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Lithuania Awakening. Alfred Erich Senn. University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California; Oxford, England, 1990.295 pp. \$24.95.

Generally, historians write from a distance in time and space. Alfred Erich Senn, Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin, presents his study of recent developments in Lithuania from the perspective of a historian, yet with the immediacy of an eye-witness to these events. In his introduction the author states: "The study at hand purposes to explain the background and development of Lithuanian politics through the summer and fall of 1988, concentrating first of all on the Lithuanians' historical consciousness as a factor in the development of their national consciousness and of their political and cultural life." (p. 15)

This study in turn becomes the disclaimed "written documentation" through the author's participation in, and recording of various meetings, contending polemics, demonstrations, rallies and interviews with key figures in the unfolding political drama. In addition to a thorough index and substantial annotations, the reader will find appended helpful lists of biographical notes and a chronology of major events.

The book is a detailed account of the renaissance of Lithuanian national and cultural consciousness after Mikhail Gorbachev's call to the Soviet Socialist Republics to implement his policy of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. While the author covers primarily the period in 1988 (when he was visiting Lithuania as a guest of the Institute of History at the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, and again in the spring of 1990), he also provides pertinent information on developments before and after that period. Above all, it is the exhilarating account of the genesis of Sajūdis, the Lithuanian reform movement. It takes the reader step-by-step from the seminal events and the ascendancy of Sajūdis from a discussion group of intellectuals, artists, and scientists to the election of the Initiative Group on June 3, 1988, to the euphoria of its founding Congress on October 22-24 of the same year, and leading to the overwhelming vote on March 11, 1990, in the newly elected legislature to restore Lithuania's independence.

It is interesting to note that at its inception the Initiative Group of thirty-six members (sixteen were members of the Lithuanian Communist Party) had difficulty in finding a regular place for its weekly meetings which were to be open to the public. But evidently little time was wasted in undertaking the work at hand. Five days after election the Initiative Group formed special commissions which in turn, five days later, presented their respective programs as guidelines for discussions. While the format was that of seemingly innocuous discussions — as opposed to formal statements — the thrust of the programs was daring indeed, ranging from ending the privileges of the *nomenclatura* and holding them responsible for their decisions; saving the Lithuanian cultural heritage; recognizing Lithuanian as the official language; calling for economic and political self-sufficiency; to demands for a safe and rational management of ecology and resources, especially of the Ignalina power plant, similar to the disastrous one at Chernobyl.

The boldness of the programs for discussion was an obvious assertion of the collective moral imperative as seen by the Initiative Group, and indeed by the Lithuanian population at large. The author relates various incidents whereby Lithuanians had begun to express their self-confidence and determination vis-a-vis Soviet officialdom: e.g. the defiant demonstration at Ignalina, or the public complaint of Vytautas Petkevičius "... that in my native land and uncultured man [Niklai Mitkin, the Communist Party's second secretary and a Russian] demands that I speak Russian." (p.81)

The resolve to reclaim their national and cultural heritage was manifest in the many mass rallies and demonstrations commemorating tragic and sorrowful events of the past five decades. In general, advance notice of proposed events was at times provided by the Voice of America broadcasts, since the Soviet government despite *glasnost*, refused to make local communications media available to Sajūdis and other reform groups. Initially Sajūdis printed a newsletter, in small format to avoid Glavlit, the state censorship. However, occasionally the developing events outpaced the time needed for general dissemination of information — hence the use of Voice of America.

While Sajūdis had the support of the majority, the Lithuanian Freedom League was a critical and forceful influence in the rebirth of national consciousness and demand for outright independence, having worked for these goals since 1978 as an underground organization. (p. 67) Between the two organizations there was both rivalry and cooperation, the difference being in their respective *modus operandi*: some considered Sajūdis too cautious, others, the League as confrontational.

Sajūdis called the Congress of October 22-24,1988, "to establish its mandate as the voice of Lithuania." (p. 217) Seemingly, the entire country was galvanized by the event, and Vytautas Landsbergis described it as "two days that changed Lithuania." (Ibid.) The Communist Party offered its assistance, and Algirdas Brazauskas - now its first secretary — attended, bringing greetings from Comrade Gorbachev, who considered Sajūdis as a tool to implement his policy of *perestroika*. (p.222) While applauding Brazauskas' conciliatory remarks, the delegates laughed, nevertheless, when he credited the party with having begun *perestroika*. The program for the Congress was based on issues originally submitted by the special commissions of the Initiative Group. Sajūdis was not yet advocating independence for Lithuania, but the Lithuanian Freedom League paraded its daring vision with signs reading: "We support the secession of Russia from the USSR." (p. 219)

Not surprisingly the author repeatedly returns to Soviet Lithuanian historiography and historians who, as "the official caretakers of the people's collective memory, found themselves in an embarrassing position." (p. 3) In closing the author states wryly: "Even the historian could claim progress on their path of atonement and redemption taking charge of the new image of Lithuania's past. They provided the documentation and argumentation for forcing Moscow to discuss the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and eventually admit that a secret protocol dividing up Eastern Europe had in fact been a part of that agreement. (p. 252)

In an "Afterword" dated April 12,1990, the author writes: "Books must end, but life goes on." (p. 255) Life in Lithuania, after the March 11,1990, declaration of restoration of independence, brought renewed threats from Gorbachev, an economic blockade, brutal military harassment and intimidation, and finally violent death of civilians under rolling Soviet tanks. One hopes professor Senn is preparing a study on Lithuania in the aftermath of the awakening.

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