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THE LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE — HOSTAGE OF FOREIGN POWERS : 1940-1991

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The fifty years from 1940 to 1991 which the Lithuanian nation experienced by their horrible consequences may be compared to the epoch of bloody wars between the Lithuanians and the crusaders in the 13th to the 15th century and exceeded by far the four decades of the Lithuanian press ban (1865-1904). How did this period influence the development of the Lithuanian language?

In assessing the half-century path of the Lithuanian language, one should bear in mind the fact that every phenomenon in so-called Soviet society was double: it had a facade and a dark backstage side. There was facade politics, facade culture, facade morality, facade science, art, etc. Perhaps in all of world history one could not find a case when so much attention, effort and resources were devoted to the facade of the regime as in the Soviet Union. In this facade system a certain space was designated for national languages.

If we only look at the facade state of the Lithuanian language, we can quite agree with the conclusion reached in a publication devoted to the Lithuanian language, published in 1961: "After the restoration of the soviet system in Lithuania, a qualitatively new stage in the development of the literary Lithuanian language began. The state control of book and newspaper publishing put an end to the corruption and torturing of written literary Lithuanian. The cultural revolution which took place in the republic created new, *never before seen conditions for the growth and improvement of the literary Lithuanian language*, encompassing all strata of the population" (italics mine — A.P.).

On the whole, during the Soviet period Lithuanian linguists were not inclined to speak about the achievements of the Lithuanian language with much enthusiasm. Communist party slogans declaring to the whole world the unlimited possibilities of developing national cultures were a certain lever allowing people interested in true national culture to secure some space or future for the nation's language, literature, culture, etc. In this game much depended on the ingenuity, persistence, and cleverness of those people. A great number of examples could be provided demonstrating that not all nations were equally successful in this game. By comparison with others, Lithuanian linguists came off rather well. Under the cover of facade principles, considerable achievements were reached, which contributed to the general situation of the Lithuanian language during these five decades.

On January 16, 1941 the Lithuanian (with the letters SSR added) Academy of Sciences was founded. Almost at the same time the Institute of the Lithuanian Language, subordinate to the Academy of Sciences, was founded. Here scholars of the Institute of Lithuanian Studies founded by the Parliament of independent Lithuania assembled. The Institute of the Lithuanian Language, also functioned during the German occupation.

In 1944 and 1945, after all the fronts had passed leaving Lithuania under Soviet occupation for the second time, the situation of the Lithuanian nation, its culture and language seemed very difficult and maybe even hopeless. If we take Lithuanian linguistics only, the majority of its scholars retreated from Lithuania to the West. Among them were the most active Lithuanian linguists: Antanas Salyas, Pranas Skardžius, Petras Jonikas, Leonardas Dambriūnas, Stasys Barzdukas, Kazys Alminauskis, and others. A considerable number of Lithuanian writers and scholars of literature, pillars of the Lithuanian language, also sought shelter there. Out of the large and strong team of scholars in the Lithuanian language, literally only Juozas Balčikonis remained, surrounded by several younger specialists: Juozas Senkus, Jonas Kruopas, Elzbieta Mikalauskaitė, Antanų Lyberis, Kazys Ulvydas, and others. But it was teachers of Lithuanian language and literature of secondary schools who suffered most severely. Some of them went to the West, others found themselves in Siberia, were taken to prison; some of them had to leave schools due to political persecution. Though they were not

engaged in scholarly work, their modest occupation in school directly influenced the usage of the Lithuanian language in society. Their absence inflicted a great loss to the field of standard Lithuanian.

The work of those linguists who remained in Lithuania was hindered by an unfavorable atmosphere, the main element of which was the forcefully imposed "Marxist" language theory. For several centuries investigations of the Lithuanian language were spurred by historical Indo-European linguistics which at that time in the Soviet Union was denounced as bourgeois and anti-Soviet. Therefore, all scholars who in any case were inclined to base themselves on comparative historical Indo-European linguistics could be proclaimed bourgeois scholars, cosmopolitans and other enemies of Marxist ideology and methodology. The requirement to refer exclusively to old Russian linguistics of the late 19th century and works of Soviet scholars and also to condemn the ideas of Western linguistics made any scholarly work almost impossible. Personal contacts of Lithuanian scholars with their colleagues abroad nearly ceased. The restrictions imposed on the use of old scholarly literature (special library funds, bans on quoting certain authors, etc.) created many difficulties for scholars. For instance, due to ideological considerations the second volume of the academic dictionary of the Lithuanian language (1947) was destroyed, further publishing of this dictionary was disrupted, some doctoral candidate's theses were rejected.

Gradually new, broader possibilities opened up for Lithuanian linguistics. Apart from the above mentioned facade principle, and perhaps due to this principle a powerful stimulus both to Lithuanian linguistics and to the possibilities of the Lithuanian language was provided by Stalin's pamphlet, *Marxism and Issues of Linguistics*, published in 1950, in which comparative historical linguistics was exonerated. The Lithuanian language and its history became relevant. Ideological taboos were removed from investigations of the Lithuanian language.

Lithuanian linguists used this breath of ideological freedom in a very skillful way. They were considerably aided by one more principle typical of the Soviet system which may be called the law of even progression: in the Soviet Union each year everything had to be better than in the previous one. Therefore, while making plans for future activity, various institutions saw to it that the level of the previous year was exceeded by several percent to justify an increase in staff and budget. Though this increase was not always successful (somebody would eventually reduce this percentage for Lithuanian studies), Lithuanian linguistics still used to receive something from the budget.

One more feature was favorable to Lithuanian linguists: after 1950 two centers of Lithuanian studies started to form in Vilnius — the above mentioned Institute of the Lithuanian Language (unfortunately, in 1952 it was united with the Institute of Lithuanian Literature, which was not helpful in developing language studies), and Vilnius University. Gradually linguists of the Vilnius Pedagogical Institute joined them.

If we compare the activity of linguists of the Institute of the Lithuanian Language and Literature with that of the university linguists, we shall notice a certain division of labor and specialization. Linguists of the Institute continued the amassing of language material started by their predecessors: they increased the dictionary files, arranged various expeditions to collect dialectological material, collected place names and personal names. University linguists did not have any collections; they used to give their collected material to the Institute. The Institute tended towards long-term collective works. For instance, in 1956, having felt more freedom, it renewed the publication of the academic dictionary: the third volume appeared, next year — the fourth one, and later a new bulky volume appeared every two or three years. Finally, *The Dictionary of Modern Lithuanian* was presented to Lithuanian society (the first edition — in 1954, the second — in 1972). With the help of the university linguists the Institute prepared and published the academic grammar of the Lithuanian language in 1965-1976. It is a large three volume work in which phonetics, grammar (morphology, syntax) and word-formation of modern Lithuanian is described in great detail. The Institute also produced two large works in which collected dialectological material was used: the reader *Lithuanian Dialects* (1970) and *The Atlas of the Lithuanian Language* (2 volumes, 1977 and 1982). Since 1957 the periodical publication *Issues of Lithuanian Linguistics* has been published. The Institute employees publish their works in the periodical *Literature and Language*. On the basis of the material collected by the Institute *The Dictionary of Lithuanian Surnames*, a large 2-volume work (1985 and 1990), was compiled and published. Its authors are employees of the Institute as well.

Linguists of Lithuanian language and literature have done a great deal of work in the field of Lithuanian terminology: they took part in the preparation of over forty terminological dictionaries. The Institute promoted the publishing of the periodical *Kalbos kultūra (Language Usage)* (since 1961), from which later evolved the Committee of the Lithuanian Language founded at the Academy of Sciences in 1976 which united into one organization institutions and specialists interested in standardizing current Lithuanian. Meeting the needs of society the publication *Lietuvių kalbos rašyba ir skyryba (Spelling and Punctuation of the Lithuanian Language)*, prepared by the Institute appeared (the first edition in 1976, the second in 1989). To all these works those published on the initiative of Institute employees and in their name should be added. Since it is impossible to characterize them all in this article (those who are interested can refer to Algirdas Sabaliauskas' two books *History of Investigations of the Lithuanian Language*, 1979 and 1982), let us mention the names of the most productive linguists of the Institute: Jonas Kruopas, Juozas Senkus, Vytautas Ambrazas, Simas Karaliūnas, Antanas Lyberis, Jonas Paulauskas, Algirdas Sabaliauskas, Kazys Ulvydas, Adelė Valeckienė, Aleksandras Vanagas, Vytautas Vitkauskas, and others. To discuss each scholar's contribution a separate page would be necessary. Thus, having summarized both the collective and individual production of the Institute's scholars, one could possibly state that this center of the Lithuanian language alone during these five decades has done more than all the linguists in Lithuania in 1918-1940.

The second research center of the Lithuanian language after the war was represented by the Lithuanian Language Department of Vilnius University, and since 1973, by the Department of Baltic Philology which branched off.

The character of activity of this center was determined by the specific features of an institution of higher learning. They were favorable to dynamic activity, innovations in the theory of linguistics and, what is of greatest value, to scholars' initiative and individuality. Therefore, members of the Lithuanian Language Department who began their scholarly activity in 1950-1954 — as if by agreement — chose separate fields of investigation of the Lithuanian language which were not even included in the Institute's plans; they submitted their candidate's theses quite soon and became full-fledged specialists. The products of their activity — books and articles — started to appear one after another. Their pupils, not much younger than themselves, also started working in the field of the Lithuanian language.

This process can be briefly presented in the following way: In 1950 the young graduate of the Department, Zigmas Zinkevičius, starts to teach Lithuanian historical grammar and dialectology; in 1951 after post-graduate courses Jonas Palionis joins him, having devoted himself to the subject of the history of Lithuanian literary language. 1953 can be considered the year when Lithuanian stylistics was born. This subject was taken up by Juozas Pikčilingis. The same year after post-graduate courses Adelė Laigonaitė begins to teach Lithuanian accentology and morphology. In 1954 the postgraduate Vincas Urbutis begins to teach Lithuanian word-formation. In 1955, after post-graduate courses at Moscow University, Vytautas Mažulis begins his teaching and scholarly activity and expands the range of subjects with the Prussian language, comparative grammar of Indo-European languages and general linguistics. Already in 1957 the team of Lithuanian linguists is joined by nearly the most gifted and talented post-war graduate of Vilnius University, Jonas Kazlauskas (1930-1970), a pupil of the above-mentioned teachers. His tragic death was one of the heaviest losses to Lithuanian linguistics comparable to Kazimieras Būga's death in 1924. The names of his murderers are unknown, but they were directed by the Soviet regime.

To those who have at least a faint notion about Lithuanian linguistics and its development, these names can tell much. It was due to these scholars' efforts that the world's linguists finally recognized that the world center of Baltic studies, which had been in Riga before the war, in the seventies moved to Vilnius. In the seventies, when a galaxy of the above mentioned scholars gathered at the Lithuanian Language Department of Vilnius University, a significant turning point occurred in Lithuanian linguistics. Lithuanian linguists were engaged not only in collecting language material, but also in explaining, generalizing it and generating new ideas of Baltic linguistics.

The fame and authority of Lithuanian linguistics was considerably enhanced by the conference of the world's Baltic scholars (due to the requirement of party ideologists it had to be called an all-union conference) held in Vilnius in 1964 on the initiative of the Lithuanian Language Department (Jonas Kazlauskas' original idea) which decided to publish the periodical *Baltistica* (the editor-in-chief was J. Kazlauskas until his death in 1970, later V. Mažulis). July, 1970 saw the second conference of Baltic scholars. Later they were held every five years (in 1985 the Latvians arranged it in Riga).

In the seventh and eighth decades the process of molding new scholars was going on. University linguists were joined by one of the most famous post-war scholars of syntax, Jonas Balkevičius, (since 1960) the originator of Lithuanian phonology, and representative of the third generation Aleksas Girdenis (since 1962); in the same year his fellow-student Evaldą Jakaitienė began to work there. Two years later the productive and active scholar Aldona Paulauskienė began to teach morphology. In 1965, after post-graduate courses at Leningrad University, Aldonas Pupkis returned to his Alma Mater and devoted himself to the field of language usage.

On the whole, it should be said that each university linguist used to seek and find his own field or aspect of activity. Even the unpopular methodology of teaching Lithuanian had two distinctive and original teachers — the deceased Pranas Gailiūnas and Adomas Šoblinskas. In 1971 a graduate of the Department, Kazimieras Ambrasas, took up translation theory (unfortunately, after he left the Department, there is nobody to work in this important field of Lithuanian philology).

Vilnius University became such a significant center of Lithuanian linguistics after establishing post-graduate courses and a scientific council which had the right to confer degrees of candidate of philology and, later, doctor. These two institutions were widely used by other Lithuanian institutions of higher learning and even the Institute of Lithuanian Language and Literature, which in this case seemed to give preference to the university (for example, in Latvia was the opposite case: the council of conferring degrees was at the Academy of Sciences). Thus, scholars of Lithuanian studies of Vilnius University not only used these institutions themselves, but also to a certain extent began to turn the preparation of scholars and improvement of their skills in the necessary direction. The scholarly activity of the dialectologist of the Vilnius Pedagogical Institute (now University), V. Girnaveckis, the investigator of language history, Vincas Drotvinas, the scholar of syntax of the Šiauliai Pedagogical Institute, Vytautas Sirtautas and the scholar of stylistics, Kazimieras Zuperka are related to Vilnius University. In these scholarly institutions, as well as in Klaipėda University, we could find more of them; nearly all the instructors of subjects of the Lithuanian language went through the mill of Vilnius University.

Therefore, if we set out to look for arguments in favor of the "thriving" of the Lithuanian language, one of them could be the growth of Lithuanian linguistics in the period 1940-1990. One more argument could be added — the Lithuanian language occupied a firm position in the whole educational cycle. Contrary to Moldavia, Central Asia and even the Caucasus republics, let alone Lithuania's neighbor Belarus, where national languages were nearly ousted from secondary schools and in universities the Russian language prevailed, Lithuania did not experience such devastation.

Finally, let us add one more argument — the extent and production of the Lithuanian press. For instance, in 1984 2,594 books were published in Lithuania, 75% of which were in Lithuanian (1,939 books), whereas in Moldavia 745 books were published in 1978, 300 of them (about 40%) in Moldavian. In Tadjikistan the situation was similar in 1981: 745 books were published, out of which 300 were in the Tadjik language. In the same year in Uzbekistan (population 17 million) 2,293 books were published, out of which 1,028 were in the Uzbek language (for almost 12 million Uzbeks living in the republic). An even greater disproportion was in the Ukraine. In 1981 8,450 books were published, out of which only 2,141 in Ukrainian.

With all these facts in mind, one may ask how these Lithuanians can speak of the losses they suffered, when linguistics, education and book publishing were thriving in their country? Where do they see any threat to their language and nationality?

As a matter of fact, in the Soviet Union all principles, declarations and slogans proclaimed to the world by the Communist party which had absolute, indivisible and unlimited power, had turned into their opposites, and all national "achievements" led to one goal — liquidation of all national minorities, their melting in the tremendous Russian pot. Everything depended on tactics. In this respect one should consider the principle expressed by the creator of this system, Lenin, in his article "Is a State Language Obligatory?": "We do not want to drive anyone into paradise with a club... We are sure that it is not necessary for the great and powerful Russian language to make anyone learn it *by force*" (Lenin's emphasis).

In fact, one was not obliged to learn Russian in the Soviet Union, if one was not afraid of being called a nationalist and having other career difficulties. Having incorporated Lithuania in 1940, the Soviet Union did not ban speaking Lithuanian, like Hitler's administration did in the Klaipėda region in 1939, having joined it to Germany. Yet when the Russian language is declared to be paradise, the nations are sure to yield to the lure of that paradise sooner or later. Although their paths to that paradise are different and the tempo varies, they are sure to follow that way; the Communist party took care of it. They will follow it of their own free will; it is only necessary to instill this feeling in them. Thus after 1927 the nations which had used the Muslim alphabet changed to the Latin one "of their own free will", and after 1938 — to the Russian one.

The aim of the present article is not to enumerate the means used in the Soviet Union to encourage nations to turn away from their mother tongue "of their own free will". We can only note that the means included the rejection to legitimize an obligatory state language. It was convenient for the policy of Russification. The russifiers could not declare the Russian language alone the obligatory state language, for the myth of nations' equality propagated by them would be dispelled. To declare all languages used by nations having national territories (union republics, etc.) was also a bad choice for it would make the newcomers learn local languages and hinder Russification.

Therefore, neither linguists' activity nor increasing publications, nor tolerance of language in schools and offices (by the way, its extent varied greatly in the republics) did not guarantee that the nation would preserve its national self-consciousness and national identity. The Lithuanians experienced something similar in the late 19th - early 20th century in German-ruled Lithuania Minor. Although the Lithuanian press was more numerous in this part of Lithuania than in Lithuania Major occupied by Russia (in 1865-1904 it was totally banned), although the activity of various societies was comparatively free and the population enjoyed the considerable attention of the world's linguists to their language which had quite a firm position in the Church, it still was germanized to such an extent that the process could not be stopped by the sixteen years after 1923, when the Klaipėda region belonged to the Lithuanian state.

It is not clear whether the ruling classes of the Soviet Union used Germany as an example of an assimilation policy, but the direction was the same. They knew that if national linguistics is allowed to develop, the educational system and literature is centered on the national language, the aim of assimilation recedes. Yet there is nothing the Party will not do in order to achieve this great aim! All the more that it is quite possible to achieve this aim with the help of other, more covert means. The important thing is to instill the major language and to protect it for a while. On this occasion an episode from the so-called Dalimil chronicle written by an unknown Czech author in the early fourteenth century and reflecting the struggle of his nation with German expansionism comes to mind. Generalizing his country's experience, the author writes: "A language cannot exist if it is not an exclusive ruler in a country. An alien language edges its way surreptitiously, wanders through the country at first searching for a place to stay; but once it perches somewhere, it changes the nation's language in order to destroy it." The Lithuanian language found itself in a similar situation after 1940, particularly after 1945, when in its own country occupied by the Soviet Union it lost sovereignty and had to adapt itself to another, more powerful language.

This inequality of languages was felt immediately, when in 1940 Lithuania was invaded by Soviet specialists coming from all over the Soviet Union. Lithuanian officials of that time attempted to conceal or mitigate the neglect of the Lithuanian language showed by Moscow-sent internationalists. Thus several decrees defining the relation between languages and their usage were issued. For example, by Decree No. 334 of April 14, 1941 the Council of People's Commissars of the Lithuanian SSR obliged to arrange courses of the Lithuanian language for specialists coming from other republics. Yet neither this decree nor those issued later after the war were ever put into force; not only because the war broke out, but also due to the newcomers' unwillingness to learn the language of this small nation.

Westerners may not understand how people living in their countries can work there without learning their language. In Lithuania (and other republics) that was the case. How to communicate with these newcomers, mostly supervisors of various rank, was the problem of the local people, not that of the newcomers.

Nevertheless, the major means of assimilation was migration, the mechanical change of national structure. There are some indications about the existence of a special decision of the highest instance that in union republics the proportion of local nations should not exceed 60%, and in their capitals — 40%. In some republics this plan was carried out and exceeded; for example, in Kazakhstan the Kazakhs constituted about 33%, the Russians — 43%, in Kirghizstan — respectively 44% and 29%. Before the war in independent Latvia the Latvians constituted about 80% of the whole population, in 1970 only 56.8% remained, while the Russians constituted 29.8%. These changes were not the result of assimilation of local people, but that of a purposefully controlled and encouraged migration. When the number of the autochthonous population decreases so rapidly, the problem of languages solved by itself, the Russian language becomes firmly established. Then the basis for a legal requirement that the newcomers constituting such a high percentage of population should be obliged to learn the local nation's language is no longer necessary. The point is that at first the country's national structure is changed using any means, even the most illegitimate and after that the world recognizes that there is no legal basis for the restitution of the nation's violated rights, as now is the case in Latvia and Estonia.

The situation in Lithuania is somewhat better in this respect, but its national structure also changed after the war in comparison with the pre-war period due to intensive migration which came in handy for the assimilation policy led by the Communist Party. The migration of population was forced and "voluntary," mass and individual, from various regions of the Soviet Union and within Lithuania. It was a very complicated process, still to be thoroughly investigated and described with respect to national assimilation. Emigration did not always produce results desirable for the Party, but the general outcome was always anticipated by the ruling classes of the empire. In Lithuania the number of the Russian population increased approximately 3-3.5 times: in 1935 it was 2.34%, in 1942 — .1%, and in 1979 — 8.9%. But the percentage of Russian-speaking people was even higher. Thus Lithuania was russified even more than can be judged from these figures.

Physical extermination of people was particularly dangerous to the Lithuanian nation. It began in July, 1940 with mass arrests and deportations carried out without any court. In the middle of June, 1941, just before Germany's attack on the Soviet Union, within a few days over 34,000 people from Lithuania were deported to Siberia. Though not all of them were Lithuanians (there were Poles, Jews, even a small number of Lithuanian Russians among them), but they constituted the majority, and in this way the number of Lithuanians proportionately decreased. While the Red Army was approaching in 1944, a great many Lithuanians retreated to the West in fear of the Bolshevik revenge. After the end of the war the Lithuanian nation's genocide began; nearly annual deportations to the most severe regions of the Soviet Union were carried out. Many of them died in prisons and the resistance struggle. Losses suffered by the Lithuanian nation during all these years are not yet counted precisely, but the total number of people who died in deportations or were killed in battles with the Soviet power is about 300,000. The nation's most active members in terms of national self-consciousness, many educated people who were the support of the native language, were lost. Has anybody counted how many teachers of the Lithuanian language and literature stopped working after 1940?

Inner migration also changed the national structure of certain Lithuanian towns and regions, and this change was not always favorable to the Lithuanian language. Yet there were some positive developments. For example, during the first ten years after the war, when due to various repressions and forced collectivization it was becoming very difficult to live in the country, a good number of people moved to towns and the deserted Klaipėda region. Thus Vilnius, a non-Lithuanian city for several centuries (in 1942 Lithuanians constituted 20.5%) was increasingly lithuanized; recently Lithuanians constituted about 51%. Lithuanian peasants persecuted by Soviet authorities and killed by the Polish Armia Krajowa in their native villages of the Vilnius region, also went to Vilnius in vast numbers. Neither Moscow nor its representatives in Lithuania had the goal of lithuanizing this and other towns, but they were not able to stop this process. In any case, party propagandists used this lithuanization as an argument that they had been leading a nationalistic policy.

The opposite situation was observed in the Šalčininkai, Vilnius and partly Trakai and Švenčionys districts surrounding Vilnius. There the number of Lithuanians sharply decreased due to various kinds of emigration, irrespective of the fact that after the war about 200,000 Poles living in this region left for Poland (among them were many Lithuanians registered as Poles). Facts revealing how after the war in East Lithuania Lithuanian-speaking areas decreased can be found in the book *South Eastern Lithuania: Social and Legal Aspects* (Vilnius, 1990). A. Eigirdas¹ article indicates that 36.4% of the residents of the Vilnius district come from the former USSR. In the Šalčininkai district 53% of the immigrants were born in Byelorussia. "The majority of district administration officials are also newcomers," reads the article. To these 36.4% should be added those who have come from Russia (15%) and Ukraine (7.5%). Those coming from other Lithuanian districts and towns constitute as little as 25.5%. Among them only one or two percent were Lithuanians, which by far could not compensate for the decrease of the indigenous Lithuanians in the district. Therefore, at present Lithuanians constitute as little as 9% of the population of this district.

Why did uneven migration in this region consolidate the non-Lithuanian element? Apart from other reasons (Lithuania's economic situation was better in comparison with Belarus at that time; the Poles had more favorable conditions to let their children attend Polish schools, etc.), the influence of the national structure of various offices, farms and organizations was important. In those places where the lead-ing posts were held by Russians or russified Poles, Lithuanians always had poor career opportunities. This is observed even in Vilnius offices. These leaders served as a tool for the Communist Party to implement its policy of russification.

In the Vilnius region a rule was in force that the most influential party posts were occupied by people of different nationalities who did not learn and were unwilling to learn the Lithuanian language. They invited specialists from outside Lithuania who experienced better material conditions. Meanwhile Lithuanians faced various difficulties. For example, under various pretexts Lithuanian schools were closed (lack of pupils and teachers; lodging was not provided; buildings could not be found to accommodate schools), thus the Lithuanians avoided moving to those places where Lithuanian schools were absent, or even moved out when it was time for their children to go to school.

In Lithuania the practice of the leaders' russification began in the first days of Soviet life in 1940. Specialists of various kinds — temporary and permanent, necessary and unnecessary — were sent to Lithuania all the time. They were able to find jobs by using their connections; all sorts of "amateurs," both honest and dishonest, were sent here. In some fields the Russian language became dominant. Military service was thoroughly Russian, the systems of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and, all the more, the state security organs were also nearly russified. There the Lithuanian language was used as an additional means when a visitor did not know Russian or he had to be interrogated (in that case interpreters were used). The Russian language was almost exclusively used in transport: railroads, navigation on the Nemunas river, seaports and the sea fleet. Energy concerns (e.g. the atomic power station in Visaginas, the Mažeikiai oil refinery) used Russian as the main language, let alone numerous closed, secret military enterprises.

By the 1990s conditions were formed in Lithuania for the Russian language to become the main language. For that purpose the Lithuanians' psychological and ideological disposition was prepared. It may be said that a whole system of proofs was constructed that it was better to know Russian than Lithuanian; the Lithuanian language was said to be meant for domestic use. The smaller the sphere of language usage, the lesser value it has for the user. In the same way the Lithuanians of Lithuania Minor rejected their native language in the late 19th-early 20th century. The German language was proved to be more necessary and useful for them than Lithuanian. At the end of the 20th century the same fate awaited the Lithuanian language in the Soviet Union. In addition, it was done on a large scale encompassing the whole state and with the help of scholars and their institutions' linguists (the works of J. Deshirejev and I. Protchenko), sociologists, philosophers, teachers, etc.

Being daily surrounded by an alien language promotes the acquisition of the alien language's constructions. Language users begin to feel that their language is "ugly," i.e. loses its originality. They feel incapable of learning it which undermines its prestige and appeal even more. On the whole, it should be said that all languages are ousted from their users' consciousness when their prestige is damaged. Before 1991 the Lithuanian language also was in a similar state or a hair's breath from it.

Though Lithuania has regained political independence, the language has not yet reached the level of 1918-1940. Society and its leaders mechanically use Russian constructions and are not in a hurry to learn the authentic Lithuanian language. Five decades of Soviet occupation created a paradoxical situation for the Lithuanian language which can be characterized as an extremely disproportional gap between Lithuanian linguistics theory of language usage and everyday colloquial language usage.

Translated by Aušra Čižikienė