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AABS President Mara Lazda and Mordechai Zalkin at the AABS-SASS Conference | Photo by Michael Marsland.

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As this issue of the AABS Newsletter was going to press we learned of the loss of one of the world's most significant supporters of Baltic Studies. Dr. Joseph P. Kazickas passed away in his home in East Hampton, NY, on July 9 at the age of 96. A funeral Mass for him was held on July 14 at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church in East Hampton. An appreciation of Dr. Kazickas's life will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

Introspection in an Era of Globalization: The State of Baltic Studies Today

Welcoming Remarks at AABS Luncheon

Yale University Conference on Baltic and Scandinavian Studies

March 15, 2014

By Māra Lazda
President

Good afternoon. Let me take my turn now in welcoming you to the 23rd AABS Conference on Baltic Studies and the second joint conference with the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study (SASS). I must thank those who put so much work and energy into the conference, especially the AABS Vice President for Conferences Brad Woodworth. Brad's dedication and ability to attend to details while keeping in mind the vision of the conference has been nothing short of amazing. The SASS members on the conference planning committee, Sherrill Harbison and Sharon Franklin-Rahkonen were equally dedicated and, importantly, collegial, and I thank them in helping build a strong conference planning team. And finally, an enormous thank you to Marianne Lyden, Program Director of European Studies at Yale and Jadzia Biskupska, a recent Yale PhD graduate in History, and beginning this fall Assistant Professor of History at Sam Houston State University. I cannot overstate the amount of work and, most impressively and movingly, the heart that Marianne and Jadzia put into the conference. They were committed equally to the practical details such as space and safety as to creating a vibrant intellectual environment.

As I prepared for this moment to introduce myself to you, the AABS members, I, as many presidents-elect before me, turned to the wisdom of those who held this position before I did. In the next ten minutes, I will continue the tradition of my predecessors of considering the state of Baltic Studies. In past years the emphasis has been on the need for scholars of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to reach out, to make their mark on the global stage, to make a case for the relevance of Baltic studies and AABS. As I look at some of the themes of the confer-

ence that include Global Communication; 20th Century War, Jewish Life and Culture, Transnational Approaches, and Perspectives, I conclude that the case for the broader relevance for Baltic Studies has been made. That this is a joint conference with Scandinavian Studies further strengthens the global ties of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Moreover, as the panelists shall discuss in a few minutes, events in Ukraine underscore the relevance of our work. So, while we should continue to build on the transnational commonalities we have, I would like to ask for a moment for introspection in this era of globalization, to consider our role in studying the uniqueness of the Baltic experience, a theme that Professor Motti Zalkin emphasized in his rich presentation yesterday on Lithuanian Jewish Life.

There are three parts to my call for introspection and historical reflection.

The first and longest part of my reflection is on our immediate surroundings, on this conference at Yale University.

Holding our conference at Yale is exciting because of the intellectual resources as well as the beautiful and inspiring surroundings. But Yale is not just a venue. More importantly, the AABS joint conference at Yale builds on long-established connections to Baltic Studies.

From 1950s, the Baltic influence has been seen in Yale's resources and publications. For more than two decades, from the 1950s to 1981, the curator of the Yale Slavic and East European Collection was Alexis Rannit, an Estonian art and literary critic and poet. Further, all speakers and students of Estonian know well Paul Saagpakk's 500,000 word Estonian-English dictionary, and this was published by Yale University Press.

Turning to the faculty at Yale, the enormous contribution of Tomas Venclova, Professor of Slavic Studies, now emeritus, immediately comes to mind. Prof. Venclova's poetry and scholarship on

Vilnius, Joseph Brodsky, and Alexander Wat have been instrumental in shaping discussions of the history and culture of the Baltic region and its neighbors. In addition to his scholarship, Professor Venclova continues to act as an ambassador for Lithuania and Baltic Studies. We are honored that he was able to join us for the conference, and his participation in the poetry evening was a highlight.

Although Professor Venclova is now emeritus, the Yale faculty connection to the region continues, with the work of scholars such as historian Timothy Snyder, author of *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (2010), who has also presented his research findings in the Baltic States. On the Yale economics faculty, American Lithuanian Professor Robert Shiller received the Nobel Prize in 2013. Rimas Vaišnys, a professor in the Yale School of Engineering and Applied Science is a life member of AABS.

In addition to faculty members, Baltic Studies supporters are represented among its alumni, including Ülo Sinberg, who received a BA from Yale in 1955. Sinberg devoted many years of his life to his work as the Financial Manager of AABS and then as senior advisor from 2002 until his passing in 2005. Prof. Tõnu Parming received his PhD in Sociology from Yale (1966) and then was a leading scholar on Soviet nationality policy and key figure in AABS. Life member Romas Misiunas received his PhD in History in 1971, and later served as Lithuania's Ambassador to Israel. At this conference, we are joined by life member of AABS Elona Vaišnys, a Yale PhD in French, who also worked in the Engineering Department.

In 2007 three of these Yale alumni Dr. Kristaps Keggi (Yale College 1955) Mr. Juris Padegs (Yale College 1954) and Mr. Joseph Kazickas (PhD. Yale 1951) further strengthened this foundation for the future of Baltic Studies at Yale with the establishment of the Baltic Studies Program at Yale. The coordinator of the program is Professor Bradley Woodworth. Thanks to the generous donations of these afore-

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State of Baltic Studies *Continued from Page 2*

mentioned Yale alumni, the Baltic Studies Program offers grants and scholarships at different levels of study. The Keggi-Berzins fellowship awards financial support to current Yale undergraduate and graduate students for research or language study in or about a Baltic country. In 2013 the Baltic Studies Program created two new research fellowships at Yale University for citizens of the Baltic countries. The aim of these fellowships is to identify and support talented individuals from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia who will be future leaders in their respective academic fields. The Joseph P. Kazickas Post-Doctoral Fellowship is for citizens of Lithuania, and the Juris Padegs Research Fellowship is for citizens of Latvia and Estonia. The Juris Padegs Fellow for 2013-2014 is Eneken Laanes, from Tallinn University; the Joseph P. Kazickas Fellow for this year is Irina Matijošaitienė from Kaunas University of Technology. At present these fellowships are offered every other year.

The Yale Baltic Studies Program has also hosted workshops and presentations on the Baltic Studies topics. This is a remarkable investment in the future of Baltic Studies. AABS is grateful for this support and hopes in the future that Yale may regularly offer courses on the Baltic States and their languages. In 2013, Yale contributed financial support to the Baltic Studies Summer Institute (BALSSI), which offers instruction in all three Baltic languages. We hope that Yale may also become one of the eleven universities to host BALSSI on its campus.

The second reflection is a personal one. As I stand before you, as I am about to increase my responsibilities in AABS, I cannot help but ask, "How on earth did I get here?" both as a historian and as a scholar of Baltic Studies? I might say that I have been training all my life for this position. I grew up in the Latvian-American community in Minneapolis, where I learned the language, history, and culture. I spent 1988-1989 as a student at the Latvian Gymnasium in Muenster, Germany, and in Latvia that March, fully caught up in the excitement of protest and changes of 1989. Not only did I grow with this cultural background, but both of my parents are university professors in history and

German. Some, including myself, considered that these personal connections could be a professional liability. In one of my last conversations before leaving for graduate school, one of my undergraduate mentors suggested that "You know, it might be better if you were interested in something, like—Ireland."

So it was with some sense of insecurity that I began my graduate studies at Indiana University in the history of Latvia and the Baltic States. The summer of my first graduate year, however, I participated in a field work expedition run by the National Oral History Center at the University of Latvia to collect lifestories of Latvians in rural areas. My immediate and practical goal was to identify a research topic, which I did—this experience did lead me to my work on the gendered experience of WWII under the Soviet and Nazi occupations. But perhaps even more importantly, this experience taught me how an understanding of the culture and language can coexist with critical, professional distance. What I mean by this is that on more than one occasion, at the end of the life story, the interviewee would thank me, for coming from America, for listening to their life story, and then they would comment "I know you will tell the truth about the past, how it really was." This always took me aback, after all, this went against my professional training as a historian in maintaining critical distance. I also had a sense of betraying my subject. Moreover, if there is one point on which we historians agree, it is that there is no one established "truth," but rather truths, and history is a process. Though I knew I could not promise to tell the "truth," and, most likely, I had the sinking feeling my interviewee would disagree with my historical analysis, I realized that what I was doing, what we all, as scholars of the Baltic region do, as members of AABS do, is give voice and center stage to the multiple truths and experiences that characterize the Baltic. By studying the languages, cultures, and histories of this region, we are providing a forum for voices not usually heard, or in other cases, analyzed by scholars who have not visited the region. Further, our introspection enriches our disciplines whatever they may be, which is the cen-

tral goal of advancing Baltic Studies.

My last point of introspection is connected to my comment in the beginning on the unique characteristics of Baltic Studies. Along with the pull toward globalization, the particularities of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian experiences has been a central theme of this conference. For example, the two panels on the Singing Revolutions raised the question—is there something particularly Baltic about revolution and song, and perhaps, a connection to post 1991 democracy? What can this tell us about civic and ethnic nation building? Our guest speaker Professor Zalkin pointed to a more narrowly defined uniqueness as Jews in interwar Lithuania held a particular status not seen in the Estonia or Latvia, for in Lithuania, he noted, "the name of the game was openness and tolerance."

Introspection and globalization, looking in and looking out, of course, are not mutually exclusive but instead inform each other. I look forward to the next two years and to consider how AABS can do both: reach out to the global community and participate in transnational conversations; reach in to its membership to provide the support and connections it needs. Our membership is growing in many ways—in terms of generation, scholarship, and geography. Our backgrounds are more diverse we have members in Japan, Italy, and Australia to name a few.

It seems appropriate to conclude with the words of Yale professor Tomas Venclova that effectively articulates the role of introspection in growth. In a 2006 essay "The Best Way to Love our Identity" in *Lituanus*, Venclova examines the evolution of Lithuanian identities in the 20th and 21st centuries, and addresses fears of what integration into a European community may bring. He writes, "Love for one's particularity, for one's own tradition and symbols is perhaps anachronistic in this time, but then anachronisms often serve a purpose, and embellish the world. . . ." This call to embrace the particular and embellish the world may also be applied more broadly to the work of AABS. I look forward to in the next two years in having many conversations on

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Scholars of Baltic region, Scandinavia gather at Yale University

By Bradley Woodworth

University of New Haven
Yale University

Over 500 scholars and guests interested in the Baltic region and Scandinavia gathered in New Haven on March 13-15, 2014 to share their work and enthusiasm for this part of the world at the Yale Conference on Baltic and Scandinavian Studies. Participants came from 23 countries, and the conference featured over 450 presentations on some 150 separate panels.

The conference was the second joint effort of AABS with the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study (SASS). Exceeding the size of the first such joint conference, held in Seattle in 2010, the Yale conference was the largest event of its kind ever to be held. The Baltic Studies Program at Yale University was host, and also a partner with AABS and SASS in organizing the conference. Financial support came from the European Studies Council

at Yale University and from the Edward J. and Dorothy Kempf Memorial Fund of the Whitney and Betty MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies.

Top emphases at the conference were on cross-associational exchange and connections, and on transregionalism and interdisciplinarity. Whenever possible, panels included presentations based on the experiences of peoples both to the north and the south of the Baltic Sea. Organizers adopted the practice employed at the SASS yearly conferences of encouraging participants to collaborate in bundling together panels and papers on thematic topics, called "streams." Among the topics on which streams – and thus, multiple panels – were featured were the Arctic region today; art history; crime fiction; cultural constructions and representations of gender; exploring race; Jewish life and culture; public diplomacy; Scandinavia and the Baltic region before

1500; Baltic-Nordic transnational approaches and perspectives; Scandinavia and the Baltic in a global world; the Vikings; and wars of the twentieth century in the Baltic Sea region.

Opening the conference was the Yale historian and MacArthur Fellow Anders Winroth, who spoke to a packed audience in Yale's Sprague Hall on the topic "The Curious Career of the Viking Berserk."

The stunning interior of the Beinecke Rare Book Library was the venue for the opening conference reception; academic papers were presented in the wood-paneled and stained glass rooms of Yale's beautiful Linsly-Chittenden Hall.

From the AABS perspective, the conference achieved notable success in incorporating Jewish topics – more so than at any AABS conference in recent memory. Jewish themes were discussed on panels titled "Early Jewish and Karaite Life and Culture," "Jewish Writing, Jewish Learning, and Yiddish

Texts," "Remembering and Commemorating the Lithuanian Holocaust," and "Understanding the Holocaust in Vilnius." Thanks to the efforts of new AABS President Mara Lazda (Bronx Community College, CUNY), the association was able to bring to the Yale conference Mordechai (Motti) Zalkin, a historian at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. At a special, large conference session Professor Zalkin spoke on the topic, "Jews in Interwar Lithuanian Society: Between Identity, Culture, and Image." Amid a historiography that is dominated by the Holocaust, Professor Zalkin's well-received address discussed the everyday lives of Jews in pre-war Lithuania and their connections with the lives of ethnic Lithuanians.

The conference was particularly rich in music: on the evening of March 14 the Haven String Quartet presented a program of the music of Edvard Grieg, Jan Sibelius, Hilding Rosenberg, Arvo

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Forst Family Professor of History at Yale University, Anders Winroth delivers his talk, "The Curious Career of the Viking Berserk." | Photo by Michael Marsland



Irena Blekys, Bradley Woodworth, Marianne Lyden, Ellen Cassidy and Guntis Šmidchens at the conference reception in the Beinecke Rare Book Library | Photo by Michael Marsland

Baltic Studies at Stanford Libraries

By Liisi Eglit

Asst. Curator for Estonian & Baltic Studies
Stanford University Libraries

Until recently, the Baltic collection of Stanford University Libraries (SUL) formed a tiny fraction of its large Slavic and East European collection. This changed due to an endowment received from Kistler-Ritso Foundation, an organization founded by Dr. Olga Kistler-Ritso.

In Estonia, the foundation's greatest achievement is building and supporting the Museum of Occupations, which was opened in Tallinn in 2003. The foundation's endowment to SUL made it possible to hire a person who would specifically curate and enlarge the collections of three Baltic States at Stanford, and would also collaborate with the museum in Estonia. In 2013, Liisi Eglit started her work as assistant curator for Estonian and Baltic studies.

The current Baltic collection of SUL focuses on the 20th and 21st century history and culture of the Baltic states, and is represented by four main keywords: occupation, resistance, freedom, and recovery. The 20,000+ volume collection is growing fast due to acquisitions of newly published material, exchange programs with other libraries, and numerous donations received from other institutions (e.g. University of Washington Library, Estonian Museum Abroad) and members of the Baltic community. SUL is increasingly interested in enlarging its Baltic archival collections by focusing on memoirs, life stories, and documents of members of the Baltic diaspora in the United States.

SUL actively collaborates with other institutions and organizations in order to enhance the Baltic studies by conducting collaborative projects,

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Reflections on AABS Conference

By Maira Bundza

Western Michigan University

After returning from the AABS conference, I am again motivated to get back to work on my own research, so I think it is money well spent by me and my institution. This is the second time the Balts decided to have a combined conference with the Scandinavians, and though I see overlapping themes and some joint sessions, I am not sure this is the best for Baltic studies. There were close to 530 attendees from 22 countries and 39 percent were AABS members, so roughly 200 with interest in the Baltics. I don't know how that compares with the last conference in Chicago, but there were a good number of grad students attending, so I feel Baltic studies are alive and well.

As in all conferences, there were various tracks with presentations on minutiae that mostly interest specialists, but I found something interesting to attend in almost all the time slots. Only in the very first session I had no preference and chose a room, because it just looked cool with stained glass and had plenty of seats, so I could go through the program and choose what I was going to listen to throughout the conference. With one eye and ear I vaguely followed a session on Viking archeological digs. What I got out of it was that Vikings were buried with their horses, dogs and weapons, sometimes in boats. The keynote was also on Vikings, or more specifically – Berserkers – an especially crazy, violent form of Vikings. A renown Yale professor – Anders Winroth – started with the word “berserk” as used in newspapers and elsewhere in the last 100 years or so, went on to references of Berserkers in 12th century sagas, to various linguistic explanations of the word – weather it meant bare-skinned, or bear skin covered or chain mail covered. I enjoyed watching this man make his argument.

The reception was held in the Yale's Beinecke Rare Books & Manuscript Library. It was one of the few times where



we could mingle with all of the conference attendees. I stood in a food line with a grad student who had always defined himself as The Viking, and was now disconcerted to be amongst so many Vikings. It was a pleasure to run into three delightful folks from the Herder Institute, who reminded me that the next European Baltic Studies conference will be held at their institution in September 2015. Wonder how I could get to that?

There was no bibliographic track and the only session I would categorize as being library focused was on émigré Baltic Press, where Andris Straumanis had again done solid research looking at how the word “veclatvieši” or “old Latvians” had come about and how that first wave of Latvian emigrants was described in Latvia and in the émigré press. His paper was full of useful facts and numbers. Erick Zen (he actually has a much longer full name) surprised me by being from Rio de Janeiro and talking about Lithuanians in Argentina and Brazil. Violeta Kaledaite from Vytautas Magnus University discussed the publication *Lituanus*, one of the two scholarly publications on Lithuanian issues in English. My oldest acquaintance in the Lithuanian community, Ramune Kubilius, had a very nice overview of current Lithuanian publications in English.

I ran into Ivars Ijābs from the University of Latvia on the street and went to his presentation on the evolution of Latvian nationalist thought through maps. I had never seen the early maps of Latvia that did not contain the Latgale region and had no distinct border at the north dividing it from Estonia. The first map that included what we now consider Latvia was printed in 1890 and the use of the term “Latvia” started in the 1860's. It was fun to watch the Lithuanians squirm, when some of the maps took a broad sweep of Latvia that included Lithuania.

There were many simultaneous sessions, but at least they were all in close proximity, and I would hop from one to the next, even within one session, so I only got to a part of the round table on BATUN, the Baltic Appeal to the United Nations. This session led to some of the most useful discussions for me. First,

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AABS Awards Book Prize to Cassedy, Purs

By Daiva Markelis

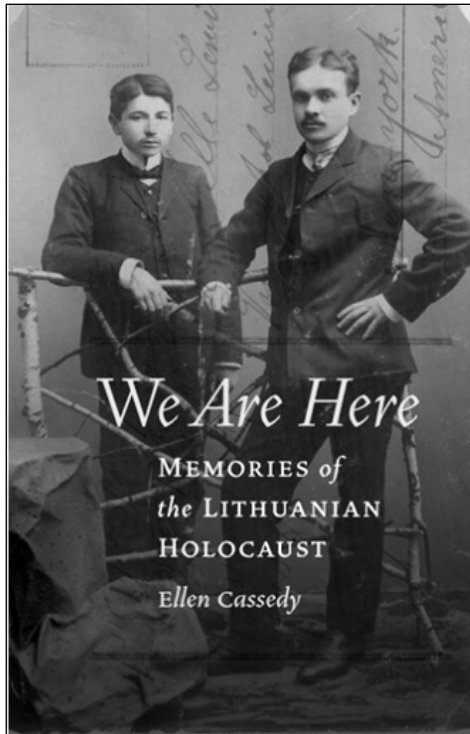
Vice President for Publications

The recipients of the biennial AABS Book Prize were announced at the Yale Conference on Baltic and Scandinavian Studies this past March. Two authors shared the award: Ellen Cassedy for *We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust* (University of Nebraska Press) and Aldis Purs for *Baltic Facades: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania since 1945* (Reaktion Books—Contemporary Worlds.) Although both works make a significant contribution to the advancement of Baltic Studies, neither is what might be termed a traditional academic monograph; *We Are Here* and *Baltic Facades* are aimed at discourse communities that include not only scholars in the field, but also intellectually curious readers who hope to expand their knowledge of Baltic history and culture.

In *We Are Here*, personal experience is seamlessly integrated with in-depth ethnographic interviews and formidable historical research. Cassedy begins the book by describing lessons in Yiddish at Vilnius University, one of her reasons for visiting Lithuania. The book's intimate beginning works to make readers more emotionally receptive when the author shifts to the more important and challenging reasons for her journey: to uncover family secrets about her Uncle Will, who served as a Jewish policeman in the Siauliai ghetto during the Nazi occupation, as well as to chronicle how present-day Lithuania has been coming to terms with one of the darkest periods of its history.

Cassedy structures her book so that readers can absorb broader historical events and think about their implications while at the same time immersing themselves in the writer's personal quest to unearth family information. She weaves a complex and colorful tapestry where certain themes emerge, then recede, then appear again. The individuals Cassedy meets during her summer journey are depicted with a writer's eye for detail and a humanist's desire for understanding the motivations of ordinary people.

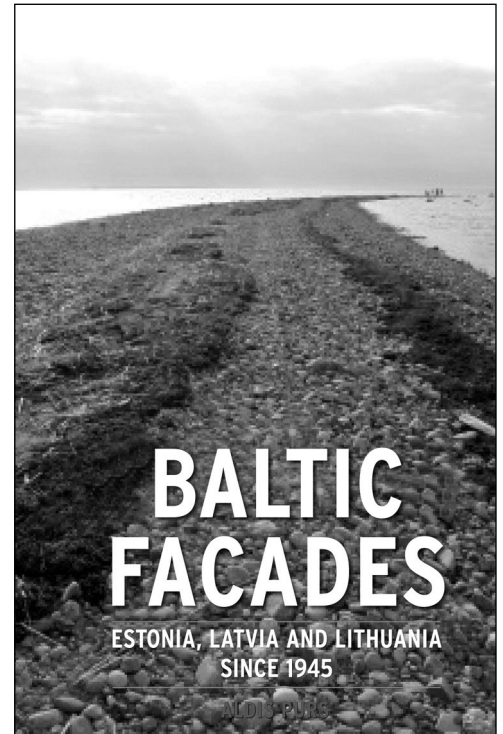
We Are Here has been widely praised and has received numerous awards, in-



cluding the Grub Street National Book Prize for Nonfiction, the Towson Prize for Literature, a Prakhin International Literary Foundation Award, and the Silver Medal in History from ForeWord Reviews. Valdas Adamkus, the former Lithuanian president, has said the following: "This eloquent book can help us to reach out, open our hearts, and rediscover one another in a spirit of mutual understanding."

Aldis Purs, in his thought-provoking and smartly written *Baltic Facades*, deconstructs the idea of the Baltic States as a stable and coherent entity. He does so while taking into account what the three countries do have in common historically, economically, and culturally. The book has a decidedly modern academic sensibility; Purs does a great job of placing Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania within a wider geopolitical framework. He also focuses on questions of national identity—"how the Baltic states see themselves and how they imagine others see them," as he writes in the introduction.

The structure of *Baltic Facades* is different from that of many other works about the Baltics. Purs doesn't write about the countries in discrete sections, but rather intertwines information and analysis, allowing the reader to get a more compre-



hensive sense of how the countries differ, as well as what they have historically shared.

The first three chapters provide an historical overview beginning with the earliest settlements in the Baltic regions and ending with the current financial and political situation. The focus of the fourth chapter is on economic development, the fifth on identity, and the last on what the future might hold for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Purs is an academic and a specialist in Latvian history. While his writing style has been influenced by the characteristic features of modern academic discourse, he writes about complex material in a way that is accessible and engaging. In addition, he has forgone the traditional referencing of sources via footnotes, opting instead for simpler endnotes. A Further Reading section supplies the reader with a useful selection of works.

We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust and *Baltic Facades: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania since 1945* are available from their respective publishers: University of Nebraska Press at <http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu> and Reaktion Books at <http://www.reaktionbooks.co.uk/>. Both are also available at Amazon.

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Baltic Studies at Stanford University Libraries continued from pg. 5

organizing seminars, conferences and other events, and exchanging ideas regarding collection development. SUL works closely together with the Museum of Occupations in Tallinn, Estonia. In 2013, SUL, the museum in Tallinn and Stanford Video collaborated in making a short film about Olga Kistler-Ritso's life by interviewing her husband, daughter and grandchildren. Although the film focuses on Olga's story, it also helps to deepen our understanding of the painful history of three Baltic countries and the fascinating stories of people who had to leave Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania during World War II.

In 2014, SUL and the museum launched a blog, *Baltic Scholars for Ukraine*, which aims to foster thoughtful and analytical discussion on the Russian occupation and annexation of Crimea, as well as the situa-

tion in Ukraine, Eastern Europe and Russia, in general.


In 2013, SUL started a project together with the Museum of Occupation in Riga, aiming to digitize, preserve and enhance access to its collection of video interviews with Latvians about the Second World War and the Soviet period. In 2014, SUL, Kistler-Ritso Foundation and Unitas Foundation/Kogu Me Lugu network kicked off a collaborative project of making new video interviews with members of the Estonian diaspora in the United States. The material will be preserved and made accessible both at Stanford and in Estonia.

In June 2013, shortly before the LEP-ESTO festival in San Francisco, SUL hosted a conference dedicated to collecting, preserving and researching the material of Estonian diaspora, attended by representatives of vari-


ous Estonian museums and archives, and the Estonian Minister of Culture.


In May 2014, SUL was proud to be a co-sponsor of the visit by the President of Estonia, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who gave a talk on "Evolving into a Genuinely Digital Society" to an audience of 200 students and members of Stanford staff, faculty and local Baltic communities. SUL has also started a tradition of Baltic cultural evenings at Stanford.


The most recent news about the Baltic Studies Program of Stanford Libraries, and about Baltic studies elsewhere are posted on the program's Facebook and Twitter accounts (@BalticsSUL).

 [@StanfordLibraries](https://www.twitter.com/StanfordLibraries) | [@BalticsSUL](https://www.twitter.com/BalticsSUL)

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 <https://www.facebook.com/aabs.baltic.studies>

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 <http://www.aabs-balticstudies.org>

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Pärt, and Pēteris Vasks. The concluding conference banquet featured Scandinavian and Finnish folk music performed by Linnunrata, a ensemble of Yale graduate students, and after dinner, the rousing sounds of the Connecticut-based swing band Eight to the Bar.

Among the individuals recognized by the two organizations at the banquet were George C. Schoolfield, Yale Emeritus Professor in the field of German and Scandinavian literature, and Ellen Cassedy, co-winner of the AABS Best Book Award for 2012-2013 for her book *We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2012). The other co-winner, Aldis Purs, was not in attendance.

AABS, SASS, and the Yale Baltic Studies Program are heavily indebted to the heroic work of two individuals in particular: Marianne Lyden, Program Manager at Yale's European Studies Council; and Jadwiga Biskupska, a new Yale Ph.D. in History. We will never forget



Linnunrata, led by Lauren Frankel on accordion | Photo by Jadwiga Biskupska

all you did for this conference! Marianne and Jadzia's efforts brought to life the ideas of the conference's academic organizers: Mara Lazda and Bradley Woodworth from AABS, and Sharon Franklin-Rahkonen and Sherrill Harbison from SASS. The conference is also grateful to the Yale undergraduate students who worked tirelessly throughout the week

getting everything ready and ensuring everything during the conference was in place and working as expected, and also to the Yale faculty and graduate students who agreed to stay in New Haven during what was Yale's spring break to participate in the conference as panel chairs and respondents.

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Remembering Dzidra Rodiņa

By Jānis Chakars

Vice-President for Conferences

"Mēs mācāmies latviešu valodu Indianās Universitātē. Mūsu profesore ir Dzidra Rodiņa. Viņa parasti sāk stundu ar dziesmu. Šad un tad mēs dziedam labi, bet bieži es dziedu slikti ar daudz kļūdām."/>

"We study Latvian at Indiana University. Our professor is Dzidra Rodina. She usually starts class with a song. Now and then, we sing well, but often I sing badly with many mistakes."

So I wrote as part of an essay for homework about a typical day at the Baltic Studies Summer Institute in 1999. I still have my notes from that summer and I took them out after hearing of my dear professor's passing.

Class was hard work and at one moment I remember saying, "Oh, I wish there was a just language injection." Dzidra responded, "No, you don't. That would take all of the fun out of it."

The exchange took place in Latvian and she reminded me that, although difficult, learning the language was a pleasure. Indeed, that was a fantastic and ideal summer. I was with my wife and sister in Bloomington, Ind. and we had nothing to do but Baltic studies.

In that essay, I also wrote "Mana dzīve ir ļoti interesanta. (My life is very interesting.)" and "Man nav nekad garlaicīgi skolā. (I am never bored in school.)"

I am not a gifted language

learner — handing back another assignment, I remember Dzidra teasing that she would give me a bag of *garumzīmes* (long vowel diacritics) for Christmas — but I learned a lot.

At lunch, "mēs ar Melisu un Andru parasti sēžamies zālē un edam. Mēs lasām un pārrunājam mūsu klases. Man vienmēr ir jautājums par gramatiku," I wrote. (Melissa, Andrea and I usually sit in the grass and eat. We read and discuss our classes. I always have a question about grammar.)

In the evenings, "Mēs mācāmies apmēram trīs vai četras stundas." (We study about three or four hours.)

Following my strenuous efforts to construct the simple sentences in that essay, I was able to eventually write a dissertation about Latvia. That is thanks to Dzidra Rodina.

Without her, I would also likely not be on the board of AABS today, where we continue to support BALSSI so that many others have the same great experience I did. Sadly, now they will have it without Dzidra.

She was a true master teacher, the kind that worked with such competence that you never appreciated how hard her job was.

She was a marvelous person — the quiet people who keep surprising you always are. That summer, we visited Garezers, the Latvian Center in Michigan. Dzidra drove. So reserved in person, she must have gone a thousand miles an hour behind the wheel. She turned out to be a great dancer too. I'll always be grateful for her company and her instruction. She is sorely and sincerely missed.

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Above: Dzidra Rodiņa with Professor Jāzepts Lelis.

Middle: Rodiņa with students.

Below: Rodiņa with students in 1994.

Power of Poetry: Venclova Shares at Conference

By Guntis Šmidchens
Executive Officer-at-Large

At the closing banquet of the AABS-SASS conference, I was asked to say a few words about Professor Tomas Venclova, renowned Lithuanian poet and thinker, AABS President (1990-1992), and Professor of Russian and Polish Literature at Yale University since 1980:

There has been a cloud hanging over this conference for many of us who are Baltic Studies scholars — the news from Ukraine. Though it feels strange to say it, somebody has to say it: This time, after we say goodbye and travel back to our homes, it's a fact that we can't be entirely sure when, where and how we will be meeting again. Some of us are quite worried. But when I worry, I do what many Balts do — I pick up a book of poetry. Tomas Venclova's poem somehow calms the senses, even while it does not dismiss the disquiet: ...“But everything turned out well in the end —” ...

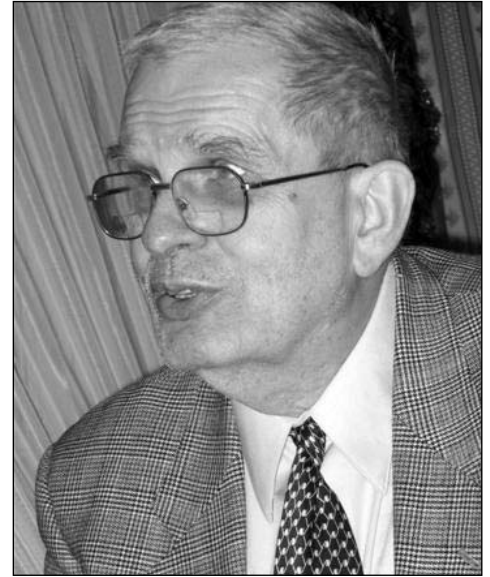
Tomas Venclova is honored as a brave voice of truth. In the 1970s, he was a founding member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, speaking out for human rights at a very dangerous time. Although he grew up with all of the advantages offered to the Communist elite — his father was a loyal Soviet poet, author of the Lithuanian SSR anthem — in 1975 Tomas Venclova penned a letter requesting permission to leave the country. There followed two long years of KGB persecution, but then the Iron Curtain's gates were finally opened. Soon-to-be Nobel Prize poet Czeslaw Milosz invited Venclova to lecture at UC-Berkeley. When he arrived in California, the Soviet Union permanently revoked his passport and the gates slammed shut forever. He was expelled from Lithuania, but the exile communities did not embrace him either because his essays and poetry sometimes caused them great discomfort. At the time, he thought

he was traveling in the world of the dead, to the island purgatory of Shakespeare's *Tempest* (which he had recently translated into Lithuanian).

Where did he get the bravery, the daring, and fortitude to persist on his quest for truth? The answer is simple — from poets! In the 1960s, while living in Moscow, Venclova had the good fortune to meet great speakers of truth — Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova. In a recent interview about Akhmatova, Venclova distinguished some attributes of a strong human. Of three possible sources of strength —bravery, daring and fortitude — the first two are ethically neutral, but fortitude gives a person what is essential: moral strength. During those two years while he was living in limbo, under the demeaning, frightening stress of Soviet political repression, Venclova continued to write essays that today are bastions of humanity and cornerstones of Lithuanian intellectual life: “Jews and Lithuanians,” “Russians and Lithuanians,” and many more. Later, he wrote “Poetry as atonement,” which might cause some discomfort to Westerners, Easterners, Marxists, nationalists, Christians, pagans, and others, too, poets included, as well as some comfort.

Might his essays — intensely self-critical reflections on human existence — harm Lithuania? He did not avoid painful topics, or worry about casting light on ugly phenomena that might, some could say, play into the hand of the enemy and thus harm the nation. “There is only one choice to be made,” he says, “not between the positions of ‘the nation’ (‘the state’) and ‘the enemy,’ but between what is true and untrue. For the nation — and, besides, the state — only the untrue is harmful.”

“A decent individual must react to purely political questions as well, even if that is more the domain of social and political writing rather than of poetry,” says Tomas Venclova in another interview. (It is imperative nowadays to think and talk



Tomas Venclova

about security politics in Ukraine, regardless of whether this is supposed to be a conference on a different region — Scandinavia and the Baltic — and regardless of the fact that most of us are not political scientists.)

We know that Tomas Venclova's quest for truth has been the same as the mission that gave birth to, and continues to fuel the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies. We like to remember that when Professor Venclova arrived in the United States, he found here a collegial home of scholarly friends. He has certainly found among AABS members an audience of intense listeners, whenever he recited his poetry. Thanks to a marvelous harmonic convergence of circumstances this week, Professor Venclova flew back from Poland on Wednesday and was able to participate in our event on Thursday evening; that's why some of us have for the past few days been walking around on cloud nine, feeling somehow blessed by poetry. I think the feeling that this conference has been a very, very special one will remain with us for some time. “Silence ends, a sentence begins,” he said.

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Reflections on Conference *Continued from Page 5*

I heard them ask the presenters, if they would be willing to share their presentations, and it was left up to people emailing each other. I just thought „Sheesh, if they were using our institutional repository platform, had the conference schedule up in that, they could just add their presentations, and they would be available to everybody.” The Administrative Executive Director of AABS, Irena Blekys, was there, so I started talking to her about this. Then it evolved into a conversation about how AABS and BATUN archives should be saved, organized, digitized, etc.

There was a whole series of sessions on the Singing Revolution theme. I wanted to hear Guntis Šmidchens speak, so I went to one of those sessions and got to also hear Jānis Chakars, who will organize the next AABS conference in Philadelphia, and Bradley Woodworth, who heads the Baltic Studies program at Yale and was the main organizer of this conference. The Singing Revolution is an engaging topic raising questions on the role the Baltic States played in the fall of the Soviet Union, did they show how a David can slay Goliath, what role singing had in it, did the fact that choirs are inherently democratic have an effect, etc. At this session I also ran into Joseph Ellis from Wingate University in NC, who had taken his students to Estonia after teaching a class on the Singing Revolution. We presented at the same session in Chicago and he was recognized with a reward at the AABS meeting.

I heard Vilis Inde talk about translating a Latvian classic – Rainis’ *Zelta zirgs* into *Golden Horse*. Inde first discussed the importance of having quality English translations on Latvian websites. He had spent months trying to convince the organizers and Latvian government to clean up the Riga 2014 site, meant for tourists who will visit Riga during its year as the European Capital of Culture. I found it interesting that he had translated the book for his nephews, so that they would have a point of connection with their grandparents, as that generation often does not read contemporary Latvian fiction.

I stumbled into a great presentation on evaluating Lithuanian language skills through a natural context. I missed how she had set up these “interviews,” but she analyzed the language of Lithuanian



Andris Straumanis and Ramune Kubilius at the 2014 AABS-SASS Conference. | Photo by Maira Bundza

residents whose first language was Italian, Russian, French, etc. She also asked them about their motivation to learn or not learn Lithuanian. Some were eager to learn so they would fit in better, others felt no reason to and had not learned anything besides very basic courtesies in over 15 years.

Iveta Grinberga, the Latvian instructor for UW had done a preliminary study with two students of different backgrounds. The non-heritage student had more difficulty with cases and tended to simplify the case system. The heritage student, who had at least heard the language in childhood, tended to do more code mixing – substituting English words for Latvian. Looking forward to more of her research.

Agita Misāne of the University of Latvia explained to us how the Namejs ring became a tradition. Namejs was a political and military leader in the late 13th century, but there is no historical basis to connect him with any ring. Archeologists found a plaited ring, but in a different part of the country and from about 100 years earlier. Writer Aleksandrs Grīns wrote a book in 1928 titled *Namejs Ring*, though the ring he describes is different. Grīns story was eventually performed on stage and later someone presented then President Ulmanis a ring they called a Namejs, and painter Liberts painted the archeological ring on the finger of his fantasy portrait of Namejs. Later Ulmanis' connection to the ring was forgotten and it became a symbol of identity in the exile community and in Latvia, a symbol for supporters of Latvian independence.

Anna Romanovska talked about thinking of her past life in colors - dark ones for difficult parts of her life, bright yellow for shoes her mother had purchased for her abroad, etc. She had an amazing sketch where she had managed to display the lives of her family as intertwining colored timelines. I think this would be a fun way for displaying a family history. Mark Ian Jones from Australia talked about Swedish and Scandinavian design that was very popular 1950-70. Mark Svede talked about the Latvian artist Andris Vitoliņš, making sense of things I would not have understood on my own. The session ended with Zivile Gimbutas talking about Lithuanian artists Ciurlionis, Vizgirda and Virkau. Mark suggested that we also listen to Alise Tifentale, who he considers the brightest new art historian for the Latvians. The title of her presentation had caught my eye: "Our Muddy Boots on Their Marble Floor ..." She looked at artists Kaspars Podnieks and Krišs Salamanis at the 55th Venice Biennale in the Latvian Pavilion in 2013. Podnieks has done portraits of farmers that look simple, until you realize they are suspended a few meters off the ground. Salamanis had a large tree swinging upside down from the ceiling of the hall.

All in all a good conference. It was fun to walk the hallowed halls of Yale. The conference was bigger than they expected, so some rooms were quite crowded and there wasn't much room to hang out, but Yale had nice simple WiFi access for guests. And there were plenty of restaurants to eat at close by.

Report on American Council of Learned Sciences Census of Member Societies, Annual Meeting

By Olavi Arens

Academic Executive Director

The ACLS held its annual meeting on May 8-10, 2014 in Philadelphia. The AABS was represented by its elected delegate, Janis Chakars and Olavi Arens, the Academic Executive Director.

The meeting began with a single session (usually there are two), Thursday evening entitled, "Money, Members, Mission: Learned Societies by the Numbers" at which five persons representing different societies discussed the results of the recent census of member societies.

In 2001 ACLS conducted a major census of member societies in order to gain an idea of the health and well-being of learned societies in North America. The results were analyzed in a paper by Catherine Rudder, "Scholarly Societies and their Members: Incentives, Motives, and Policy Implications." Attempts to conduct follow-up census surveys, however, were not successful, because the existing census questionnaire was long, complicated, and time-consuming for the societies.

At the end of last year and beginning of the current year a new census was administered. It was shorter and an effort had been made to make data collection as manageable as possible. The census results were circulated to the societies prior to the Philadelphia meeting. Thursday evening's meeting discussed the data obtained. Fifty-six of the 71 societies participated in some way in the census. Among them were: 15 small societies (under 999 members), 16 small-medium (1,000-2,499), 11 medium-large (2,500-6,000) and 14 large societies (above 6,000).

Questions were asked about membership, conference attendance, and above all finances. While each society is unique with its history and internal operative culture, the census data does allow some comparisons to be made that can be useful in helping better understand the position of individual societies. Among the smaller societies the AABS stands out as having the highest percentage of its revenue derive from investment income. Only two other societies of the eleven smaller



The 2014 ACLS annual meeting was held in Philadelphia, Penn.

societies that responded came close to the AABS percentage. As sources of income considered were: dues, conferences, publications, contracts or grants, investments, and charity & bequests. What somewhat distorts the result is that AABS holds biennial conferences, and the financial report for June 2012-July 2013, on which the census data was based, was not a conference year. For most societies, conferences are a revenue raising event. On the expenditure side it appears that the AABS is one of five (from 10 that responded) small societies that is involved in a meaningful way in grant and fellowship activity. Expenditures considered were: compensation, publications, conferences, governance, professional services, office expense, external relations, grants, member resources, and fundraising. Again for the AABS a no-conference year skewed the percentages.

The annual meeting continued on Friday when three recipients of ACLS fellowships in the preceding year presented their research. The traditional report of the ACLS president, Pauline Yu, followed and then the Treasurer's report. The latter report noted that the ACLS endowment had increased from \$85 million in 2007 to \$115 million in 2013. This allowed the ACLS to fund 70 fellowships in the current year at an average academic salary. The ACLS

in addition administers a number of additional fellowship programs funded by outside foundations.

By vote of the delegates, the Oral History Association was admitted to membership (the 72nd). The featured speaker at lunch was Early Lewis, the president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The afternoon session was entitled, "The Public Face of the Humanities," and dealt with the interface of Humanities Studies with the wider public. The final event scheduled for the delegates took place in the evening when the annual Charles Homer Haskins Prize Lecture was given this year by Bruno Nettl, Prof. Emeritus of Music and Anthropology at the Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The Conference of Administrative Officers met on Saturday morning at which discussion of the census was continued. Also discussed was the internationalization of U.S. education in the 21st century. This was followed by a preview of issues for the fall meeting that were to include discussion of part-time and adjunct faculty and careers outside of classrooms. Finally, Stephen Schaefer, the representative of the law firm that is being utilized by some of the ACLS affiliated societies was available to answer questions.

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