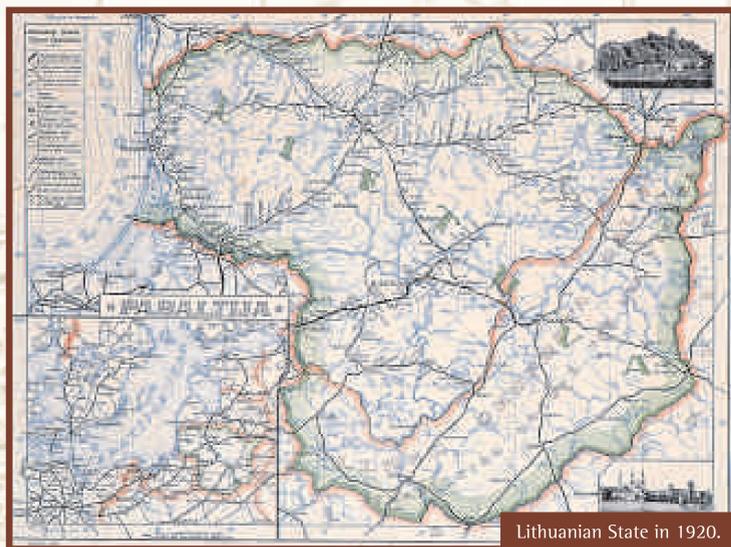


Lithuania

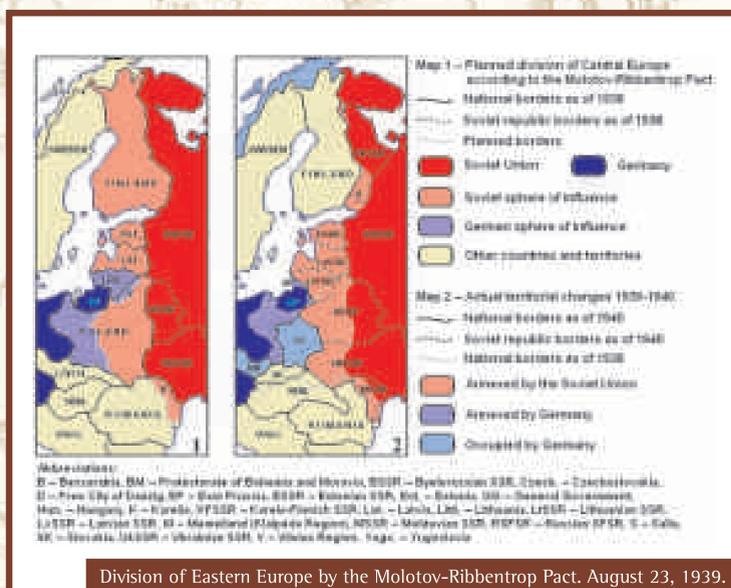
1918 – 2008 chronicle

Lithuania counts its history since 1009 when it was first mentioned in the Quedlinburg annals. Since then Lithuanian State went through a range of upheavals, and the last ninety years were especially tense. Lithuania tried to be an independent actor on the political map of Europe, grow economically, had to outlive wars, loss of freedom and harsh occupations. This exhibition shows diverse aspects of the history of Lithuania in photographs.

1918 On February 16 Lithuanian Council signed the Act of Independence of the Republic of Lithuania.



1921 Lithuania was admitted to the League of Nations.



1940 The Soviet Union occupied and annexed Lithuania.

1941-1944 Lithuania was occupied by Nazi Germany.

1944-1990 Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union again, and for the next 46 years it was known as the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania.

1944-1953 Armed resistance movement against the Soviet rule (partisan war) known as “War after the War” took place in the forests of the occupied country.

1988 Independence Movement (Sąjūdis) was established.

1990 On March 11 Lithuania declared the Act of the Re-establishment of the Lithuanian State.

1991 Lithuania became a member of the United Nations.

1993 Soviet troops were withdrawn from Lithuania, for the first time in the whole Post-Soviet era.

1993 National currency Litas was introduced.

1998 Lithuania became the associated member of EU.

2004 Lithuania became a member of EU and joined NATO.



2007 Lithuania joined the Schengen area.

Lithuania

1918 - 2008 chronicle

Army: then and now

Tense political situation, threat of foreign invasions and war forced the re-established Lithuanian State to organise and strengthen its Armed Forces in 1918. On the other hand, Army officials played a significant role in the society and public life of the country.

After the rebirth of independent Lithuania in 1990, the withdrawal of the Soviet Armed Forces from Lithuanian territory was possible only after the unsuccessful putsch of 1991 in Moscow and start of democratic changes in Soviet Union. The last Russian troops crossed the Lithuanian border on August 31, 1993.

These days, the National Armed Forces of Lithuania consist of Land, Air, Naval Forces, National Defence, Volunteer Forces and Special Forces. Since 1994, Lithuania successfully participated in a number of peace-keeping missions and international operations in the Balkan region, Central and Southern Asia, Caucasus, Afghanistan, and the Gulf region.



Lithuanian cavalry. Around 1938.



Military parade after regaining Vilnius, October 29, 1939.



Lithuanian army vehicles. 1928.



LITCON-3 soldiers on patrol in the streets of Al-Qumah town, Iraq, 2004.

Lithuanian provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Chagcharan, Afghanistan. 2005.



Cordon and search mission: checking residential housing marked with a red X. Iraq, February 2004.



Lithuania

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Basketball: then and now

Basketball is sometimes jokingly called the “second religion” in Lithuania. Since the first gold medals in the European Championship in 1937 and 1939, basketball gained large popularity among Lithuanians all over the world. Traditions of good basketball were kept strong over the years. Lithuanian men were bronze medal winners in 1992, 1996, and 2000 Summer Olympics. Lithuanian women’s team took gold in Euro league in 1997; men’s team won the gold in European Championship in 2003 again.

During the Soviet era, Lithuanian players frequently formed the core of the Soviet basketball team. This was especially so for the 1988 Olympics, where the team took gold mostly thanks to splendid scoring by four Lithuanians, namely Valdemaras Chomičius, Rimas Kurtinaitis, Šarūnas Marčiulionis and Arvydas Sabonis. Basketball was as a real “battlefield” in soviet times, especially when Lithuanian national club Žalgiris Kaunas was playing against “Red Army’s” basketball team CSKA Moscow. Lithuanians were not simply fans of the club but rather patriots of their country while watching those matches.

With various wins by youth teams and a recent bronze medal in men’s European championship in 2007, Lithuanian basketball seems to have a promising future.

Lithuanian basketball team – winners of European Championship in Riga, 1937.



Leader of Lithuanian pre-war team Pranas Lubinas, “The Godfather of Lithuanian basketball”. Vilnius, 1937.



Caricature of Lithuanian national basketball team. 1939.

Gold in European Championship. Stockholm, 2003.



Bronze in European Championship. Spain, 2007.



Lithuanian Prime Minister G. Vagnorius greets national women’s team – gold medal winners of European Championship. Vilnius, 1997.



Lithuania

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Guns against guns

The loss of independence in 1940 was an extremely painful blow to Lithuania. The Soviet invaders took drastic measures to ensure the entrenchment of their rule. People (mostly young men) responded in an armed resistance that lasted until 1953 and so became one of the longest partisan wars of the 20th century. The exact number of victims of the armed resistance is still unknown but it is believed that it took at least 20 000 young lives. Not only were the partisans brutally killed, but also their corpses were displayed in towns and villages to show the civil population, what happens to those who dare to resist the Soviet rule.



Partisans of the Vytautas County murdered and desecrated. Anykščiai, April 29, 1952.

Red Army division crosses Lithuanian border. June 15, 1940.



80 intellectuals and other important social figures brutally killed and displayed by the Red Army to scare local population. Rainiai. June 24 -25, 1941.

Rainiai. June 24-25, 1941.



Partisan leader of Eastern Lithuanian county Jonas Kimštas – Žalgiris with his wife. October, 1950.



Unidentified partisans of Žemaitija District.



Lithuania

1918 - 2008 chronicle

Soviet story: Deportation

The Soviet rule stood out as a centralised system interfering in all spheres of life, including all - out tracking, terror, intellectual cleansing, and omnipotence of repressive bodies. With the help of the Red Army those features of political regime became the everyday reality in Lithuania. People who did not fit the system were eliminated under the cover of treason. It was very easy to get into trouble even through a minor "mistake"; one word against the system or just belonging to a more prosperous family may have resulted in years of prison or deportation to Siberia. Approximately 250 000 Lithuanians were deported between 1940 and 1953. Due to severe living conditions in Siberia, forced labour, starvation and almost no medical access this number was drastically reduced. It is believed that approximately one third of the deportees died.



Group of political prisoners in forced labour camp in Omsk district, 1956.

Deported people were forced to worship Stalin. Around 1954.



... and female political prisoners in Irkutsk district, 1953.



Lithuanian deportees in Siberia. Matilda Janiselenė with her children sawing logs. Irkutsk district, 1949.



Rosary made of bread in a forced labour camp in Inta district.



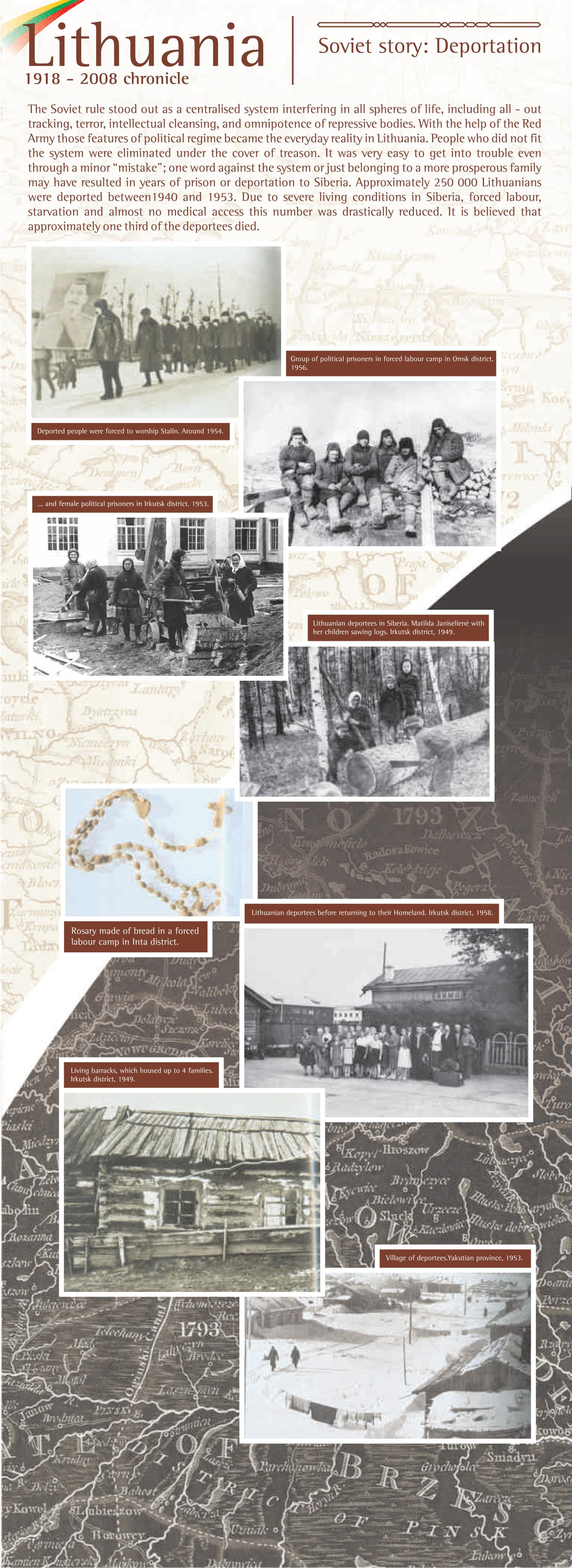
Lithuanian deportees before returning to their Homeland. Irkutsk district, 1958.



Living barracks, which housed up to 4 families. Irkutsk district, 1949.



Village of deportees. Yakutian province, 1953.



Lithuania

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2 independencies

During the 20 century Lithuania had to struggle for its independence twice. First time, when after the World War I and revolutions in Russia and Germany, Lithuanian Council signed the Act of Independence on February 16, 1918. The newly re-established state took over the symbols of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and was based the notions of nationality and democracy.

The long years under the Soviet rule, suppression of freedom, expression of thought and religion, did not make Lithuanian people comply with the Soviet ideology. The unarmed resistance against the Soviet regime in the Baltic States in 1987 - 1990 rose in the form of a Singing Revolution. Peaceful demonstrations expressed people's love of freedom.

The second time the Lithuanian statehood was regained on the 11 March, 1990. Crowds of people expressed their will by congregating near the Parliament, showing their support to declaring the Restoration of Independence.

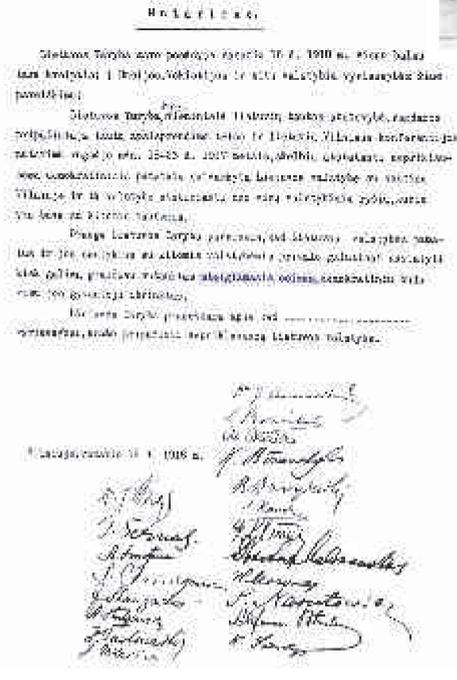


Children celebrating anniversary of Independence Day. Panevėžys district 1933.



Signatories of the Act of Independence of Lithuania. Vilnius, 1918.

The Act of Independence of the Republic of Lithuania, signed on 16 February, 1918.



Declaration of the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Lithuania, by the Supreme Council of Lithuania. (also known as the Act of March 11).



Deputies of the Supreme Council of Lithuania after the declaration of Lithuania's independence. Vilnius, March 11, 1990.



Lithuanians near the building of the Supreme Council supporting the Declaration of Restoration of Independence. Vilnius, March 11, 1990.



Lithuania

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Songs against guns

The way to independence was not easy. In 1988 Sąjūdis (National independence movement) started. It took a number of political steps in just one year. The greatest event of the time was the "Baltic Way" when a live chain of people connected Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The Baltic Way, also known as Baltic chain (August 23, 1989) was the peak of the Singing Revolution and succeeded to draw the world's attention to the common historical fate which these three countries suffered.

On 13 January, 1991, the Soviet troops intruded into the Television Tower of Vilnius and took control of National Radio and Television Centre. During the dramatic events 14 people, who were peacefully defending Lithuanian freedom, were killed and hundreds of Lithuanians were injured.

The "Baltic Way" stretched from Vilnius through Riga to Tallinn. August 23, 1989.



"Sąjūdis" movement, which started in the late 1980s with the aim of re-establishing independence. It is also known as the Singing Revolution.



Meeting near the building of the Supreme Council of Lithuania (which now houses the Lithuanian Parliament), supporting Lithuania's independence. Vilnius, 1990.

Soldiers seizing the Press Center on January 11; no victims thus far. Vilnius, 1991.



Gediminas Avenue filled with barricades near the Supreme Council. Vilnius, 1991.



Soviet tank against unarmed civilians. Vilnius, January 13, 1991.



Lithuania

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Forever in love with aviation

Lithuanians have been enamoured with aviation since the first days of the independent state. Its aviation forces grew from humble beginnings to become modern and advanced. Aeroplane construction was also at a high-level. The ANBO – IV was one of the most advanced planes of the time, constructed by Antanas Gustaitis. The biggest success among other aviation records was the flight across the Atlantic Ocean by Lithuanian pilots Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas on 15 July, 1933. The flight lasted 37 hours and 11 minutes, which makes it the second fastest in those days.

The love for aviation is still very much alive. Most of the achievements in the field of aviation are associated with acrobatic pilot Jurgis Kairys, who has won many awards. He also contributed to development of several aeroplanes and inventions of several new manoeuvres.

In the summer of 1934 a group of pilots led by Antanas Gustaitis flew around Europe with three ANBO-IV airplanes on a planned route. London, 1934.



Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas before the flight over the Atlantic. New York, USA, 1933.



Lithuanian military aviation. Kaunas, 1938.



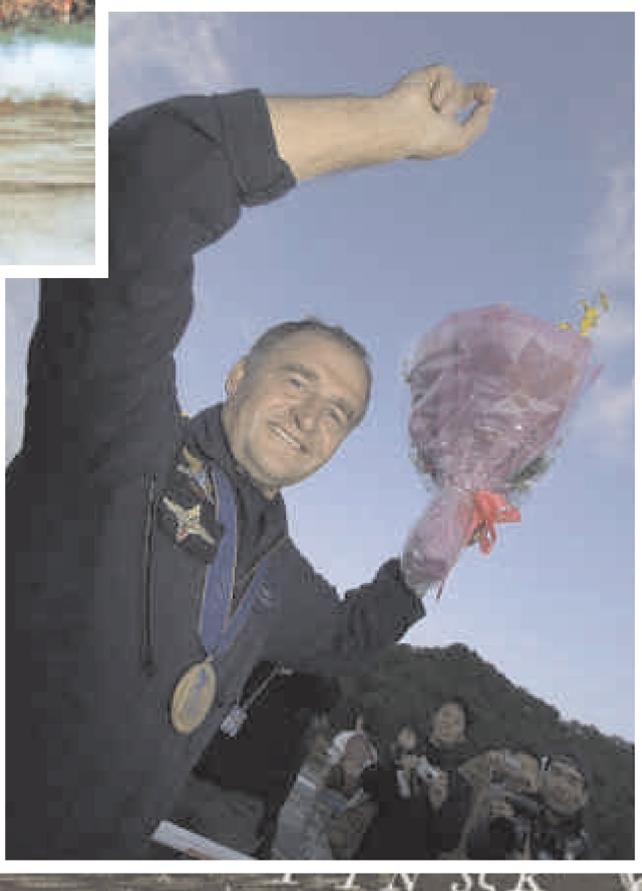
For over 35 years Lithuanian Company "Sportine Aviacija" has designed and manufactured highest quality gliders.



Acrobatic pilot Jurgis Kairys' flight under the nine bridges of Vilnius. 1999.



Pilot Jurgis Kairys.



Lithuania

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Religion

The religion in Lithuania is predominantly Catholic, reflecting Lithuania's history, with a strong presence from other minorities (Orthodox, Judaism, Protestantism, etc).

Religion has always played a significant role in Lithuania. The Soviet state regarded religion as useless or even as an enemy of the system, which meant closure of the most churches throughout the country. At best, they were turned into art galleries or concert halls, at worst, they become warehouses, factories, or were just demolished. Nevertheless Lithuanian people kept Christian traditions and under the Soviet regime religion gained even more importance as a fortress of opposition to official government.

After the independence was regained, most of prayer houses were given back to the Church.

The Three Crosses monument was built in honour of holy martyrs and for centuries was considered as one of the symbols of Vilnius. 1939.



The Three Crosses blasted in May 1950. Vilnius, 1988.



Bernardinai Church turned into a storage facility. 1967.



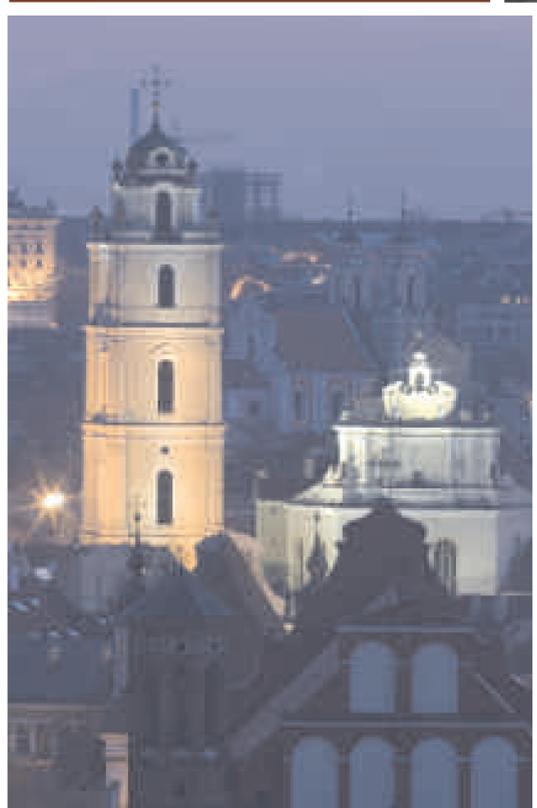
Churches during the Soviet period. Interior of St. John's Church, middle nave. 1966.



Pope John Paul II visiting a unique place in Lithuania – the Hill of Crosses. Šiauliai, 1993.



Vilnius is famous for its Baroque churches. Since the Independence they have been renovated and cherished.



Lithuania

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Recognition

The recognition of the State was not easy either in 1918, or in 1990. In 1918, Lithuania as a newly established country tried to reinstate itself on the political map of Europe and the world. This was implemented through diplomatic means: hard efforts were put to get recognition from the key powers of that time, to establish diplomatic relations with other countries, to be accepted into the League of Nations. The restored independent state met tremendous difficulties of similar kind in 1990 again. Now, after having entered the United Nations in 1991, the European Union and NATO in 2004, Lithuania enjoys being a full-fledged member of the family of Euro Atlantic democracies.



Kaunas, 1920 m. Vasario 16 d.

President of Lithuania Antanas Smetona during the celebration of second anniversary of the Independence Day in the Town Hall Square in Kaunas. February 16, 1920.

Lithuanian diplomats. 1923. In 1st row from left to right: Br. Balutis, D. Zaunius, T. Naruškevičius, E. Galvanauskas, J. Baltrušaitis, P. Klimas, O. Milašius. 2nd row from left to right: V. Černeckis, K. Bizauskas, Aukštuolis, Vailokaitis, M. Avietėnaitė, V. Sidzikauskas, Prof. Ig. Jonynas, Romas Karūža, Ignas Šcinius.



Chairman of Lithuanian Supreme Council Vytautas Landsbergis and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Margaret Thatcher. London, December 4, 1990.



President of Lithuania Algirdas Brazauskas with Pope John Paul II during his historic visit to Lithuania in 1993.



President of the USA George W. Bush on a visit to Lithuania in November 22-23, 2002, right after the Prague Summit when Lithuania was invited to join NATO. From the left: President of Estonia Arnold Riittel, President of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus, President of Latvija Vaira Vike - Freiberga. Vilnius, 2002.



Leaders from European Union, Central Asia, Caspian and Black Sea regions and the United States of America gathered in Vilnius for the Energy Security Conference 2007: Responsible Energy for Responsible Partners. Vilnius, October 10, 2007.

