



Vol. 2, Nr. 7

JULY, 1978

### THE CASE OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG

Ambassador Young's comment that "in our prisons too there are hundreds, perhaps even thousands of people I would call political prisoners," suggests a timely idea: Why not work out a permanent swap arrangement between us and the Soviet Union whereby we'd give them one of our political muggers (or anybody else who stole, robbed, raped, maimed or killed "because he was poor") in return for someone like Balys Gajauskas, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, and Viktoras Petkus? Indeed, we could be generous and offer the Soviets two, three — yes, as many "political prisoners" as they want — for the price of one. We could even let them pick whomever they want, subject to the prisoner's consent, as long as he promises never to return to the U.S., or, if he does, understands that he must serve out the rest of his original time (and remain forever under FBI scrutiny).

On what grounds could the Soviets object? The line about American political prisoners is, after all, no invention of Andy Young's but an old Marxist chestnut brought out to roast by the Kremlin, the **Daily Worker**, and the likes of Angela Davis every time the fire gets too hot for Moscow. Thus no sooner had Young spoken than his words were picked up by TASS, which later proceeded to chide American newsmen for not "investigating" Young's charge the way they had been pursuing stories concerning Soviet mistreatment of dissidents. At the very least public broaching of the prisoner-exchange proposal should cause the USSR acute ideological embarrassment.

If Moscow is serious about peddling the notion that most of our common criminals are political prisoners, we should be no less committed to exploring imaginatively every avenue of help for genuine politicals condemned to a slow death in Siberian prisons and camps. (Not incidentally, there could be side benefits for us from the proposed swap: think about the prospect of lighter prison populations and safer inner city streets.)

Furthermore, Andy Young (if and when he needs a new job) would be the ideal man to head the American side of the exchange set-up because, contrary to popular impressions, he really does feel empathy with Soviet prisoners of conscience. In the very same French interview in which he spoke his piece about American political prisoners he also gave emphatic homage to Soviet dissidents (a fact which was not widely reported). Mr. Young even expressed the hope that someday soon the dissidents would topple the present Soviet regime and become part of the new government (even as he, after being a political prisoner — he had been arrested for obstructing a garbage cleanup during a civil-rights-related garbage-collectors' strike — is now an American ambassador). Farfetched and wishful though this idea may sound to most of us, it is remarkably close to that publicized by Dr. Aleksandras Shtromas and other decidedly anti-Communist observers, who believe that the Soviet Union is on the brink of revolution (see BRIDGES, Vol. 2, No. 3).

That Andy Young's heart is not with the Soviet tyrants but with the dissidents and resisters was brought home to our own Lithuanian Community (Bendruomenė) representatives last May 2nd. During their visit national president Algimantas S. Gečys



and vicepresident Rimas Česonis provided the Ambassador with a lengthy memorandum detailing from beginning to end the Lithuanian case against the Soviets. They also asked for his direct intercession on behalf of Lithuanian prisoners (which he readily promised. Even more importantly, they explained that the Lithuanian people have not given up on their fight for independence (far from it!) and that the Soviet Union will sooner or later go the way of the other colonial powers — an idea to which, again, the Ambassador was highly receptive (it being his own). Finally, the Bendruomenė spokesman asked that the issue of Lithuanian self-determination be raised more actively in the appropriate U. N. commissions, something that, once more, Mr. Young pledged he would see to. (On that issue Messrs Gečys and Česonis also met with Edward Mezvinsky, our delegate to the U.S. Human Rights Commission.)

Andrew Young, then, is no Soviet sympathizer. To be sure, his vision is skewed because he perceives everything in terms of his own confrontation with "the system" during the civil rights movement of the 60's. To him the biggest of all political evils is "racism" (he calls the Russians "the worst racists in the world"), and he finds it hard to appreciate the distinction between democratic and totalitarian "systems." Insofar as he lumps together American civil rights workers — and American criminals — with Soviet dissidents, he is blind; but insofar as he evinces deep concern for prisoners everywhere and anywhere, he cannot, from our point of view, be "all bad" — and we have a valid (and who knows, perhaps even fruitful) claim on him.

**Mykolas J. Drunga**

#### THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY

Due to the efforts of the National Executive Board of the Lithuanian American Community (**Bendruomenė**) an audience was arranged with **Vice President Walter F. Mondale** on June 13th. The White House visit occurred in conjunction with the anniversary of the Terrible June Events in the Baltic States. The Baltic delegation consisted of the following: Bronius Nainys, President of the World Lithuanian Community (PLB); Algimantas S. Gečys, Rimas Česonis and Algimantas Gureckas, representing the Lithuanian American Community, Inc.; Dr. Kęstutis Valiūnas, President of VLIK; Rev. Casimir Pugevičius (Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid), Dr. Thomas Remeikis (Institute of Lithuanian Studies), Viktoras Nakas (World Lithuanian Youth Association), Jolanta Raslavičius (Lithuanian press). Dr. Olgerts Povlovskis represented the World Latvian Association, and Maido Kari was the spokesman for the Estonian National Council of America.

During the visit with Vice President Mondale, the following issues were discussed: continued nonrecognition of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States, Soviet colonialism, Russification, political prisoners, national self-determination, reunion of families, increased radio broadcasts to the Baltic States, preservation of ethnic neighborhoods in America, better distribution of Federal grants for ethnic studies, and other relevant matters. The audience lasted 50 minutes. Vice Pres. Mondale showed sincere interest in the topics raised and expressed his regret that human rights are denied the peoples of the Baltic nations. He reaffirmed to the Lithuanian delegation that the present administration implements and supports the policy of nonrecognition of the annexation by the USSR as promulgated in 1940.

During the visit **President Jimmy Carter unexpectedly entered the conference room.** In view of the fact that June 15th marks the anniversary dates of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States and the commencement of mass deportations, President Carter's meeting with the Baltic delegation assumed political significance vis-a-vis the Administration's position on the Baltic question.

The meeting was also attended by representatives of the State Department, the National Security Council and the White House Staff, the latter being represented by Mrs. Ann Wexler and her staff assistant Victoria Mongiardo. The chief coordinator of the Baltic Delegation was **Rimas Česonis**, Vice President of Bendruomenė; he was instrumental in obtaining the White House invitation through his contacts as a hard-working New Jersey Democrat. **A. Gč.**



**L. to r.: W. Mondale, R. Česonis, K. Pugevičius, A. Gečys, B. Nainys, M. Kari, K. Valiūnas, J. Carter, V. Nakas, T. Remeikis, A. Gureckas, J. Raslavičius, O. Povlovskis.**



**You've had heard it by now, but it bears repeating: Viktoras Petkus** has been convicted (3 yrs. prison, 7 yrs. hard labor camp, 5 yrs. internal exile) for his membership on a committee that monitored Soviet compliance with the Helsinki Agreement in Lithuania.

Petkus, 49, has been actively defending **individual freedom** and **national self-determination** ever since the Soviets annexed Lithuania. He was first arrested in 1947 at the **age of 18** for helping Lithuanian freedom fighters and sentenced to 10 yrs. in Siberia. Amnestied after Stalin died 6 years later, in 1957 he was re-arrested and condemned to 6 years in prison for keeping and distributing Lithuanian books written prior to the Soviet occupation. This time he served out his sentence in full. (Our earlier information that he spent only 1.6 yrs. in camp is grievously incorrect.)

Now, after 1 yr. of pre-trial detention, this Lithuanian of seemingly unbounded courageousness has been given a sentence even harsher than those of Shcharansky and Ginzburg. From what we know, he has the active support of the Lithuanian people behind him. During his trial (if one can call it that), a woman who was supposed to testify against him placed a red rose in front of him, saying it was a gift from the youth and the Catholics of Lithuania. But a guard, seeing this, grabbed the rose and threw it back at the woman.

In lieu of roses, the least we in the West can do is send letters and telegrams to our officials, asking them to do their utmost to help Petkus. (Letters to editors are also needed). President Carter mentioned Petkus in his press conference. The Senate and the House both passed a resolution explicitly condemning the trials of Petkus, Shcharansky, and Ginzburg. **But more needs to be done.**

The Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (Bendruomenė), the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania (VLIK), the Lithuanian-American Council, and other organizations are urging **everyone** to call, write, or cable the President and our representatives in Washington, thanking them for what they've already done on Petkus' behalf but also asking them to **keep up and intensify the pressure** on the Soviets. In particular, we should be demanding that **Petkus be made part of any exchange deal** that involves Shcharansky and/or Ginzburg. Another good point to raise is that if the Russians are going to continue mocking the Helsinki Agreements by persecuting people such as Petkus, they shouldn't expect to be buying computer technology, oil-drilling equipment, or wheat from us so easily. (President Carter already has moved in the right direction on this, but he needs to be pushed, and pushed, and pushed . . .)

So, be brief, use your own words, but **WRITE**. Here are some addresses:

The Hon. Jimmy Carter, The White House, Washington, D.C. 20500; The Hon. Cyrus Vance, Dept. of State, Washington, D.C. 20520; The Honorable . . ., U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510; The Honorable . . ., House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

On June 17-18 the **American, Canadian, and World Lithuanian YOUTH Association** held a political conference in Chicago's Youth Center. Among the guest speakers were **Valdas V. Adamkus**, regional Environmental Protection Agency administrator, who on the basis of his long experience argued that for a relatively small-numbered constituency such as the Lithuanian-Americans it is more important who you know in Washington than who you are in your own community; author, Cleveland city official and former UPI reporter **Algis Rukšėnas**, who offered some inside tips on how to get the attention of newsmen; and **Jim Henderson**, head of the State Department's Baltic Desk who shared some surprising thoughts on how "Foggy Bottom" bureaucrats view the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian community representatives knocking on their door. There were lively question-and-answer sessions with each of the three speakers. Then the conferees, virtually all of them under 30, held several political action workshops, some of which bore immediate fruit (see below).

Emerging from the political youth conference (see above), the Association of Young Lithuanian Americans (JAV Lietuvių Jaunimo Sąjunga), under the leadership of public affairs coordinator **Linas Kojelis**, prepared to demonstrate against the small but noisy Nationalist Socialist Party of America in affirmation of Lithuanian democratic principles. In their news release, the Association explained the destruction and suffering endured by Lithuanians at the hands of the Nazis during the years that Hitler had occupied Lithuania (1941-44). Drawing about 40 young people with imaginative picket signs, the demonstration took place June 23rd in front of the Nazis' Chicago headquarters in the heart of the Marquette Park section. **John L. Juozevičius**, president of the Association's Chicago chapter, was quoted in the **Sun Times** (June 24) as saying that "the purpose is to express our opposition to the demented bigotry of American Nazis." The bigots, meanwhile, after renouncing plans to march in Skokie, held a flop of a rally in Marquette Park on July 9.

The **World Lithuanian Youth Association** has also launched a project aimed at the **media** covering the 1980 summer **Olympics** to be held in the Soviet Union. NBC has the exclusive TV broadcast rights to this event. Unfortunately, the Soviets have been conceded a great deal of control over content and censorship of broadcasts. The Association is concerned that Soviet propaganda will be transmitted during the sports coverage and that this propaganda will go unanswered by the TV media.

Therefore a task force is now being created for carrying out a project to sharpen media sensitivity to the political and cultural issues involved. The nub of this project is a mechanism whereby the NBC sports and news staffs will be offered an information



service providing biographical data on non-Russian Soviet athletes as well as relevant historical data, in exchange for NBC commitments that their coverage will not deteriorate into a free advertisement of the Soviet system.

Anyone interested in participating in this project of at least two years' duration should contact Ms. Asta Banionis, 515 Madison S.E., Grand Rapids, MI. 49503.

**Rochester, N.Y.**, observances of **Captive Nations Week** (July 16-22) were held on July 20th in the New City Hall Building. The Lithuanian delegation was well represented, with Larry Wizman holding the flag and close to a dozen persons attending in national costumes. Fr. Justinas Vaškys, OFM, pastor of St. George's Lithuanian parish, opened the commemoration with a prayer. Rochester mayor Thomas Ryan presided. The main speaker was Ukrainian dissident **Gen. Piotr Grigorenko**. Through the aid of a translator, he mentioned his close friend, recently arrested Viktoras Petkus, several times. The event was carried on the local news, and on P.B.S. Channel 21.

Similar observances were held in major cities throughout the country. Lithuanians participating in them demanded the release of Petkus and other prisoners of conscience. President Carter issued the annual Captive Nations Week Proclamation (pursuant to a law passed by Congress in 1959). This year, unlike the last, it was on time. **L.W.**

## EVENTS

Thousands of Lithuanians flocked to **Toronto** this summer to participate in the giant **World Lithuanian Days** celebration (June 27 - July 4). The following were the highlights of this impressive mass gathering:

The **Fifth Congress of the Lithuanian World Community** (See the Community with a capital "C" section);

The **Third Lithuanian Song Festival of the U.S. and Canada** at Maple Leaf Gardens, attracting over 10,000 spectators who came to hear a program of folk and concert songs performed by a joint chorus made up of 54 Lithuanian choirs with a total of 1,475 singers (including more than 300 children); and

The **Lithuanian World Games** (see our next issue under "Sports").

Besides these three major events, the World Lithuanian Days occasioned the **Twelfth U.S. and Canadian Lithuanian Teacher's Study Week**, a fine exhibit by Lithuanian-Canadian painters and sculptors, and a host of social functions. One of the most heartening aspects of the entire festival was the active participation of Lithuanians from at least 13 free-world countries. Another was the ability of the organizing committee to secure considerable financial support (to the tune of nearly \$100,000!) from Canadian government sources.

4 And here are some other Lithuanian mass gatherings held this summer that will already have occurred by the time you read this:

**Baltimore's Lithuanian Festival** (June 10-11), where, in addition to crafts, music, culinary offerings, and an appearance by Simas Kudirka, the main attraction was a life-sized replica of a Lithuanian country cottage, built of wood with a straw roof.

**A Day of Dance, Music and Song** (June 11) at **Hot Springs, Ark.**, presented by the local Bendruomenė chapter in cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce; the celebration featured an appearance by "Grandis", the Chicago-based folk dance group, together with an arts and crafts exhibit.

The **Lithuania Day Radio Picnic** (June 18) in **Jackson Township, N.J.** Organized by the indefatigable Dr. Jack J. Stukas and his associates, this event drew thousands to be entertained by Lithuanian, Estonian and Polish singing and dancing groups and exceptionally good food.

In the **New England** area, the two traditional mid-summer picnics were held July 23 at **Putnam, Ct.**, by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and August 13 at Romuva Park in **Brockton, Mass.**, by Stephen and Valentine Minkus, directors of N.E.'s oldest Lithuanian radio program.

The **64th Annual Lithuanian Day (August 13)** at **Lakewood Park, Pa.**, the oldest continuous ethnic day in Pennsylvania, sponsored by the Anthracite Council 144, K. of L. The most rollicking of all the traditional picnics, this festival boasted an attendance second only to that of the Toronto Lithuanian World Days fete. Proceeds went towards the publication of "The Chronicles of the Catholic Church in Lithuania."

The **65th National Convention of the Knights of Lithuania** (August 16-20), held in Syracuse, N.Y. More about this event in our next issue.

The **Sixth National Jamboree** of the **Lithuanian Scouts** in exile will be held from August 13 to 26 on the Boy Scouts of America Treasure Valley Camping Grounds in Paxton, Mass. This jamboree will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Lithuanian Scouting Association. For that occasion the Scouts designed a commemorative envelope and obtained a special postmark from the U.S. Postal Service. It will read: 6th Lithuanian Scout Jamboree Sta., Paxton, MA 01612", and will be used on all mail leaving the camp.

## COMMUNITY WITH A CAPITAL "C"

**Pasaulio Lietuvių Bendruomenė** (Lithuanian World Community), which embraces the **Bendruomenė** organizations of the U.S., Canada, and a dozen other countries in which Lithuanian immigrants reside, held its **Fifth Congress** from June 30 to July 3 during the **World Lithuanian Days** at Toronto, Canada. The



Congress drew together 107 official delegates and many more guests from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Great Britain, France, New Zealand, Switzerland, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, and West Germany. They heard reports from the Bendruomenė leadership, discussed the state of Lithuanian affairs in their respective countries, and adopted a series of proposals delineating the shape of Lithuanian political, educational, cultural, youth, and sports activities over the next five-year period.

Among the many projects endorsed by the delegates was one to aid the nearly forgotten cause of beleaguered Lithuanian Catholics in (formerly Lithuanian) northern Poland; another to represent Lithuanian interests at NBC and other media organizations covering the upcoming 1980 Moscow Olympics; and a third to lay the ground for establishing a chair of Lithuanian Studies (or, ideally, an entire institute) at one of the top-notch American or Canadian universities.

The endorsement of these and other action projects by the predominantly young to middle-aged delegates — together with the responsibility for follow-up such an endorsement entails — provides genuine hope for the continued perseverance of meaningful Lithuanian action in the next few years to come.

The Congress also elected a new executive leadership for the Lithuanian World Bendruomenė which will be charged with coordinating its international activities until the next Congress in 1983. A Chicago slate of candidates led by well-known scout and Bendruomenė activist **Vytautas Kamantas** of Lemont, Ill., won out handily over a Cleveland slate headed by **Raymond Kudukis**, a top-level city official in the former administration of Mayor Ralph Perk. In addition to Kamantas, who will be president, the new Lithuanian World Community Executive Board seats Antanas Juodvalkis, Vaclovas Kleiza, Daina Kojelis, Saulius Kuprys, Dr. Algis Paulius, Romas Sakadolskis, Father Antanas Saulaitis, SJ, and Mečys Šilkaitis.

The outgoing president, **Bronius Nainys** of Chicago, and his colleagues on the old executive board (Father Jonas Borevičius, SJ, Kostas Dočkus, Stasys Džiugas, Romas Kasparas, Jonas Kavaliūnas, and Juozas Šlajus) received a standing ovation for a job extremely well done, particularly in the fields of international relations, communication, and support for youth activities. Regarding the latter, Mr. Nainys' administration provided the financial backing for the Third Lithuanian World Youth Congress in Latin America (1974); and the delegates at Toronto charged the new Kamantas leadership with helping to do the same for the **Fourth Youth Congress** which will take place in **Europe next summer**.

## ISSUES

Lithuanian-Americans have been **protesting** certain **undeserved negative references to Lithuanians in NBC's "HOLOCAUST" series**. In particular, the film **repeatedly mentioned the "Lithuanian SS"**. Actually,

**no such thing ever existed — thanks to the efforts of the strong and popular Lithuanian anti-Nazi resistance movement. Three times the Nazis tried to organize a native Lithuanian SS unit, and three times they failed.** And their reaction was savage: intensified economic exploitation; capture, by 1943, of most (but not all) resistance leaders and their internment in concentration camps, together with a shutdown of all institutions of higher learning, which were the hotbeds of anti-Nazi activity; finally, mass persecution of the Lithuanian people, resulting in more than 29,000 new inmates for the concentration camps (of which over 6,000 died). None of this was mentioned in "Holocaust", of course. The fact that hundreds of Lithuanian families and individuals stepped in to help Jews — at great risk to their own lives — was also ignored.

To be sure, there were Lithuanian individuals who served in German units (some of German origin who repatriated to Germany in 1940; others forcibly conscripted), and there were those who privately or in gangs committed atrocities against the Jews. But just what significance does this fact of individual crime over 30 years ago, in the complex context that then existed, have today? Parallel question: What should we, today, make of the fact that many individual Jews were part of the Communist apparatus and Soviet secret police which oppressed, tortured, and mass-deported Lithuanians during the Soviet occupation immediately preceding that of the Nazis?

"People who do not speak English are becoming a significant voting bloc. In addition to government jobs and government largesse, they ask for school classes in their ethnic history and culture and language," observes columnist **Jack Mabley** (Chicago Tribune, May 23, 1978). But, according to him, "descendants of earlier immigrants aren't very sympathetic" to this. As an example he quotes **Mrs. Aldona Daukus**, director of the popular Sophie Barcus Lithuanian Family Radio Hour, who told him that instead of demanding special classes, the earlier immigrants "established their own Saturday schools, where the children learn the language, literature, and history of their parents' and grandparents' homeland." She pointed out that "Lithuanians have two grammar and high schools in Chicago, one in Cicero, and one in Lemont... also one college in Chicago... And we're not alone. The Greek, Ukrainian, Polish, and Jewish have Saturday schools. We don't believe that all taxpayers should be forced to pay for what we believe is our responsibility... Another point: We never hear our children ask, 'What is there to do?'"

Through Mrs. Daukus speaks the old-fashioned voice of private initiative and community self-reliance. But can, will, and should the Lithuanian-Americans resist the pressure to join the government subsidy bandwagon now that the blacks, the Hispanics, the Orientals, and other fashionable minorities have shown the way? There is a genuine dilemma here. On the



one hand, Lithuanians, like other East European whites, tend to think that they should get what they feel is their rightful share of the growing tax dollar bounty being spent on ethnic educational and cultural projects. On the other hand, their conservative instincts, recently sharpened by confrontations with busing, affirmative action, and other federal interventions, tell them to be wary.

The issue deserves a good public hearing in our community. The results of the corresponding experience in Canada — where, in the name of "multiculturalism," the government lavishes millions of dollars on ethnics including the Lithuanians — should also be assessed.

### THE HOMELAND

"During my three-month clinical rotation in the capital city of Vilnius, I was impressed by the high regard Lithuanians have for American medicine. This was vividly brought to light when I was invited to examine the fundus of a renal dialysis patient. In an attempt to escape from the direct morning glare of the ten-bed ward-room, I took the patient to a corner of a nursing station. On completing the examination, I was most humbled to find all of the renal patients lined up in the corridor outside, expectantly waiting to be examined by the American doctor with the American ophthalmoscope!"

So writes **Linas Sidrys, MD**, in a fine article for the May 19, 1978 issue of JAMA, the journal of the well-known **American Medical Association**. At present with the University of Chicago Hospitals, Dr. Sidrys, a Lithuanian community activist, goes on to comment on the economic aspects of practicing and teaching medicine in Lithuania:

"Foreign medical journals must be purchased with gold rubles, and only a full professor has a right to such a private subscription. Thus, physician frequently send abroad for free reprints and are extremely grateful to the authors who respond.

"Personal financial incentives here, as in all of Soviet medicine, are strictly controlled. Medical students receive a monthly stipend of 40 rubles for six years, a beginning physician is paid 110 rubles a month, and the top of the pay scale reaches 600 rubles for a full professor." (The present official US-USSR exchange rate is about 3 dollars per ruble). "However, it is a universally accepted although technically illegal custom to give important physicians gifts to remain in their favor." Other sources have confirmed the fact that more often than not bribery is necessary to obtain better and/or faster treatment.

Nevertheless, although "in this socialized system the pay remains the same regardless of the specialty practiced, the number of patients examined, or the type of operation performed," Dr. Sidrys "was impressed to find many conscientious ophthalmologists who work in what Americans would consider a difficult professional setting with the primary interest of doing a better job."

6 (Incidentally, JAMA's senior editor is another Chicago Lithuanian, **Dr. Zenonas Danilevičius**.)

**One quarter** or around 45,000 sq. miles of the **Baltic Sea** floor has become **biologically "dead"**, despite various counter-measures. The ecological balance of the once-rich sea floor has been damaged by pollution, which has caused the depletion of oxygen, as well as by increased high-tonnage shipping. The situation has become of grave concern to many in the Baltic scientific community. To alert the West about the alarming state of deterioration, a group of naturalists from Estonia have sent an open letter of appeal to their colleagues in other countries bordering the Baltic Sea. **LND**

**The founder of modern Lithuanian archeology, Dr. Jonas Puzinas** (b. 1905), died in Chicago on April 14th. A professor at the Universities of Kaunas (1934 - 40) and Vilnius (1940 - 43), he systematized prehistorical information, placed it in a chronological framework, and helped define essential archeological terminology in Lithuanian. Residing in this country since 1949, Puzinas continued scholarly work in several areas of Lithuanian studies, even though he could no longer do primary research in his principal field of interest — the archeology of the Lithuanian terrain.

### PERSONALITIES

Lithuania's diplomatic representation suffered a loss in the death of **Juozas Kajeckas** (b. 1897) on July 2nd in Washington, D.C. Mr. Kajeckas had been in Lithuania's foreign service since 1929. For 39 years he served the Lithuanian legation in Washington, first as councilor, then from 1957 until 1976 as charge d'affaires (i.e., top official representative). Due to ill health he resigned his post two years ago, when Stasys Bačkis, the current charge d'affaires, was appointed to succeed him. The head of the Lithuanian Diplomatic Mission abroad is Stasys Lozoraitis, who resides in Rome. Some Western countries, including the United States, continue to recognize the diplomatic representatives of the independent Republic of Lithuania (1918 - 1940) but their advanced age has begun to pose a problem for the continuation of this policy.

Finally, **Dr. Michael Devenis** (b. 1891), a physician, died in Santa Monica on May 28th. He lived in the U.S. from 1914 until 1928, then returned to Lithuania. In 1940 he was arrested by the invading Soviets, and after spending a year in jails on Lithuanian territory, he was moved to the forced labor camp of Vorkuta in Siberia, the sub-arctic coal mining center. However, due to the efforts of his U.S. wife and the intervention of the State Department, he was released in 1942 and came to this country. A decade later he



testified before the famous **House Baltic Committee** (1953-54) under Rep. Charles J. Kersten, which was investigating the illegal Soviet annexation of the three Baltic republics. (The Committee's reports constitute valuable source materials on Soviet perfidy against Lithuania.) Dr. Devenis is the son-in-law of **Jonas Vileišis**, one of the 20 signatories of the Lithuanian Declaration of Independence (1918). Among his many surviving relatives BRIDGES readers know his son-in-law, **Dr. C. K. Bobelis**, the energetic president of the **Lithuanian American Council**, as well as his brother-in-law, **Dr. Peter Vileišis**, a veteran **Bendruomenė** leader in Connecticut.

"After a brilliant showing at the University of Chicago Medical School, **Andrius "Andy" Plioplys** was finishing his internship in Madison, Wis., in June, 1976, and was on the verge of specializing in neurology, when the artist inside his doctor's white coat finally pushed its way forward," writes the **Washington Star** in its June 29 issue. Plioplys is now in Washington, D.C., where his work in sculpture, "tending toward three-dimensional structures, utilizing rectangular and square shapes, cracked mirrors and other 'conceptual' ideas, has met with favorable critical response." The physician-turned-artist has also been writing thoughtful essays in art history for Lithuanian-language publications. But the need to earn a living, which art alone cannot meet, has led Plioplys to accept an offer at the famous Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., where he will resume research in pediatric neurology while pursuing his interest in "installation pieces, works of art that are so big they have to be permanently installed."

Lithuanians have never had a U.S. Senator or Congressman, but probably the next best thing for gaining any kind of clout on Capitol Hill is to get appointed to the Congressional staff. If a number of senators or congressmen have recently shown special regard for the Baltic and East European cause, this might in no small measure be due to the fact that their **legislative assistants** are descended from that area. Thus the ever-helpful Sen. Robert Dole (R., Kans.) has an actively Latvian legislative assistant, while Sen. Harrison Schmitt (R., N. Mex.) is served in the same capacity by a Ukrainian. And our own **George Ramonas** of Michigan works as a legislative assistant to Sen. Pete V. Domenici (R., N. Mex.). There are no Balts or Ukrainians to speak of in the two states represented by these senators but all three of them made it a point, for example, to accept speaking invitations to last September's Baltic Human Rights Rally after chief organizer Viktoras Nakas approached their assistants . . .

. . . Speaking of **Republicans**, prominent **Bendruomenė** activist **Anthony Novasitis, Jr.**, serves as General Counsel for the National Republican Heritage Group Council. In addition, he has been appointed to the **Legal Affairs Committee** of the Republican National Committee, and just recently the Pennsylvania Heritage

Groups Council elected him as their president. Meanwhile, in Illinois, our kinsman **Don Adams** is State Chairman of the Illinois Republican State Central Committee; **Casimir Oksas** was reelected as President of the state's Republican State Nationalities Council; and the **Lithuanian-American Republican League of Illinois**, chaired by **John Talandis**, was named the Heritage Organization of the Year because of their "outstanding record of consistent success in ethnic politics."

Right now, the Republicans seem to have a decided edge over the Democrats in building white ethnic participation, although on international issues directly affecting the Lithuanian interest there is no real difference between the current mainstreams of both parties.

**Carol Grabauskas**, a popular radio personality (WMSP-FM) in Harrisburg, Pa., is vice-president of the newly formed Knights of Lithuania Council 146 . . . **Stanley Balzekas, Sr.**, a prominent Chicago car dealer and community leader, was named "Man of the Year" by the Illinois Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce at their May banquet . . . **Gordon Matulonis, Edward Budelis** and **Casimir Razulis** comprise an unofficial Baltimore beer tasting society "who in less than three years have thoughtfully sipped some 700 brands of beer from the United States and 54 other countries. Their goal is to judge 1,000 of the estimated 3,000 beers brewed," the Baltimore Sun Magazine (June 11, 1978) reports. So far they've given only three beers the bottom (ugh!) rating: two from Russia and one from Lithuania . . . **I Wanna Hold Your Hand**, a Canadian screen comedy recreating the Beatlemania of the 60's, was directed and co-authored by **Robert Zemeckis** . . . **Ray Šilkaitis** of Chicago served as an ethnic consultant for **F.I.S.T.**, the recently released Hollywood saga of union-organizing starring Sylvester Stallone ("Rocky"). He, wife **Rasa**, and brother **Edmund** also danced as extras in the film's Lithuanian wedding scene.

## SPORTS

Adolphe V. Bernotas, who manages the Associated Press office at Concord, the capital of New Hampshire, a Lithuanian himself, took time out to pay a visit to another Lithuanian, comfortably settled in Epping, N.H. — Jack Sharkey, the 1932-1933 world heavyweight champion, and wrote an informative article published in the New Hampshire Nashua Telegraph and, probably, in quite a few other papers across the country.

Bernotas writes: "About 10 years ago the postmaster of the Epping Post Office removed President Lyndon Johnson's photograph and replaced it with two autographed pictures of Sharkey, regarded by the townspeople as the Squire of Epping."

When Tommy Laughran stopped Sharkey in 1933 in the latter's bid to regain the world title lost to Primo Carnera, or when Joe Louis stopped him in the Yankee Stadium Aug. 18, 1936, neither probably knew that Sharkey's real name was the Lithuanian Jozas Povilas Žukauskas, Americanized as Joseph



BLP 1195

Paul Cukoshay. Even his wife Dorothy, who died four years ago, became cognizant of the real name only when their intentions of marriage were publicized in their local parish.

"Of course Jack Sharkey has been my legal name for years," Jack told Bernotas, who delighted him with the knowledge of his ethnic background and conversed during part of the interview in the native language of their births. Sharkey was born 75 years ago in Binghampton, N.Y., where his parents settled after leaving Lithuania at the turn of the century.

Bernotas writes: "Sharkey is fiercely proud of his heritage, pointing out that besides himself other Lithuanian Americans have contributed to American sports like Eddie Waitkus, Dick Butkus, Johnny Unitas and 'that hell of a tennis player Vitas Gerulaitis' ". One can see the Lithuanian American journal Vytis on his table in the library.

When Sharkey was trying to become a fighter in Boston around the 1920s he was told that the name Žukauskas - Cukoshay will not do. So he borrowed the first name of Jack Dempsey and the last name of Sailor Tom Sharkey, boxers he most admired. "Boston was all Irish then and nobody knew the difference", Sharkey said.

At the present in retirement Sharkey spends most of his time fishing, hunting or taking cross-country trips. He is an authority on hunting and fishing in New England. For instance, he can tell where to fish on the upper Androscoggin river and what flies,

which he designs himself, work best.

A great-grandfather eight times, Sharkey says that only one Sharkey, Jack Sharkey III, dabbled seriously in athletics, playing scholarship football at the University of Maryland.

He said he began visiting Epping to train and recuperate from bouts as early as 1924. His wife was born "right here in this house". He moved to live in it permanently in 1952.

Recovering from a second prostrate operation, he had to forego his daily three-mile jog. He, also, gave up appearing at sportsmen's shows some time ago, because they have become "too commercialized."

"It's nice to be remembered," Sharkey said at the end of the interview to Bernotas, "and hell to be forgotten. Actually, I'm pretty well fortified. Across the street is a funeral parlor, the church isn't far away and over there is the cemetery." **Vyt. Š.**

**NOTE TO OUR READERS:** We are sorry that the July issue of BRIDGES is so late, but vacations and this summer's hectic schedule of important political and cultural events combined to cause the delay.

**IMPORTANT:** The BRIDGES address for all business matters (subscriptions, change of address, etc.) has been changed. The new address is: BRIDGES, c/o Jonas Jankus, 85-66 98th St., Woodhaven, N.Y., 11421. The editorial address remains the same.

---

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.

---

After 5 Days, Return to  
**Bridges - Lithuanian American Newsletter**  
c/o DARBININKAS  
341 Highland Blvd.  
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11207

Non-Profit Org.  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Brooklyn, N. Y.  
Permit No. 5417

Romas Sakadolskis  
2532 W. 46 Pl.  
Chicago, IL 60632