



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