

LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL CLASS IN SOUTHWESTERN LITHUANIA BEFORE 1864

SAULIUS SUŽIEDĖLIS

Modern Lithuanian nationalism had its real beginnings in the last two decades of the 19th century. However, it could not have been possible without the slow, but steady expansion of Lithuanian national cultural life before that time. Since almost all Lithuanian speakers came from the peasantry, the emergence of any significant Lithuanian national movement was tied up with social and economic developments within the village. Historically, the roots of modern Lithuanian national culture and literature are to be found in the countryside.

This article deals with the problems of Lithuanian cultural life in the *Užnemunė* region of southwestern Lithuania, that is, the ethnographically Lithuanian lands to the south and west of the Nemunas River. During the 19th century they included the Lithuanian-speaking districts of the Kingdom of Poland, which was then under Russian sovereignty. The Kingdom, however, enjoyed genuine autonomy before 1831 and some aspects of self-rule afterwards. Unlike their counterparts in the Russian Empire proper, the Lithuanian peasants of the Polish Kingdom were legally free (serfdom had been abolished in 1807), lived mostly on state rather than seignioral estates, and contained an unusually high percentage of prosperous largeholders.

The linguistic division of Lithuanian society into a Polish-speaking nobility and a Lithuanian-speaking peasantry was a long and gradual one. The Polish language first penetrated Lithuania during the Christianization of the country in the late 14th century. The last Grand Duke known to have spoken Lithuanian was Jogaila's (Pol. Jagiello) son Casimir (1440-1492). Spoken Polish came into wider use in the Grand Duke's court by the middle of the 16th century and radiated outward from here. Quite naturally, the magnates and large landowners accepted the Polish customs and language first. Many of the lesser gentry and townspeople continued speaking Lithuanian until the 18th century during which, except in Samogitia, they gradually switched to Polish. Thus, by the 19th century, Polish was clearly established as the language of public life and social prestige in Lithuania.¹

The historic exclusion of the Lithuanian language from affairs of Church and State relegated it to a tongue of the lower social classes. For internal affairs, the Lithuanian chancellory usually used a form of Old Church Slavic,² which was formally replaced by Latin and Polish in 1697. For a long time, a kind of linguistic dualism prevailed in Lithuania; for example, while spoken Lithuanian was still widely used in the Grand Duchy's courts during the 17th century, official documents, except for occasional oaths sworn by peasants, were written down in Old Church Slavic, Polish or Latin. Lithuanian as an official state language came into being only during the 20th century.

Lithuanian writing and literature, however, did make some progress ever since the first Lithuanian books were published in East Prussia during the Reformation. In the 17th century, Lithuanian letters underwent a brief "Golden Age," and a few men of the period, most notably Mikalojus Daukša (Pol. Mikolaj Dauksza), appealed for a wider use of Lithuanian in public life. However, these isolated voices ran counter to the prevailing trend of Polonization and, during the 18th century, the level of Lithuanian literature declined.³

The Lithuanians of East Prussia were an exception to this general decline. Since the 16th century, Prussian Lithuanians had schools in their own language; in addition, the native tongue was recognized as an official language in schools, churches, courts and government offices. Royal edicts affecting the peasantry were published in Lithuanian as well as German. In 1832, the first Lithuanian newspaper, *Lietuwiszka Ceitunga* (The Lithuanian Newspaper), appeared in East Prussia.⁴ In Prussia, German and Lithuanian scholars took an increasing interest in Lithuanian literature and folklore during the 18th and 19th centuries. The works of Lithuania's greatest epic poet, Kristijonas Donelaitis (Ger. Christian Donalitius) (1714-1780), were published in Prussia during the early 19th century. Donelaitis was best known for his epic poem *Metai* (The Seasons), a remarkably powerful description of Lithuanian peasant life and work in East Prussia.

However, the Prussian Lithuanians' cultural movement succumbed to rapid Germanization during the late 19th century. In any case, the Protestant Prussian Lithuanians, with their difficult Gothic alphabet, had only a limited impact on the Catholic Lithuanian peasants in Russia and the Kingdom. In Lithuania Major, the Polonization of the nobles, gentry and townspeople was virtually complete by the beginning of the 19th century. The Lithuanian language remained important only as a means of communicating with the peasantry.

As far as the Polonized nobility and gentry were concerned, this linguistic difference was a minor nuisance, and it was bound to remain so, as long as the oppressively dependent relations between village and manor prevailed. Once these began to change, however, linguistic relations were bound to be affected. The Soviet historian Vytautas Merkys comments:

The Polonized gentry and clergy of Lithuania viewed the Lithuanian language as a serf tongue . . . Lithuanian publications of the ruling class were full of Polish expressions that were difficult for the people to understand. This is the (Polonized) language that the managers of estates used when addressing the peasants. The Lithuanian language, like the Lithuanian peasant himself, was often an object of scorn. For a long time, it was useful only as a means of communication among the peasants within the boundaries of the estate or parish. However, as the economic relations of the peasants with the market were strengthened, and with the introduction of capitalist relations of production, the importance of the Lithuanian language increased. Wealthier peasants traveled to various markets and towns, and began dealing among themselves economically on a much wider scale.⁵

While it is true, as Merkys says, that the emergence of a well-to-do peasant class corresponded to an expansion in the use of the Lithuanian language, the process was complex and, on the surface at least, sometimes contradictory. Even while the peasants' language made gains in public acceptance during the 19th century, the relatively low social prestige of the Lithuanian language, and the active propagation of Polish by the Church and nobility, continued the Polonization process at the same time, while Germanization progressed unchecked in Prussian Lithuania. To some extent, Polonization was also the result of demographic changes. In southwestern Lithuania, the influx of Polish elements, though limited, must have had some effect on the native Lithuanian populace. In the early 1840s, a number of Polish peasants came to Augustów province; although most stayed in the predominantly Polish southern half of the province, some reportedly penetrated the Sejny area and a few settled in the northernmost Marijampolė district.⁶ In 1861, the Sejny district reported an influx of Polish craftsmen.⁷ In eastern Lithuania, the traditional westward expansion of the Slavic languages (Polish and Belorussian primarily) continued in the 19th century.⁸ Thus, even while Lithuanian nationalism grew and matured in the 19th century, the ethnographically Lithuanian living space continued to shrink.

The history, or rather the "prehistory," of the Lithuanian national movement during the first half of the 19th century is closely linked with these phenomena: (1) the language policy of the Church, (2) the rising importance of the peasantry in national political affairs within Russia and the Kingdom, (3) the rise in village literacy and the expansion of peasant education. These interrelated factors and developments eventually led to the formation of a national intelligentsia. This article deals primarily with the social aspects of the first theme."

Lithuanian was not a national language in the modern sense; rather, it was the means of communication with, and among, a certain social group. The survival of Lithuanian as a language depended not only on its continued use among the peasantry, but also on the villagers' rejection of other languages, primarily Polish, Russian, German and Belorussian, in favor of the native tongue.

In the three Lithuanian districts of the Kingdom, the overwhelming majority of the rural inhabitants spoke only Lithuanian during the 19th century. According to official estimates made in 1864, the number of people in Augustów province knowing only Lithuanian was the following:

Augustów district	172
Kalvarija district.....	80,341
Marijampolė district.....	119,221
Sejny district.....	62,648
Total	262,382

If we accept this figure as a rough estimate,⁹ and then compare it with the total Lithuanian population in the Kingdom (estimated at a little over 260,000 in 1863),¹⁰ it would seem that just about 100% of the Lithuanian rural populace of southwestern Lithuania spoke no language other than Lithuanian. Such a conclusion would certainly be unrealistic: contemporary accounts reveal that some peasants, particularly those who had served in the army, worked on the manor, or received some schooling, knew Polish. No doubt, many Lithuanian Protestants were at least familiar with German. Taking this into account, and remembering that some linguistic Polonization was occurring around southwestern Lithuania's southern fringes (in Sejny district), a more realistic estimate should posit, at most, four-fifths of the Lithuanian peasant population in the Kingdom of Poland as monolingual during the first half of the 19th century. It also seems reasonable to assume that the knowledge of Polish among the Lithuanian peasantry was distributed very unevenly; it was more probable in the southern fringes of the *Užnemunė* region, and certainly more extensive among families intermarried with Poles, as well as among Lithuanians living in or near towns. Also, a Lithuanian man was far more likely to know Polish than a woman, since he had more contact with the world outside the village.¹¹

Contemporary accounts of visitors to southwestern Lithuania during the 19th century leave no doubt about the peasant's attachment to his native language. One landowner, Adam Goltz, complained of the difficulties of asking directions in

Marijampolė and Kalvarija districts: "*Ne suprantu lenkiškai* (I don't understand Polish) is the answer of the reluctant Lithuanian to someone who doesn't understand his dialect."¹² Polujanski reported that "even if one of the Lithuanians knows Polish, he prefers to speak Lithuanian, even with a Pole, and only extremity or necessity forces him occasionally to speak Polish with those people who don't understand his language."¹³ Bonawentura Butkiewicz, a prominent diocesan official, noticed that while the peasants respected most of the clergy, they were particularly enthusiastic about those who "spoke to the Lithuanians in their own language,"¹⁴ perhaps, because, until the end of the 19th century and later, such priests were the only ones from the "world of authority" who addressed the villagers without an interpreter. In his memoirs, Mikalojus Akelaitis reported that those among the nobility who bothered to learn Lithuanian were very popular among the peasantry. He also noted examples of friction between Polish government land surveyors and peasants over language.¹⁵

The peasantry's strong attachment to the native language compelled Lithuania's religious and secular institutions to deal with the village population in its own idiom. On the other hand, these predominantly Polish institutions contributed to Polonizing much of the Lithuanian population in the 19th century. Perhaps, the most important institution affecting the use of the Lithuanian language in the 19th century was the Church. This was especially true of the Catholic Church. The role of the Church and clergy in the history of Lithuanian culture has long been a subject of controversy among educated Lithuanians. Some have viewed the Church as an instrument of Polonization; others have seen it as the preserver of the Lithuanian language. Actually, such discussions are fruitless: the Church and its clergy have, in fact, been both of these things. On the surface, this seems a contradiction, but a more detailed examination of the Church and its linguistic policy in southwestern Lithuania confirms this dual posture.

The episcopal hierarchy of the Sejny-Augustów diocese traditionally recognized the necessity of using Lithuanian to communicate with the peasantry. A 1797 document indicates that the Prussian government also considered a knowledge of the language a desirable requirement in appointing new parish pastors.¹⁶ However, until 1876, only two of the bishops of the Sejny-Augustów diocese are known to have spoken Lithuanian. Bishop Karpowicz (d. 1804) was the only consecrated Lithuanian-speaking Bishop of Sejny during the 1807-1864 period. In 1817, Bishop Jan Golaszewski informed the government that it would be desirable to appoint a Lithuanian-speaker as his auxiliary bishop, complaining that religious services, such as confirmations, were lagging seriously because the majority of the diocese's inhabitants needed someone to perform episcopal functions in Lithuanian. The government acceded to the appointment of Polikarp Marciejewski who had learned Lithuanian while serving in Urdamina parish. From 1809 to his death in 1827, Marciejewski practically ran the Lithuanian part of the Sejny-Augustów diocese. He propagated the use of the local languages and considered both Polish and Lithuanian as equally "diocesan languages."¹⁷ Between 1809 and 1834, none of the bishops of the diocese knew Lithuanian; however, all of them were basically absentee bishops and the diocese was administered by lesser officials familiar with local conditions. All this changed in 1837, when Pawel Straszyński became Bishop of Sejny. An energetic man, who actually made his residence in Sejny, he revitalized and disciplined the disorganized diocese. However, Straszyński's relations with the Lithuanian peasants were not good (see below). After his death in 1847, no new bishop was consecrated. Another Pole, Micholaj Blocki, administered the diocese until 1851 when Marciejewski's nephew, the Samogitian Bonawentura Butkiewicz, became the diocesan administrator. An ambitious and controversial figure, he was never consecrated bishop even though he went to Rome himself in support of his candidacy. Butkiewicz more or less ran the diocese between 1853 and 1860. It was only in 1863 that the Sejny-Augustów diocese received a new bishop, Konstanty Lubieński, the descendant of a prominent Polish family.

Lithuanian bishops were regularly appointed to the Sejny-Augustów diocese only towards the end of the 19th century, and only at this time did the Lithuanian language begin to appear in official Church correspondence. Before this, the higher Church hierarchy, with the exceptions of Marciejewski and Butkiewicz, was not Lithuanian. These two men tried to take the peasants' language into account during their administrations. Marciejewski pushed for a new seminary in Sejny to provide more Lithuanian-speaking priests for the parishes and it opened its doors in 1826. This was a significant step in providing an education for many peasant sons.¹⁸ Butkiewicz, for his part, is known to have published a diocesan circular in Lithuanian in 1853, the first such document in the Kingdom.¹⁹

In the period before 1864, the Church used Lithuanian widely only at the parish level. This practice had long traditions. For example, the Putsch parish charter of 1597 stipulated that the pastor must be a Lithuanian speaker. Other such charters are known from the earlier 16th century.²⁰ In Prienai parish, according to an 1837 document, the rosary was sung in Lithuanian "by the people;" sermons were in both Polish and Lithuanian. In Balbieriškis, "the teachings are announced on Sundays in the Lithuanian language, while on holidays Polish sermons are added."²¹ Obviously, those parishes which were predominantly rural tended to be more Lithuanian than those in the towns. The Protestant churches of southwestern Lithuania used three languages: Polish, German and Lithuanian. In 1853, the parish instructions to the Evangelical Lutheran pastor of Wizajny required him "to perform services once a month in the German and Lithuanian languages." The parish charter also stated that the "reverend pastor will perform the official functions relating to the Lithuanians of our Evangelical faith in their language."²²

Until 1837, the appointment of parish pastors by language ability seems to have been generally applied. Bishop Manugiewicz, who was head of the Sejny-Augustów diocese from 1826 to 1834, refused to appoint non-Lithuanian pastors to parishes in the Lithuanian districts, despite repeated requests by some priests for appointments to the wealthier parishes of southwestern Lithuania. Manugiewicz followed a fairly consistent policy of appointing as pastors only those priests who spoke the parishioners' language.²³ In some cases, where Polish pastors were appointed to Lithuanian

parishes in later years, they retained Lithuanian-speaking curates; as one pastor explained, he kept his assistant "only for help with the Lithuanian language, so that he would be an interpreter of my wishes."[24](#)

The Church also maintained the use of the Lithuanian language through the religious publications that were popular among the peasantry in all the Lithuanian-speaking regions. Bishop Valančius of Samogitia and Father Tataré from Marijampolė district were among the clergy who authored religious books. Lithuanian religious works ranged from instructions for confession to translations of Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*. The Church-sponsored temperance movement produced an explosion of popular Lithuanian publications.[25](#) A number of these temperance books no doubt reached the Lithuanian peasantry living in the Kingdom of Poland. In addition to books, the temperance societies issued Lithuanian medals and posters; these were modest, but effective, ways of propagating the use of the Lithuanian language.

Despite the maintenance of Lithuanian in many areas of Church life, particularly on the parish level, Polonization made great inroads in some parts of Lithuania during the 19th century. In many parishes, the gentry and nobility, a small minority of the parishioners, successfully pressed for the introduction of Polish and the elimination or curtailment of Lithuanian services. Thus, in Gudeliai parish, hymns and services came to be sung in Polish; only after "higher" society had filed out of the church, would certain announcements be given to the peasants in Lithuanian.[26](#) The belief of the Polish nobility, gentry and townspeople that Polish was a superior language tended to discourage some priests from continuing Lithuanian services in church. One newspaper correspondent asked priests to abolish "compulsory teaching of prayers and catechisms in Lithuanian." Although admitting that this was necessary in parishes where only Lithuanian was spoken, the correspondent saw no need to encourage the peasants' language in areas where Polish was already the church language. "Why should the peasants today expend funds for the schooling of a child," he asked, "when they teach him Polish but, on return from school to the home, this language will not be used, because in the church and the manor they speak to him in Lithuanian?"[27](#)

The Polonization of Church life in southwestern Lithuania made its greatest advances during Bishop Pawel Straszyński's ten year (1837-1847) reign as Bishop of Sejny. Concerned with reforming the lax standards in the liturgy, Straszyński reformed the church services; however, in doing so, he also abolished Lithuanian sermons and services in many parishes of the diocese.[28](#) Bishop Straszyński not only failed to learn the language spoken by over half of his flock, but was reported to have openly and publicly insulted Lithuanian as a "language of sheep," a derogatory expression not uncommon at the time.[29](#) In addition, Straszyński assigned many Poles to Lithuanian parishes, ending the former policy of taking language into account in appointing pastors.[30](#) Polujanski, while praising the bishop's administrative abilities, vehemently criticized Straszyński's "hatred of the people's language" in his 1859 travelogue of Augustów province; he was convinced that the attempt to drive out the long-standing tradition of Lithuanian church services was responsible for the peasants' lack of respect for their bishop.[31](#) At least some Lithuanian peasants never quite forgot Straszyński's "reforms;" in 1906, a petition to the Sejny diocese asking for the return of Lithuanian-language church services stated that "as our grandfathers tell us, the rosary and other hymns were sung in Lithuanian long ago, but during Bishop Straszyński's time, the Poles took the rosary away from us."[32](#) Despite peasant resentment against Straszyński's policies, the language controversy in the churches of southwestern Lithuania took on a violent and bitter form only at the turn of the 20th century.

Despite growing national awareness among the Lithuanian peasantry, and an increase in literacy in the native language, the Polonization process made considerable gains in the 19th century, in part through the Church. This was particularly noticeable along the southern fringes of Sejny district and in eastern Lithuania, where a lower educational level and the proximity of Belorussian and Polish peasants made the Lithuanian villagers more vulnerable to assimilation by Slavic elements. It was, in fact, easier for Catholic Lithuanian peasants to resist Russification than Polonization, for they were "immunized" against Russian influence by their deep mistrust of Orthodoxy. The peasants had no such "vaccine" against Polonization: the very Catholic faith which protected them against Russification was often an instrument of denationalization from the Polish direction.[33](#)

Furthermore, before the 20th century, many Lithuanian and Belorussian peasants confused their religious and national identities. In fact, Belorussian ex-Catholics, when converted to Orthodoxy, stated that "we were formerly of the Polish faith, now it seems we are of the Russian (persuasion)" — this answer was given when the peasants were questioned about their religious affiliation in 1855.[34](#) Compared to the Belorussians, the Lithuanians developed a national identity more easily, in part because their language was distinct from the Slavic tongues around them. Still, the Lithuanians' identification with Catholicism made many Lithuanian peasants vulnerable to Polonization.



Fig. 1. A Lithuanian Temperance Poster Published in Warsaw Commemorating the "Introduction of Sobriety in 1858." The caption around the Blessed Virgin reads: "Through Your Intercession We Will Endure to the End."



Fig. 2. Closeup: The Fate that Awaits the Drinking Driver, According to a Mid-Nineteenth Century Temperance Poster. The caption for the scene at the top reads: "The Drunkard Was Killed Driving From the Market." The bottom picture is subtitled: "The Death of the Drunkard."

Conscious resistance to the domination of what the peasants considered "foreign languages" in southwestern Lithuania's churches began, on a massive scale, only in the late 19th century; at this time, the Lithuanian language actually regained much of the ground it had previously lost in the parishes.³⁵ There are signs, however, that at least some Lithuanian Catholics and Protestants were concerned about maintaining their native language in the churches of the *Užnemunė* region as early as the 1820s. In 1820, the parishioners of Pajevonys parish in Kalvarija district wrote a letter to their new bishop Ignacy Czyzewski; having heard that a Polish pastor was to replace their previous one, the peasants begged the bishop not to assign a "dumb" priest to their parish — that is, one who could not speak Lithuanian. "It's not the first pastor we've had whom barely a thousandth of the parish can understand," they complained. The peasants said that they received little religious instruction from a non-Lithuanian pastor; according to them, the hired help had become "disobedient" and untrustworthy, since farmhands received no moral "reinforcement from the mouth of their own pastor." All their problems, the petitioners implied, were not so much the result of a bad pastor, as the work of a priest who did not "know (our) language, everywhere detested, but native to us." The parishioners of Pajevonys asked that the bishop at least assign a Lithuanian curate to their parish.³⁶

The Evangelicals of Marijampolė provide another instance of early concern with language rights. In 1825, the Lithuanian Protestants here petitioned the Kingdom's Commission for Religious Affairs to allow them to recruit a pastor from the town of Schirwindt (Lith. *Širvinta*) in Prussian Lithuania. Local authorities supported the petition, stressing that "for the most part,

the Lithuanian language is used in these areas."³⁷ The petitioners claimed that one of the local pastors was too old, while another could not speak Lithuanian, the language for the majority of the local Evangelicals. However, the Kingdom's Commission for Religious Affairs refused the Lithuanians' request for permission to recruit a pastor from Prussia, claiming that it would be inappropriate for a "foreigner" to conduct services in Poland. The government suggested that the people obtain a pastor from Kaunas in Russian Lithuania,³⁸ in reality, a useless suggestion since the Evangelical pastors there did not know Lithuanian. The Marijampolė parishioners later offered to pay the costs of recruiting a pastor from Prussian Lithuania for their congregation, but their continued efforts were to no avail: the government refused to admit a "foreign" pastor.³⁹ In June, 1825, Karol Trapp, the chief petitioner, composed a letter to the Tsar himself in French, but it was turned over to the unsympathetic Commission for Religious Affairs for resolution. The local Evangelicals finally obtained a pastor for the town of Marijampolė, but the desires of the area's Lithuanians for services in their own language were apparently not satisfied.⁴⁰ In 1830, Karol Lange, a theological candidate, reportedly preached sermons here in German and Polish, but the documents make no mention of Lithuanian.⁴¹

Documentary evidence on the struggle of the Lithuanian peasantry for language rights before 1864 is scarce, but does seem to buttress contemporaries' reports of the peasantry's strong attachment to the native language. Except for the southern fringes of southwestern Lithuania, it seems that Polonization in the *Užnemunė* during the first half of the 19th century was a surface phenomenon; despite some inroads, the Polish language found no firm roots in the Lithuanian village. While it is true that, overall, the ethnographically Lithuanian area shrank during the 19th century, most of the recession was in eastern Lithuania, where the peasantry was less affluent, and where the ethnic distinction between Lithuanian, Polish and Belorussian Catholic peasants was often vague.

Until the middle of the 19th century, government authorities rarely communicated directly with the Lithuanian peasantry. The Church and the manor normally translated and explained government decrees to the village,⁴² However, with the rising importance of the peasantry in national affairs during the 19th century, it became imperative for the various authorities to address the peasant directly. The Polish-Lithuanian rebels of the 1790s had been the first to publish political appeals to the peasantry in the Lithuanian language. Under Prussian rule, several circulars were issued to the Lithuanian populace of the *Užnemunė* region, usually concerning military supplies and their procurement.

However, during the 19th century Lithuanian remained, with few exceptions, an "oral" administrative language in southwestern Lithuania. This was especially true in the lower courts where Lithuanian was still spoken, probably until the early years of the 19th century; one Lithuanian document was found in the Kalvarija criminal courts dating from 1844. A Lithuanian text enumerating landowner-peasant relations after the emancipation is known to have been published in Gelgaudiškis in 1814.⁴³ Yet, while the government and manor routinely addressed the peasants through interpreters, all official documents were recorded in Polish, occasionally in Russian. An agreement between landowner Floryanowicz and the peasants of Keturkaimis (Pol. Kieturkowo) village concluded in 1838, records that the document was witnessed and signed "after its reading and translation into the Lithuanian language for the peasants."⁴⁴ Of necessity, the languages of written and oral administration in southwestern Lithuania were different.

The peasants' language in Lithuania was viewed as an exclusively village dialect during the 19th century; it was the language of a social class, rather than a nation. In fact, the peasants' national characteristics aroused very little interest in the upper classes — they were just another of those numerous qualities that made up the gulf between manor and village. Actually, many absentee landowners had little opportunity to even hear their subjects' language: the estate managers and the Church dealt directly with the villagers for them.

No doubt, the nobility's disinterest in the culture of the peasantry was compounded by a very real prejudice against the village population on the part of the Polish-speaking classes. For example, the comments of one Church official: "The impudence of the Lithuanian peasants is difficult to describe ... It is hard to overcome the resistance of the Lithuanian peasant ... It is necessary to know the Lithuanian peasants who weep, kneel, protest their innocence like lambs, but are (really) rapacious."⁴⁵ Naturally, the anti-peasant attitudes of the upper classes extended to all villagers, regardless of nationality; however, the ethnic difference in Lithuania definitely added to the mistrust between the social classes. The Marijampolė district chief reported that the peasant disturbances of 1861 there were due in part to the "mistrust of everything, even government officials, which lies in the character of the Lithuanian people."⁴⁶ The generally pro-peasant *Szubrawcy* secret society of the early 19th century, despite its social sympathies, was not above ridiculing the attempts by some of the Samogitian petty gentry to bring the Lithuanian language into literature and public life.⁴⁷ In southwestern Lithuania, it was Bishop Straszynski's anti-Lithuanian policy that exemplified the national prejudice of the Polish upper classes.

Despite the low social prestige of the Lithuanian language, the political and agrarian turmoil that led up to the great reforms of the sixties necessitated public communication with the Lithuanian peasantry on a larger scale. As mentioned above, the Lithuanian rebels of the 1790s had issued political proclamations aimed at the peasantry. Although these documents were crude and ineffective, they were the real beginnings of "Lithuanian publicism."⁴⁸ From this time on, the number of written materials for the villagers increased. Peasant unrest during the Franco-Russian War of 1812 compelled the then bishop of Samogitia, Juozapas Giedraitis (Pol. Józef Giedroyc), to issue two Lithuanian circulars which, while praising Napoleon as one "marked by heaven," asked the peasants to submit to their obligations and to the provisional authorities.⁴⁹

The most important political events that stimulated the expanded use of Lithuanian-language political propaganda were the anti-Russian insurrections in Poland and Lithuania (1830-1831 and 1863-1864), and the great agrarian reforms of the sixties. The participation of a considerable number of the peasantry in the 1831 insurrection persuaded rebel authorities to make more announcements to the peasants in both Polish and Lithuanian. The latter language was spoken by many of the rebel troops and came to be widely used in the ranks.⁵⁰

However, it was the period 1861-1864 that really led to the publication of substantial amounts of political and social propaganda aimed at the Lithuanian peasants. The Emancipation of 1861, and the difficulties associated with its implementation, inspired some Russian officials in Lithuania to address the peasants directly. In Russian Lithuania, several thousand Lithuanian copies of the Emancipation Manifesto were printed and distributed in an effort to reduce the peasants' ignorance and suspicions about the terms of the emancipation.⁵¹ Governor-General Nazimov appealed to the villagers to trust the Tsar; in May, 1861, he issued a Lithuanian circular to local police authorities, ordering them to redouble their efforts at explaining the real terms of the Tsar's reform.⁵²

In the Kingdom, language problems accompanied the introduction of the 1864 reform in the Lithuanian districts. In Kalvarija district, the peasants complained that the proclamation of the reform was in Polish, a language which they either did not understand or understood poorly.⁵³ In March, 1864, Governor-General Murav'ev, who was in charge of the four northern districts of Augustów province, ordered the translation of the 1864 reform announcement into Lithuanian. Within a few days, ten thousand Lithuanian copies of the announcement were published and distributed. Soon after, Murav'ev suggested to the Kingdom's Secretary of State, N. A. Miliutin, that the 1864 decree itself be published in Lithuanian; furthermore, Murav'ev proposed the printing of the decree in Cyrillic, instead of the customary Latin alphabet. Miliutin replied, however, that unless such a "Cyrillic reform" of the Lithuanian language was made to include all of Lithuania, and not only the Kingdom's Lithuanian districts, it would appear as a grossly political move against Poland.⁵⁴ The idea of introducing the Cyrillic alphabet into Lithuanian was abandoned for the moment, but in 1865 the Russian government issued a comprehensive press ban on all Lithuanian publications in the Latin alphabet which lasted until 1904. This move, an attempt to separate the Lithuanian peasantry from the Polonized Church and nobility, eventually backfired and became a major stimulus to anti-Russian sentiment among the Lithuanian people.⁵⁵

Thus, the government came to recognize the Lithuanian language as an important element in dealing with the peasantry. More important, the anti-Russian insurrection of 1863-1864 greatly enhanced the use of the Lithuanian language. The emergence of a Lithuanian-speaking intelligentsia during the second half of the 19th century and the corresponding influx of Lithuanians into the towns, though modest at first, made the language more than a peasant idiom. Lithuanian now emerged as a truly national language, transcending the boundaries of the parish and estate. The subsequent modernization and standardization of the modern Lithuanian literary language became one of the crucial achievements of the Lithuanian national movement. Thus, the fear of some contemporaries that Lithuanian would go the way of Gaelic was not borne out. Yet it must be remembered that the basis for this linguistic achievement, so indispensable to the very existence of the Modern Lithuanian nation, lay within the peasants' stubborn adherence to native culture and tradition.

1 See Jonas Totoraitis, *Sūduvos-Suvalkijos istorija* (Kaunas, 1938), pp. 267-274.

2 This language has also been incorrectly termed "Old Ruthenian" and "Old Russian."

3 See Jurgis Lebedys, *Mikalojus Daukša* (Vilnius, 1963), pp. 9-26, 270 ff. and Viktoras Biržiška, *Senujų lietuviškų knygų istorija*, II (Chicago, 1957), pp. 9 ff.

4 Michal Römer, *Litwini w Prusiech* Książęcych (Cracow, 1911), pp. 2-10) Vladas Nausėdas, "Lietuviškos mokyklos Prūsijoje XVI-XVIII amžiais," *Iš lietuvių kultūros istorijos*, II, 320 ff.

5 Vytautas Merkys, "Lietuvių nacionalinio judėjimo XIX a. socialinės-ekonominės priežastys," in *Lietuvos TSR istorijos bruožai*, ed. Juozas Jurginis (Kaunas, 1965), p. 58.

6 Krzysztof Groniowski, "Wychodzący mazurscy i warmińscy w Królestwie Polskim w połowie XIX w.," in *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, No. 2 (1960), 250-251.

7 *Gazeta Warszawska*, August 26, 1861 (No. 223), 2.

8 Władysław Wielhorski, *Litwa etnograficzna: przyroda jako podstawa gospodarcza, rozwój stosunków narodowościowych* (Wilno, 1928), pp. 110-112.

9 These figures are cited by I. I. Kostiuško, *Krest'ianskaia reforma 1864 goda v Tsarstve Pol'skom* (Moscow, 1962), p. 141, fn. 53.

10 Kazys Pakštas, "Earliest Statistics of Nationalities and Religions in the Territories of Old Lithuania," in *Commentationes Balticae*, IV-V (1958), 178.

11 In his memoirs, the Lithuanian activist Mikalojus Akelaitis says that in his village of "sixty souls," only three men spoke Polish. This was probably not unusual, but it is unlikely that this was the norm everywhere. Mikołaj Akielewicz, "Słódko z Mariampolszczyzny; wspomnienia z lat młodych," in Jan Jaworski, ed. *Kalendarz ilustrowany na rok 1877* (Warsaw, 1877), 111.

12 Adam Goltz, "Kilka słów o północnych powiatach gubernii Augustowskiej," in *Roczniki Gospodarstwa Krajowego*, X (1847), 286.

13 Aleksander Polujański, *Wędrowki po Gubernji Augustowskiej w celu naukowym odbyte* (Warsaw, 1859), p. 12.

14 Bonawentura Butkiewicz, "Opis kościołów i parafij w mieście Władysławów i we wsi Gryszakubada, położonych w gubernii Augustowskiej," in *Pamiętnik Religijno-Moralny*, VI (1849), 299.

15 Akielewicz, "Słódko," 110-111.

16 Archiwum Diecezjalne w Lomży (The Diocesan Archive of Lomza, henceforth cited as A. D. L.), Ser. A, 378: *Pojewoń*, Chamber of Białystok to Bishop Karpowicz, August 18, 1797.

17 Witold Jemielity, *Diecezja Augustowska czyli sejneńska w latach 1818-1872* (Lublin, 1972), pp. 33-34; cf. Jonas Basanavičius, "Iš Seinų vyskupystės istorijos," in *Lietuvių tauta*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1907-1910), 367-372.

18 Jemielity, *Diecezja*, pp. 82-84.

19 Antanas Ulpis, ed., *Lietuvos TSR bibliografija. Serija A: Knygos lietuvių kalba, 1547-1867*, I (Vilnius, 1969), p. 69; Vaclovas Biržiška, *Aleksandrynas*, III

(Chicago, 1965), 30-32.

20 *Lietuvių enciklopedija*, XXIV, 240; Totoraitis, pp. 267 ff.

21 A. D. L., Ser. B, 188; Wykaz Ogólny, k. 6-7, 12, 18, 37.

22 Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych (The Main Archive of Old Documents in Warsaw, henceforth cited as A. G. A. D.), Centralne Władze Wyznań (Central Religious Authorities, hereafter CWW) — 1340, Instructions for the Wizajni Evangelical Pastor, October 14, 1853.

23 Jemielity, *Diecezja*, pp. 47, 146.

24 A. D. L., Ser. A, 314: *Luksze*, Father Aleksandrowicz to Bishop Straszynski, March 28, 1840.

25 Valančius' handbook on abstinence went through at least six editions between 1858 and 1861. See Ulpis, *Lietuvos TSR bibliografija*, p. 434; cf. Juozas Tumas, *Tremtiniai, romantikininkai, Vaižganto Raštai*, Vol. XI (Kaunas, 1929), pp. 47-52 and Biržiška, *Aleksandrynas*, III (Chicago, 1965), 337-346.

26 Jonas Basanavičius, "Gudelių parapijos monografija," in *Lietuvių tauta*, Bk. 2, Pt. 3 (1914), 428.

27 *Gazeta Polska*, September 10, 1862 (No. 206), 2.

28 Basanavičius, "Iš Seinų," 372-376.

29 Cf. Akielewicz, "Słówko," 111 and Mikalojus Katkus, *Raštai* (Vilnius, 1965), p. 311.

30 Stanisław Jamiólkowski, *Opisanie kościoła sejmnerskiego pod względem historycznym, architektonicznym i inwentarskim* (Unpublished manuscript in A. D. L.), pp. 45, 170.

31 Polujanski, p. 288.

32 A. D. L., Ser. A, 184: *Kalwaria*, Peasants to Diocesan Administrator Antanavičius, May 1, 1906.

33 The Protestant Church in Prussia proved an effective instrument of Germanization among the Lithuanians there. There is little evidence of language policy changes among the Evangelical Lutherans of southwestern Lithuania in the 19th century.

34 Dawid Fajnhauz, *Ruch konspiracyjny na Litwie i Białorusi 1846-1848* (Warsaw, 1965), p. 39.

35 Basanavičius, "Gudelių parapijos," 429.

36 A. D. L., 379: *Pojewoń*, Pajevonys parishioners' petition, July 10, 1820.

37 A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Augustów Provincial Commission to Commission for Religious Affairs, May 13, 1825.

38 A. C. A. D., CWW-1340, Karol Trapp to Augustów Provincial Commission, April 24, 1825, k. 29-30.

39 A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Karol Trapp to Augustów Provincial Commission, June 27, 1825, k. 34-35.

40 A. C. A. D., CWW-1340, Commission for Religious Affairs to Augustów Provincial Commission, October 19, 1826, k. 41.

41 A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Deposition of Marijampolė Evangelicals, September 5, 1830, k. 140.

42 A partial exception was Prussia, where the royal government published numerous Lithuanian decrees between the 16th and 19th centuries.

43 Vaclovas Biržiška, *Senųjų lietuviškų knygų istorija*, II (Chicago, 1957), 55-56.

44 A. D. L., Ser. A, 613: *Władysławów*, Agreement between Floryanowicz and the Peasants, October 17, 1838; cf. A. G. A. D., CWW-1340, Depositions of Andruszaytis, Gudaytis et al, July 1, 1827.

45 A. D. L., Ser. A, 129: *Grazyszki*, Father Baykowicz's Report, May 24, 1817.

46 Quoted in Hipolit Grynwaser, *Sprawa włościańska w Królestwie Polskim w latach 1867-1862 w świetle źródeł archiwalnych* (Wrocław, 1951), p. 148.

47 Vincas Maciūnas, "Susirūpinimas lietuvių kalba XIX a. pradžioje," in *Vairas*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (1936), 508-509.

48 Leonas Gineitis, *Kristijonas Donelaitis ir jo epocha* (Vilnius, 1964), pp. 30-32.

49 Text is in Augustinas Janulaitis, "Aktai ir dokumentai," in *Praeitis*, I (1930), 361-365.

50 Feliksas Sliesoriūnas and J. Kruopas, "Nežinomas 1831 m. Lietuvos sukilėlių atsišaukimas lietuvių kalba," *LTSRMA Darbai*, XVIII (1965), 239-243.

51 Ivan P. Kornilov, *Russkoe delo v severo-zapadnom kraie* (St. Petersburg, 1908), p. 123.

52 Konstantinas Jablonskis, ed., *Lietuvos TSR istorijos šaltiniai*, II (Vilnius, 1957), 26-27.

53 Kostiuszko, *Krest'ianskaia reforma*, p. 141.

54 "Iz zapisok I. A. Nikotina," in *Russkaia starina*, CXIII (1903), 501-502.

55 See the article "Press Ban," in *Encyclopedia Lituanica*, IV, 342-345.