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## **From Russia With Lunch**

**David Smiedt**  
University of Queensland  
Press, \$24.95

THIS is David Smiedt's second foray into his family's history, following on from his first book *Are We There Yet?* – a journey around South Africa, the land of his birth.

In *From Russia With Lunch* Smiedt follows the footsteps of his Lithuanian-born maternal grandfather Maurice Dibowitz – a Jew who fled persecution from various regimes, including the Germans, the Bolsheviks and the Tsarists. Arriving in



Hamburg in 1925 he caught a steamer ship to London before heading to South Africa. It wasn't this journey, however, that interested Smiedt. Since childhood he had been intrigued by the place of his grandfather's birth – an intrigue piqued by the Miss

Disability and Miss Prison Inmate beauty competitions. The pageant that tipped him over the edge, however, was Miss Long Haired Lithuanian. Starting in the nation's capital of Vilnius, Smiedt bumps into a group of lads over from London for a buck's night. He's invited along and finds that museums and cathedrals can barely hold a candle to the city's popular strip joints. From Vilnius he heads out into the countryside, where his escapades are experienced through the haze of alcohol. It's genuinely funny with plenty to offer those interested in learning about a country not often on the tourism radar.

**Bernadette Condren**