



# BALTIC HERITAGE NETWORK

Newsletter no. 3 (48) 2024

issn: 228-3390

## The Great Escape of 1944 Analyzed at the Baltic Heritage Network Conference in Vilnius



Baltic Heritage Network conference participants in Vilnius.  
Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Vygaudas Juozaitis.

The 7th Baltic Cultural Heritage Abroad conference titled “Eighty Years After 1944: Then and Now” took place in Vilnius from June 26-28th, 2024. Organized by the National Library of Latvia, Not-For-Profit organization Baltic Heritage Network and a whole slew of partner institutions, the meeting was dedicated to the Great Escape of 1944, as well as its effects on global Baltic diaspora communities and on the three

Baltic States during the Soviet occupation as well as following their re-independence. There were 33 presentations over the course of three days and included in the program for two nights was the opportunity for participants to familiarize themselves with the National Library of Latvia’s thematic exhibit and watch the film “The Story of the Baltic University” (Helga Merits, 2015).  
Professor Egidijus Aleksandravičius

80 years ago, tens of thousands of Balts left their homelands in order to escape the looming threat of the Soviet occupation. This devastating event has been commemorated throughout this entire year. The very successful BaltHerNet conference in Vilnius was also dedicated to this and we are incredibly thankful to our hosts, the team of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, for an enriching experience and seamless organization of the conference.

A whole slew of commemorative events already took place during the summer, in September, and even more are coming in the fall. New exhibitions, documentary films, books are being completed. Academic researchers and journalists alike have shown interest regarding this topic. All of this produces new knowledge and brings one of the most dramatic events in Baltic history to a wider audience, it educates younger generations. From time to time, you hear that people are worried that those who experienced the historical event and can be asked about it are disappearing or have already disappeared. But consolation can be found in the knowledge that quite a lot of material has been gathered about the first generation of refugees. But their stories and experiences are carried forth by second and third generations, who we should now be putting more focus on. Some coverage of the events that took place is already in this issue, more to come in the next one.

Wishing everyone a good new academic season! Happy reading!

Piret Noorhani

from the Vytautas Magnus University delivered the opening presentation, in which he gave an overview of the generation of poets and soldiers within the history of the emigration of Baltic peoples. He considered the Great Escape to be a unique event within world history and therefore, placed even more importance on research of the topic, since the Baltic diaspora isn't documented in history textbooks. But the topic is being explored by a strong circle of researchers and so the diaspora story should therefore have its well-deserved and recognized place in society. According to him, the progression towards publication of diaspora research in Lithuania is maybe even more developed than in Estonia and Latvia, yet the merging and integration of communities into society has been slower in Lithuania. Although the final wave of emigration also took place in Lithuania in the 1990's, it wasn't comparable in a political context to the forced emigration of World War II. The professor also drew attention to the importance of post-war refugee camps in fostering Baltic unity and friendships, but also in the continuation of cooperation in obtaining higher education as well as in the sciences. Of the remaining presentations, 20 explored the Lithuanian diaspora through the post-war experiences of refugees in camps and in the new countries they emigrated to, to the effects of the final wave of emigration at the end of the 20th century. The focus of many papers was the Lithuanian community in the USA, but the activities of Lithuanians who emigrated to Germany and Kazakhstan was also analyzed, as well as the progression of the Lithuanian Jewish community in Central and Eastern Europe in the 20th century. In addition, the presenters introduced community initiatives in journalism, architecture, education, faith, and sports. An overview of the Latvian diaspora was given in two presentations, where the focus was on the activities of the Latvian archives and museum in Canada and the University of Latvia's project regarding researching memoirs of diaspora Latvians. Estonian topics were discussed in nine presentations: the global Estonian community and their archival and museum heritage in Estonian, Canadian and Australian memory institutions, seminars for young researchers and Estonians in England and Holland. It is worth highlighting Hillar Tammela's introduction of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory's database and also the book, which is in progress, "Paadipõgenemine" (Escape by Boat), in which the focus is on Estonians who escaped to Sweden. In many ways, Sweden is an appropriate direction for research, since it helps foremost to explore boat refugees, who escaped to Sweden on their own and in small boats, not via ships that were organized thank

to the help of the German government. Secondly, it's important to understand the agreement forged between Sweden and Germany, which gave refugees the right to escape to Sweden. Among those who escaped to Sweden were also those who belonged to so-called escape cooperatives, meaning people who scrounged together the necessary items needed for the boat trip (fuel, alcohol, food, etc.) for many families or in their closest circles of friends and acquaintances, and organized the whole trip by themselves. In parallel, there were also those who were paid off, who were prepared to take people across the sea. Although based on the small amount of documentation on this topic it is estimated that about 6-9% of refugees (approx. 2000 people) perished on the escape trip, Tammela suggests not using this figure since corresponding data doesn't exist yet and the topic has to be researched further.

Gratifyingly, among the presenters for this year's conference were Danish journalists and researchers Thomas Svaneborg and Brian Traantoft Rasmussen, who introduced their book "ESCAPE: A Book About and Overlooked Danish Refugee History." The Danes have also compiled a database of refugees who escaped to Denmark during the Second World War; people from over 40 different cultural backgrounds are documented there, among them 1010 Estonians and almost 3000 Lithuanians. Interestingly, there were also active refugee camps in Denmark for Russians, one of the largest was in Copenhagen. Since most Baltic refugees were not interested in leaving Denmark, their forced deportation was an unpleasant episode in post-war Danish society. Many refugees who left Denmark set their sights on Australia, but they weren't treated in a friendly manner there either due to hostile stances towards immigrants spreading there at the time.

The conference program, the presenters and their presentations with annotations can be viewed on the Baltic Heritage Network [website](#).

Birgit Kibal

The Baltic Heritage Newsletter is distributed quarterly, on-line.

The next deadline for submissions is **November 15th, 2024.**

Please send all related enquiries and submissions to Piret Noorhani: [piretnoorhani@gmail.com](mailto:piretnoorhani@gmail.com)

**Editor in Chief:**  
Piret Noorhani

**Design & Layout:**  
Nina Lamberg

[www.balther.net](http://www.balther.net)

[ISSN 2228-3390](https://doi.org/10.2478/ISSN.2228-3390)

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## NFP Baltic Heritage Network's Annual General Meeting in a Summery Vilnius

During the conference “Eighty Years After 1944: Then and Now” in Vilnius, NFP BaltHerNet's annual general meeting was also held on June 27th. The idea for the creation of the organization came about in 2006 in Tartu at a conference dedicated to the cultural heritage of the Baltic diaspora, held at the Estonian Literary Museum. The organization was established in 2008. The contacts made and developed through the network have led to many different projects and ventures, which have all helped to preserve, further research, and introduce the history of the Baltic diaspora.

Piret Noorhani, the president of the organization, focused firstly on the history of the organization and followed that up with an overview of the activities of the past year and the financial state. The audit committee report was delivered by Riina Reinvelt.

Former members of the board were voted in again: president Piret Noorhani (Estonian Museum Canada VEMU), vice president Jolanta Budriuniene (Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania), secretary Karin Kiisk (Estonian National Museum), and board member Birgit Kibal (National Archives of Estonia). A heartfelt thanks went to long-time vice president Kristine Bekere



Baltic Heritage Network conference participants in Vilnius.  
Photo by Vygaudas Juozaitis

(Latvia) for her contributions to the organization. In the role of vice president, the new Latvian representative Inese Kalnina from the National Archives of Latvia was voted in. Maarja Merivoo-Parro, who stepped down from the board, was also thanked for her contributions and organizing the BaltHerNet youth seminars for many years. A new audit committee was also voted on, including the following members: Tiiu Kravtsev (chairwoman), Riina Reinvelt, and Gristel Ramler.

The main goals for the next year are to continue the development of the balther.net portal and continue to publish the newsletter. The 2025 summer school will take place in mid-June in Rakvere, Estonia. We also hope to restore the tradition of the youth seminars next year, under the leadership of a new individual.

## Books for the Lithuanians in São Paulo

Since 2021, the National Library of Lithuania has been implementing the Reading Promotion Program funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania. The purpose of the program is to encourage Lithuanian communities abroad to read Lithuanian books by taking care of their reading needs and environment.

This August, the Consul General of the Republic of Lithuania in São Paulo, Brazil, Audra Čiapienė, visited the National Library of Lithuania. During the meeting, Čiapienė received a pile of books intended for the Lithuanian Community in São Paulo. The guest met with the Director General of the National Library of Lithuania Aušrinė Žilinskienė, and the Head of the Documentary Heritage Research Department, Dr. Jolanta Budriūnienė, shared her thoughts about the challenges faced by the Lithuanian diaspora in general, discussed the possibilities of cooperation between the National Library of Lithuania and the Consulate General in São Paulo.

The Consul General also visited the exhibition “Stranded: Experiences of Fleeing West in 1944–1952,” which is currently exhibited in the Library.



The Director General of the National Library of Lithuania, Aušrinė Žilinskienė (left), and the Head of the Documentary Heritage Research Department, Dr. Jolanta Budriūnienė (right), handed over the Consul General of the Republic of Lithuania in São Paulo, Audra Čiapienė (center), the books.  
Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Arūnas Sartanavičius.



Refugees and their descendants at conference Toronto.  
Photo by Monika Siim

## VEMU Estonian Museum Canada Commemorated the 80th Anniversary of the Great Escape with a Series of Events

80 years ago, thousands of Baltic peoples embarked upon the escape journey. They were fleeing from the Red Army since the terror from the previous Soviet occupation was still fresh in their minds and hearts. Escape took place via sea as well as land and was temporary, as far as the escapees knew. But with the passing of time, it became clear that there would be no return – people stayed or relocated to new countries. The ideology of freedom of the Balts was carried forward and preserved around the world until the collapse of the Soviet Union and restoration of independence. This sorrowful occasion was commemorated in Toronto from September 19–21 with a slew of events that had a great turnout.

In collaboration with the Chair of Estonian Studies at the University of Toronto, an **international conference titled “The Great Escape of 1944 – The Baltic Experience”** took place on **September 19–20 at Tartu College**. At the conference, dedicated to the Great Escape and its aftermaths, topics under discussion were the reasons behind and process of the flight, the resettlement of refugees in Canada and how they adapted, how various generations live with multi-identities, and work in regards to historical preservation. 20 presentations took place, academic

researchers, filmmakers and authors of memoirs, preservers of historical heritage from Canada, Estonia, USA, Holland, and from Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian communities performed. The conference programme can be viewed [here](#). The recording of the conference will be available soon on VEMU’s website: [info@vemu.ca](mailto:info@vemu.ca).

Helga Merits’ **new documentary film “The Paradox of Seabrook Farms. Shattered dreams. Restored hopes”** was screened at **Innis Town Hall on the evening of September 19**. The film summarizes many years of research, during which nearly 50 interviews were conducted. The film tells the story of the Seabrook family enterprise, which gave about thousands of immigrants work in the 1950’s, among them about 900 Estonian, 200 Latvian, and 2000 Japanese immigrants. Helga Merits herself was also present to speak about the making of the film.

**On September 21**, an Estonian language event took place at **Tartu College**, where **Dr. Tiina Kirss presented the annual Dr. Vello Soots memorial lecture, titled “Leaving the Homeland: Escape Stories from 1944.”** The joint exhibition, which was produced with the collaboration of VEMU, the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, and the Association of Estonians in Sweden, was opened. Following the lecture, a reception in celebration of Tartu College’s 54th anniversary took place. **The evening continued with a diaspora Estonian musical event “Singing Our Songs Again,”** during which DJ Erik Laar played familiar songs from records chosen from VEMU’s record collection and performed his own creations that were inspired by these records. Erik Kreem entertained us with captivating piano melodies. The evening ended with a sing-along, which Enno Agur and Erik Kreem helped out with.



During the events, fresh books with topics pertaining to the escape could be purchased.

In addition to Tartu College, the series of events was sponsored by Estonian Foundation of Canada (main sponsor), the Estonian Central Council in Canada, and the Integration Foundation (Estonia). Thank you!

## VEMU's Summer Guests



Ave-Marleen Rei, Marcus Kolga and Monika Roose before the interview at Tartu College. Photo Piret Noorhani.

VEMU Estonian Museum Canada received many guests at the end of the summer. Kadri Vissel and Tiina Tael from the Estonian National Museum visited us. Kadri continued working with the VEMU artefact collection, in which over 2000 items have been registered to date. Tiina perused Tommy Tomson's extensive negative collection and chose suitable frames for archiving. The project was supported by the Ministry of Education and Research, under the Estonian Diaspora Action Plan.

Margus Meinart, the director of the department of painting of the Tartu Pallas University of Applied

Sciences, and his wife visited during their vacation. They met with representatives of the Society of Estonian Artists in Toronto, were introduced to VEMU's collections, and visited other Estonian places in Toronto and Ontario.

In commemoration of the anniversary of the Great Escape, Ave-Marleen Rei from Estonian Public Broadcasting came to Toronto to conduct interviews. She is preparing a series for Vikerraadio in which there will be discussions with refugees and their descendants.

Taimi Grauberg came to VEMU's archives to do research work for her master's thesis at the University of Tartu. The subject of the thesis is the inner and outer politics of the Toronto diaspora Estonian community during the 1960's. We are excited to see her completed work.



Ene Liis Martens explaining the history of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club to Tiina Tael, Taimi Grauberg, Kadri Vissel. Photo by Piret Noorhani.

# Lithuanian Museum Archives of Canada Launches Community Story Project



Toronto, Ontario – September 10, 2024 – The Lithuanian Museum Archives of Canada, the nation’s only Museum-Archives dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of Lithuanian Canadians,

is thrilled to announce the launch of a new community story on the Digital Museums Canada website, titled “European Traces in the War of 1812.” This initiative aims to capture and share the early history of the first Lithuanians to reach Canada.

The “European Traces in the War of 1812” story highlights the little-known contributions of ninety-nine men from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania who, as members of the British/Swiss de Watteville Regiment, played a significant role in the War of 1812. This story explores their journey from fighting on the side of Napoleon to becoming prisoners and eventually fighting for the British in North America. It delves into their roles during the war, their post-war outcomes, and their impact on Canada’s development.

The story provides detailed insights into the lives of these soldiers, including their participation in lesser-known battles such as the Battle of Oswego and the Siege at Fort Erie. It also examines their transition from European conflicts to North American warfare, their experiences as British soldiers, and their contributions to the western settlement and the Red River Colony. By uncovering these stories, the story aims to enhance public understanding of the multicultural dimensions of Canadian history and the significant European influences on the War of 1812.

“We are incredibly grateful to Digital Museums Canada for their support,” said Danguolė Juozapavičius-Breen, Director of the Lithuanian Museum Archives of Canada. “This funding has enabled us to document the unique experiences of the first Lithuanians to reach Canada, ensuring that their stories are not forgotten.”

The museum invites members of the community to visit: [European Traces in the War of 1812](#)

[Guerre de 1812 : les empreintes de l’Europe](#)

The online project was developed with the support of the Digital Museums Canada investment program which helps build digital capacity in Canadian museums and heritage, cultural, and Indigenous organizations, providing people living in Canada with unique access to diverse stories and experiences. Digital Museums Canada is managed by the Canadian Museum of History, with the financial support of the Government of Canada.

Piret Noorhani visited the Estonian archive in Vancouver in September. It was nice to meet new and old BaltHerNet friends and see that the work with the collections continues

From left Jutta Kitsching, Tom Vesik, Lilijan Oljum.  
Photo by PiretNoorhani.







The agreement was signed at the Estonian Literary Museum's exhibit "Enter Woodland Spirits," which could be viewed in Tartu until August 25th.

Photo: Emily Käärrik.

According to Piret Voolaid, director of the Estonian Literary Museum, the teamwork between the two institutions has already been multi-faceted and substantial: "As a science and memory institution, the Literary Museum has had good experiences documenting and analyzing diaspora communities. We have common projects with VEMU in the realms of history and cultural history, folkloristics, ethnology, anthropology and among other fields of study related to humanitarian and social sciences. Together, we have organized large-scale memoir collection campaigns and recently conducted a school lore competition for Estonians in Canada. The Literary Museum's archives feature some of the largest diaspora Estonian themed collections, which create an advantageous basis for joint research and exhibition projects and for composition of publications."

VEMU's chief archivist Piret Noorhani adds: "As a former employee of the Literary Museum and the Estonian National Museum, I see how VEMU, with the largest Estonian-themed collections outside of Estonia, is a smaller copy of the two aforementioned institutions - especially keeping in mind collection work and diaspora Estonian collections. Cooperation with the Literary Museum has therefore progressed very naturally and is essential to us especially now, when we're preparing the permanent exhibit that will

## VEMU Estonian Museum Canada and the Estonian Literary Museum Signed a Collaborative Agreement

*On July 23rd, the long-term cooperation between VEMU and the Estonian Literary Museum was officially documented in a collaborative agreement in Tartu. The goal of the agreement is to increase the effectiveness of and diversity of preservation, collection, research, accessibility, and publicize the cultural heritage of Estonians in the homeland and abroad.*

be in VEMU's new building. We are thankful to the Literary Museum for displaying our exhibits. This year, you can see the following at the Literary Museum: "Our Tartu: 50 Years of Tartu College," which tells the story of VEMU's current home. But there is even more potential for collaboration. VEMU can share experiences regarding working with volunteers for example, the Literary Museum can share information about joint ventures with schools."

One of the most important goals of the agreement is to build bridges between diaspora Estonia and the homeland – to tie various diaspora Estonian generations with the Estonian cultural space and to bring the diaspora Estonian experience closer to Estonia. Considering the



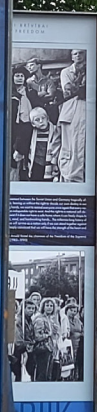
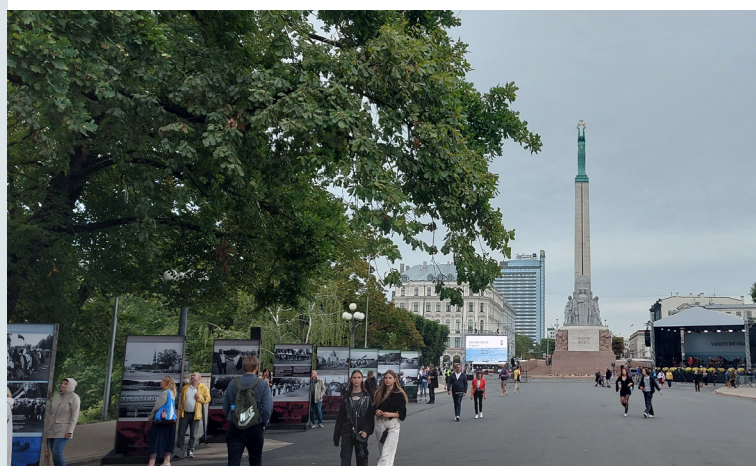


current international political context, the historical and cultural experience of our diaspora has taken on a new meaning and importance within society.

## The exhibition “The Baltic Way – United for Freedom” opened in Riga

The exhibition “The Baltic Way – United for Freedom” opened on 23 August, 2024 in Riga, nearby the Statue of Liberty provides a perfect opportunity to get to know the documentary evidence of this historic event from the archives of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Baltic Way, as being one of the most ambitious Baltic nations’ actions for fighting for the freedom, bears an utterly important value for our three nations as well as obliges us to tell this story to every new generation. The Baltic Way, made by the brave Baltic people standing tightly next to each other, holding the hands of each other, and saying as a prayer the magic word of freedom (brīvība, laisve, vabadus) can never be forgotten. On the contrary, the Baltic Way is still something that the others, dreaming of the freedom, can learn from us.

Birgit Kibal





## Vikerraadio's New Series “Abroad and Home” Will Air on October 4th

In August of 2024, Ave-Marleen Rei was in Toronto to conduct interviews with Estonian families who left Estonia in September 1944 to escape the invading Soviet Army. The series “Abroad and Home” visits seven Estonian-Canadian families – each one has their own personal story to tell of how they remained Estonian. In each episode, we will hear from three different generations: those, who had lived through the escape and the tough first years as immigrants, those from the second generation who were born and have grown up abroad and for whom Estonia seemed unreachable, and the youngest generation, who live in an expansive world in which cultural identity needs to be reimagined and recontextualized.

What are these Estonians that live 6500 thousand kilometres away from Tallinn like? Do they eat sprat sandwiches and dance the “reilender?” What have they had to sacrifice in order to remain Estonians? What is their perspective on Estonia and what do they most long for? The answers to these questions and many more can be heard in Vikerraadio's new series “Abroad and Home.” You can listen to the series [here](#).

The author of the series is Ave-Marleen Rei, the sound producers are Andres Olema and Johannes Ek, the sound designer is Andres Olema, and texts are read by Lee Trei and Leino Rei. The series received support under the Diaspora Estonian Action Plan and from the Department of Global Estonian and Cultural Diplomacy of the Republic of Estonia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Meeting Tartu in Tartu

The university city Tartu is also a European Capital of Culture this year. But Tartu also exists in Toronto, Canada and it has travelled to the aforementioned Tartu, Estonia. Everyone that visits the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu, Estonia can ensure that fact. On Monday, September 9th, VEMU Estonian Museum Canada's exhibition “Our Tartu: 50 Years of Tartu College” opened at the Literary Museum.

Welcoming remarks were delivered by the director of the Literary Museum, Piret Voolaid. VEMU's chief archivist Piret Noorhane had a longer presentation titled “Two Tartus,” in which she talked about the “parallel-Tartus.” Noorhane brought up several examples of her experiences as a Tartu native who has had the unique opportunity to experience the far-away Tartu and gain further enrichment through her job as chief archivist in Tartu College. In her presentation, Noorhane introduced the history, essence, and organizations within Tartu College, the cultural and academic life that takes place there, and the founder of the TC concept, architect and a long time president, Elmar Tampõld.

In the second half of the exhibition opening, Ahto Külvet introduced and commented on diaspora Estonian music. The music was played on vinyl records, which VEMU



Ahto Külvet playing LPs at the Estonian Literary Museum.  
Photo by Alar Madisson

had sent to Psühhooteek, a used record store operating in Tartu, at the end of 2023.

VEMU and the Literary Museum, who signed a cooperation agreement in the summer, are contributing to the Tartu European Culture of Capital program and the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Great



Escape of 1944 through this exhibit.

The opening could be viewed on the Literary Museum's [website](#).

The event was supported by the Integration Foundation.

The exhibit is able to be viewed at the Literary Museum until October 11th and will then be displayed at the University of Tartu in November.

*This article appeared in Estonian Life newspaper in English on September 13, 2024.*



The exhibition has been very popular among the Library's patrons. Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Vygaudas Juozaitis.

took a photo album, others a prayer book or pictures of saints, and others a high school diploma or a dissertation. Still others grabbed books and textbooks, which were especially useful when schools and universities were later established in West Germany.

The first part of the exhibition "Stranded from the Native Land" features the pictures of saints taken from Lithuania, the passport of Adolfas Domaševičius (Damušis), his graduation diploma of from Vytautas Magnus University Faculty of Technology, the graduation diploma of Damušis' future wife Jadvyga-Aleksandra Pšibilskytė (Damušienė) from the Klaipėda Pedagogical Institute, and the prayer book written by Adolfas Sabaliauskas "Šlovinkim Viešpatį," published in 1928 [imprint: 1929] in Klaipėda.

Few people know that back in 1943, the weekly newspaper "Lithuanians Working in the Reich" was published in Kaunas. At the end of 1944, when a large number of refugees from Lithuania began to appear in Germany, not only the place of publication changed, with the editorial office moving to Berlin, but also its purpose. From November 1944, the newspaper was called

## The Exhibition on the Great Flight in 1944

The new National Library of Lithuania exhibition, which opened on June 26, 2024, tells about the great flight that took place in the summer of 1944. At the end of WWII, as the German-Soviet war front approached from the east, the inhabitants of the Baltic States, Eastern and Central European countries moved en masse to the West. Nobody knew that they would not return.

The necessity of leaving home caught most Eastern Europeans little or completely unprepared. The rapid collapse of the German front in the east and the approaching Soviet army prevented any deliberation or planning. Since the flight was hasty, people did not have much time to think about what to take. Some

"The Newspaper of Lithuanians Living in the Reich." It published poetry, prose, literary reports, and even had a section for children. The exhibition showcases a few original copies of this newspaper.

The train ticket from Eitkūnai (Eydtkau) to Graz belonging to the Lithuanian poet Bernardas Brazdžionis, issued on July 31, 1944, is perhaps the most interesting exhibit of this part of the exhibition. While traveling to East Prussia, at the border, the Brazdžionis family had to be separated. The sister of the economist Juozas Leimonas, who traveled with the Brazdžionis family, lived in Graz, Austria, so Brazdžionis and Leimonas decided to send their families in that direction, while they stayed behind. Aldona Brazdžionienė and her three small children traveled in freight wagons and were placed in a transit camp, while Brazdžionis was taken to dig trenches. Fortunately, three days later, a medical certificate was issued to Brazdžionis stating that he is unfit for work. There is no doubt that this ticket opened the first gate to the free world for the poet.

The plight of war refugees did not end with the end of the war. Most Western Europeans soon returned to

their homelands, but Eastern Europeans, including Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, did not want to return to their Soviet-occupied homelands. Germany was divided into four zones: American, British, French and Soviet. Soon, in 1946, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Authority (UNRRA) began to establish refugee camps in West Germany and Austria, also known as displaced persons, or DP camps.

In the first post-war years, the war refugees feared that the Allies might return them to their homelands occupied by the Soviets. The people of the Baltic countries saw how brutally Ukrainians were treated, who were forcibly sent back home. Only after receiving assurances from the United States and other allies that the citizens of the Baltic States would not be forcibly sent home, could they start planning their future lives. Despite various constraints and difficult living conditions, the refugees who settled in DP camps led active social, cultural and political life. A lot of time and effort was spent fighting for the freedom of the homeland.

In the second part of the exhibition “From Everyday Life in the DP Camps,” visitors are acquainted with the everyday life of the displaced persons. Here, they see the DP identity card that belonged to Adolfas Damušis, the identity card issued by the British military administration to the war refugee Žalkauskas, the paper money of the Scheinfeld DP camp, the tobacco card that belonged to Bernardas Brazdžionis, the health cards of Juozas Grimskis, as well as various publications, such as “Santa Claus and Aunt UNRRA: A Christmas Sketch for DP children” [songs-music A.G.], [illustrated by A. Petrikonis], Eutin, 1946; “Calendar of DPs” 1947, released by the Lithuanians of the Dragsbæk refugee camp; “Summer Camp Songs” [Hannover], World’s YMCA-YWCA, 1948; “DP Baltic Camp at Seedorf, 1946-1947,” prepared by S. Narkeliūnaitė; artist J. Steponavičius; photos by V. Augustinas, Br. Gross, S. Narkeliūnaitė. Hamburg: UNRRA Team 295, 1947; “On the Roads of Exile,” Bologna: LUX, 1947 and many others.

The exhibition also shows two Soviet propaganda publications, aimed to sow a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity among the DPs and to encourage them to return to their homeland. Moscow directed all the information dissemination channels possible at the time to the war refugees. For those who ended up in DP camps, the press remained an important source of information, so the Soviets made particularly active use of periodicals for the dissemination of propaganda. However, they quickly realized that the press published for a local audience was not suitable for the DP camp residents, so they started publishing specialized publications. One of such publications, the newspaper “Tėvynės balsas,” was published in Vilnius in 1947-1953 and in 1957-1967.

After it became clear that the war refugees would not return home, efforts were made to find them a permanent place of residence. In 1946, Great Britain offered DP women jobs in hospitals and sanatoriums, in 1947, Canada invited young men to work in logging and road construction, and young women as servants. Unlike Canada and Australia, the United States had relatively strict immigration laws and an immigration quota, so for a while, the number of war refugees from Eastern Europe was extremely low. Only in 1945, after US President Harry S. Truman signed the decree on the quota, priority was given to war refugees and the situation began to change. The first army transport ship “General Black” with the war refugees from Europe on board, sailed on October 30, 1948. The USA, Australia, Israel and Canada accepted the most refugees, in Europe, it was Great Britain, France and Belgium. Only a small part of them remained in Germany.

The exhibits displayed in the third part of the exhibition, named “Where to Next?” show what a difficult path the DPs had to take, if they wanted to emigrate overseas, among which the USA, Canada and Australia were the most popular. They had to be in good health, have the necessary vaccination certificates, and a proof that they have not committed a crime. Those who decided to travel to the USA first had to pass the medical examination of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) and American doctors and undergo quarantine. Then they had to appear before the DP commission, meet with the consul and finally, the emigration inspector. If all stages were passed successfully, future US emigrants would travel to transit camps and wait for the journey across the Atlantic. It was not uncommon to have to wait several months or even longer. There were also cases where documents were lost or health conditions such as TB were detected. Then one had to return to the old camp and start the whole procedure again or bury all hopes of leaving.



Artist Lina Šlipavičiūtė created neo-mural for the exhibition.  
Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Vygaudas Juozaitis.



The DPs, having successfully passed all bureaucratic obstacles, usually traveled to the German port of Bremerhaven on the North Sea. Almost all emigrants mention in their memoirs the name of Bremerhaven, which is stuck deep in their memory, and the army transport ships sent by the Americans, for it was a significant event—saying goodbye to Europe and at the same time, hoping for a new life.

The trip to the USA took about ten days, to other countries, especially Australia, longer. Accustomed to the press in DP camps, the war refugees did not want to be without it during the trip and published the newspapers on board. It is impossible to count how many and in what languages ships' newspapers were published. Their circulations are small and probably only a small part has reached our times. These are probably the only publications published not on the land, their place of publication being the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean.

After arriving in the dreamed new homeland, the hardships of DPs did not end. They faced many challenges. One of the cartoons of that time reveals the social metamorphosis of a DP: from the Big Shot to the Working Mouse.

The works of two Lithuanian artists, Lina Šlipavičiūtė and Margarita Valionytė, specially created for the event, complement and expand this documentary exhibition.

Šlipavičiūtė's neo-mural created in street art stylistics conveys the atmosphere of the DP camps in a closed space of the exhibition. Valionytė's animated videos tell about the experiences of people who left Lithuania at the end of the WWII. The videos are based on the memoirs and photographs of three Lithuanian Americans: Irena Arnauskaitė-Grigaitienė, Juozas Gaila and Juozas Kapačinskas.

The exhibition is available in Lithuanian, English and Ukrainian.

The exhibition was prepared by Valda Budreckaitė, Dr. Dalia Cidzikaitė, Asta Miltenytė, Silvija Stankevičiūtė and Dr. Ilona Strumickienė. Exhibition architecture by Algirdas Jakas. Graphic design by Emilija Dobrovolskienė.

Coordinated by Milda Dainovskytė. Organized by Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

Partner: Lithuanian Research Center, USA

Dalia Cidzikaitė



The grandchildren of Lithuanian-American Irena Arnauskaitė-Grigaitienė, who is featured in the exhibition, visited the exhibition. Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Vygaudas Juozaitis.





## Cooperation with the Lithuanian Teachers Abroad Continues

It has become a tradition for the National Library of Lithuania to welcome the Lithuanian language and culture teachers working in Lithuanian schools and Baltic Studies Centers abroad. This summer, two groups visited the Library.

The National Library of Lithuania welcomed the Lithuanian language and culture teachers. Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Vygaudas Juozaitis

## Guests from the Lithuanian Saturday Schools



A full day program was prepared for the teachers. Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Vygaudas Juozaitis

On July 11, teachers working in Lithuanian schools abroad visited the Library. This year, the teachers came from Ireland, Belgium, Brazil, Greece, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Norway and Ukraine.

The staff of the Documentary Heritage Research Department of the Library prepared a full day educational program for them. Dr. Dalia Cidzikaitė shared tips and insights about how to use Lithuanian comics in classroom. She presented a number of Lithuanian comic books that can contribute to the development of reading, text comprehension and literary analysis in a Lithuanian school abroad. The books are written in modern Lithuanian language, they also do not shy from using colloquial language and even jargon; at the same time, they can be a great opportunity to get acquainted young Lithuanian readers with important figures of Lithuanian history, politics, art, and culture in an attractive way.

Prof. Dr. Jolanta Zabarskaitė presented a lecture on cognitive language teaching methods. According to her, language is an extensive network of concepts connected by the most diverse connections at the cognitive level and that that language can be learned by using this network. The lecturer talked about four principles of cognitive language teaching, advised how to talk to students in a classroom, how to create semantic fields in students' brains.



Silvija Stankevičiūtė invited the teachers to examine the interwar periodicals as a particular social network that has equivalents in contemporary world as well. Many details of the history of everyday life can be seen in the numerous periodicals of the interwar period. According to her, research into the history of everyday life helps to get to know the society of earlier times better, to understand how people lived, what their free time and holidays looked like.

Valda Budreckaitė gave teachers a tour of the exhibition “Stranded: Experiences of Fleeing West in 1944–1952.” The researcher presented the aim of the organizers of the exhibition to take a closer look at the phenomenon of forced migration, to delve deeper into the authentic experiences of people who because of the war had to leave their homes.



The teachers were invited to leaf through the periodicals published in interwar Lithuania. Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Vygaudas Juozaitis



In August, the lecturers of the Baltic Studies Centers visited the Library. Photo credit: National Library of Lithuania / Vygaudas Juozaitis

## Lecturers from the Baltic Studies Centers

On August 7, a small group of lecturers teaching at the Baltic Studies Centers in the United Kingdom, USA, Japan, Latvia and other countries visited the Library.

Aušra Vaškevičienė, Director of the Services Department of the National Library of Lithuania, and Viktorija Bulyginaitė, a staff member of the Department of Children and Youth Literature, gave a tour of the library. The visitors also had the opportunity to visit the exhibitions that have been currently taking place.

One of the participants, the famous linguist Laimutė Balodė, a long-time lecturer at the universities of Latvia and Helsinki, gifted the Library the latest issue of *Linguistica Lettica*, a linguistics journal published in Latvia. Alongside articles on various language topics, the donated issue of the journal contains texts dedicated to Balodė's activities, as well as the memoirs of her father Vytautas Anelauskas in Lithuanian.