



SUSTAINING THE IDEA OF LATVIAN INDEPENDENCE IN EXILE 1945-1991

The idea of possible restoration of their homeland's state independence was highly important among Baltic diaspora all around the world during the whole time the three Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – were under the soviet rule. Terming themselves “exiles” to even more stress the fact of forceful occupation of Baltic states and in consequence, the unwilling nature of their being abroad, Latvian diaspora acted in various ways to sustain the idea of Latvian independence and to lobby for the restoration of this independence. A new collection of documents characterizing these various and animated actions has been published late September 2017 entitled “Latvijas neatkarības idejas uzturēšana trimdā (1945-1991)” (Sustaining the idea of Latvian independence in exile 1945-1991).

This book of almost 400 pages contains 140 documents in Latvian language, covering time period from the last days of World War Two to the August Putsch of 1991, when Latvian independence was in fact fully restored. Aim of this publication is, through the scope of original documents, to show the immense diversity of exile national-political work both geographically and thematically, and to show how a large number of different exile organizations in all host countries in very varied ways for 46 years continued to sustain and promote this one for them very important idea – the idea of Latvian independence. Accordingly, authors of this volume have tried to represent in it all major events in diaspora national-political life and to give an example of political work done not only by large main diaspora organizations, but by all kinds of different organizations in different countries as well.

Documents for this volume have been chosen among many thousands of such in numerous archives all around the globe; volume contains documents from National archives of Latvia, USA, Australia, Great Britain, Sweden,

Call for papers open until January 21, 2018!
BALTIC HERITAGE NETWORK CONFERENCE
NEW BEGINNINGS OF BALTIC DIASPORA
26.-29.06.2018 TARTU, ESTONIA

More information on page 7.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Documentary Film Maker Helga Merits was Awarded the Baltic Unity Medal
- National Fashion Exhibit at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu
- Film Screening “Reflections of Paradise according to B.M. Galdikas”
- Fall Lectures at VEMU
- Focus on Jewish Diaspora and Its Heritage
- Sharing Our Stories: Born in Canada Symposium
- Building a Community: Estonian Architects in Post-War Toronto”

Editor-in-Chief: Piret Noorhani

Editor: Kristina Lupp

Designer: Kristina Lupp

The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line. The next deadline for submissions is 30 January 2018. Please send all related enquiries and submissions to Piret Noorhani: piretnoorhani@gmail.com

The Non-Profit Association Baltic Heritage Network was founded in Tartu on January 11, 2008. NPA BaltHerNet was established to foster cooperation between national and private archives, museums, libraries, and institutions of research, public associations and organizations collecting and studying the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora. It aims to facilitate the preservation and research of the historically valuable cultural property of the Baltic diaspora, as well as to ensure accessibility of these materials to the public.

NPA BaltHerNet is also committed to the organising of conferences, seminars and workshops, and to developing and administrating the electronic information website Baltic Heritage Network, a multilingual electronic gateway for information on the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora.

www.balther.net

ISSN 2228-3390

Germany, New Zealand, several USA presidential archives, archives of diaspora organizations and private archives of individuals and others. Three reports on diaspora activities by the KGB of the Latvian SSR are also included in the volume and show how diaspora activities were perceived by this institution. Preparation of this volume for publication took seven years and most of the documents have been published for the first time.

This collection of documents is published by the Latvian Academy of Sciences Baltic Center for Strategic Studies and is the 4th volume in the series of document publications "Non-violent resistance: documents (1945-1991) related to restoration of Latvian independence". First three volumes comprise documents on non-violent resistance in Latvia from 1945-1985 (vol.1), during the Awakening period from July 1986 to May 1990 (vol.2) and during the transition period to the full de facto restoration of independence from May 1990 to 21st of August 1991 (vol. 3).

As documents in this newly published volume testify, diaspora activities to preserve and promote the idea of Latvian independence were surprisingly varied, diverse and creative. The authors of this volume hope that it will spark an additional interest for the very interesting and not so very well-known pages of Latvian diaspora history.

Kristīne Beķere
Latvian Academy of Sciences

DOCUMENTARY FILM MAKER HELGA MERITS WAS AWARDED THE BALTIC UNITY MEDAL



Opening event. Riga, 26.09.2017.

From left: Tālav Jundzis, scientific editor and project head for publication series; Kristīne Beķere, editor of the volume; Venta Kocere, director of the Academic Library of University of Latvia; Jānis Kukainis, President of the World Federation of Free Latvians; Oļģerts Pavlovskis, former President of the World Federation of Free Latvians. Back row from left: Pēteris Blumbergs, President of the American Latvian Association; Andris Kesteris, President of the Latvian National Federation in Canada.

On November 10th the 36th session of the Baltic Assembly and the 23rd Baltic Council gathered in Tallinn. Representatives of the Baltic countries' parliament, speakers, and foreign ministers were present at the session. The Baltic Assembly was established in 1991 with the goal to promote the activities and collaboration of the Baltic parliaments. This time, the discussions considered questions regarding education, healthcare, security, and the protection of the European Union across borders.

At this session, the Baltic Unity Medals were also awarded to those who have assisted in creating Baltic collaboration as well as strengthening unity within their homeland and between the Baltic countries. Among those who received the medal was the director of the documentary film "The Story of the Baltic University," journalist Helga Merits from the Netherlands. The President of the Baltic Assembly, Aadu Must presented Helga with the medal.

Other award winners included the creative director of the Gaudeamus XII and XV Baltic Student Song and Dance Festival, head conductor Alo Ritsing, as well as the Baltic forestry

school professional competition organizer, director of Luua Forestry School Haana Zuba-Reinsalu.

Helga Merits is currently working on her fourth film on the topic of refugees. This film will focus on the Geislingen refugee camp. The film is unfinished as finding funding has been complicated. If anyone is interested in supporting Helga Merits' next film, this can be done through the Estonian Studies Centre. Please contact Piret Noorhane, 416 925 9405 or email: piret.noorhane@vemu.ca.

NATIONAL FASHION EXHIBIT AT THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM IN TARTU

In October the exhibit "From the Village Road to the Red Carpet: A Hundred Years of National Fashion" was opened at the Estonian National Museum in Tartu. The exhibit focuses on patterns and elements borrowed from Estonian folk costumes that have been used in contemporary fashion beginning in the 1920s until today.

Searching for one's family roots, with support from the past, is characteristic of Estonians and



one of the central aspects of our identity. Estonian national costume has endured for more than a hundred years, and been in a rather noteworthy position in Estonian public life. A wider revival of folk costume as festive clothing began in the 1920s. During the following decades the development clearly followed two paths. On one hand, the making of authentic national costumes following the ethnographic example was supported; on the other hand, the folk costume elements and attributes (patterns, cuts and materials) were used both by professionals and amateurs for designing modern clothing.

The exhibit also features 17 mannequins that demonstrate the importance of this topic in Estonian communities abroad. In the aftermath of World War II nearly 70,000 refugees fled from Estonia to the West, where at first, family lives continued in Germany and Sweden. Later, larger communities were also born in the USA, Canada, Australia, and Great Britain. While being detained in the German DP camps, people started to make clothing with national patterns, leather items, and jewellery.

By the end of 1952, a home decorating and handicraft magazine *Triinu* was being published in Sweden (later the headquarters of the magazine eventually moved to a Canadian publishing house Estoprint Ltd). Since the very beginning, in almost every issue, instructions were published for making a folk costume from an Estonian parish. These same patterns were also suggested for

decorating fashionable dresses and accessories.

It was stressed, that a national ornament is an important accessory and testimony for an Estonian woman with handicraft skills, especially in a foreign environment, which she should try to carry with her consciously, and then pass on to her descendants. National handicraft as a part of the national culture soon became one of the pillars of Estonian identity in exile. Not only was the copying of old patterns considered important, but also their improvement by re-design. If necessary, it was advised to change the material, the choice of colours, and the measurements of the pattern according to modern demands.

It was found that it was possible to assert the Estonian national pride internationally by using Estonia's cultural originality. Estonia, the Estonian people, and Estonian culture were introduced both in smaller places, and at larger Estonian events, such as the ESTOs, the USA West Coast Estonian Days, and the Australian Estonian Festivals.

Patterns of the national costume – sash/belt patterns, sleeve patterns, skirt stripes, the eight-pointed cross, the flower, the lozenge shape, the strawberry, and the Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria*) – are all beautiful and well-known to Estonians. These images have always carried a deeper message, as a part of national propaganda, in helping to resist a foreign ideology, supporting the national pride, and manifest of being an Estonian.

If anyone wishes to offer their



Jūratė Kazickaitė

Photo: National Library of Lithuania.

clothing decorated with national patterns or elements to the museum, please contact riina@erm.ee. We would be especially grateful for men's clothing with national patterns.

Riina Reinvelt, curator

A GUEST FROM THE US

On November 3, Jūratė Kazickaitė, the President of the Kazickas Family Foundation, visited the National Library of Lithuania. She was accompanied by Neila Baumilienė, the Head of the Foundation's New York City branch. The guests were given a tour of the Library and introduced with the activities and ongoing projects of such departments and centers as Adolfas Damušis Democracy Studies Centre.

The main focus of the Kazickas Family Foundation is education and social projects in Lithuania and the United States. During the meeting, the guests discussed future projects and further cooperation with the Library.

FILM SCREENING “REFLECTIONS OF PARADISE ACCORDING TO B.M. GALDIKAS”

On September 15, the National Library of Lithuania invited film fans to spend an hour in the jungles of Indonesia with Birutė Marija



Rojaus atspindžiai pagal Birutę Mariją Galdikas

Susitikimas su N. Skrudupaitė ir filmo peržiūra
Rugsejo 22 d. 12 val.
Kino salė, V a.

Filomena Galdikas, a Lithuanian-Canadian anthropologist, primatologist, conservationist, ethologist and author. “My real home is where my heart is—in the Kempliky National Park,” says one of the most famous anthropologists of the time, Dr. Galdikas. Although she rarely visits Lithuania, Galdikas always emphasizes her Baltic origin and love for her parents’ homeland.

In Indonesian tropical forests, Dr. Galdikas has spent more than 40 years studying and preserving “the last great monkey living in the trees.” During these years, the orangutans have almost disappeared due to the heavy logging and hunters who sell animals to individual buyers, as well as zoos or laboratories.

A few years ago, Neringa Skrudupaitė, a journalist and traveler, visited the Orangutan Rehabilitation and Conservation Center in Kalimantan, island of Borneo. After returning to Lithuania, she created a documentary film, “Reflections of Paradise according to B.M. Galdikas,” about Dr. Galdikas’s work with the endangered primates. The film captures the daily routine of a



scientist’s work and the challenges she faces every single day.

FALL LECTURES AT VEMU

The summer/fall 2017 lecture season at VEMU has been full of celebrations and anniversaries. The first lecture took place on August 14th and was presented by Maarja Hollo, who was visiting VEMU from the Estonian Literary Museum. Maarja spoke about the renowned Estonian author Bernard Kangro focusing on trauma, memory and confession in his poetry.

On August 28th, Sirje Kiin gave a lecture from the Metsaülikool (Forest University) Lecture series to celebrate the famous Estonian literary collective, Siuru’s 100th anniversary.

Special guest from Estonia, the Rector of the Estonian Academy of Arts, Professor Mart Kalm gave the

Prof Andres Kasekamp Photo: Peeter Põldre

Dr. Vello Soots Memorial Lecture to celebrate Tartu College’s 47th birthday on September 23rd. Prof. Mart Kalm spoke on the topic of “Constructed Estonia. Houses as the Shapers of Identity”. His presentation included an interesting selection of photos that highlighted the different architectural features that have been used in Estonian architecture.

Continuing the series of anniversary celebrations, pastor Mart Salumäe from St. Peter’s Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Toronto gave a lecture on October 10th to celebrate a century since the establishment of the Estonian’s own church of the people.

On October 22nd, the newly appointed professor of the University of Toronto E. Tampõld Chair of Estonian Studies, Dr. Andres



*Mart Salumäe
- Photo: Taavi
Tamtik*

Kasekamp gave a lecture on the topic of “How Estonia Leads Europe. The Opportunities and Challenges of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.” A reception followed to welcome Prof. Kasekamp and celebrate his arrival.

Prof. Kasekamp will be concluding the fall lecture season by presenting again on December 5th in a seminar format to celebrate the 98th anniversary of Estonian language university. He will be giving an overview of the current situation of higher education in Estonia.

Piret Noorhani complemented the lectures by leading the first session of the new Estonian Language Book Club on November 29. The two first books that were discussed were “Leikude” by Erni Kask and “Vee peal” (On the Water) by Olavi Ruitlane.

“SHARING OUR STORIES: BORN IN CANADA SYMPOSIUM”

On November 11th at Tartu College, the Baltic Canadian Imprints partnership hosted a symposium to open the discussion surrounding Canadian Baltic identity. The “Sharing Our Stories: Born in Canada” symposium was organized into three panels with first generation Canadian Balt representatives from each of the four Baltic communities – Baltic German, Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian. Special guest Dr Jaak Rakfeldt (PhD, LCSW), Professor of Social Work at Southern Connecticut State University, moderated the discussion and summarized the important points following each panel.

The speakers of the first panel, Dr Aija Mazsīlis (Latvian), Ramūnė Jonaitienė (Lithuanian), Anne Remmel (Estonian), Daphne Habib (Baltic German), discussed living in two worlds – the Baltic community and the Canadian community.

The second panel topic was a discussion about what it means to be the child of political refugee(s). The speakers Astrid Neuland (Baltic German), Andris Kesteris (Latvian), Maimu Mölder (Estonian), Joana Kuras (Lithuanian) shared their experiences of living in a refugee household.

The final panel tackled the difficult question why some chose not to be involved in their communities or why they may decide to return. Speakers Brigitte Brown (Baltic German), Koidula Aedna (Estonian), and Dāvis Makšiņš (Latvian) explained what they believe may be some of the reasons for these choices, also discussing the younger generations and current influential factors.

All the speakers were thanked by the Baltic Canadian Imprints group with mini kringel breads.

The Baltic Canadian Imprints partnership is made up of the Canadian Baltic Immigrant Aid Society, VEMU/Estonian Studies Centre, Lithuanian Museum Archives of Canada and the Canadian Latvian Archive and Museum (Latvian National Federation in Canada). This group has been working together since 2016 and created the exhibit “Sharing Our Stories: The Baltic Diaspora at Home in Canada” opened in March 2017, which profiles the age-old story of people forced to leave their homeland due to war



Speakers Graeme Stewart and Alfred Holden with the curator Jarmo Kauge (in the middle). Photo: Piret Noorhani

and political oppression and start a new life elsewhere. This exhibit is based on a series of interviews with seniors from Ontario’s Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Baltic German communities. Their personal ‘snapshot stories’ shed light on what it means to be Baltic, and on the universal experiences of migration and settlement. An online PDF version of the exhibit can be found on the VEMU website (www.vemu.ca) and on the Lithuanian Museum Archives of Canada website (www.lithuanianheritage.ca).

BUILDING A COMMUNITY: ESTONIAN ARCHITECTS IN POST-WAR TORONTO”

On September 22, 2017 the long-awaited, exciting exhibit “Building a Community: Estonian Architects in Post-War Toronto” was opened with a symposium and reception at Tartu College. VEMU has been working in collaboration with the Museum of Estonian Architecture in Tallinn since 2015 to prepare an exhibit about architects in Toronto with Estonian backgrounds.

The curator and keeper of collections at the Museum of Estonian Architecture, Jarmo Kauge has visited Toronto three times to research the lives and architectural heritage in their new homeland of architects that emigrated to Canada after the Second World War. The exhibit is a summary of the research, demonstrating the surprising influence Estonian-born architects had on the spread of modern architecture in Toronto and



BCI symposium: Speakers (from the left) Dr Aija Mazsīlis, Ramūnė Jonaitienė, Anne Remmel, Dahne Habib and moderator Dr. Jaak Rakfeldt. Photo: Taavi Tamtik



Mart Kalm speaking at the symposium. Photo: Piret Noorhani

across Canada. The focus is first and foremost on the older generation of architects, those whose work and activity at universities have left a strong mark on Toronto's cityscape, as well as on the quality of architectural education. The exhibit celebrates both Canada's 150th and Estonia's 100th birthdays.

The opening day began with a symposium, Piret Noorhani welcomed all the architecture enthusiasts to the symposium. Her words were followed by the Rector of the Estonian Academy of Arts, Prof. Mart Kalm's presentation comparing 20th century Estonian architects at home and abroad. Canadian architect, Graeme Stewart, who worked on the restoration of Uno Prii's buildings, presented an interesting perspective on how to look at the grey concrete buildings in Toronto in a positive light. The first session was concluded by the exhibit curator, Jarmo Kauge, who gave an overview of how the exhibit came together.

The second session was opened by Alfred Holden, a Toronto-based journalist with architectural interests, who discussed Uno Prii's Toronto apartments describing Uno Prii's creative character with great detail. Thomas Tampõld concluded the symposium by giving an intimate overview of his father, Elmar Tampõld's, life's work in architecture.

The symposium was followed with a reception where all audience members were able to take a closer look at the exhibit, which was beautifully arranged in the hall of Tartu College. The Compatriots Program and MISA assisted in the

financial support of this collaborative project. The exhibit will be on display until February 12, 2018 and then travel to Tallinn to be displayed at the Museum of Estonian Architecture.

FOCUS ON JEWISH DIASPORA AND ITS HERITAGE

For the first time the Judaica Research Center of the National Library of Lithuania participated in the annual program of the European Day of Jewish Culture. This year's focus was on Jewish diaspora and its heritage. On September 4-5, an international conference "How to Commemorate the Great Synagogue of Vilna Site?" was organized by the NGO "Jerusalem of the North" in cooperation with the National Library of Lithuania. On September 4, the Judaica Research Center invited to a concert "History of Jewish Music" performed by the "Klezmer Klängen" ensemble. Lithuania and Vilnius in particular, have been one of the most historically important Jewish diaspora centers.

A MEETING WITH PROF. SKRUPSKELIS

On August 25, Adolfas Damušis Democracy Studies Centre of the National Library of Lithuania met with Prof. Kęstutis Skrupskelis, a prominent Lithuanian-American



historian and philosopher, author and professor emeritus. During the meeting, the professor talked about his books and shared his thoughts on the book he is currently writing in English about the young Kazys Grinius, the future President of Lithuania.

Prof. Skrupskelis was born in Kaunas, to a family of a journalist Ignas Skrupskelis and a literary scholar Alina Skrupskelienė. His academic specialty is the history of American philosophy. He is also interested in the intellectual life of pre-war Lithuania, the history of the press, and the consequences of occupation for the development of political



A meeting with prof. Skrupskelis (on the left).

Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania.

consciousness in Lithuania. He taught philosophy at the University of South Carolina (US) and Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania). Currently he is a professor emeritus.

VENCLOVA'S EVENING AND THE EXHIBITION



In commemoration of the eightieth anniversary of Tomas Venclova, a Lithuanian-American poet, scholar, philologist, translator and a dissident, a discussion was organized at the National Library in Lithuania on September 11. The event called on the guests to reflect on Venclova's contribution to the culture and the continuity of his works and thought in contemporary Lithuania.

On this occasion, the exhibition of photographs and books, "Tomas Venclova: That Is How the Word Approaches," was opened in Vilnius Town Hall. One of the partners, the National Library of Lithuania, prepared a collection of Venclova's poetry books. This exhibition invites acquaintance with poet's poems in their original language and in their translations into twenty-three languages. Despite the rather complex strophic and rhythmic patterns of his poems—or perhaps because of them—Venclova's poems have been translated not only into English, Russian, Polish, and German, but also into Albanian, Macedonian, Dutch, Danish, Finnish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and even Esperanto, among other languages.

Most of the publications were drawn from the Tomas Venclova Collection housed at the National Library of Lithuania.

Call for papers open until January 21, 2018!

BALTIC HERITAGE NETWORK CONFERENCE NEW BEGINNINGS OF BALTIC DIASPORA 26.-29.06.2018 TARTU, ESTONIA

The Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are celebrating their 100th birthdays in 2018. For this occasion Baltic countries, as well as Baltic diaspora communities, are looking back in time and summing up the experience of a century. Such important anniversaries give us the opportunity to make conclusions of what has occurred, but also to look at what has yet to come and make goals for the future.

The Baltic Heritage Network is celebrating the 100th birthdays of the Baltic countries with a conference: "New Beginnings of Baltic Diaspora." The historical and present circumstances of the Baltic diaspora are like a garden of forking paths for both individuals and communities. New beginnings are taking place whether we are paying attention or not. This conference is an effort to look at the endings and new beginnings of communities and their archives both at present time and in retrospect. From oral history and family stories to the ever fluctuating flow of migration, from creating new collections to developing existing archives - how can we recognize change and convert endings into beginnings? Are we able to and how will we preserve these changes in archives and other collections? How will diaspora memory institutions survive these changes in society?

The conference is open to presentations by academic researchers, memory institution specialists, representatives of diaspora communities, and anyone to whom the preservation of Baltic diaspora communities, capturing and understanding both the past and present is important.

The conference welcomes papers that discuss changes and shifting dynamics in the following areas of interest:

- Memory institutions of Baltic diaspora communities
- Collaborative efforts of diaspora communities and homeland in preserving, digitizing and researching the history of the Baltic diaspora
- Integrating the history of the Baltic diaspora into the discourse of Baltic history
- Discourse of life writing
- Representation of diaspora topics through film and other media
- Diaspora publications
- Community life and belonging
- Psychology of diaspora
- Intellectuals of the Baltic diaspora
- Transnationalism and multi-nationalism

Please send abstracts (max. 500 words) by January 21, 2018 to piretnoorhani@gmail.com. The conference programming committee will notify you about your paper proposal by February 28, 2018.

Conference registration begins February 1, 2018.

The working language of the conference is English.

Other partners for the conference include the Estonian National Museum, the Estonian Literary Museum, the Centre of Excellence for Estonian Studies, and the National Archives of Estonia.