

# Lithuanian Awakening: How a Book Ban Rebirthed a National Identity

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*The work of restoring Lithuania's independence began not in 1918 [when Lithuania declared itself a state], but rather at the time of the book carriers. With bundles of books on their backs, these warriors were the first to start preparing the ground for Independence, the first to propagate the idea that it was imperative to throw off the yoke of Russian oppression.<sup>1</sup>*

—Father Julijonas Kasperavičius

IN 1864, THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE placed a ban on all forms of the written Lithuanian language in order to subdue the people of Lithuania and to shape the country's culture into the Russian norm. The ban made a variety of Lithuanian books, as well as many other forms of Lithuanian communication, illegal. Over the next 40 years, Lithuanians resisted this Russian oppression in many ways, including finding loopholes in the law, starting secret schools, and smuggling books across the country's border. In time, the resistance would not only save the Lithuanian culture, but would set the foundation for independence by saving the Lithuanian language, separating Lithuania from foreign powers, and, most importantly, reforming the country's identity.

Lithuania became a Russian province in 1795. In the decades following, there were two main rebellions against the new government: one in 1831 and another in 1863. Ultimately, both uprisings failed. To punish the people for their defiance and insubordination, and to help prevent further rebellions, Russia placed a ban on everything published in the Lithuanian language.<sup>2</sup> By going after the books and language of the Lithuanian people, Russia threatened Lithuanian identity, since these forms of communication were fundamental aspects of their culture.<sup>3</sup>

Scholars' opinions and perspectives differ in regard to what exactly the Russians were trying to accomplish through the book ban. Some say that Russia wanted to diminish Lithuanian culture and replace it with their own.<sup>4</sup> Having conquered Lithuania, Russia now moved to assimilate it.

In the eyes of these historians, the book ban was a way to promote the Russification of the country and overwhelm Lithuania until it became a part of Russia. Along those lines, the Tsar commanded the governor of Lithuania to “make me a Lithuania with nothing Lithuanian.”<sup>5</sup>

In contrast, other scholars have a slightly different theory. Their perspective is that the Russification of Lithuania had not directly been an attempt to replace the culture, but rather it was a way to eradicate the Polish and Catholic influences in Lithuania, since Poland was seen as a larger threat. These influences were assimilated into Lithuanian culture during the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that ended in 1795, less than a century prior. At the time, Russia viewed Lithuania as a country that was too small to survive on its own. It was commonly assumed that Lithuanians would eventually be forced to side with either the “Russian State Principle” or Polonism, and as a result, many believed they had the potential to become either entirely Russian or entirely Polish.<sup>6</sup> Naturally, Russians wanted Lithuania to be a part of their empire.

The argument that Poland was the main target is supported by the fact that Russia planned to replace Catholicism with Russian Orthodoxy.<sup>7</sup> In addition to this, Russia ordered “not to allow the printing of a single Lithuanian textbook in Polish letters,”<sup>8</sup> as Lithuania shared the Latin alphabet with Poland. Some viewed this statement as proof that the Russian government was not attempting to destroy the Lithuanian language itself, but rather the Polish influences present in their written language. To this end, anything written in Lithuanian, including textbooks, recipes, newspapers, and books, was outlawed overnight.

To the Lithuanians, the book ban was not just a law enacted by Russia to implement Russian traditions and values and diminish Polish and Catholic influences, rather, they looked upon the ban as a personal blow to their national pride.<sup>9</sup> The Lithuanian language is one of the oldest surviving languages in the world and is a primary symbol of the Lithuanian culture.<sup>10</sup> Language “for most of us is more than just a means of communication. It is often a part of ethnic heritage and identity and is intertwined with culture, [and] literature.”<sup>11</sup> In banning the Lithuanian language, Russia was attempting to suffocate Lithuanian communication and striving to make the people forget who they were. Birute Putrius, whose grandfather was active in the Lithuanian resistance, summarized: “first the language dies, then the culture.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Book Smuggling**

While Lithuanians did not declare war against the Russians to defend their culture, they did develop a nonviolent rebellion consisting mostly of

small acts of resistance. The most impactful form of rebellion was their book smuggling movement. The first to smuggle books were the Catholic priests. For them, smuggling was not only a way to oppose and retaliate against Russia for outlawing religious works, but it also defended their right to worship. The next to take up the movement were the common people. By the end of the ban, the common people would account for an astounding 86% of the overall smugglers.<sup>13</sup> It was truly a collective, national effort. The vast majority of the books were smuggled into Lithuania by *knygnešiai*, which means “book carriers.” Other smugglers then distributed the books within the country.

Jurgis Bielinis was known as the king of the book carriers for having developed an organized book smuggling network. This network operated for 31 of the 40 years of the book ban and is thought to be responsible for bringing in almost half of the books that were smuggled into the country.<sup>14</sup> Historians approximate that millions of printed works were smuggled into Lithuania.<sup>15</sup> It was quite an impressive feat for such a small country. Over the course of the ban, it is estimated that Russia confiscated about 8-10% of all Lithuanian books. The vast majority of those books were burned.<sup>16</sup>

Although numerous books were successfully smuggled into Lithuania, the *knygnešiai*'s endeavors were not without consequences. The border was protected by three layers of security, including soldiers on horseback. Those smugglers who were discovered in attempts at border crossings were frequently either beaten, killed on the spot, or sent to prisons in Siberia.<sup>17</sup> The Governor-General Mikhail Muravyov was labeled the Hangman, and for good reason, as he repeatedly punished the Lithuanian insurgents by sentencing them to death.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the reason for such harsh punishments was because some of the books that were smuggled into the country contained hidden messages and anti-Russia propaganda.

A notable example of this is the poem *The Forest of Anykščiai*. This poem tells the tale of a beautiful forest that is destroyed, but slowly comes back to life. The forest refers to the country of Lithuania, “the heart of Lithuanians in one homeland,”<sup>19</sup> as being cut down and hurt by the Russians. The poem uses the forest growing back as a metaphor for Lithuania becoming free. It was a cry for revolution hidden in plain sight.<sup>20</sup> The lengths that the Lithuanians went to in order to defend their language and culture demonstrates how important their ability to communicate was to them.

In an effort to avoid the dangers of book smuggling, various Lithuanians took it upon themselves to find loopholes in the law. These loopholes included writing on cloth as a substitute for paper, printing on wet clay,<sup>21</sup> and faking older printing dates on newly published material.<sup>22</sup> Not all Lithuanian printing, however, was successfully terminated by the ban. Illegal newspapers written in Lithuanian emerged. These newspapers

and other printed works were often published outside of the country, then were smuggled across the border by the *knygnešiai*. *Ausra*, meaning *The Dawn*,<sup>23</sup> and *Varpas*, meaning *The Bell*, were both coveted Lithuanian papers. *Varpas* was written by a secret group of students and edited by the physician Vincas Kudirka. Kudirka would later go on to write the poem that would become the current Lithuanian national anthem.

### **Clandestine Education**

While book smuggling was arguably the most influential act of rebellion, there were many other acts of notable resistance. In order to read smuggled works, many Lithuanians founded secret schools. These illegal schools, present in almost every town, were taught by literate, but often untrained, members of the community. The people refused to let their words be silenced. The Russian governor claimed that “clandestine schooling is the strongest factor of resistance to state [Russian] education.”<sup>24</sup> The Lithuanians wore this as a badge of honor. In time, these schools would secure a Lithuanian identity for the future.<sup>25</sup>

Russians, on the other hand, intended to let their education system transform young Lithuanian pupils into new Russian subjects, while simultaneously replacing the Polish-Lithuanian alphabet with Russian Cyrillic.<sup>26</sup> The Russian politician Mikhail Muravyov was known to have boasted, “What the Russian bayonet didn’t accomplish, the Russian school will.”<sup>27</sup> They aimed to implement Russification gradually and began translating Lithuanian books into Russian Cyrillic. To their great dismay, the books were not accepted by the people. Furthermore, Lithuanians were outraged that they were expected to pay for translations of the very books that Russia banned. Consequently, the Lithuanians refused the translated works,<sup>28</sup> even when the government distributed them for free.<sup>29</sup> Overall, an estimated 4,000 Lithuanian titles were printed illegally over the course of the ban. Conversely, Russia printed merely 60 Lithuanian titles in the Russian Cyrillic alphabet.<sup>30</sup>

### **Resistance and Results**

By the 1880s, the resistance was in full swing. In fact, the 1880s are often referred to as the Lithuanian National Awakening.<sup>31</sup> Lithuanian printing had increased,<sup>32</sup> and the Lithuanian culture was thriving regardless of Russian influences. As Kudirka observed, “The purpose of the [book] ban was to bring the Lithuanian peasantry into closer relations with Russia and Russian culture. In fact, by arousing their specifically Lithuanian national feelings and inspiring [Lithuanians] to effective resistance against

Russification, [the book ban] managed to achieve the exact opposite result.”<sup>33</sup> The outcome of the book ban directly contradicted the purpose for which it had been created. The more strict the rules became, the more the people spoke out against Russian control.

This contradiction took place not only in Lithuania, but in other countries as well, which included Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus. While the book smuggling movement was unique to the Lithuanians, the incentives for their revolution were not.<sup>34</sup> Many other countries shared similar conditions.<sup>35</sup> Russians viewed Poland and the Catholic church as their main targets, and because of this, the Polish language was banned in the entire Russian empire. Even with these severe restrictions, Poland, like Lithuania, was eventually recognized as an individual country in 1918, while Ukraine and Belarus were not as successful in separating themselves from Russia.<sup>36</sup>

### Conclusion

Before the book ban was enacted, the Lithuanian people had been isolated, confined to small towns and farms.<sup>37</sup> When Russia placed this restriction on their communication, they were able to unify under a common name with a common adversary and a common purpose. They were Lithuanians who were trying to get their language and identity back. Despite Russian rule, Lithuanians fought back to restore their communication and culture with an effective revolution. This revolution can be viewed as a turning point in Lithuanian history. They were a unified nation fighting to defend their language, culture, and identity.<sup>38</sup> Lithuanians were determined to win.

As Russia’s grip on the Lithuanian people began to falter, confidence in the book ban faded.<sup>39</sup> The small country of Lithuania was taking on the great Russian Empire. The Lithuanian people were able to unite in their struggle against Russian oppression. In 1898, Russian government officials reported that the book ban had adverse and unforeseen results, and recommended that the book ban be rescinded.<sup>40</sup> Six years later, amid the Russo-Japanese war, Russia officially surrendered to the Lithuanians’ will, formally lifting the ban on April 24, 1904.<sup>41</sup> The main error that Russia made was to think of the Lithuanian people as pawns to be “manipulated in Russia’s interests, not as people with [their] own national interests,”<sup>42</sup> and this eventually led to Russia losing Lithuania as a province.

While Lithuania won a very symbolic battle in their cultural war, it would take time for the new nation to emerge. In 1905, after conflicts with Russian troops, the Lithuanian Assembly, Seimas, called for autonomy. While autonomy was denied, the people still persisted. Nearly a decade later, during World War I, German troops attacked Russian

soldiers stationed in Lithuania. In the process, Germany captured the country's capital, Vilnius. Now the Lithuanian people had to fight against two foreign powers, as both Germany and Russia struggled to claim the country. Before either was able to conquer Lithuania, the people declared themselves to be independent. In 1918, both foreign powers acknowledged the new nation. Lithuania now stood on its own, no longer a part of Poland, Germany, or Russia.<sup>43</sup> The Lithuanians fought their wars, and they won. This was an incredible feat for the nation, as they had been attached to foreign powers for hundreds of years. There were more battles yet to come, and in the future the country was forced to endure multiple invasions from the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.<sup>44</sup> During these occupations the country suffered immeasurable losses, yet they held onto their spirit. In 1990, the people once again declared themselves to be an independent state. Within a year of the declaration, the country of Lithuania was internationally recognized.<sup>45</sup> The people were finally free.

Today, Lithuania is a proudly independent nation. In their constitution, the preamble contains a unique tribute to the Lithuanian people for having survived and maintained the nation's identity. It states, "[The people of Lithuania] having for centuries defended [Lithuania's] freedom and independence and for having preserved its spirit, native language, writing, [and] customs...by the will of the citizens of the reborn State of Lithuania, [do] approve and declare this Constitution."<sup>46</sup> The country was truly reborn, with Lithuanians having achieved all that their predecessors, and the book smugglers, could ever have hoped for. The nation is independent and continues to keep the Lithuanian culture alive. It overcame extreme cultural oppression, something very few countries have ever achieved. The people can read their books, get their education, and communicate freely in Lithuanian.

Above all, the book ban was a pivotal moment in Lithuanian history. It caused the nation to unite and stand together in a rebellion against a significant threat to their culture, communication, and language. In the process of defending their language, culture, and national identity, the country experienced a revolution that would, in time, provide the foundation for national autonomy. Lithuania would never have been able to become independent without the book ban that united the people in an effort to protect their nation.

## Notes

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This poem was smuggled during the Lithuanian book ban and was a metaphor for Lithuanian independence. This is important because it set up a foundation and a precedent for the events that would occur in the upcoming years.

Duncan, Robert B. Interview. Conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy, 9 Apr. 1995.

In this oral history, information is given about how Lithuania got their independence a second time from the Soviet Union. It was very beneficial to be able to compare how Lithuania got their independence from Tsarist Russia to how they got autonomy from the Soviet Union.

Gazette of the United States and Daily Evening Advertiser. (Philadelphia, PA) 8 Apr. 1795, p. 2. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, [www.loc.gov/item/sn84026271/1795-04-08/ed-1/](http://www.loc.gov/item/sn84026271/1795-04-08/ed-1/).

This newspaper article contains a report of how Russia was spreading its “poison” and forcing its provinces to convert to Russian Orthodoxy. This is similar to when Russia attempted to change the Lithuanian language to Russian Cyrillic and is a good reminder that Lithuania was not the only country that had to bear the burdens of Russification.

Gazette of the United States and Daily Evening Advertiser. (Philadelphia, PA) 14 May. 1795, p. 2. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, [www.loc.gov/item/sn84026271/1795-05-14/ed-1/](http://www.loc.gov/item/sn84026271/1795-05-14/ed-1/).

This newspaper article includes more in-depth descriptions of Poland and Lithuania’s first reactions to the new Russian rule. This was important because it displays how relations between the foreign nations changed over time.

A Lithuanian Book Smuggler. *Rarehistoricalphotos.com*, 24 Jan. 2017, [rarehistoricalphotos.com/lithuanian-book-smuggler-19th-century/](http://rarehistoricalphotos.com/lithuanian-book-smuggler-19th-century/). Accessed 24 Nov. 2020.

Seeing photographs from the time of the ban added a new dimension to the information I gathered. Being able to imagine the book smugglers as individual people instead of a general group helped me to get inside of their mindset more, and attempt to view the book ban the way they had.

“National Anthem of Lithuania.” *AnthemsWorld.com*, Anthem World, [anthemworld.com/Lithuania.html](http://anthemworld.com/Lithuania.html). Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

This audio clip is a recording of the Lithuanian National Anthem, as well as translated lyrics. This clip was important because it demonstrates both Lithuania as it is today, but also the story of how Lithuania got to where it is. It is even more relevant because the man that wrote the original poem was an editor for the illegal newspaper, *Varpas*, during the book ban.

National Gazette. (Philadelphia, PA) 5 Sep. 1792, p. 2. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, [www.loc.gov/item/sn83025887/1792-09-05/ed-1/](http://www.loc.gov/item/sn83025887/1792-09-05/ed-1/).

This newspaper article provided a glimpse of how other countries viewed Lithuania before it was taken over by Russia. I thought it was very fitting because the author said that the Lithuanians were proud to protect their liberty and independence, a theme that continues to be relevant today.

National Gazette. (Philadelphia, PA) 19 Sep. 1792, p. 4. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, [www.loc.gov/item/sn83025887/1792-09-19/ed-1/](http://www.loc.gov/item/sn83025887/1792-09-19/ed-1/).

This newspaper article includes a declaration of the Lithuanian people regarding Russian soldiers. It was very fascinating to realize how far back the tension between Lithuania and Russia went.

Photographs of the Illegal Lithuanian Newspaper Azura. *epaveldas.lt*, [www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0003775110](http://www.epaveldas.lt/object/recordDescription/LNB/C1B0003775110). Accessed 15 Dec. 2021.

This website included a collection of photographs of the illegal Lithuanian newspapers that were published at the time of the ban, then smuggled inside of the country. It was exciting to be able to view the pictures of the original papers, the very things I had read about.

Scheinin, Martin, translator. "The Lithuanian Constitution." *Servat.unibe.ch*, ICL Project, 25 Oct. 1995, [www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/lh00000\\_.html](http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/lh00000_.html). Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

I honestly found the Lithuanian Constitution to be fascinating. I compared it to the United States Constitution and was surprised by how similar they appeared, although there were substantial differences. The document was very enlightening and expressed exactly what the Lithuanians were fighting for.

U.S. Constitution. *Archives.gov*, [www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript](http://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript). Accessed 19 Jan. 2021.

Reading the Constitution helped me compare the Lithuanian Constitution to the United States Constitution. This comparison was very valuable in identifying national values and ideals.

Wanat, Jan. Wesoła Wiesniaczka Polka. 1918. Audio. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, [www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-27322/](http://www.loc.gov/item/jukebox-27322/).

This song was recorded on March 10, 1918, only one day before Lithuania became independent. The music was eye-opening and encouraged me to look into what else made up the Lithuanian culture besides their language and books.

## Secondary Sources

Eidintas, Alfonsas, et al. "Lithuania under the Russian Empire (1795-1915)." *The History of Lithuania*, translated by Ramūnas Kondratas and Skirma Kondratas, Second ed., Eugrimas, 2015, pp. 118-146.

This book is notable for its interpretation of how Poland, Lithuania, and Russia all affected each other. It was also very enlightening on all of the religious aspects of Russification.

Cymbalistyj, Petro. "Ukrainian Linguistic Elements in the Russian Language in the 17-18th Centuries (1680-1760)." Slavonic Philology, School of Slavonic and East European Studies Univ. of London, 1989. *UCL Discovery*, [discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10121649/1/Ukrainian\\_linguistic\\_elements\\_.pdf](http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10121649/1/Ukrainian_linguistic_elements_.pdf). Accessed 10 Apr. 2021. Manuscript.

This paper provided proof that Russification affected other countries. Furthermore, it provided evidence that Russification affected other languages in addition to Lithuanian.

Green, Sonia Bychkov. "Language of Lullabies: The Russification and De-Russification of the Baltic States." *Michigan Journal of International Law*, vol. 19, no. 1, 1997, pp. 200-274, repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1439&context=mjil. Accessed 6 Apr. 2021.

This journal describes the process of restoring the national languages of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The author goes into why their languages were such a point of emphasis and also explains the many motives of Tsarist and Soviet Russia's language imperialism and Russification policies.

Hamilton, E. L. "In the 19th Century, Lithuanians Smuggled Books in an Act of Rebellion against Russian Control." *Thevintagenews.com*, The Vintage News, 23 Apr. 2018, www.thevintagenews.com/2018/04/23/book-smugglers/. Accessed 4 Dec. 2020.

This webpage was extremely informational and provided a great deal of information on the public views of the ban, as well as some of the more notable historical figures involved.

Hilbig, Inga. "The Lithuanian Language." *Department of Lithuanian Studies*, Vilnius University, 2010, www.lsk.flf.vu.lt/en/department/courses/lithuanian-language/. Accessed 19 Nov. 2020.

This web page informed me about the complex history of the Lithuanian language, and why the people were so desperate to protect it.

"Lithuanian Press Ban." <http://dictionnaire.sensagent.leparisien.fr/>, LeParisein, dictionnaire.sensagent.leparisien.fr/lithuanian+press+ban/en-en/. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

This webpage was extremely informational, mentioning dates, statistics, and historical figures at the time of the Lithuanian national movement.

Lithuanian Students Association, "Book Review: The Forest of Anykščiai." 1956. *Lithuanus*, translated by N. Rastenis. *Lituanus.org*, www.lituanus.org/1956/56\_4\_10BR-Anyksciu.html. Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

This review provided an interpretation of the Forest of Anyksciai from a Lithuanian perspective 100 years after the original piece was written. It helped me get into the mindset of the Lithuanian people.

Miniotaite, Grazina. "Nonviolent Resistance against Russification in the 19th Century." *Nonviolent Resistance in Lithuania: A Story of Peaceful Liberation*, pp. 8-16. *Aeinstein.org*, www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/NonviolentResistanceInLithuania.pdf. Accessed 4 Jan. 2021.

This book was thought-provoking, as it went into detail about the many ways that the Lithuanians have peacefully resisted Russian oppression over time. In this section, the author also summarized the results of their resistance.

Putrius, Birute. Telephone interview. 24 Jan. 2021.

I was able to interview Birute Putrius, the author of *The Last Book Smuggler*, and learn more about her family's personal experience with the book ban. The conversation was very intriguing, and by the time the interview had concluded, I was filled with a new appreciation for Lithuanian culture.

Putrius, Birutė. *The Last Book Smuggler*. Los Angeles, Birchwood Press, 2018.

This novel contained many examples of what the book smuggling movement was like for everyday people witnessing the event. It also gave insight into the political aspects of the rebellion. While the characters in the book are purely fictional, the book is based on the author's grandfather's personal experience with the book ban.

Rovira, Lourdes C. "The Relationship Between Language and Identity: The Use of the Home Language as a Human Right of the Immigrant." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Human Mobility*, pp. 63-81. *Redalyc.org*, [www.redalyc.org/pdf/4070/407042009004.pdf](http://www.redalyc.org/pdf/4070/407042009004.pdf). Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

This journal contained vital knowledge on how our culture, language, and identity are connected. It elaborates on how our language affects us, and helped me understand how the book ban was an attack on the Lithuanian culture, as well as the nation's identity.

"Russia/Lithuania (1905-1920)." *Uca.edu*, University of Central Arkansas, [uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/europerussiacentral-asia-region/russialithuania-1905-1920/#:~:text=Crisis%20Phase%20\(January%202024%201905,deaths%20of%20some%2024%20individuals](http://uca.edu/politicalscience/dadm-project/europerussiacentral-asia-region/russialithuania-1905-1920/#:~:text=Crisis%20Phase%20(January%202024%201905,deaths%20of%20some%2024%20individuals). Accessed 18 Jan. 2021.

This webpage supplied me with new information that I had been previously unaware of. This page included reports about what occurred directly after the Lithuanians were granted independence, as well as the journey it took to become fully free.

"Security of the Tsarist state before 1905." *British Broadcasting Corporation*, [www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9qnsbk/revision/1](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z9qnsbk/revision/1). Accessed 5 Apr. 2021.

This website displayed a crash course in Russian history and Russification around the world. I believe it was very helpful to learn more about the history of Russia, and how the nation has changed over the years.

Stražas, A. S. "Lithuania 1863-1893: Tsarists Russification and the Beginnings of the Modern Lithuanian National Movement." *Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences*. *Lituanus.org*, [www.lituanus.org/1996/96\\_3\\_03.htm](http://www.lituanus.org/1996/96_3_03.htm). Accessed 22 Dec. 2020. Originally published in *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence, 1940-80*, edited by Antanas Klimas, translated by Saulius Sužiedėlis, 1996.

This article was extremely informational. It contained valuable knowledge on the political aspects of the Lithuanian National Movement, as well as figures and statistics related to the economy at the time.

Subačius, Giedrius. "Official Cyrillic Alphabet for Lithuanian (1864-1904) and its Relation to the Clandestine Standardization of Lithuanian in Latin Script." University of Illinois at Chicago, 14 Oct. 2005. *Subacius.people.uic.edu*, [lith520.class.uic.edu/SUBACIUS\\_Luneburg\\_2005\\_10\\_14.pdf](http://lith520.class.uic.edu/SUBACIUS_Luneburg_2005_10_14.pdf). Accessed 13 Jan. 2021. Manuscript.

This slideshow included information on the process that Russia used in an attempt to change the Lithuanian alphabet to Russian Cyrillic. This was interesting because there was a section on what the attempted transitions were, and how they had the potential to backfire.

Trueman, C. N. "Russification." *History Learning Site*, 22 May 2015, [www.historylearningsite.co.uk/modern-world-history-1918-to-1980/russia-1900-to-1939/russification/](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/modern-world-history-1918-to-1980/russia-1900-to-1939/russification/). Accessed 6 Apr. 2021.

This webpage was dedicated entirely to Russification. The article, however, went a step farther than most. It included the history of Russification and changes in the movement, all of which were explained and described through real-world examples. I found it to be very practical and informational.

Vasiliauskas, Geoffrey. "Legacy of the book smugglers." *Baltictimes.com*, 16 May 2002, [www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/6396/](http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/6396/). Accessed 16 Oct. 2020.

I had a new perspective on the topic after reading this because it went into some of the reasons Russia placed its ban on Lithuanian books.

Velaviciene, Silvija. "Republic of Lithuania: Banned Literature and Newspapers." *Beacon for Freedom of Expression*, National Library of Norway, [www.beaconforfreedom.org/liste.html?tid=415&art\\_id=554](http://www.beaconforfreedom.org/liste.html?tid=415&art_id=554). Accessed 20 Nov. 2020.

This database presented me with new information about the censorship and restrictions that were still placed on Lithuanian books years after the ban was withdrawn.

Walter R. Iwaskiw, ed. *Lithuania: A Country Study*. GPO for the Library of Congress, 1995. <http://countrystudies.us/lithuania/1.htm>. Accessed 2 Nov. 2020.

This website was crucial because it provided context to the history of Lithuania. It also gave insights into the people's values, their origins, and why the people reacted the way they did towards the Russian ban.

Waters, Michael. "The 19th-Century Lithuanians Who Smuggled Books to save Their Language." *Atlasobscura.com*, 19 July 2017, [www.atlasobscura.com/articles/lithuanian-book-smugglers](http://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/lithuanian-book-smugglers). Accessed 15 Oct. 2020.

This article helped me understand what led the Lithuanian people to rebel, and why their cause was so important to them.

Weeks, Theodore. "Managing Empire: Tsarist Nationalities Policy." *The Cambridge History of Russia*. Ed. Dominic Lieven. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. 27-44.

This book excerpt summarized how Russification occurred all over the world. It described the many methods used to control countries and the bigger picture of what was taking place.

Weeks, Theodore R. *Nation and the State in Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914*. DeKalb, Northern Illinois UP, 1996.

It took a ton of work to track this book down, as there was only one copy in the state. This book went into depth about the histories of Poland and Russia, with side notes about how this connected to Lithuania. In addition to the histories, the book included notes about Russian orders and strategies. It was an interesting read, and I found it to be very helpful for me to learn more about all the different sides of the same story.

Weeks, Theodore R. "Russification/Sovietization." *European History Online*, edited by Theodore Weeks and Stefan Troebst, Theodore R. Weeks, 3 Dec. 2010, [ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/russification-sovietization](http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/russification-sovietization). Accessed 5 Apr. 2021.

This article was extremely useful. The main theme of the article was the difference between Russification and Sovietization. In each case, examples were used including Lithuanian and Polish reactions. There was also a section on Belarus and the Ukraine, countries whose experiences and perspectives I had not learned about prior to reading the article.

Weeks, Theodore R. "Russification and the Lithuanians, 1863-1905." *Slavic Review*, vol. 60, no. 1, 2001, pp. 95-114. doi.org/10.2307/2697645.

This article helped me to see a different perspective on Russification. The author, Theodore R. Weeks, makes the argument that Russification was directed to the Polish-Catholic influences, and not the Lithuanian culture itself. Analyzing the book ban through this perspective, I realized Russia's motives were even more complex than I originally thought.

Woodbury, Anthony C. "What Is an Endangered Language?" *Linguistic Society of America*, [www.linguisticsociety.org/content/what-endangered-language](http://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/what-endangered-language). Accessed 12 May 2021.

I wish I had read this article sooner. It provided examples of languages that have been lost, the impacts of this loss, and the reasons that the languages or dialects died out. My main takeaway from this article is that it is absolutely incredible that the Lithuanians were able to hold on to their language and culture when so many other languages and cultures have been lost under similar circumstances.

## Appendix

### Process Paper

My topic is the Lithuanian book ban of 1864-1904. This book ban had a large impact on Lithuanian culture and national identity, making it a turning point in Lithuanian history. I first learned of the book ban when I read *Words on Fire* by Jennifer A. Nielsen, and I came across that book again when we were exploring different topic ideas for NHD. The more I looked into the Lithuanian book ban, the more fascinated I became with it. It was the perfect topic because some of the main themes and concepts related directly to this year's NHD theme, "Communication: The Key to Understanding." The book ban was placed on all forms of the printed Lithuanian language. Language is an extremely influential part of our lives and our communications. It also plays a vital role in our culture, as well as our understanding of the world around us. Furthermore, the ban directly affected publications such as newspapers and books. These printed works were, and are, widely used to communicate news, ideas, and information.

As I began to conduct more research, I recognized several problems. The book ban is not commonly known, and there were limited secondary sources that I was able to access. In addition, nearly all of the primary documents that I found were written in Lithuanian. I knew from the start that I would be forced to rely on the little snippets of translations that historians had deemed important enough to transcribe. In the end, I decided that it would be more than worth it to face the hurdles that came with researching the book ban. That being said, conducting research was by far the most difficult part of my project.

As I began to formulate my paper, I realized just how much I did not know. I started looking into related topics such as Lithuanian history, the impact of language, and how the book ban shaped the country. I also performed a telephone interview with Birute Putrius, whose grandfather participated in the book smuggling movement. After I received feedback from the NHD judges, I decided to conduct even more research on Russification and how it affected other countries. This new information enriched my understanding of the topic, particularly the different conclusions that historians have come to regarding Russian intentions, as well as the layers of Lithuanian resistance.

After meeting with an NHD judge to go over the second round of feedback, I was encouraged to expand upon the idea that other cultures and languages were unable to withstand similar restrictions and suppressions on their culture and communication. In my revised paper, I concluded that the book ban was a transformational time for Lithuania. It was an important moment in history because it united the Lithuanian people, separated the country from foreign powers, reformed the national identity, and protected the Lithuanian language. As a result of their legendary resistance against the cultural and linguistic oppression, the Lithuanian spirit and culture have survived the tests of time.