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Publication Details

Vico, M. (2008). Lithuanian diaspora: An interview study on the preservation or loss of Pre-World War Two traditional culture among Lithuanian Catholic Émigrés in Western Australia and Siberia, in comparison with Lithuanians in their homeland (Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)). University of Notre Dame Australia. <http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/theses/33>

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CHAPTER 8

LITHUANIANS IN KRASNOYARSK, SIBERIA: THE SURVIVAL OF A COMMUNITY

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LITHUANIANS IN KRASNOYARSK, SIBERIA: THE SURVIVAL OF A COMMUNITY

We lost everything ... our native language was about the only thing of value we were able to preserve (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 3*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

State-backed powers included the right to confiscate and re-allocate property (also a right under the auspices and authority of village elders), and to order deportation and forced labour. These have been mechanisms of social and political control and State economic management for over three and a half centuries. The Czarist laws of 1649-1736 first instituted and legitimized the forced removal and re-settlement of people in both the core Russian and colonized territories. Then after 1917, the Revolutionary Government and Soviet System controlled internal and external policy and political opposition and what was labelled 'criminality'. So over time this State-controlled system of mass arrest or exile settlements in remote areas directly affected and shaped the lives of millions of people. To attain a comprehensive and grounded understanding of the Gulag, its origin and organization I have analysed in depth the works of the historian Anne Applebaum(2003), the most Rev. Michael Bordeaux (1979) Roy A Medvedev,(1971, 2004), the most Rev. Jonas Savasis (1996) and the writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, (1973).

For the purpose of this thesis the focus is on the half century of forced removal and re-settlement of Lithuanian people which began with the first Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1940; and on the ways in which this diaspora has affected the pre-WWII rural Lithuanian culture, its customs and traditions, values and beliefs. Under particular examination is the experience of Lithuanian *émigrés* in the former Soviet Siberian Region of Krasnoyarsk, collected through interviews; and I consider the extent to which these core markers of pre-war Lithuanian identity have been retained, modified or lost over the period of their diaspora. The period examined covers the fifty years of exile during which these original *émigrés*, all of whom chose to stay in Soviet or former Soviet regions to which they had been initially deported, have evolved over time into another condition: that of residents, tied to their adopted land by the intersecting claims of circumstances, history, economy and family.

The cornerstone of Soviet and State initiated and controlled deportation and re-settlement was the Gulag, the extensive system of labour camps and of the *specpolesenia* (special exile settlements). These were first established in Russia in 1919 as a direct result of the October 1917 Revolution and continued to expand over the following decades across the whole of the Soviet Union. The term Gulag, which was initially the Soviet acronym for *Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei* (Main Camp Administration), has come over the years to represent the entire Soviet prison and camp system in all its procedures and varieties. As such, the term now connotes for most people the form of arrest, the methods of interrogation, the transportation and the forced-labour. The Gulag involved as many as six million exiles in remote and scarcely populated areas of the Soviet Union, and the estimated death of approximately eighteen million people (Applebaum, 2003, p. 4).

The first camp of the Gulag was established by the Revolutionary Government in the Solovetsky Islands when prisoners, white guard officers, orthodox nuns and priests, and political dissidents started to arrive there in the summer of 1920. As early as May 1920, the government newspaper *Izvestija* had described the isolated islands of the Solovetsky as being the ideal work camps: “The harsh environment, the work regime, the fight against the force of the nature will be a good school for all criminal elements” (Applebaum, 2003, p. 42). Solovetsky may not have been the only prison in the Soviet Union, but it was a prison where slave-labour was used for the first time and where the camp system originated. According to Applebaum the entire Soviet system of forced labour as a method or re-education started in 1921. In this period eighty-four forced labour camps in forty-three provinces were established with the purpose to ‘rehabilitate’ the enemies of the people and continue to expand until 1953 (Applebaum, 2003, p. 4) In 1930 the Gulag was re-established as an administrative organisation. The administration of this system of re-education by forced labour, was under the direct responsibility of the *Chrezvychynaya Komissiya* or CHEKA (Extraordinary Commission), a secret police organization of the civil war period, whose power was absolute (Medvedev, 1971, p. 388). Years later Alexander Solzhenitsyn in his 1973 work *The Gulag Archipelago*, wrote that the CHEKA was “The only punitive organ in human history that combined in one set of hands investigation, arrest, interrogation, persecution, trial and execution of the verdict” (Solzhenitsyn, 1973, p. 28).

By 1934 the CHEKA, re-organized and re-named as the *Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikt* or NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs), was playing a key role in the implementation of Stalin's large-scale construction projects in the remote territories of former Siberia. This system was devised in order to accelerate the industrialisation of the Soviet Union and harvest the rich mineral resources of those underpopulated territories (Gregory and Lavarez, 2003, p. 213). Stalin's constant increasingly unreasonable demands for more and better output, together with the harsh environment and difficult living conditions in the camps, continually depleted the labour force and required an on-going supply of fresh manpower. The NKVD, by virtue of its unchallengeable right to imprison people and exile them with a mere administrative act and no juridical procedure (Medvedev, 1971, p. 391), was able to provide this essential labour supply for most of the first half of the twentieth century. The Gulag continued to expand throughout WWII. During the time from 1940 to 1953 it has been estimated that 279,313 Lithuanians were deported to the territories of the former Soviet Union. See Maps in Appendix 11 and Photographs in Appendix 13.

Of these, 152, 496 were sentenced to forced-labour and lived in imprisonment camps, and 126,817 were assigned to exile settlement villages (Racénas, 2005, p. 11), among them about 30,700 children under the age of eighteen (Balkelis, 2005, p. 42). During the first Soviet mass deportation that took place from June 14 to 17 June, 1941 about 5,500 children were among the deportees, of whom 965 were younger than four years of age, 1,918 between the ages of five and ten years, and 2,276 between the ages of eleven and eighteen (Balkelis, 2005, p. 44). It was the contribution of some of these children to my interviews that allowed me to establish the patterns of maintenance, loss and adaptation of the pre-WWII rural Lithuanian traditions, religious practices and beliefs and language among the Lithuanian *émigrés* community still living in Siberia.

Among these Lithuanians deported, there were male and female prisoners of war, dissidents and partisans who were sentenced between fifteen and twenty-five years of imprisonment in forced-labour camps in the Norilsk, Vorkuta, Kolyma and Altaj Regions. Prisoners worked in almost every industry: logging, mining, construction, factory works and farming (Applebaum, 2003, p. 396). As part of the politics of concealment and control, the camps' identities were often disguised by names that reflected their topographic location and made difficult their identification and geographic

location. Jonas, who had been sentenced to fifteen years of forced-labour in one of those camps, described his experience with these words:

I was deported on the 10th of August, 1946, at *Berlag* [shore camp] at Magadan because I did not want to serve in the Red Army ... I worked in a mine ... it was very cold, minus-50 degrees in winter. I was only twenty-six years old. My camp was 6000 km from Krasnoyarsk ... there were also 800 women. ... In my barrack there were thirty-three people from nineteen different countries Germans, Polish, Finnish (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Given the concealed nature of the system, it is impossible to determine accurately in exact figures the size and the numbers of camps and prisoners (United Nations, International Labour Office, 1953). Its effects and its survivors can be established and presented. The Russian historian Galina Ivanovna, in her work *Labour camp Socialism: the Gulag in the Totalitarian System* claims:

To date, the Russian historians have discovered and described 476 camps that existed at different times on the territory of the USSR. It is well known that practically every one of them had several branches, many of which were quite large. In addition to the large numbers of camps, there were no less than 2000 colonies. It would be virtually impossible to reflect the entire mass of Gulag facilities on a map that would also account for the various times of their existence (Ivanovna, 2000, p. 188).

The Gulag endured in its core form until 1953, the year which marked the death of Stalin. By July of the following year the Soviet authorities, after having recognized the unproductive nature of the camps, the system was officially dissolved and the camps began to be dismantled and their prisoners released (Applebaum, 2002, p. 454).

Deportation Period (1940-1953): The Built Environment, Communities and Changes

Lithuanian deportees were mentally and physically unprepared for the environment that they had to confront when they reached their destination. The sense of alienation and despair is expressed in the words of Antanas who remembered what he saw from the small windows of the train on his journey to a remote settlements area in the *taiga* (Siberian forest) near Krasnoyarsk in the Altaj Region.

I saw from the train ... a large empty space with few houses here and there, very poor wooden houses, more like huts ... with small windows ... no trees ... and no people (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

After their train journey, most of the deportees and their wagons were transferred onto large barges on the Yenisei River and transported to a virgin forest, to work in the logging camps. Janina remembered that on their arrival they were placed either in overcrowded wooden rectangular barracks (with thatched roofs, often with broken windows and doors, with a common kitchen, with scarce or no electricity, and with little heating) or in tents if they had been sent to build new camps, or in huts made from tree branches.

With my daughter and my parents we were sent in a room shared with other two families. We were about twelve ... it was all right other Lithuanians were twenty in a room and they had to sleep on the floor, it was so dirty and smelling (Janina, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Once in the exile settlement, the deportees were immediately organized in working teams without consideration of their age and gender. Men, boys, women and young girls alike were expected to fell trees and raft them down to the Yenisei River. Those of working age who were too ill to work were sent to the settlement infirmary or left home, mostly unattended. During the day, small children of working parents were either left in the care of other children or older siblings who had not reached the required working age, or were sent to a camp barrack that functioned as a nursery. Valerija, who lived for years in one of these exile settlements, gave a brief account of her experiences:

When I arrived with my family it was very cold ... they sent us in a barrack ... the building was dirty, smelling, and the windows had broken glass ... there were only a kerosene-lamp we did not have enough light the electricity was not working properly ... some day it was all right and others it did not work, there was only a kerosene-fuelled lantern ... I was with my mother and my two brothers and my younger sister ... we had to share this place with another Lithuanian women and her three children ... but it was all right ... we had a common kitchen we were lucky ... we soon learnt that some other people before being in this village were sent north and they had to stay in the Jurta a sort of round barracks, and they were a lot it was very cold. ... I was twenty years old and I had to move the trees from the forest to the river, it was cold my hands were very cold, sometimes I had trouble to push the trunks ... my skin was all swollen, the mosquitoes were everywhere, but we had to work men and women together with the same job, we were a mixed group there were also Ukrainians and Polish ... everybody was working hard ... but I met a lot of new people ... my mother was often sick ... I had to leave her at home by herself all of us had to go to work, my youngest sister was taken to the nursery she was only three years old (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In contrast Emilija recalled:

In my village we were lucky there were new barracks that the people before us had already built. They were all right only the door did not close properly but

there was the electricity, and we had enough heating, it was not hot but it was all right ... we could read at night and do what ever we wanted, we shared it with another family mother, grandmother and a son ... we were only three, my mother, my father and me ... my brothers weren't at home when they came ... they were in the fields and when they saw the trucks, they ran away ... so they took only us ... my mother was cleaning the school and in the infirmary (Emilija, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Life for the deportees was difficult but they generally supported and helped each other, essentially as one big family and with the strong sense of community that had been typical of their pre-war rural Lithuanian society and experience. Over time the exiles were able gradually to improve the standard of their accommodation, purchasing wood from the nearby forest and in the summer, adding a vegetable garden in a small piece of land given to them by the camp authorities. In most exile settlements, the Lithuanian deportees were able to mix relatively freely with the local population of fellow mixed-ethnic deportees and the Mongolian people native to the area. Janina, showing an old black and white photo, remembered the people depicted.

Here we are in front of the tent where I was living and these was a family of local people ... this was the mother and the father and they had also children ... they used to drive a sledge pulled by the a reindeer. They were very nice and we become friends ... they helped us they gave us some food (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

There was no possibility of escape from these exile settlements, as they were isolated and some of them could only be reached via river. The land around the exile settlements was typically flat, with a river or a small lake being the only source of fresh water and fish. A typical exile settlement, as described by Janina who lived near Krasnoyarsk, consisted of barracks for the deportees, a general store accessible to the local population, a post-office, a police station, a small hospital, a nursery, a pre-school and a primary school.

We lived in a village not far from the river Yenisei ... only six miles ... close to the forest there were timber barracks ... a shop, a school ... and also better accommodation for the people in charge of the settlement ... we were about fifty Lithuanians families (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Only a small number of the respondents who had spent time in the forced labour-camps were prepared or able to give any detailed description of the camp and their routines of daily life during their years there. During the interviews some clearly showed signs of evident distress and pain when I touched on their earliest days of deportation, and I decided (for them at least) not to exacerbate their discomfort by pursuing details of their

life in the camps. What I have recorded from them is therefore limited for the most part to the re-collections they have shared with me of their life after their release from the labour camps in Soviet Siberia.

According to those who did feel comfortable in relating their experiences, accommodation in the forced labour camps was typically in rectangular, overcrowded barracks made of wood, with the walls unplastered, with rows of bunk-beds and with a table and some benches placed in the centre of the room. Jonas remembered that heating and electricity was often, though not always, scarce.

In my barrack we were a lot and of different nationality, the smell was terrible, but we had a good light and good heating, we could take home some coal from the mine (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The main compound of the typical forced labour camp was surrounded by a high wooden fence protected by a second wired fence and with a large open area inside and near to the entrance gate where the deportees were required to stand twice a day to be counted.

Petras, who had lived for fifteen years in one of these camps, described his daily routine in these words:

I lived in a barrack not far from the entrance gate ... we were about thirty people of different nationalities ... we worked in the near coal mine, the work was hard, they gave us food, but was never enough, we had bread and meat ration ... we were not free to move out of the camp only we could go to work ... they later allowed us to receive some parcel from home and that was good, because they did not take anything from us, so I received food and books from home ... my barracks was warm as we could take some coal from the mine ... they did not mind (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The experience and lifestyle of the deportees, both in the forced labour camps and in the exile settlements, varied according to their administration and the location. Agota recalled with sadness:

I was deported with my two children ... I was in the village alone for seven years, my husband was in a labour camp ... my life was very hard, I was always worried for my children ... but I kept going for them ... I was so happy when he returned ... we could be now a real family ... all my relatives were back home we were the only one that were deported ... my husband was a journalist and a partisan (Agota, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Petras further stated:

We did not have any freedom, we were always checked ... we still could contact each other as there were other Lithuanians in the camps and we formed our ethnic

group, but we did not have much freedom ... how can a person be happy if doesn't have any freedom ... some of us learnt how to twist the rules but it was still dangerous (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The difficulty of adapting to a new physical environment, to the hard working conditions and to the separation from their family often resulted in tension, depression, and feelings of alienation which lasted for a long period. Petras described with feelings of sadness his life after he was married; he continued to live in fear for many years.

Even when I was free for many years I lived in fear ... that someone was coming to my door and pick me up in the middle of the night ... I could not sleep and I felt very bad ... I was always worried ... my wife that is a Russian ... she was very good and help me a lot (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Valerija stated that food shortages were ever present and food was a commodity always in demand in the first years of deportation. In the words of Valerija:

We were always starving ... we were always looking for food ... it was never enough people died for starvation ... children, elderly people and women. We were lucky, my mother packed a lot of food, ham, potato, cabbage and bread ... we even shared it with some people on the train ... they did not have anything ... we also had enough food for reaching our camp, but after it was a trouble ... the weather was cold and we did have only the food rations, and sometimes we really starved ... even if you had the money there was no food to buy in the village shop ... some people could not buy anything because they did not have the money and anything else to barter ... they were the one that died (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

For the deportees interned in the forced labour camps, a daily food ration was regularly provided according to their work load. However, the food was seldom enough for the deportees, most of whom were working long hours on heavy tasks. Jonas, who had worked in one of these camps, claimed:

I worked thirteen hours a day in a mine, it was very hard work and cold and always the food was not enough ... it was difficult to work in these conditions without enough food ... people died from diseases and starvation (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

After a few months most of the deportees were allowed to write letters to relatives and friends back home. Although this was limited to once a year for those in the labour camps soon they began to receive monthly parcels of Lithuanian staple food, smoked ham and bacon, porridge mixture, dry beans, together with clothes and books for

children, and other amenities. They received vegetable seeds and started growing their own vegetables such as carrots, onions, cabbage and potatoes, preserving in this way some of the rural Lithuanian cooking traditions and eating habits. In the early 1950s, food started to become more available in the village stores, with the deportees typically being able to use their food ration cards to obtain their basic requirements. In the summer and autumn months, wild berries, edible mushrooms and nuts grew in the forest and could be collected by the children while their parents were working. Janina maintained that families were able for the most part to continue preparing traditional Lithuanian meals involving an abundance of rye, barley, beetroot, potatoes, cabbage, salads, pancakes and their usual meat dishes based on pork.

After so many months of starvation, my mother was very happy, we had a vegetable garden with potatoes, cabbage, carrots and beetroots and onions ... our relatives in Kaunas were sending us ham and bacon and we could it now with the bread that we could purchase from the local shop ... with flowers and sugar my mother was always making biscuits (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Most of the respondents claimed that the traditional rural cooking and eating habits could be maintained largely because of the soil and the summer weather conditions of the area which were very similar to those in Lithuania. Leonas claimed that fish, easily caught in the local rivers and lakes, was an important and abundant addition to the basic diet for most families.

Here in Siberia, there is the best fish that one can eat ... I ate fish everyday for breakfast and it is enough for all day, it is very fresh, rich and tasty ... after you do not need to eat anything else (Leonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Tea was always a commodity of high consumption, due to the severe weather conditions of the Siberian winters. Herbal tea, if not purchased from the local village store, was prepared directly by the female deportees from herbs and flowers gathered in the neighbouring forest, as was traditionally done in Lithuania.

Lithuanian Language: An Identification of National Identity

The Lithuanian language continued to be maintained on a daily basis for private use both in the settlements and in the forced-labour camps. Juozas, who at the time of deportation was aged fifteen, remembered:

We spoke and prayed in Lithuanian on the train ... we spoke Lithuanian at home with our grandparents and parents, we had officially to speak Russian, but as soon as we were together we spoke Lithuanian ... even at work, if the guard were not there (Juozas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Janina, who lived in a settlement village, explained that everyone was speaking Lithuanian, while Russian was only spoken at work.

In the village we spoke only Lithuanian, as well at work if we could ... the commandant of the camp did not want ... I spoke all the time Lithuanian at home with my three girls, it was a form of protest ... we could not speak Russian among us ... at home we were Lithuanians (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Petras in the same vein added that also in his labour camp everyone continued to speak their native language.

We were only three Lithuanians in my barracks but we spoke Lithuanian all the time ... it was a form of protest ... we were Lithuanians ... it was dangerous, the guards did not want us to speak a language that they could not understand but we did it just the same (Petras, *Interview Transcript 3*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Comments such as these, echoed by all the other respondents, expressed the common view that Lithuanians since their first days of deportation and during all their period of detention strove to maintain their language, a key marker of their national identity and a symbol of concealed rebellion against the new order.

Antanas claimed that most of the émigré Lithuanian children, being of school age at the time of deportation, were already familiar with both the Lithuanian and Russian languages.

I was only fifteen ... and my brother nine ... but with my mother and grandmother until they died we spoke only Lithuanian, when my mother died ... than I was twenty years old ... all of us could speak and understand Russian, I learnt it at school, but we refused to speak it at home (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Valerija had memories of her mother speaking Lithuanian within the family and friends.

My mother used to talk with me only in Lithuanian ... I know that both of us could speak Russia, ... but she used to tell me about her life when she was young in Kaunas, she was a dressmaker and she was telling me about the young girls who wanted a dress for their weddings ... she always told me how the life was beautiful back home in springs with the gandrās (stork) in the farm of my grandfather ... and the day in which she was helping grandmother to bake some bread ... she could not possibly tell me this in Russian ... I remember also our

Lithuanian friends all of us were speaking Lithuanian (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Those who had been below school-age when in Lithuania were exposed to Lithuanian language in the home after deportation, and learnt Russian once they began to attend the local village Russian school. So it was for Marija's son:

My son was only three years old when we were deported, at home with us he spoke only Lithuanian and when he went to primary school, he never spoke a word of Russian with us we always wanted him to speak Lithuanian (Marija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

However, they all continued to use Lithuanian as the only language of communication with their family members, in this way strengthening their national ethnic identity and the sense of belonging to their homeland, which they associated with freedom and normal life through the continuous narrative of their parents and grandparents.

Lithuanian Families: The New Role of the Women and the Children

The size of the Lithuanian family at the time of their deportation varied according to the number of people deported and the people who survived the hardship of the journey to reach their destination. Most of the deportees' families, however, were typically large, particularly in the period from 1946 to 1950, when the *kulaks* were deported with their entire family as mentioned in Chapter 4. In the words of Agnes:

All my family my father, my mother, two sisters and three brothers and me were deported also my grandfather and my grandmother ... they were living with us at the farm ... I was the oldest child, my little sister was only three years old ... that night I remembered she was scared and she was crying ... we were all taking something with us some food and clothes but she was sat on a chair and she was crying (Agnes, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In contrast, Antanas claimed:

I was deported in 1948 with my mother, my grandmother and my brother ... my father was a partisan and he was not at home ... he was hidden in the nearby forest, some neighbour later when I went to Lithuania told me that he knew what was happened immediately because he was in a forest next to our farm but he could not help ... later my father was shot (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Dividing and separating the family unit was a deliberate strategy of the Soviet authorities. The men of most families were taken away from their wives and children and sent either

to prison or to forced-labour camps. Most of the women with young children were sent to the re-settlement villages.

Childbirths in the first years of deportation were not numerous. However, the traditional home childbirth event was maintained in the settlements for the female deportees who at the time of deportation were pregnant. Hospitalization and medical assistance were not always readily available in the infirmary of the settlement. Janina remembered the birth of her second baby girl.

My first daughter was born in the village the first year when we arrived. I had her delivery in my barrack. My mother was there with another two Lithuanian female deportees. Everything was all right. I didn't need any other help (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Although most of the women managed to keep the family together, they had to endure further hardship, particularly if their children were very young and had elderly members of the family to look after as well. In the words of Janina who had been deported in 1948:

In my village there were many Lithuanian women with young children and no husband some of them they had also some parents, which were elderly ... they were the poorest in the village they never had enough money to buy food for the family and nothing that they could exchange for food ... they lived out of one salary and from the help of the other Lithuanian families (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Antanas, who at that time was a young boy, recollected:

In the village there were some women with their families that have been moved from one village to another without any reasons ... one woman with four children told me that they were settled down in the village for about six months and then suddenly they had to change ... they stay another two months in a small village north and then they reach this place were they settled down ... but the grandmother died, almost immediately it was too difficult for her she was eighty-five years old (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The roles of the members of the typical pre-war rural Lithuanian family from the very early days of their deportation became progressively adapted to the new environment and life-style, reflecting their new realities more than the role relationships that had been the tradition in the homeland. In the re-settlement villages the head of the family was typically and necessarily the woman. Antanas pointed out that often the children took on the role of their father as principal guardians for the sole parent, grandparents and younger siblings. He has vivid sad memories of his family:

My mother was paralysed after one year we arrived in the village, my grandmother was old, my brother and I we had to work to support them and to look after them, and my mother was always in bed (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

For the children, the deportation represented the end of their childhood. Their displacement marked a forced separation from the physical environment and social expectations they would have held in their homeland: a comfortable home and a native social and cultural environment. Agnes, who had been deported at the age of nine and spent her youth in one of the re-settlement villages, claimed:

When I left my village [in Lithuania] I was so sorry ... I had to leave behind my friends, my school ... my dog and a tree not far from my farm on the road were I used to sit and recite little poems (Agnes, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Children other than the very young were expected to work with the adult deportees and they received the same food ration as the adults, bread (the staple for all deportees in the first years of deportation), flour, tea, potato and salt. Agnes described her new life in Siberia as follows:

I worked everyday in the forest with my mother, I had to help to put the trees that were cut together and then pushed them down in the water on a raft for being transported down to the river ... it was hard work ... in winter my hands were very cold, my mother was very tired and became sick, she wasn't used to this kind of work ... I brought home some bread, potatoes some onions for all of us to eat ... back home my mother was always happy she was cooking for us and she made my clothes with the sewing machine that my father bought for her ... here as well she made my clothes but it was different (Agnes, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

During their time of deportation, most of the participants in the study reported that they felt homesick, due to the loss of members of the family, relatives, friends and the close relationships which they had enjoyed back home. Valerija recalled this period with feelings of anxiety.

With my mother, two brothers and my younger sister we were sent in a village near Irkutsk, after few weeks ... they sent us here, ... my husband was in a prison camp in the Pechora area, my father in another camp working on a farm ... here there were many Lithuanian families ... it was like a family we did things together ... we supported each other ... life was not very easy ... I did not have my husband helping me, I missed him and I was very worried ... but I made very good friends ... there were also many Germans ... they were good too ... my best friend was a German lady, she is now dead ... I miss her ... my family went all back to Lithuania (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In order to survive physically, emotionally and spiritually in the new circumstances and environment of the exile settlements and labour camps, the deportees gathered together and formed their own Lithuanian sub-communities. This also was in order to offer some sort of protection to the weaker members' children and elderly or frail family members, and to secure jobs and food rations. The deportees were drawn to each other for their common cultural, social, religious and political values and beliefs and for their family links, since entire families were deported together; but it was also because of their shared feelings of resentment against and hostility towards the Soviet State that occupied their homeland.

These communities evidently helped to form and reinforce the children's identities as Lithuanians. The deportees' ethnicity functioned as a uniting force for the displaced and disrupted families, bringing the deportees together as they had to confront an alien environment and adjust to new life pressures. Their common culture, language and values clearly helped to strengthen their character and assist them to cope with the inevitable trauma of forced displacement. Most of the participants to the study made a distinction between their life before and after deportation. Leonas recalled his happy life in his village.

I was ten years old and I remember my neighbour and my family everybody was happy with their life because they were content with what they did and had ... they were able to built their own house their own garden and vegetable garden ... With the Soviets even the nature had no life even the gandrās (stork) were sick. I remember in those time in the evening you go to sleep and you do not know what was happening the following day ... but now everything is good ... they have nice trees and animals ... with the Soviets everything disappeared (Leonas, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

This recollection conveys the feelings of belonging, nostalgia and sorrow which are found also in most of the interviews. The homeland during the years of deportation and exile was and is still for the émigrés a powerful element in their continuing identity as exiles in a foreign land.

In most of the exile settlements, Lithuanian deportees managed to organize cultural and social activities and even religious festivals in secrecy. Agnes, an 84-year-old female respondent remembered preserving her Lithuanian identity in those early years by attending youth gatherings where she could recite Lithuanian poems.

Back home at school I was always reciting poems, I was very good and I liked ... my mother used to teach me them ... even very old poem that her grandmother taught her when she was young ... I used to learn them ... and recite them at school it was the same here in this village where I was living before move to Krasnoyarsk ... I always liked they were about nature and forest and animals of the forest, about the farms (Agnes, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Leonas claimed that although he and his fellow deportees rarely had much to share, they nevertheless enjoyed meeting and giving away what they did have, in a continuing tradition of the hospitality that is a key defining trait of the Lithuanian culture.

We had a club, where we met, we socialized and entertained each other by singing old Lithuanian songs and dancing ... in this meeting we get to know each other and also some of us started a family ... we were happy and she shared just our support and friendship because we had no food or drinks (Leonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

However, the deportees were not always able to organize meeting places as permission had to be granted by the authorities in charge of the camps. Agnes, living now in the city of Krasnoyarsk, recalled that:

As soon as we arrived in the village after few weeks we organized a sort of club, where we met and sang songs and dance, but when the commandant of the camp find out, he closed it down, we meet in secret in our houses ... but it was different, not many people could be there all the time we did not have enough space (Agnes, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

According to Antanas for many, the home was considered the only place where they could come together and express their feelings of fears and doubt about their future, speak their native language, pray and maintain their family and religious traditions and their national identity.

I was young when I lived in the village, but I remember that after work, someone was always coming to visit my family ... one women with two children and without husband ... she had always problems of food and we often shared with her our meal that was very poor as well, but we all helped each others from the hearts, that was the only way to survive (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

They organized gatherings for religious and family occasions in secrecy, all prepared and enjoyed in keeping with the traditional Lithuanian sense of hospitality. However, Janina claimed that by the 1960s most of the Lithuanian families had returned to their homeland. Many of the single people, mostly men, who were not allowed to return to Lithuania for political reasons, had moved to the city of Krasnoyarsk.

In my village everybody left ... they all returned to Lithuania, only my family remained because my husband could not return to Lithuania ... we became very good friends with a German family ... we did a lot of things together ... but we were only two families (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The Lithuanian émigrés in the villages strove to maintain the sense of community and shared hospitality among those left behind, who in some cases were émigrés from a different national background but with the same experiences.

The traditional values always attached to the family and education that helped nurture the Lithuanian personal and social identity in the period before and during independence, continued to be maintained during the first years of deportation in the new country. In the re-settlement villages, even though children were expected to work as adults, they were also able to benefit from the Soviet educational system. Children at the age of seven were expected and encouraged by their parents to attend the local schools although attendance was not compulsory. Most Lithuanian parents, however, sent their children and the time spent at school served to shorten their required working day by four hours. Agnes remembered about her schooling:

I came here that I was ten years old, my mother sent me to school, and I liked, there I met other children of my age, we had a Russian teacher that was good ... I remembered that when I was sick ... than my mother though me at home ... she wanted me to learn (Agnes, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Statements such these were common in most of the interviews and are reflective of the parents' attitudes to encourage their children to obtain a better education.

The Role of Religion in the Life of the Deportees

For Lithuanian deportees and exiles, religious expression was a practice which became vital from the first days of their deportation as Antanas recollected:

I was deported in 1948 with my family. ... I remember everybody in my wagon were praying on their knees and singing a song to Our Lady ... Marija, Marija, everyone was praying and crying (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Whilst the support of family members, friends and inmates was essential to endure the harsh living conditions and the unfamiliar environment, religion assisted the deportees' spiritual survival. However, in the Gulag the practice of any form of religion was

forbidden. It was not always possible for the deportees to maintain religious festivals and religious practices as a community, in the attempt to preserve their 'Lithuanian-ness' and their survival as an ethnic group in the forced labour camps and in the exile settlements. The harshness of the environment, climate conditions, the isolation of the exile settlements and the physically hard work, the Soviet rules and controls prevented it. Thus it was maintained secretly, at times with the tacit approval of sympathetic guards. Jonas, who was sentenced to forced labour in Magadan in the Kolyma Region, remembered: "When I wanted to pray I knelt facing the wall, I made the sign of the cross and I prayed for some minutes. ... So did the others ... some guards knew ... but they never said anything" (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Lithuanian religious faith impressed many non-Catholics in the forced labour camps. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in his book *The Gulag Archipelago* claims that the Lithuanian Catholics were extremely religious and describes with these words how in prison they made their rosaries:

In the Kuibyshev transit prison I saw Catholics [Lithuanians] busy making themselves rosaries for prison use. They made them by soaking bread kneading beads and stringing them while still moist on several strands (Solzhenitsyn, 1999, pp. 100-101).

Rev. Michael Bordeaux in his book *Lithuania the Land of Crosses* describes the Lithuanian as "... brave country-folk openly wore their baptismal crosses on their necks, thus making a silent testimony to their belonging to Jesus Christ ..." (Bordeaux, 1979, p. 190).

In the labour camps religious practices survived only as individual practice as the Soviet controls prevented community events. Among the general prisoners in the camps, clergy and nuns from all over the Soviet Union and occupied countries were numerous and represented different faiths. Jonas claimed that Lithuanian Catholic priests would hold Sunday's service, Christmas and Easter celebrations in secrecy and would administer the Sacraments.

I am a strong believer, and without my prayers, I think I could not survive, it was very hard to live there ... there was a priest among us and in great secrecy helped us. ... In the camp you could not show that you were praying, but in my barrack we always pray together, we recited the rosary ... it was hard, you had to be very careful ... I still pray everyday and recite my rosary (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In the exile settlements, religious practices and festivals were also celebrated in secrecy. Lithuanian female members of the family traditionally entrusted with the duty of safeguarding religious values, beliefs and traditions, had to strive throughout the entire period of the exile to meet their commitments. Valerija maintained that there were times when to mark a religious celebration was difficult because of work commitments, the absence of a priest, or the Soviet rules and controls imposed on the deportees.

In the past if they discovered that you believed in God you were sent to prison, or punished ... they changed your work or place of work with a more difficult one ... we simply had no freedom ... but we could still pray and gather together in secret. We used to meet at the house of different families in turns ... we were about ten or twelve people and we prayed and sang together ... we always did, we sang but not louder, because we were worried to be discovered (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

With no places of worship, Lithuanian deportees improvised a church in their own houses where they would meet and keep alive their religious faith, one of the most significant markers of the pre-war rural culture.

During the interviews almost all the Lithuanian religious calendar traditions were mentioned by one or more of the participants, the most commonly retained traditions being the celebration of *Gegužės Mėnesis* (Month of May), a month of prayer dedicated to the Virgin Mary; *Kūčios* (Christmas Eve meal), the customary Lithuanian Christmas Eve meal strictly shared only with the members of the family; *Kaledos* (Christmas Day); and *Velykos* (Easter Day) celebrations.

Gegužės Mėnesis (Month of May), is a month of prayer traditionally dedicated to the Virgin Mary in accordance to the Roman Catholic religious calendar. All the participants in the study confirmed that this observance was maintained in secret in the exile settlements as a community event. Agnes remembered one of these prayer meetings with the participation of six families.

Every day during all month we met in turn in different houses and we recited the rosary and the Litanies and sang hymns together, we were a group of fourteen or twenty people ... we all participated in it. Once they all gathered at my family's barrack we were about 23 people including the children I think about six families ... we prayed and sang religious songs but not loudly ... people could hear us and then the guards could cause troubles ... but it was good everybody was happy and we support each others (Agnes, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In the forced labour camp *Gegužės Mėnesis* was also maintained among the political prisoners on an individual and private basis. Petras described his observance of daily prayer in May in these words:

In my barrack we prayed during *Gegužės Mėnesis* but not together ... I always found time to recite my rosary ... I had to, I used to do it when I was in Lithuania with my family and friends ... my mother was a very religious person and she taught us how to pray, since we were little children (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Kūčios (Christmas Eve meal), Emilija explained that it had to be adapted to the new circumstances.

At the beginning in the village nobody could prepare a *Kūčios* meal ... there was not enough food ... we only wish Merry Christmas and shake hands, sometime we exchange only some potatoes and an onion ... we were always looking for food ... but after when we started to receive parcel from Lithuania, we had some food that we shared with the other that they did not have enough ... and we started to prepare *Kūčios* (Emilija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In the first years of deportation the meal was prepared using herrings or other fish saved during the previous months, together with other available food such as bread, beetroot, beans, and potatoes. Valerija, mentioning the food parcels that her family received from relatives in Lithuania in the early 1950s, recollected:

I was able to prepare *Kūčios* for my family ... I cooked some beetroot soup, beans salad, some herrings that I saved the previous months ... and I made even some *kisielius* (cranberry pudding) ... and a fruit compote with apples and pears ... I used to receive food from my sisters that returned to Lithuania (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Janina explained that *ploktele*, traditionally shared among those who participate in the meal, were occasionally received by some of the deportees from their relatives in Lithuania and when available would typically be divided with other families in the village.

After two years that we were in the village we had the permission to receive some parcel from Lithuania and my sister sent me also some books from my children and some cloths ... I used to receive *ploktele* inside some Lithuanian newspaper that my mother sent to me in the parcel with some food (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Petras reported that in the labour camps *Kūčios* meal was celebrated in secrecy and not as a regular community practice.

In my barrack we were about ten Lithuanians and we saved some food during the previous months to be used for *Kūčios*, and then we celebrated in some corner of the camps that nobody knew (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Since the time of deportation *Kaledos* (Christmas Day) had become a normal working day. Both in the exile settlements and the forced labour camps, authorities would make sure of the presence of the exiles on the working sites by calling a daily roll, as Agota recalled.

I was working in the forest to cut trees, most of us in my village worked in the forest. We had family and children, but on that day [Kaledos] we had to go to work. The people in charge of the camp used to come and check on us ... it was too dangerous to remain at home (Agota, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In the same vein Marjia added:

After work [on that day] people used to gather at the house of some families and sing traditional Lithuanian Christmas carols, but in low voices because gatherings of a large group of people were forbidden ... and the guard could hear (Marjia, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Parents would decorate a Christmas tree for their children with cotton and paper decorations but would avoid speaking about the religious aspect of this day, especially with their children if they were attending school. At the time of Christmas, the young children of the émigrés were often queried by their teachers for information about their parents' social teaching and cultural practices in the home. Such indirect information gathering often was the source of serious consequences for the parents. Juozas, who at that time was fifteen years old, recollected:

My parents didn't talk to my brother and me about God. We knew about it because we had been baptized in Lithuania, but they preferred not to say much ... they always prepared the Christmas tree but they told us that was a winter celebration ... they were too afraid to be discovered by the Soviet authorities in charge of the village and put in jail or be transferred to work in a different place (Juozas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Juozas continued by saying that parents with children born in the exile settlements would typically choose not to expose them directly to any sort of religious upbringing as the risks would have been seen as far too great.

Parents would avoid showing pictures of Jesus and of the Virgin Mary to the children ... it was too dangerous ... the communists would arrive and you would

have problems at least with your work ... and others (Juozas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Agnes remembered her parents preparing a Christmas tree, but they never talked to the children about the religious meaning of Christmas. Clearly she knew it, being nine years old at the time of deportation, but the parents feared for her younger brother.

I remember my mother and my father [helping us] to prepare the Christmas tree ... [but] they never told us about Infant Jesus, ... only later they did ... I was nine and I knew everything from home, when we were in Lithuanian, but my brother was too young he was only six years old he could talk at school ... so they decided not to say anything (Agnes, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Valerija, who was 26-year-old at the time of her family's deportation, reported:

When we arrived here [the Krasnoyarsk area], in our village there were 100 Lithuanian families ... we didn't have the church or a priest ... [the first arriving only after 1956, he was also a deportee] ... we met in different houses and prayed together ... for Christmas and the Epiphany we gathered together and sang Christmas carols (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Jonas explained that in the labour camps *Kaledos* was celebrated as individual practice.

For Christmas we went to work ... but at night when we returned we prayed with some other inmates, Polish, and Germans that were also in my barrack (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

During the interview Marjia mentioned also that for the Epiphany some families used to go to the nearby forest to pray and sing: "It was cold but we wanted to be together to share that event ... we went regularly for three years" (Marjia, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The religious celebration of *Didzioji Savaitė* (Holy Week), which started with *Verbo Sekmadieni* (Palm Sunday) considered by the Catholic Lithuanian population to be the most important and significant celebration of the year, could be preserved in the forced labour camps and in the exile settlements only as individual or within family practices. Large gatherings of people were allowed and there was neither a local church nor a resident priest. Janina remembered:

We used to meet at the house of a family in turn but no more than ten or twelve people it was too dangerous, we prayed, we sang but not too loud (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In the same vein Petras reported:

During the Holy week we prayed ... in my barrack there were 28 people and eight of us were Lithuanians ... we recited the rosary (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The *pasnikas* (fasting) was strictly observed by most of the deportees both in the exile settlements and in the forced labour camps as the core of *Dydysis Penktadieni* (Good Friday) preparations for Easter, as a sign of devotion, respect and penance. Most of the participants in the study confirmed that they had always fasted on Good Friday and they met and prayed together. Janina remembered:

I have always observed 'pasnikas' on Good Friday all my life as I did with my family back to Lithuania, I don't even drink water ... my mother did the same (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Petras recounted during an interview:

I have always been fasting for Good Friday, my mother did not allow us to eat and to drink when we were in Lithuania, now I continue to do so, I am been brought up in believe that is something that you have to do at least once a year ... if you are a religious person ... (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The traditional decoration of *margučiu* was maintained by the deportees, with the decorated eggs then being shared among their children and members of the family, as Agota remembered.

I prepared *margučiu* [Easter decorated eggs] for my children when I could have some eggs ... I boiled them with onions peels or green leaves that I had in the garden ... I used to do it back home in the same way, they look very nice (Agota, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Vėlinės, (All Soul's Day) according to the participants it was observed as individual or family practice, as Janina with feelings of sadness explained.

The first year was so sad because I went to the grave of my little daughter ... so many children had died ... it was so sad ... all the families had at least a child that was dead ... my little girl died after eight months from our arrival in the settlement and my husband did not see her anymore ... I did not have any flowers but I prayed for her my two boys were with me and also they were very sad (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Petras maintained that:

For *Velinė* I prayed for my father and my brother who had been shot by the Soviets ... my brother was only twenty but he was with the partisan as my father

was ... I prayed also for my friends and my son that died not long ago ... in an accident (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Although the environment and the circumstances were clearly not favourable to any open disclosure of religious practices, the vastness of the Lithuanian exile population in the exile settlements and in the forced labour camps made possible the maintenance of religious celebration and practices as a community event and as personal means of survival and preservation of national identity.

Senn suggested that religious faith held Lithuanians together, especially during 1948-1949 deportations.

Religion strengthened the spiritual life of the Lithuanians in Siberia ... [In that period] there were more of them, they could support and help each other in various ways (Senn, 1992, p. 12).

For the pre-war rural Lithuanian population, the family represented the most powerful organization able to maintain the material and spiritual values which were part of the core of the Lithuanian culture and national identity. It was within the family that customs and traditions were created and handed down from generation to generation. The Lithuanians who were deported to Soviet Siberia brought their culture and values with them, although it is clear that they had to strive to maintain them as they adjusted to a new life and environment which most found culturally and personally hostile. Janina, who had lived for fifty-four years in an exile settlement, recalled:

When we arrived, in my village there were about one hundred Lithuanian families with children, but we did not know what to do ... everybody was afraid...at least until 1953 ... everything was forbidden and they always controlled us (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Religious celebration of christenings, weddings and funerals were not allowed. In the first years of deportation the deportees experienced a high number of losses, typically among the elderly, young children and pregnant women. The harsh climate conditions and the hard work proved to be the main causes of death in addition to malnutrition and diseases. Antanas recollected the death of his grandmother just after their arrival with feelings of sadness and bitterness.

My grandmother died one year after she was deported in 1948, at Iarzava settlement village. My brother that was sixteen and me, we dug a hole in the frozen ground ... it was winter and it was difficult ... with some piece of wood we made a sort of box and buried senele [grandmother]. She was very religious,

she wanted a priest but it was not possible ... we could only pray for her (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Post Deportation Period (1953): The Exodus of the Former Deportees to their Homeland

From 1953, the year which marked Stalin's death, the controls in the exile settlements and forced labour camps relaxed and between February of the same year and September of 1955 amnesty was granted to all prisoners with sentences of five years or less, to all pregnant women, to all women with young children and to everyone less than eighteen years of age (Knight, 1993, p. 185). Most of the former Lithuanian *kulaks* (farmers) were rehabilitated and granted the permission to return to Lithuania with their families although some who applied to return were denied by the Lithuanian Soviet Authorities on the basis of their affiliation to former partisan organizations. Emilija, speaking about her father, reported:

My father was a farmer ... we had a farm not far from Kaunas, he was sent to Siberia because he used to help the partisans that they were living in the forest not far from our farm ... I remembered they used to come to our place for food ... when the Russian arrived they captured them in the forests and sent us to Siberia ... I was only sixteen years old (Emilija, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The forced labour camps began progressively to be dismantled and the political prisoners released. However, political prisoners in the camps who had committed crimes or who had taken part in revolts in the camps during their years of detention were not rehabilitated and were not free to leave the former Soviet Union. There is little doubt that the Soviets feared the influence that this group of dissidents and former political prisoners would have on the Lithuanian population in Lithuania.. Clearly Lithuanians wanted to continue as an independent nation, people and culture with their own definitive traditions, values and language, and thus were inclined to go on resisting the Soviets. Some deportees, for reasons of their political past, or economic and personal circumstances, had no choice but to remain in their original place of exile.

Among the released prisoners, 130 Lithuanian priests were also able to return to Lithuania. However, a few remained voluntarily with the exiles to minister to their spiritual needs (Savasis, 1966, p. 31). Priests who returned to Lithuania were never fully

rehabilitated by the local Lithuanian Communist Authorities and were sent to isolated parishes. Subsequently, some of them chose to return to the former Soviet Union to work for the exiles. In 1955 Lithuanian children for the first time could be baptized and receive their First Communion. Janina, mother of three girls, claimed during the interview:

My three daughters were all baptized in 1955, with Christian names ... they were baptized in secret ... I was happy that they were healthy ... some children died after few weeks from their birth without being baptized by the priest ... I remember that the parents were very upset ... a little boy died only after three weeks (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Emilija explained that typically the godparents were chosen among the grandparents if still alive, relatives or close friends.

The god parents of my first child were my father and my mother ... but then they returned to Lithuania ... for my second child I had German friends ... they were living just the house next door and we were very good friends for all these years (Emilija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Priests were still reaching the villages in secrecy. If discovered they would be arrested, given another sentence, or would be expelled from their place of residence. Catholic nuns who were also among the exiles would teach catechism and would prepare people to receive the Sacraments. When a group was ready a priest known to the nuns would be invited to the village to visit and minister the Sacraments. Leonas recalled:

We all knew when a priest was coming ... in our village, we were all happy we could receive the Sacraments, and have a Mass, all in secret at the house of some of us, we had our children baptized, confirmed, and some of us married (Leonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Although most of the Russian-Lithuanian born children were baptized with names of Christian Saints, most of the émigrés families started to celebrate birthdays in place of the Name's Day, leaving Name's Day celebration for elderly members of the family, grandparents and parents. Marija remembered the celebration of her Name's Day.

At the beginning for Name's Day we just congratulated to each other and shook the hands or gave hugs ... we did not have anything to give as a present ... Once I remembered some came with an onion and hugged me (Marija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

According to the participants in the study Name's Day celebration ceased to be celebrated when grandparents died or returned to Lithuania.

The first weddings according to the Roman Catholic rites were also celebrated after 1955 in secrecy, by a visiting priest. Valerija explained that the celebration would take place in a deportee's house in the exile settlement that would be improvised as a church in the presence of friends and relatives. The family of the bride for the occasion would organise a party for relatives and friends.

I was invited to a wedding ... a young girl, the daughter of a friend married a Lithuanian young man ... It was celebrated at the house of my friends, it was beautiful finally we had a religious wedding ... we had also a party it was just as it was to be at home (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Although the official celebration of funerals was not permitted, depending on the settlement authorities, after 1954 the deportees were allowed to accompany the deceased to the burial place, generally an area outside the settlement. A procession was often organized with the participation of most of the Lithuanians living in the exile settlement. Daiva described the funeral of her sister who was only six years old.

My sister died in 1954, she was ill, and at that time there were not a lot of medicines ... my mother and grandmother tried to heal her with some herbs, but she was too sick, she went to the infirmary and then after few days she died. We made a small coffin and we brought them to the cemetery it was a very sad day ... it was winter and there was a lot of snow ... but lots of friends of my family came with us to the cemetery (Daiva, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

By the early 1960s, most of the deportees had returned to Lithuania, leaving behind only a few families (and in some cases, members of their own families) who had not been granted permission to return to their homeland. The Lithuanians who had remained in Krasnoyarsk and were available to participate in the present study were those who had been denied permission to return to their original country after the dissolution of the camps; or were the deportees who chose to return to Krasnoyarsk as their original place of exile. At times when the male member of family was precluded from returning home, others who may themselves have been free to return opted instead to remain in order to keep the family unit intact. The following extract from an interview with Petras describes his experience of the time and his feelings of anxiety.

At the railway station of Krasnoyarsk, ... the central Siberian railway station ... there was such a crowd that to leave was almost impossible ... deportees were there from all over Siberia ... I met my mother and my sister for the first time after ten years, both released from a re-settlement village and on the way to Lithuania ... I couldn't go with them. I was not allowed [the respondent was a former partisan], and also other Lithuanians couldn't go ... I was very sick ... and for two years I couldn't write to my mother and sister or receive their letters ...

and other Lithuanians could not leave because they were former partisans ... as other Lithuanians that now lived here in the city (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Petras summed up the feelings of most of the participants in the study who had the same experience of being left behind, separated from the rest of the family and friends.

The memories of Daiva, create a stark and painful reminder of the ways in which personal and political concerns worked to limit the choices available for exiled Lithuanians who may have wanted to return to the country of their birth but who felt or were unable to do so.

My sisters, my mother and I we had the permission to return to Lithuania but not my father, we all remained here; we didn't want to leave my father. ... Still today I do not know why my father was not allowed to return to Lithuania (Daiva, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

For those deportees who did return to Lithuania, the situation for some was complicated by a number of factors, including the reactions they received from those who had remained in Lithuania during the years of Soviet occupation. Many of their former countrymen, marked by their history of war, foreign occupation and cultural upheaval, had been effectively educated and trained by the institutions of their occupiers to regard former deportees as criminals and enemies of the state to be treated with suspicion, hostility and active avoidance. This evidently made it difficult or impossible for some former deportees to resettle in their homeland and some of them made the decision to return to the area of their initial exile and attempt to start a new life where they would at least not find the same rejection. As Leonas maintained:

I went back to Lithuania twice and they [the Lithuanian authorities] did not register me ... I couldn't work and I didn't have any place to stay ... I returned to Krasnoyarsk. ... Here it was easy for me ... people were more friendly ... the Russian families helped me (Leonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Juozas in the same vein stated:

I didn't want to remain in Lithuania, they did not help me ... here I have a good life. I studied at the University ... I married a Russian girl ... I have two daughters and two grandchildren ... and I have three shops in the villages around Krasnoyarsk (Juozas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The Lithuanian historian Saldukas claimed that approximately 40,000 Lithuanian-born were in 1989 still living in different regions of Siberia (Saldukas, 2002, p. 193).

The Effects of *Glasnost* (Openness) and *Perestroika* (Restructuring)

In 1997 approximately 8000 Lithuanian-born lived in the city of Krasnoyarsk and in the surrounding villages (Saldukas, 2002, p. 194). Lithuanian analyst and journalist Birutė Vyšniauskaitė, in her article *Krasnojarsko lietuviai tikisi paramos* (*Sostinė*, December 23, 1997 see Appendix 12 Newspapers and Newsletters), maintained that among the Lithuanian *émigrés* there were still 248 original Lithuanian deportees who had settled in the region in the late 1940s. It is against this background that in this chapter I examine and interpret the extent to which the key pre-war rural Lithuanian traditions, values and beliefs survived in a foreign land which had become the new home and in which their lives had to be adapted; and the effect of *Glasnost* (openness) and *Perestroika* (restructuring) that started in 1987 and marked a new era of reforms in the former Soviet Union (Kiaupa, 2002, p. 424). *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* were new programmes of reform promoted by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, which advocated reforms in all spheres of the lives of the Soviet citizens and encouraged a new rapport based on openness between the state and its citizens.

These *émigrés* established themselves in the rural villages that for most of them were their former exile settlement camps. Most built their own houses, raised families and continued to live, with some degree of adaptation, according to their original culture, maintaining as far as was possible and practicable, their pre-war rural Lithuanian family and community traditions, religious practices and beliefs and language. Valerija, still living in a village approximately 100 kilometres from Krasnoyarsk, remembered:

When we arrived in this village there were about fifty Lithuanians families, we knew each other ... we did a lot of things together ... we pray, we speak Lithuanian with our children and we sang Lithuanian songs ... when they started to return to Lithuania only few of us was left behind, but we continued to maintain our traditions and to do things together (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Leonas, who lives in Krasnoyarsk, recollected:

In the villages live the Lithuanians who worked in the kolkhozes or were cutting the trees in the taiga (Russian forest) these people if they are still here, found difficult to live in the city. ... Krasnoyarsk is surrounded by hills and by the big rock cliffs of the Stolby Nature Reserve ... in this area many Lithuanian deportees built villages and made the roads. Before here there were only forests ... some of Lithuanians they still live where they first settled (Leonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Most of the former political prisoners who were deported without family or were single people at the time of their deportation moved to the city of Krasnoyarsk in search of job opportunities, to further their education and participate in a wider social life. They found jobs in factories or government organizations; they married mostly with members of the mainstream population or other ethnic groups and had a family. Jonas explained that the weddings were celebrated in the Town Hall with a civil rite according to Soviet rules.

The traditional Lithuanian weddings gave way at this time to civil ceremonies.

I married after that I realized that I could not returned to Lithuania ... all my family went back ... I was alone ... I could not find a Lithuanian girls because most of them returned home with their family ... it was very difficult ... I married my wife that was the daughter of a Russian family that helped me a lot ... they were very nice people (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

According to most of the responses given by the male participants in the study the *Kūčios* tradition appears having been lost when they entered into mixed marriages. Jonas, with a Russian wife, claimed: “I am married with a Russian ... she is not Catholic ... for Christmas Eve I ask her not to cook meat, but we do not do anything special” (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004). Thus, this celebration is maintained according to Janina only by the aging female Lithuanian *émigrés*, most of them helped by their daughters and granddaughters. “In my family we prepare always *Kucios* ... meal my two granddaughters like it very much as well as their father that is Russian ... my daughter helps me and she likes to cook Lithuanian dishes” (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Being in a large and densely populated city, Lithuanian *émigrés* tended to be somewhat isolated. Juozas who worked in an aluminium factory described his life in the city of Krasnoyarsk in these words:

Krasnoyarsk is an industrial and military centre, many Lithuanians that could not return home settle down here because they had a job ... people worked in an aluminium plant, in the hydroelectric power station, in the railway station that is very big and is an important station for the Tran-Siberian railway line ... only who worked in factories and in the railway line live in the city ... many of us are here, but we do not know where ... the place is too big and everybody speak Russian ... but from time to time I had the opportunity to meet some Lithuanian through my Russian friends ... I met a family the wife was Lithuanian he was Russian ... they had four children. ... He is dead now but I am still in contact with his wife and the family (Juozas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Leonas, with a Russian spouse, maintained that in mixed marriages and with the lack of or only limited contacts between themselves, it was clearly problematic for the *émigrés* to preserve their traditional culture. Family traditions and language had to be negotiated and religious practices could only be maintained as individual practice.

The Lithuanians who lived in the villages had an easier life as they knew each others they were like a community ... if some of them are still here ... they found difficult to live in the city. Some of Lithuanians they still live where they first settled ... for them it was easier to contact each other ... they were together but in the city it was very difficult and now is even more difficult because we are old and sick, we not drive and we do not have a car ... it is difficult ... there are buses ... but it takes all day to go and visit people ... it takes two hours from where I live to go to the church on Sunday (Leonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

It is important to recognise the differences between these two groups of Lithuanian *émigrés* living in former Soviet Siberia, in villages and in cities. Each has been influenced by different experiences, faced different challenges and adapted to different circumstances as its members sought to survive and prosper in their new environment. As will be shown there is no single description or common characterisation that can represent adequately the ways in which the Lithuanian *émigrés* living in Siberia today have retained, adapted or surrendered their former Lithuanian character.

The Built Environment: Freedom in the Former Exile Settlement

Most of the former deportees, who with their families opted to continue living in or near their original exile settlements, pursued a life on the land as farmers. For those who stayed on the land, the houses they built for themselves were typically constructed in local timber, usually with tiled roofs according to the pre-war rural features, but designed in harmony with the Siberian landscape and according to the prevailing weather conditions. Most were built on single residential blocks, at the footstep of the *taiga* (Siberian forest) or along the Yenisei River. Each of them had sufficient space at the front for a garden with pine trees and bushes of rue and with the traditional flowers, marigolds, pansies and native *taiga* flowers.

Most also had a large vegetable garden in the back of the house with rows of berry bushes, strawberry patches and plantings of peas, potatoes, carrots, cucumbers and cabbages. An external summer kitchen, a shed for farming utensils and food storage, a

pirties (rural Lithuanian traditional bath house) and a large log pile were common in addition to the main building. Small farms' animals typically were chickens, roosters, goose and ducks; and were kept for meat and eggs. The house and the other buildings were guarded by a dog chained to a pole aside the main entrance of the house. Agota, speaking about her house, explained that the contents of the houses were reduced to the essentials.

My husband and I we both worked hard, it was difficult to save, but we had to because we wanted our daughters to go to the high school, we did not have to pay fees, but we had to buy food for them and clothes ... my husband was working in the local forest and I worked for many years in the local shop, at home we had only the essential, I used to make our clothes, and try to save as much possible because our salaries were very low and if you did not work they did not pay you (Agota, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Inside the typical *émigré* house there were two bedrooms which opened one to each side of a large clay stove that was built in the corner of the living room, where the family used to stay during the day. The rooms had small windows and doors that were always closed to retain warmth during the long and severe Siberian winter. Colourful and heavy rugs were typically also hung on the walls and covered the floors to help keep the rooms warm and to add colour to what would otherwise have been a somewhat drab and uninviting environment. Most houses were externally painted in blue and white, the typical colours of the rural Russian landscape. Marija recounted the building of her house with these words:

When first I came here I was by myself with my children, then my husband joined us and he started to work on this house ... before was really small and not so nice ... my husband painted the all house in blue and white because they were the only colour that were around here ... then he made some furniture and all the sheds outside ... I helped him but he worked hard ... our life as never be easy ... we had two girls ... I had to work as well (Marija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In keeping with the rural traditions of wood-carving and needle work, the household furniture typically was home-built, styled and constructed mostly by the Lithuanian men and decorated with needle work done by the women of the family. As Emilija claimed:

The furniture of this room, except for the fridge ... was made by my husband ... he made this table and these chairs and for the children their beds ... he was very good he used to do also a lot of work in the garden ... he built an outside table, and all the fence around the house ... the inkilai (birds' nesting boxes) he also painted the house and made the sheds (Emilija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Small *inkilai* (birds' nesting boxes) are still found in all my respondents' gardens, placed on trees in front of the house and at the back in their gardens, as had been the custom in their homeland. Indeed, one of my elderly female respondents wanted to show me the *inkilai*, and interrupted the interview so that we could go into the garden to see the small nesting boxes built by her late husband. Janina made this comment:

In winter is very cold and we do not have many birds but I like to see them around my house in spring and in summer ... in Lithuania I remembered to wait for the birds because the good weather was closer ... in spring I like my garden and in summer it is not too hot, but I like to sit outside as I used to do when my husband was alive and with my children, ... now I am on my own, I have a daughter that lives with me but she came only during at the end of the week, she is not married but she lives in the city, she asked me to go and live with her but I like here it is like to be back home ... I can do what I like, it is not like to live in the flat in the city you cannot move ... I have never been in a flat in all my life (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The Lithuanian *émigrés* who went to live in the city typically found accommodation in multistorey apartment buildings in the suburban areas of Krasnoyarsk. These multistorey apartment buildings were clustered in groups of approximately four or five to form a residential complex with a common children's playground and courtyard with wooden tables and benches. A market with food and general stalls, a post-office, a medical centre and a kindergarten and primary schools were all located within walking distance.

The apartment typically consisted of two or three bedrooms according to the number of people in the family; a small kitchen; and a small sanitary room separated from the washing room; a medium size balcony that most of the *émigrés* used as a store room and on which they cultivated flowers and herbs; and, typically, double entrance doors which helped to protect the dwelling from the cold Siberian winter weather. Petras, who at the time of the interview was living on the fourth floor in one of these apartment buildings, explained:

I have been living in this apartment with my wife and my two children for the last forty years. It is comfortable, I have my bedroom, my son with his wife have their bedroom as well my two single sons ... Now that all of them work and they have a good salaries we have changed all the kitchen and the bathroom everything is modern and clean. We still had to paint one room the dining room but that's all ... When my wife was alive she was very proud of this apartment she used to work hard, when she came back from work, but we all helped her ... everyone had a duty, my oldest son had to clean the floors, and the youngest one had to do the washing and ironing and I helped my wife with the shopping and cooking ... we were always working. ... We had a house in the country for the summer and

during the weekend we used to go there and work (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Juozas, who for the last forty years has been living in an apartment building in the outskirts of Krasnoyarsk, recounted:

I live here since 1965, with my wife, she is Russian we do not have any children ... this flat is enough for us ... from the window we can see the forest and it is beautiful especially in winter because you can see some squirrels ... in spring if full of birds ... and flowers, we like here ... it is far from the city but I can catch the bus ... I need two catch two of them ... but we do not need to go to the city very often, and I was working not far from here I used to walk at the factory and my wife she is a teacher she had a school not far from here she was teaching in the local school. ... The only things that we would like to have a new sewerage system and a new kitchen ... they are very old ... but it costs a lot of money and we are pensioners ... we also went few times to Lithuania on holidays ... at Siauliai where my sister lives. In winter is very cold here, but we do not have to go to work anymore so we can stay at home ... I like to read ... but only in Lithuanian. I don't read Russian. I never liked (Juozas, *Interview transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Jonas, who at the time of the interview lived with his wife in a wooden cottage that he built more than forty years ago in a Krasnoyarsk suburb, claimed:

I lived in this house with my Russian wife and with my two children ... since I married. We started to build this house slowly because we both were working and we had also two children and not much time. It is like the one in which I used to live back home. My wife liked the garden with flowers and vegetable as my mother used to have. I always liked to live here. It is very close to the city, just few bus stops or by car ten minutes. I have everything that I want here, just as it was back home (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Most of these apartments and cottages which were occupied during the Soviet period are still owned or rented by the original recipients or by their offspring. The structure and organization of the built environment of these first generation Lithuanian *émigrés* reveals clearly that most of them had continued to live according to the old familiar ways in which they have been brought up, and they have maintained to some extent the associated traditions, beliefs and values brought with them at the time of deportation.

The New Lithuanian Family in Siberia

For most of the *émigrés* in Krasnoyarsk, their immediate and extended families were typically small. Most were limited to two or three children. The lifestyle and financial

hardship in the first years of their resettlement denied the larger families typical of rural Lithuania. As Antanas recalled:

We had only two children ... we could not afford more ... I was working all day, my husband was working ... we did not have money ... I wanted to give them also a bit more than what I had ... it was hard (Daiva, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004)

Janina maintained:

My husband was for many years in prison, then when he came home we had three daughters, I was already old ... one of them died ... it was hard to raise children here, not enough food, cold weather and my husband and I we were always working ... I wanted also send my daughters to the university and it cost a lot of money as we had to provide food and clothes (Janina, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Both adults of working age were typically in employment. Their roles within the family were no longer defined as they had been for their counterparts in the pre-war rural Lithuania. Out of necessity, their roles had adapted to the new life. The man was still considered the head of the family and the provider, but the position of the woman had changed, often very significantly. The woman was also working outside the family, partly in compliance with the Soviet expectation that required all Soviet citizens to contribute to the prosperity and development of the country, and partly because it was difficult for any family in the former Soviet Union at the time to survive on just one income.

At home the woman was still expected to fulfil her traditional role of wife and mother, although all members of the family evidently began to share part of the home duties in view of the fact that the woman was also employed outside the home. Daiva, a mother of two children, living in the city described her life in these words:

My father could not return home ... we all remain in Krasnoyarsk ... I married and I am now seventy eight ... all my family has been always working hard because we had only enough money for the basic needs ... when I married I continued to work in the same factory and I was an employee as I had the opportunity to study ... my husband died and I was left with my children (Daiva, *Interview Transcript 1*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Similar comments shared by all respondents confirm the continuing adjustment and re-shaping of roles that took place within the new Lithuanian family as its members adapted to the new realities. Once again they underline the difficulties and countervailing forces

faced by the *émigrés* as they sought to hold onto their original culture during and after their times in the forced labour camps and exile settlements.

Most of the traditional foods and eating habits had been maintained and were still followed by the old *émigrés*, although some aspects of doing so naturally had to be negotiated with their partners in mixed marriages. The respondents claimed that the Russian cooking traditions are in fact very similar to those of Lithuania, largely because the soil and the weather conditions in both countries are favourable to the same crops.

Janina claimed:

I cook only Lithuanian dishes that I learnt from my mother at home, in Lithuania ... here as in Lithuania to fight the cold winter you have to have fat that protect you, I also eat meat that give me more energy and drink a lot of milk. ... In Autumn as I used to do back home I still make my jam out of berries, that I pick up wild just on the back of my house near to forest and my strawberry' jam and I preserve a lot of mushroom. I do here at home in my kitchen outside in the garden my children came and help me in summer on Saturday and on Sunday. They spent some holidays here to prepare with me some food for the winter they live in the city (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The use of fat in many of the staple dishes is evidently very high, due mainly to the severe weather conditions in the East European and Siberian winters. Petras explained:

In this country, as in Lithuania, in winter you don't have much because it is too cold therefore you have to prepare everything in summer so you can eat in winter. Now you can find everything in the shops but in winter it is very expensive and if you are a pensioner you don't have enough money to spend only on food. Lithuanians like to eat well and a lot, but you can see us we are not fat as the cold it helps to burnt your fat ... I preserve a lot of mushroom that I dried or I put in jars ... my children like them very much ... I live with my children and I cook for them as they are all working and I cook only what I remember my mother used to cook and my wife that is dead. She was Lithuanian (Petras, *Interview, Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Typically all the respondents who live in the city have a *dacha* (summer cottage) in the country, which is a source of an additional income to their pension and also to their children's family. In fact, during the good season the *émigrés* would grow enough vegetables and fruit to be preserved and consumed during the cold season with wild berries and mushrooms gathered from the near-by forest. Antanas, living in Krasnoyarsk all year, described how he spent his summer with his family.

Most of us are still working hard in Summer ... I go with my wife to my dacha and we stay there all summer ... Saturday and Sunday often my children with their families join us and together we work in the vegetable garden and in the

orchard ... the dacha is forty-two kilometres from the city and I returned to the flat only once every two weeks to pick up what I need ... with my vegetable garden we are all self sufficient as well as my sons with their families we need only to buy salt and meat ... we don't spend any money on food and we all eat well, I made also my own dektinė [vodka], bottle of two litres each ... I have also a small smoked house and there I can smoked fish and meat and sausage ... near the house there is a river and I go there fishing ... my wife she is Russian but she can prepare everything ... Russian and Lithuanian dishes ... It is just as it was back home, on my father farm ... we used to have a very large farms, with lots of animals and people helping us in the orchards ... we had hundreds apple trees ... I can make also my cheese and my wife she knows how to bake the bread ... I buy honey from people that has bees had we eat it with cheese ... just as it was at home (Antanas, *Interview transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

With the exception of those in poor health, most of the respondents maintained that even though they are now elderly and some are alone, they still enjoy cooking and eating much as they did in the 'old time'.

Herbal tea and instant coffee are routinely on the *émigrés*' dinner tables with their daily meals. Antanas claimed that herbal tea is prepared by the old *émigrés* directly from herbs and flowers gathered in the neighbouring forest during summer, or bought at the local market, essentially as it was done in Lithuania before the war.

In our *dacia* we grew all sort of vegetable and we have also a forest closely where we can go and pick up mushrooms, herbs, berries all sort of things as we did back home and we made our own tea ... the Lithuanian that don't have a *dacha* they go and pick up the herbs in the forest or they buy them at the market (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Fresh coffee beans and instant coffee are expensive items and therefore not always affordable. Most of the participants in the study agreed that they could purchase spirits quite cheaply and that they were also able to make their own bottle of *dektinė* (vodka). Juozas asserted that the consumption of alcohol among the *émigrés* has never been high.

The Russian people young and old they drink too much ... all the time ... and they have always done it. In Lithuania, I remember my father would drink only for parties or when the friends came to see him ... we had to work, and we children were not allowed to drink, here to buy alcohol is very cheap and in Krasnoyarsk once a year there is the festival of the beer, you can drink free as much as you want ... the Russian they all get drunk but not the Lithuanians I never did ... when I was young I had a family and a work to look after ... I did not have time to get drunk people here drink because they do not have anything spiritual in which to believe ... they do not believe in anything ... I am a strong Catholic and believe I know that drinking is wrong (Juozas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Similar feelings are echoed in the comments of all the respondents, suggesting that many of the pre-WWII rural Lithuanian beliefs and traditions are still being preserved and supported by the aging *émigrés*, despite the fact that they have been living for more than fifty years outside the homeland and in a community where, according to them, religious and family values are diluted.

The Struggle to Maintain the Lithuanian Language

For the Lithuanians left behind after most of the former deportees returned to Lithuania, the possibility of speaking their native language daily in the villages and in Krasnoyarsk became increasingly difficult. Jouzas claimed that most of them had already entered into mixed marriages with the language of communication –spoken at home – now being Russian.

I worked with some Lithuanians at the railway line here in Krasnoyarsk, but then my friends left, they wanted to returned to Lithuania, I could not do it ... I was married, my wife is Russian, I had built the house I had already a boy and a girl who were going to school, my wife had a job, ... I did not like to stay here ... but my life was here (Juozas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Moreover, their children had grown up, and most of them left home to attend high school or university or found jobs. They started to socialise with friends from different ethnic groups and began to merge into the mainstream population. Russian became their daily language, with Lithuanian being used only at home with their parents. They married members of different ethnic groups, started families of their own, and Russian naturally became the language in which they raised their children. Janina made clear how she still continues to speak Lithuanian with her adult children, even though they themselves have adopted Russian as the language in their own homes.

When my children were small and until they lived at home with us ... and my husband was still alive we spoke only Lithuanian ... but then my daughters all married with Russians, ... in the villages there were no Lithuanian men left ... all of them returned to Lithuania with their parents ... my daughters married boys that they met at the University or at work. ... One of my daughter is a doctor and she met her husband when she was in the first year of the medical school ... I wanted for her a Lithuanian man ... but it was impossible. ... My daughters they speak Lithuanian only with me ... I don't speak Russian with them ... I did not learn to read or to write Russian ... it was a form of protest ... I still refused now (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Although the new life for most of the old *émigrés* prevented daily use of the Lithuanian language, the respondents agreed that maintenance of their language was high among the generation of offspring who were born in Lithuania and had been attending primary school before deportation. Agnes, who had arrived in Siberia as a school-aged child, confirmed:

Here all the people of about my age speak Lithuania, and also younger ... we all speak Lithuanian, I spoke with my parents and friends, my wife is Russian and she started to learn Lithuanian, we go almost every year to Lithuania on holidays, I cannot write very well in Lithuanian but I can speak and read (Agnes, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Among most of the Siberian-Lithuanian generation born into mixed marriages, the knowledge of the Lithuanian language is either limited or completely absent. They were exposed primarily to the Russian language during their childhood. Juozas, who had a German wife, stated:

My children cannot speak Lithuanian, just few words that they have learn when they were travelling there few years ago ... they would like to go and work to Lithuania, but they cannot speak the Language it is impossible now, may be my youngest would be able, he wants to go there and study the language but he need a lot of money. ... My wife was German ... between us we always spoke German but with the children Russian ... I was here by myself the children they did not have any opportunity to speak with grandparents (Juozas, *Interview, Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Some of the grandchildren can speak Lithuanian. Some are studying or have studied at Lithuanian universities in Vilnius or Kaunas; others have decided to live in Lithuania and are married to Lithuanians they met there. Others who settled in Siberia spend part of their holidays in most years visiting the country of their ancestors. As Antanas, evidently proud of the achievements of his two sons and pleased with their interest in the Lithuanian culture and language, declared:

My second son went to study at the university of Vilnius and now he has married to a Lithuanian girl and they live in Lithuania ... my first son is married with a Russian girl and they have a son, they want to go to live in Lithuania and work there ... he is now studying Lithuanian (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In contrast, Petras admitted with evident feelings of despair and sadness:

My two boys they would like to go to live in Lithuania and to work there but they do not know the language and they cannot do anything. ... My wife was German, we spoke Russian at home with our children ... my children did not have any relatives from Lithuania here ... I was deported with my mother, my brother and

my sister but they all returned to Lithuania ... I was not allowed (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In 1997, in the attempt to maintain their language, a Sunday school was organised for the first time in Krasnoyarsk. Antanas explained that:

A Lithuanian teacher was appointed from Lithuania ... the school was attended successfully for few years, there were about twenty-five students ... then the teacher returned to Lithuania and the school was closed (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

According to some of the *émigrés* interviewed in the study, the Lithuanian language has survived and continues to survive among their Russian-born children and grandchildren, many of whom have a strong interest in the country and culture of their ancestors, and a sense of continuing national identity that was and is still actively nurtured by their grandparents and parents. These children and grandchildren of the original *émigrés*, although born and raised in Soviet Siberia or Russian Siberia, perceive Lithuania as a free country offering a better lifestyle and environment and providing a more open window to Western countries. Janina described with these words the interest in Lithuanian culture shown by her daughter and granddaughters:

My daughter and my two granddaughters and me ... we go every year to Lithuania to visit my sister in Kaunas, they like the country, the culture, the food, the songs ... the girls are considering to go and live there ... my eldest granddaughter has studied already for few months Lithuanian at the University of Kaunas ... my eldest granddaughter she speak Lithuanian and she is only twenty two ... she wants to speak with me in Lithuanian ... my daughter is married with a doctor he is Russian, but he likes Lithuania and our culture, ... he speaks [only] a bit of Lithuanian but he understand it (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The Role of Education

The traditional pre-war values attached to education continued to be maintained among the Lithuanian *émigrés*. Most of the grandparents and parents encouraged their children to achieve a good education and a better status. Agnes remembered how her parents helped and encouraged her to pursue her study.

I was allowed to attend the high school, but my parents had to provide food and clothing for me ... I was away from home ... I went also to a Technical College in Krasnoyarsk. I studied business ... than I worked in a Government office and I was able to have a good position ... I was the person in charge of my office ... I never married I became a career woman ... now I am retired and I help my niece

to go to the University in Moscow ... it is very expensive so I help her (Agnes, *Interview transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Statements such these were common in most of the interviews and are reflective of attitudes that were already well established by the time of deportation. Back home, for the rural population, education represented the only means available to most of their children to assure them of a better social and economic status in the new Independent Lithuania. This was especially true for the usually large size of the typical rural family of the day, given the likelihood that only some of the children could reasonably look to a continuing life on the land in their adulthood.

In Siberia, most of the *émigré* families had to confront a similar reality. Regardless of their status prior to deportation, all were again forced into a situation of deprivation and poverty. Janina described her former life in Kaunas with a mixture of sadness and nostalgia, explaining how she and her husband had encouraged their Russian Lithuanian-born daughters to look to education as the basis of their way forward in their new society.

My parents had a big farm in a village near Kaunas ... I was sent to study in the city, with my two brothers. I became a secretary ... I met my husband, he was a journalist. We married and we lived in the city. But during summer everybody was working on the farm of my father. I remembered during my holidays since I was a student I used to go home with my two brothers and help my parents on the farm ... we had people coming to help us, but the farm was very big ... there was a lot to do ... we had a very big orchard ... we were deported just because according to the Soviets my father was a bourgeois. ... My husband and I we worked hard in this village and if we were able to give to my daughters a good education ... one is a teacher in Moscow and the other is a doctor ... not far from here (Janina, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Without exception, all the participants in the study stressed that most of their children and grandchildren had been able to achieve good professional positions in Russian Siberia and in Lithuania. Even the oldest of the original *émigrés'* children had already completed some years of high school, and some even college or university, before being deported. However, they were not allowed to continue their study in the first years of deportation. They were eventually able to finish their courses at a technical institute or university with support from their families. As Antanas declared:

I am geologist and my wife is a paediatrician ... when I came here I was only twelve. I was not allowed to study, I had to go to work ... then later I could, I studied and now I am still working two days a week ... (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The Soviet Control of Religious Practices

In 1992 the Catholic Church in Krasnoyarsk, originally built by Polish and Lithuanian exiles during the Czarist period, and used as a theatre during the Soviet period, was re-opened for Christian worship once a week on Sundays and for Christmas and Easter celebrations. See photographs in Appendix 13. So after years of undisclosed religious practices, Lithuanian émigrés were at last able openly to attend the Sunday service. By that time the number of the Lithuanian émigrés in the region of Krasnoyarsk had become smaller, as most of them had returned to Lithuania, died, or were married to partners from the mainstream population and had started their lives separately from the rest of the remaining émigrés. However, Petras remembered that attendance at the church was high.

Many Lithuanians used to come to the church at the beginning ... we even asked to the Catholic Church in Lithuania, to send us a priest to work for the community here and to help to maintain our religious traditions and to minister the Sacraments and celebrate the Sunday mass in Lithuanian, to visit us at home, we were many ... especially old people ... they couldn't come to the church for health reasons ... they lived in villages far away or simply they did not have the money to travel to the city (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

At that time the Parish priest was (and is still at the time of the interviews) Polish. Today he celebrates three services in Russian each Sunday. All are well attended by a mixed congregation of Catholic émigrés and converted Russians. Marija, who regularly attended the Sunday masses, stated:

Our church is open only on Sunday for three hours ... during the week and at night it is still used as a theatre, but we are more than hundred people who attend regularly the service ... Polish, German and Lithuanians, and some converted Russians ... we have had also christenings and marriages (Marija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Most of the original émigrés with some of their children and grandchildren also attend the Christmas and Easter Day services that are held every year. Those living in the surrounding villages would often be brought to the church by city-based friends or relatives. After the service, all would gather at a suitably large meeting place, usually the Polish school. The Lithuanian émigrés in Krasnoyarsk did not have a school or community house of their own. The émigrés, with their families, would share lunch together, although it would not be a typical traditional Lithuanian festive meal; but they would still share the traditional *margucios*. They would sing old Lithuanian songs and speak in the Lithuanian language, as Petras explained:

After [the Christmas and Easter] Mass we all go to the Polish School ... there are also some Lithuanian that they are not religious but they want to come and share some time together with our wives ... although they are Russians and do not speak Lithuanian, they understand the language and are happy to share [the celebration] as a community event. We all know each other, our wives are Polish, Russian, German and two of us have married two Lithuanian girls... but every time there is some new people join us. At the beginning we were only ten people, now we are more than fifty ... we gathered regularly twice a year (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Verbo Sekmadieni (Palm Sunday), this important and popular pre-war religious tradition that was immediately abandoned once the Lithuanians had been deported, has re-appeared also since 1992 as an important liturgical celebration for the senior *émigrés*. During the now-revived Palm Sunday service, the parish priest blesses the greenery that the *émigrés* bring to the church. Petras recorded:

On Palm Sunday, I go to the church with some *rūta* [rue] the national Lithuanian flower that grow very well here in Siberia ... and the priest blessed it ... then I will take it home and I keep it until next year ... my mother in Lithuanian she used to bring small juniper branches to be blessed (Petras, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Some traditional services in accordance to the Roman Catholic religious calendar could not be maintained (at the time of these interviews) as the church was opened to worship only on Sundays: the traditional Friday afternoon service to remember and commemorate the death of Jesus Christ; the *Gegužė Menesi* (Month of May); the traditional month of prayer dedicated to the Virgin Mary; and *Vėlinė* (All Soul's Day), the day of remembrance for departed family members and friends. However, according to Agota these practices are still maintained, albeit mostly as individual or family practices.

For *Gegužė Menesi*, we always prayed together ... [in the early days] we were many ... in my village there were about fifty families ... but then [most of them] returned to Lithuania ... not many of us were left behind in the village, but we still met and prayed [for a time] ... but now, nobody is left. I am the only one ... I pray ... I still recite my rosary by myself (Agota, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Emilija further explained:

For *Vėlinė* I go to the cemetery of the village to visit the grave of my husband and of one of my daughter. I take flowers and candles and I pray for them ... then I go and visit the graves of those Lithuanian that died and don't have anybody who look after their graves. I also go to visit a German grave of some friends of mine ... they both died here ... they did not have any children (Emilija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

After 1992 most of deceased members of the family were brought back to Lithuania by their children or relatives. However, a large number of Lithuanians are still buried in former Soviet Siberia, but their graves have not been found, as Jonas recounted during an interview:

Especially at the beginning people that died in the labour camps, they were buried in some place outside the camps ... but with the time the Russians have built or used the area for agricultural purposes and it was not easy to find the original graves ... I don't have any relatives here, they are all buried in Lithuania, they could go back ... I have only my son who died four years ago in an accident (Jonas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

While attendance at the church had been high in the few years from 1992 to 1996 and most traditional Catholic religious celebrations and practices had been re-established, this soon diminished to the point that today, only the old original *émigrés* (now just ten to fifteen in number) regularly attend the Sunday Mass. Many of these now-ageing *émigrés* are experiencing health problems or becoming increasingly frail and confined to their homes, and again others with their families returned to Lithuania. Valerija stated:

I live far from the city, I cannot go to the church and we do not have any Lithuanian priests here ... I pray at home, I recite my rosary ... my daughter take me to the church in Krasnoyarsk for Christmas and Easter (Valerija, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Although the original *émigrés* have been living for more than fifty years in an atheistic society, most of them seem to have maintained their religious values and beliefs in which they have been brought up. Marija maintained that although most of the Siberian-Lithuanian generation do not regularly attend religious services, it seems to have retained part of the religious traditions of their ancestors.

The young generation doesn't come to the church very often, however, when the grandparents or parents died they come to the church and asked for a priest and a funeral ... [and with pride added further] ... In Irkutsk, there is a young Lithuanian girl, that is very active in the church and wants to become a Carmelite nun (Marija, *Interview, Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

The Beginning of a New Community

From 1992 the *émigrés* in Krasnoyarsk established the *Lituanica*, a cultural organization as an attempt to maintain their national identity and promote their culture among the new Siberian-Lithuanian generation. See Newspapers and Newsletters in Appendix 12. It was a slow process at the beginning. The *émigrés* had to overcome bureaucratic hindrance in

a system where the establishment of non-state organizations was still perceived as a threat. According to the president Antanas (at the time of the interview), the organization was formed easily, since it needed only to be recognized by the Russian authority.

When they gave us the permission to openly gather and they recognised the society, I could not believe it. I was scared, for nights I remembered I could not sleep and I was always ready to be summoned by the police ... but it did not happen ... after so many years, finally we could declare openly to be Lithuanians. Most of us has never said it ... we have many members in this society and we continue to grow (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

Obviously it is difficult to contact all *émigrés* in the vast Krasnoyarsk region, but the organisation has established a network of communication that reached the remote areas. Antanas maintained that after so many years of living in the former Soviet Siberia, some *émigrés* had chosen not to disclose their original ethnic origin and they continue in this choice.

There are many Lithuanians also in the remote villages, but we don't know where ... they don't contact us ... Siberia is a big country. ... At the beginning and until few years ago, we were scared to say that we were Lithuanians ... but now we have our organisation, we have our choir, we have back our national identity (Antanas, *Interview Transcript 2*, Krasnoyarsk, 2004).

In 1989 the choir *Rūta* (Rue), was established to promote Lithuanian folk songs. The choir, dressed in Lithuanian national costume, has performed on several occasions in Krasnoyarsk and in 1998 at the Song Festival in Lithuania. See Photographs in Appendix 13. Interestingly, the members of the choir are mostly young Russian Lithuanian-born children and grandchildren.

Concluding Summary

The Lithuanian *émigrés* living in the former Soviet Siberia were part of an ethnic group deported as a consequence of forty-six years of Soviet occupation of their homeland. They constituted two distinctive groups, which included political prisoners (mainly partisans and dissidents) and *kulaks* (farmers). They were sentenced for different lengths of time and sent to re-settlement villages and prison camps. These two groups have been influenced by different experiences, challenges and circumstances which have affected the retention, adaptation and in some case the loss of their pre-WWII Lithuanian culture.

In the first years of deportation, Catholic religious traditions and practices played an important role in the life of the deportees. Living in an atheistic society, faith and religious practices were the only instruments at the deportees' disposal, to assist them in their physical and spiritual survival in an environment where they endured constant psychological and physical hardship. Particularly for the large numbers of deportees in the prison camps, the retention of religious practices and traditions signified their individual survival.

In the exile settlement villages the deportees, mainly *kulaks* were able to re-create at least to some extent a spiritual life similar to that of their villages in their homeland, through religious practices and traditions shared with other members of the community in secrecy. Most of the Catholic Lithuanians perceived this as a link between their past and present life and it gave them a sense of national identity and belonging. By 1960 most of the former *kulaks* returned to Lithuania with their families and only a few family units were left behind in remote settlements. These Lithuanians continued to maintain their religious practices and traditions at an individual family level, in the absence of a larger community. Clearly, the *émigrés* in the villages missed the sense of the formal, open, religious community, the sharing of religious celebration and practices which had been so typical of their pre-war rural experience and upbringing. Indeed, the religious life of rural Lithuanians gravitated mostly around their Catholic parishes.

In 1992, the Catholic Church in Krasnoyarsk was re-opened for worship. At that time the vast majority of the *émigrés* living in the city with some of their children would regularly attend the only Sunday service. As for the *émigrés* living in the villages, their attendance was not always possible due to distance and lack of transportation. The aging *émigrés* had to depend on children and grandchildren for transport. However, most of them participated in the services of Christmas and Easter celebrations.

Today, the numbers of original *émigrés* attending church has further decreased for health and practical reasons and also due to the loss of the few other families who returned to Lithuania. However, they still maintained their religion as individual practice. One can conclude therefore that although the Lithuanian *émigrés* had been living for more than fifty years in an atheistic society, religion seems to have remained a strong element of

Lithuanian identification; and similarly to some extent in most of their children, who have still maintained Roman Catholic traditions.

The Lithuanian language, one of the key features of Lithuanian identity, according to this research has been maintained among the original émigrés and their children, since the first days of their deportation, both in the exile settlements and in forced-labour camps. The Siberian-Lithuanian born children, although exposed to the Russian language in their daily life, continued to maintain the use of the language of their parents within the context of the family and rest of the Lithuanian community in the village. After 1960, when most of the former deportees returned to Lithuania, the use of the language in the exile settlements became a challenge. The younger generation started to merge into the mainstream population and most of the single men released from the camps settled in the city and entered into marriages with non Lithuanians. The language was still maintained as the way of communication between the old *émigrés* and their children. Today, although the *émigrés* must speak Russian as a national language in their gatherings and contacts within the community, they continue the use of their native language. Furthermore, most of them declared that they know only how to speak Russian; and indeed they have refused to learn how to read and write it.

It appears that since 1992 the new Siberian-Lithuanian generation has established close ties with the land of their ancestors through studying and holidays; and therefore in 1997 the Lithuanian community, in an attempt to maintain a live Lithuanian language, organized a Sunday school which was well attended. This allowed the younger generation to further develop and maintain a basic knowledge of the language of their ancestors.

The pre-WWII rural Lithuanian family traditions have always survived in the exile settlements, with a certain degree of adaptation. This especially has been the case where both parents were Lithuanians and there was also the presence of elderly members of the family, at least until 1960. Their presence guaranteed the continuation of family traditions. In the city with mixed marriages, the pre-war family traditions struggled to survive even if the environment and lifestyle were very similar to those in Lithuania. Traditions had to be compromised due to the different ethnic background of the spouse.

In conclusion, the Lithuanian *émigrés* in Siberia, although limited in numbers, coming from different social backgrounds, and living in an alien environment and difficult circumstances, succeeded after fifty years in retaining part of those elements that I have identified as the key characteristics of Lithuanian culture. The language, the Roman Catholic religion and family traditions and have been handed down successfully to some extent to the new Siberian-Lithuanian generation.

Two separate columns, profiling in summary form the cultural characteristics of the rural and urban subgroup sample, are presented in columns 3 and 4 of the multi-column table in Appendix 3.

Three non-identifying but directly grounded composite narratives to convey the sense of people who constitute the present-day Siberian sample are in Appendix 10: 10.6, 10.7 and 10.8.

The next chapter provides a detailed account of the retention, loss or adaptation of the key characteristic of the pre-WWII Lithuanian culture in the present-day sample in Lithuania.