

## DEAR BALTHERNET MEMBERS AND FRIENDS!

These unprecedented times continue. Some of us can occasionally go to work in the archives, museum or office, but most of us are still forced to find new solutions for how to get everything done in our home offices or online. New times call for new coping strategies in both our personal and work lives.

The Baltic Heritage Network is also forced to set plans according to how the battle with COVID-19 continues to go. 2021 is a conference and new board election year for our organization. The Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania in Vilnius was supposed to be the venue for this year's conference, but considering both the social and travel restrictions, as well as the overarching sense of uncertainty, it does not seem likely that our global family will meet in Vilnius this summer. The Corona crisis has also reduced the financial resources of our institutions. For these reasons, the NGO board has decided that the 2021 BaltHerNet conference will take place online on 15-16 September. Save the dates! The topic and call for papers will be announced at the beginning of April.

Challenging times have also hit the Baltic Heritage Network. This is related to a number of memory institutions in Baltic countries not being able to legally be institutional members and many individuals who had become members early on have decided to no longer be members. This has led to BaltHerNet losing members as well as income from membership fees. There are also members who still have membership fees owing. Unfortunately, we have not been able to organize our usual profitable lotteries and finally, year after year the support from the Estonian Government has also decreased. In this way, the savings we had in our bank account has reached a critical limit.

### **BaltHerNet needs your help now! How can you help?**

**# If you are our member, please make sure that your membership fees are paid on time!**

**# If you participate in our events and read or contribute to our newsletter, but haven't become a member yet, now is the best time to do so!**

**# If you have colleagues or friends who may be interested in our activities, invite them to join!**

**# If you have already done all of the above, then consider making a special one-time donation, which will soon be possible at [www.balther.net](http://www.balther.net)**

We are grateful from the bottoms of our hearts to everyone who has contributed to BaltHerNet's activities! We have grown into a large and friendly global family that shares the same values and works together toward common goals. If you think that BaltHerNet should continue fulfilling our mission in the future, please find a way to show your support.

Stay healthy and keep up the good spirit!

Piret Noorhani - President



*Photo: Keryl Ilves*

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The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line. The next deadline for submissions is 15 May 2021. Please send all related enquiries and submissions to Piret Noorhani: [piretnoorhani@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.balther.net)

ISSN 2228-3390

## HIGH RECOGNITION FOR ANU KORB

The President of the Republic of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid, bestowed Anu Korb, Estonian Literary Museum senior researcher in Estonian folklore and long-time collector of Siberian Estonian heritage and compiler of the publication series “Eesti asundused I-VII” (Estonian Settlements I-VII), with the Order of the White Star Class V. Ahead of the Republic of Estonia’s Independence Day, 152 people whose dedication to their work and community have improved life in Estonia were bestowed honourable decorations.

Anu Korb graduated from the University of Tartu as an Estonian philologist in 1974 and has worked as a researcher at the Estonian Literary Museum in the Estonian Folklore Archives since 1975. From 1991–1998 as the archives director and starting in 2007 focusing more on research as a senior researcher. Anu Korb is a member of the Academic Folklore Society and the Eastern Estonians’ Cultural Society. During the years 2004–2010, she was the president of the latter.

Anu Korb’s first contact with Siberian Estonians took place in August 1991 in Verkhni Suetuk village (Ülem-Suetuk in Estonian) in Krasnoyarsk Krai. Since then, Anu Korb has organized regular heritage collection trips to Siberian Estonian settlements, including to a number of villages of Siberian Estonians who had emigrated out of Southern Estonian: Zolotaya Niva, Semjonovka,



Lilliküla, Estonka in the region of Omsk, Jurievka, Koidula in the region of Kemerovo, and many others. She has gone to almost all the remaining Estonian communities (there are about 40) and gathered diverse oral heritage and historical village material. In fall 2003, Anu Korb started gathering heritage from Estonians born in Russia (primarily Siberia) who had returned to Estonia (including in Põlva and Võru counties). The heritage that has been recorded, written, filmed and photographed is archived at the Estonian Folklore Archives and is accessible to all researchers and those interested. The heritage that has been gathered from both Siberian Estonians in Siberia and those who have returned to Estonia has also been published in the popular 7-part series “Eesti asundused” (Estonian Settlements).

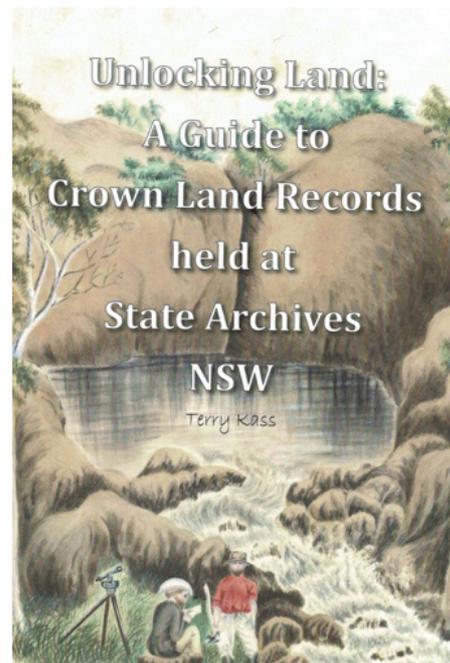
In 2003, Anu Korb initiated a series of family days “Venemaale veerenud” (Rolled to Russia), where the gathered material on Russian settlements is introduced to a wider group of interested people. Similarly, she has compiled photo exhibits, the largest of which is “Siberian Estonians” completed at the end of 2008 in collaboration with the Estonian Academy of Arts.

Anu Korb is a member of the Baltic Heritage Network and a long-time member of the BaltHerNet Estonian working group. Her work with preserving the heritage of Siberian Estonians has significantly expanded research on Estonians abroad by demonstrating that Estonians abroad are not only in the West but also in the East. We wish Anu hearty congratulations and good luck and inspiration for her future undertakings!

## DIASPORA RADIO ON ESTONIAN PUBLIC BROADCASTING

As of the beginning of this year, Estonian Public Broadcasting’s most popular radio station Vikerraadio is hosting a weekly show “Hajala ringvaade” dedicated to the activities of Estonians abroad. The host is BaltHerNet long time board member and historian Maarja Merivoo-Parro and she welcomes hints for topics. She can be reached at [hajala@err.ee](mailto:hajala@err.ee)

## ESTONIAN ORAL HISTORIES TO BE INSCRIBED ON AUSTRALIAN MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER



The Memory of the World Register is maintained by UNESCO as a record of documents, books and other records of enduring worth for the world. It is a parallel register to the World Heritage Register of Places. The Australian section of the Register includes records such as the convict records held in the NSW, West Australian and Tasmanian Archives, the Endeavour journal of Captain James Cook, and the First Fleet journals.

A major entry on the Register is ‘Migration Voices’, recognising migrant oral histories held in archives and libraries such as the Victorian State Library, the Mitchell Library in NSW and the Migration Museum, South Australia. The Estonian Archives in Australia was invited to submit its oral history collection for consideration as an addition to ‘Migration Voices’. The collection has now been accepted becoming the first ethnic community oral history collection held outside a major national library or archive added to the Australian Register. The Estonian oral history collection will be formally inscribed on the Register at a ceremony at 3.00 pm, Friday, 26 February 2021. This will be a virtual ceremony held via ZOOM.

Viewers can access the ceremony via the link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81586806400>.

The Estonian Archives in Australia is currently investigating the digitisation of its oral history collection.

## RIP WILLIAM R. SCHMALSTIEG

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of William R. Schmalstieg, Sparks Professor Emeritus of Slavic and Baltic Linguistics, Penn State University, on January 22, 2021, at the age of 91.

Prof. Schmalstieg was a prominent linguist, especially in the study of the Lithuanian and Prussian languages, a long-time member of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (he served as the President of AABS from 1982-1984) and a Lithuanian friend. William R. Schmalstieg actively cooperated in the Lithuanian diaspora press, many of his linguistic articles appeared in the journal "Lituanus." He is the author of a number of books on the Lithuanian language. At least a couple of generations of Lithuanians in the United States grew up learning from the textbook "Introduction to Modern Lithuanian," written by him together with Leonardas Dambriūnas and Antanas Klimas (Brooklyn, N. Y., 1966).

After the breakup of the Soviet Union when Lithuania regained its independence in 1991, the Lithuanian government officially honoured Prof. Schmalstieg for his accomplishments in the study of the Lithuanian language. In 1994, Vilnius University presented Prof. Schmalstieg with the honorary doctor regalia.

Recently, Prof. Giedrius Subačius



*Prof. Schmalstieg presented his book at Vilnius University in 2004.*

*Photo Giedrius Subačius.*

shared a video of his, Prof. Pietro Dini's and Prof. Phillip Baldi's visit at William R. Schmalstieg's home in Pennsylvania in 2004: [https://vimeo.com/503916734?fbclid=IwAR1K\\_0WKHW-62cjh1pTWjRoXHJWrv9DVuUsgLEDjhPgfc3JMSTNNrLFX10](https://vimeo.com/503916734?fbclid=IwAR1K_0WKHW-62cjh1pTWjRoXHJWrv9DVuUsgLEDjhPgfc3JMSTNNrLFX10)

## FACT AND FICTION

I am a researcher and therefore well familiar with the joys and tribulations of archival research. When at the end of the day I feel I have gained a tiny piece of something new, I feel elated, however small the gain. By contrast, if I have not gained anything after perusing a stack of files for days, I am irritable, unhappy, deep in the doldrums. Perhaps you have experienced something like that yourself?

My interest has been in pre-WWII Estonian diplomacy. I have read a great many official reports the diplomats sent to Tallinn, also private letters they sent to each other. It all started with August Torma, the Estonian ambassador to Britain from 1934-1971, whom I studied for my PhD. He was a very reserved man and I was hoping to discover a few personal details from his correspondence and at least establish his circle of friends from casting the net wider. This is how I discovered Johan Leppik, a friend of Torma's, who was at one time the Estonian ambassador to Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Italy and Hungary. Torma and Leppik were roughly the same age and both, to my delight, had highly legible handwriting. However, few of their letters to each other have survived.

Most diplomats' personal letters have proved less interesting than I had expected. The men were far from home, lonely, self-centred, wanted to let off steam about working hard while being short-staffed, felt neglected by Tallinn. This is why Johan Leppik's letters stood out. Even his official reports to the Foreign Ministry in Tallinn contained an occasional personal comment, a hint at humanity. Torma's official reports by contrast were lifeless, bone dry. In private letters Leppik was even more revealing: he readily admitted that he was an emotional man – something of a surprise.



In 1959 he wrote to Torma: „Your letter moved me deeply. For me, you are of the same block as [Lithuanian ambassador to Italy Stasys] Lozoraitis, both in work and make-up. Your feelings are under lock and key, as if you had no human weaknesses, made no mistakes and never erred. One can just about guess with you, the best one can do. That's how it is. What has happened to you that you could write about Alice this way?“ Torma's original letter to Leppik has unfortunately gone missing, so it is not known how exactly he had described his wife's illness but in his reply Leppik was very direct: he knew Alice, was concerned about her health and told Torma off for his lack of compassion.

Leppik was in correspondence with another colleague: Kaarel Pusta, and 94 of his letter to Pusta have survived. There are unexplained gaps in the letters; a few of Pusta's replies are available. In a way this is even pleasing: Pusta's handwriting is ever so hard to read although it seems very regular. The two men corresponded over several decades. Leppik regarded Pusta as a leading light, was grateful to him for having brought him to diplomacy and taught him the ropes.

By that time I had already published a biography of August Torma and felt that Leppik would deserve similar treatment. However, there was not enough archival material for a full-length biography, not enough was known about his life. So what was I to do? In 2018 I had already published a novel about Konstantin Päts

who was at the helm of the first Republic of Estonia for more than a decade, so I decided to write another novel, about Leppik. Its title is „Otseütleja“ (Straight talker). I aimed to stick to the facts and archival sources as much as possible, but the novel format allowed me to fill in the gaps where information was scarce.

I am not the only Estonian who thinks that Leppik was an interesting and remarkable man. Quite a few people have remembered him in their memoirs, unlike August Torma who hardly features in expatriate writing. In half a dozen memoirs Leppik has secured a full chapter that describes his hobbies and personal idiosyncrasies, but one can also read admiration into these pages. The pianist Käbi Laretei, who is, unfortunately, better known for having married the Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman than for piano playing, had a teenage crush on Leppik, who incidentally also played the piano. Leppik and Laretei corresponded for decades and she has said in one of her books that she kept all his letters, hundreds of them, sorted by date. However, she died in 2014 and the letters have since gone missing. This is why one can marvel at the treasures of the Estonian national archives: despite political upheavals, so many diplomats' personal letters have survived.

My novel „Otseütleja“ is a kind of biography of Leppik, one individual, while actually summing up what happened to all Estonian diplomats after 1940 when the Soviets occupied the country. They were told to return to Estonia but chose to stay put, labelled traitors by the Soviet authorities. They lost their income, diplomatic status and place in life, were forced to adjust to the new circumstances. All kept longing for their homeland, knowing they would never see it again.

There must be other remarkable men, perhaps also women, of that long-gone era that you know of. If there is not enough archival material for a full-length biography, why not consider writing a novel? It is not too late to resurrect their names, recapture their era. History matters.

**Tina Tamman**



Oled hea eesti ja inglise keele oskaja?  
Tule ja osale!

## VEMU TÕLKEVÕISTLUS

### VEMU TRANSLATION COMPETITION

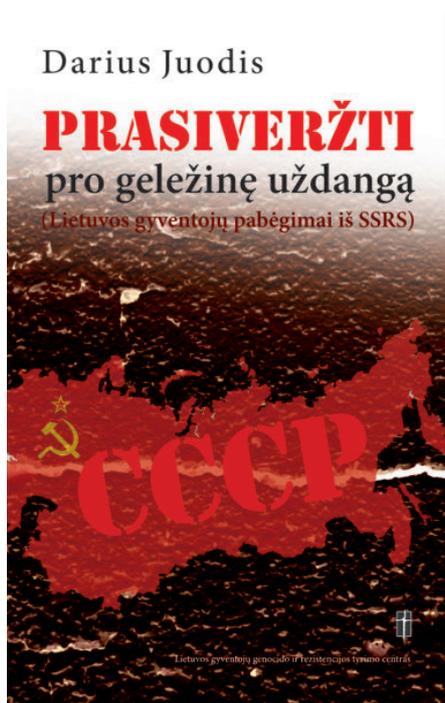
TARTU UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
ESTONIAN LITERATURE CENTER  
Eesti Kirjanike Liit

#### THE BOOK “BREAKING THROUGH THE IRON CURTAIN”

At the end of WWII, the Baltic States found themselves in the Soviet grip, isolated from the free world. The people who remained in the country lost the opportunity to travel freely. Soviet oppression and restrictions on freedom of movement prompted many Lithuanians to flee Lithuania. The book “Breaking Through the Iron Curtain” prepared by Dr Darius Juodis examines the flight of the Lithuanian population from the Soviet Union.

The book presents several periods: the first escapes (1940-1941); the period after WWII; the partisan escapes; the flight of the Lithuanian population to the West from the 1950s to the 1990s and the subsequent escapes.

Two components stand out in the structure of the book: research and the analysis of the situation and a biographical description of each flight. The latter part lists the persons



who successfully fled abroad. Dr Juodis' book presents various stories of escapees, photos of persons who fled and border crossings and KGB documents from the Lithuanian Special Archives, other memory institutions and personal archives.

#### VEMU TRANSLATION COMPETITION

The Museum of Estonians Abroad (VEMU) in Toronto together with the Estonian Writer's Union and Estonian Literature Center announce a competition to find new translators of fiction from Estonian into English. Participation is open to people of all ages provided they have not previously made public any translated book. This competition hopes to encourage linguaphile Estonians living abroad to delve more deeply into their Estonian language skills and to also use their strength in the English language. Non-native Estonian speakers who are interested in promoting the translation of Estonian literature into English are also invited to apply. This competition may help discover new talent, who in the future, could aid in the global dissemination of Estonian literature.

Contestants must translate both prescribed texts: Jürgen Rooste's “Astrid Lindgreni surm”, Mehis Heinsaar's “Rändaja õnn”. Texts can be found here at [vemu.ca](http://vemu.ca).

**The competition deadline date is March 31, 2021.**

To ensure anonymity please use a keyword, and submit your work to [piret.noorhani@vemu.ca](mailto:piret.noorhani@vemu.ca) or by mail to The Museum of Estonians Abroad (VEMU) 310 Bloor St. W., Toronto ON.M5S.1W4. Personal data (name, address, e-mail and phone number) should be submitted separately by e-mail.

A three-member jury will announce the winners at the end of April. Winners will be eligible for publication in the Estonian Literary Magazine and to receive a travel stipend to attend the translators' seminar taking place in mid-June in Estonia.

### A NEW BATCH OF DOCUMENTS FROM THE LITHUANIAN CULTURAL ATTACHÉ IN THE UK

The archive of Justė Kostikovaitė, the cultural attaché of the Republic of Lithuania in the United Kingdom, covering the period from 2016 to 2020, has arrived at the National Library of Lithuania. Kostikovaitė noted that during the four years of her term as a cultural attaché, the need for contemporary cultural content had arisen. The events focused on virtual content distribution have become very important, particularly during the ongoing pandemic.

While in the office, Kostikovaitė was able to introduce new communication tools now used by almost the entire network of Lithuanian cultural attachés. One of them is an e-newsletter, which helps to inform the audience about Lithuania. There is also a huge array of archival and communication material in social media, such as a Facebook "Lithuanian Art and Culture in the UK," Twitter—"@LtCultureUK," and Instagram—"lithuanian\_art\_in\_the\_uk," created and administered by Kostikovaitė.

Kostikovaitė also noted that in recent years there has been a great need to form a digital archive of cultural and other special attachés, which currently contains a large number of material on dissemination and documentation of the events.



*Various documents collected by the Lithuanian cultural attaché in the UK.*



### DEMOCRACY - ONE DEFINING MOMENT - A NEW VIRTUAL EXHIBITION BY THE LITHUANIAN MUSEUM ARCHIVES OF CANADA

Thirty years later, we return to the events of January 13th, 1991, in Vilnius Lithuania. A fledgeling democracy is challenged by Soviet military force. Many civilians are injured and fourteen are killed.

In the virtual exhibition, "Democracy - One Defining Moment", we explore these tragic events and show how the Lithuanian Canadian community heard the calls for help and responded using all of the tools of a democratic society available to them.

Visit the virtual exhibition at:

<https://www.lithuanianheritage.ca/january-13/>

and listen to our presentation introducing the Lithuanian Museum Archives of Canada and the virtual exhibition at:

<https://www.lithuanianheritage.ca/explore/>

### LATEST IN CANADA

PBLA - The World Federation of Free Latvians has announced an initiative, to create a digital listing of archival sources in the diaspora ([www.pbla.lv](http://www.pbla.lv) „Jaunumi“). The survey's goal is to work in collaboration with the Latvian Ministry of Culture and the central cultural and archival centres outside Latvia, with a view to documenting the existence, condition and accessibility of historical materials.

Archival and museum awareness has for many years been championed by enthusiastic activists in the community while taking into consideration diverse local resources, whether it be space, finances or availability of volunteers. The evolution and recognition of the need to locate and preserve documentation has varied by regions.

The World Federation membership consists of the leadership of central organizations in Canada, the USA, Europe, Russia, South America/Caribbean and Australia.

In truth, diaspora archival work did not always get the support that it deserved. Today, however, it seems that there is a sudden surge of interest due to the possible availability of some minor funding. It may also be the realization that neglect will mean losing a part of our documentary heritage. In this age of fake news, political revision of history and cyber warfare in social media, it is more important than ever to save the true record of our past. As they say, „If you do not know where you have been, you will not know where you are going“. This applies, in particular, to the arriving younger generations who are not necessarily well versed in history and are more susceptible to influence from a lack of information, or worse, an overabundance of misinformation, thus damaging the chance for critical thinking.

In Canada, the central organization for the Latvian Community is LNAK or Latvian National Federation in Canada. Its official administrative files, up until 2004, are found in the Archives of Ontario. A number of years ago, we created the Canadian Latvian Archive and Museum or in the Latvian acronym, LNAK-KLAM. In Latvian, KLAM is Kanadas Latviešu Arhīvs un Mūzejs.

KLAM strives to identify the existence of documentation, letters, photos or artefacts relating to the contribution made by Latvians and their extended communities to the development of Canada. This includes personal archival materials which travelled with them from the homeland. It should be noted that the first traces of Latvians go back to the 1890s.

Though it is still growing, researchers have found the holdings of KLAM very useful. Times, however, are changing



*Photo: Ženija Vītols*

and new opportunities arise on how to deal with our historical record. The pandemic has actually helped us look at the virtual experience. It has emphasized the need and possibilities of digitization. Though original documents are vital and must be preserved, they can nevertheless be easily digitized at home and sent directly to KLAM.

In addition to the PBLA survey, we strongly encourage our Canadian public to inform us directly at LNAK-KLAM if they should have something of archival interest.

We are all an intrinsic part of the history of Canada and Latvia.

**Andris Kēsteris**

**President**

**LNAK - Latvian National Federation in Canada**

E-mail addresses:

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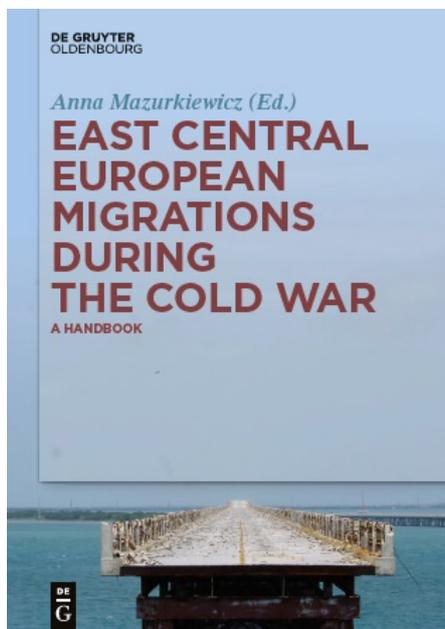
KLAM - [klam@lnak.org](mailto:klam@lnak.org)

With special thanks to Ženija Vītols, Aija Kārklīš, Skaidrīte Tērauds, Ilze Makšiņa, Aivars Vinters, Jānis Ivsiņš, Sibilla Korulis and the Capt. Jānis Korulis archive.

## NEW BOOK SUMS UP EASTERN EUROPEAN EMIGRANT STORIES

The publication, *East Central European Migrations During the Cold War. A Handbook* brings researchers from eight countries to look at the emigrants from the former Soviet bloc. Each chapter provides the basic information from the escape (destinations, persons, organizations, relations across the Iron Curtain) until the fall of Communism and the return. Dr Pauli Heikkilä, currently visiting researcher at the University of Latvia, has written the chapter on Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian emigrants. He had this to say:

‘The project started in various conferences on Central Eastern European emigration. The papers on national diasporas followed a similar pattern and they sounded like the same story only with different names. Naturally, these stories are important as such, but there was a broad consensus of getting past this introduction by having



the structured presentation in writing and then move on to find parallels and similarities in other national groups. This would increase the theoretical perspective in our diaspora research and eventually to discover what is truly unique in each national emigration. Assistant Professor Anna Mazurkiewicz from the University of Gdansk was the organizer of many of these conferences and she became the editor of the anthology. The guidelines were drafted in November 2014, and although Anna made laudable work, the book came out in May 2019. These things just take their time.

Originally my idea was to have three authors for the Baltic article, but I quickly ditched it. It would have made me an interim-editor to collect the contributions from two other authors and accommodate them to a single presentation. I figured that it would be equally burdensome to find the information myself. Such a collective article would have repeated the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian stories. Certainly, there are significant differences in these diasporas (such as Estonians in Sweden, and Lithuanians in the West since the 19th century), but on the other hand, the three groups engaged in Baltic cooperation in such a magnitude, which was impossible to ignore.

The guidelines were to summarize the current research, and furthermore, the instruction was to limit the literature in English. This eliminated the problem

of three languages and my uneven language skills. It also serves the purpose to introduce the Baltic cases to researchers from outside the region. The Baltic Heritage Network is naturally mentioned in the article as an example of continuing Baltic collaboration and the place to start looking for archival sources.

The biggest challenge – and the main difference from other chapters in the anthology – was to have a balanced proportion of each national group. However, my ambitious plan to have a systematic chart of every national group in every destination country failed. If I could not acquire certain figures for each occasion, I could not use that exact figure for the other two countries either, only some approximates. The most significant detail left out regards the world festivals: Estonians started their festivals in Toronto in 1972 every four years, but I could not find the information on Latvian and Lithuanian gatherings and even the Estonian case was accidentally erased.

Despite these shortcomings, I'm quite satisfied with the outcome. The article, like the book, is not the final word of Cold War emigration but hopefully invites new researchers on the topic.'

The book is available on the DeGruyter website to download [<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110610635/html>]. A cheaper paperback version came out in December 2020.

## VEMU ONLINE EVENTS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2021

As the COVID-19 situation in Toronto has not brought us back any of our old freedoms, VEMU has continued to organize events online. During the first two months of the year, we have had many exciting events.

The season began on **January 13th, with the workshop “Baking with Ene: Healthy Rye Bread”**, where Ene Timmusk taught us how to bake traditional Estonian bread in her home kitchen while sharing specific tips for achieving the best results.

**On January 21st, Gabriel Doherty (University College Cork)** gave a



lecture on the topic “Escape by Victory: Ireland and Refugees, 1949-51”, where he unveiled the dramatic story of the disrupted journey of Baltic refugees on their way from Sweden to Canada. The presentation, based on thorough archival research, brought together a hundred viewers from various Estonian communities abroad, many of whom had personal memories of this historic episode. One person who travelled aboard Victory, now a Toronto resident, Mall Puhm, helped to organize the lecture. The discussion was moderated by Andres Kasekamp, Chair of Estonian Studies at the University of Toronto.

**On February 3rd, Peeter Põldre, who participated in the 2019 Estonian Jubilee Song Festival in Tallinn** as a photographer, shared with us his impressions of and photos taken at this memorable event. His stories and recollections allowed the audience to look at this great event from a slightly different perspective. For those accustomed to the limitations of COVID-19, it seemed strange to see such huge crowds of people together, as the main concert of the Song Festival brought together more than 100,000 people. At the end of the lecture, many listeners must have wondered when we

can gather like this again.

**On February 16th, we listened to a lecture on school lore by Piret Voolaid**, a senior researcher at the Estonian Literary Museum. Piret introduced the materials obtained during the collection campaigns organized in Estonia and talked about the competition for collecting school lore of Estonians in Canada. The collection campaign began at the end of 2020 and will conclude when final submissions are due on June 1st, 2021. The lecture was also attended by students of the Toronto Estonian Supplementary School together with teachers and parents.

**The 103rd birthday of the Republic of Estonia was celebrated on February 20th with the screening of Elmo Nüganen’s film “1944”**, an Estonian war drama that follows the devastating events that occurred as the Soviet Union advanced against the Germany army to occupy Estonia at the end of the Second World War. The film was followed by a discussion with screenwriter and former military officer Leo Kunnas.

**The month’s events ended on February 25th with the premiere of Estonian Music Week’s online concert series “Memories of Home”**, introducing two female performers central to expanding the sonic capabilities and breaking through genre barriers of the accordion, **Tiina Kiik (Canada) and Tuulikki Bartosik (Estonia)**, with a special guest Julia Aplin. The series embraces the duality of having roots in one country while starting afresh in another. In a global society characterized by immigration, many Canadians are familiar with memories that compete for the title of “home”. Such memories might be fleeting images or feelings deep down



**Lietuvių išėvijos žiniasklaidos lužiai po 1990 m.**

Virtuali paroda



inside – vague or distinct – conjuring up an attachment to place. In the current climate of reflection, such memories are more precious than ever.

Recordings of the events can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/user/VEMUESC>

## A VIRTUAL EXHIBITION ON LITHUANIAN PRESS IN THE DIASPORA POST-1990 IS NOW AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH

The exhibition illustrates the wide variety of media that has existed in the diaspora since 1990. Presented in seven sections, it invites visitors to learn about both print media and electronic publications in Europe, the USA, South America, Canada and Australia. A separate section is dedicated to publications that were repatriated to Lithuania, and another to radio and television programming that was important to the diaspora. Finally, the section “Communication on the Internet” is an overview of virtual forms of contact and information.

The exhibition includes only a small number of Lithuanian publications that existed in the diaspora. According to the National Library of Lithuania data, there were more than 50 publications in English alone after 1990. Thirty years ago Lithuanian communities outside of Lithuania were flourishing, and are still dynamic, as shown by the profusion of available media, from traditional newspapers to today’s websites, social networks, forums and blogs.

The exhibition was curated by the staff of the Adolfas Damušis Centre for Democratic Studies and the Lithuanian Studies Section of the Department of Heritage Documentation Research of



*A virtual forum was dedicated to the Lithuanian education in the world.*

the the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania. The English translation was provided by Ramūnė Sakalaitė Jonaitis.

The exhibition in English is available here: <https://parodos.lnb.lt/en/exhibits/show/lithuanian-press-in-the-diaspo>

## THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LITHUANIA HOSTED A VIRTUAL LANGUAGE FORUM

In recent years, an increasing number of foreigners has been interested in the Lithuanian language and Lithuania. People want to learn the language for different reasons. If in the past a lot of foreigners wanted to study the Lithuanian language because it was the mother tongue of their significant other, today a large number of students search for their Lithuanian roots and identity.

In January, Vytautas Magnus University Academy of Education, in cooperation with the National Library of Lithuania, organized a virtual forum, “Teaching the Language in the 21st Century: Current Experiences and Future Trends,” in which researchers talked about multilingualism, language learning, the survival of a native language in the 21st century, Lithuanian education in the world, and the importance of creativity and innovations teaching the language.

This year, the researchers of the National Library of Lithuania have been giving lectures to students of the Lithuanian Saturday schools abroad on the topics of Lithuanian cultural history, language and literature.

## A BOOK ABOUT LITHUANIAN WAR REFUGEES IN BRITAIN

A new book “West Midlands Ho!” is a compelling work of local history, focused on a particular corner of

*The book is an important contribution to the body of work on migration within Europe in the period since WWII.*

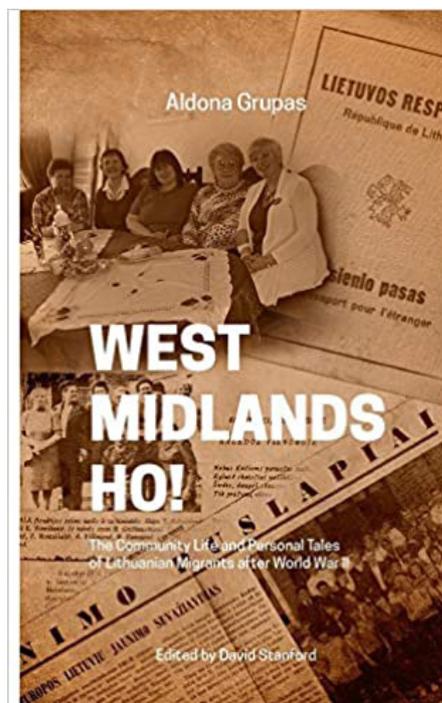
England but set against a background of tumultuous international events. In the book, Lithuanian author Aldona Grupas reveals the personal tales of Lithuanian migrants who moved to Britain in the wake of WWII. Unable to return to their homeland due to the Soviet occupation, from 1947 onwards, several thousand refugees swapped the refugee camps of Allied-occupied Germany for basic accommodation in Britain, along with jobs in manufacturing and agriculture. In the following decades, they put down roots in Britain, all the while keeping their Lithuanian identity alive. In a series of interviews, Grupas teases out the personal experiences of five members of this migrant community in the West Midlands of England.

The book begins with an overview of Lithuanian history, taking in WWII and the post-war Soviet period. Drawing on existing literature, Grupas explains why so many Lithuanians were stuck in Germany in the post-war period and were subsequently offered new lives in Britain under resettlement programs like Balt Cygnet and Westward Ho!

The main part of the book consists of five interviews with members of the Lithuanian migrant community in the city of Wolverhampton, where the interviewees spent most of their lives.

The first interview is with a woman named Gene, who arrived in Britain in 1947. Gene tells of the wartime experiences that caused her to flee Lithuania, her time as a refugee in Germany, and her migration to England. She describes the basic living conditions and the long process of building a new life and raising a family.

The author describes the ongoing effort to balance two conflicting forces: the need to integrate into one’s host culture, and the desire to preserve one’s national culture and identity. This latter task was important to migrants such as Gene, due to the Soviet occupation of their country, which they feared might erase the national culture. The author tells of the creation of a network of community groups that linked all post-war Lithuanian migrants across Britain,



and her local branch in Wolverhampton, which organized social, religious, sporting and cultural events.

Grupas concludes her book with a summary of the key factors that caused these post-war migrants to bond in the way that they did, forming a strong and vibrant community that nurtured their distinct identity against all the odds.

Prepared from [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

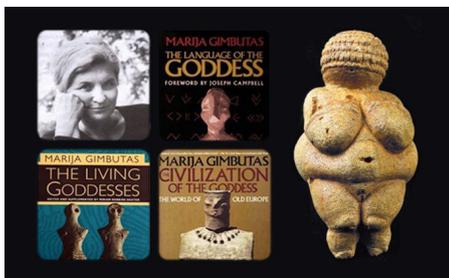
## THE YEAR OF MARIJA ALSEIKAITĖ-GIMBUTIENĖ

This year Lithuania celebrates a world-renowned American-Lithuanian archaeologist, anthropologist, a pioneer of archaeomithology, Marija Birutė Alseikaitė-Gimbutienė (Marija Gimbutas).

Marija Birutė Alseikaitė-Gimbutienė was born on January 23, 1921 in Vilnius. She began to study at Vilnius Vytautas Magnus Gymnasium.



*The Lithuania Post issued a postage stamp dedicated to Prof. Marija Gimbutienė. By E. Kulbytė.*



*“The Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Old Europe” (1991) is among the most notable works of Gimbutienė.*

In 1931, the family moved to the provisional capital of Lithuania, Kaunas. There, Gimbutienė studied at Aušra Gymnasium, which she finished in 1938. In the same year, she started studying linguistics at the Faculty of Humanities of Vytautas Magnus University. In 1936, she participated in archaeological research in Lithuania, in 1938–1939, she took part in the excavation works of prehistoric burial grounds in Kaunas. After Lithuania regained Vilnius, Gimbutienė went to study archaeology at Vilnius University. In 1942, she defended her MA thesis “Modes of Burials in Lithuania in the Iron Age.” In 1944, when the Soviets were approaching Lithuania, the Gimbutas family left the country.

In 1946, Gimbutienė defended her PhD dissertation “Prehistoric Burial Rites in Lithuania” at the University of Tübingen, Germany. In 1949, the Gimbutas family left for the United States and settled in Boston. From 1950 to 1956, Gimbutienė worked at Harvard University translating Eastern European archaeological texts, teaching at the Department of Anthropology and later collaborating with Harvard’s Peabody Museum. In 1956, Gimbutienė’s book “The Prehistory of Eastern Europe” was published, in 1958, a study “Ancient Symbolism in Lithuanian Folk Art” and in 1963, a book “The Balts” came out.

Gimbutienė conducted archaeological research in the Balkans, Italy and Greece. Since 1964, Gimbutienė worked as a professor of European Archeology and Indo-European Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA); since 1965, she was a curator of Old World Archeology.

In 2003, a film about Gimbutienė “Signs Out of Time” was released. The film examines her theories and their influence on the academic community, the development of feminism, etc. In 1993, for the book “The Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Old Europe” (1991) the professor was awarded the prestigious Anisfield-Wolf Book Award in the non-fiction category. In 1993, Gimbutienė was presented with the title of Honorary Doctor of Vytautas Magnus University.

Gimbutienė died in 1994 in Los Angeles.

The Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art prepared a virtual exhibition dedicated to Gimbutienė. The exhibition showcases photos from the archeologist’s private and professional life, as well as her correspondence with students and colleagues. The exhibition is available here: <https://tinyurl.com/4su3d6xe>

### ILME – SEARCHING THROUGH HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY FACE

The photographic collections of the National Archives of Estonia are impressive and always worth exploring, with the database FOTIS (<http://www.ra.ee/fotis/>) containing over 700.000 digitized and born-digital photographs from the 1840s up to today. It does not only consist of photographic recordings of important public events and figures. The photographs in the archives of for example newspapers, societies or educational institutions may contain

photographic depictions of anyone’s predecessors, depending on their life story. Sadly, the information on who is standing before the camera hasn’t always reached the National Archives with the photograph. This is where the new searching tool called Ilme (<https://www.ra.ee/ilme/>) comes to the rescue.

Ilme searches not by name but by face. More precisely, it uses the help of artificial intelligence to find the most similar counterparts in FOTIS to the face on an image You upload. This way for example You can try searching for images of Your grandmother. Or take a selfie and look for historical look-alikes of Yourself. Facial recognition technologies are in wide use today, be that by law enforcement agencies or in apps that draw dog ears on Your face. The working principle behind them is generally the same – first the computer searches for where the face is in a picture, then it marks certain points on them like the eyes, nose and mouth. By comparing those to other photographs, the computer then tries to find the closest corresponding faces, hoping that those will be of the same person. Efficient systems do that quite well. Sadly, at this stage, Ilme does not belong to them. The results can be heavily influenced for example by the person’s age in the photo or the angle of their head towards the camera. So one shouldn’t get their hopes too high, but Ilme is still definitely worth a try, for its entertainment as well as practical value.