



The deeds and days of the Lithuanian republic's Centennial have filled our horizon with things both serious and trivial. It's an amalgamation of textbook facts, low-value interpretations, patriotic images, propaganda clichés, and public relations comics, all reminding us that taking too much of even the best of medications may result in loss of life. Under these circumstances academic answers and scholarly participation in the jubilee become difficult matters, considering that it is the duty of human and social sciences to plumb analytic depths rather than take joy in childish discoveries and Internet reality games with national symbols.

Volume 69 begins with an article that the well-known German historian and dean of Lithuanian studies Joachim Tauber wrote before the Centennial and presented as an introductory lecture at the National Lithuanian Committee of Historians Congress that took place last September in Kaunas at Vytautas Magnus University. Although the remaining articles in the first part of this volume do not directly support the Centennial deliberations, still to a thoughtful reader the essays by Gintautas Mažeikis, Linas Jokubaitis, Tomas Bacys, and Halina Beresnevičiūtė-Nosálová, as if falling into place here accidentally, create a meaningful mosaic of thoughts and historical facts that help to make sense of fateful issues.

Accidental is also a word that best describes the relation of this first part to the second, or monographic, part. We titled the latter *Codes of the unornamented language generation*. It is composed of texts created for a conference held at the Lithuanian Emigration Institute of Vytautas Magnus University and devoted to Algimantas Mackus, a poet and a hero of postwar Lithuanian intellectual life in exile. The tragic fate of Lithuanian war and post-war refugees has given rise to a number of different descriptive metaphors. But what is most important to the fabric of ideas in this volume of *Deeds and Days* is that all of it relates to the losses endured by the independent Republic of Lithuania in the whirlwind of Soviet invasions and mass-scale persecutions and killings. The generation of the unornamented language

came to be the witnesses, condemned by history, of a fate as painful as that endured by their brothers and sisters who stayed behind in occupied Lithuania. The difference between the two groups was that the first had the opportunity and the duty to openly communicate their experiences.

What was expressed in poetic language and nurtured intellectually is today a veritably golden trove of ideas and words without which our post-Soviet and post-colonial consciousness would be much poorer and our ability to bring back to words their real meanings would be much weaker. Under the Soviet occupation a sincere, authentic, and poetic sensitivity led to a skillful use of Aesopian language, while fruits of careful thought were and still are covered by a complex blanket of limitless insinuations. It's a good thing that the feelings and thoughts of Lithuanian exile are not allowed to be erased from the memories of contemporary Lithuanians.

The essays by experts of literature and poetry are supplemented by a text of intellectual history from the pen of Žygmantas Menčėnkovas. He analyzes the literary efforts of the recently deceased writer and professor of nuclear physics Kazys Almenas to get to know—and help the diaspora reader to understand—the human reality of Soviet Lithuania. What's more, this writer was that rare bird in Lithuanian creativity who having returned to Lithuania for keeps did not cease to delve into the consciousness and behavior of *homo sovieticus*. Writing his critically realist detective novels he did his best to preserve the recent pictures of late Soviet times that traumatized so many people trying to conform to the details of life. The intention of the writer Almenas reminded us constantly of what Umberto Eco had claimed when he said that *it only seems to us we understand post-Soviet man...*

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that we publish a scholarly journal volume without any book reviews. That this editorial complaint has become chronic doesn't make it easier to bear. Maybe a future editor-in-chief will initiate a seminar or even devote an entire monographic part to an analysis of this cultural phenomenon. The fate of the book review is a glove, not especially white, thrown down to the Lithuanian academic humanities. But for now we leave the reader with the hope that someone will spontaneously feel the desire to share his or her reactions to texts just read in a dignified space beyond *Facebook*.

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