

<http://doi.org/10.31861/pytlit2024.110.239>

УДК 821.172-94

NON-FICTION FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: SITUATION OF LITHUANIAN STATEMEN AMID TRAGIC EVENTS OF 1940–1941

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Abstract. Non-fiction literature has become the crucial historical drama of the present, with its power to change the fate of the state and its interpretations. The line of statehood defence in the context of history or the so-called Mannerheim line is crucial in texts accessing only destroyed documentary sources left from decades of occupation. It is characteristic of the current era, in which real wars of history develop, and fiction causes the need for non-fiction looking for explanations, facts and illuminating shadowed destruction of the State and still dark turns of Lithuania's historical path. Several episodes of non-fiction electrify society even today. There are unresolved questions where non-fiction is invaluable to changing the pro-Soviet historical narrative. The first question is the meeting of the last Government and the loss of Independence on June 15, 1940. Most Lithuanians believe it was President Antanas Smetona's guilt (1874–1944), though he voted against the Soviets' ultimatum and realised where things were leading. The question about the President's guilt for leaving Lithuania and his mysterious death in an "accidental" fire in the USA is still influential in contemporary Lithuania but seems to have failed for genuine historical research. The following unresolved question is about the June Uprising against the Soviets during the invasion of the German army and the role of Colonel Kazys Škirpa in collaboration with Nazis or being their enemy. Historian and journalist Vidmantas Valiušaitis is engaged in the historical decoding of the Lithuanian Statehood path and building its own Mannerheim line, actually for predicting the fate of Ukraine and a new war with the Imperial ambitions of Russia in Europe.

Keywords: non-fiction; research; history; questions; Statehood; defence; Mannerheim line.

Non-fiction literature has become the most important *historical drama* of the present. It is characteristic of the current era, in which real wars of history narrative develop. Here, non-fiction literature is invaluable – memoirs, research in humanities, archives, and most importantly, windows of the truth play an exceptional role, little by little, cleaning up the pollution with garbage from the image of Lithuania's independence history. The individual destinies of statesmen, the statements, letters, diaries, confessions of writers, the enigma of their appearance and disappearance, and the hidden circumstances of their departures from life, “successfully” wrapped in the fakes of ideology by the Soviets are held in high regard. This whole process, with non-fiction or documentary literature as the driving force, opens the indescribable drama of Lithuania's fate against Soviet-era fabrications, next to which fiction appears almost on the margins of this maturing process of the nation. I will single out several episodes of non-fiction literature that are exciting today, illuminating the dark turns of Lithuania's historical path.

The question about the last government meeting, June 15, 1940.

It was the day of the loss of independence on June 15, 1940. We cannot come to terms with this, asking why the government accepted Stalin's ultimatum, let the Red Army in and did not resist. Why did the Lithuanian army not resist? In the opinion of most Lithuanian historians, politicians, scientists and journalists, it is the most shameful page in the history of Lithuania. Its culprit is President Antanas Smetona. Although he was in favour of resistance, other members of the government, such as Army Commander Vincas Vitkauskas and Minister of Deference General Stasys Raštikis, did not support him. This *last meeting* was like a stab in the back to Lithuanian self-awareness and has been discussed in detail in non-fiction literature until now. Realising where events were leading, the president crossed the border with Germany through the Kybartai border crossing (it seems he was the only one in this context) and hurriedly left Lithuania so the Bolsheviks would not force him to surrender the state. It was a matter of minutes. When he got close to the border (his family had left earlier), he had to be detained, and only because of a policeman loyal to him was he taken across the stream and thus reached Germany. Then, they wanted to get him back in various ways, but Germany did not betray him and allowed him to stay. Later, he and his family emigrated to America. Although he was forbidden to

engage in political activities there, Smetona was liquidated by the KGB at the end of the war (1944), dying in an “accidental” fire. So, he could not stop the allies in Yalta from handing over half of Europe to Stalin and surrendering the Baltic countries, including Lithuania, to the Russian side of the world. Meanwhile, in Soviet history textbooks, he was humiliated, despised, marginalised as a dictator, the undertaker of democracy, and constantly ridiculed in the cartoons of history school books as he waded across the stream. This tendency is deeply rooted, albeit partially, in the current self-consciousness of Lithuania – the constant shame and inferiority of being a smaller entity next to the imperial narratives so romanticised in Russian culture. Even contemporary writers have succumbed to this concept. Marius Ivaškevičius (*1973) *Žali* [*Greens*], 2002, is an example of a transformed pro-soviet paradigm in the postmodern field. And only detailed research here allows us to answer some questions. The most important fact is that the commander-in-chief of the army, Vincas Vitkauskas (1890–1965), was already a traitor, a recruited KGB agent. However, it is seldom mentioned for some unknown reason. So, Vitkauskas ordered the army not to resist, and the Red Army disarmed the Lithuanian army. Later, he spoke and wrote in Russian only. In his memoirs, he was proud that he had managed to destroy the defence of the Lithuanian state and the army, which could have resisted the Soviets (Milašius 2021). However, as if by agreement, this circumstance is mythologised with Smetona’s escape and is not mentioned, examined or researched. It means surrendering to feelings – bitterness due to the confusion of the statesmen at a decisive moment, condemning the escape of the president (the alternative was to encounter the fates of the presidents of Latvia and Estonia – personalities destruction, punishment, prison and death) and treating the fire in America as an “unproven fact”. Although quietly realising that it was not a coincidence but a successfully completed “task” by the KGB agent (there is testimony, but it is supposedly marginalised) (Skučaitė 2024: p. 5). The interpretation of death by fire is called a “coincidence”. However, the only positive factor here is the “not burned” but preserved and published in the US *Memoirs of President Antanas Smetona* (Černiauskas 2024: p. 29–36), where many questions are answered in detail. At the beginning of his political career, Smetona was a Lithuanian language teacher in Jelgava, Latvia, so

his great literary style opened this most painful twist of fate for Lithuania to a critical eye. Joint research of the military commander Vitkauskas, called the greatest traitor of the State (Milašius 2021), activities would also be necessary, though it still has to wait its time, as with other non-fiction books, which may fundamentally change the self-awareness of national history. However, it is worth mentioning the data collected by some witnesses about the fire in Cleveland that killed the president and the bragging of his assassin, KGB agent Povilas Rostomskis, spoken during some drinking frenzy (Skučaitė 2024: p. 5). Does the confusion of the *last meeting* persist? It ended tragically for other Lithuanian statesmen, too. On June 15, 1940, Minister of the Interior Kazimieras Skučas and Director of the State Security Department Augustinas Povilaitis were betrayed, handing them to the Soviets. President was against it, in this case acting honourably. Povilaitis was arrested while trying to cross the border, and both were executed on July 30, 1941, in Moscow's famous murder place, Komunarka (Skučaitė, 2021: p. 92).

Another extremely relevant and unresolved question from non-fiction literature is the June Uprising of 1941 (June 23, 1941), when Lithuania rose against the Soviets, fleeing from the German army, and tried to restore the state. A Provisional Government was formed which tried to cooperate with the German administration. However, the fact of the Uprising was overshadowed by the start of anti-Jewish pogroms and, later, the terrible industrialisation of the Holocaust in Lithuania. It became a very convenient factor for the Soviet narrative to blacken and deny the significance of the June Uprising. By the way, during the retreat of the Soviets, terrible war crimes were committed in Lithuania. Torture and murders of innocent people were too gruesome to talk about, which could lead to an uncontrollable wave of revenge by prisoners released from KGB cells and interrogated under torture. The situation became uncontrollable, and the Nazi administration encouraged as many Lithuanians as possible to get involved to make it look that the Lithuanians were the main murderers of the Jews. That *Bloodland* starting period remains only partially explored. The real meaning of the Uprising seems to disappear under the bloody black soil of the holocaust. There are still many attempts to resurrect this event in texts – a solid two-volume printing, *Birželis kvietė į kovą* [*June Invited to Fight*] – collections of documents were finally published (edited by

V. Valiušaitis, Vilnius: Žara, 2021).

By the way, Vidmantas Valiušaitis (*1956) is the author, publicist, and historian who dares to raise uncomfortable questions and legitimise the Lithuanian struggle against the Soviet Union in the narratives of current history, constantly faces professional difficulties as a researcher and has been removed from the statehood research centres he actually leads. However, in this sense, it is worth highlighting him as one of the best recent authors of non-fiction literature on unblocking Lithuanian history. Vidmantas Valiušaitis focuses his interests on the dramatic turns of Lithuanian history, trying to reveal the details and their meaningful interaction and the intervention of hybrid actions through unverified data. The book seems to play another role, cleaning up the perception of history and drawing *Mannerheim's line* through the political *red lines* related to the war in Ukraine. As we know, due to the Russian invasion, this concept has become paradigmatic even nowadays. Thus, it is necessary to notice the flexibility of the *red lines* concept and their *perpetuity* in the snares and traps of historical narratives, the never-disappearing interpretations of past and present events and reality, a permanent network in which we get confused. And it is only because of Ukraine that the horizon of the *Mannerheim line* in Lithuania's self-awareness is getting stronger.

It is possible to see emerging new junctions of discourse: historical fiction, what wakes up the protest of witnesses like Ivaškevičius' fiction *The Greens*, and factual paradigm-changing *non-fiction*. The latter includes essential documentary texts and studies that change the face of literature. Some authors just play postmodern games over Bloodlands in a cynical way and with emptiness in style. However, one of the authors changing this paradigm in non-fiction is Vidmantas Valiušaitis, who, in his books, refines the strategy of the meaning of statehood. Such books scream the truth even in their titles: *Kalbėkime patys, girdėkime kitus. Tragiškieji istorijos 1940–1941 metai* [*Let Us Speak and Hear Others: History's Tragic Years of 1940–1941*] (Valiušaitis 2013), and *Istorikai nenaudoja dalies šaltinių. Augustinas Idzelis ir Lietuvos okupacijų interpretavimo drama*. [*Historians do not Use Some Sources. Dr Augustinas Idzelis and Interpretation Drama of Occupations of Lithuania*] (Valiušaitis 2019).

Dramas of Lithuanian history open up as inexhaustible sources for

literary contexts. They become signs of the new era demanding their own time-space scene for self-perception of the time meaning. These fractures of the new era, like underground shocks from the past, come from the suspended time through political-cultural breakthroughs of previously rejected events and shocks of the conflictual dramaturgy of their interpretations. The epochal turning point in 1940–1941 is one of them and has been unsettling until now. The occupation of Lithuania is also carefully examined by Vidmantas Valiušaitis, the author of essential non-fiction books that change the paradigms of the Lithuanian nation's self-awareness. Valiušaitis' scientific career was undermined by the breakthrough of Lithuania's political liberation before the collapse of the Soviet system. He participated in the most important rally of Lithuanian dissidents at the beginning of the Gorbachev era on August 23, 1987, commemorating the signing of the protocols of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, which determined the occupation of the Baltic states. At that time, the reorganisation movement, the movement for the revival of Lithuania, had not yet been legalised (the founding meeting of the Movement was held only on June 3, 1988), and only the bravest representatives of the Lithuanian intelligentsia, who paid the price with the prospects of their careers, and political prisoners who had already been free, for whom the Soviet system *red lines* did not exist, took part in the rally. Vidmantas Valiušaitis, who then studied at the university's postgraduate school for a doctoral degree, got expelled. However, the path of his research acquired the impulse of this unconventional courage, which continued throughout his life's journey to uncover historical truth. And he was constantly punished for it with a career perspective...

Delving into the tragedy of immeasurable depth of controversies in Lithuania in 1940–1941, Valiušaitis managed to travel to America, where the witnesses of such tragedy lived or still live, and who were *not liquidated*, like President Smetona, and talk to them to learn about the Lithuanian public figures arrested and killed by the Soviets at the very dawn of the occupation treachery, when “nobody could understand anything”. Valiušaitis reproduces the image of the occupation reality following the meaning of the texts of philosopher Antanas Maceina (1908–1987, Germany, Münster), a direct witness of that time.

The philosopher understood perfectly well the deceit of the Bolsheviks and the phenomenon of evil taking over humanity. After the

war, when he was in Germany, he encountered this directly from his wife, who came from occupied Lithuania with a Russian delegation persuading him to return. Maceina refused, saying:

There is nothing humanly possible to do here without wanting to let the Bolsheviks make me a scoundrel and a traitor. <...> Bolsheviks are good psychologists. When they see that a person tends to compromise for the sake of his family, they press him further and squeeze him to the limit like a lemon (Valiušaitis 2013: p. 38).

Soon after this upheaval, Maceina wrote the work *Niekšybės paslaptis* [*The Secret of Meanness*] in German. Reviewing Antanas Maceina's *The Secret of Meanness: Antichrist in History According to the Story of V. Solovyov* in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, protestant philosopher Walter Nigg writes:

For our time, the secret of meanness should not be passed over with a shrug. They have experienced a satanic manifestation that a couple of older generations would have thought impossible. Evil, in its real unreality, is such a phenomenon that today's people have to stand up against in a completely different way than before (Valiušaitis 2013: p. 39).

The dynamics of loss of the state recreated in the narrative of memories bring back step by step the dramaturgy of the functioning of time processes, encode the meaning of the word and deny "emptiness". These semantic shifts in the actual context of the story also presuppose the features of literary processes from which it is impossible to separate fictional texts. It is the basic foundation of truth for any narrative of meaning-making. It becomes impossible for the writer to write a text that is not based on historical documents and shows indifference to the survival of the Lithuanian state. Literature will not be successful without a researched context of history, without a clear mathematical internal expediency in relation to time (modernist open "placement" and "timeliness" will no longer convince), without a relevant internal openness to the *non-end of history* and the pulse of the current political discourse. And there are no greater sources of dramaturgical tension than *unresolved questions of history*, the most painful of which, so far, is precisely the object of Vidmantas Valiušaitis' research: Lithuania in

1940–1941. The revelations of this era, like the blood-stained earth from the drought, inexorably keep emerging in the testimonies of memories, raising whirlwinds of surprises and probabilities. Questions of global dispute are asked: Soviet and German occupation, their contexts, and the fate of the Jews. And the fate of Lithuania State. Where are the limits of sacrificing truth for the sake of political survival?

Vidmantas Valiušaitis by publishing texts in *Let Us Speak for Ourselves, Let Us Hear Others. The Tragic Years of 1940–1941* (Valiušaitis 2013) tells us about the unusually difficult and impassably blocked path of restoring the historical truths of Lithuania. If you decide to follow it, you need the courage of a dissident and political prisoner and the determination and sense of freedom of an anti-imperialist figure. These characteristics also enabled the researcher and writer of historical novels, Kristina Sabaliauskaitė (*1974), to enter another category of internationally recognised talent, where the struggle for the truth of history, the examined archives led to the special success of her books to become bestsellers (*Petro Imperatorė [Peter's Empress]* I, II, 2020). If the writer could not substantiate her shocking statements about the life of Russia's most powerful tsar, her novel would probably have received not only crushing criticism for Russophobia but also another blocking, moving the text into the margins. However, the factual pulse makes the existence of a literary text *fateful*, existentially linked to the gene of statehood.

Another personality in the whirlpool of the Lithuanian tragedy in 1940–1941 causes so many conflicting intersections nowadays like no other. It is a diplomat and Colonel Kazys Škirpa (1895–1979, USA). It is also worth mentioning profound research in the monograph, published based on the thesis of the young historian, PhD Simonas Jazavita: *“Kovok!” Kazys Škirpa ir Lietuvos likimas Antrajame pasauliniame kare [“Fight!”: Kazys Škirpa and the Fate of Lithuania in the Second World War]* (Jazavita 2022). Kazys Škirpa was a very active fighter for Lithuanian Independence. He even thought Lithuania State could be safer in alliance with Nazi Germany, but it obediently agreed with Stalin's ultimatum and Soviet Russia's invasion. He was the June Uprising leader and organiser, though he was not present in Lithuania then. He was mistrusted and arrested in Berlin. The German Gestapo described him as a “hard nationalist and anticommunist” but did not trust

him to do anything in Germany's favour (Jazavita 2022: p. 30). Historians face the complicated question of whether Škirpa was a collaborator with the Nazis or their smart enemy? (Jazavita 2022).

Returning to Vidmantas Valiušaitis, it is worth looking at another connection of the Lithuanian defence line hidden between his historical insights.

Such investigative journalism is the inspiring transformation of unblocking the fictions of Lithuanian history, which is extremely ungrateful regarding scientific career prospects, constantly facing sharp political ambiguities and decades-long existing KGB paradigms of the "Russian world" in the world. However, Valiušaitis continues this activity without stopping, and his recent book *A Lady from a Venetian Tavern. "Our People" and Other Passersby In Their Very Own History* (Valiušaitis 2018) arranges accents in the order of documentary meanings, revealing the dynamics of literary dramaturgy's contours. The first chapter discusses Lithuania's most important historical pain – the non-resistance mentioned above to occupation, rising to a transcendent landscape: the **Mannerheim Line**. The activities of dissident believers, Catholics, priests, and banned secret monks are also included in this concept. It has opened up now in publishing chronicle *Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios kronika (1972–1989)* [*Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church (1972–1989)*], which KGB has not managed to take over. Valiušaitis here is delving again into the very phenomenon of Marshal of Finland Karl Gustav Mannerheim (1867–1951), his defensive line, the gene of the Finnish nation's patriotism, struggle for independence and the spiritual code of the Lithuanian nation, enabling the resurrection of history. Here are his questions: "Kas pastatys lietuvišką Mannerheimo liniją?" [Who will build the Lithuanian Mannerheim line?] (Valiušaitis 2018: p. 63–68), and "Iš istorijos dera mokytis anksčiau, nei ji pradeda kartotis" [Learn from history before it repeats itself], (Valiušaitis 2018: p. 74–78), "Ar lietuviai sužeista tauta?" [Are Lithuanians a wounded nation?] (Valiušaitis 2018: p. 79–82). In this way, Valiušaitis seeks to grasp the deep sources of historical truth that can revive self-belief – the vital power of the right of self-defence, illuminate the authenticity of the statehood path, the strategy of trust in freedom, which was deliberately distorted, blocked, marginalised and despised by Russian imperialist goals, presenting the world with its own version of the *inevitability of*

occupation. Thus, a whole line of Lithuanian statesmen, fighters and diplomats were varyingly slandered, their activities falsified, criminalised, ridiculed or even made into war criminals, followers of Hitler, anti-Semites, who promoted or even carried out the Holocaust. It is fundamentally important to investigate their actual activities. Still, it is not desirable because then the paradigms of history would change, and all means are used for this – historical fabrications, distortions of the truth, and even lies (false testimonies written down after the death of witnesses, etc.). Vidmantas Valiušaitis is engaged in the historical decoding of such discussed statesmen. He tries to explain many persons, [like the leader of the June Uprising 1941 against the Soviets, Colonel Kazys Škirpa, who was not allowed by the Germans even to come to Lithuania and form the Provisional Government and resided later was arrested in Berlin. He was accused of collaborating with the Nazis and expressing anti-Semitic statements; he really wondered whether it would be more beneficial for Lithuania to unite with Germany against the Soviets] like, the head of the Provisional Government, Juozas Brazaitis Ambrazevičius (1903–1975), who was among the accused. However, he did not even have such considerations as Škirpa, and his government soon ceased to exist. But he was guilty of existing in this timeline and trying to save the State (Valiušaitis 2013: p. 188).

It is an arduous and complicated path against the Soviet propaganda mainstream that has been echoing worldwide for decades. The second chapter of the book is called “Būgnai” [Drums], in which the author focuses on naming Lithuania as the main Bloodland of the Holocaust via the lips of Soviet propaganda. Valiušaitis finds and describes the real killers of Jewish people, although they are of *no interest to anyone* for some reason. As MP Emanuelis Zingeris stated:

A hellish game was played to hurt Lithuanians and Jews, which was carried out by the machine of the special services of a foreign state. And this can be seen from all the KGB documents I was allowed to see (Valiušaitis 2013: p. 307).

Without these studies and delving into the painful medium of history, without non-fiction insights into the traumatic past of nations that have to live together, non-fictional literature can heal wounds and

feel refreshment and confidence in one's statehood. Maturity, dignity and security of self-awareness are in need of such studies and non-fiction literature. Otherwise, it is just a play with that pain, what extended the Emptiness like in Ivaškevičius *The Greens* (2002).

Another fundamental, essential question raised in Valiusašaitis' book (2018) is "Are we all alone?" It was the name given to the tragedy of realising the essence of the partisan struggle, which was reflected in the year of Independence. This meant being left behind the "iron curtain" by the afterwar world as if returning to barbaric times. While the prospects of modernity, freedom, democracy and technological progress began to flourish in the world, Lithuania then remained on the outskirts, pushed into forests, bunkers or transported by cattle wagons beyond the Arctic Circle to the edges of the genocidal empire. It was **impossible to believe**, but the deportees even believed that they would be taken by ship to America (!). However, it is based on the diaries of the deportee Dalia Grinkevičiūtė published as the non-fiction book *Lietuviai prie Laptevų jūros* [Lithuanians by Latev Sea, Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2005]. It was also believed that America would soon recover, a world war would begin, and the Soviet-occupied Baltic countries would soon be liberated (Laukaitytė 2022). The partisans in the forests have also been waiting for this to happen. This long-lasting layer of the curtained history of the era of lies must be decoded and researched. Its "suspended time" and traumatic psychology can restore the identity of the nation only through the presence of signs left by reality, through the truth of the actual evidence, like after long research, the discovery of the "disguised burial places" of the partisan commanders, or destroyed, deep hidden documentary (such as about killing of the President) of the Lithuanian state. The paradigm of the injustice of being "all alone" is deeply embedded in the consciousness of Lithuanians, and it is spreading to the world as a message, searching for the origins of this dire change in history. Opening the Lithuanian question of being "all alone" (Once again "all alone"? Valiušaitis 2018: p. 359–362) in the last chapter, *Paraphrases*, of the book, Valiušaitis seems to be predicting the fate of Ukraine in the 21st century and the endless discourse of *red lines* in the 2022 Russian aggression against this country. In essence, it is no longer about "all alone" but the question of the West, especially Europe, about the future of our common existence. However, as in the fiction of

history, there is no desire to admit the truth. In that respect, Valiušaitis' nonfiction was then "all alone" in 2018, and now Europe is about to become like him, repeating the dramaturgical processes of its fate. This really ungrateful decoding of the transformation in the dark of history to enlightenment, carried out by "lone wolves", brave fighters, and statesmen of the "deep state", should also attract the attention of fiction writers. Creativity often suffocates in the "void" of modernity and expires without a deep motivation for survival, where one of the essential foundations is the existential dignity and maturity for the life being of the state and the nation humanity, but this requires a path of historical research beyond which the gap of paradigms spreads. At this time, the leader of that path became the Ukrainian nation. That is why Valiušaitis calls with questions to the Lithuanian nation, "Who will build the Lithuanian *Mannerheim Line*?", "Who will defend the flag laid on the pavement?", "Once again, *all alone*?" (Valiušaitis 2018: p. 43–44) receive the answers of the returned history or the contradicting Fukuyama's *the end of history*. Europe has not yet heard the echo of this existential cry, but the current of survival vibrations has electrified Lithuania and its literature for a long time. So, Valiušaitis' questions confirm the well-known reality of the path of anti-imperial history like a ringing of a bell: there is no freedom without a fight. Historical fiction is gradually outweighed by non-fiction, dictating the content of their dramaturgy on questions of the fate of the state.

Conclusions. The literature field is ready to accept the necessity of research: recording history, memory, and facts and bringing them to light. This critical area of texts can provide new sources and impulses for literary creativity in principle:

- like illuminating search for existential codes;
- as an affirmation of the nation's archetypal survival powers;
- as the gene of history's resistance to time and the liberation of the creative self.

Lithuanian non-fiction literature is focused on the most critical issues of state survival, loss, defence, and betrayal. Some moments here carry the particular importance:

- 1) The *last government meeting* on June 15, 1940, and the state's no-resistance to the Soviet ultimatum. The paradigm of the Finnish Marshal Mannerheim line emerges as an alternative.

2) The role of President Antanas Smetona in this turning point in history and his fate in America, the unexamined liquidation at a convenient time for the Soviets and their allies, and the “coincidence” of the fire. The lack of substantial research and publications on this topic is particularly evident. The tension of the *last meeting* is still lingering, lost in the falsification of history, where another Soviet “success” continues.

3) June Uprising, 1941. At the beginning of the Holocaust, there was a point in history successfully muddled by the Nazis and the Soviets, where Lithuania showed its resistance to the Soviet occupation. It was an attempt to return as European country. It is imperative to explore this intersection together with the content of the last meeting, without succumbing to the KGB narrative.

4) The role of general army commander Vincas Vitkauskas in betraying Lithuania to Stalin and the Soviets has not been fully explored. Without it, the knowledge of betrayal is blocked, overwhelmed with Smetona’s guilt and the monstrous destruction of the state with its consequences – deportations, massacres, and a return to the anti-European darkness of barbarism.

5) All these questions and the meaning of non-fiction arose in the context of Russia’s war against Ukraine in 2022, which was started by Russia’s desire to regain the empire’s old borders. Literature returned to the living battlefield of history, essentially transforming into a non-fiction paradigm. The need to clear fiction and myth that overshadows the facts has intensified.

6) Vidmantas Valiušaitis’ works, research, publications, and books acquire the particular significance of unblocking the truth in the context of Lithuania. Then, the creativity of literature fiction could flourish, not pushed into post-Soviet emptiness.

7) The great attention and active involvement in transforming Ukraine into a free European state shows this need for historical truth and the perspective of current facts to restore the nation’s right to join valuable cultural space.

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НЕФІКЦІЙНА ЛІТЕРАТУРА З ІСТОРИЧНОЇ ТОЧКИ ЗОРУ: ДЕРЖАВНІ ДІЯЧІ ЛИТВИ НА ТЛІ ТРАГІЧНИХ ПОДІЙ 1940–1941 РР.

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Анотація. Досліджено нефікційну літературу – важливу історичну драму сьогодення, що здатна змінювати долю держави та інтерпретувати її по-різному. Лінія захисту державності в контексті історії, або так звана лінія Маннергейма, визначальна в текстах, які мають доступ до знищених документальних джерел, що залишилися після десятиліть окупації. В нинішню епоху, коли розгортаються справжні історичні війни, художня література відчуває потребу в нефікційній, що шукає пояснень, фактів і висвітлює затінені руйнацію держави та досі темні повороти історичного шляху Литви. Деякі епізоди нефікційної літератури електризують суспільство

навіть сьогодні. Існують нерозв'язані проблеми, де нефікційна література має неоціненне значення для зміни прорадянського історичного наративу. Перша проблема – це засідання останнього уряду і втрата незалежності 15 червня 1940 року. Більшість литовців вважають, що в цьому винен президент Антанас Смятона (1874–1944), хоча він голосував проти радянського ультиматуму і розумів, куди все йде. Питання про провину президента за втечу з Литви і його загадкову загибель у «випадковій» пожежі в США все ще залишається актуальним у сучасній Литві, але, здається, не є предметом справжніх історичних досліджень. Наступне невирішене питання стосується червеневого повстання проти радянської влади під час вторгнення німецької армії та ролі полковника Казиса Шкірпи у співпраці з нацистами. Історик і журналіст Відмантас Валіушайтіс займається історичним декодуванням шляху литовської державності та вибудовує власну лінію Маннергейма, фактично й щодо прогнозування долі України та нової війни з імперськими амбіціями Росії в Європі.

Ключові слова: нефікційна література; дослідження; історія; проблема; державність; захист; лінія Маннергейма.

Suggested citation

Landsbergytė-Becher, J. (2024). Non-Fiction from a Historical Perspective: Situation of Lithuanian Statemen Amid Tragic Events (literary research based on Vidmantas Valiušaitis' texts). *Pitannâ literaturoznavstva*, no. 110, pp. 239–253. <http://doi.org/10.31861/pytlit2024.110.239>

Стаття надійшла до редакції 15.12.2024 р.

Стаття прийнята до друку 30.12.2024 р.