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Some of the organizers of the First Conference on Baltic Studies: 1. J. Balys, I. Ivask, P. Lejiņš, J. Gaigulis, P. Zunde, V. Bagdanavičius, E. Anderson. 2. Z. Vaituzis, A. Ambre, N. Briška, R. Miezis, A. Tsirk, H. Valdsaar, M. Krūmiņš. | Photo: Varolin

50 Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies



AABS student travel grant recipients at the 2016 Conference in Philadelphia. | Photo: AABS Archives

Founding the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies

By Olavi Arens

Academic Executive Director

The Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies was founded on Sunday afternoon, December 1, 1968, the final day of the First Conference on Baltic Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland. My presence at the conference began on Wednesday, November 27, when, as a graduate student at Columbia University, I had taken a bus from New York City to College Park, Maryland in order to participate.

What led to the First Conference on Baltic Studies and then to the foundation of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies? I recently visited the AABS archives at the Special Collections Section of Allen Library of the University of Washington seeking clarification.

In the fall of 1967, a temporary steering committee was formed under the chairmanship of Jānis Gaigulis to explore greater cooperation among Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian scholars and scientists (Gaigulis religiously adhered to an alphabetic listing of countries and names).¹ Gaigulis himself identified the source of the idea for Baltic cooperation as the Committee for Sciences of the Association of Latvian Academic Fraternities that, under his chairmanship in 1966, had proposed the organization of a conference of Baltic scholars.² There, of course, did exist separate Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian scholarly societies at the time. The steering committee consisted of nine members representing Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian organizations (three from each national group),

but it changed its composition a number of times. Besides Jānis Gaigulis, the committee included among others: Nils Briška, Algirdas Budreckis, Sigurd Grava, Andres Jüriado, Walter Juskiewicz, H. Leesment, Kestutis Miklas, Jonas Puzinas, Hilda Radziņa, Peep Rebane, Are Tsirk and Herbert Valdsaar.

It should be noted that the 1960s were a period of greater cooperation among Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian exile organizations. A number of common Baltic organizations, such as the Joint Baltic American National Committee (1961) and the Baltic Appeal to the United Nations (1966), were established. Cooperation was based on an understanding of the commonality of Baltic interests within each Baltic community and a realization that more could be achieved by a pooling of resources.

On November 30, 1967, the temporary steering committee adopted the goal of organizing a First Conference of Baltic Scientists. At its December 11 meeting, the temporary committee renamed itself a permanent steering committee for a conference now called the First Conference of Baltic Studies.³ The designation "First Conference" suggested that there were more to follow. The initial date for the conference was set for August 11-13, 1968. The committee began to meet regularly in the following four months and devoted itself to two tasks. One was locating and securing "moderators" and participants for the conference. The "moderators" (in effect session chairmen for the program) were to head discipline-based sections and were supposed to recruit participants for their sessions. Letters were sent to Baltic aca-

demic organizations asking for suggestions and invitation letters were sent to potential participants. The second issue was financing the conference by raising money from Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian national organizations to support scholars from each national group. Since all of this took more time than initially anticipated, the conference date was pushed back from August to Thanksgiving weekend, November 28 - December 1, 1968. The choice of the University of Maryland for the conference was determined by one of the earliest proponents of the idea, Peter Lejiņš, a professor of Sociology and Director of the Criminology Program at the University of Maryland, who became a co-chair of the conference. Lejiņš secured approval for the use of university facilities for the conference. The local arrangements committee was chaired by Maigonis Krūmiņš.

The primary theme for the conference was an exploration of "conditions and changes in the Baltic States under Soviet rule." A second concern was to investigate "the function and role of Baltic peoples in the free world."⁴ By the summer of 1968, the moderators of the eight discipline-defined sections were identified and potential participants lined up. The moderators by divisions were Economics: Pranas Zunde, Georgia Institute of Technology; History: Edgar Anderson, San Jose State College; Linguistics: Antanas Klimas, University of Rochester; Literature: Ivar Ivask, University of Oklahoma; Political Science and Law: V. Stanley Vardys, University of Oklahoma; Pure & Applied Science: Lauri Vaska, Clarkson College of Technology; Religion:

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Participants of the Session on Pure and Applied Sciences, First Conference on Baltic Studies in at University of Maryland, College Park, 1968. | Photo: Maigonis Krūmiņš



The Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies: A proposal

By Edgar Anderson

Professor of History, San Jose State College

Scientists interested in the Baltic area, those of Baltic national origin and those who are simply interested in the Baltic countries, have until now acted in the West as isolated individuals in their research and in their struggle to publish their findings. Most of them have found shelter in associations of a more general nature, not always, however, exactly suited to their interests, as, e.g., the Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. For the Baltic nations are not Slavic and it is not in their national interests to be fused customarily with the Slavic nations, especially at the present time when they are dominated by the Russians. Many Baltic scientists have learned to inject their Baltic matters into "large" schemes of general interest. Purely Baltic themes themselves are still generally considered extraordinary or at least somewhat exotic. In general, sessions on Baltic problems have been organized on very rare occasions, and then generally under the auspices of Slavic, German, or Scandinavian studies.

Until now, most of the Baltic scientists have been strangers to one another and in most cases have not even been aware of each other's existence. The rare Western scientists, German, Polish, Scandinavian, British, American, Canadian, Australian, etc., who have been attracted to the Baltic studies by sheer interest and fascination, have not been in contact with the Baltic nationals abroad, or even with one another. It is high time to found a center which will unite all scientists in the West interested in Baltic matters, in order to facilitate their studies, to form common bonds, to exchange their information and source materials, and to make a common front in their efforts to make Baltic studies a "legitimate" field of inquiry. Such a center would promote the general public's acquaintance with these scholars' research activities and with the role of the Baltic area, past and present.

Scholars should be urged to investigate the possibilities of enlarging or internationalizing the existing institutions on Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, or general Baltic studies, or if that is not possible, to investigate the chances of creating a new institution at an American university which would sponsor research and conferences. If that is not practicable, a roof organization, like the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies, the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Slavic Conferences, British Conferences, or similar organizations, could be created on a broad basis with access to all scientific institutions, universities, colleges, and research institutes where scholars devoted to Baltic studies are working. This seems the most likely possibility, and it would also guarantee the greatest number of participants and the least friction.

Certain general American institutions, like the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, would be quite useful as depositories and research facilities in certain areas. This also applies to the Herder Institute in Germany and other places, devoted to the Baltic area or Eastern Europe in general.

The suggested Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies should be organized on a national, meaning American, or supranational scale. If this were to be a supranational organization, besides a national or supranational board there should be regional boards in different countries. These boards should have a fair representation of persons specifically interested in regional Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian studies, and, if possible, should be headed by persons with broader--all--Baltic--interests. The board or the regional boards should consist of scholars with professional affiliations, but the technical personnel need not necessarily be of an academic background, but rather skilled administrators, experts in business and finance.

The financial support for the organization should come from membership dues, regular and contributory, grants by Baltic national and cultural organizations and major research foundations, research institutes, and interested government agencies.

The Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies should facilitate Baltic studies in general, sponsor individual and guided research in Baltic matters, and organize periodic conferences on Baltic studies. It should act as intermediary between various scholars and agencies interested in Baltic problems, spread information on Baltic problems, cooperate with various research institutes and national and international organizations devoted to Baltic studies, and publish, if possible, or sponsor publications of, research works on the Baltic problems.

As a rule the Association should be apolitical. Otherwise it would defeat its purpose as a scholarly scientific organization; it would not become recognized as such by research foundations and scientific institutions in general, and would not gain a reputation as a purely scholarly agency among scholars and universities. Most Baltic organizations are, as a rule, considered by a great number of scholars as political organizations. The commonly accepted suspicious attitude and skepticism toward the Baltic scientists and Baltic problems cause harm to those serious Baltic scholars only interested in acquainting the Western world, generally ignorant of the area and its people, with the Baltic problems in their proper perspective. Therefore, the utmost caution and the fairest possible approach should be used in dealing with the Baltic question in open forum. By such an approach we shall win friends, supporters, and collaborators on a wide scale.

It does not seem that one should completely avoid a nationalistic viewpoint or stop fighting for a just cause. Nor does it mean that one should refrain from searching for common grounds for a united Baltic study. It also does not mean that one should refrain from attempts to study the Baltic problems on the Baltic soil, provided one does not become a political tool of one ideology or another.

This conference should create the basis for a common strength and concerted efforts of the Baltic scientists and Western scholars interested in the Baltic area and the surrounding regions. Such a basis can be found in the proposed Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies.

The 2018 AABS Conference at Stanford University: Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Baltic Independence

The Stanford University Libraries will host the 2018 AABS Conference at Stanford University, which celebrates two important milestones – the 50th anniversary of the founding of the AABS and the 100th anniversary of independence for the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Registration for presenting participants is open until May 1, 2018.

By Liisi Esse
Vice President for Conferences

The 2018 AABS Conference at Stanford University: The 100th Anniversary of Baltic Independence will bring together scholars interested in Baltic studies from all over the world and foster collaboration between Baltic and Stanford researchers. The three-day program, to be held on the Stanford University campus June 1–3, 2018, will feature panels, roundtable discussions, and workshops on 15 broad topics. The conference program is organized by the program committee, which consists of over 50 renowned scholars and specialists representing institutions and organizations in the Baltic states, the United States, and Canada.

The conference will highlight the achievements of Baltic studies a century after the three nations gained their independence and 27 years after the fall of the Soviet Union. Questions to be considered include: Why are Baltic studies important today? How does the region fit into larger global and transnational trends, including the growth of populism and increasing instability catalyzed by the region's eastern neighbor? What is the intersection between Baltic and East European studies? The conference will showcase cutting-edge Baltic research as well as highlight and discuss the roles of memory institutions and the digital humanities in Baltic studies.

In addition to around 100 academic sessions (paper and poster panels, roundtables, workshops), the conference will feature a number of special events. Throughout the conference, tours of Stanford University campus, Stanford Libraries, and exhibits will be offered. The conference will kick off on June 1 with the *Journal of Baltic Studies Breakfast Session*, "Interdisciplinary in Area Studies and the Changing Role of *Journal of Baltic Studies* (JBS)." In this session, the editor of JBS Matthew Kott will discuss some of the recent trends within current academia. He will take up the role of interdisciplinary journals like JBS in reinforcing or challenging these trends, and what he hopes for the future of JBS and Baltic studies. The JBS Breakfast Session will be followed by the AABS Member Meeting that will include a keynote address by incoming AABS President Andres Kasenkamp and a report and a discussion on the Association's activities in 2016–2018.

The conference's first keynote talk, "Looking at Baltic Studies in the Larger Context of European and Russian/East European fields," will be delivered by renowned historian Dr. Norman Naimark during a luncheon. The keynote talk will be followed by a special roundtable, "Baltic Exceptionalism? A Roundtable featuring Baltic



Meyer lawn, Green Library, Hoover Tower. Linda A. Cicero | Photo: Stanford News Service

Foreign Ministers and Prof. Anna Grzymala-Busse," which is co-sponsored by the European Security Initiative at Stanford's Europe Center at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies. The first day of the program will end with the conference's official opening ceremony that will feature a keynote talk, "The Baltic States and Human Rights in Europe: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," by Dr. Nils Muiznieks. A display of recent Baltic publications will also be showcased at the event.

The second day of the conference will feature the conference's third keynote talk, "50 Years of Transforming Geopolitics and Baltic Studies," which will be delivered during a luncheon by Dr. Agnia Grigas. Another luncheon event, targeted at graduate students and titled "How to Find One's Place in Academia and Beyond Post-Graduation?" will explore the process of completing a PhD in a topic connected to Baltic studies and attaining postdocs and academic jobs, with alternatives to academia also considered and explored. The day will end with the Open-Air Celebration of Baltic Culture and Reception, an evening program featuring musical and dance performances by several Baltic and American groups (The Mägi Ensemble, Tiltas, Võlukeeled).

The last day of the conference will feature a fourth keynote talk, "The Baltic States at 100: The State Continuity Claim in International Law and in Relations with Russia," which will be delivered during a luncheon by Dr. Lauri Mälksoo. The conference will conclude with the screening of brand-new feature film "Ashes in the Snow" (2018). The film is based on the New York Times best-selling novel "Between Shades of Gray" written by Carnegie Medal winning au-

AABS Board Gathers in Chicago for Fall Meeting

By Māra Lazda
Director at Large

On November 12, 2017 AABS Board members gathered for the fall board meeting, hosted by AABS President Giedrius Subačius at the University of Illinois, Chicago, with the area's first snow of the season providing a wintery backdrop. The board meeting provides an opportunity for officers to report on their work, and to examine the organization's finances (see separate report by AABS Treasurer Merike Henneman, pg. 9). Importantly, the board meeting is also a forum for in-depth, face-to-face discussions on how best to serve the needs and interests of our members in advancing Baltic Studies.

The meeting began with a presentation by *Journal of Baltic Studies* representatives. The *JBS* is an internationally recognized, peer-reviewed publication that has a global reach for the most recent and innovative scholarship in Baltic Studies, published by Taylor and Francis Group. Jevgenija Gehsbarga from the editorial office, Madeleine Markey from Taylor and Francis, and new *JBS* editor Matthew Kott (via Skype) discussed development trends of the journal. Kott began his tenure as editor of the journal in September; he expressed his thanks to Terry Clark, whose leadership as editor from 2010 to 2017 facilitated a smooth transition. *JBS* continues to have an international readership; while most readers are in North America and Europe, they also come from South America, Asia, and Australia.

The central concern of AABS board members is article accessibility, particularly for scholars who are not members of the organization. While AABS members receive *JBS* as a part of their membership, other scholars or non-specialists who are not (yet) members depend on library access. But library budgets are regularly cut, while subscription costs for journals grow at an alarming rate. Gehsbarga and Markey pointed out that Taylor and Francis, like most other publishers, offer libraries subscription "bundles" that allow institutions to receive discounts for subscribing to multiple publications. Further, many libraries, not just in North America but globally, subscribe to JStor, a digital library with millions of sources, where *JBS* issues from 1972 to 2010 are available. Gehsbarga and Markey also spoke of Taylor and Francis's program to publish special issues as monographs, which they also sell to libraries at a high cost. Affordability for readers continues to concern AABS board members,

and we will continue to discuss with other learned societies how best to insure accessibility for all interested in Baltic Studies, which is essential in fostering research in the field and membership in the organization.

AABS already offers numerous fellowships and grants for Baltic scholars, which are described on the website. Board members discussed several new initiatives dedicated to promoting research being done in the Baltic field. Vice President for Publications Dovile Budrytė and Graduate Student Representative Harry Merritt announced an award competition for best undergraduate paper in Baltic Studies, which will be presented at the AABS conference in Stanford in June. As President-Elect Andres Kasekamp recalled at an earlier meeting, winning a similar award as an undergraduate led him to attend an AABS meeting, which turned out to be an important initial step in his professional development as a Baltic scholar.

A second way AABS hopes to soon support scholarship is through a book subvention program. Ever more frequently, academic presses require authors to provide substantial financial contributions to the publication of their books, even though authors themselves receive little to no remuneration for their work. Along with a growing number of other area studies societies, AABS aims to support its scholars with a competitive book subvention program. Director-at-Large Mara Lazda is heading the subcommittee to draft the requirements for application; details will be forthcoming on the AABS website.

Two other topics caused lively debate. The first was a proposal to become an affiliated member of the Association for the Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES). Currently AABS has an informal relationship with ASEEES. Some AABS members are also members of ASEEES and they present Baltic scholarship at annual ASEEES conventions; board meetings have recently taken place during ASEEES meetings. Affiliate members are listed on ASEEES website and one affiliate-sponsored panel is designated in the program. However, several board members were concerned that official affiliation with ASEEES might overshadow other important working relationships AABS has, including, for example, the German Studies Association and Scandinavian Studies. The AABS is an equal member with these and other area studies associations in the ACLS. This

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Conference

thor Ruta Sepetys. The film is produced and directed by Marius Markevicius who previously directed the award-winning documentary "The Other Dream Team" (2012). The screening of the film will be followed by a Q&A session with Marius Markevicius and Ruta Sepetys, and a closing reception.

Registration for the conference opened on January 15, 2018 for presenting participants. General registration will open April 1. Registration deadlines are May 1 for presenting participants and May 15 for general audience.

The conference organizers invite all those who would like to be an active part of celebrating the 100th anniversary of independence for the Baltic republics and the 50th anniversary of the founding of the AABS to help turn this conference into an extraordinary success by making a tax-deductible gift that will go toward developing and carrying out the conference program.

The platinum sponsors of the conference include the American Latvian Association; Baltic American Freedom Foundation; consulate general of Lithuania in Los Ange-

les; Dennis Garrison, Lithuanian honorary consul in San Francisco; Latvian Embassy to the US; Hoover Institution Library and Archives; Jeff Nelson, Lithuanian honorary consul in Virginia; Liga E. Hoy, Latvian honorary consul in Northern California; Latvian Ministry of Culture; Estonian Ministry of Education and Research; and Stanford University Libraries.

More info about the conference and a link to registration form can be found at: <http://aabs2018.stanford.edu>.

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Concluding session of the First Conference on Baltic Studies, 1968. | Photo: Maigonis Krūmiņš

Vytautas Bagdanavičius, Lithuanian Pedagogical Institute of Chicago; and Social Sciences: Peter P. Lejiņš, University of Maryland.

Discussions also began on future directions. Unfortunately, there is no record of telephone conversations in the archives. Still, among the Gaigulis papers we find two written proposals for the future; both were later published in the conference proceedings. The proposals show that the way forward was a matter of debate in the run-up to the conference. One proposal, written by Herbert Valdsaar (a member of the steering committee) proposed continuing holding conferences similar to the first one and also smaller specialized topical meetings. He also suggested the need for a part-time office to coordinate activity in the future, but did not propose the establishment of a permanent scholarly organization.⁵ The other proposal was written by Edgar Anderson, a professor of history at San Jose State College.⁶ Anderson noted the basic problem for Baltic scholars: "In general, sessions on Baltic problems have been organized on very rare occasions, and then generally under the auspices of Slavic, German, or Scandinavian studies." He advanced several ideas including the establishment of a center or institute at a university to sponsor Baltic Studies. But he concluded:

"If that is not practicable, a roof organization, like the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies, the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Slavic Conferences, British Conferences, or similar organizations could be created..."

It may be noted that while both SASS and AAASS had been around for a time, the formation of a number of other area studies organizations took place at the same time as the Baltic Studies association: Association for Jewish Studies (1969); Austrian Studies (1961); German Studies Association (1976); Latin American Studies Association (1966); and Middle Eastern Studies Association (1966). In his proposal Anderson also warned:

"As a rule the Association should be apolitical, otherwise it would defeat its purpose as a scholarly scientific organization... Most Baltic organizations are, as a rule, considered by a great number of scholars as political organizations... the utmost caution and

the fairest possible approach should be used in dealing with the Baltic question in open forum. By such an approach we shall win friends, supporters, and collaborators on a wide scale."

This warning was generally accepted by the participants at the conference and set the tone for the AABS at its foundation. Anderson concluded: "Such a basis can be found in the proposed Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies." Apparently some of the members of the steering committee, the local arrangements committee and the moderators, in a meeting at the beginning of the conference on November 27, voted in favor of the Anderson proposal. They endorsed the idea of presenting the proposal to participants at the concluding session of conference, scheduled for Sunday, December 1.⁷

The conference itself included two keynote addresses by the co-chairs:⁸ Peter Lejiņš and V. Stanley Vardys. In his keynote speech Peter Lejiņš spoke about the generational divide that was present and felt at the conference. Lejiņš spoke from the vantage point of the generation that had finished university study in the Baltic States and had begun their careers there. He noted the existence of: "...an emerging generation of young Baltic scholars... The crucial issue was whether these scholars, brought up far from their ancestral homeland, would have enough of an interest in their countries to at least peripherally relate their academic skills to Baltic subject matter. The answer is now clear."⁹ Lejiņš expressed pleasant surprise that the new generation had exhibited the degree of interest that it did in Baltic studies. Indeed, it was members of this new generation (who often were also members of other learned societies) who carried the work of the AABS for the next 30 years. The other co-chair, V. Stanley Vardys, Prof. of Political Science and Chair of Russian Studies Committee at the Univ. of Oklahoma, and a member of the younger generation, made the case for Baltic Studies in his keynote address.¹⁰ As he noted, "scholars and journalists studying the Soviet Union frequently left out the Baltic republics as not typically Soviet, while those who now wrote about Eastern Europe omitted

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the Baltic republics because they no longer shared the East European fate.” As a result: “Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania now existed in a ‘twilight zone.’” Vardys also sought to deflect arguments that scholars, because they were of Baltic origin, could not be objective in the study of “civilization of their origin” by noting the contributions of Russian emigrés to Russian Studies in America and refugees from Germany to the study of totalitarianism and of Germany.

In all, 50 papers were presented, along with three roundtable discussions on topics in literature, political science, and the sciences were held.¹¹ As is the case generally at scholarly conferences, discussion was not limited to what took place during the official sessions. Conversation continued in the cafeteria during the meals and indeed into the early morning hours in some of the rooms.

Anderson’s proposal became the major topic of discussion at the final concluding session of the conference on Sunday afternoon.¹² Both of his positions—the establishment of an independent scholarly association and the avoidance of political advocacy—were accepted by the participants at the conference and came to guide activity in the future. The general session voted unanimously to accept the motion to establish the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies. They also voted to approve a slate of nine persons: Edgar Anderson (San Jose State College), Sigurd Grava (Columbia Univ.), Ivar Ivask (Univ. of Oklahoma), Bronis Kaslas (Wilkes College), Gundar J. King (Pacific Lutheran Univ.), Peter Lejiņš (Univ. of Maryland), Rimvydas Silbajoris (Ohio State Univ.), Herbert Valdsaar (E.I. Dupont de Nemours & Co.), and V. Stanley Vardys (Univ. of Oklahoma) to form an organizing committee for the association. The names of those in attendance at the final concluding session (48 persons that included both speakers and members of the audience) and who had signed the attendance roster were appended to the minutes. The organizing committee elected Gundar J. King as its Chair.

I did not have to return by bus to New York City. Jānis Gaigulis offered me a seat in his car returning to Brooklyn. He left me at a convenient subway stop in the City that allowed me to return to Columbia and Riverside Drive. The glow of a successful conference accompanied us. Yet, as we drove back, the talk was of the future – the need to organize the AABS and begin planning its activities.

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Endnotes

1 Box 5, Folder 1. “Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies archives,” Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries. Only some of the Steering Committee minutes can be located.

2 Jānis Gaigulis, “Ten Years of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies,” *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1978) 259.

3 Minutes of 11 December, AABS archive, Box 5, Folder 1.

4 Ibid.

5 Ivar Ivask (ed.), *First Conference on Baltic Studies: Summary of Proceedings* (Tacoma, Washington: AABS, 1969) 119-22.

6 Ibid., 118-119. The 1969 published version differs only slightly (minor editorial changes) from the copy in the archives that was circulated at the conference. The version published in the *Bulletin of Baltic Studies*, No. 1 (Feb. 1970) has omitted several phrases in the original text and has added three paragraphs at the end that deal mostly with Valdsaar’s proposal.

7 Unfortunately there is no copy of the minutes of the 27 November meeting in the archives.

8 Ernst Ōpik, the third person listed as a co-chair in the program, did not attend the conference.

9 I. Ivask (ed.), 14.

10 Ibid., 16-19.

11 The program for the First Conference may be found in Box 5, Folder 4, AABS archives.

12 Minutes of the closing session (1 December 1968) Ibid., 112-115.

2018 AABS Grant & Fellowship Awards

The Aina Birnitis Fellowship supports a year of research and writing to help advanced graduate students in the humanities in the last year of Ph.D. dissertation writing. The fellowship is supported by a bequest of Aina Birnitis, a librarian by profession who lived in Carlton, a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Jānis Ozoliņš, University of Latvia

Research grants for Emerging Scholars foster the development of Baltic Studies by supporting new and ongoing research projects.

Una Bergmane, Foreign Policy Research Institute

Indra Ekmanis, Kennan Institute/Foreign Policy Research Institute

Dissertation grants support doctoral dissertation research and write-up in any field of Baltic Studies.

Bart Pushaw, University of Maryland

Feruza Aripova, Northeastern University

The Jānis Grundmanis Postgraduate Fellowship, established in the memory of Dr. Jānis Grundmanis, is an annual fellowship for graduate study in the United States.

Anna Žabicka, Wayne State University

AABS member news & updates

AABS members: We invite you to share your news (publications, job updates, current research, etc.) with the newsletter. Please send your short news update (50-100 words) to aabs@uw.edu

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American Council of Learned Societies and AABS

By Olavi Arens

Academic Executive Director

AABS is a constituent member of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), whose mission in part is to advance humanistic studies and strengthen individual member societies. Founded in 1919 by 13 scholarly societies that were either traditional learned societies whose foundation went back to early American history (e.g. American Philosophical Society - 1743) or were discipline-based societies founded in the second half of the 19th century (e.g. American Historical Association - 1884; American Economic Association - 1885), the impetus was a result of European contacts with historians (e.g. James Shotwell) among the American Peace Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. As ACLS President Pauline Yu reminded the ACLS audience at a recent annual meeting in Washington, the ACLS was founded to represent the United States internationally in the International Union of Academies, something the ACLS still does.

With a few exceptions (the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study was founded in 1911, for example), area studies associations are a post-World War II phenomena. The American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, the forerunner of ASEES, was founded in 1948. It was the 1960s, however, that saw the establishment of a number of area studies associations, including AABS. Their admission to ACLS membership occurred 15-25 years following their foundation. In more recent times more specialized societies (Shakespeare Association; American Society for Environmental History) have been accepted into ACLS membership.

A rigorous vetting process is followed in accepting new members. An applicant society must demonstrate a strong record of accomplishment in the pursuit of humanistic studies. Each society needs to cover a distinct field of study while at the same time be willing to contribute to both ACLS activity and to the work of other societies. Besides securing the approval of a number of ACLS committees, the delegates of member societies ultimately vote on the admission of each applicant society for membership at the annual meeting. The AABS, which was founded in 1968, was approved for membership in 1991 after 22 years of activity. Membership meant that a peer judgment was delivered by existing member learned societies that validated the AABS as a worthy member of the world of American and indeed of the international community of learned societies. With the addition of the Austrian Studies Association in 2017, the ACLS has at present a membership of 75 constituent societies. The general grouping of societies is by size—large (over 6,000), large medium, medium, and small societies. The small societies are those with membership below 1000. The AABS and, for that matter, SASS belong to this category.

As a member of ACLS, AABS representatives attend the association's annual meeting each year in May, as well as an executive officers' meeting in the fall. The meetings are an opportunity

to learn more about ACLS fellowships and grants that support humanistic study, to participate in the governance of ACLS, and to meet as scholarly societies to share best practices and discuss issues of common interest. In addition to a half day meeting for executive officers, we learn from each other as we interact during coffee breaks and meals.

What have been some of the issues of concern to the ACLS and its member societies? ACLS collects data to measure the health of learned societies. A comprehensive census of societies was carried out at the end of the 1990s with more modest annual follow-ups to document current trends in membership, finances, and activity. ACLS also seeks ways to provide services that its member societies can access at affordable rates. Journal publishing—open access, the cost of journals for libraries, etc.—have been common issues for the societies and have been discussed at a number of meetings.

The internationalization of the activity of the member associations has also received attention. The time of purely national learned societies, à la 1919, is a thing of the past. Many of the member societies, particularly the area studies societies, have experienced major growth in both international membership and conference participation. The AABS has, of course, been an international association from the beginning and has worked in tandem since 1971 with an independent European Baltic Studies conference as a counterpart (odd years) to our biennial conferences in North America in the even years.

"What have been some of the issues of concern to the ACLS and its member societies?"

The decline of government funding and university support for the study of foreign languages and area studies programs has received a fair amount of attention. We may note that this discussion spurred us to look again at how to support Lithuanian-

language study at the University of Illinois, Chicago. In recent years, public advocacy in behalf of the study of humanities or of public issues of concern for members of societies have been major topics of discussion. The AABS has had a long-standing tradition of avoiding involvement in public political issues. The issue may need further discussion.

And finally, a constant issue has been cooperation with other associations, which is part of the mission of the ACLS. This stemmed in part from the recognition that definitional boundaries between societies had become blurred more-and-more and can be crossed readily. As individuals, we ourselves are often members of several societies. It was at ACLS meetings that we began to talk with SASS representatives on cooperation. These conversations, together with the University of Washington connection, led to our first joint meeting in 2010 in Seattle and of course the 2014 Yale University conference. Conversations at ACLS meetings have also led to exchanges with the German Studies Association and SASS that we saw at the recent AABS conference in Philadelphia. Panels on Baltic themes have become a regular feature of ASEES conference. We need to continue these contacts and expand our cooperation in the future with other associations.

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AABS Newsletter | Summer 2017

Treasurer's Report

By Merike Henneman
Treasurer

Review of 2017

The value of the Association's investment portfolio grew by 3.7% from \$3,443,737 to \$3,571,166 between 30 June 2016 and 30 June 2017. This balance reflects withdrawal of \$150,000 for grant payments and operating expenses. Of the \$3,571,166 total portfolio balance, \$1,794,196 (50.2%) was invested in stocks and \$1,776,970 (49.8%) in bonds. These totals remain within acceptable tolerance of the target allocations established in the Association's investment policy.

The Association's asset portfolio produced a net return (income and capital gains) of \$277,443 representing 201% increase over the budgeted investment return of \$137,749.

Membership dues and donations totaled \$26,347, exceeding the budget target of \$20,000 by 32%. JBS revenue of \$28,072 exceeded budget by 8%.

Total expenses and allocations of \$188,576 exceeded the budgeted total of \$183,340 by less than 3%. This increase is due to higher grant payout.

2018 budget

Total non-investment revenue and support for the fiscal year ending 30 June 2018 is budgeted to total \$56,000.

Investment returns (dividends and capital gains) are budgeted to be \$142,847 based on assumed 4% annual return on 30 June 2017 investment balance.

Total expenses are budgeted at \$197,960 compared to last year's budget of \$183,340. This 8% increase is primarily allocated to conference related costs. Fiscal year 2018 is expected to be a breakeven year with \$887 change in net assets.

Other matters

Peterson Sullivan, LLC conducted a review of the Association's financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2017. There was no need for a management letter. An audit is scheduled for fiscal year 2018 to cover the conference year activity.

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Board meeting



Current AABS board: 1. Liisi Esse, Merike Henneman, Giedrius Subačius, Māra Lazda, Amanda Swain, Dovilė Budrytė, Kara Brown. 2. Harry Merritt, Guntis Šmidchens, Ivars Ijabs, Andres Kasekamp, Olavi Arens.

proposal led to multifaceted discussion about the identity and definition of Baltic Studies, and the need for its independence. At the end of the discussion, there was not sufficient board support for the proposal.

A second topic of debate had to do with the AABS adopting political and other types of advocacy resolutions. Since its founding in 1968, AABS has avoided political advocacy and maintained this stance throughout the Cold War and the recovery of independence. Papers and panels on controversial topics, including political and human rights issues have always been welcome. This attitude has been questioned by some members on issues such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine or the Hungarian government's threat to close Central European University. The Board decided to ask two members to prepare a statement on the topic for the next board meeting at Stanford.

The board also briefly discussed other ways in which to engage its membership between conferences. AABS already has a substantial social media presence (see our Facebook and Twitter accounts), but we are also developing ideas for webinars and other digital collections.

We look forward to continuing these conversations with members at the 2018 AABS Conference at Stanford University from June 1 to 3. Detailed information is available on the AABS and Conference website. Please plan on attending the member meeting on Friday, June 1, from 10 to 11:30am.

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**THE 2018 AABS CONFERENCE
AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY:**
THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BALTIC INDEPENDENCE

JUNE 1-3, 2018

<http://aabs2018.stanford.edu/>



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The AABS is an international educational and scholarly non-profit organization. The purpose of the Association is the promotion of research and education in Baltic Studies. Its activities include sponsoring meetings and conferences for the exchange of scholarly views, the evaluation of research in Baltic Studies and supporting the publication of research and other information about Baltic Studies. Membership is open to anyone wishing to support these endeavors. All AABS memberships include complimentary subscriptions to the quarterly Journal of Baltic Studies and the Baltic Studies Newsletter. Membership dues are not tax deductible as charitable contributions but may be deductible, depending on individual circumstances, as miscellaneous professional expenses. All donations to the Baltic Studies Fund are deductible in the United States as provided by law.

To communicate with us, detach the entire sheet including your address and send it to the return address printed above.

- ☐ Please note my address correction above.
 - ☐ Please send me additional information about the AABS, including a membership application.
 - ☐ Please send me information about the Baltic Studies Fund.
- (Membership forms may also be downloaded at the AABS website, <http://depts.washington.edu/aabs/>)

Check the type of membership desired (annual dues in parentheses):

- ☐ student (\$25.00) ☐ Baltic resident (\$25.00) ☐ retired (\$35.00) ☐ regular (\$60.00)
- ☐ sponsor (\$100.00) ☐ patron (\$500.00) ☐ life membership (\$2000.00)

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