



VOL. 2 No. 5

MAY 1978

### REFLECTIONS ON THE LITHUANIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

For me anyway, and I'm sure for many of our readers, whenever I sing the Lithuanian National Anthem, a feeling of pride swells up within me. I'd like to share some of the thoughts that go through my mind during the Anthem, but, first, a bit of background.

**Lietuva, Tėvyne Mūsų** was adopted as our national hymn at the conclusion of the Lithuanian National Conference at Kaunas on January 21, 1919, almost a year after independence was restored to Lithuania on February 16, 1918. The words and music were written by Dr. Vincas Kudirka in 1898 and were first published in **Varpas** (The Bell), the underground journal which Kudirka founded and edited. To put this in a historical perspective, at the time of the anthem's publication, Lithuania was under the forced subjugation of the Russian czar and his policy of press ban was in effect since 1864. This czarist edit forbade, under penalty of death, the possession, publication, and distribution of Lithuanian printed matter (books, pamphlets, journals, newspapers, etc.) in conventional Latin characters as we know them. The obvious purpose of this edict was to Russify the Lithuanian Nation.

Under these difficult conditions, though Lithuania was experiencing a period of renaissance, which resulted ultimately in the restoration of independence, **Varpas** and similar underground publications smuggled in from abroad did much to awaken the Lithuanian national spirit, which during the 123 years of foreign domination, never died, but had only fallen into a deep sleep.

Kudirka's 16 lines sum up the feelings of all Lithuanians both at the turn of the century and the present day.

As we begin to sing **Lietuva, Tėvyne Mūsų, Tu Didvyrių Žemė**, our thoughts travel to the homeland, the land of our ancestors. Here is where our roots are, Lithuania, the land of heroes. Few nations can boast of a history as long and as glorious as Lithuania's 727 years as a nation. For that reason, we continue: **Iš praeities Tavo sūnūs, Te stiprybę semia**. From this past we gather our strength and pride, especially during the difficult times of foreign domination. We sing further: **Tegul Tavo Vaikai Eina, Vien Takais Dorybės** — Lithuania's children (that is, you and I) should only walk down the paths of virtue, keeping as the highest, the ideals of a virtuous life, not causing any harm to others. Lithuania was never bent on destruction, war, or worldwide conquest. That is not part of the Lithuanian psyche. I should note that not one word of the Lithuanian National Anthem glorifies war or speaks of the desire to conquer and subjugate. The anthem continues: **Tegul dirba tavo naudai ir žmonių gėrybei**. We are called to work for the best interests of Lithuania, which we all agree are: first, the rightful restoration of independence, now lost for 37 years, and secondly, the preservation of the age-old Lithuanian tradition, culture and sense of national pride. This is our collective duty as men and women of Lithuanian extraction. Lithuania must never die to the world. We sing further: **Tegul saulė Lietuvos, tamsumus prašalina.. Ir šviesa, ir tiesa mūs žingsnius telydi**. May the sun shining brightly over Lithuania pierce all that is veiled in darkness, be it the darkness of ignorance, the darkness of despair, or the darkness of oppression. All our works on Lithuania's behalf are led by the spirit of truth. For

that reason we are urged to be truthful in all our endeavors, because truthfulness is man's greatest virtue and the truth will set us free.

The Anthem concludes: **Tegul meilė Lietuvos, dega mūsų širdyse, Vardan tos, Lietuvos, vienybė težydi.** Our love for Lithuania should burn as a torch deep inside us, a torch with an eternal flame, because our sense of Lithuanianism can never, nor should ever, die. As we derive our strength from a sense of Lithuanian history, we should all stand united in the name of Lithuania. We must remember that in unity there is strength. Unity is the foundation for the accomplishment of monumental tasks. Unity of purpose should, therefore, be our collective goal. Unity will return independence to Lithuania.

Whenever we sing the Lithuanian National Anthem, let us reflect on the meaning of those 16 lines, written 80 years ago. The words are truly timeless.

**Eduardas Meilus, Jr.**

#### THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY

The **Joint Baltic American National Committee** recently made an interim **assessment** of the **Belgrade Conference**. The report states in part, that "the first eleven weeks (October 4 — December 22, 1977) of the Belgrade Conference of Helsinki Accord signatories established a new ingredient in East-West diplomacy. the legitimacy of human rights questions within the framework of detente. Insuring discussion of the human rights issue, however, can only be assessed as an important first step on a long road. That step represents no promise of speedy diplomatic action to remedy perceived human rights abuses in any of the signatory states".

The reviewing past actions (and inaction) and in presenting suggestions for new commitments to improve implementation of the Final Act, the Western delegations have voiced concern over a number of Helsinki provisions, not always directly related to human rights. Barriers by Communist states to the flow of economic information, impediments to contact between businessmen and potential customers, obstacles to the conduct of fruitful scholarly research or scientific collaboration and censorship even of cultural imports have all come under critical scrutiny. While such topics are unusual diplomatic fare, they are not as sensitive aspects of Helsinki compliance as repression of dissent, persecution of religion, restriction of emigration and interference with journalists.

The fact that pressure on human rights issues was a permanent feature of the Belgrade proceedings, an extremely uncomfortable element . . . in East-West diplomacy, an unprecedented advance over years of diplomatic silence. The precedent for discussion of human rights as an inescapable attribute of detente has been set.

In an action which should be applauded by all Baltic peoples, the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) has nominated 43 members of Helsinki Watch groups in the Soviet Union, representing Moscow, Georgian, Ukrainian, Armenian and Lithuanian committees, for the **1978 Nobel Peace Prize**. The five Lithuanians nominated were Eitan Finkelšteinas, Karolis Garuckas, Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė, Viktoras Petkus, and Tomas Venclova.

Following the signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, the U.S. Congress passed a resolution reaffirming the U.S. policy of not recognizing the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. However, that resolution did not specify measures to redress the status of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — it was a general policy statement. In 1977 due to active Balts in California, the effort to pass a more comprehensive resolution was undertaken. Each Congress is composed of two-year sessions, thus we only have the remainder of 1978 in which to work for a stronger Congressional stand on the Baltic States.

At present, 52 House Representatives have sponsored a resolution on the Baltic States. Among other points, these resolutions call for the withdrawal of Soviet occupying forces from the Baltic States, the restoration of self-determination, and greater dissemination by the U.S. government of information on the plight of the Balts. At this point, only the House of Representatives has this resolution before it, if it is successful there, than it will go to the Senate. Balts throughout the U.S. can play the major role by writing and urging their Congressmen to sponsor a Baltic States resolution. Reference can be made to the following House Concurrent Resolution numbers: 177, 283, 292, 308, 319, 325, 354, and 4:6. On resolutions of this nature, at least 100 sponsors are needed before the full House will consider it. We need at least 50 more Representatives to do so. **John Bolsteins**

**Tomas Venclova** attended the **International PEN Club** Congress in Sydney, Australia this past December. He was in Australia from December 8 to January 6, 1978. In addition to reading a lecture about the situation of Lithuanians in their occupied homeland and in the USSR during PEN Club Congress, he spoke about the lack of human rights in Lithuania before groups in Canberra, Adelaide, and Melbourne. He also met with Lithuanian groups in Hobart, Tasmania, and Auckland, New Zealand. The Australian press carried accounts of his reports.

The Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid, headed by Rev. Casimir Pugevičius, criticized the Vatican's so-called **Ostpolitik**, defended recently in Washington by Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, secretary of the Council for

the Public Affairs of the Church. Archbishop Casaroli, sometimes called "The Pope's Foreign Minister", said the Church "only needs, humanly speaking, a little bit of true liberty," and that this was the aim of the Holy See's initiatives toward the East. But according to the underground paper, **Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania** (Issue 28), Ostpolitik "has greatly hurt the Church in Eastern Europe".

The publication cited the argument that diplomatic maneuvers keep Iron Curtain Catholics from being annihilated. "In our opinion," it responded, "it is not diplomatic efforts which keep them from atrocities but the necessity of reckoning with the might of powerful states, world and national public opinion, and fear of a new Nuremberg trial". Soviet leaders, the underground paper continued, "eagerly seek diplomatic ties with the Apostolic See, in order that, having obtained concessions from the Catholic Church, they might even more subtly persecute the Church, especially at the hands of Church leader (locally) who have capitulated to them.

Senator Carl T. Curtis (R.-Neb.) submitted Senate Concurrent Resolution 68 "Expressing the Sense of the Senate on the Baltic States Question" to the Senate on March 2nd. The Concurrent Resolution 68 was referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. The six point resolution in essence requests: 1) the right of self-determination to be returned to the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia through free elections conducted under the auspices of the United Nations after Soviet withdrawal from the Baltic States, and 2) the right of self-determination should be made a prime political objective of the United Nations and should be accorded through free elections under the auspices of the United Nations to all peoples now involuntarily subjugated to Soviet communism. Concerned Lithuanian-Americans should write to members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations urging passage of the Concurrent Resolution. **L.V.**

## THE HOMELAND

Where is Lithuania? Ah yes. You can say that it lies on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea and that its neighbors are Latvia, Poland, Germany, Russia, et cetera. Technically, the land of Lithuania lies on the parallel of 54 of northern latitude. By tracing your finger around a geographic globe, you find that Sitka and Juneau, Alaska are also on the same latitude as is Glasgow, Scotland. This is about 5 degrees south of the Arctic Circle. Lithuania also lies on meridian 25 of eastern longitude. A line down the globe carries you through Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Libya, and directly through the center of the long part of Africa. Actually, Lithuania is not in eastern Europe at all. It truly contains the exact center of Europe. There is an equal distance east and west and north and south to the borders of Europe. You might say Lithuania is the "heart" of Europe. **Aldona Ryan**

3 **My husband, Vincent Morkus, and I, Florence, would like to share with the readers of BRIDGES our experiences during our first visit to Lithuania, the homeland of our parents.**

**Vilnius Railroad Station No-No.** It was the latter part of May. The day after our arrival and after a warm welcome from my relatives, we took an inspiring tour through picturesque old Vilnius. It was a beautiful sunny day and we took lots of pictures and movies. After we returned to our hotel we wanted to buy postage stamps, but they did not have the large stamp with the pink flower, like the ones we found in Moscow. The clerk told us we might find them in the railroad station just across the park. We took a stroll to the railroad station and bought the stamps we wanted.

While walking outside with the movie camera in my hand, I thought, what a wonderful picture to bring home the railroad station in Vilnius, Lithuania. So I passed the camera across one side of the station with the people waiting on the platform and back across to get the clock on the station, showing two p.m. I had just finished when from behind me came a Russian woman in uniform shouting. All I could understand was "photography", "photography" and with her finger she was calling us into her booth. She picked up the phone and after talking to someone she left. We were left alone waiting and wondering. In a little while a woman walked in who spoke Lithuanian and we were able to explain what happened. She went out to look for someone. In the mean time, a man walked in, and he spoke Lithuanian. We explained to him what happened. He said we would have to wait.

Then a railway policeman in Russian uniform came in and led us into the station police office. I thought that if it was so bad, they could always take the film and let us go. After a while, which seemed like a long time, three men with topcoats and brief cases, probably the KGB, walked in and interrogated us in Lithuanian. Then two men left and remained. I had the movie camera — Canon zoom lens — in my hand. The interrogator asked: "Is that the camera? Could I see it?" He picked it up, looked it over carefully and asked: "Why do you want to take pictures around the railroad station? Don't you know a lot of drunks hang around here? Why do you want to bring home pictures like this?" I replied: "I didn't see anything wrong. Just ordinary people at the station. I want to bring home good pictures". I told him that the only reason we came to the station was to buy stamps, otherwise we wouldn't even be here now. He returned the camera with the film. I wondered why he did not keep the film to end it all? He said it was prohibited to take pictures from the airport, bridges and railroad stations.

We knew about the airport and bridges, but not the railroad stations. And there were no restriction signs posted. Then he said, "You're not allowed to take pictures at home from the airport". To this I quickly replied, "but we do take pictures from the airport and I've even taken movies from the airplane".

He was amazed. He told us to go and not to do it<sup>4</sup> again. It was 3 p.m. We had been held for an hour. We couldn't get away fast enough from that station.

When we strolled in the park nearby with my relatives we talked about our home. That same evening we were fortunate to see the Lithuanian Ensemble perform "Dainuojame Žmogui" in the Philharmonic in Vilnius. The songs and dances, the performers in lovely costumes were the best we have ever seen. It was hearthwarming. We will always remember that lively performance in Vilnius, and the one hour detention nearby at the railroad station. **Florence Morkus, Hartford, Ct.**

Rev. **Joseph Prunskis** in a much quoted article about the suppression of the Catholic Church in the USSR in the **Chicago Tribune** of January 17th pointed out that separation of church and state under communist rule constitutes elimination of any church influence in state affairs and strict control of the church by the state. The following quotations point out the extent of "religious freedom" in Lithuania today. "The appointment of priests is controlled by atheistic officials. Bishops who try to resist this are exiled from their dioceses, as were two Lithuanian bishops, Julius Steponavičius and Vincentas Sladkevičius. Priests are fined for teaching children religion even in church." "Churches are declared 'public property' and parishioners are obliged to pay high rent, disregarding the fact that they constructed these edifices at their own expense without state help... St. Casimir's church, constructed in Vilnius in 1604, has been converted into a storehouse for vodka. In Vilnius, only one-fourth of all churches remain open. The Church of the Visitation convent has been converted into a jail, the chapel in Antakalnis destroyed. On July 28, 1976, a new law in Lithuania forbade priests to perform religious duties in any churches except the one in which they are registered..."

Moscow is systematically trying to **replace the Lithuanian language with Russian**. The Lithuanian samizdat publication, **Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania** has repeatedly pointed this out. And now the fourth issue of the clandestine publication, **Aušra** (October 20, 1976) succinctly complains about the Russification practices of the Soviet regime: "The disappearance of national and language differences is to occur gradually, not suddenly. Under the pretext of proletarian internationalism and Soviet patriotism, there is an effort to speed up the process. Great strides have been made in this direction in Lithuania. The Russian language dominates in the "government" and party leadership of Lithuania. Meetings and conferences are conducted in Russian not only at the center, but also at municipal and rayon levels. In many industries, especially those which are under All-Union supervision, the reports, instructions, and rules are written and announced in Russian. Some of the operas are performed in Russian, even though

Russians, according to hearsay, do not attend. During concert performances, as a rule, Russian songs are included. Observing television and listening to radio programs, one gets the impression that V. Noreika, V. Daunora, Ambrazaitytė and other soloists sing more in Russian than in Lithuanian.

"Campaigns are conducted to intensify Russian language courses. There have been results. According to the orders of the director of Joniškėlis Soviet Economic Technicum (October 29, 1975) teachers are duty-bound to give Lithuanian and Russian terms for all special courses, to develop Russian language bulletins and instructions for the use of tractors, cars and agricultural machinery."

**Aušra** concludes: "One cannot resist the teaching of Russian in the Lithuanian schools. It is a language widely used and of great utility. However, when the Russian language was forced upon us in place of Lithuanian, the Lithuanian Nation resisted during the tsarist period, and will energetically resist today!"

The Hill of Crosses near Šiauliai is one of the most famous of the thousands of historic and "sacred" castle-mounds and hills in Lithuania. For several centuries, crosses have been erected on it by Lithuanians to mark their sufferings and hopes for a "brighter future for their nation." Today, the Hill is a symbol of "national resurrection." Twelve years ago, the Soviet authorities began a systematic destruction of the crosses. But after every razing of the crosses, new ones were erected again. This "struggle" has been continuing for years. ELTA

A recent Reuters Agency news report informed that numerous areas in the Soviet Union are now open to visitors from the West. The areas in Soviet-occupied Lithuania are: the city of Vilnius and travel to it by rail and air; direct rail transit on to Grodno - Vilnius - Leningrad route; the city of Druskininkai and travel to it by rail from Vilnius and by Intourist auto transport; the city of Kaunas with travel to it by Intourist auto transport with a one-day stop in Trakai and Prienai. It is thought that this action may be a Soviet response to the Belgrade Conference.

The U.S. State Department is interested in compiling documentation on the "openness" of the above areas. If there are negative results in gaining access to the above areas, it would be helpful if such information would be forwarded to the Joint Baltic American National Committee, P. O. Box 432, Rockville, MD. 20850. The Joint Baltic Committee would transmit the information to the State Department. Thus, the State Department would have a basis for a factual protest to the USSR and this matter might get greater publicity. **John Bolsteins.**

The most westernized of the Soviet ruled countries today is probably Lithuania, according to two Tamaqua, Pennsylvania travelers who visited the Soviet Union in August. Dennis Sweeney of Hometown and Thomas

Hoban of Tamaqua toured the USSR with a group of 5 students from Bloomsburg State College this summer and revealed fallacies and standards set by Hendrick Smith in his recent book "The Russians". "Lithuania is probably the most westernized of the Soviet satellites", noted Sweeney, "where the influences of Radio Free Europe and Radio Luxembourg have taken effect. Rock music and disco recordings are abundant and the attire of the young people are much like our own. We've had the best relationship with the people of Lithuania than any other country, although many of the people in high official capacities were Russians, not Lithuanians".

The biggest sale in the black market trade was jeans (dungarees) and top prices were paid for "Levis" and "Wranglers". The citizen owning a bottle of American after shave, jeans, or western merchandise knew that the product was made well, better than the cheap Russian merchandise, and it was also a symbol of prestige. A Russian Ruble costs \$1.39 in the Soviet Union, but if you purchase the currency outside a Soviet rule, a collector could buy the ruble for 30 cents. During customs checks, the ruble or indeed any Russian money is confiscated as were many books on Russian society, noted social scientist Sweeney.

The Catholic Church has divided itself into two complementary parts in order to survive in the Soviet Union, according to the most recent issue of the **Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania** to arrive in the United States. One works openly, the other underground. "Forced to operate entirely underground are religious orders of men and women, young men secretly preparing for the priesthood, almost all teachers and various officials, who are afraid to be seen receiving the sacraments in church lest they suffer for it," reports the 20th issue of the **Chronicle**. Although it has certain privileges, "the Church operating legitimately in the open can be annihilated at any moment by the atheists who can close down the churches and arrest the bishops and priests," the **Chronicle** noted.

## POLITICAL ACTION

The 60th anniversary of the Independence of Lithuania was commemorated in the U.S. Congress. The speeches and remarks, as inserted into the **Congressional Record**, brought out historical as well as current aspects of the subjugation of Lithuania and the other two Baltic States. Those who participated in the 60th anniversary observance in Congress were: In the Senate: C. Percy (R-Ill.), P. Domenici (R-N.M.), J. Heinz (R-Pa.), C. Case (R-N.J.), R. Dole (R-Kans.), C. Curtis (R-Neb.), H. Williams (D-N.J.), W. Anderson (D-Minn.), J. Glenn (D-Ohio), R. Schweiker (R-Pa.), R. Lugar (R-Ind.), H. Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) and Q. Burdick (D-ND). In the House of Representatives: J. Addabbo (D-N.Y.), F. Annunzio (D-Ill.), M. Biaggi (D-N.Y.), J.

Blanchard (D-Mich.), D. Bonior (D-Mich.), W. Broomfield (R-Mich.), J. H. Burke (R-Fla.), G. Byron (D-Md.), C. Carney (D-Ohio), J. Cleveland (R-NH), B. Conable (R-N.Y.), W. Cotter (C-Conn.), L. Coughlin (R-Pa.), J. Delaney (D-NY), E. Derwinski (R-Ill.), J. Dingell (D-Mich.), C. Dodd (D-Conn.), J. Eilberg (D-Pa.), J. Fary (D-Ill.), M. Fenwick (R-NJ), F. Fithian (D-Ind.), D. Flood (D-Pa.), J. Florio (D-NJ), R. Giaimo (D-Conn.), J. Hammerschmidt (R-Ark.), J. Hanley (D-NY), H. Hollembeck (R-NJ), W. Hughes (D-NJ), H. Heyde (R-Ill.), J. Kemp (R-NY), J. LeFante (D-NJ), N. Lent (R-NY), R. McClory (R-Ill.), M. McHugh (D-NY), A. Maguire (D-NJ), B. Mikulski (D-Md), A. Mikva (D-Ill), J. Minish (D-NJ), J. Moakley (D-Mass), R. Mottl (D-Ohio), M. Murphy (D-Ill.), R. Ottinger (D-NY), E. Patten (D-NJ), C. Pursell (R-Mich.), M. Rinaldo (R-NJ), P. Rodino (D-NJ), R. Roe (D-NJ), B. Rosenthal (D-NY), E. Rudd (R-Ariz.), P. Ruppe (R-Mich.), M. Russo (D-Ill.), R. Sarasin (R-Conn.), N. Steers (R-Md.), S. Stratton (D-NY), G. Vanderjagt (R-Mich.), D. Walgren (D-Pa.), W. Walsh (R-NY), C. Whalen (R-Ohio), J. Wydler (R-NY), G. Yatron (D-Pa.), C. W. Young (R-Fla.) and C. Zablocki (D-Wis.). In all, thirteen senators (5 Democrats and 8 Republican) as well as 62 Congressmen (38 Democrats and 24 Republicans) spoke on the occasion.

**Joseph Stempužis**, director of Cleveland's Lithuanian Radio Program, arranged a pre-campaign dinner on January 18, 1978 for the representatives of the ethnic electronic and printed media to meet with Cuyahoga County auditor Vincent Campanella, currently seeking re-election to that office. Mr. Stempužis had campaigned in the past for former county auditor George Voinovich, and again had helped to forge an alliance for a candidate who supports the ethnic cause. **Victor Stankus**.

## COMMUNITY WITH A CAPITAL "C"

The Department of State held its first **National Foreign Policy Conference on Human Rights** for leaders of non-governmental organizations on February 27-28. The Conference — one of a series of conferences organized by the Bureau of Public Affairs — is a part of the Department's domestic outreach program. The Conference was attended by over 500 leaders, representing religious, ethnic, women, black, educational and human rights organizations. The Lithuanian representation was numerous. Bendruomenė was represented by National President A. Gečys, Mrs. Aušra Zerr, Mrs. Dalia Jakys, and A. Gureckas. Other Lithuanian spokesmen were: Dr. J. Genys, T. Blinstrubas and Dr. K. Šidlauskas (Lithuanian American Council), Rev. K. Pugevičius (Lithuanian Religious Aid); V. Rastenis (Radio Liberty); A. Kalvaitis, Jūratė Neumann and Birutė Zdanys (Lith. Youth Association) and Dr. J. Kazlas from Yale University.

The **Worcester Chapter** of the Lithuanian Community (Bendruomenė) held its annual meeting on Sunday,

March 12, 1978 in Maironis Park. Chapter president Vladas Židžiūnas spoke of the last year's varied activities of the chapter, giving the financial report as well. Eduardas V. Meilus, Jr. was called upon to report on youth association activities. Bernadette Miliuskas reported on the Worcester Lithuanistic School. Dance group instructors Irene Markevičius and Nijolė Pranckevičius reported on the group's activities. All of the above areas come under the auspices of the Worcester Bendruomenė Chapter. Election of officers and a discussion of future activities followed. While the assemblage was treated by the chapter's officers to a "kavutė", Mr. Židžiūnas gave an interesting and informative report on his recent trip to Australia as part of the VI National Lithuanian Scout Association Jamboree. His focus was on Australian Bendruomenė activities and on the history of Lithuanian Immigration to that island continent. Mr. Algis Norkevičius, who had been to Australia 8 years ago on business for 6 months, added his thoughts to the detailed report by Mr. Židžiūnas. **EVM**

**The American** of Waterbury, Conn. carried Dr. Peter Vileišis' pungent letter to the editor on the occasion of Lithuanian Independence Day. On February 21st Dr. Vileišis wrote: "... we come to the sad conclusion that the present western world is morally decayed, rotten and falling apart... We participated in selling out the Baltic countries in Helsinki and thought by appeasing the Soviet monstrosity that we will have peace. Meantime, the Soviets grabbed Angola and Ethiopia and many other African countries preparing for final cut-off from our Middle East oil supplies and strangling us economically... Instead of applying economic pressure on the Soviet, we give up. We forget that they need us, we don't need them. Our presidents call Soviet dictators "friends". That is an insult to the American electorate who elected their president. The Soviet Dictators get their only support from soldiers' bayonets". Dr. Petras Vileišis is a long-standing leader and activist of Bendruomenė.

**The Boston District of Bendruomenė** showed initiative in combatting defamation. It appears that the theater group of Randolph High School planned to stage "Lithuania" on March 2 and 4th. This nasty one-act play by Rupert Brooke depicts degenerates in a mythical dark land which the author, for no apparent reason, calls "Lithuania". Circulars bearing that name were widely circulated in southeastern Massachusetts. **Paul Jančauskas**, President of the Boston District, wrote a letter of protest to Thomas Warren, superintendent of Randolph Public Schools, on February 25th. Copies were sent to the Massachusetts Secretary of Education and to Joseph Califano, Secretary of HEW. In his letter, Mr. Jančauskas brought out the following objections: "First, the play degrades and slurs the Lithuanians, as being backward peoples and greedy murderers which is an open insult to all honest Americans of Lithuanian descent. Secondly, the play has

nothing to do with Lithuania, except the name of the play and a note telling that it happens in a hut in Lithuania. A) The places mentioned in the play, as Mohilew, are in Russia, not in Lithuania. B) Ivan is a Russian name, never used in Lithuania. In short, I don't find any reason why this play should bear the name "Lithuania". It only shows the ignorance and prejudice of the author. On behalf of my organization and of all Americans of Lithuanians descent, I demand cancellation of the performance, or, at least, take the name of Lithuania out of the play".

John E. Zoino, deputy superintendent of the Randolph Public Schools, replied on February 28th. He wrote: "As a result of my investigation, I am satisfied that the high school coach did not deliberately select the play "Lithuania" with any intended negativism toward all honest Americans or for that matter, against Lithuanian people throughout the world. In review, I concur with your sentiments and agree that there seems to be no reason why this play should bear the name 'Lithuania' ". Mr. Zoino stated further: "... we find it impossible at this late date to cancel this production and to develop some other play. We do, however, desire to cooperate with you... I directed Mr. Donald Nelson, the coach of the play, to contact Sedgewich & Jackson, Ltd. of London, England, to secure permission to take the name "Lithuania" out of the play, even to the point of renaming it. This he has done with the result that we have a verbal approval of this agency, who controls the play, to delete all references to and the name 'Lithuania' from the play... Further, I have instructed Mr. Nelson to use this experience as a lesson for all students who are participating in this production." Rupert Brooke's one-act work was staged under the title "A Play by Rupert Brooke." **AMB**

**Many Lithuanian families are circling June 28 — July 3rd on their 1978 calendar in order to attend the Lithuanian World Days (Pasaulio Lietuvių Dienos).** Toronto, Canada will host three gala Lithuanian events: The Congress of the World Lithuanian Community, the Fifth Lithuanian Song Festival and the World Lithuanian Sports Events. Many are planning to extend their Canadian visit to vacation in the northern part of Ontario Province, noted as a vacationland.

The PLB Seimas or Congress will draw many delegates representing the Bendruomenės of twenty free world countries. Of course, the largest contingent will come from the U.S. The World Lithuanian Community is the only world-wide cultural and civic Lithuanian organization, uniting and organizing nationals through the democratic process. All sessions will be open to the Lithuanian public. A new World Bendruomenė Executive Board will be chosen. The current president is Bronius Nainys.

The **Pasaulio Lietuvių Sporto Žaidynės (Sports Events)** could last 6 days. The best Lithuanian athletes will compete for gold, silver and bronze medals, as well as other citations. Competitive events will include: track, swimming, basketball, volleyball, table tennis,

court tennis, soccer, golf, chess, and marksmanship. Information may be obtained from the World Lithuanian Sports Events Committee, 32 Rivercrest Rd., Toronto, Ont., Canada (tel.: 1-416-763-4429). Most events will take place in the air-conditioned Etobicoke Olympium, which seats 3,000 viewers.

The major event will be the Fifth Lithuanian Song Festival (V Dainų Šventė) at the Maple Leaf Gardens which has a seating capacity of 15,000. Over a thousand voices in colorful national dress will perform. It will be a public manifestation of Lithuanian music and pageantry. Truly an historic occasion in the annales of Lithuanians in North America.

A trip to Toronto at the end of June could also be spent on sightseeing at the North American "Mecca of Lithuanians". The Lithuanian Consulate General, functioning under Dr. J. Žmuidzinas; Anapolis parish of Rev. P. Ažubalis; the Resurrection Church and monastery of Lithuanian Franciscans, and the Toronto Lithuanian House are sites to visit. Two Lithuanian credit unions — Parama and Prisikėlimo parapijos bankas, and the news office of **Tėviškės Žiburiai** beckon all. The Saviour — Išganytojas parish church of Lithuanian Evangelical Lutherans is also worth visiting.

About 85 miles above Toronto is Georgian Bay which has the longest sand beach in the world. Springhurst Beach contains many Lithuanian summer homes and resorts. Rev. Petras Ažubalis constructed a chapel, sports court and camp facilities there. The Lithuanian Franciscans maintain camping facilities for 200 campers at New Wasaga Beach. Lithuanian sportsmen, scouts, ateitininkai, and other Lithuanian groups held camps at these locales. Further information about the World Lithuanian Days may be obtained by writing to Mr. J. Karka, PLD Information Committee, 1011 College St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6H 1A8. **AMB**

## CULTURE

**The Easter Cycle** abound with Lithuanian traditions beginning with Užgavėnės, through Lent (Gavėnia), Easter Sunday and Atvelykis. Užgavėnės — literally before Lent, is what I like to call **Mardi Grad** Lithuanian style. It is the Tuesday before Lent begins, that is before Ash Wednesday (Pelenų Diena). Užgavėnės is a day of feasting and celebration — the last day to "party" before the season of preparation. Traditional is the kaukių balius or masquerade ball, parades through the streets, singing until you are hoarse and dancing until your feet hold out no more. Rich and "fat" foods are served. This is in contrast to the 40 days of preparation during Lent where only sausi valgiai, literally dry foods, are eaten. After 20 days of Lent, the day is known as pusiaugavėnis. The Church bells are rung at noon, announcing a special time for prayer. On this day a silkė (herring) is cut in half by a blindfolded man who then chooses half of it. If the half with the head of the fish is heavier, the most difficult fasting time is over, if the tail end is heavier, difficult fasting lies ahead. Preparations both on the

7 physical and spiritual planes for Easter then begin in earnest.

Holy Saturday night begins the Easter festival lasting 8 days. Fire and water, traditionally held as important symbols of cleansing, are ritually blessed during these special church services. The Easter water is ceremoniously carried home in special ornate vessels by each family and then sprinkled throughout the house, on the farm animals and all pets. It was believed that this would keep the household free from sickness, diseases and spiritually cleanse from all sinfulness. The holy fire, symbolizing Christ, the "Light of the World", is also carried throughout the house so that all darkness would be dispelled.

It was believed that early on Easter morning as the sun rose, it danced for joy while changing to all the colors of the spectrum. As the sun raises all the bells ring out for joy, silenced since Holy Thursday, calling all to Resurrection services. The hymn traditional to the day "Linksma diena mums nušvito — our day of joy has dawned" is sung by all as joyous processions wind through the streets. During the Mass special foods are blessed. This dates back to the 8th century. They are ham or fresh pork sausage and artistically decorated margučiai or Easter eggs, which were decorated all day Holy Saturday. This quite intricate method of egg decorating varies from kaimas to kaimas in Lithuania, but in general wax designs are drawn on the eggs, then dipped in a sequence of colors, each time etching off the desired segments of the pattern. The results are truly works of art. On Easter morning, after Resurrection services, the townspeople, in early times, rushed home in the belief that the one who arrives home first would have the earliest and richest harvest. There were races, sometimes involving minor accidents such as wagons overturning or horses breaking their reins. Once at home, the entire family shares a blessed margutis and breaks the 40 days of fasting just concluded. And then comes rest for most people kept a fervent vigil at the church since Holy Saturday night. In the afternoon the children search for treats left by the Velykų Bobutė — Grandma Easter. A Lithuanian Easter is actually celebrated for 8 days which include carnivals, fairs, and other forms of merriment. The celebration culminates on the Sunday after Easter — Atvelykis, when games involving margučiai are held. There are contests with coveted prizes for the best decorated egg, the hardest egg, and egg rolling games. For the young set there are margučiai treasure hunts, which are later poetically described by the children in their poignant manner. A Lithuanian Easter — truly an ethnic cultural celebration. Linksmy Velykų Švenčių! A Happy Easter Season to you all! **Eduardas Meilus, Jr.**

In tracing the culture of a people through songs, stories, and scientific knowledge, we often come upon mysteries. The word "Diveriks" is one of them. There were those who claimed this was the name of an ancient pagal god. Then there were those who thought this was a shortened form of "Dievų rikis"

— Master of Gods. Others say that it should be read as "Dievo rykštė" — God's rod — and connected to "vaivorykštė" — the rainbow. It is noted that the ancient people called the northern lights "rods" and believed them to be signs of coming misfortune. A still greater warning was the appearance of a comet which was also called "Dievo rykštė". During the 14-15th centuries, older chronicles were compiled into the Volynian chronicle which accuses King Mindaugas of worshipping pagan gods. Astronomical records state that comets appeared in 1240, 1250, 1254 and 1260. It was the custom of the times to hold church services after such fearful events as this. Therefore, did King Mindaugas really "worship pagan gods"? Or was this an accounting of natural scientific phenomenon?  
**Aldona Ryan**

**We are as Lithuanian as we make up our minds to be. — Vytautas Širvydas**

The Chief Commissioner of Australian Scouts, Bruce Garnsey, opened the **6th World Lithuanian Scout Jamboree** (National Jamboree) on January 3rd. The Jamboree or Tautinė Stovykla was held from January 2 to 15th. The report which follows was based on the write-up in **The Victorian Scout**.

Held once every ten years, the Lithuanian Scout National Jamboree draws together boy and girl scouts of Lithuanian origins from all parts of the world. The 1978 Jamboree attracted over 400 campers with sizeable contingents from the US and Canada as well as representatives from England, Germany, France and

South American Countries. The Jamboree was held to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Scout Movement in the Republic of Lithuania.

For the very first time, Australia was host country to this unusual event and expressed much interest in the Jamboree by Scout and Government leaders.

Probably the most interesting aspect is that traditionally Lithuanian boy and girl scouts participate in common activities. They meet together, hike together and take part in joint boy and girl scout camps and jamborees. The 6th Lithuanian National Scout Jamboree was one such co-ed venture and provided the visitors a rare opportunity to observe boy and girl scouts working and playing together in a spirit of scouting harmony and cooperation. **Ant. S.**

**IN APPRECIATION**

The staff of BRIDGES takes this opportunity to thank the following readers for financial contributions to defray the printing costs of the Lithuanian American Newsletter. These donations were made in addition to the regular subscriptions. We cordially extend a Lithuanian AČIŪ to the following supporters:

- The Central Chapter of Bendruomenė, Detroit, Mich. — 10.00;**
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- Diane Abromaitis, Watertown, Ct. — \$12.00;**
- Vete Shillings, Chicago, Ill. — \$10.00.**

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BRIDGES — LITHUANIAN AMERICAN NEWSLETTER is published monthly by the Lithuanian American Community of the USA, Inc. Managing Editor: Algirdas Budreckis; Members of the Editorial Board: Mykolas Drunga, Vytautas Jurgėla, Gintaras Karosas, Eduardas Meilus, Jr., Algirdas Mitkus, Viktoras Stankus, Vytautas Širvydas, Marytė Bizinkauskaitė. Entered as Third Class Matter at the Post Office in Boston, Mass. Subscription rates: \$3.00 for one year. Editorial and Subscriptions Address: P. O. Box 9061, Boston, MA. 02114.

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