



Diaspora as Homeland Changing Agent: The Case of the Friends of the Lithuanian Front

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Abstract. The article examines the efforts of the Lithuanian diaspora to make an impact on post-1990 Lithuania. The main object of this research is the Friends of the Lithuanian Front (FLF), an association formed in the Lithuanian diaspora after the Second World War, which united people of a Christian worldview who identified themselves with the anti-Soviet and anti-Nazi resistance. After Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, the FLF tried to introduce to Lithuanian society the intangible heritage accumulated in the diaspora. The transnational relations that the FLF formed in the previous period were used for that purpose. They made it possible to establish organisational structures in Lithuania to set up contacts and cooperation with Lithuanian politicians. The concepts of sociology, “social remittances”, and “political remittances” were used to interpret historical data and reveal the efforts of the Friends of the Lithuanian Front to acquaint Lithuanian society with the concept of integral democracy and influence the politics of Lithuanian history and memory.

Keywords: *social remittances, political remittances, diaspora, homeland, the Friends of Lithuanian Front.*

Anotacija. Straipsnyje analizuojamos lietuvių migrantų pastangos daryti poveikį 1990 m. nepriklausomybę atkūrusiai Lietuvos valstybei ir visuomenei. Straipsnio objektas: Lietuvių fronto bičiuliai – po Antrojo pasaulinio karo lietuvių diasporoje susiformavusi grupė, vienijusi krikščioniškos pasaulėžiūros asmenis, kurių daugelis karo metais dalyvavo antisovietinėje ir antinacinėje rezistencijoje. Lietuvai atkūrus nepriklausomybę, Lietuvių fronto bičiuliai bandė supažindinti Lietuvos visuomenę su diasporoje sukauptu nematerialiuoju paveldu. Tuo tikslu

buvo išnaudojami ankstesniu laikotarpiu susiformavę transnacionalūs ryšiai, kurie leido įsteigti Lietuvoje organizacines struktūras, užmegzti ryšius ir bendradarbiavimą su Lietuvos politikais. Istoriniai duomenys straipsnyje interpretuojami naudojant sociologijos mokslo sąvokas „socialinės perlaidos“ ir „politinės perlaidos“. Daugiausia dėmesio skiriama Lietuvių fronto bičiulių pastangoms supažindinti Lietuvos visuomenę su pilnutinės demokratijos koncepcija, taip pat daryti poveikį Lietuvos istorijos ir atminties politikai.

Esminiai žodžiai: *socialinės perlaidos, politinės perlaidos, diaspora, tėvynė, Lietuvių fronto bičiuliai.*

Introduction

Lithuanian society and scholars have considered migration a threat to the Lithuanian state and society for many years. We used to see our emigrants as lost to the homeland, and immigrants as a peril to our small (less than 3 million population) and mostly ethno-homogenous society. Such a trend to perceive a negative impact of migration exists in many other countries. However, the concept of *transnationalism* has been changing this paradigm. Researchers, politicians, and even the public started to grasp the overlooked aspects of migration processes. Reduction of social tensions, remittances, and return migration are just a tiny part of the positive outcomes of emigration to the sending countries. Filling job vacancies, economic benefits, and cultural diversity are valuable aspects of immigration to receiving societies.

Owning a history of a few centuries of voluntary and involuntary mass migration to different directions and a vivid diaspora, Lithuania is starting to acknowledge some positive aspects of emigration. One might notice interest in remittances, return migration, and the diaspora's political lobbying. Considering high emigration rates and the depopulation of Lithuania on the one side, and on the other side the fact that modern communications require less effort to maintain the ties between migrants and non-migrants, an idea of *Global Lithuania*¹ has emerged.

Transnationalism is a term coming from a sociology realm. It happens that successful intellectual constructions often overstep the boundaries of their discipline. This is the case with transnationalism. Historians have found it fruitful as an analytical instrument incising the past. Some sociologists call transnationalism the phenomenon of the 21st century; however, historians might trace its manifestations at least back to the 19th century.

¹ Since 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania has coordinated an inter-institutional programme called *Global Lithuania*.

A review of the literature on Lithuanian migration lets us ascertain that researchers have been tracking the cross-border relationships and networks throughout the history of Lithuanian mass migration, even without mentioning the term “transnationalism” itself.²

This paper shares this perspective likewise. It focuses on the post-WW2 Lithuanian migrants, especially the Friends of Lithuanian Front, the FLF (Lietuvių fronto bičiuliai). Besides the other activities, the FLF elaborated a comprehensive political programme for future independent Lithuania called “Toward an integral democracy” (Į pilnutinę demokratiją).

Even though there is still no detailed history of the FLF,³ the development of the concept of integral democracy has been getting the most scholar attention compared to the other aspects of the FLF history.⁴

However, researchers, primarily political scientists and philosophers, have been paying attention to the content of integral democracy. On the other hand, the FLF’s attempts to promote this concept among Lithuanian intellectuals, politicians, and the public have yet to captivate the minds of historians. Nonetheless, this aspect is worth inquiry, as in the late 1980s and especially after 1990, when Lithuania restored its independence, the FLF was keen to introduce this concept to Lithuanian society and eventually see their homeland organised on the principles of integral democracy.

It is worth mentioning that the concept of integral democracy was a part of affluent non-material assets that the Friends of Lithuanian Front accumulated in the diaspora and were keen to introduce to Lithuanian society.

Over several decades, researchers have analysed the process of diasporants sharing their non-material resources with their (ethnic) homelands. As a result, some new analytical instruments have been developed. For instance, concepts of social and political

² LIULEVIČIUS, Vincentas. *Amerikos lietuvių ekonominė veikla*. Chicago, 1980, 223 p.; EIDINTAS, Alfonsas. *Lietuvių kolumbai*. Vilnius: Mintis, 1993, 228 p.; ALEKSANDRAVIČIUS, Egidijus. *Karklo diegas. Lietuvių pasaulio istorija*. Versus aureus, 2013, 632 p.; SUBAČIUS, Paulius. *Dvidešimt penkeri religinės laisvės metai. 1988–2013: Krikščionys Lietuvos visuomenėje po Atgimimo*. (2 tomai). Vilnius: Lietuvių katalikų mokslo akademija, VŠĮ Naujasis Židinys-Aidai, 2015, 1534 p.; SKIRIUS, Juozas. *JAV lietuvių darbai Lietuvai 1918–2018 metais*. Vilnius: Savas takas ir Ko, 2018, 558 p.; EIDINTAS, Alfonsas. *Lietuva ir masinė išeivystė 1868–2020 metais*. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras, 2021, 402 p. etc.

³ VITKAUSKAS, Vidmantas. Lietuvių fronto bičiuliai. *Į laisvę*, 2000, Nr. 131, p. 11–20, 2001, Nr. 132, p. 21–30, 2001 Nr. 133, p. 80–94; LABANAUSKAS, Ramūnas. Lietuvių fronto bičiuliai. [Žiūrėta 2023 07 03]. Prieiga per internetą: <https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/lietuviu-fronto-biciuliai/>; STRUMICKIENĖ, Ilona. Moterys lietuvių fronto bičiulių organizacijoje. *Oikos: lietuvių migracijos ir diasporos studijos*, 2017, Nr. 23/24, p. 137–147.

⁴ REKLAITIS, Gediminas. Pilnutinė demokratija: komunitarizmo ženklai Lietuvos politinėje mintyje. *Geriausių rašto darbų almanachas*, 2011, p. 20–32; JANKAUSKAS, Algimantas. Pilnutinė demokratija: Lietuvos valstybės vizija išeivijoje. Vilnius: Lietuvos kultūros tyrimų institutas, 2015, p. 117–138; *Lietuva, kurios nebuvo. Pilnutinės demokratijos svarstymai ir vertinimai*. Red. Kęstutis Girnius et al. Vilnius, Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2016, 587 p.; ALEKSANDRAVIČIUS, Povilas; PELURITIS, Laurynas. *Tarp įsitikinimo ir atvirybės: pilnutinės demokratijos ištakos, kontekstai ir perspektyvos*. Vilnius, Mykolo Romerio universitetas, 2023, 118 p.

remittances have been beneficial for a better understanding of transnational processes. I found these concepts helpful for describing the FLF activities towards introducing their non-material assets to Lithuania.

Therefore, this article aims to explore the efforts of the Friends of the Lithuanian Front to transmit their social and political remittances to post-1990 Lithuania.

This research covers two chronologically different time intervals. The first examines the period until the late 1980s, and the second deals with later development in transmitting social and political remittances from exile to Lithuania. The first part of the research, which I named “Before,” presents the messenger, i.e. the Friends of the Lithuanian Front, their identity, beliefs, practices, cross-border networks, and the evolution of the concept of integral democracy. The second part, “Transmitting,” focuses on the second period and describes the complex and complementary ways of transmitting the idea of integral democracy and other assets of the FLF social capital and its impact on Lithuanian society.

I combine the insights of other researchers with the analysis of primary sources, especially the publications in the diaspora’s and Lithuania’s media.

Methodological framework

Migration has been an inseparable part of human life for thousands of years; however, globalisation and rapidly evolving means of communication are changing the patterns of mobility and the perception of migration. The realm of migration research is diverse and rapidly changing. Different methodological perspectives and research tools are on display.

This paper focuses (1) on the dynamic development between people on the move and those who stay, and (2) networks binding people across borders. According to Roger Waldinger, people opting for life in another country are not just immigrants but also emigrants, in most cases retaining various bonds to the places left behind.⁵

For many years, researchers have been focusing on economic ties between migrants and their homeland. Still, at the end of the 20th century, scholars have extended their attention from economic to social cross-border networks. A concept of social remittances, coined by American sociologist Peggy Levitt, contributed to the studies of migration processes and the better understanding of cross-border relationships and migrants’ impact on their homeland societies.

Levitt describes social remittances as a “local-level, migration-driven form of cultural diffusion”, consisting of “ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from

⁵ WALDINGER, Roger. Engaging from abroad: the sociology of emigrants politics. *Migration Studies*, No. 2(3), p. 319–339.

receiving to sending countries”⁶ Notably, Levitt and some other scholars pointed out the manifestation of social remittances locally;⁷ however, later studies lost that “local level” dimension and have been grasping broader processes.

In her 1998 work, Levitt specifies the factors influencing the impact of social remittances on their homeland. She names remittances, the transnational system, the messenger, the target audience, differences between sending and receiving countries, and the transmission process as the impact determinants.⁸

Scholars researching social remittances noted that cross-border exchanges of ideas, behaviours, identities, and social capital arise and move not in one direction but manifest themselves in not a unidirectional flow.⁹ Marta Bivand Erdal et al. remark that these cross-border circular social exchanges “reinforce and are reinforced by other forms of cultural circulation”¹⁰

The founder of the term “social remittances” describes how social remittances flow from migrants to non-migrants in their country of descent. According to the researcher, social remittances occur:

1. Within the permanent or temporal return of migrants to their homeland.
2. When non-migrants visit their family members (we can add friends and acquaintances) in a destination country.
3. Through communication, such as letters, emails, and phone calls.
4. Through the activity of organisations.¹¹

Within organisations, individuals transmit social remittances through their organisational roles or via the looser, informally organised groups and social networks connected to the formal organisations.¹²

Scholars describe social capital as a factor determining social remittances, and even this concept has a vast amount of literature; in the context of this research, some aspects are worth noting. Summing up the pioneering works on social capital, American sociologist Susan Eckstein notes that Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Coleman defined this phenomenon as benefits acquired through the networks guided by the norms of reciprocity and correlating with other forms of capital. Later, Alejandro Portes and Julia

⁶ LEVITT, Peggy. Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion. *The International Migration Review*, Winter, 1998, Vol. 32, No. 4, p. 926–927.

⁷ Ibid., p. 926.

⁸ Ibid., p. 937.

⁹ ERDAL, Marta Bivand, et al. On the formation of content for ‘political remittances’: an analysis of Polish and Romanian migrants comparative evaluations of ‘here’ and ‘there’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Published online: 11 Jun 2022, p. 2.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ LEVITT, Peggy. Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion. *The International Migration Review*. Winter, 1998, Vol. 32, No. 4, p. 936.

¹² Ibid.

Sensenbrenner added that social capital rises from shared values, enforceable trust, and bounded solidarity.¹³

It is noteworthy to touch on the remark of Eliza Markley about two dimensions of social capital as distinct forms of social remittances. One targets how social norms, trust, and networks affect societies, and the second focuses on the obligations and expectations of a particular individual that take the form of social capital.¹⁴

Thorough studies of interactions between migrants and non-migrants in economic and social realms led researchers to study the flows of political influence as a component of social capital, which lets us better understand the complexity of transnationalism and remittances. A new concept of political remittances (as a subset of social remittances) emerged. Félix Krawatzek and Lea Müller-Funk point out that “political remittances are analytically distinct from other remittances primarily because they may want to transform the state itself and generally target the public sphere – in contrast to social, economic or cultural remittances”.¹⁵ In addition, Krawatzek and Müller-Funk highlight that as political remittances are remoulded in a context of migration, they can influence political behaviour, mobilisation, organisation, and narratives of belonging in places of destination and origin.¹⁶ Researchers define political remittances as “the act of transferring political principles, vocabulary, and practices between two or more locations, which migrants and their descendants share a connection with”.¹⁷ Some authors assume that political remittances might have a democratising impact on societies of origin.¹⁸ However, one might find critics of the idea presenting political remittances as carriers of democracy.¹⁹

As mentioned above, political remitting as a social one is not just one direction flow. Countries of origin tend to shape and control political norms, vocabulary, and practices among migrants. Homelands might invoke various tools for achieving their goals. Summing up the findings of the other researchers, Krawatzek and Müller-Funk name the creation of citizenship policies, granting or not voting rights, establishing

¹³ ECKSTEIN, Susan. Immigration, remittances, and transnational social capital formation: a Cuban case study. *Ethnic and Racial studies*, 2010, Vol. 33, No. 9, p. 1650–1651.

¹⁴ MARKLEY, Eliza. Social remittances and Social Capital: Values and Practices of Transnational Social Space. *Quality of Life*, 2011, No. 22, p. 365–378.

¹⁵ KRAWATZEK, Félix; MÜLLER-FUNK, Lea. Two centuries of flows between ‘here’ and ‘there’: political remittances and their transformative potential. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2020, Vol. 46, No. 6, p. 1010.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1004.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ ERDAL, Marta Bivand, et al. On the formation of content for ‘political remittances’: an analysis of Polish and Romanian migrants comparative evaluations of ‘here’ and ‘there’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Published online: 11 Jun 2022, p. 5; BURGESS, Katrina. Unpacking the Diaspora in New Democracies: When do Migrants act politically back Home? *St Comp Int Dev.*, 2014, No. 49, p. 13–43.

¹⁹ ERDAL, Marta Bivand, et al. On the formation of content for ‘political remittances’: an analysis of Polish and Romanian migrants comparative evaluations of ‘here’ and ‘there’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Published online: 11 Jun 2022, p. 5.

the legal context and political opportunity structure in which messengers of political remittances can act.²⁰

To conclude, through the decades, researchers have developed concepts and analytical tools that help to see overlooked processes affecting the countries of origin, diasporas, and people on the move.

I hope this paper will contribute to a better understanding of Lithuania and its people opting for a life abroad.

Before

“The messenger” – The Friends of Lithuanian Front

The origins. The emergence of the Friends of Lithuanian Front is inseparable from the 20th-century history of Lithuania. The FLF arose from the prewar experiences of the younger generation of Lithuanian Catholic intelligentsia and the manifesto “Toward the creation of the organic state” (1936). This proclamation is a product of a group of Catholic intellectuals known as the 1936-generation or *younger Catholics*. Even if it was not numerous, due to the social and intellectual potential and activity, it played a significant role in Lithuanian society and the diaspora.

Throughout its existence, the FLF took heed to perfect and disseminate this intellectual document. (The concept of integral democracy is presented more explicitly in the following text of this article.)

The Soviet and subsequent Nazi occupations radically changed the development of the Lithuanian state and society. The experience of the war years was crucial in forming the Friends of Lithuanian Front and specific features of their identity.

Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940 and increasing terror against Lithuanian society led to the rise of anti-Soviet resistance. Due to the complicated geopolitical situation, part of Lithuanian society saw only a chance to restore statehood with the forthcoming Soviet-Nazi war. Illustrating the saying that *the enemy of my enemy is my friend*, Lithuanians organised an anti-Soviet Uprising. It aimed to reestablish statehood in that short span between Soviet retreat and the Nazi advent. However, the Nazis misused Lithuanian aspirations for independence to achieve better control over the occupied territory and its resources. Even after a short period (up to 6 weeks) of attempts to negotiate with the German occupants over some extent of Lithuanian statehood, they entangled Lithuanians into the accusations of collaboration with Nazis

²⁰ KRAWATZEK, Félix; MÜLLER-FUNK, Lea. Two centuries of flows between ‘here’ and ‘there’: political remittances and their transformative potential. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2020, Vol. 46, No. 6, p. 1011.

and even contribution to the Holocaust.²¹ As hopes of independence restoration faded, non-homogenous anti-Nazi resistance emerged. In the autumn of 1941, the younger generation of the Catholic intelligentsia, which took an active part in the 1941 June Uprising and then worked in the Provisional Government of Lithuania, formed an anti-Nazi resistance group called the Lithuanian Front.²²

With the worsening situation for Germans in their war with the Soviet Union, Lithuanian resistance acquired a double identity. It acted against Germans, but advancing Soviets seemed a significant threat.²³ Nonetheless, the Nazis arrested some participants of Lithuanian resistance. Leaders of the Lithuanian Front were among them. Some met the end of the war at Nazi prisons or concentration camps.

In 1944, the Red Army was approaching Lithuania for the second time, and thousands of Lithuanians moved westwards. The members of the Lithuanian Front were in that flood of people. It is not surprising that they shared thoughts and ideas that were circulating among Lithuanian war refugees. Three aspects of the mentality of those days are worth mentioning.

Firstly, it was confidence that their departure would be temporary, that the Allies would liberate their homeland, and they would be able to return home.²⁴ Nonetheless, these hopes did not materialise, and in a few years, Lithuanian refugees turned into emigrants, enriching the Lithuanian diaspora with human and intellectual influx. Secondly, the homeland primacy principle shaped the relationship between the freedom fighters in Lithuania and their associates in the West. This principle manifested that the diaspora must help, support, or represent the homeland. Still, people in Lithuania will be the ones who will decide the way of development of the country and its inhabitants. Due to the permeable Soviet border, there was contact between the anti-Soviet resistance activists in Lithuania and the so-called free world in the first postwar years. Communication with the representatives of fighting Lithuania had a crucial impact on gaining legitimisation and social status for various organisations and associations in the diaspora. As the Soviets advanced in suppressing the resistance, it became evident that for some time, the Lithuanian diaspora would be the only representative of the Lithuanian nation and its voice, claiming independence and state restoration.

Due to this perception, in 1949, the Supreme Committee for Liberation of Lithuania issued guidelines for Lithuanians worldwide. A document called the “Lithuanian

²¹ EIDINTAS, Alfonsas. Žydai, lietuviai ir holokaustas. Vilnius: Vaga, 2022; STASIULIS, Stanislovas. Apie rezistenciją ir šešias birželio savaites. *Lietuvos istorijos studijos*, 2012, Nr. 30, p. 189–191; BUMBLAUSKAS, Alfredas. Recenzijos recenzija. *Lietuvos istorijos studijos*. 2012, Nr. 30, p. 192–194, etc.

²² BUBNYS, Arūnas. Lietuvių frontas. *Lietuvių enciklopedija*. [Žiūrėta 2023 08 21]. Prieiga per internetą: <https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/lietuviu-frontas/>; BLOZNELIS, Mindaugas. *Lietuvių frontas*. I dalis. Kaunas: Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2008, p. 49.

²³ BLOZNELIS, Mindaugas. *Lietuvių frontas*. D.1, p. 257.

²⁴ ANYSAS, Dalia Stakė, et al. *We thought we'd be back soon: 18 stories of refugees, 1940–1944*. Vilnius: Aukso žuvys, 2017.

Charter” (Lietuvių charta) consists of thirteen paragraphs and manifests the twofold goal of the Lithuanian diaspora.²⁵ One segment of the Lithuanian Charter obliges co-nationals to contain and nurture Lithuanian identity, and the second urges them to devote their life to the liberation of their homeland.²⁶ A member of the Lithuanian Front, Vytautas Vaitiekūnas (before WW2, Juozas Katilius), took an active role in creating this document. Principles incised in the “Lithuanian Charter” were the third factor that moulded the worldview and activities of members of the Lithuanian Front abroad.

At the same time, when war refugees waited for the liberation of their homeland, members of the Lithuanian Front in Lithuania joined the underground anti-Soviet resistance. Plenty of them paid the ultimate price in their fight for Lithuania’s independence; the others ended in places of detention or exile.²⁷

Summing up, at the end of WW2, the members of the Lithuanian Front were scattered among Soviet-occupied Lithuania, Siberia, and countries of the so-called free world.

Organisational and social structure. It is worth mentioning that during the first post-war years, the members of the Lithuanian Front refrained from creating or reestablishing a formal organisational structure.²⁸ They took part in administrative units working for the sake of the Lithuanian nation in general. Still, they only undertook endeavours to establish an official organisation, except for a few volumes of the periodicals and the Convention of 1948. The Lithuanian Front leaders focused on continuing their work begun earlier at the Supreme Committee for Liberation of Lithuania (Vyriausiasis Lietuvos išlaisvinimo komitetas), established in 1943. The movement members also stood at the frontiers of various activities related to the Lithuanian community in so-called Displaced Persons (DP) Camps.

In 1952, due to the conflict with other political groups, the Lithuanian Front withdrew from the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania.²⁹ This decision engaged the members of the Lithuanian Front in exile to strengthen their activities in different areas, such as cultural, communal, intellectual, and political lobbying. Those in the Western countries paying tribute to their comrades under the Soviet burden and acknowledging very different conditions of their activity started naming themselves the Friends of Lithuanian Front.³⁰

²⁵ Lithuanian Charter. *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas*. [Žiūrėta 2023 09 05]. Prieiga per internetą: https://www.lrs.lt/sip/getFile3?p_fid=67917&fbclid=IwAR0tv-r4YmRvQrJd1vZnWkyr51ijxyJbnCw4LCG_tzCZ-Nkx_gjq4iKPkNA

²⁶ CIDZIKAITĖ, Dalia. Lithuanian Charter turns Seventy. *Lietuvos nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo biblioteka*. [Žiūrėta 2023 09 05]. Prieiga per internetą: <https://blog.lnb.lt/lituanistika/tag/lithuanian-charter/>

²⁷ Mindaugas Bloznelis. *Lietuvių frontas*. II dalis. Kaunas: Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2012, p. 24–25, 54–55, etc.

²⁸ *Ugninis stulpas: 25 metai be Juozo Brazaičio; laiškai, dokumentai, liudijimai*. Red. V. Valiušaitis. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2000, p. 259.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

³⁰ LABANAUSKAS, Ramūnas. Lietuvių fronto bičiuliai. *Visuotinė lietuvių enciklopedija*. [Žiūrėta 2023 07 03]. Prieiga per internetą: <https://www.vle.lt/straipsnis/lietuviu-fronto-biciuliai/>

Even the FLF was an innumerable group, though due to its members' activism and intellectual potential, it became a distinctive and influential part of the Lithuanian diaspora.

It is a challenging task to define the character of the Friends of the Lithuanian Front. It had traits of the organisation, and at the same time, it is evident that the FLF functioned as a less formal association. Even though the FLF defined itself as a movement, the features of the legal organisation (such as a board or the chair, periodic meetings, press, financial funds, etc.) speak in favour of naming the FLF association with a well-functioning organisational structure at the core, and a looser layer of supporters.

Internal communication proceeded through special Bulletins (*Lietuvių biuletenis*, *JAV ir Kanados Lietuvių fronto bičiulių biuletenis*, etc.) and an abundance of letters, *pro memorias*, etc.

In 1953, the FLF reestablished publishing the magazine *Toward Freedom* (Į laisvę). It was addressed to the public, but the authors of the texts, mostly, were the members of the FLF.

It had a few foundations to fulfil the organisation's financial needs. The major one, "Toward Freedom. The foundation for the advancement of Lithuanian culture" (Į laisvę fondas lietuviškai kultūrai ugdyti), later played an essential role in transmitting the cultural, social, and political remittances of the FLF to Lithuania. Its primary goal was to publish books on historical, philosophical, religious, and aesthetic topics to support cultural and patriotic activities among Lithuanians abroad.³¹

Since 1957, the FLF in Northern America organised study and recreation weeks. Their fellows in Europe, in collaboration with other associations, run so-called European weeks for Lithuanian studies (Europos lietuviškųjų studijų savaitės). In 1969, the FLF of California organised the first weekend of political studies, which became many years of lasting tradition.

Despite building a dense social network, the Friends of Lithuanian Front did not tend to create its material infrastructure. For its needs, the FLF used facilities owned by other institutions or held meetings in their own houses.

The legacy of resistance. Over the years, the FLF become a concentric association, merging the core members and a looser layer of supporters. The organisational core of the FLF consisted of people actively involved in resistance activities during WW2. Resistance experience granted ex-activists with trust, support, solidarity, encouragement, and care. The FLF provided material and legal support for those members who were in need.

For the Friends of Lithuanian Front, resistance experience was crucial in creating social bonds and networks among the former resistance activists and turning the FLF into a carrier of the memory of anti-Soviet and anti-Nazi resistance. For the Friends of Lithuanian Front, it was a heroic episode in Lithuanian history and their own lives.

³¹ VITKAUSKAS, Vidmantas. „Į laisvę“ fondas lietuviškai kultūrai ugdyti. Organizacijos veiklos ir studijų savaitių Lietuvoje apybraiža. *Draugas*, 2006 07 15, p. 7–8.

Unsurprisingly, the FLF tried to remind the Lithuanian diaspora and the world of the June Uprising of 1941, the work of the Provisional Government of Lithuania, and other episodes illustrating Lithuanian resistance towards totalitarian regimes. The FLF played a significant role in creating heroic discourse on Lithuanian anti-Soviet and anti-Nazi resistance and put efforts to transmit this narrative into post-1990 Lithuania. When the accusations of Lithuanian collaboration with Nazis and participation in the Holocaust came, the FLF reacted defensively. They used to write letters clarifying their position to editorial offices of major newspapers of the USA; also, the FLF funded lawyers that defended former resistance activist blamed for participating in activities related to the Holocaust. Such accusations strengthened the feeling of the sieged fortress and solidarity among the Friends of Lithuanian Front.

Even though resistance experience served as a binding factor, at the same time, it played a negative role in the development of the association. It was not easy for people lacking direct resistance experience to enter the organisational core. In the late 1960s, the leaders of the FLF started expressing a willingness to attract younger people. However, with some exceptions, the FLF became a one-generation association.³² For women as well, it was not easy to find a place within the FLF.³³ Wives and other family members of the FLF or people who shared the same values, financially or in different ways supported the FLF, formed a looser circle of the association. They were the readers of the FLF magazine and other publications, attended the FLF events, joined the activities organised by FLF, supported financially, granted their votes for the FLF candidates in various elections in the diaspora, etc. Some called this looser circle of supporters the Friends of the Friends of Lithuanian Front, but they never became the actual members of the organisation. Therefore, every year, the problem of ageing and decreasing numbers becomes more significant.

Opposition to traditional Christian Democrats. One feature that defines the FLF is its long-lasting conflict with the Lithuanian Christian Democrat Party and its members in the free world. The origins of this tension bring us back to the mid-1930s when a group of so-called *younger Catholics* emerged. Most of them joined anti-Soviet resistance in the years 1940–1941. Personal grievances, ideological differences, and even different interpretations of Catholic social teaching led to the rivalry that continued until the mid-1990s.

Opposition to the Lithuanian diaspora's liberal wing. In addition to harsh discussions with Christian Democrats, the FLF saw *Santara-Šviesa* (an association gathering intellectuals of liberal worldview) as another ideological rival. According to FLF ideologists, communism and liberalism emerged from the same source.³⁴ Far-reaching fear that

³² STRUMICKIENĖ, Ilona. Moterys Lietuvių fronto bičiulių organizacijoje. *OIKOS: lietuvių migracijos ir diasporos studijos*, 2017, Nr. 1–2 (23–24), p. 143.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ GIRNIUS, Juozas. Liberalizmo klausimu. *Aidai*, 1956, Nr. 4, p. 158–168.

liberalism might lead Lithuanians into the arms of Lithuania's worst enemy was one of the motives for opposing the diaspora's liberals. The fact that some people related to the prewar authoritarian regime of Antanas Smetona joined *the Santara-Šviesa* association became a matter of additional concern to the Friends of Lithuanian Front.

From the historical perspective, one can observe that the tension between the FLF and liberals was transmitted to post-1990 Lithuania. Counter-reacting to strengthening positions of the *Santara-Šviesa* in Lithuania (especially in academia and politics) motivated the FLF into action.

Towards Lithuania. The Friends of Lithuanian Front were always orientated towards Lithuania. Even during the years of severe Soviet oppression, they sought to get information not only about the general developments in their homeland, and were particularly keen to know the fate of their fellows who took part in anti-Soviet and anti-Nazi resistance. Since the death of Stalin in 1953, the exchange of letters written in aesopic language shed some light on the destiny of former resistance activists. Most of them suffered from Soviet persecution of different kinds. Due to imprisonment or detention, they had health issues, their possibilities to integrate into the Soviet labour system were restricted, and the majority faced financial difficulties. The FLF started materially supporting their comrades in Lithuania and their family members when it only became possible.

Since the early 1960s, there has been a significant debate in the Lithuanian diaspora to maintain contact with the co-nationals in the Soviet-occupied homeland or not and under what conditions. FLF supported the idea of restraining contacts with Soviet officials, but private communication seemed acceptable and valuable.³⁵

As Christian values and Catholic social teaching lay in the founding of the FLF ideological worldview, the Catholic Church and its development in the Soviet-occupied homeland was the second principal object that concerned the Friends of Lithuanian Front. Despite endless efforts, the Soviets could never fully submerge the Roman Catholic Church. Throughout the Soviet occupation, it remained an oasis of dissent and hope for freedom. In the late 1960s, an underground Catholic dissent movement emerged. Since 1972, its activists started printing "The Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church" (*Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios kronika*) and smuggling it into the West. This periodical wrecked the image of the USSR as a country that supports human rights. Due to shared values and activities against the Soviet regime, the FLF trusted Catholic dissidents in Lithuania and made efforts to assist them.

To conclude, WW2 resistance activists and Catholic dissidents were two groups in Soviet-occupied Lithuania that the FLF trusted and tried to help. As cross-border networks work in both directions, the fellows of the Lithuanian Front (in Lithuania) formed the perception of the Friends of the Lithuanian Front on what was happening

³⁵ DAPKUTĖ, Daiva. *Lietuvių išėvijos liberaliosios srovės genezė: politiniai-organizaciniai aspektai: 1945 m. – šeštojo dešimtmečio pabaiga*. Vilnius: Vaga, 2002, p. 144–149.

in Lithuania and what processes the society of Lithuania underwent. Based on the information from Lithuania, the FLF developed an agenda for the future. One narrative became crucial. Both ex-activists of resistance and Catholic dissidents stressed the harm the Soviet regime inflicted on the morality and spirituality of Lithuanian society. That gave an idea for the FLF and other groups in the diaspora that the moral and spiritual rebirth of Lithuania is nonetheless more important than regaining the status of an independent state.

Integral democracy

As mentioned above, one trait that characterises the Friends of the Lithuanian Front is the concept of *integral democracy*. Discussions related to it became a binding factor for the members of this association. Noteworthy, the FLF was the only Lithuanian emigre group that prepared a complete outline of how the future independent Lithuania could be organised. A series of articles published in the journal “Toward Freedom” (*Į laisvę*) in 1954–1955 and the whole compendium issued in 1958³⁶ summed up considerations of a few generations of Lithuanian Catholic intellectuals.

Researchers consent that the concept evolved in a few stages. This chapter will present the main ideas formulated in every step.

In developing the concept of integral democracy, the Manifesto of 1936 called “Toward the creation of the organic state” (further, the Manifesto) plays an important role. However, before this intellectual document appeared in public, the early seeds of the concept emerged. The authors of integral democracy acknowledge that the works of Pranciškus Būčys, Kazys Pakštas, and Stasys Šalkauskis lay at the findings for the integral democracy. Būčys introduced Lithuanian society with the idea of cultural autonomy; Pakštas stressed the necessity of non-doctrinal politics. Šalkauskis proposed the concept of democracy operating in three spheres – politics, economy, and culture.

Manifesto (1936)³⁷ marks the second stage in developing the concept of integral democracy. The ideas of former thinkers, as well as the reactions to the politics of the authoritarian regimes of the late 1920s and 1930s, and the reflections of the processes occurring in those days in Europe, led a group of the younger Lithuanian Catholic intellectuals³⁸ to issue that proclamation.

The Manifesto presupposed that Lithuania needs an authentic and appropriate form of self-governance, an alternative to liberal democracy and authoritarianism. Such an

³⁶ *Į pilnutinę demokratiją*. [Detroitas]: [L. fronto bičiulių sambūris], 1958.

³⁷ *Lietuva, kurios nebuvo. Pilnutinės demokratijos svarstymai ir vertinimai*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2016, p. 79–91.

³⁸ J. Brazaitis, P. Dielininkaitis, J. Girnius, J. Grušas, Z. Ivinskis, J. Keliuotis, A. Maceina, I. Malinauskas, P. Mantvydas, K. Pakštas, J. Pankauskas, A. Salys, I. Skrupskelis, A. Vaičiulaitis, B. Vitkus.

alternative could be an organic state. This document also questioned the effectiveness of the party system as political rivals wasted plenty of energy and time during endless debates and conflicts.

It is worth highlighting that the authors of the Manifesto speak up for the national state, a social entity designed for the Lithuanian nation. Cultural autonomy would guarantee national minorities an integral place in the Lithuanian state. The Manifesto also asserts citizens' active involvement in the state and society.³⁹

The crucial feature of the Manifesto is a twofold understanding of a human being. According to the declaration's authors, every human exists as an individual and a person. An individual's dimension defines a human's natural origin, while a personhood represents the spiritual realm. As an individual, a human being is subjugated to society and the state; as a person, a human is superior to every aspect of nature, community, or state. Therefore, following the Manifesto, in the organic state, a citizen does not subdue the state, nor do citizens constrain the state. However, both the state and the individual (as a citizen) work for the well-being of personhood. In addition, as a culture's creator, personhood is necessary for cultural and creative autonomy.

The Manifesto characterises the organic state through the ideas of personalism and pluralism. It stated that personalism leads to the pluralistic nature of the state and the variety of social layouts. In the vision of the authors of the Manifesto, cooperation would help to implement sociocultural pluralism, and cultural autonomy would enforce the fulfilment of principles of personalism and pluralism in the area of ideology and culture. Moreover, the rule of law would guarantee the organic nature of the state.

During the Nazi occupation period, and subsequently, in the diaspora, Catholic intellectuals put effort into perfecting the document of 1936.

It is worth mentioning that there is a sketch of Šalkauskis' manuscript from 1941, named "The integral democracy" (*Pilnutinė demokratija*), where he expands on the importance of democracy.⁴⁰ The other texts from the WW2 period, related to the development of integral democracy, were of a lesser extent than the Manifesto and, therefore, covered fewer features. However, some aspects are worth noting. For instance, emphasising the role of professions and occupation in the future Lithuanian state and society.⁴¹ The authors⁴² of a series of articles titled "Toward a reformed democracy" noted that the place of religion in society causes much unrest among politicians. Therefore, they suggested acknowledging 1) that religion might have a positive role in society, and 2) every person's right to practise religion, whether or not.⁴³

³⁹ *Lietuva, kurios nebuvo. Pilnutinės demokratijos svarstymai ir vertinimai*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2016, p. 19.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 202, 206.

⁴² The authors of the compendium *Lietuva, kurios nebuvo. Pilnutinės demokratijos svarstymai ir vertinimai* (2016) claim, that one of the authors of these articles was Maceina. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

One more phase in the development of the concept of integral democracy occurred in the postwar years, during the so-called DP camps period. Antanas Maceina and Juozas Girnius put efforts to expand on notions of non-doctrinal politics and functional democracy. Texts published in a periodical, “The Minor Fireplace” (*Mažasis židinys*) aimed to disseminate these ideas among the broader Lithuanian public.

The detailed outline of integral democracy got its final shape in the mid-1950s. Nonetheless, a broad group of the FLF and influential figures of the Lithuanian diaspora⁴⁴ worked to prepare a comprehensive programme for future Lithuania, and the input of Antanas Maceina is the most significant. In fact, “Toward an integral Democracy” is a shorter and edited version of his study “The foundations of an integral democracy” (*Pilnutinės demokratijos pagrindai*).⁴⁵

Following the Manifesto of 1936, “Toward an integral democracy” promotes an alternative model to liberal democracy and authoritarianism and aims to restore authentic and vividly functioning democracy; it also states the importance of personhood in culture and religion. Notably, the authors of integral democracy matched the importance of personhood to freedom of consciousness, a term from the international human rights domain.

To ensure the importance of personhood, self-government of culture is vital. The competence of cultural self-governance belongs to communities living under particular worldviews or doctrines. According to the authors of “Toward an integral democracy”, self-governance should overwhelm political but also social, economic, and cultural spheres, leading to an organic connection between the state and society. In the realm of political democracy, the FLF suggests a reform of the political system. According to “Toward an integral democracy”, the identity of political parties should be based not on ideological or doctrinal differences but on suggesting practical ways to achieve a particular aim. People residing in a country of an integral democracy can live according to their worldview and vocalise their attitudes freely.

Social democracy, in the vision of its authors, has attributes of collectivism; it foresees the necessity of basic incomes and social security instruments to protect the dignity of those in need.

Compared to earlier versions of integral democracy, “Toward an integral democracy” pays much attention to family and diaspora and points out the state’s obligations and the need for coherent policies towards these two social institutions.

Some can call this document paternalistic, as it presents women as protectors of family hearths and educators of younger generations and does not praise women who

⁴⁴ A. Maceina, V. Manelis, G. Galva, J. Kazickas, P. Padalis, J. Pažemėnas, K. Balčys, J. Borevičius, V. Dabušis, J. Pakalniškis, S. Yla, B. Balčiūnas, J. Bobelis, S. Raštikis, L. Šimkus, J. Šlepetyš, K. Ambrozaitis, J. Girnius, A. Pocius, A. Šmulkštys, V. Vardys, V. Vyantas, A. Dambriūnas, J. Brazaitis, V. Vaitiekūnas ir kt. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 306–378.

work outside the home. However, women's role is seen with respect as crucial for the development of society and the state.

Multiple references to ecclesiastical documents and emphasis on personal freedom in cultural and social spheres point out threads between integral democracy and Catholic social teaching.

Paradoxically, the proponents of Christian democracy and Catholic social teaching in the Lithuanian diaspora were among the harshest critics of the concept of integral democracy. The idea of non-doctrinal politics was criticised the most.

Even though the FLF published multiple texts promoting and explaining ideas of integral democracy or non-doctrinal politics, it did not earn many new followers. It took a lot of work to grasp this complicated concept, even for the members of the FLF. For instance, the attendees of the 1995 FLF Conference, which took place in Chicago, once again lively discussed the notion of non-doctrinal politics. Adolfas Damušis, one of the FLF leaders at the time, admitted that the title of "non-doctrinal politics" itself was not exact and did not reveal the idea that a state should guarantee the freedom of decision-making.⁴⁶

Constant critics addressed the concept of integral democracy. It led the Friends of the Lithuanian Front to revise the document and prepare a shorter and more precise version of integral democracy.

In 1978, "The Credo of the Friends of the Lithuanian Front" (Lietuvių fronto bičiulių Credo; further, Credo)⁴⁷ appeared in public. Adolfas Damušis was the *spiritus movens* of this endeavour. Even Credo followed the earlier versions of integral democracy; one can notice a few novelties. Firstly, it puts capitalism in the same row as communism, as these social systems do not ensure social justice for every person, community, or initiative. Secondly, Credo foresees the possibility to organise international relationships according to the concept of integral democracy.

In 1958, when the concept of integral democracy was published as a separate volume, its authors highlighted a few aspects of its necessity:

1. They predicted that the issue of democracy would be vital for future independent Lithuania.
2. They perceived the concept as not an instruction but a way to maintain or fuel the intellectual process in diaspora and future independent Lithuania.
3. The authors of integral democracy saw its potential beyond the Lithuanian context: "The problem of democracy is vital for the future state of Lithuania. However, it is not only exclusively Lithuanian and related only to the state of Lithuania. It is universal and universally relevant..."⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Lietuvių fronto konferencija. *Į laisvę*, 1995, Nr. 121, p. 56.

⁴⁷ *Lietuva, kurios nebuvo. Pilnutinės demokratijos svarstymai ir vertinimai*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2016, p. 436–441.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

The second aspect is worthy of more explicit comment, as researchers have missed it and presented integral democracy as a set of directions for future independent Lithuania. However, the authors of the concept specified that the goal of “Toward an integral democracy” is “to awaken the creative mind”.⁴⁹ We can also find this leitmotif in “Credo”.⁵⁰

However, it should be mentioned that even if the authors of integral democracy presented it as a sketch of the future state order of Lithuania, some of the FLF perceived the concept as a solid prospect for a future Lithuania. The idea that this concept would serve as a trigger for polemics in society diminished. If looking back in time, one can notice that the concept of integral democracy caused polemics in the diaspora, in such a way, fulfilling the intention to promote intellectual debates about the state order.

Although studying integral democracy was an inseparable part of various FLF events and publications, further substantial developments of the concept did not follow. The FLF concentrated on activities related to the Lithuanian Community’s political lobbying and paid less attention to polishing its programme documents.

In the late 1980s, when Gorbachev launched *perestroika*, national awakening overwhelmed Soviet-occupied Lithuania, and hopes of restoring Lithuania’s statehood became more realistic; the FLF started revising its intellectual heritage. Even though there were appeals to update the concept of integral democracy,⁵¹ the Friends of the Lithuanian Front did not have the intellectual resources and time to prepare a new document version adjusted to post-Soviet Lithuania’s reality. Therefore, the concept elaborated in the diaspora became an object of transmission. However, the FLF expected that the idea’s further development would occur in their homeland, where Lithuanian intellectuals, politicians, and the public would modify the concept according to the realities of post-Soviet Lithuania.

In the next chapter, we will determine if these expectations were fulfilled.

Transmitting

As social remittances are a product of cross-border communication and cooperation, political remitting intends to affect and transform the political process in a country of origin (or vice versa).⁵² It is no wonder that carriers of social and political remittances search for effective ways and channels to gain the desirable effect.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ *Lietuva, kurios nebuvo. Pilnutinės demokratijos svarstymai ir vertinimai*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla, 2016, p. 436.

⁵¹ Lietuvių fronto bičiulių konferencija. *Į laisvę*, 1995, Nr. 121 (158), p. 54.

⁵² KRAWATZEK, Félix; MÜLLER-FUNK, Lea. Two centuries of flows between ‘here’ and ‘there’: political remittances and their transformative potential. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 2020, Vol. 46, No. 6, p. 1009.

The Friends of the Lithuanian Front, as carriers of a particular set of political remittances, searched for the most efficient ways to introduce Lithuanian society to the norms, vocabulary, and practices they developed throughout the decades. The FLF targeted several groups of Lithuanian society. One can notice that the FLF made efforts to affect the public in general, academia, and politicians.

Most of these attempts had an overall effect and reached individuals in various groups.

The transmission of the FLF social and political remittances to Lithuania continued. One can notice a few phases of this process and some intertwined initiatives that witnessed the FLF consistency and dynamic reactions to the processes occurring in Lithuania and the diaspora.

The late 1980s marked establishing and (re)establishing contacts between the FLF and Lithuania, building and strengthening cross-border networks. The Lithuanian branch of *The Foundation for the Advancement of Lithuanian Culture “Toward Freedom”* (further in the text, FALC Lithuanian branch), established in 1990, was crucial in transmitting social and political remittances to Lithuania.

The attempts to influence Lithuania’s development are evident between 1990 and 1992. At that period, FLF had expectations that some principles of integral democracy would occur in Lithuania’s constitution. The period between 1995 and 2000 marks another effort to build closer ties with Lithuania’s politicians and achieve specific goals. From the year 2000, the process of the FLF decline became apparent.

In 2016, Lithuanian scholars published a book named “Lithuania that did not exist” (Lietuva, kurios nebuvo). It might be a symbolic mark testifying that the attempts of FLF to transfer its social and political remittances to Lithuania ended and became a part of its cultural and intellectual heritage. On June 23, 2023, the Lithuanian branch of FALC officially ceased to exist.⁵³

Establishing cross-border ties for transmitting

The late 1980s and early 1990s were crucial for transmitting the FLF cultural, social, and political remittances into Lithuania. During this short but dynamic period, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front established social networks and infrastructure for sharing its social and political remittances with people in their homeland.

Due to reforms issued in the USSR by Mikhail Gorbachev, the regime eased its pressure on annexed societies. Weakened international movement constraints were one more outcome of the reform process in the USSR. The Soviet citizens more often got permission to visit capitalist countries, and, in reverse, the USSR opened its borders to

⁵³ *I laisvę, fondo lietuviškai kultūrai ugdyti Lietuvos filialas. Rekvizitai. VŽ. [Žiūrėta 2023 09 01]. Prieiga per internetą: https://rekvizitai.vz.lt/imone/i_laisve_fondo_lietuviskai_kulturai_ugdyti_lietuvos_filialas/juridinis-asmuo/*

Western visitors. This tendency played a positive effect in intensifying the cross-border contacts and networks between Lithuania and its diaspora.

One can observe that the Friends of the Lithuanian Front worked on strengthening ties with their fellows in Lithuania (former resistance activists, Catholic dissidents), as well as friends and relatives.

At the same time, the process of establishing new contacts occurred. As a reaction to *perestroika*, national movements sprang up in many Soviet republics. The Lithuanian Reform Movement (Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sąjūdis, further *Sąjūdis*) and some other smaller groups spoke out about the illegal annexation of Lithuania. They expressed the will of the Lithuanian nation to restore its independence and statehood. Therefore, establishing contact with the Western world became one of the crucial goals for *Sąjūdis* at that time.

Consequently, we can observe that visitors to both directions were driven by personal motives, such as meeting long non-seen relatives, and by examining collaboration possibilities, especially searching for ways to restore Lithuania's independence. Unsurprisingly, that movement, which raised the same goals as the WW2 diaspora, attracted the attention of diasporants. Visitors coming from Lithuania searched for contacts with Lithuanians in the diaspora, especially with the ones who occupied leading positions in the Lithuanian community and had connections with the representatives of politics, business, or media in their living countries or were gatekeepers of the diaspora's financial funds. The Friends of the Lithuanian Front were among these people.

It is worth mentioning that for a short period, some diasporants were critical of the national awakening processes in Lithuania. The Friends of the Lithuanian Front also doubted if *Sąjūdis* was an authentic expression of national awakening in Lithuania, or if the KGB orchestrated it. The fact that among the *Sąjūdis* activists were members of the Communist party or people closely related to the Soviet regime raised reasonable concerns. In addition, people whom the FLF trusted in Lithuania hesitated if *Sąjūdis* was trustworthy. For instance, Antanas Terleckas, a leader of the Lithuanian Freedom League (Lietuvos laisvės lyga), openly expressed his scepticism towards *Sąjūdis* modus operandi during his visit to Europe⁵⁴ or the United States.⁵⁵

However, the intensifying visits and direct contact conversations led to a better understanding and forming of new cross-border ties with some people in Lithuania. It is evident that, in the late 1980s, the FLF formed close relations with some leaders of *Sąjūdis*, who later established a political party called "Homeland Union" (Tėvynės Sąjunga) or future leaders of parties related to Christian Democracy ideology.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Išeivijos susitikimas su Lietuva. *Į laisvę*, 1989, Nr. 106, p. 69–70;

⁵⁵ Jie pasakojo apie Lietuvą. *Tėviškės žiburiai*, 1989 12 05, p. 30.

⁵⁶ VITKAUSKAS, Vidmantas. *Į laisvę* fondas lietuviškai kultūrai ugdyti. Organizacijos veiklos ir studijų savaičių Lietuvoje apybraiža. *Draugas*, 2006 07 15, p. 7–8.

Among the visitors to the West, a select group of young intellectuals stood out for their genuine interest in the FLF's intellectual legacy, recognising its potential for awakening Lithuanian society. Vidmantas Valiušaitis, Arvydas Juozaitis, and Vaidotas Daunys were among the most active. These people were crucial in transmitting the FLF social and political remittances to Lithuania. There is a question of further research: how did the trust-based relationship develop among the FLF and their younger colleagues in Lithuania? It is beyond doubt that the FLF understood how valuable incentive was coming from Lithuanian intellectuals and what potential in cross-border cooperation it might unlock.

Cross-border communicational and organisational cooperation

Researchers have pointed out the importance of cross-border communication followed by cross-border organisational cooperation in social and political remittances.⁵⁷ The post-1990 history of the FLF illustrates this statement. Diasporants hailed the restoration of Lithuanian statehood on March 11, 1990, and were keen to contribute to the well-being of their (ethnic) homeland. No wonder that the FLF shared that determination as well. They came to the assistance of Lithuania (state and society) individually and in association with other groups or organisations.

Even though there were attempts of the FLF cross-border collaboration with various associations or organisations in Lithuania, the Lithuanian Branch of FALC played the most significant role. It started its activity on October 24, 1990,⁵⁸ and became the leading platform for disseminating the FLF cultural, social, and political remittances. It became into a hub that shared the FLF values, vocabulary, and practices.

The founding of this organisation was only possible with the contacts (re)established in the previous period. One can notice that the first Board of FALC Lithuanian branch consisted of three members representing the younger intellectuals (Vaidotas Daunys, Arvydas Juozaitis, and Vidmantas Valiušaitis) and two other members (Liudas Dambrauskas and Mindaugas Bloznelis) who had many years of resistance experience.⁵⁹

As we can see, the first Board subsisted particularly of people living in Lithuania. However, the FLF upgraded the management of the FALC Lithuanian Branch by establishing the Council that assisted the Board in implementing the mission of the FLF in Lithuania. To ensure the representation of the interests of the central FALC, two diasporants (Kęstutis Skrupskelis and Kęstutis Girnius) joined the Board.⁶⁰ The trend to have at least one representative of the Central division continued until the late 2000s.

⁵⁷ LEVITT, Peggy. Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion. *The International Migration Review*. Winter, 1998, Vol. 32, No. 4, p. 936.

⁵⁸ Pokalbis su Vidmantu Valiušaičiu. *Į laisvę*, 1990–1991, Nr. 110 (147), p. 29; *Į laisvę* fondo lietuviškai kultūrai ugdyti Lietuvos filialo tarybos kreipimasis. *Į laisvę*, 1990–1991, Nr. 110 (147), p. 2.

⁵⁹ Lietuvos Respublika gyva. *Į laisvę*, 1990, Nr. 110, p. 2.

⁶⁰ *Į laisvę* fondo filialo veikla. *Į laisvę*, 1991, Nr. 111, p. 31.

The Central division of FALC sponsored the entire activity of the Lithuanian branch. That might be the reason behind frequent contact and coordination of the activities. Numerous visits, telephone calls, and faxes ensured that the FLF in the diaspora and their fellows in Lithuania worked in the same direction.

Four commissions curated certain activities to ensure an adequate functioning of the Lithuanian branch of FALC. One concentrated on publishing, the focus of the second lay on press and information, the third centred on organising study weeks and other events, and the last targeted the legacy of Lithuanian resistance.⁶¹ Certainly, the activities of these commissions intertwined. However, their existence pointed out the main areas the FALC Lithuanian branch addresses. It is worth mentioning that the action of separate commissions is traceable only in the early 1990s; later, most decisions and activities came under the general name of the FALC Lithuanian branch.

Publishing. Publishing played a vital role throughout the entire FALC Lithuanian branch's existence. If the bibliographical records of the Lithuanian National Library are correct, from 1991 (the first publication) until 2012 (the last publication), FALC Lithuanian Branch issued 31 publications of different titles. See Appendix 1.

The list illustrates a few trends. Firstly, the majority of the publications of the FALC Lithuanian branch are (re)publishing of the texts of the diaspora's authors, particularly related to the FLF. A diplomat, Vytautas Antanas Dambra, and novelist, Vytautas Volertas, were among the most frequently published authors. In 1992, the FALC Lithuanian branch published the second edition of "Toward an integral democracy". This publication contributed to a broader dissemination of this intellectual concept in Lithuanian society.

It is worth mentioning that FALC Lithuanian branch encouraged Lithuania's authors to create texts relevant to the FLF's goals and worldview. It even announced a contest for a novel on Lithuanian resistance in the post-war years.⁶² However, this initiative did not give the expected results.

Besides the diaspora texts, publications related to the activity of the FLF (like collections of papers presented at the study weeks and various other events) comprised a significant part of the FALC Lithuanian branch publications.

Notably, the FALC central unit, with the help of the Lithuanian branch, also published books in Lithuania. These projects are examples of cross-border cooperation.

Press and information. Since the beginning of the activity, the FALC Lithuanian branch paid significant attention to the diffusion of the FLF ideas and values through the media, primarily the press. The FLF journal "Toward Freedom" (*Į laisvę*) played a critical role. The Friends of the Lithuanian Front were keen to disseminate this journal among the Lithuanian public. Firstly, the main libraries of Lithuania started getting a set

⁶¹ Pokalbis su Vidmantu Valiušaičiu. *Į laisvę*, 1990–1991, Nr. 110 (147), p. 29.

⁶² Romano konkursas. *Į laisvę*, 1991, Nr. 111, p. 72.

of various the FLF publications. “Toward Freedom” was among them.⁶³ Later, the FLF came up with the idea to donate subscriptions to the journal’s readers in Lithuania.⁶⁴ Notably, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front were not unique in applying such a method for introducing the Lithuanian public to the diaspora’s periodicals. Certainly, most of Lithuania’s population then experienced economic difficulties and could not afford subscription fees. However, the diaspora’s generosity might have played a disserving role, as Lithuania’s public did not learn to value the gifts it was getting.

Subscription donations were not the only method that the FLF engaged in easing the dissemination of the journal among the readers in Lithuania. In 1994, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front started to print part of the issue in Lithuania.⁶⁵ The other part continued to be published in the diaspora. The editorial board worked in the USA, too. The FLF relocated the editing of the journal to Lithuania only in 2000. However, this initiative did not become a cure for the decreasing number of readers. The last volume of the journal “Toward Freedom” saw the light of day in 2008.⁶⁶

“Toward Freedom” was not the only periodical that the FLF supported intellectually and financially. “XXI amžius” (“21st century”, a cultural newspaper of Christian thought), “Kauno laikas” (The Kaunas’ time, a newspaper issued by Kaunas city municipality) or “(Naujasis) Dienovidis” (“The (new) Meridian”, a cultural periodical) attracted the FLF attention and financial support.⁶⁷

Organising of various events. The FLF did not count only on disseminating its ideas through printed materials; on multiple occasions, especially study weeks organised by the FALC Lithuanian branch, it became one more channel for transmitting the FLF social and political remittances to Lithuania. From 1992, the FLF organised 14 study weeks in different venues in Lithuania. Each of them was dedicated to a particular topic. For the entire list of FALC Lithuanian branch study weeks, see Appendix 2. It is worth mentioning that the first study week (1992) was explicitly devoted to the concept of integral democracy. Almost every study week had papers or discussions related to this concept.

The FLF leaders from the diaspora became an inseparable part of the FALC study weeks in Lithuania. One can notice the names of Kazys Ambrozaitis, Petras Kisielius, Kęstutis Skrupskelis, Algis Raulinaitis, Juozas Kojelis, Vytautas A. Dambra, Jonas Pajaujis, Adolfas Damušis, Juozas Kazickas, Nijolė Bražėnaitė, Viktoras Naudžius, Zigmas Brinkis, Vytautas Majauskas, and Juozas Ardys etc. in the reviews of the study weeks. The events organised by the FALC Lithuanian branch attracted prominent Lithuanian

⁶³ *Į laisvę* Lietuvoje. *Į laisvę*, 1990, Nr. 109 (146), p. 6.

⁶⁴ Prenumeruokime po tris... *Į laisvę*, 1990, Nr. 109 (146), p. 7.

⁶⁵ Lietuvių išeivijos žiniasklaidos lūžiai po 1990 metų. *Lietuvos nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo biblioteka*. [Žiūrėta 2023 08 23]. Prieiga per internetą: <https://parodos.lnb.lt/exhibits/show/iseivijos-ziniasklaidos-luziai/lietuvon-perkelta-spauda>

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Lietuvių fronto bičiulių konferencijos nutarimai. *Į laisvę*, 1995, Nr. 121 (158), p. 59.

diasporants then visiting Lithuania. Bernardas Brazdžionis, Kazys Bradūnas, Mr. & Mrs. Rugienis, Jonas Pabedinskas, Feliksas Pabedinskas, Vytautas Bieliauskas, Juozas Polikaitis, et al. could be mentioned in this context.⁶⁸ However, the number of diasporants constantly sank yearly due to ageing and death.

FALC Lithuanian branch used to invite politicians of similar ideological values to various events. Vytautas Landsbergis, Bronius Kuzmickas, Egidijus Vareikis, Vilija Aleknaitė-Abramikienė, Algirdas Patackas, Arimantas Raškinis, Algis Kašėta were among the most frequent guests.⁶⁹

History of Lithuanian resistance. As mentioned above, the heroic perception of Lithuanian resistance during the war and post-war years strongly defined the FLF identity in the diaspora; therefore, there is no wonder that the FLF encouraged Lithuanian society and historians to pay attention to these topics. The Friends of the Lithuanian Front acted as carriers of heroic resistance memory. In Lithuania's media, one can find many texts by the FLF on Lithuanian resistance against totalitarian regimes.

The Friends of the Lithuanian Front willingly gave speeches at various events and shared their memories and insights with researchers, journalists, etc.

The Resistance Prize was established in 1994 to boost interest in the resistance phenomenon. Historian Nijolė Gaškaitė became the first winner of this prize followed by Dalia Kodytė, Dalius Stancikas, Algis Kašėta, Virginijus Gasiliūnas, Nijolė Gaškaitė-Žemaitienė, Romas Kaunietis, Juozas Starkauskas, Tatjana Maceinienė, Kęstutis Kasparas, Ema Mikulėnaitė, and Danutė Gailienė.⁷⁰ This prize fostered an interest in specific historical topics and narratives and introduced Lithuania's researchers to the FLF and its heritage. The same goal served the fact that historians were frequent guests in the events of the FALC Lithuanian branch.

To sum up, the FALC Lithuanian branch became an example of cross-border communicational and organisational cooperation between the Friends of the Lithuanian Front in the diaspora and their fellows in Lithuania. It served as a channel for transmitting cultural, social, and political remittances. FALC Lithuanian branch carried out a significant part of sending political remittances to Lithuanian society. Through printed materials, information, direct contacts, and formal and informal communication, the FLF introduced target groups to the vocabulary, norms, and practices developed in the diaspora for decades.

⁶⁸ VITKAUSKAS, Vidmantas. *Į laisvę fondas lietuviškai kultūrai ugdyti. Organizacijos veiklos ir studijų savaičių Lietuvoje apybraiža. Draugas, 2006 07 15, p. 7.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7–8.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

FLF and Lithuanian Politics

One can see various trends defining attempts to influence the field of politics in Lithuania. Some describe the general dynamic of the relationship between the diaspora and Lithuania, and others are specific to the Friends of the Lithuanian Front.

As members of the Lithuanian diaspora, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front shared the same concerns that bothered other diasporants. The questions on reestablishing Lithuanian citizenship and restitution of the property were at the top.

The FLF was keen to transfer *integral democracy* (or, at least, some features of it) and a heroic perception of 1941 anti-Soviet resistance to Lithuania. The Friends of the Lithuanian Front assumed that targeting politicians might lead to implementing the FLF vision in Lithuania.

Earlier established contacts made it easier for the FLF to connect with Lithuania's politicians and decision-makers. The latter were interested in the diaspora's symbolic and financial support; therefore, Lithuanian politicians willingly communicated with diasporants.

Election results and the election cycle affected FLF's efforts to influence Lithuania's politics. Due to ideological and geopolitical resemblance, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front supported mostly politicians and political parties of the right in the 1990s, which were the Homeland Union and Lithuania's Christian Democrats. After 2000, when the Homeland Union lost the elections, the FLF searched for collaboration possibilities with the minor political movements of the political right.

Former communists, who blended into the political process of independent Lithuania, raised the most concerns to the Friends of the Lithuanian Front. In 1992 and 1993, when the Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (former communists) won the parliamentary and presidential elections, many critical comments appeared in the FLF press; nonetheless, the FLF respected the will of the Lithuanian people. One can say that the return of the former communists to power became more proof that Lithuania needs spiritual revival and motivated the FLF to work harder on disseminating their ideas and norms.

Based on intentions and forms of activity, one can discern some trends that characterise the FLF efforts to affect Lithuania's politics.

1990 to 1992. These years were a complicated period of state building. It was also a time when Lithuanian politicians and lawyers worked on the text of the Lithuanian constitution. The legal findings were prepared and approved in a referendum of October 25, 1992. At that period, the FLF had expectations that the concept of integral democracy, or at least some of its principles, might lay down in the legal founding of the Lithuanian state.

In 1991, the chair of the FALC Central branch, Kazys Ambrozaitis, stated that the principles of integral democracy might be considered when the constitutional debates

were taking place.⁷¹ Incomparable values of the person, independent Lithuanian culture, and Christian morality were the principles that the FLF wanted to transmit to Lithuania.⁷² Nonetheless, the FLF emphasised that the primary role in defining the direction for the future of Lithuania was in the hands of Lithuania. Ambrozaitis continues, “Not the FLF, but those in Lithuania will have to prepare the ground, and the Friends of the Lithuanian Front, who decide to return from the diaspora, will join it”.⁷³ According to Algimantas Jankauskas, the Moderate Christian Democrats and Lithuanian Social Democrats were the first to respond to this appeal. The notion of social justice served as a binding factor. They updated the ideas of integral democracy and united their potential by forming a coalition.⁷⁴ On 1992 September 12, these political parties proclaimed a joint programme for forthcoming Parliamentary Elections.⁷⁵

The crucial role in the process of introducing the concept of integral democracy to the Moderate Christian Democrats and Lithuanian Social Democrats was played by Jonas Algirdas Antanaitis, an activist of the 1941 June Uprising, a member of the Moderate Christian Democratic Party, and an engaged participant of events organised by FALC Lithuanian. Furthermore, Antanaitis continued promoting the ideas of integral democracy in later years.

Notably, the FLF journal “Toward Freedom” did not express explicit support for the coalition of Lithuanian Social Democrats and the Moderate Christian Democrats. Such a position might be explained by considering the self-perception of the FLF as a resistance movement, not a political party. Therefore, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front relied on the long-term, low-intensity education of Lithuanian society and decision-makers by disseminating printed materials and presenting the concept at various events. Such a strategy derived from a principle of homeland primacy but it was insufficient for introducing Lithuanian society to the idea of integral democracy in such a short time. It could not ensure that principles of integral democracy would appear in the text of Lithuania’s Constitution (1992).

The years 1995 to 2000 mark a period of FLF’s active engagement in the political life in Lithuania. The FLF Conference, which took place in Chicago in 1995, played a crucial role in further development of the FLF. During the gathering, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front reflected on the condition of their movement and the paths of its future development. Even though there were suggestions to quit the activity, the FLF chose to intensify their endeavours and focus on political action. Conference stated that “Movement of the Friends of the Lithuanian Front, which has carried out its resistance

⁷¹ Dar kartą: atiduok ką privalai. *Į laisvę*, 1991, Nr. 112 (149), p. 4.

⁷² VALIUŠAITIS, Vidmantas. Pilnutinė demokratija Lietuvoje. *Į laisvę*, 1990–1991, Nr. 110 (147), p. 62.

⁷³ Dar kartą: atiduok ką privalai. *Į laisvę*, 1991, Nr. 112 (149), p. 4.

⁷⁴ JANKAUSKAS, Algimantas. Organiškos valstybės koncepcija Lietuvoje: kūrėjai, raida, vertinimai. II. *Į laisvę*, 1996, Nr. 123 (160), p. 33.

⁷⁵ Lietuvos socialdemokratų partijos ir nuosaukiųjų krikščionių demokratų rinkimų programos „Į pilnutinę demokratiją“ pagrindinės nuostatos. *Lietuvos rytas*, 1992 09 19, p. 4–5.

mission in exile for more than fifty years, is now changing it to political activity and is looking for ways to continue this activity in Lithuania”.⁷⁶ The FLF decided to get actively involved into Lithuanian Politics and during election campaign for 1996 Parliamentary elections and support “candidates with strong democratic convictions, of Christian morality, and who were not stained by their political past or who have renounced it”.⁷⁷ In addition, the conference participants agreed to cooperate with ideologically close parties in Lithuania.

The Chicago conference (1995) ended the debates on the concept of non-doctrinal politics, which had been stirring the minds of the diaspora for many decades. According to conference resolutions, “a term for non-doctrinal politics, coined many years ago by Professor Antanas Maceina, never had the idea to remove a person’s worldview and ideology from public life. On the contrary, it emphasised the issue of freedom and cultural autonomy in the state. [...] the further use of the term ‘non-doctrinal politics’ is no longer relevant”.⁷⁸

Implementing the resolutions of the 1995 Conference, the FLF took responsibility for funding three areas related to the election campaign in Lithuania. Firstly, the FLF supported twelve individual candidates from the Homeland Union and Lithuanian Christian Democrats. Secondly, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front covered the costs of election leaflets, and in addition, it contributed to election advertisement in Lithuanian broadcasting companies. The latter required the most FLF attention and resources.⁷⁹

It is difficult to assess to what extent the FLF engagement contributed to the victory of the Homeland Union and Lithuanian Christian Democrat Party. Still, it strengthened the awareness of the Friends of the Lithuanian Front about unity with the winning parties. Due to joint activities, communication between the FLF and the Lithuanian parties intensified, and the process of political remitting strengthened.

The Chairman of the Council of FALC Lithuanian Branch, Jonas Kairevičius, was enthusiastic about the prospects of the FLF, integral democracy, and Lithuania’s general development. At the beginning of 1997, he stated, that democracy was taking root in Lithuania, that ideas of integral democracy nurtured by “Toward Freedom Foundation” were sprouting mature seeds on the land of Lithuania.⁸⁰

One more initiative that greatly pleased the FLF is worth remembering. In 1997, a member of the Lithuanian Christian Democrat Party, Algis Kašėta started action to acknowledge the independence declaration of 1941, June 23, as a founding document of the Lithuanian State.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Lietuvių fronto bičiulių konferencijos, įvykusios 1995 m. gegužės 12–13 d. Čikagoje, nutarimai. *Į laisvę*, 1995, Nr. 121 (158), p. 59.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ LFB įnašas Seimo rinkimuose. *Į laisvę*, 1997, Nr. 125 (162), p. 27–28.

⁸⁰ KAIREVIČIUS, Jonas. Lietuvos politinio gyvenimo tikrovės. *Į laisvę*, 1997, Nr. 126 (163), p. 20.

⁸¹ „Į laisvę“ fondo VI studijų savaitės dalyvių nutarimas. *Į laisvę*, 1997, Nr. 126 (163), p. 5.

After long debates and consultations with experts, on September 12, 2000, a Homeland Union member, Antanas Stasiškis, presented the draft document to the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas).⁸² The law was adopted.

Due to links between the 1941 June Uprising and the Holocaust, this law caused a massive international scandal and outrage among the Jewish community worldwide. On September 25, 2000, the Lithuanian Parliament changed its position and revoked the law.⁸³

The FLF did not hide their disappointment with such a decision of Lithuanian authorities. During the FALC Lithuanian branch study week of 2001, Adolfas Damušis (activist of the 1941 June Uprising and Industry minister at Provisional Government) expressed his bitterness that participants of the 1941 June Uprising faced false accusations.⁸⁴ The FLF continued to repeat that the 1941 Uprising and the Holocaust were separate phenomena and should not be blended.⁸⁵ This narrative resonated with a part of Lithuanian society.

Post 2000. Because the parliamentary election 2000 ended unsuccessfully for the Homeland Union and Lithuanian Christian Democrats, the FLF lost the possibility to transmit its political remittances to decision-makers of that period. Nonetheless, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front continued their efforts to contribute to the advancement of Lithuania. They were willing to share their shrinking human and financial resources with those who were concerned about the future of the Lithuanian state and society. The FLF continued collaborating with the political figures with whom it had long-lasting contacts. In addition, the Friends of the Lithuanian Front examined collaboration possibilities with newly emerging leaders or organisations of political rights.

The fact that, in 2007, the Association of Friends of the Lithuanian Front was established witnessed that the FLF were able to transmit at least some of its social and political remittances to Lithuania. However, the Association did not expand its activity.

Since 2000, one can observe the decline of the FLF activity in Lithuania. The final study week of the FALC Lithuanian Branch took place in 2005. The last volume of the FLF periodical “Toward Freedom” is from 2008. FALC Lithuanian Branch issued its last book in 2012.

Summarising the process of the FLF’s interaction with the political realm in Lithuania, one can observe that the FLF searched for ways of effective participation in the

⁸² Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo 2000 m. rugšėjo 12 d. (antradienio) plenarinių posėdžių darbotvarkė. *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas*. [Žiūrėta 2023 09 19]. Prieiga per internetą: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lit/TAK/TAIS.108141?positionInSearchResults=6&searchModelUUID=1b3b028c-dd83-4f63-9112-dae009d025c0>

⁸³ Tarptautinį skandalą sukėlusio įstatymo istorijoje padėtas taškas. *Delfi.lt*. [Žiūrėta 2023 09 19]. Prieiga per internetą: <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/tarptautini-skandala-sukelusio-istatymo-istorijoje-padetas-taskas.d?id=74327>

⁸⁴ Vaisinga studijų savaitė. *Draugas. Literatūra. Menas*. Mokslas, 2001 09 01, p. 2.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

development of their homeland. Cooperation with politicians and political parties of similar ideologies seemed the best way to achieve desired goals.

Due to the alliance with certain political parties in Lithuania, the FLF experienced the effect of an electoral pendulum. The FLF fully participated in Lithuanian political life only in the period 1996–2000; however, the defeat of the FLF-backed parties in the elections of the year 2000 coincided with the decline of the FLF's human and financial resources, which cut down the FLF's political and social remittances almost to zero.

Reflections on the transmitting results

Since the late 1980s, the FLF has put much effort into transmitting its social and political remittances to Lithuania, hoping to affect the development of their (ethnic) homeland positively. Two cases described in this paper attest to different outcomes. If the transmission of integral democracy failed, the glorious perception of 1941 anti-Soviet resistance has found support among a significant part of Lithuanian society.

It is not surprising that the Friends of the Lithuanian Front searched for explanations for why the FLF ideas, norms, and values did not resonate with the minds of Lithuanian people.

The determinants of impact, named by Peggy Levitt, might be landmarks while pondering on factors that shaped the effects of FLF's social and political remittances to Lithuania. The American sociologist cites remittances themselves, the transnational system, the messenger, the target audience, differences between sending and receiving countries, and the transmitting process.

The Friends of the Lithuanian Front mostly thought about two aspects that moulded the FLF impact on Lithuanian society, i.e. differences between Lithuanian society and the diaspora and the content of remittances. The discourse that due to the Soviet occupation, crucial socio-psychological transformations occurred in Lithuanian society and, therefore, it was not able to adopt ideas coming from the diaspora, prevailed among the Friends of the Lithuanian Front.

Just a few thinkers took it a step further. They reflected the possibility that the content of social and political remittances was not engaging, and did not reflect the realities of post-Soviet Lithuanian society. For instance, Jonas Pabedinskas, a business analyst, criticised the concept of integral democracy. He urged the Friends of the Lithuanian Front to review and update the idea according to the global processes. In 1990, he claimed: "Fellow citizens in Lithuania and the whole of Central Europe simply shout that they no longer want to see collectivism; however, among us, there are still those who propose bureaucracy, planned economy, and state-owned enterprises and speak against competition or the introduction of a market economy".⁸⁶ A few years later, he

⁸⁶ PABEDINSKAS, Jonas. Pilnutinė demokratija, socialinis teisingumas ir ekonominis progresas. *Į laisvę*, 1990, Nr. 109 (146), p. 71.

called the concept of integral democracy “obsolete”⁸⁷ and not suitable for post-Soviet Lithuanian society.

During the FLF Conference of 1995, more voices supported the idea of the need to update the FLF political programme;⁸⁸ however, the FLF did not have enough intellectual resources to prepare a new version of their political agenda.

For an extended period, the FLF refused to admit that the concept of integral democracy is incomplete and, therefore, it could not compete with widespread ideas of liberal democracy and the free market.

Conclusions

The Friends of the Lithuanian Front (FLF) served as prominent agents of the diaspora’s social and political remittances in post-1990 Lithuania, striving to transmit their non-material assets, such as the concept of integral democracy and the heroic narrative of anti-Soviet resistance, to their homeland. While their efforts were notable, they faced significant challenges in adapting these remittances to the rapidly changing political and social realities of post-Soviet Lithuania. Despite some success in influencing conservative political circles, the broader Lithuanian society largely remained unreceptive to their contributions.

The FLF’s political remittances, especially the concept of integral democracy, deeply rooted in their interpretation of Catholic social teaching, encountered difficulties in application within the context of a nation transitioning from Soviet rule to a market-based democracy. The absence of a clear strategy for adapting these remittances to the realities of modern Lithuania limited their effectiveness. As a result, while their social remittances – particularly their contributions to cultural memory and intellectual heritage – continued to influence Lithuania’s historical narrative, their political remittances struggled to find lasting resonance in the country’s evolving democratic framework.

As the FLF’s resources, both human and financial, gradually diminished, so did their ability to shape Lithuania’s political landscape. Nevertheless, their role as agents of the diaspora’s social and political remittances is significant. The transmission of their social remittances, especially the narrative of heroic resistance, has become an integral part of Lithuania’s cultural identity, even as their broader political ambitions remained unfulfilled. Ultimately, the FLF’s legacy as homeland-changing agents is more symbolic than transformative, highlighting their impact on Lithuanian history and cultural memory.

⁸⁷ Faktai ir idėjos. *Naujoji Romuva*, 1995, Nr. 4 (499), p. 57.

⁸⁸ Lietuvių fronto bičiulių konferencija. *Į laisvę*, 1995, Nr. 121 (158), p. 54.

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Diaspora, kaip tėvynę keičiantis veiksnys: Lietuvių fronto bičiulių byla

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamos lietuvių diasporos pastangos daryti įtaką Lietuvai po 1990 m., ypatingą dėmesį skiriant Lietuvių fronto bičiulių (LFB) sambūriui.

Skatinami nostalgijos ir noro prisidėti prie nepriklausomybę atkūrusios Lietuvos vystymosi, LFB siekė perduoti Lietuvos visuomenei išeivijoje sukauptus nematerialius išteklius, ypač pilnutinės demokratijos sampratą bei 1941 m. antisovietinio pasipriešinimo herojišką vertinimą.

Straipsnyje, pasitelkus socialinių ir politinių perlaidų sąvokas, analizuojama, kaip LFB mezgė ryšius su Lietuvos politine aplinka ir visuomene bei kokiais būdais stengėsi daryti įtaką šalies politikai ir istorinės atminties formavimui.

Daromos išvados, kad nors LFB trūko aiškios strategijos, visgi sambūriui pavyko užmegzti ryšius su dalimi Lietuvos politikų ir visuomenės (ypač su konservatyvių pažiūrų atstovais), tačiau mažėjant sambūrio materialiniams ir žmogiškiesiems ištekliams, jo įtaka Lietuvos politikai bei visuomenei palaipsniui silpo. Nepaisant to, LFB idėjos ir šiandieną sudaro vertingą Lietuvos kultūrinio paveldo segmentą ir dalyvauja Lietuvos istorinės atminties naratyvo formavime.

Gauta / Received 2023 10 31
Priimta / Accepted 2024 10 07

Appendices

Appendix no 1: “The list of books and brochures, published by FALC Lithuanian branch”

1. *Kultūra kaip argumentas valstybės nepriklausomybei: „Į laisvę“ fondo lietuviškai kultūrai ugdyti studijų savaitgalis Vilniuje 1991 m. vasario 23 d.* Vilnius [i.e. Kaunas]: [„Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas], 1991.
2. DAMUŠIS, Adolfas. *Lietuvos gyventojų aukos ir nuostoliai Antrojo pasaulinio karo ir pokario (1940–1959) metais*. 3rd edition. Kaunas: „Į Laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 1991.
3. *1/2 metų: kas padaryta ir ko nepadaryta atgavus Nepriklausomybę*. Vilnius: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, Amžius, 1992.
4. *Asmuo ir valstybė: (prisiminimai ir pranešimai): iškilminga konferencija 1941 m. birželio 23 d. sukilimo 50-mečiui paminėti*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo leidykla, 1992.
5. *Į pilnutinę demokratiją: svarstymai apie valstybės pagrindus*. 2nd edition. Vilnius: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 1992.
6. PAŠKUS, Antanas. *Idėjų sankryžoje: kritinis skerspjūvis*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 1992.
7. RAMONAS, Vincas. *Kryžiai*. 3rd edition. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 1992.
8. *Nutrūkę skrydžiai*. Red. Jonas Voronavičius. [Kaunas]: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialo leidykla], [1992].
9. *Vydūnui – 125: asmeninio albumo nuotraukos*. Vilnius: [„Į laisvę“ fondo filialo Lietuvoje Rezistensinio paveldo komisija], 1993.
10. LUKŠA-DAUMANTAS, Juozas. *Laiškai mylimosioms*. 2nd edition. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 1994.
11. MIKELINSKAS, Jonas. *Nors nešvietė laimėjimo viltis*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo lietuviškai kultūrai ugdyti Lietuvos filialas, 1994.

12. DAMBRAVA, Vytautas Antanas. *Teisingumo principai*. 2nd edition. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 1995.
13. VOLERTAS, Vytautas. *Meilė žolei: pasakojimai, novelės*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondas. Lietuvos filialas, 1997.
14. DAMBRAVA, Vytautas Antanas. *Politika ir moralė*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 1998.
15. *Į pilnutinę demokratiją Lietuvoje keliu: politinės studijos prie Ramiojo vandenyno, Los Angeles, 1999 m. sausio 30–31 d.* Red. V. Valiušaitis. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 1999.
16. DAMBRAVA, Vytautas Antanas. *Atverkime duris teisingumui*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2000.
17. *Širdis – Lietuva. Vytautas Antanas Dambrava diplomatinėje tarnyboje*. Red. V. Valiušaitis. Kaunas: „Į Laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2000.
18. *Gairė – pilnutinė demokratija: „Į laisvę“ fondo dešimtmetis Lietuvoje*. Red. V. Valiušaitis. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2001.
19. KOJELIS, Juozas. *Tarp rūpesčių ir vilties: straipsnių rinkinys*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2001.
20. VOLERTAS, Vytautas. *Viešnageje pas Dievą: pasakojimas apie tikrovę*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2001.
21. *Į antrąjį išsilaisvinimą: politinės studijos, Los Angeles, 2002 m. sausio 26–27 d.* Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2002.
22. *Lietuvai reikia antro išsilaisvinimo*. Red. J. Kojelis. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2002.
23. DAMBRAVA, Vytautas Antanas. *Lietuvių tautos kelias į tikrąją demokratiją*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2002.
24. *Viešoji įstaiga Okupacijos muziejus: steigimo idėjos matmenys*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialo Vilniaus skyrius, Okupacijos muziejaus organizacinis komitetas, 2003.
25. LELEŠIUS-GRAFAS, Justinas. *Partizanų kapeliono dienoraštis*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2006.
26. VOLERTAS, Vytautas. *Pranyko, ir tiek: romanas vietai ir laikui*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2006.
27. ŠVABAITĖ-GYLIENĖ, Julija. *Ant vėlių suoloelio*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2007.
28. BLOZNELIS, Mindaugas. *Lietuvių frontas*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2008.
29. *Sakalai parskrido: Julijonas Būtėnas atminties liudijimuose*. Red. V. Kazilionytė. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2008.
30. VOLERTAS, Vytautas. *Varniukai*. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2010.
31. *In memoriam Juozas Brazaitis (1903–1974)*. Red. V. Valiušaitis. Kaunas: „Į laisvę“ fondo Lietuvos filialas, 2012.

Appendix no 2: The list of the FALC Lithuanian branch study weeks' locations and themes

No.	Year	Location	Themes
1	1992	Vilnius, Nida	Integral democracy: ideas, realities and prospects (Pilnutinė demokratija: idėjos, realijos ir perspektyvos)
2	1993	Birštonas	75 for the independence of Lithuania (Lietuvos nepriklausomybei 75)
3	1994	Mastaičiai (Kaunas district)	Lithuanian political culture (Lietuvos politinė kultūra)
4	1995	Kaunas	Lithuania: state and society 1990–1995 (Lietuva: valstybė ir visuomenė 1990–1995)
5	1996	Telšiai	Lithuanian roads and crossroads 1990–1996 (Lietuvos keliai ir kryžkelės 1990–1996)
6	1997	Jurbarkas	Lithuania on the eve of the 21st century: between Europe and Eurasia (Lietuva XXI amžiaus išvakarėse: tarp Europos ir Eurazijos)
7	1998	Druskininkai	Resistance and culture – two guidelines for reviving historical memory (Rezistencija ir kultūra – dvi istorinės atminties gaivinimo gairės)
8	1999	Anykščiai	Community in Lithuania: historical experience and perspectives (Bendruomenė Lietuvoje: istorinė patirtis ir perspektyvos)
9	2000	Kaunas district, Molėtai	Lithuania and the diaspora during 10 years of independence (Lietuva ir išeivija per 10 nepriklausomybės metų)
10	2001	Vilnius ir Trakai	The idea of the Lithuanian state and the most important moments of its expression (Lietuvos valstybės idėja ir svarbiausi jos raiškos momentai)
11	2002	Marijampolė	Tautiškumo ir pilietiškumo balansas demokratinėje Lietuvoje
12	2003	Alytus	Lietuvos kelias: praeities heroizmas ir ateities vizijos
13	2004	Kaunas, Rumšiškės	Demokratijos pamokos ateities Lietuvai
14	2005	Kaunas and Kaunas district	Lietuvių rezistencija 1941 m.: įvykiai ir jų vertinimas