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BRIDGES IS PUBLISHED BY THE LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN COM-MUNITY OF THE U.S.A., INC. THROUGH THIS NEWSLETTER, THE PUBLISHERS HOPE TO RE-ESTABLISH TIES BETWEEN THE DE-TACHED, MOBILE LITHUANIAN-AMERICANS AND THEIR LITHUANIAN HERITAGE BY PRESENTING ITEMS ON LITHUANIAN CULTURE, CONDITIONS IN THE HOMELAND, EVENTS AND PERSONALITIES IN AMERICA, AND THE ASPIRATIONS OF ALL WHO SUBSCRIBE TO THE IDEA THAT LITHUANIA DESIRES TO BE AN INDEPENDENT AND FREE NATION AGAIN.

Linksmų šventų Kalėdų ir laimingų Naujųjų Metų! Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year!

from the editorial board of *Bridges*!!

An old Lithuanian custom says that the way you spend your first day of the New Year foretells the course of the rest of your year. With this, our first issue, we carry many hopes for 1979. Foremost of these is the hope of preparing interesting, provocative, timely, and informative material for our readers.

Although we will be maintaining the basic format of previous *Bridges* issues, we will also explore some new areas and introduce some new directions. Our goals will remain the same as those stated in the very first issue of *Bridges* — to reestablish the link and build bridges between the uprooted, mobile Lithuanian-Americans and their Lithuanian heritage. Hence, our articles will deal with Lithuanian culture and language, information on Lithuanian group activities, personalities, and cultural events. An important focus will be on events and conditions in Lithuania.

We invite all suggestions and constructive criticism from you, our readers, and look forward to serving you in the best Lithuanian tradition.

THE CAUSE OF LIBERTY

Balys Gajauskas, having just finished a sentence of 25 years for participating in the partisan movement in Lithuania, and having just been sentenced to another 10 years for "anti-Soviet agitation," was married in prison to Irena Dumbrytė. Miss Dumbrytė traveled from Lithuania to Mordavia, where Gajauskas is imprisoned. She was accompanied by Father Zdebskis, an activist Lithuanian priest. However, Fr. Zdebskis was not allowed to perform a Christian wedding, so the pair were married with a short, civil ceremony. After two hours allotted for visiting, the bride was told to go. She will not be allowed to see her husband again for another four years!

Amnesty International has featured Mr. Gajauskas in their Amnesty Action Bulletin. They urged their members, as we urge our readers, to write on Mr. Gajauskas's behalf. Letters should be addressed to:

Vilnius, Lithuania

Attorney-General for Lithuania, S.S.R.

A. K. Kairelis



Balys Gajauskas and his new wife before his imprisonment

Religion

Two KGB agents have been expelled from Kaunas seminary for "unbecoming conduct," according to Lietuvos Katalikų Bažnyčios Kronika (Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania), No. 32, recently smuggled over to the United States. In retaliation, Communist officials forced the expulsion of two exemplary seminarians while the KGB continues to pressure the seminary to reinstate their two men. The expulsion is the latest episode in a series of clashes between the Church and Communist authorities over control of the seminary, which is the only remaining institution still training Roman Catholic candidates for the priesthood in the entire Soviet Union.

Representatives of the Lithuanian Catholic Church have been inspired by Pope John Paul II's encouragement to speak out against religious discrimination, according to Reuters News Service. Three Lithuanian priests travelled to Moscow where they told Western reporters they had come to announce the formation of a new movement, called the "Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers." According to the Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas, one of the groups five founders, the aims of the new Committee are to establish legal and practical equality between believers and atheists, and that, in the future, there would no longer be a "silent Church" in Eastern Europe. Svarinskas pointed out that "there has never been a church of silence in Lithuania." He went on to point out that the ratio of priests to churches in Lithuania is steadily declining because of Soviet restrictions and the harassment of priests and bishops. Two bishops, Vincentas Sladkevičius and Julijonas Steponavičius, have been in exile for 20 years without trial and without apparent reason. The establishment of this Committee is the first active response in the Soviet Union to the election last October of a pope from communist Poland.

Other Nationalities

After nearly 800 years of domination by more powerful neighbors, **Estonia** became an independent republic in 1918 and, for 22 years, experienced an unparalleled period of flourishing cultural activity. With autonomy cut short in 1940, the idea of an independent Estonian nation is dying out again, according to an article published in the *Los Angeles Times*. Numerous reasons can be cited to explain this disheartening trend. Estonians reportedly enjoy a higher per capita income than the U.S.S.R.'s national average; they also enjoy many "bourgeois" luxuries such as

western restaurants, discotheques, and cars. Estonians say there is a continuing, subtle program of "Russification" which reinforces these materialistic distractions from nationalism. A large number of the republic's government and party officials speak only Russian. One such official, Arnold Koop, reportedly is attempting to make "Tartu", Estonia's most famous university, into a center of Soviet, rather than Estonian studies. The fact that Estonia has one of the Soviet Union's lowest birthrates only compounds the problem. Although a similar situation exists in Lithuania, it is not nearly as acute. Estonia's lesson, however, has sobering implications. Our attention to Lithuania's needs must be unwavering if we in America are to offer any compensation.

A Soviet court in Riga, Latvia has tried and sentenced a Swedish citizen of Latvian descent. Lalmonis Niedre, 54, to ten years at hard labor for espionage. He was charged with having systematically collected information on military installations. His real "crime" is thought to be taking phorographs of many churches that have been destroyed or damaged over the past vears. Niedre had taken the photographs during previous tours of the Baltic states and had then distributed them in the West. The sentence, handed down on November 3rd, 1978, did not say on whose behalf Niedre had conducted this so-called spying; Sweden was not named, nor were any of those to whom the military information was allegedly passed. Mr. Janis Skudra, a native Latvian, was charged as Niedre's accomplice at the same trial and given a sentence of 12 years at hard labor. The entire process may, in this instance, be a Soviet warning to ethnic Balts in the West, including Lithuanians, to severly restrict their activities when visiting their homelands. For more information, contact Mr. John Bolsteins of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, P. O. Box 432, Rockville, Maryland 20850.

The Latvian News Digest, an informational bulletin published in the United States by the American Latvian Association, informs us of a telling slip in the Soviet press. An article published in a newspaper in Soviet-occupied Latvia, Padomju Jaunatne, dated April 18, 1978, discusses the decisions made by the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party with regards to the new Constitution. The article contains a fateful misprint. The intended word, apspriesana (discussion) was misspelled to read apspiesana (oppression). The reprint of the official party edict in the article thus orders "all parties and Soviet organs of the republic, its ministries and departments, labor, youth and social

organizations, to review the comments and recommendations made by the people in the course of the people's oppression (sic!!) regarding the new draft of the constitution for the Soviet Republic of Latvia."

It is known that the editor of *Padomju Jaunatne*, E. Papins, suffered a heart attack upon reading the article. Since he remains hospitalized, the further course of his carrer can only be surmised. He is not, however, expected to return to his former post as editor-in-chief of the newspaper. Perhaps he could apply for a similar position in Lithuania?

COMMUNITY WITH A CAPITAL "C"

About 250 Lithuanian-Americans attended a briefing at the Old Executive Office Building in Washington, D.C. on November 20, 1978. Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's advisor on foreign affairs, addressed the gathering with a reiteration of the administration's policy on human rights and the Baltic States Question. Mr. Brzezinski accepted a plaque, on the president's behalf, honoring President Carter's stand on human rights. The president, Mr. Brzezinski said, is "deeply conscious of the present condition of (the Lithuanian) people." The briefing was followed by a reception at the White House hosted by Roslyn Carter. A more detailed account of these important events, as well as a report of Bendruomenė's Council session and Human Rights Awards banquet held the weekend before the Washington meetings, will appear in the next edition of Bridges.



Zbigniew Brzezinski being presented with a copy of Lithuania: 700 Years, by the editor, Algirdas Budreckis (Vice-president of Bendruomene) before accepting President Carter's Human Rights Award. In the photo, from the left, are Aušra Zerr, Mr. Budreckis, Algimantas Gečys, and Mr. Brzezinski.

The Interfaith Council of the American Jewish Committee invited American Bendruomenė president, S. Algimantas Gečys to confer on the subject of human rights. During their conference on November 8th, a phone call was made to U.S. Senator Richard Schweicker (R.-PA), who was due to make a trip to the Soviet Union. The senator was specifically asked to intercede with the Soviets in the cases of Soviet Jew Vladimir Slepak and Lithuanian Viktoras Petkus.



Algimantas Gečys, National President of Bendruomenė, center, meeting with Susan O. Weinberg and Dr. Seymour Piwoz, Vicepresident of the Interfaith Council.

MEDIA

Few would deny the far-reaching educational power of television, evidenced by such recently popular programs as Roots and The Holocaust. One aspect of this type of broadcasting that often goes unexamined is the realization that much of its audience is uncritical and basically uninformed about the subject matter. The contents of programs labeled "documentaries" or "docu-dramas" tend to be accepted by the audience as "truth." Details may be dismissed or forgotten, but the images created by those details generally remain. Even worse, other facts perhaps known to the viewer before the broadcast, can themselves become distorted by the barrage of new and attractive images. The television industry and its commercial or government sponsors therefore bear a special responsibility not to disseminate lies or package propaganda in slickly produced, easy-to-swallow packets.

A case in point is the current television series. The Unknown War. The series deals with World War II battles between Nazi Germany and Stalin's Russia. presented in 20 full-hour segments. Albert Shanker, President of the United Federation of Teachers, recently devoted an issue of his union-sponsored column to this specific topic. In his paid column, Where We Stand, Mr. Shanker described how the first episode of this program sets the stage by telling viewers that, "in the 1930's, the quality of life in the Soviet Union was improving." There is no mention of the forced collectivization which resulted in the deaths of more than 10 million Ukrainian and Russian peasants from 1931 to 1933, nor of the equally deadly purge trials. nor of the Gulag Archipelago and the suffering it still causes. Churches destroyed by the Nazis are shown, but not those destroyed by Stalin's troops. While the Russian invasion of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia also goes unmentioned, it is but one element of a long list of distortions and omissions.

The narrator describes the Nazi's New Order: "It treated human beings as if they were objects.... It left the dead anonymous and annihiliated families." Strange, but it seems the same words could apply to Stalin's "New Order," too.

Tom Buckley, writing in *The New York Times* on November 25th, has noted that viewers are never clearly told that the show "is, essentially, a Soviet production." While others had the right to make suggestions, "the final form of the series and its narration were decided in Moscow on a take-it-or-leave-it basis."

A respect for truth should compel the producers to tell the audience that this is the Soviet Union's version of history. However, adults viewing the series at home, or children in the company of their parents. at least have the opportunity for skepticism. Children in a classroom do not always have that privilege. In his column, Mr. Shanker asks why it is that the National Educational Association, representing 1.5 million teachers and presumably familiar with other, more objective versions of that same history, has recommended the Soviet series and allowed its name to appear in the credits. Did NEA representatives even see the series? If so, were they aware of its distortions? Were they also aware of the serious harm such lies can inflict on the open, receptive minds of children, especially when the children watch it under the authoritative and approving eyes of NEA-member teachers? The fact that these questions must be raised casts some doubt on the NEA's commitment to historical accuracy and human rights. The NEA's members, the general public, and parents in particular, have reason to be greatly concerned.

The September 25, 1978 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* featured an article entitled "How Baltic States Torment Russia." The article, generally positive in tone, emphasized the growing number and intensity of anti-Russian outbursts which have occured throughout the Baltic States in opposition to Soviet attempts at erasing national identities. The article highlighted the policy of the United States and other NATO nations in refusing to legally accept Russian authority over the Baltic States. The dissident movement in **Lithuania** was described as the most active and most nationalistic of the three states, which the article called the most western-oriented of all the Soviet Republics.

The article also mentioned that Lithuania was the "target" of Kremlin efforts to weaken the enduring strength of the Roman Catholic Church. In spite of this, the Immaculate Conception Church in Vilnius regularly attracts 8,000 worshippers each Sunday. One petition protesting religious persecution in Lithuania attracted more than 17,000 signatures, with some signers adding their addresses and telephone numbers as well. In apparent contradiction of the evidence submitted in the article itself, the author falsely concluded that for most Balts, "prosperity outweighs the drawbacks of Kremlin control." Rev. Casimir Pugevičius, writing as a representative of the Knights of Lithuania, responded to this conclusion by correctly pointing out in a letter to the USN&WR editor that "our evidence shows not that prosperity outweighs the drawbacks of Kremlin control, but that the ruthlessness of the Soviet police state outweighs the desire of the majority for independence."

A speech Leonid Brezhnev gave in Baku last October, airing a list of grievances against the United States, received comment in The Wall Street Journal. Mr. Brezhnev's harshest criticisms were reserved for American critics of the way the Soviet Union treats dissidents. The criticism, according to Brezhnev, violates the letter and spirit of the Helsinki agreement because it interferes in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union. "So now we know," commented the author of the article. "If people don't think the Russians are living up to the human rights provisions of the Helsinki agreement, they are supposed to keep quiet because demanding that the Soviets live up to the agreement would be a violation of the agreement." Lithuanian - American human rights activists probably appreciate what The Wall Street Journal appropriately called "Catchski 22."

CULTURE

Dr. Romas Viesulas, a professor from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, spoke to a large gathering of Lithuanians at St. Andrew's Parish in Philadelphia on December 3rd, 1978. His topic was "The Origin of the Pillar-shrines and the Problems for their Future." The center of discussion was the koplytstulpis (pillar-shrine), the seven to ten-foot shrines which we often see in Lithuanian churches here in the United States, or in pictures depicting Lithuanian crossroads and cemeteries. In a lecture that was complimented by sketches and illustrations, Dr. Viesulas pointed out that there are two theories about the origin of the Lithuanian pillar-shrines. One is that the shrines can be traced to the coming of Christianity to Lithuanian in the thirteenth century. The other is that the pillar-shrines date back to the beginnings of the Proto-Baltic language, about 4,000 years ago. Dr. Viesulas pointed out that there is evidence which supports this latter theory.

It is thought that the prototype of the pillarshrine was the uncut trunk of a tree, bark and all, but with all branches removed. Designs were engraved into this trunk, as were crevices large enough to hold offerings and sacrifices to the "spirits." In later versions of these pillars, three tiers of branch stubs were left on the tree trunks. Various offerings and magically charged symbols were hung from these branches, such as animal skins and bones, including skulls, and wreaths of leaves and flowers. The three tiers are thought to have symbolized the sacred nature of the trees and the symbolic function they had in the mythology of early Lithuanians. The topmost tier signified the heavens; the middle tier represented the earth, with the trunk as its stronghold; the bottom tier stood for death and the netherworld. These sacred trees therefore symbolized a terrestrial support for the heavens. They were the axis of the universe and a fitting center for sacrifice and worship.

Later in time, the pillars acquired small roof-like constructions, still arranged in three tiers. These roofs probably evolved from the structures formed by placing animal skins on the branches. Neither the animal skins nor the later roofs served any practical purpose. Rather, it is believed they were symbolic tokens offered to safeguard the "spirits" within. Niches were then built into the three tiers, beneath the roofs, to hold sacrifices.

Other ancient symbols have also survived in the modern versions of the *koplytstulpiai*. The S-shaped curves that support the roofs or radiate from some fized point along the height of the pillar are thought to symbolize worship of the *žaltys* (serpent), an animal revered by the ancient Balts as the embodiment of

wisdom. The little wooden bells decorating the roofs may originally have been attempts to frighten away evil spirits. In some pillar-shrines, the spheres and crescents which now serve as adornment can be seen as symbols of the sun and moon, two more ancient objects of worship.

With the coming of Christianity, the shrines changed in nature. The pantheistic tokens were replaced with statues of Christ and the saints. The three tiers were not necessarily discarded, but the pillars began to incorporate the cross as the center of the structure, although the ancient embellishments were still added.



Modern Koplytstulpis (pillar-shrine)

Since the occupation of Lithuania by the atheistic Soviet Union, many of these religious shrines have been demolished or left to slowly decay. In fact, the Soviets no longer call them *koplytstulpiai* (pillarshrines), but *stogastulpiai* (roofed-pillars), a term used to refer to the shrines of pre-Christian pagans. It is "against the law" to build new shrines without a permit, which is next to impossible to obtain. Therefore, we are seeing this unique and important artifact of Lithuanian culture and religion being systematically destroyed and obliterated from the pages of Lithuania's history.

Traditions

Philadelphia's Lithuanian Boy and Girl Scout Organizations hosted their annual, traditionally Lithuanian Kūčios supper on December 17th. This year's celebration at St. Andrew's parish began with a candlelit procession of young scouts who welcomed all to enjoy the feast by lighting the candles on the banquet tables. After an opening prayer, the gathering of approximately 150 people exchanged best wishes for Christmas and the New Year by sharing pieces of plotkelės (blessed, unleavened bread wafers). They then sat down to a meal of 12 different dishes, as befits Lithuanian tradition. There were many plates of baked fish with various types of sauces, such as mushroom, onion, carrot, and tomato, as well as herring and smelt dishes. Bowls of potatoes and mišrainės (a salad of beets, beans, and other ingredients) were also a treat. The final touches to the banquet were provided by aguonu pienas (poppy seed milk) served with šližikai (little bisquits made with honey and poppy seeds), kisielius (a clear, jellied cranberry pudding), and traditional poppy seed yeast cakes. After dinner, the young scouts treated the onlookers to a play about the spirit of Christmas. performed in Lithuanian. The Kūčių vakaras was accented by a large Christmas tree decorated with Lithuanian straw ornaments made by the scouts.

The popular custom of decorating Christmas trees originated in Germany during the Middle Ages. Although ancient Lithuanians considered trees to be sacred, and although Lithuania was noted for its spruce and pine forests (eglynai and pušynai), this holiday ritual did not become popular in Lithuania until the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Encyclopedia Lituanica, the custom first appeared in Lithuanian cities and schools after World War I, then gradually spread out into the villages. The Lithuanian practice of decorating eglutės (Christmas trees) with straw ornaments (šiaudinukai) may have come from an ancient marriage rite involving a wedding tree. This tree,

a symbol of youth and fertility, was hung from the ceiling above the heads of the bridal pair at the wedding feast. Later, the custom was modified when the tree was symbolized by a lattice-work of straw arranged to resemble a little garden suspended in the air. Similar geometric ornaments eventually were used to decorate the eglutés. Genuine Christmas ornaments were made of wheat or rye straw, but since these materials are not readily available in the cities, soda straws in white or pastel colors would be substituted. Today, these ornaments constitute a very lovely and unique element of Lithuanian culture.



Some examples of šlaudinukai (straw ornaments) made from white drinking straws.

Lithuanians have many "magical" customs which were taken quite seriously when they originated in pre-Christmas times, but which are now performed for entertainment. Many have a mixture of Christian and pagan origins, according to Ina Čepėnaltė in an article citing noted ethnographer Jonas Balys.

On Christmas Eve, after the $K\bar{u}\check{c}ios$ feast, celebrants attempted to foretell the future through the interpretation of natural phenomena. For example, if the night sky was clear and starry, the hens were expected to lay many eggs during the coming year; if it was misty, the cows would give much milk. Hot wax was dropped into water, and the figures that were formed were searched for symbolic meaning... did that one resemble a child? a coffin? a house? Young girls ran outside to listen for the barking of dogs — the sound of the dogs voices

indicated the direction from which the matchmaker would come. Many New Year's Eve customs were similar. A piece of tree bark or a dry twig was burned and its shadows observed for figures which held meaning. A section of road was leveled with a rake: in the morning, the footsteps of a passerby were examined for the type of shoe worn, and therefore the wealth of a future husband. The shadow that one's body cast in the light of the moon told the observer whether he or she would live through the next year, depending on whether or not the shadow had a head. At midnight on New Year's Eve, even the youngest children were awakened so that they would not miss their luck while they slept.

Publications

The sixth and final volume of *Encyclopedia Lituanica* went to press in October, 1978. This event marked the culmination of the most ambitious cultural and scholarly endeavor ever attempted by Lithuanian-Americans. After twenty-five years of research, editing, and composition, a complete encyclopedia in Lithuanian was published in Boston and followed by a companion set in English.

Juozas Kapočius, a former publisher in Lithuania, conceived the idea of a multi-volume, scholarly compendium in his native language back in June, 1952. He urged, cajoled, and otherwise convinced exiled Lithuanian professors, scientists, and specialists to join him in putting together a twenty-volume encyclopedia. He succeeded in not only mobilizing over 300 scholars and contributors, but in raising the initial capital as well. An old brick schoolhouse in South Boston was converted into a publishing house. The enterprise was to be funded through subscriptions. The first volume of Lietuvių Enciklopedija rolled off the presses in 1953. In 1969, the 36th and final volume was published. The result was a collection of articles and entries on virtually every subject in the Lithuanian language. In addition to general knowledge, the Enciklopedija is a source of information on Lithuanian and Eastern-European subjects.

Encouraged by the success of Lietuvių Enciklopedija, Mr. Kapočius undertook a second, equally difficult task: a six-volume work containing concise information on Lithuania and Lithuanians and written in English. The first volume of Encyclopedia Lituanica appeared in 1970. The rest is history.

The completion of the two Lithuanian encyclopedias is a unique event in the history of emigration. No other ethnic group, outside its homeland, has ever completed such a project on so large a scale as that of the Lithuanian emigres in America.

To commemorate the completion of these two monumental tasks, and to honor Mr. Kapočius, a special testimonial was held on December 3rd, 1978 at the South Boston Lithuanian Citizens Association Hall. The testimonial featured a lecture by Prof. Antanas Klimas from the University of Rochester, readings by Henrikas Kačinskas of the Voice of America, and a preview of the documentary film about the Lithuanian Encyclopedia Press by Algimantas Kezys, S.J.

Other dignitaries included prominent Lithuanian cultural leaders from Boston and from across the United States, as well as distinguished political and religious figures from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Cleveland's Lithuanian Center

Lithuanians in the Cleveland area number only 16,000, but they take pride in their unity and in their new nationality center, "The Lithuanian-American Citizens Club". Well, relatively new, since the club was actually opened in 1973 after the old one burned down in 1971. The new, two-story center has two kitchens, a small stage, lounges, and meeting rooms. Its hall can seat 350 people. Use of the building is free for non-profit Lithuanian organizations and 30 other local clubs. The internationally renowned Clurlionis National Art Ensemble is based in Cleveland and rehearses at the club, which is also home for Cleveland's Lithuanian Athletic Club, a sponsor of sports programs for all ages. The Lithuanian language is taught there twice a week, and the club's dining room is one of the most attractive among nationality halls in Cleveland, according to journalist Janice F. Munson as reported in Cleveland's Plain Dealer. The dining room, which serves an American menu as well as Lithuanian specialties, is carpeted and has panelled walls adorned with carved wood details that represent traditional Lithuanian architectural motifs.

The club is primarily interested in providing a "relaxed atmosphere in which members can get in touch with their roots," according to Juozas Stempužis, vice-president of public relations for Lithuanian Village, Inc. The corporation, incidentally, was organized by the Lithuanian community to build and operate the club. "You feel free here, like you would at home," Mr. Stempužis continues. "Everything is discussed and resolved here, including politics: international and community." The club is located at 877 E. 185th St., in Cleveland; annual dues are \$5.00.

Philadelphia Folk Fair

The Lithuanian Music Hall in Philadelphia held a successful, three-day Folk Fair during the Thanksgiving Day weekend, November 24-25-26. Over 1,500 visitors

came to the three-story Hall to view cultural and information booths, buy artifacts and memorabilia, feast on traditional Lithuanian foods, and even taste some of the "Big Lit Special," meškinis (a honey liquer), that was prepared by local experts. There were dance bands. Monte Carlo-type amusements, and other types of entertainment. The opening ceremonies were attended not only by local Lithuanian and community leaders, but members of the Philadelphia City Council. the Pennsylvania State Legislature, and a representative of U.S. Congresman Raymond F. Lederer (D.-PA) as well. The Fair, whose sponsors intend to make into an annual events, also helped raise money for the establishment of a Lithuanian Cultural Center at the Hall. The proposed center will have a library, museum, and meeting rooms for area organizations. It will be the first of its kind in the Philadelphia area.



Among the attractions of the Philadelphia Folk Fair were wood sculptures by Tom Bažys, an artisan from the Philadelphia area.

Language Corner

Lithuanian is an Indo-European language of the Baltic subfamily. Some linguistic books and journals have, in the past, categorized the Lithuanian language under the "Balto-Slavic" subfamily of languages. More recent research indicates, however, that the Baltic and Slavic languages developed from different protolanguages (parent languages) and are related only to the extent that both are Satem or Eastern European languages. The importance of Lithuanian in linguistic studies stems from its designation as the most ancient of the living Indo-European languages. It is also the language closest to Proto-Indo-European, the ancestral tongue from which all the Indo-European languages evolved.

At times during Lithuania's history, borrowings from Polish or German were popular. Some of these bor-

rowings remained and have become a part of the language. With the revival of the nationalistic movement near the turn of the century and the lifting of the 40-year-old ban against official and public use of the native tongue in 1904, came a desire to purify the language. Many of these borrowings were expunged and use of the proper Lithuanian synonyms was encouraged.

As for the Lithuanian language here in the United States, borrowings from the English language are common in some communities or in some households. In most cases a Lithuanian equivalent exists and should be used because of our pride in the Lithuanian language and culture for which many have sacrificed so much.

It is the purpose of this column to present news, information, or facts dealing with the Lithuania language, so as to keep you informed about its historical and linguistic importance. In the first few installments, we will be giving Lithuanian equivalents for some commonly used English *loan* words. We will also present some important linguistic facts emphasizing the uniqueness of the Lithuanian language as well as the common bond between Lithuanian and other European languages.

English loan word:

1. bučeris

2. bučernė

3. trafikas

pėdė
 mitingas

Lithuanian equivalent: mésininkas (butcher)

mėsinė (butcher shop)

eismas (traffic) alga (pay, salary)

posėdis (meeting of officers

in an organization) or susirinkimas (general meeting)

Meanwhile . . .

Free Lithuanian language classes are being offered in Pittsburgh at the Brashear Center, 2005 Sarah St., South Side. Instruction will be offered at the primary level for 7- to 14-year-olds, with additional classes available at the intermediate and advanced levels. For more information, contact Louis Sirokie, 224 W. Bruceton Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15236.

EVENTS

In the coming year, 1979, people of Lithuanian descent have several important centennial anniversaries to commemorate and celebrate.

Vilnius University — First and foremost is our 400-year celebration of the founding of the University of Vilnius in 1579. Vilnius University is the oldest institution of higher education in Eastern Europe. We will devote special articles to this topic in the coming issues of *Bridges*.

In 1979, we also commemorate the birth, in 1579,

of Konstantinas Sirvydas. A professor at the Vilnius Jesuit Academy (an earlier name for Vilnius University), Sirvydas was also author of some of Lithuania's first books, including *Punktai Sakymu* (Gospel Points) and *Directorium Trium Linguarium*. In the *Directorium*, each word was defined in three languages: Polish, Lithuanian, and Latin. Sirvydas died in 1631.

Adomas Varnas, the famous Lithuanian painter, celebrated his 100th birthday on January 1st. He is one of the most popular of Lithuanian artists, well-known for his portraits, his landscape, and his monumental painting, *The Crowning of Mindaugas*. The Cultural Council of Bendruomenė, with the Lithuanian Foundation as patron, named Mr. Varnas recipient of this year's annual art award. The prize of \$1,000 was presented to him on September 21, 1978, in Chicago.

The Olympics

If you thought that the Olympics merely consisted of teams from around the world competing against each other with displays of athletic prowess, buoyed by the euphoria of sportsmanlike camaraderie, think again. The Soviets have added a new wrinkle to competition in the field: a battle in the "propaganda arena." They are now in the process of maneuvering to control the audience for the games by establishing national quotas, with an over-all limit of 300,000 spectators. Of this total, only one-third will come from the West. According to the Christian Science Monitor, an unbelievably small bloc is alloted to the United States . . . the guota is set at 10,000. Explaining these quotas, Soviet spokesmen are saying that tourist facilities are in short supply in Moscow and the other Olympic-site cities (Tallin, Leningrad, Kiev, and Minsk). Considering the ever-present housing shortage in the Soviet Union, there is an element of truth to this rationale, but it does not account for the tens of thousands of Americans who would be willing to endure considerable physical inconvenience in order to see the games. The quotas have a more sinister significance, however. First, even 100,000 visitors from the West will put a strain on the Soviet surveillance apparatus. More important, however, is the image the Soviet Union would like to present to the world. By packing the galleries with sympathetic Third World nationals and undoubtedly well-rehearsed representatives from Communist nations, the Soviets can project an immense, united front that is overwhelmingly anti-Western and anti-American. Apparently, and incredibly, this scheme is going forward and will take place. By their acquiescence, the Western media, the United States Olympic Committee, and even President Carter are doing everything they need to do to make the Olympics a "success" for the Soviet Union.

Lithuanian Young People's Congress

The IVth World Lithuanian Young People's Congress will take place in Europe, July 11th through the 29th, 1979. Previous Congresses were held in North and South America. This Congress will begin in England and end in West Germany. Youth representatives elected to the Congress, numbering 120 in all, will hail from many nations, including the United States, Canada, Venezuela, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Australia, Sweden, France, Great Britain, and West Germany. The U.S. will be sending about 40 representatives. "Observers" to the Congress may want to join tourists in taking advantage of the reduced charter flights and excursions that will be available. Tourists — those not taking part in the formal seminar/ camp and planning sessions, but participating in the opening and closing ceremonies, concerts, and dances - may also choose from six excursion options that will take them through France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy.

Symposiums and discussions taking place during the seminar/camp and planning sessions will cover a variety of topics ranging from Human Rights and Freedom for Lithuania to the state of Lithuanian Culture and Language in the various nations of the participants. The representatives will also discuss and plan future areas of activity. All parts of the Congress will be held in the Lithuanian language.

A general schedule of events for representatives is as follows:

- Opening ceremonies July 11 to take place at the Seminar/Camp at St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, near London, England.
- Seminar/camp July 11 through July 18 Strawberry Hill. The cost is \$160 (U.S.).
- Congress Concert July 14 Queen Elizabeth Hall, London.
- Congress Ball July 14 Kensington Town Hall, London.
- Trip to Germany July 19 the "next leg" of the Congress. There will be train trip to Dover, a boat trip across the English Channel, and then another train trip, this time to Germany.
- Planning Session July 19 through July 26 This part of the Congress is for representatives and will take place in Altenburg, near Bonn, West Germany. The cost is \$160 (U.S.).
- Closing Ceremonies July 27, 28, and 29 These ceremonies will take place in Koenigstein, near Frankfurt. The agenda includes a dance, concert, talent evening, and results of the planning sessions.

Registration for the Congress and the tourist excursions ends on **February 16**, 1979. The early date is necessary to take advantage of special travel reductions. Interested individuals should contact:

IV PLJK 5620 So. Claremont Ave. Chicago, IL 60636

ORGANIZATIONS

Lithuanian students at Purdue University have created an ethnic student organization calling itself Lituanica. Formed in the fall of 1977, Lituanica currently has 25 student members of Lithuanian descent. The club's activities include weekly language classes, monthly meetings, cultural exhibits held on the university campus, and various social activities such as Easter egg decorating. Although the club has received support from people within the Lithuanian community and from Bendruomenė, club president Asta M. Baskauskas reports that the club still needs help. Contributions of literature or other material would, therefore, be greatly appreciated. For more information, contact Ms. Baskauskaitė at:

"Lituanica"

Box 605 — Stewart Center

Purdue University

West Lafayette, IN 47907

Lithuanian numismatics were in the spotlight in the August issue of *The Numismatist*, a journal published by the American Numismatic Association. An eight page article entitled, "Coins of the Republic of Lithuania", by Frank Passic, gave a brief survey of Lithuanian history and coinage, focusing on the modern issues.

This fact was reported by the Lithuanian Numismatic Association in the October-November issue of the newsletter it publishes, The Knight. The association is currently undertaking the ambitious task of translating Nepriklausomos Lietuvos Pinigai (Money of Independent Lithuania), a major tome by Jonas K. Karys. This is an important volume in Lithuanian numismatics, and much of the L.N.A.'s research is based on Mr. Karys's works. The first stage in the English serialization of the book has been started by L.N.A. member Val Matelis of Coral Gables. Florida. Bridges readers who wish to receive the L.N.A. publication or information about Lithuanian numismatics should write to:

Lithuanian Numismatic Association P.O. Box 612 Columbia, MD 21045

PERSONALITIES

A new Baltic States Desk Officer was appointed to this post in the State Department in September. Thomas Longo, who replaced Thomas Gerth, is primarily concerned with fundamental aspects of U.S. policy on the Baltic States. Day-to-day matters, such as emigration, family reunification, and Baltic dissidents will be handled by the Soviet Union Affairs Office. Longo, a native of Boston, has recently returned from a tour of duty to the U.S. embassy in Budapest and, as did Gerth before him, will have responsibility for Baltic and Hungarian affairs at the State Department. At a meeting with both officers and representatives from the Joint Baltic American National Committee, Lietuviy Dienos reports that Gerth acknowledged that Basket 3 of the Helsinki Final Act the one containing most of the human rights language - might not be as prominent a topic at Madrid as it was in Belgrade. An effort may be made to look at the two other baskets: military confidence-building measures and others that stress a more cooperative East-West relationship.

On the 50th anniversary of his graduation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Walter E. Norton (Norkevičius) donated \$1,000 to MIT for an award to a deserving Lithuanian student. Mr. Norton, who has worked for a Philadelphia firm as an industrial engineer for the past forty years, is also well known as a Lithuanian philatelist.

The White House, seeking solutions to new and old problems which besiege the United States, has been inviting influential experts from various fields and of various nationalities to take part in panel discussions in Washington, D. C. The Cleveland-based Lithuanian newsletter, Mūsų Žingsniai, notes that three Lithuanians from Cleveland have been honored in this fashion. On August 26th, Dr. Edmundas Lenkauskas, a health specialist, participated in talks aimed at finding ways to lower abnormally high hospital and medical costs. Rev. Gediminas Kijauskas, S.J. took part in discussions on August 28th about the problems afflicting America's big cities. President Jimmy Carter, who was among the speakers, noted that the clergy can have a great deal of influence in solving urban ills. Jonas Nasvytis, president of the Lithuanian-American Democratic Club of Cuyahoga County, Ohio and delegate to the Ohio Democratic Caucus, visited the White House on October 19th. He took part in discussions about the upcoming elections and associated problems. Mr. Nasvytis took the opportunity to ask for help in tha case of Viktoras Petkus and other human rights fighters.

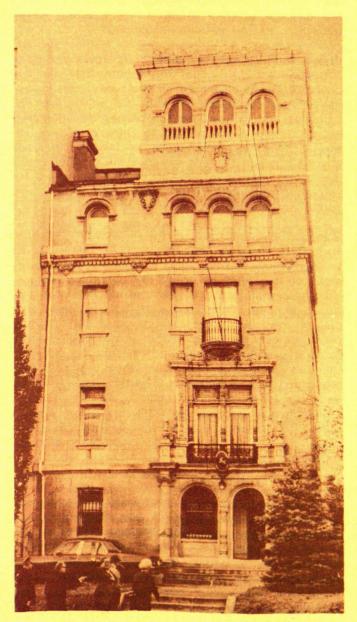
The BALF Chapter and Lithuanian community of Nashua, N.H. recently feted Vytautas Širvydas on his 80th birthday. Editor, journalist, civic leader, and Lithuanian-American historian, Mr. Širvydas began his writing career in 1912 and has since contributed to nearly every Lithuanian newspaper in America and Canada. He has been editor of the Lithuanian newspapers Tauta and Vienybė and authored the biographies of Juozas O. Širvydas (1941), Vincas Anbrazevičius (1942), and Bronius Balutis (1951). He contributed to and helped edit the collective works Kovos metai dėl savosios spaudos (1957) and A History of the Lithuanian Alliance of America (1976). Mr. Širvydas is the "youngest" contributing editor of Bridges, joining our staff in May, 1977.

Simas Kudirka was interviewed in November by a correspondant from *The Washington Star*. In the interview, Simas discussed his life here in the United States and contrasted it with his experiences in Lithuania and in Soviet prison camps. He compared his life in the Soviet Union to Dante's *Inferno*. He was surprised by many things we take for granted: abundant material goods, libraries full of books, and especially, freedom of speech and of the press. He cautioned Americans to be "very, very vigilant and careful because Moscow never stops."

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, in his column for the New York Daily Press on August 21, 1978, following the death of Pope Paul VI, made a prophetic pronouncement on the kind of pontiff the Church deserves. He stated that in the Western world, affluence has ruined the "sacrificial service of the altar," and that only a mediocre pontiff would be desired if one considers only the United States and parts of Europe. for example. But, "when one considers the suffering that has gone on in Russia, .. when one considers the strong faith of Poland, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia and the other countries behind the Iron Curtain in the face of godless persecution, there is a solid reason for believing that we will be blessed with a good one." The good Bishop apparently has the right connections.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has announced that, for 1978, the agency's highest award was given to Valdas Adamkus, Assistant Administrator for the Midwest Region. While presenting the award to Mr. Adamkus in a special ceremony in Washington, D.C., EPA Administrator Douglas Costle noted that the award was in recognition of Mr. Adamkus's exceptional leadership and his contributions in the field of international ecology.

Terence Downs, a free-lance writer, recently interviewed **Dr. Stasys Bačkis**, the Lithuanian Charge d'Affaires in Washington. The interview appeared in The Washington Post. Dr. Bačkis is one of the surviving members of the Lithuanian diplomatic corps, which now consists of 10 individuals scattered throughout the United States and Europe. Only those diplomats who were in the diplomatic service before the war can have official credentials; all but one are now in their 70's. "You ask what exile is like," said Bačkis. "Exile? It is suffering. It is nostalgia.



The Lithuanian Legation building in Washington, D.C.

We cherish this (Lithuanian) Christian, Occidental civilization. We cherish it... We are essentially symbols of a free Lithuania. That is our purpose." Although the legation building is paid for in full, the funds for maintaining the legation, Bačkis revealed, will be exhausted in another two or three years. "After that..?" He could only raise his hands in an invocation of God's continued protection.

Reunions

After 35 years, Juozas Sisas was finally reunited with his wife, Teofilija. Her devoted husband, a 75 year old Brockton mason who fled Lithuania in 1943, fought with red tape, lawyers, and letters for 35 years before he finally succeded in getting her out of Lithuania. He seems to know that he probably never will see his children again. He never has seen his grandchildren. Friends say the only reason Mrs. Sisas was released is that she is 59 and the Communists didn't want to pay her a pension. She retired four years ago from her job on a collective farm. Sisas was 40 when he last saw his wife. She was 24. They have much to talk about.

Eighty-year old Aleksandras Skopas, after 34 years of estrangement from his wife and children, was finally reunited with them as a result of a wild, incredible journey. In 1944, the family fled west with hundreds of thousands of other Lithuanians. Mr. Skopas was caught and sent to Siberia for 12 years. After his release, he continually attempted to rejoin his wife and their children, who had made their way to the United States and were settled in Chicago. Finally, last fall, without permission or papers, he caught an overnight train to Moscow and somehow sneaked into the U.S. Embassy Compound. The American officials managed to get him the necessary papers, but the Soviet secret police lured him out of the Embassy on the pretext of getting him a necessary medical examination. They beat him, took his papers, and left him in the gutter. He tried three more times, was caught, thrown into jail, and then sent home. Finally, the U.S. Embassy persuaded Soviet officials to let him return to Moscow to get the exit visa. At O'Hare Airport this past spring. after a tearful reunion, Skopas commented, never stopped fighting, and I never gave up hope ... America, it just looks great."

After waiting a lifetime laced with nyets and battles with red tape. Povilas Grigalauskas has been reunited with his family. Many American congressmen had tried to attain the release of his wife and

son. The greatest help came from Arthur Goldberg, who presented a petition in Mr. Grigalauskas's behalf in Belgrade during open meetings with the Russian Ambassador. For Goldberg, this material strengthened the case he was making that the Russians were not keeping up with the Helsinki Agreement on human rights. "I think that helped the most because, suddenly, after 22 years, they got permission to leave," Povilas declared. He last saw his son when he was only 14 months old. His wife was a young girl then. For a time, Povilas had no idea if they had survived World War II or where they were. After ten years, he succeeded in making contact with them, and the battles with the bureaucracy began. They were a family again on March 13, 1978. Gene and Arūnas have yet to find the words to express all the changes to their lives, but Povilas interpreted their feelings by saying: "Everything here is nicer, more relaxing, You can breathe freely. You come here and you don't know there is a government here."

Not all such attempts at reuniting families have been as successful as the ones described above. Jonas and Lorraine Jodwalls, American citizens born here to resident parents, have been trying to emigrate for over four decades. As children, they accompanied their mother on what was to be a memorable, extended, and "happy" visit to Lithuania. They were unable to escape during the Nazi invasion of Lithuania, and were caught again in the Russian takeover of 1944. The Jodwalises protested, saying they were Americans. They became marked as troublemakers and were soon to pay dearly. They were arrested and sent to Siberia. Both became ill, particularly Jonas, who became emaciated. When Khrushchev became ruler of Russia he ordered reviews of all political prisoners, and the Jodwalises were found innocent and freed from exile. They returned to Lithuania but were ostracized by the Communists. And so it continues. Every year, the Jodwalises apply for exit documents. Every year, permission is denied, without comment. Jonas and Lorraine are in their 50's now, and their relatives in the U.S. say they never write a letter home that does not hint of their endless discontent. Several U.S. Presidents have made appeals on their behalf, and the State Department says it has "worked on the case for years." Yet there has still been no progress.

EDUCATION

The Ford Foundation is announcing a new fellowship program designed to improve the skill of scholars and analysts interested in specializing both in Soviet and East European Studies and in International Security and Arms Control. The program will be open to both graduate degree and post-doctoral candidates currently specializing in one of these fields. For more details and for application forms, contact the Fellowship Program in Dual Expertise, Office of European and International Affairs, The Ford Foundation, 320 East 43rd St., New York, New York 10017. Hurry — the dead-line for applications is January 15, 1979.

In recent years, several unscientific books and films have unjustly accused the Lithuanian nation of committing atrocities during the German occupation of World War II. The most recent of these was Holocaust, a movie made for television. Considering the wide dissemination these negative views receive, there exists an urgent need to objectively document the German occupation of Lithuania while those who can give eye-witness accounts can still be located. An oral history project is therefore proposed so that the Lithuanian point of view can be presented. Funding, in the form of a \$2,000 stipend, has been made available through Kent State University to carry out this important task. The stipend will be awarded to a master's or doctoral candidate of Lithuanian descent who is able to read, write, and speak the Lithuanian language. The candidate must be working towards a degree in the humanities or social sciences, and must write his or her thesis on a Lithuanian topic. Interested individuals should send their resume and a letter explaining their field of study to: Dr. John F. Cadzow, Director of the Ethnic Heritage Program, 729 Wright Hall, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, 44242.

Under conditions established by the will of the late Charles Protaps, a scholarship loan fund is available to college students of Lithuanian descent. Applications for the low-interest loan, which is to be repaid after the recipient finishes his or her college program, are available from Attorney Raymond Dodds, Jr., 520 East Broadway, South Boston, MA 021127; or Mr. Edward Zaleskas, 361 Weld St., West Roxbury, MA 02132.

SPORTS

Pool halls, long thought to be the exclusive property of the sharpshooters and the hustlers, all of them men, are no place for a lady, let alone a small girl. Right? Well, **Jean Balukas**, now 18, has been shooting pool and winning tournaments ever since she could see above the table. Her competition has been largely confined to other women, except for the noted TV special which pitted her against the man everyone wants to beat, and whom she did, Willie Mosconi. "I have the skills to beat almost any of the famous players," she said according to an article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, but I don't know if I'm ready to spend the five hours a day practicing it would take to compete on a regular basis."

Vitas Gerulaitis Sr., a longtime tennis instructor, has just been named director of the National Tennis Center for the United States Tennis Association. "We are planning a large junior development program, not only to find promising players, but to get more kids involved in the game," said the 63-year-old Gerulaitis.

Born in Lithuania, he became a national champion and came to this country in 1936 in anticipation of the eventual Soviet domination of his native country. He arrived a penniless refugee and "took all kinds of jobs. But the Highland Park courts were not far away," and he began teaching Vitas Jr. and his daughter, Rūta. Later, Vitas Sr. earned his living as a teaching pro.

Vitas Sr. has always shown a sense of social awareness since "he has taught many beginners in the public parks." In his new position as National Director he intends to "work hard" at setting up a program to turn out players with "a chance for rankings."

To Our Readers:

Allow us to take a moment of your time to introduce ourselves as the new editorial board of *Bridges*.

RIMANTAS A. STIRBYS, editor, is currently employed in Philadelphia by the Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) as a technical writer. He became active in Lithuanian affairs within the last two years, assuming the role of media representative for the Lithuanian-American Youth Association's Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey Chapter. He is also involved in promotional and public relations activities with the Lithuanian Music Hall in Philadelphia. Born in New Britain, Connecticut, his previous experience includes editorship of the quarterly Newsletter of the Rensselaer Fresh Water Institute in Troy, New York.

JURATE KROKYS-STIRBYS, assistant editor, is a teacher of special education (severely and profoundly impaired children) at the Northwest Child Development Center in Philadelphia. She has been intensely involved in Lithuanian affairs since her youth. A native of Rochester. New York, she has taught in Lithuanian Saturday Schools, belonged to the Lithuanian Radio Club there, and helped direct the Lithuanian Radio Hour. She also organized a chapter of the Lithuanian-American Youth Association and was elected its first president. After moving to Philadelphia over two years ago, she organized the Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey Chapter of the same association and is now its president. Currently, she is active in "Ateitininkai" and is Secretary of Protocol for the Lithuanian Music Hall Association in Philadelphia.

CRAIG HARDY, assistant editor, teaches Spanish and French at the St. James School in Chester, Pennsylvania. A lifelong resident of the Philadelphia area, Craig is a relative newcomer to the Lithuanian community. Born of a Ukrainian father and Lithuanian mother, Craig's interest in linguistics and philology led him to seek tutoring in the Lithuanian language. Immersion in Lithuanian culture and affairs came quickly, and was a logical step toward recapturing his heritage. Since joining the Lithuanian community in Philadelphia (he is treasurer of the youth association chapter), Craig has adopted the name GRIGAS ARDYS, a Lithuanianized version of his given name. It is as GRIGAS that he will appear in Bridges.



The new editorial board of *Bridges*. From the left, Grigas Ardys, Rimantas A. Stirbys, and Jūratė Krokytė-Stirblenė.

BREZHNEV SAYS:

In the U.S.S.R., "strikes are not necessary," reports the December 3rd edition of Moscow News in an article which responds to a letter from a reader in India. "Our people realize that in a socialist state, in which the power is wielded by the elected representatives of the people, a protest expressed in a strike would, essentially, be addressed by the working people to themselves . . . Therefore, the Soviet working people realize that only through their own efforts and through greater productivity will they be able to raise their living standards." Apparently, no one told Valeria Novodvorskaya that. She helped found the Interprofessional Association of Workers "which was designed to give Soviet workers a voice outside the state apparatus," reported The Philadelphia Inquirer in November. She has since been committed to a psychiatric hospital. It seems Russian labor reformers and Lithuanian religious Be sure to include your name and address. activists have guite a lot in common.

ACTION

Feel the urge to write any letters? Here are some addresses you might want to try:

Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim **United Nations** New York, NY 10017

The President The White House Washington, D.C. 20500

His Excellency, Leonid Brezhnev Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Moscow, U.S.S.R.

Letters should be short and to the point. Pick a topic from this issue of Bridges or one of the innumerable other areas requiring urgent attention.

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Mail to:

Bridges — Lithuanian-American Newsletter c/o J. Jankus 84-55 86th Ave. Woodhaven, NY 11421

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Editor's note: The November and December issues of Bridges were combined in this special edition so that we could return to a normal production schedule. Please bear with us while we catch up.

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Famas Sakadolskis

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