WHY LITHUANIA'S INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY IS UNIQUE

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SUMMARY. On October 27–29, 2022, Vytautas Magnus University held a World Lithuanian University Symposium, one event of which consisted of panel discussions highlighting VMU's contributions to scholarship world-wide. Here we publish a report by Mykolas Drunga on five globally recognized scholars closely associated with VMU. They are the archaeologist Marija Gimbutas, the linguist Alfred Senn, the historian Alfred Erich Senn, the semanticist Algirdas Julius Greimas, and the computer scientist Algirdas Avižienis, all whom made a substantial intellectual impact on their discipline, often changing the direction of a whole field of study.

KEYWORDS: Maria Gimbutas, Jurgis Gimbutas, Zivile Gimbutas, Antanas Salys, Alfred Senn, William Schmalstieg, Alfred Erich Senn, Thomas Broden, Algirdas Julius Greimas, Algirdas Avizienis.

Vytautas Magnus University is not the oldest university in Lithuania – that distinction belongs to the University of Vilnius. But our university (VMU) is unique in several respects worth thinking about as we are celebrating one hundred years, a full century, ten whole decades of its existence. Well, unfortunately, not exactly full or whole: that single century of our university's existence was not without interruption caused by the same unfriendly force that earlier and for a longer time had closed down our older brother – or should I say sister? – the University of Vilnius.

DISCOVERING AN OLD EUROPE

I mention *sister* not because that might be politically correct but because of one person close to VMU – she became an honorary doctor of our university in 1993 after having been a student in our Humanities Faculty just before the outbreak of World War II and then moving to her native city of Vilnius where in 1942 she completed her archaeology studies before being forced to flee to the West along with several tens of thousands of other Lithuanians – flee from the same unfriendly force I just mentioned and to which we'll briefly return later. But for now let's just stay a bit

with Marija Gimbutas – Marija Gimbutienė in canonical Lithuanian – who after receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Tübingen in Germany in 1946 for a thesis on prehistoric burial rites in Lithuania did post-graduate work at the Universities of Heidelberg and Munich. In 1949 she emigrated to the United States and began with menial jobs before getting hired to teach first at Harvard then at the University of California from 1963 onwards until her retirement when she already had become truly world famous for showing the ways human civilization had been formed not just by men but also – and arguably primarily – by women.

Actually she discovered and described a wholly *new* civilization that before her no one had so much as an inkling of (that's why her claims were highly controversial but that's usually the case with exciting scholarly discoveries) – *new* in the sense of very very old, a civilization that existed from 7000 to 3500 B. C., before it was replaced by the newly arrived war-loving Indo-Europeans. The civilization she had discovered had been, according to her, a peaceful civilization of prospering villages and towns where women, especially mothers, set the tone; human life was valued and safeguarded; and women and men had equal rights, engaged in agriculture, worshipped the Great Maternal Goddess, and crafted wonderful works of art. Gimbutas called this the Ancient Europe or the Civilization of the Goddess and interpreted its existence and nature through a unique methodological approach she developed herself: a fusion of archaeology, mythology, folklore, linguistics, and aesthetics.

In accordance with this, Gimbutas urged the adoption of a new way of looking at the world's past and at the prospects for its future. She rejected viewing the past in terms of the wars that shaped society and allegedly separated the winners from the losers, and thus she rejected defining a superior civilization in terms of the victories won by its hardy warriors. In her view, what makes any civilization powerful is not its military successes but the artistic creativity it promotes and the immaterial values it cherishes. It is these creative and spiritual values that cause the lives of people to be meaningful and pleasant, rather than "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short," in the memorable and frightening words of Thomas Hobbes. I think that Marija Gimbutas believed that life can again become meaningful and pleasant for most people if only they stopped believing in the myth of continuous technological progress and began understanding that what is now held to be progress in fact destroys the conditions necessary for a good life on Earth.

But was life ever meaningful and pleasant for most people? I suspect again that she would shift her gaze many thousands of years backwards to the Ancient Europe that she had discovered and declare that back then life indeed was not solitary, poor, nasty, and brutish; though admittedly it might have been short, but just because modern medicine had not yet been discovered, and modern medicine is one of the few really good things that the modern age brought us.

One of the best texts in Lithuanian on Marija Gimbutas is an interview the photographer Neringa Rekašiūtė did in March 11, 2021 with the scholar Rasa Navickaitė who had delved deeply into the archaeologist's life, work, and archives. The interview is entitled "O jeigu Dievas yra moteris? Pažinti Mariją Gimbutienę" [What if God is a woman? To know Marija Gimbutas]" and was available November 30, 2022 under <https://nara.lt/lt/articles-lt/marija-gimbutiene>. In it Navickaitė says that she "immediately bumped up against the most varied interpretations, with some people taking Gimbutas very seriously as a person of influence, while others looked at her books with disdain, calling them unscientific idealizations. According to Professor Violeta Kelertas, Gimbutas was controversial because in the United States she came to be associated with spiritualistic feminists who 'believe in crystals' and that's why she wasn't taken seriously in academic circles." But, to prevent misunderstanding, I should make it clear that I think that both Professor Kelertas and Professor Gimbutas as well as in fact most rational people today are feminists not in the sense of having wacky beliefs but in the sense of deeply believing that all human beings, all women and men have the same human rights and deserve equal respect.

To return now specifically to Marija Gimbutas, as reported in the constantly updated Archeology Guide *Archeos.Eu*, she "first gained recognition because of her Kurgan hypothesis by which she explained the origin of the Indo-Europeans and their gradual spread through the territory of contemporary Europe. This hypothesis, which she developed in the 1950s, had the Indo-Europeans originating in the steppes extending along the northern shore of the Black Sea; now this hypothesis is held to be the most credible of all and was recently partially confirmed by genetic research." This area from which Indo-Europeans are thought to have descended is the homeland of the Yamnaya, a late Copper Age to early Bronze Age archaeological culture.

As the science journalist Douglas Preston wrote in the December 14, 2020 issue of the *New Yorker*, "the idea that Indo-European languages emanated from the Yamnaya homeland was established in 1956, by the Lithuanian-American archaeologist Marija Gimbutas. Her view, known as the Kurgan hypothesis – named for the distinctive burial mounds that spread west across Europe – is now the most widely accepted theory about Indo-European linguistic origins. But, where many archaeologists envisaged a gradual process of cultural diffusion, Gimbutas saw 'continuous waves of expansion or raids'.

As her career progressed, her ideas became more controversial. In Europe previously, Gimbutas hypothesized, men and women held relatively equal places in a peaceful, female-centered, goddess-worshipping society – as evidenced by the famous fertility figurines of the time. She believed that the nomads from the

Caspian steppes imposed a male-dominated warrior culture of violence, sexual inequality, and social stratification, in which women were subservient to men and a small number of elite males accumulated most of the wealth and power. The DNA from the Iberian skeletons can't tell us what kind of culture the Yamnaya replaced, but it does much to corroborate Gimbutas's sense that the descendants of the Yamnaya caused much greater disruption than other archeologists believed. Even today, the Y chromosomes of almost all men of Western European ancestry have a high percentage of Yamnaya-derived genes, suggesting that violent conquest may have been widespread." (*Iberian* here refers to one or more peoples anciently inhabiting, not the peninsula comprising Spain and Portugal, but the Caucasus in Asia between the Black and the Caspian seas.)

Prior to imaginatively postulating a hitherto unknown but very ancient, pre-Indo-European civilization, Gimbutas more conventionally contributed to a deeper understanding of the prehistory of the Baltic and Slavic peoples as well as developed the Kurgan hypothesis for which she initially became famous.

But it's precisely her later notion that prior to the violent invasion of the Indo-Europeans the civilization of Neolithic Europe had been harmonious, produced high-quality artifacts, and had a social system that was matristic and matrilineal, in which the religious and political spheres were dominated by women but without sexual oppression – it was this civilization of the Motherly Deity, the discovery and celebration of which Gimbutas herself regarded as her most valuable contribution to scholarship but which was less enthusiastically or even coldly received by her peers in archaeology who regarded her vision as wishful thinking and much too idyllic. When in 1974 she published her first book on this topic, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 6500–3500 BC. Myths and Cult Images*, no one really noticed or reacted to it. Her authority began to wane only in the late 1980s when her physical health also decreased even as she published two new books – *The Language of the Goddess* in 1989 and *The Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Old Europe* in 1991.

THE WOMEN AND MEN AROUND THE ACOLYTE OF THE GODDESS

The earthly existence of Marija Gimbutas came to an end in 1994 in Los Angeles after an eventful life that included a happy childhood following her birth in 1921 in Vilnius as Marija Birutė Alseikaitė to loving parents, Veronika Janulaitytė-Alseikienė and Danielius Alseika, both physicians and Lithuanian activists in then Polish-occupied Vilnius. It also included comparatively rare events for two generations of Lithuanians – the separation of her parents as well as her own separation

from her husband Jurgis Gimbutas, with whom she had three daughters, one of whom, Živilė Gimbutaitė, not only authored two books in English on literature but also taught Lithuanian émigré literature and English at VMU.

The connection to VMU was manifest even more strongly in the case of the architect and engineer Jurgis Gimbutas, who graduated from VMU in 1941 and then continued to teach there until 1944 when the family was forced to flee westward to Germany where Jurgis Gimbutas resumed his activities as a teacher at the UNRRA University for displaced persons in Munich from 1946 to 1948 before earning his Ph. D. at the University of Stuttgart for a dissertation on Lithuanian rustic architecture. In the United States since 1949 the Gimbutas family settled in Boston where Jurgis was employed from the very beginning until his retirement in 1983 as an engineering consultant creating successful projects for big buildings, bridges, complicated harbor facilities, power stations, and freeways, among others.

While both Marija and Jurgis intently pursued and were at times hugely successful in their professional lives, they also actively participated in Lithuanian community life. Marija Gimbutas especially left a mark not only in the Lithuanian emigration but also in the intellectual life of Soviet-occupied Lithuania. She did the latter without compromising herself politically, a fate her older bother Vytautas Alseika, unfortunately, failed to avoid. A journalist important first in pre-war independent Lithuania (he had graduated from the VMU Law Faculty in 1935) and later in the Lithuanian diaspora working for VLIKas, the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania, editing its newsletter *Elta*, as well as serving as an editor of the Lithuanian Catholic daily *Draugas*, he at some point became a Soviet agent and returned to Lithuania in 1972, where he died in 2002. Vytautas Alseika was one of the very few émigré Lithuanians who, after fleeing from the Soviets in 1944, were politically seduced during the Cold War by Lithuanian Communists and came back to live permanently in their land of birth while it was still under Soviet control.

WORTHY PUPILS OF NO LESS GREAT TEACHERS

To return to the famous (rather than infamous) personalities associated with VMU, there are two lines leading from Marija Gimbutas to two other very great luminaries. In one case the connection is not from Marija Gimbutas directly but runs from a favorite teacher of hers – the prominent linguist Antanas Salys, from whom by her own testimony she took nearly 10 courses in linguistics that he taught at VMU and later at VU (Vilnius University). Before becoming a successful educator Salys studied from 1923 to 1925 at the University of Lithuania (which was rechristened

VMU in 1930). One of his teachers there was the Swiss linguist Alfred Senn whom we'll come to in a moment, but first let's say a few words about his brilliant student Salys. After further studies at the Universities of Leipzig and Hamburg Salys returned to Kaunas in 1930 to teach at VMU where he founded the Phonetics Lab and thereby originated the field of experimental phonetics in Lithuania. And even as his student Marija Gimbutas moved from Kaunas to study in Vilnius in 1939, so did her teacher Antanas Salys move from teaching in Kaunas to teaching in Vilnius that very same year. In 1944 both along with many thousands of other Lithuanians fled from the returning Soviet invaders to a Germany that found itself in the process of being liberated from Hitler.

In this newly reborn Germany they both commenced pursuing their separate careers: Gimbutas beginning in archaeology and Salys continuing in linguistics. From 1944 to 1946 he, Salys, taught at the Universities of Greifswald and Tübingen before emigrating to the United States where from 1947 until his death in 1972 he taught Slavic and Baltic languages at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. It is there that he resumed contact with his former teacher and now fellow professor Alfred Senn, who was born 1899 in then German-ruled Alsace and who after studies at the Universities of Heidelberg and Fribourg where he got his Ph.D. in 1921 immediately went to Lithuania to serve as an associate professor from 1922 to 1930 at VMU. But in 1930 Alfred Senn moved to the United States where for a year he was a Sterling Research Fellow in Germanistics at Yale. Then from 1931 to 1938 Senn taught Germanic and Indo-European philology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison before finally moving to Philadelphia to teach Germanistics at the University of Pennsylvania.

It was thanks mainly to Alfred Senn that the University of Pennsylvania became a center of Lithuanian language studies – in fact the first and for a long time the only such center in the United States – as well. In 1947 he founded University of Pennsylvania's Department of Slavic and Baltic Studies of which he was chairman until his retirement in 1978. In addition to German and Lithuanian Senn taught many other ancient and modern Indo-European languages and also taught comparative linguistics. He was indeed one of the most important linguists of his generation and in his field.

A specialist in lexicography and grammar, Alfred Senn contributed to a number of comparative Indo-European dictionaries; authored grammars of Lithuanian, medieval German, and modern Russian; and was the principal collaborator, along with Antanas Salys, on the five-volume *Wörterbuch der litauischen Schriftsprache* (Dictionary of Standard Lithuanian, published by Carl Winter, Heidelberg), begun before World War II and completed in 1968. It is the largest bilingual dictionary of literary Lithuanian ever put together.

Dr. Salys took over Dr. Senn's professorship in Kaunas when the latter left Lithuania in 1930. Professor Senn's complete bibliography comprises around 200 items; he served as president of numerous scholarly associations, and earned many honors for his work. Even before his death in 1978 in Ashford, Conn. he was considered to be one of the four great philologists of the Lithuanian language who had taught at VMU and spent the last decades of their life in the United States. The other three were Dr. Salys (1902–1972), Dr. Pranas Skardžius (1899–1975), and Dr. Petras Jonikas (1906–1996). The latter was not only a teacher but also a student at our university.

NOT ONE SENN BUT TWO!

All in all, Alfred Senn contributed mightily to the study of, and knowledge about, the Lithuanian language not only through his teaching but also through his publications. One of them is his *Handbuch der litauischen Sprache, Band 1*, containing 495 pages and published in 1966 by the Heidelberg publisher Carl Winter. As another famous Lithuanian linguist, Professor Antanas Klimas of the University of Rochester, put it in *Lituanus* (Fall 1969), "this book is a detailed description of Lithuanian grammar and usage, written in German. In 1929 Professor Senn had already written a grammar of Lithuanian in German (*Kleine Litauische Sprachlehre*), but that book has been sold out for years."

Now, Professor Klimas went on to say, "with this *Handbuch*, Professor Senn gives a very detailed description of Standard (Literary) Lithuanian, with references to its older forms found in writings, and even to some dialect variations. ... It is not a book for a beginning language learner, but rather for a more advanced student or for a linguist."

Another insight into the work of both Senn and Salys is offered by the non-Lithuanian American linguist William R. Schmalstieg. In the Fall 1992 issue of *Lituanus* he wrote: "My first real contact with Lithuanian literature came in the fall of 1950 when I entered the University of Pennsylvania as a graduate student. My professors during the first semester were Alfred Senn (seminar in Slavic philology), Vincas Krėvė (Russian conversation and composition; Soviet Russian literature), Franz Rosenthal (Arabic), Carlton Coon (anthropology) and Antanas Salys (Bulgarian).

Prof. Salys had arrived at the University of Pennsylvania after the end of World War II at the invitation of Prof. Alfred Senn, who in the late forties had been delegated the task of creating a Department of Slavic Languages. In addition to inviting his former student Prof. Salys, Prof. Senn also invited Vincas Krėvė and Pranas Skardžius, although according to rumor, the latter declined, not wishing to work with Prof. Senn.

Prof. Salys always seemed relaxed and friendly and willing to spend endless amounts of time explaining points of grammar and/or linguistics to us uncomprehending American students. My permanent impression of him is that of a man with a smile on his face. In my second semester I had many of the same courses that I had begun in the first semester (but with Vincas Krėvė instead of Soviet Russian literature, I had Old Russian literature in which Krėvė labored to explain the intricacies of the medieval Russian epic. *The Tale of Igor.)* And instead of anthropology I began the study of Old Prussian (my first Baltic language) with Prof. Salys. ... There were only five or six students in the class but I remember only two others, a certain William Gibbon, a native American like myself, and Antanas Klimas whom I met in 1950 and who has been my friend ever since. It was perhaps hard for Prof. Salys to explain elementary Baltic philology through the medium of Old Prussian, but apparently he finally felt somewhat successful, because once he told me that he thought that I was beginning to understand what he was trying to say. I always studied hard and got fairly good grades, but nothing was easy for me and frequently I did not understand immediately the point of a lecture.

After one year at the University of Pennsylvania in the fall of 1951 I transferred to Columbia University where I studied with the famous French linguist, Andre Martinet. In the spring of 1952 I was called into the army and only in the fall of 1954 was I able to return to the University of Pennsylvania. I soon found myself in Prof. Salys' Lithuanian, Polish and Old Church Slavic courses. In the Lithuanian course in 1954–1955 there were four students, among whom was my good friend Samuel Levin, now a well-known American professor of English linguistics in New York City. During that academic year often at around 3 p.m. Samuel Levin, Kostas Ostrauskas (sometimes also Vincas Maciūnas) and I would meet in the anteroom of the University of Pennsylvania library for a relaxing chat. The three of us, i.e. Levin, myself and Ostrauskas called ourselves "The Lithuanian Patriots' Club" the motto of which was: *Chicago today: the world tomorrow.* Our textbook in the Lithuanian course was written entirely in Lithuanian and we used it primarily for studying paradigms, since no comprehensive English language text of Lithuanian was then available.

Prof. Salys realized the problems of a Lithuanian grammar in Lithuanian for English-speaking students so he translated for us much of the grammar during the class periods. I think that all of us in the class got excellent training in Lithuanian grammar, although Prof. Salys did not stress conversational Lithuanian. He corrected our written work promptly and with care, never tiring, it seemed, of pointing out our elementary mistakes. In his class we read some mimeographed Lithuanian texts some of which eventually were published as the second volume of Prof. Senn's *Handbuch der litauischen Sprache* (Heidelberg [1957]: Carl Winter). From

the mimeographed prepublication copy of this book Kostas Ostrauskas recorded on my tape-recorder Lazdynų Pelėda's *Piršlybos* which I listened to faithfully a number of times trying to learn spoken Lithuanian. From this course Levin remembers particularly the saying: *Aklam kelio neparodysi* "You can't point out the road to a blind man" (now in Senn, *Handbuch* II 19) and whenever I see Levin, he repeats this saying to me. I am afraid that he might think that this proverb applies to me.

At first Prof. Salys was to be my dissertation supervisor, but because of some administrative problem it was finally decided that Prof. Senn would be my advisor. Nevertheless I frequently went to Prof. Salys for help and both Prof. Senn and Prof. Salys participated in the final examination for the doctorate. You might imagine my confusion when the problem of the Lithuanian word *kunigas* ‚priest' came up. Prof. Senn insisted that there was never a nasal element after the second vowel of this word, i.e., never **kuningas* or the like, but Prof. Salys thought otherwise. During the examination I was asked my opinion on this matter. In order to avoid having to take sides, I answered that there was something to be said in favor of both views...

On April 5–6 of 1968 the first Conference on Baltic Linguistics ever held on the North American continent took place at Penn State University. I had invited an array of distinguished speakers [then Schmalstieg lists these speakers ... and at the end returns to Alfred Senn and calls him the Nestor of Baltic Studies in the United States]: Antanas Klimas, Leonardas Dambriūnas, Gordon B. Ford, Eric P. Hamp, B. Jegers, Alfred Senn, Calvert Watkins, Warren Cowgill, Valdis Zeps, Henning Andersen, James W. Marchand, Joseph Lelis, David Robinson, Jonas Kazlauskas, Vytautas Mažiulis and Antanas Salys. All of those invited were present, except for David Robinson (who was out of the country at that time), and Jonas Kazlauskas and Vytautas Mažiulis who could not get permission to travel to the United States. Antanas Salys read his paper, "Some Remarks on the Development of Lithuanian Dialects," but unfortunately never submitted it for publication, so it does not appear in the volume *Baltic Linguistics* (University Park and London, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1970), a volume which was dedicated to Alfred Senn whom we called "the Nestor of Baltic Studies in the United States" (preface).

If the *linguist Alfred Senn* not only married a Lithuanian woman Marija Eva Vedlugaitė but also single-handedly or in cooperation with others established Lithuanian as a subject to be studied at notable North American universities, his and his wife's son, the *historian Alfred Erich Senn*, who grew up speaking Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, and German at home and English in school, almost single-handedly introduced modern and contemporary Lithuanian history to an international audience in a way that reflected an American understanding of what history is about and what historiography – the writing of history – should be like. As we'll

see, Alfred Erich Senn not only helped Americans to understand how, having once been a great and powerful state in medieval and early modern times, Lithuania was reduced to being a province of the Russian Tsarist Empire, but then rose up again in 1918 to become an independent state once more – that story he first told in his 1959 book *The Emergence of Modern Lithuania* – but he also kept up with Lithuanian history throughout the ensuing half-century up to our own days, and reflected it to an international audience, in the books *The Great Powers, Lithuania and the Vilna Question 1920–1928*; *Jonas Basanavičius, the Patriarch of the Lithuanian National Renaissance*; *Lithuania Awakening*; *Gorbachev's Failure in Lithuania*; *Lithuania 1940: Revolution from Above;* as well as in numerous scholarly articles.

Many of his articles appeared in the journal *Lituanus* and elsewhere. One of them that I find especially noteworthy and pertinent these days is Alfred Erich Senn's account of his experiences in Vilnius during the "January Days" of 1991 when Soviet troops, backed up by tanks, seized several strategic buildings in the Lithuanian capital and killed 14 civilians near the Parliament building and injured many more. I wish I could read his very informative, gripping, and personal account, but that would take at least fifteen minutes which I don't have so let me end the Senn segment of my talk right there. [The text read to the audience on October 28, 2022 did not even reach this point – because it threatened to substantially exceed the allotted time, the reading had to be stopped right before the end of the section devoted to Marija Gimbutas, although it did touch a bit on Algirdas Avižienis. The version published here includes both what was prepared for the discussion on October 28, 2022 but couldn't be included in it and additional material on Algirdas Julius Greimas and Algirdas Avižienis as well as the following paragraphs from A. E. Senn's very much longer article in *Lituanus* (Summer 2011)]:

"In the first week of December 2010, I began thinking about the twentieth anniversary of the "January events" (sausio įvykiai) in Lithuania in January 1991. Official anniversaries emphasize lessons and current concerns; as the American journalist Ted Koppel has said, "History is a tool for politicians to justify their ambitions." I was not driven by any political ambition; I simply began to feel an urge to record my memories of January 1991: How I witnessed the "January events," the violence in Lithuania in January 1991. And I succumbed to this urge. This is not an account of what happened in Lithuania in that week; it is an account of my experiences in Lithuania in that week...

Memory is tricky. We remember what we want, and perhaps also what we most do not want to remember. In between is a lot of space. My account draws on three sources, all of which are my own doing: 1. My memory – those were days that were burned into my memory; 2. Accounts that I have published – particularly *Lithuania in Crisis*, a pamphlet published in March 1991 and several times translated

into Lithuanian, and *Gorbachev's Failure in Lithuania*, a book I published in 1995; and 3. A little grey notebook in which I scrawled thoughts and impressions during those days.

My decision to go to Lithuania in January 1991 was built on past experiences. In the fall of 1988, I had participated in the fascinating development of Lithuanian national feeling. When the opportunity came to join a delegation headed to Lithuania in January 1990 to consolidate the "Sister Cities" relationship between Vilnius and Madison, my daughter and I signed up. The trip fell between semesters at the university, and since that time accidentally coincided with Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Lithuania, it provided a real "upper" for returning to the classroom. In the summer of 1990, I visited Lithuania during a governmental crisis there that probably never will reach the history books, and after all this, I decided it would be fun to go again in the space between semesters in January 1991.

Lithuania was changing rapidly. Having declared their independence of Moscow, the Lithuanians had split into political factions among themselves. Gorbachev was showing growing impatience, but he was having trouble keeping order even in Moscow. Nevertheless, I really did not expect any sudden outburst of trouble. Despite the uncertainties, I received a Soviet visa very quickly – quite a contrast to the situation during Moscow's blockade of Lithuania in the summer of 1990, when the Soviet mission in Washington first denied me a visa and then called me on the phone to tell me to apply again.

It was not easy to fly into Lithuania in those days. In 1990, I had to fly through Moscow. In January 1991, my ticket read Chicago-Amsterdam-Berlin-Vilnius. On the first leg, flying to Amsterdam, I sat with an Irishman who had been working in the post office in Minneapolis and now considered this to be his cheapest route home. (I still cannot explain that.) When I told him of my destination, he declared that once there I should buy a horse. Why? Because the Soviets would impose a new blockade, and horseback would be my only possible transportation out of the country. I laughed that off.

In Berlin, where I overnighted, the radio gave me news of trouble exploding in Lithuania. Moscow had sent troops into Lithuania, allegedly to collect recalcitrant military recruits. Russians in Vilnius, with the support of the military, were mounting demonstrations against the government. Lithuanian Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskienė had resigned under pressure from the parliament; Lithuania had to form a new government. This sounded serious, but on I traveled. On the plane to Vilnius, I met a small group of Germans who were planning business contacts in Lithuania. We compared travel itineraries: We were flying in on Wednesday, January 9, and we would see each other when we departed on Wednesday the 16th. That was quite a week.

My friend Alfonsas Eidintas met me at the airport and apologized that his wife Birutė could not provide me with my traditional first meal in Lithuania. The stores had been closed on Tuesday because the government had ordered an increase in food prices, but with Prunskienė's fall from power, the parliament had cancelled the increase. As a result, stores had to close again on Wednesday to reduce marked prices. We ate at the Neringa Hotel (where I was to stay), and after dinner we went to Independence Square where Lithuanians were gathered to protect the parliament building from Russian demonstrators. I was deeply moved when some Lithuanians recognized me and shouted things like "Tell the world that we are not afraid."

The continued presence of Lithuanian demonstrators at the parliament and the television tower was a major factor in the developments of the following days. Lithuanian leaders announced quotas for various regions of the republic to send people in buses to the capital to serve shifts at the two buildings. The demand for bread in the city grew enormously over the next several days, and subsequently Lithuanians were advisors for demonstrators throughout the Soviet Union on problems of providing food and toilet facilities for large crowds. At times musical groups provided entertainment, and the demonstrations occasionally had the tone more of a festival than of a guard watch.

That evening I learned that, late in the afternoon, Soviet troops had briefly occupied the television tower in Vilnius, suddenly withdrawing again. I later came to suspect that the Soviets had planned for Russian demonstrators at this time to take over the parliament, and then the television facilities would serve new masters. The Lithuanians, however, had gathered too many defenders at the parliament to allow any quick move, and the military retreated. Television that evening showed a basketball game between Kauno Žalgiris and Moscow TSKA. Žalgiris won; Lithuanians hoped they could take this as a good sign.

Thursday the 10th was a day of rising tension. In the afternoon, I was in the Mažvydas Library, next to the parliament, when the radio brought news that Gorbachev had sent an ultimatum demanding that the Lithuanians cease their efforts "to restore the bourgeois order." The Lithuanian government called for popular support. My friends in the library took me to a large window on a high staircase across from the parliament, and I could watch Lithuanians streaming from all directions into Independence Square in front of the parliament. Many came running. The square was soon packed with people. There was no invasion.

Late in the afternoon, I made my way through the singing crowd over to the parliament, and at the security entrance, I called around to find someone who could give me a pass into the building. After a few minutes I succeeded, and I proceeded to the parliamentary floor. I knew a number of parliamentarians personally from the exciting days of 1988, and after the election of a new prime minister,

Albertas Šimėnas, I was able to put together an interesting story of the maneuvers involved in his selection, in his agreement to serve, and in the protests of his own party that would not approve his selection. I subsequently put all this into my pamphlet on the January events, and as I later learned, a number of conservatives complained strongly about my readiness to reveal internal Lithuanian squabbles to the wide world. I do not think any Lithuanian has yet published an account of these maneuvers, but I have chosen not to repeat my account here. This is my personal story.

Thursday night and Friday morning, we heard more stories about Soviet measures cutting Lithuania off from the outside world. The airport was closed (Soviet special forces were flying in), the train station closed, and international trains were stopped; I heard that highways were closed. (The blockade, to be sure, seemed focused on Vilnius; I do not think people in Kaunas experienced the full taste of these measures.) As I shaved on Friday morning, listening to the radio, I thought to myself: "I am a hostage! I should grow a beard!" But I had already begun shaving, so that would not work. And I had not bought a horse! But then again, I have never ridden a horse in my life.

On Friday morning, the 11th, Eidintas and I had business. We went to the Press Building, where the publication of Lithuanian newspapers was centralized, so that I could pick up an honorarium that I was due. A group of women and men, armed with the national flag, fire hoses, and umbrellas, told us they were expecting a surge of Russian demonstrators at any time and that we should hurry. We hurried, and they waved goodbye to us as we left. We went on to a publishing house where I signed a contract for Lithuanian translations of two of my books. Upon returning past the Press Building we saw a Soviet tank parked at the entrance; the Soviet army had occupied the building. (I heard that some thirty tanks had driven around the building during Thursday to Friday night; speculation had it that this had been a rehearsal.) We later heard that a Soviet officer, sprayed by a fire hose, raked the side of the building with rounds from his gun. Lithuanian television that evening repeatedly showed film of the officer and of a truckload of dolls that had been damaged by the tank; the sight of the broken dolls surely evoked images of children victimized by rampant tank drivers. In the afternoon, troops seized the international telephone exchange.

Television news on Friday evening amply illustrated the conflict. Lithuanian television reported Soviet actions and threats; the poet Justinas Marcinkevičius spoke of a "menacing black wing" and declared, "The cause of freedom is always correct." After the news, the mayor of Vilnius appeared on television to urge Lithuanians to provide food for the passengers stranded on the immobile international trains. Moscow television reported discrimination in Vilnius against Moscow

loyalists, who had just announced the formation of the Committee for National Salvation, which in turn called for "presidential rule" to replace the existing government in Lithuania. That evening, I visited friends in Antakalnis, and at midnight, as they accompanied me to the bus stop in front of a building housing Lithuanian defense forces, we all commented on how quiet things seemed. A half hour later, a bomb blew up the building. Each evening now, Soviet tanks rumbled through the city, shaking buildings. Lines of Lithuanian cars followed them, no doubt irritating the Soviet authorities. (The Soviets had a military base, Šiaurės miestelis, in the center of the city; the tanks did not have far to go to make people notice them.)

Saturday the 12th was a day of enormous tension. Troop movements like this were not meant "for show." Just before noon, the radio reported that George Bush's press spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, had said it was too soon to speak of any use of force in Lithuania – this did not improve the mood in Vilnius. In Moscow, Gorbachev was meeting with his new "Federation Council," made up of representatives of the major nationalities of the Soviet Union, and no one could be sure of the result. There were rumors that the council had established contact with the Committee for National Salvation, even that the council might seat the committee as Lithuania's representative. Endless discussions considered the Soviet government's previous violent actions in Tbilisi, Baku, and Moldava. (It was said that the troops that seized the Press House included veterans of Baku and Tbilisi.) Would the council approve some sort of action against the Lithuanian government?

In the afternoon, I went to Independence Square where buses were lined up to block access, and I visited the parliament to speak with various acquaintances. Audrius Siaurusevičius, then a fledgling journalist and now the director of Lithuanian radio and television, greeted me with the cheerful thought "They have not yet shot us!" I have recorded other statements by Lithuanian leaders at this time in my pamphlet *Crisis in Lithuania* and my book *Gorbachev's Failure in Lithuania*...

That evening, I was at a social gathering of historians, and we generally believed that the worst was over. Political prophets – hah. My friend who drove me back to the Neringa Hotel was looking forward to a good night's sleep. In fact, he got none. Shortly after his returning home, his parents demanded that he take them back into the city. Soviet troops were moving, and many Lithuanians wanted to show their national feeling and their support for their government.

I was in bed reading newspapers when the first three tank cannon shots went off at 1:36 a.m. It was now January 13. I immediately turned on my television set, and a Lithuanian spokesman said the Soviets were shooting blanks. More cannon shots. At 1:53 the television announcer reported that armed Soviet troops were "at our door" and declared that she would remain at her post as long as she could. At 1:59 they entered the station. At 2:02, Vilnius radio, located on the first floor, closed

down with a crash. Television cameras showed armed Soviet soldiers advancing through the building and opening every door. At 2:08, the television sound began to fade, and at 2:09, the picture of the announcer, Eglė Bučelytė, blanked out. For another eight minutes television carried pictures from the square in front of the parliament, showing the crowd reciting the "Hail Mary" and then singing *Lietuva brangi* (Precious Lithuania), which had been the unofficial national anthem in the Soviet years. The demonstrators had put aside their spirit of celebration, and now they faced real danger. Then television ceased.

I rose from my bed, put on a warm-up suit, and went out into the hotel lobby to find someone, anyone, to talk to. The hotel administrator came to me and asked whether I had something for an upset stomach. (By this time, having already stayed several times in the Neringa Hotel, I had a reputation for having a magic medical kit – I usually handed out an aspirin or two.) I gave her a package of Tums. In the lobby, people speculated what would be next. I finally decided to walk down to the parliament building. I threw on a coat over my warm-up suit, and set off. As I passed the Soviet KGB headquarters, I noticed that all the windows were dark; the Soviet security forces had presumably established operational headquarters someplace else. (The KGB headquarters were next to the Music Conservatory; some Lithuanians referred to the KGB building as the Department of Solo Singing and Percussion Instruments.)

Independence Square was bright with electric lights. A band played. People knew there could be a military attack, and many had come dressed up in their best clothes, ready for death. An announcer occasionally tried to help separated groups to collect themselves together again. In the distance, we could hear pops that we presumed to be gunfire. In a piece written for the London *Guardian*, Siaurusevičius described the action at the television tower: "The troops started firing into the air, and the tanks rolled over lorries and cars in their way, crushing them… In two hours it was all over. The transmission tower was firmly in the hands of the Soviet troops." There was no sign of military activity in the square, but the Lithuanian government kept issuing warnings to demonstrators not to stand too close to the building.

When I returned to the hotel, I stayed on in the lobby for several more hours. There we heard Radio Kaunas, which had already been functioning since about 2 a.m.: "Kalba Lietuvos radijas!" (Lithuanian radio speaking!) Broadcasting items successively in six different languages (Lithuanian, Russian, Polish, German, French, and English), it gave the rising body count of dead at the television tower: 9 dead, 70 injured; 11 dead, 108 injured. One of the Germans with whom I had flown into Vilnius declared that the spoken German – "Es spricht Litauens Rundfunk" – sounded like a World War II underground broadcast. At 6 a.m., I still sat in

the hotel lobby with an American-Lithuanian professor – we were drafting a statement that we would make if we got out of all this alive. We were not sure what was really happening. We also had no idea that there were so many foreign journalists in Vilnius at this time and that they had such modern means of communication – our statement died in my little notebook.

I got to bed about 7 a.m. At 9:30, heavy pounding at my door awakened me, and my first thought was "They have come for me." I did not fear violence; I thought that "they" might just force me to leave Lithuania. But the visitors turned out to be two of the Germans. The Germans had rented a car to take them to Minsk: Did I want to join them? I am still amazed that I immediately said no. As a historian, I felt it was almost a duty for me to stay in Vilnius to see how this matter would turn out. I asked them, however, to call my sister in Virginia to tell her that I was all right. And they did.

Now wide awake, I went to the hotel café for breakfast, where the journalist Algimantas Čekuolis joined me and gave me the latest news. The Prime Minister, Albertas Šimėnas, had disappeared – possibly he had been kidnapped – and Lithuanians were barricading Independence Square with trucks and construction equipment. Trucks with loudspeakers were roaming the city declaring that the Committee for National Salvation was now in charge and that Vilnius now lay under martial law. Major General Vladimir Uskhopchik, chief of the Vilnius garrison, was now commandant of the city and Lithuanians were to observe a curfew from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. The voice announcing the Soviet takeover was that of the historian Juozas Jarmalavičius, who a year earlier had told me that he hoped Lithuania could avoid bloodshed.

Amazingly, no one seemed to take the Committee for National Salvation seriously. Its membership remained anonymous; Moscow eventually admitted that it was ridiculous for Soviet troops to be accepting orders from an anonymous committee that feared to reveal its members' names. Even Jarmalavičius eventually claimed to know nothing about the organization, and Gorbachev and Moscow loyalists obviously wanted everyone to forget about it...

News that Boris Yeltsin had flown to Tallinn and had issued a statement of support for the Baltic raised spirits considerably. Šimėnas, the former prime minister, reappeared, but the Lithuanian authorities refused to reinstall him and rejected all calls for explanation of his disappearance. There were rumors that Soviet tanks might yet attack the parliament; the rumors suggested different times. I was myself at Independence Square at 4 p.m., one of the hours mentioned, and saw nothing that even hinted at such a possibility.

At the hotel, I fell into a conversation with a young couple who worked for the German embassy in Moscow. They understood nothing and were obviously

frightened. The man questioned why all this action over a rise in prices? I did not try to explain, but I asked them to notify friends in Hamburg, who were expecting me on the following Wednesday, that I was all right and expected to arrive as scheduled. To be sure, I was not at all confident that I would be there, but such is life. I later learned that the embassy did call my friends...

On Tuesday the 15th, I suddenly felt a change in my own feelings and attitudes. Up to that time, I had been a participant in the kaleidoscopic events; I was a part of them. I had even come to grips with the thought that, while I was not looking for trouble, I might not get out of this place alive... Now as tension visibly, palpably, receded, I was overwhelmed by the feeling that I wanted to get out of Lithuania, to return home. At the same time, I had strong feelings of guilt for this attitude: I would be abandoning my friends to an unknown fate as I fled to safety. I do not remember going through such drastic mood changes at any other time in my life...

Finally, Wednesday morning, the 16th, arrived, and it turned out that our flight was not quite as certain as officials had declared on Monday. As we somewhat nervously waited for the plane to come from Berlin, three of us travelers formed our own little group. (The Germans with whom I had flown in had, of course, long since left the country.) My traveling companions now were a German travel agent who was trying to arrange tourist excursions to Kaliningrad and a Swedish journalist who was just ending his first stay in the Baltic States. After a bit of delay and uncertainty, everything fell into place, and we were able to fly out. I received an unexpected bonus when the journalist, saying he wanted to see Berlin and spoke no German, asked me to be his translator in Berlin during the couple of hours before my train was to leave for Hamburg. I agreed – he hired an East German taxi driver, and we had a fabulous tour of East Berlin before he dropped me off at the Zoo train station.

Once I got to Hamburg, it was a new life. The Gulf War Part I started, and German protesters took to the streets. The contrast between the violence of demonstrators in Hamburg and the peacefulness of demonstrators in Vilnius made a deep impression on me. Throughout the week in Vilnius, Lithuanian leaders had urged their fellow Lithuanians to avoid violence or "provocation." The Soviet troops were destructive; the Lithuanian demonstrators destroyed nothing. Russians broke windows; Lithuanians did not. While in Hamburg, I gave an interview, by telephone, to a radio station in Chicago, and then I made a quick trip to Bonn to see my son, who was studying there. In Bonn, I went to a demonstration in support of Lithuania, and there I met the Lithuanian Foreign Minister, Algirdas Saudargas, whom the government had sent out of the country to represent Lithuania in the event that the Soviets occupied the parliament building. I also spent an hour in a coffee shop with a member of the German parliament, filling his head with my commentary on politics and personalities in Lithuania. At one point, he interrupted our

conversation for a telephone call to the German Foreign Minister. Once back in Madison, I gave one or two lectures and even appeared on early morning TV. My wife claims that it is frequently difficult to integrate me back into Midwestern life after a lively stay in Lithuania – this time was no exception.

I had left Vilnius convinced that Gorbachev was politically bankrupt, despite the fact that he had already been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He could not speak of liberalizing the Soviet system while he tried to crush Lithuania. The Soviet authorities had attempted a *coup d'état* that had ended as a fiasco. Gorbachev then tried to dissociate himself from the events in Vilnius, but he failed miserably. The organizers of the Committee for National Salvation felt that he betrayed them by not proclaiming presidential rule. This all may well have affected the misbegotten Moscow putsch of August 1991...

One last rather humorous note on this period. A few days after my return to Madison, the receptionist in the Wisconsin History Department told me that a New York Times correspondent had just called to check on a report that I had died in Lithuania. She told him that she had just seen me that morning and that I was alive. "Not in tomorrow's first edition," came his response. To my knowledge the *Times* has not yet reported my demise...".

After these excerpts from A. E. Senn's reminiscences in his own words there are two more books of his that I would like to comment on, now in the words of their reviewers. One is about Lithuanian-Soviet Relations at the beginning of World War II and is called *Lithuania, 1940: Revolution from Above*. It was published in Amsterdam and New York by Rodopi in 2007 and reviewed in the 2008 Summer issue of *Lituanus* by the political scientist Julius Šmulkštys who writes:

"Professor Alfred Erich Senn's latest book on Lithuanian history deals with one of the most important and challenging periods in the country's modern history. The author starts with a discussion of the Treaty of Nonaggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, August 23, 1939, popularly known as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which significantly influenced the events of 1940. The pact's purpose was to assure, at least for a while, nonbelligerent relations between the parties and to divide Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. ... The book is an important contribution to the study of Moscow's policy and practice toward small neighboring states during the Stalin era. It is the only comprehensive and balanced account and analysis in the English language of the relations between Lithuania and the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Second World War. *Lithuania, 1940*, will be enjoyed by the general reader and be useful to the professional historian as well."

Another article in the Fall 1998 issue of *Lituanus* calls attention to a book co-authored by Alfonsas Eidintas, Vytautas Žalys, and Alfred Erich Senn, edited

by Edvardas Tuskenis, titled *Lithuania in European Politics – The Years of the First Republic, 1918–1940*, and published in New York (1998) by St. Martin's Press. In a review by Thomas A. Michalski published in 1999 in the journal *Polish Review* the latter writes:

"The authorship of this book is in itself remarkable. It is a solid blend of the best American and Lithuanian scholarship presented in a passionately dispassionate diplomatic manner. Alfonsas Eidintas and Vytautas Žalys are accomplished Lithuanian historians and members of the Lithuanian Foreign Service. Both held high positions as Ambassador and First-Secretary at the reactivated Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, DC. Alfonsas Eidintas is now the Lithuanian Ambassador to Canada. Vytautas Žalys has returned to the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry in Vilnius. Alfred Erich Senn is a professor of history at he University of Wisconsin-Madison and is an internationally recognized American authority on Lithuanian history and politics. His publications are required reading for anyone seriously interested in modern Lithuania. Edvardas Tuskenis is an American-Lithuanian who has brought considerable editorial skills to this volume.

In commenting on this work, Zbigniew Brzezinski, an internationally renowned American expert on international relations currently associated with the Center for Strategic & International Studies in Washington, DC. states: "Modern Lithuanian history is deeply enmeshed in the complex tangle of competing Central European national aspirations. This volume ably conveys both the determined character of the Lithuanian quest for national independence and the tragic consequences of Lithuania's vulnerability." After an introduction by Alfred Erich Senn, the nascent evolution of the modern Lithuanian national movement at the start of the twentieth century is described juxtaposing the demands of a modern nation State against the romantic legacy of a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Two directions were clearly possible, the re-establishment of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in some sort of relationship with Poland, Russia or Germany, or a modern ethno-centric Lithuanian national republic. Lithuania chose the second course."

If Marija Gimbutas newly discovered a prehistoric but supremely human (because predominantly matristic) European civilization; if Alfred Senn helped to establish the study of the Lithuanian language at major Western universities; and if his son Alfred Erich helped to familiarize the Western world with modern Lithuanian history; then there were at least two other prominent individuals closely associated with VMU who also rendered exceptional services to the intellectual world and who therefore deserve to be mentioned as we celebrate the university's centennial. They are Algirdas Julius Greimas and Algirdas Avižienis.

FOUNDING FATHER OF THE PARIS SCHOOL OF SEMIOTICS

A fine way to recall Greimas (1917–1992) is through the eyes and words of a biographer of his, the American scholar Thomas F. Broden, who is an Associate Professor of French and Comparative Literature at Purdue University. The author of numerous scholarly articles on semiotics and French literature and culture, he edited Greimas's previously unpublished Sorbonne dissertations in 2000 with the Presses Universitaires de France. In 1981–1982 he studied with Greimas and his research group in Paris.

As Broden wrote in an article published in the Winter 2011 issue of *Lituanus*, "the exile A. J. Greimas was one of the most prominent Lithuanian intellectuals of the last century. He published widely in French on linguistics, semiotics, and French language and literature. The members of the research group that he established in Paris continue to carry forward his project today.

Although it is perhaps not so widely known today, Greimas actively participated in Lithuanian public life before leaving the country in 1944. In Šiauliai, he initiated the cultural almanac *Varpai* which remains the best record of Lithuanian letters for the war years. In Kaunas, he was a member of the resistance movement the Union of Lithuanian Freedom Fighters (Lietuvos laisvės kovotojų sąjunga, LLKS) and helped write and edit its newspaper *Freedom Fighter* (*Laisvės kovotojas*), one of the three principal underground periodicals produced in Lithuania during the war. After fleeing the second Soviet occupation, he maintained close ties with the Lithuanian community, published extensively in the liberal émigré press, and was active in Santara-Šviesa. This article recounts his early years, up to the summer of 1944.

Algirdas Julius Greimas was a member of the Lithuanian equivalent of the "Greatest Generation," men and women called upon to exert decisive efforts during the Second World War. The years were all the more challenging in Lithuania in that, along with Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Belarus, and parts of Poland and Western Russia, the country lay in the swath of East Central Europe that Timothy Snyder has dubbed the "bloodlands," subjected to mass violence engineered by both Stalin and Hitler during the war years. Whereas the spirit of the USA's "Greatest Generation" was marked by the preceding hardships of the Great Depression, the social event that made the greatest impact on its Lithuanian counterparts was perhaps the Act of February 16. Greimas and his contemporaries formed part of the first generation to grow up in an independent Lithuania since the Middle Ages – and the last such generation until the end of the Twentieth Century.

For Lithuanians of his day, A. J. Greimas was an internationally celebrated scholar and an active participant in Lithuanian public life. The renown earned by his research in French linguistics and the prestigious academic position he held in

Paris put him in an elite category among intellectuals from his country. Greimas is one of only three individuals born in the last century to which a 2000 collective work on modern Lithuanian philosophy devotes an entire chapter. His twelve monographs on semantics and semiotics investigate the foundations of meaning, especially in language and texts, and have come out in translation in many languages. To date, his landmark first book, *Sémantique structurale* (*Structural Semantics*) has been translated into Italian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Finnish, English, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and Lithuanian. He taught for twenty years at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, the most illustrious and dynamic degree-granting institution of higher learning in France. Even Lithuanian Communist Party apparatchiks tacitly considered him and his scholarship a national treasure to be conserved and championed.

Virtually unbeknownst to those of us who worked with him in French semiotics, Greimas also took an active role in Lithuanian public affairs. He held leadership positions in the anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet resistance, published extensively in the liberal émigré press throughout his life, participated in Santara-Šviesa, and produced important scholarship on Lithuanian heritage that played a prominent role in the revival of the country's culture during the latter part of the Soviet period. In the mold of Lithuanian liberalism, Greimas's fidelity to his native land did not countenance complacency, parochialism, or xenophobia, but demanded critical thinking, excellence, and goals valid for all of humankind. Upon his death, the Lithuanian embassy in France published an official announcement regretting the loss of a man "Faithful to his native country's language and actively supportive of its Renaissance," and the newly independent Lithuanian Republic commemorated the return of his ashes with an official state ceremony addressed by President Vytautas Landsbergis.

In France and other Romance countries, Greimas and his scholarship remain well known today. But younger generations of Lithuanians are not necessarily familiar with his work or his person. As one of his Lithuanian friends and contemporaries put it in 2011, "Everybody that was anybody in my generation knew Greimas personally or heard of his work. But there are not many of us left. The generation of our children or even grandchildren may not be informed."

The author was fortunate enough to study with Greimas and his research group for a year in Paris and to collaborate with them ever since. The present article represents a draft of the first chapter in an intellectual biography in preparation on Greimas. To the extent feasible, the book project endeavors to communicate faithfully both events and what it was like to live through them, both history and experience. History requires an "objective" account grounded in documents recognized as authoritative. Experience demands a "subjective" contact found in personal witness, such as one may encounter in direct exchanges, interviews, and letters."

Further on in the same article Broden touches on Greimas's intellectual development in which VMU played a major part: "In the fall of 1934, Algirdas enrolled at the Law School of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, the capital of Lithuania between the two world wars, located only thirty miles from Marijampolė. Greimas describes Kaunas as a cosmopolitan city, where he first fraternized with a smarter, somewhat snobby crowd returned from foreign metropolitan centers, including some in England and America. He took classes from a number of professors who were distinguished scholars and prominent public figures, including university Rector Mykolas Römeris, the founder of Lithuanian constitutional law and justice of the Supreme Court; Vladas Jurgutis, former chairman of the Bank of Lithuania and Foreign Minister; and the eminent philosopher Vosylius Sezemanas. However, the figure who made the greatest impression on him was Lev P. Karsavin, a historian of religious philosophy. Karsavin's lectures on medieval Christian philosophy instilled in Algirdas an enduring love for the Middle Ages and inspired him by their elegant mastery of Lithuanian: "I was fascinated by his beautiful, cultivated language. I hadn't known that it was possible to speak so finely in Lithuanian about wise matters." Karsavin and the other faculty named had all studied in St. Petersburg as well as in Germany or France, and they educated Greimas in Slavic intellectual traditions.

Outside of class, lawyer-in-training Algirdas recounts a student life of nights spent drinking beer and reciting poetry with chums followed by hungover mornings devoted to reading figures such as Leon Trotsky, Oswald Spengler, and Johan Huizinga, who formed his first conceptions of history, the discipline which would provide the framework for the first two decades of his research. He joined Neo-Lithuania, a university student organization devoted to maintaining Lithuanian independence and protecting its interests. It and other student clubs developed leaders for the intellectual, economic, and political life of the young country.

Greimas never finished his law degree, however, and ended up studying in France, which prepared him for becoming a French citizen and pursuing his career in that country. While he allows that he was "interested in anything but law," he attributes the switch to global geo-politics: "How I then became French, the merit goes to Mr. Hitler. It's Hitler who decided to blackmail Lithuania, not to accept its exports. Lithuania thus had to reform its economy and politics and turn to France... The government decided: now we're going to create French lycées. But there weren't any professors of French. So three hundred guys were sent to France with scholarships to learn French and become French professors. I was a law student. I told myself: why not go to France?" [It should be mentioned here that these "guys" sent by the Lithuanian government to France included "girls" as well, my mother being among them; hence the life-long friendship between the Greimas and the Drunga families – M. D.]

"Greimas was sent to the University of Grenoble in the Alps, where he enrolled in the Humanities College. He took classes from Antonin Duraffour, a respected specialist in Romance dialects, who had studied in Leipzig, the intellectual capital of historical linguistics. Greimas credits this "remarkable master" with giving him a first-rate training in Romance philology, forming him in the rigorous methods of linguistic analysis, and teaching him a respect for the text. Duraffour instructed his disciples to stay away from the aberrant novel "structural" linguistics led by the Prague phonologist Nikolai Trubetzkoy, whom the erudite and dignified professor baldly labeled an "asshole" during his lectures in the amphitheater.

In Grenoble, Greimas hooked up with his buddy Alexys Churginas, also a first-year student at the university. He became friends and roommates with an older compatriot and fellow new student, Jonas Kossu-Aleksandravičius (Jonas Aistis), who would go on to become a celebrated poet. After a rocky transition, Greimas adapted to his new environment. As he recalls, "The first year, I was always cursing France, for me it was a mess: 1936, the [Socialist] Popular Front, you can just imagine. Nothing worked, whereas even we Lithuanians had some sense of order. The second year, I fell in love with France." Thanks to the new cultural context and to the Spanish Civil War, his political leanings shifted to far-left anarcho-syndicalism.

Greimas passed exams and obtained certificates in psychology, phonetics, French philology, and French medieval studies, and was awarded the *licence ès lettres* in June 1939. The curriculum contributed a third stratum to his intellectual makeup, the Romance tradition, which would become his dominant frame of reference going forward. With Duraffour, he defined a doctoral dissertation topic in historical linguistics. The thesis would study place names in the Graisivaudan Valley near Grenoble, identifying creations and alterations effected by its successive inhabitants, from pre-Celtic tribes through the Celts, Germanic tribes, and Romans." Greimas is a stellar example of how one can be at home in two radically different intellectual communities: the Lithuanian and the French.

AN INVENTOR OF FAULT-TOLERANT COMPUTERS FOR INTERPLANETARY TRAVEL

If Algirdas Julius Greimas was a titan of the Humanities, then Algirdas Avižienis still is one of the most illustrious Lithuanian-born scholars in what might be called the hard sciences with a lively interest in the Humanities, especially music, and an even closer connection to VMU. Avižienis was too young to be a student there during the first period of Lithuanian independence, but as the second period neared

he was a vital member of the movement to have VMU re-established in 1989 after its closure in 1950 by the Soviet government. He served as the second rector of the resuscitated VMU from August 1990 to February 1993 to which he brought his Western mentality and unmatched experience as a scholar at the Computer Science Department of the University of California at Los Angeles where he now is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus and where from the 1960s onwards until the most recent years he did pathbreaking research reflected in nearly two hundred trendsetting publications with such titles as "A class of number representations for parallel arithmetic"; "The Design of Digital Circuits to Eliminate Catastrophic Failures"; "System organization of the JPL self-testing and repairing computer and its extension to a multiprocessor configuration"; "Design of fault-tolerant computers"; "Design methods for fault-tolerant navigation computers"; "Self testing and repairing /STAR/ aerospace computer for automatic maintenance of unmanned interplanetary spacecraft."

"The discipline of fault-tolerant computing would be unnecessary if computer hardware and programs would always behave in perfect agreement with the designer's or programmer's intentions. However, imperfections of computer systems and program "bugs" have been with us since the first computer was built, and fault tolerance will remain an important objective as long as computers are in demand."

Anyway, this was just a partial list of the publications and theses produced in his professional life by the computer science and interplanetary communications specialist Professor Algirdas Avižienis. But there was and is also his Lithuanian life both in the United States and the West as a whole and in Lithuania itself where we've already talked about his input into the revival of VMU which he did not attend before World War II but keeping alive the memory of its former professors active in the diaspora contributed to VMU's reestablishment in 1989 by continuing its academic traditions through the organization every two or three years since 1969 of the Symposiums on Science and Creativity both in the United States and later in Lithuania. More information on Algirdas Avižienis is provided by the U. S. institution he worked at:

"He is Professor and Director of the Dependable Computing and Fault-Tolerant Systems Laboratory in the Computer Science Department of the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA), where since 1972 he has been Principal Investigator of continuing research projects on fault tolerant computing and system architectures, supported by about four million dollars funding in grants from the U.S. Government, the State of California, and industry. He served as Chairman of the UCLA Computer Science Department from 1982 to 1985. He has supervised 27 Ph.D. dissertations, 30 M.S. theses, and is the author or coauthor of over 120 publications in these fields of study. He was born in Kaunas, Lithuania, but his family

immigrated to the United States in 1950, settling in Chicago, Illinois. He attended the University of Illinois where he received his B.S. degree in 1954, his M.S. degree in 1955 in Electrical Engineering; and his Ph.D. in1960 in the field of Computer Science completing a Ph.D. thesis that devised the class of "signed-digit" number systems for fast digital arithmetic. From 1956 to 1960 he was associated with the Digital Computer Laboratory at the University of Illinois as a Research Assistant and Fellow, participating in the design of the ILLIAC II computer...

In 1960 he joined the Spacecraft Computers section of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), California Institute of Technology, and initiated research on reliability of computing systems that originated the concept of "fault tolerance", first described in a paper presented at the 1967 Fall Joint Computer Conference. He organized and directed the JPL STAR research project from 1961 to 1972. This effort resulted in the construction and evaluation of the experimental JPL STAR (Self-Testing-And-Repairing) computer, for which, he received U.S. Patent No. 3, 517, 171, "Self-Testing and Repairing Computer" granted on June 23, 1970 and assigned to NASA. A paper that described the JPL STAR computer won the Best Paper selection of the IEEE Transactions on Computers in 1971. In 1969, JPL began designing a Thermoelectric Outer Planet Spacecraft, or TOPS (Voyager1 and Voyager2 missions). Outer planet missions ranged so far from the sun that solar cells would be inadequate. TOPS would carry radioisotope thermoelectric generators to provide electrical power. STAR was considered as the on-board computer for TOPS. Components built to STAR specifications later found their way into the NASA Standard Spacecraft Computer 1 (NSSC-1). He joined the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) Faculty in 1962 where he led the research laboratories. In addition to the administrative and scientific work he led the Department of Computer Science. He teaches courses in computer system architecture, computer arithmetic, fault-tolerant systems, and software fault tolerance. He is a Fellow of the IEEE Computer Society, and as a member, he founded and was the first Chairman of the Technical Committee on Fault-Tolerant Computing (1969–1973), and was the organizer and General Chairman of the First International Symposium on Fault-Tolerant Computing in 1971. He also served for four years (1971–1974) as a member of the Governing Board of the IEEE Computer Society.

In international activities, he has served as the founding Chairman of the Working Group 10.4 on "Reliable Computing and Fault Tolerance" of the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) from 1980 to 1986. He is the recipient of the annual IEEE Computer Society Technical Achievement Award in 1985, and the IFIP Silver Core Award in 1986. He is also the recipient of the 1979 AIAA Information Systems Award, and the 1980NASA Exceptional Service Medal. He

has lectured and conducted joint research at the National Polytechnic Institute of Mexico, the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, the Laboratoire d'Automatique et d'Analyse des Systemes (LAAS) in Toulouse, France, Keio University in Tokyo, Japan, the Innovative Computer Systems Center of the Technical University of Berlin, ERG, and the Microelectronics Research Institute in Lintong, Peoples' Republic of China. In 1974 he spent a five-month research visit, sponsored by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, at the Institute of Mathematics and Cybernetics of the Lithuanian Academy of Science in Vilnius, Lithuania, where he also had made six shorter research visits since 1968... The Senate of Vytautas Magnus University awarded him the title of Professor Honoris Causa in 1994. He is also the President of A. Avizienis and Associates, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in dependable computing and fault-tolerant system design."

LOOKING AHEAD

Throughout the century of its existence so far, Vytautas Magnus University hasn't done too shabbily in contributing to global scholarship. But on the basis of that record, what could we hope for in the future? It would be hard to match, let alone surpass, in importance and originality, the discovery of a hitherto virtually unknown civilization; the identification of the ancient homeland of a large segment of Europe's and Asia's population; the reality of "making the Lithuanian language great again"; the establishment of a new school of humanistic studies; the development of a self-correcting computer – to mention just those achievements that have been highlighted in this paper. Here we've reviewed only the major ones, leaving out many others that might have been deemed less significant. But going by what VMU professors have done in the last thirty years or so, we shouldn't be surprised if long before the next 100 years run out somebody at VMU constructs a much better version of Google Translate (one that does not require live native speakers to correct the results of an alleged "translation"); or establishes a Baltic School of Public Communications; or unearths conclusive evidence on whether or not Immanuel Kant was of Lithuanian origin; or proves some interesting mathematical theorem not yet shown to be true; or determines what really happened in Garliava in 2012 (a challenge for historians and serious journalists, both of whom are well-represented at VMU). The first two of these just-mentioned projects have already begun to be executed; and the possibility is real that something like the others listed above or entirely different from them but still spectacular will also see the light of day eventually.

What is remarkable about VMU is not only the contributions to world science that past professors and students have made, but also those that were made by the children and grandchildren of those former professors and students. These sometimes distant descendants of the teaching staff of the old VMU that existed from 1922 to 1950 as well as of the VMU resurrected in 1989 have mostly kept the VMU spirit alive in the foreign countries they settled in because of difficult conditions in Lithuania itself. And it is they who have recently made and will almost certainly in the future make advances in human knowledge that render the world a better place to live. Therefore we dare to hope that VMU will continue to be a strong bridge between a Lithuania that a hundred years ago had very little except a lot of initiative and resolve and a Lithuania that today is an exemplary help-giver and peacekeeper recognized first of all by those desperately in need of help and peace.

Mykolas Jurgis Drunga

LIETUVOS TARPTAUTINIS UNIVERSITETAS – IŠSKIRTINIS

SANTRAUKA. Švenčiant Lietuvos universiteto (1930 metais pavadinto Vytauto Didžiojo universitetu) įsteigimo šimtmetį, pravartu prisiminti, kuo kai kurios su juo glaudžiai susijusios iškilios asmenybės praturtino pasaulio mokslus ar net pakeitė jų kryptį. Apie tai – šis Mykolo Jurgio Drungos straipsnis, kurio trumpesnę versiją 2022 metų spalio 28 dieną per Pasaulio lietuvių universiteto simpoziumą perskaitė Skirma Kondratienė.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: Marija Gimbutienė, Jurgis Gimbutas, Živilė Gimbutaitė, Antanas Salys, Alfred Senn, William Schmalstieg, Alfred Erich Senn, Thomas Broden, Algirdas Julius Greimas, Algirdas Avižienis.