

Bridges

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THE YEAR OF AUŠRA (DAWN)

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LITHUANIAN CHRISTMAS:

THROUGH CENTURIES

Baroque angels from SS Peter and Paul's Church, Vilnius



Christmas is not a stately Christmas tree, cut down after years of growth and dressed in tinsel, colored lights and gewgaws. Christmas is not a deluge of greetings the postman stuffs in your mailbox. Nor is it stacks of gifts you bought in a frenzy of shopping, which are to be wrapped, given, opened, thanked for, and so often returned to the shop for an exchange. Nor is Christmas church-bells, carols, office parties, club parties, kiddie and senior citizen and family parties. Christmas is a love feast. It is our commitment to Infant Christ for whom there was no room at the inn and for whom kings of vision searched through the darkness of

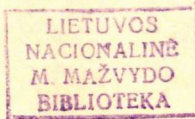
life. Christmas is the opening up of our hearts — the inn of our being — to Infant Christ whose Crib is also his Cross.

The Greeks had a word for this love feast: *agape*. Early Christians ate together and made the meal a symbolic sharing of divine love transferred from one person to another, regardless of status, merit, differences and transgressions. Our Christmas Eve supper, *Kučios*, re-enacts the same idea. Given our own blessed wafer, *plotkelė*, we offer it to those at the table who break off bits and in turn offer us theirs. As the bits melt in our mouths, the drama at the table culminates in a profound symbolic exchange of divine love, in accordance with God's plan for humanity.

Reading about Christmas in Lithuania during serfdom as well as the years of nazi and communist holocausts, you may wonder why so devout a country has had to suffer so much. Philosopher Karl Rahner (see page 2) answers the question in part. Apostle Paul answered it in his own way when he said that, generally, we see events "through a glass, darkly", but the time will come when we will see clearly. Some people see clearly much sooner than others. Astronomer Johannes Kepler declared that the publication of a scientific discovery "may well wait a century for a reader, as God waited six thousand years for an observer."

The late Cardinal Cooke who accepted and welcomed suffering as purposeful did not see "through a glass, darkly." He bore the Infant Christ with love right up to the Cross and beyond.

Demie Jonaitis



Andrius Ryliskis

CHILD OF SERFS 1854



I was a shepherd boy of eleven. I remember how hard mother and father worked for the lord at the Manor and on his land. Winter evenings our family would get together in our little cottage in front of the crackling stove and we would be busy — mother and sisters spinning, and father making rope and nets. The bright flames from the smokey stove would play merrily over our faces, over the walls and the dirt floor.

I was happy. The forest, the sky and the sun made me happy. But I remember there were people who were not so fortunate.

One day, on the grounds of the Manor, I saw a thirteen year old girl tied hand and foot to a post, struggling to get away. Clouds of horseflies from the horse manure and pig sty buzzed and stung her; her body was covered with open wounds. A man explained, "This girl stole two cucumbers and some carrots from the lord. She earned her punishment."

I also witnessed mothers weeping when their sons said, "Good bye, *mamyte*. They're taking me away for 25 years to serve in the cursed Russian army."

Winters were hard. The sun became a rare visitor to our cottage windows. The earth froze. I could hear the wheels on the road rattling far away.

One morning, waking before daybreak, I saw on the table a flickering candle and the family kneeling on the dirt floor. They were praying.

"Child," said mother, "get up. Wash. And say your prayers. Soon it will be the birth of the child Jesus."

I waited for something exceptional, out of this world.

Then a thorough cleaning of the cottage began. Soon it was time for baking: bread of pure rye flour, buckwheat *bapkas*, and buckwheat *slizikai*. Then there was the cooking of wheat with crushed poppy seeds. And the preparation of different kinds of fish. And father making a *mišima* from honey. We fasted all day. Towards evening father brought in a handful of hay which he placed on the table and covered with a white tablecloth.

When it got dark and the first stars started to glimmer, we sat down to our Christmas Eve supper — *Kučios*. With his strong voice, father prayed and then he gave each of us a *plotkelė*. This was a thin wafer like the host at Mass, made of unleavened bread with engraved scenes from the Nativity baked into it. This was a symbol of unity with the family, friends and neighbors. We shared our *plotkelės* with each other; we broke off a bit from each and we solemnly let the parts melt in our mouths.

Christmas Day we rose early, kneeled on the dirt floor and prayed. Father took the hay from the table and the leftovers of the *Kučios* meal and fed them to the animals in the shed. That morning we feasted on dishes of meat. Father and my sisters drove off to church. For three whole days we celebrated Christmas. (We ate nuts.)

Before Three Kings (January 6), father chalk-marked each door with three crosses in honor of the Three Kings. In the evening three men colorfully dressed as the Three Kings, visited us. Mother gave them gifts of food.

With Christmas, came the bitter cold and the snows. The wolves grew bold and haunted our windows. They seemed to freeze in one spot and they raised to the heavens their long dark noses, howling as if they understood their fate. The echoes of their howling were their answer.

(Trans. from *Fragmentai iš Praeities Migly*)

BARBARA ARMONAS

SIBERIAN CHRISTMAS

SLAVE LABOR CAMP, 1948

Our first winter came on very fast. The weather was fairly clear but very cold. In our barracks we had no clocks for the few we had brought with us had been exchanged for food. Since my work started very early, I soon learned to read time from the stars but when the sky was covered with clouds, I had trouble estimating the hour and a few times started off to work as early as midnight.

The first Christmas approached. Our people gathered in small groups to sing our old Christmas carols in low voices because gatherings of large groups was forbidden.

We knew that we were at the bottom of humanity but we still enjoyed one thing — freedom to exchange opinions among ourselves without fear. I remember sitting together with a few friends who were better educated than I and discussed our fate. We were dirty, crowded, undernourished, and unbelievably tired. We wondered at the will for life which was still within us. It seemed remarkable that no one had gone insane or tried to commit suicide, except Mrs. Bajorunas, who did not earn enough to feed her three children. She had exchanged everything she possessed for food, even her blankets and pillows. She had only one dress left for herself and her children. When she couldn't feed her family any longer, she took all her children — seven, five, and three years old — and jumped into the river with them. She and all the children were fished out. After this she was sent to a mental hospital. It was pitiful to see the children. We all tried to help them but no one was able to do much. Filthy dirty, they crawled and begged for food. In a few months the mother returned. She then got a job cleaning the outside

(Continued on page 4)

VANDA SRUOGIENĖ

CHRISTMAS EVE

WITH STRAW, NOT HAY
IN GERMAN DP CAMPS

During Lithuania's years of independence, religious motifs prevailed at Christmas. Children were told about Bethlehem both from historic and symbolic points of view. The food was traditional. The Christmas tree had already found its way from the wealthy manors to the homes of fairly prosperous farmers.

During the war in the displaced persons' camps in Germany, I observed that conversation was nostalgic and focused on discussions about the foods served Christmas Eve in Lithuania, old customs, and memories of happier times. Some tried to get a substitute for a Christmas tree. Always, Christmas Eve in the camps was filled with sadness.

People would wait until the very last member of the family arrived before they started the Christmas Eve supper. They talked with restrained grief about their dead and those who could not be present because of the circumstances of war.

Perhaps the talk concentrated so much on food because it was scarce, especially the specific ingredients such as poppy seeds so necessary to traditional dishes. Trying to adhere to the tradition of twelve different dishes (honoring the twelve apostles), women had to combine foods and invent all kinds of ersatz substitutes.

Customarily the *Kučiu* table was covered with a white tablecloth under which lay a mass of hay, symbolizing the manger. A place at the table was set for recently deceased members of the family; and since during the war their numbers were great, the atmosphere was sorrowful, indeed.

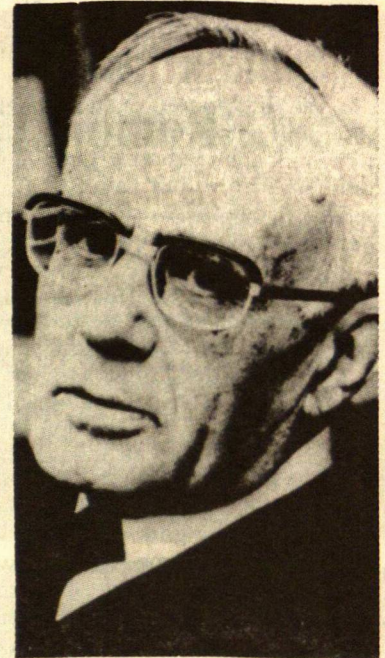
In the camps, it was almost impossible to find hay for the table. We used straw.

1984 — ONE QUESTION:

Karl Rahner (right), world-famous theologian, discussed numerous questions with Andrius Valevičius, S.J., a Lithuanian Canadian studying philosophy in Germany. We present one question pertinent to Lithuania.

ONE ANSWER

TO AN
IMPORTANT
QUESTION



Andrius Valevičius, SJ, asked:

The events in a nation's history are frequently interpreted as the direct result of that nation's relationship with God. The Old Testament reveals how Israel suffered misfortunes, wars and exile as forms of God's punishment or lessons. Is it possible that the fate of Lithuanians with their agonies, soviet oppression, and struggle for the survival of their nation is to be understood as a form of punishment or lesson from God? If not, does such a fate have a universal or eschatological significance in the history of the world's salvation? Or is it all without meaning?

KARL RAHNER ANSWERED:

We know that, in the Old Testament, the destiny of Israel is explained in terms of her covenant with God. That does not mean the fate of all other nations can be explicated theologically. Their destiny belongs to God's providence which, through the cross and suffering, victory and failure, freedom and enslavement, leads the people of the world and directs their lives so that they may reach eternal fulfillment. This does not signify that the history of a nation has any one particular concrete theological meaning. Whether the history of agony has been precipitated by a nation's sins (it can be so) or whether the agony materializes from other sources cannot be determined. For example, a person can be saintly and yet die of cancer. He can be saintly and yet have wayward children. Therefore, we can not say that all the misfortunes, persecution and suffering of a nation are the direct result of her own spiritual transgressions. We can only regard the destiny of a nation as God's providence, a mystery, and conclude that, for those who love God, as it is stated in the Holy Writ, in the end everything comes out for the good.

Every nation, like every individual, joins in the implementation of God's plans for the universal salvation of mankind. In this sense, the destiny of each individual and each nation has meaning in the ultimate salvation. How all this transpires, it is impossible to say because it rests with God's grace and judgment.

ARMONAS (Continued from page 2)

toilets and by begging, she continued to live.

We had been pushed back a thousand years in human civilization and achievement. One of the men said he didn't think that anywhere else in the world were human beings living so poorly as we.

People sat and wept for friends and relatives who were eight thousand miles away; for those who were in prison; and for those who had died in the hopeless fight for freedom. Everyone remembered the happy independent days before the occupation and we all talked about how we used to celebrate Christmas by going to church, decorating trees, and exchanging gifts.

Christmas came. I sang with Stase our Lithuanian Christmas carols. We found some carols which were familiar to our Ukrainian cellmate and we all sang together a little. This had to be done in whispers. The religious songs and ceremonies helped the hopeless people so much. Maybe that is why the Soviet Slave labor camps and prison administrations oppose religious holidays. The Lithuanian farmers are very devout and it was painful to see how they suffered without any religious help, especially those who were seriously ill or injured. I hadn't attended a religious service, entered a church, or seen a priest since my deportation.

The second day after Christmas, I was taken away to a court session. First, as usual, I was thoroughly searched. Later four soldiers with loaded guns, two in front and two behind, took me across the street to a court building. Some people walking in the street looked at me and I felt they were thinking of me as the worst criminal in the world. The soldiers led me into a waiting room before the court session started. Two soldiers remained standing guard at the door. I was alone under terrible mental tension for nearly two hours before I was led into the courtroom. I felt like telling the soldiers to go ahead and shoot me.

(Read more about Barbara Armonas' ordeals in her book "Leave Your Tears in Moscow")

THE WARMTH OF TOGETHERNESS

CHRISTMAS IN THE DAYS OF INDEPENDENCE — 1918 - 1940

Rev. Viktoras Gidžiūnas, O.F.M.

My most vivid memory of Christmas in Lithuania goes back to 1920 when I was eight years old.

I remember how, during that time from the first Sunday in Advent until Christmas, all forms of pleasurable activities — singing, playing musical instruments and dancing — were forbidden. In earlier times, such activities were not permitted until the Three Kings, January 6.

Sunday mornings in Advent, mother and father and all the children would chant the Joyful Mystery of the rosary together. Father and I, who was the oldest son of the family, would sit at the table and sing hymns of the Rosary, refrains and prayers from the large prayerbook called *The Stream*. In the meantime, mother answered the refrains and sang Holy Mary as she prepared breakfast for the family.

Weekday evenings we sang Advent hymns together. Most often we sang a hymn about Adam and Eve as well as other hymns from Motiejaus Volonczauksio Hymnal which was called *Kanticzkos*, which, due to the prohibition of publications in the Latin script, had the falsified date of 1862. The prohibition took effect in 1863 after the Lithuanian uprising.

We children awaited Christmas with joy and excitement, especially Christmas Eve. We enjoyed watching mother and father work, feverishly preparing for the holidays. A week before — even more than a week — father would drive to the mill where our wheat was ground into fine flour for the Christmas Eve supper *prėskučiai* baked bite sized pieces of white dough and other cakes Christmas Eve mother baked these items while Father and I cleaned the house and yard and gave mother a hand in the preparation of food.

When I grew older, my principle task on Christmas Eve was to mash

and grind poppy seeds with a rolling pin in a clay pot, until, pouring some water into the concoction, I produced a white liquid which was called poppyseed milk. Honey or sugar was added. The *prėskučiai* were to be soaked in this liquid. We children relished this treat with delight.

As soon as we finished the preparations we sang a few Christmas hymns. Then father, fetching some hay from the barn placed it on the table and covered it with a home-woven tablecloth. The food dishes of the Christmas Eve supper, numbering 12 in all, were placed on the table. Abstention was still in effect. No meat was permitted. Some more devout individuals refrained from eating all day long until the supper. When the *plotkelės*, herring, fish, various vegetable and fruit dishes were placed on the table, the family sat down. After a prayer, father took the *plotkelės* and handing one to each of us wished us a happy holiday. Solemnly we partook of the *plotkelė*. After this we feasted on the herring, fish and other foods. The great treat was the *prėskučiai* soaked in the poppyseed milk. It was the dessert of the Christmas Eve supper.

After supper each of us would pull a piece of dry hay from under the tablecloth. The individual who drew the longest was destined, it was said, to live the longest. In the morning when father removed the hay from the table, he looked for kernels of grain; if he found a kernel of wheat, the following year the wheat would flourish, if he found a rye kernel, the rye harvest would be great.

After supper, we recited our prayers and went to bed. We rose before daybreak to ride to church. In Lithuania, there usually was much snow during the Christmas season; therefore we would ride in a sled which father had made. In those days, in our parish there was no Midnight Mass, but the priests

would begin to offer Mass early, since on Christmas Day each priest was allowed to hold three Masses. Therefore people flocked hurriedly to church as early as possible to be present at as many Masses as they could manage.

During the main Mass, called *suma*, (usually the 11 o'clock Mass), the choir accompanied by the organ, sang Christmas hymns, which were sung throughout Christmastide until the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary which took place on February 2.

There was one Christmas Mass at which I was greatly surprised and impressed to see a Nativity scene which our pastor had erected in Church. This was not traditional. Nor was it customary in those days to decorate Christmas trees and nobody had even heard of Santa Claus. Our parents merely bought us practical gifts.

Having spent most of Christmas Day attending Mass, by the time we returned home it was evening. First the animals had to be fed, and only then mother gave us a most delicious supper of roasts and cakes.

The second day of Christmas was not a day of obligation. Nevertheless many people went to Mass and no work was done. In the evening the young people had a merry time, singing and dancing.

On this day almost every farmer used to drive his *samdinius* (hired help) home to their parents, pay the wages due and bring the parents gifts of Christmas cakes and meat.

The third day of Christmas was also a half holiday. People visited and partied. This was a somewhat difficult time for the farmers since they had to hire *samdiniai* who would work for them in the coming year. That is the reason for the proverb: *Kalėdos — bėdos*: Christmas time is worry time.

Immediately after Christmas, the matchmaking season began and before Shrovetide there were many weddings. Among people of the soil, this was a practical and suitable time for weddings.

These are happy memories of Christmas in Lithuania, 1920.

CHRISTMAS

IS DEAD?

When Mirga and I were students in Munich in 1980, we spent our Christmas holiday with relatives in Vilnius. But there was no mention of Christmas. Mirga and I sensed a hidden tension, perhaps a resentment at what was missing in their lives. We had heard that Christmas in Lithuania was dead.

I became homesick for Christmas. I longed to be back in Munich to see a Christmas tree decorated with delicate heirloom figurines of angels and birds, and lit up with tiny flaming candles. The vision of that tree became for me a symbol of humanity released from darkness.

I happened to thumb through a book published in Vilnius in 1968 and illustrated by a young artist Vl. Žilius. I was instantly intrigued.

I asked our relatives to examine his prints. "What do you see in this picture?" They studied the first print. (see top, right). We pooled our reactions. "Symbolic. Very symbolic." "The waters are angry and troubled." "But they look like pointy branches of pinetrees!" "And they're decorated with birds and stars!"

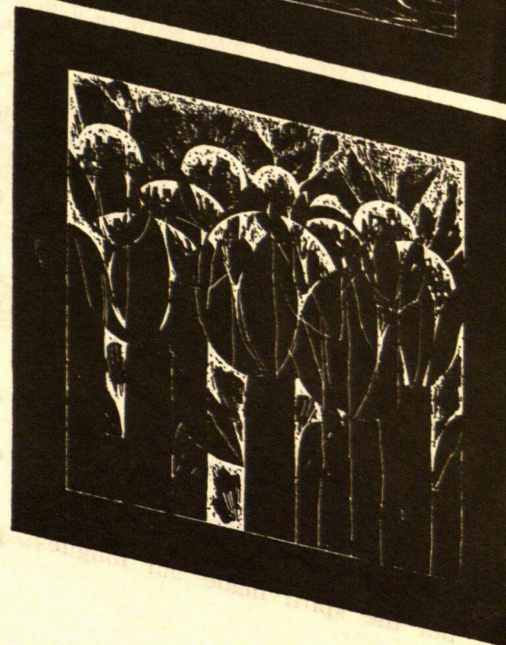
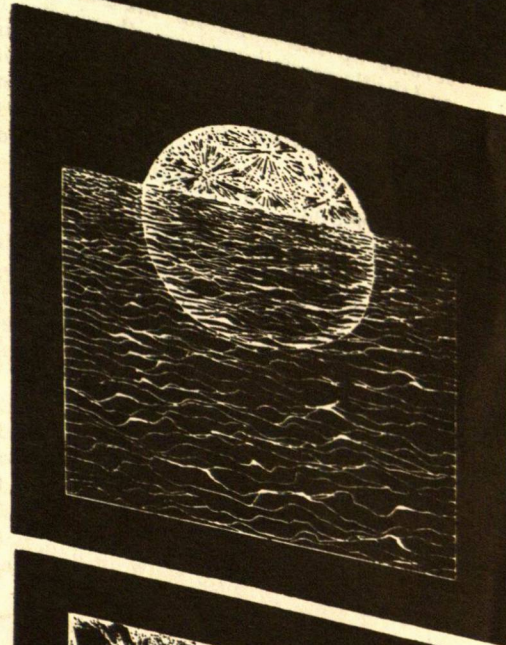
We studied the second print. "It's the sun, bursting with its own starriness." "It's sinking in the waters and calming them down." "It looks like a big decorative American ball for a Christmas tree!"

We discussed the third print. "A bunch of suns sunken in the waters!" "They're not suns, they're people!" "They're a procession of priest like people." "In concerted action. Secret action." "And look at the hands! The little hands with invisible bodies below. Groping for . . . what?" "The spirit of Christmas," murmured grandpapa laconically.

A deep mutual peace settled over us. We were silent, but we were aglow within. We had found our Christmas tree in Vilnius.

Žilius no longer lives in Lithuania. He has become a much admired artist in the United States.

Domicile Blazis



MARIUS KATILIŠKIS

ON WHOSE SIDE?

(This Christmas scene takes place in Marius Katiliškis' novel "On Whose Side Is God?", which was published in "Lithuanian Quartet", Manyland Books. Charles Angoff calls it "a searing, bitter, enormously effective war story. A group of Lithuanians is impressed into service by the Nazis for the Fuhrer and the Herrenvolk and learns the ghastly lesson of the depths to which a nation can go when lacerated by a philosophy of hate and murder.")

Christmas was right upon us. From the woods I brought a fir-tree three spans high; and it was just right to put on the table. I set about decorating it and I hung it round so effectively with little candles, made out of tallow from Hindenburg lamps, that my friends could not take their eyes off it. On the uppermost branch was a star, cut out of polished tin. We could begin.

We had a place for our festivities; that was the most important thing. One platoon had half a private house — a sitting room and a small kitchen. We sat down at the table. It was covered with a well-worn blanket that had been found on the bed. We used this as a tablecloth and I spread hay beneath it. We intended to celebrate Christmas Eve in true Lithuanian fashion.

In short, the table was to be the centre of everything. We had something to put on it. Just in time for Christmas, we received various good things that were distributed to servicemen once a month. There was a packet of cheese and a tin of fish, half a bottle of brandy and two-thirds of a bottle of white wine each. The wine was inferior, but the spirit made our tongues

tingle and after three little glasses we began to hear noise in our ears.

So we began our feast. The evening star had risen by now. First, I proposed to say a prayer and remember our nearest ones, left at home. Then we tasted God's gifts. We sampled everything in turn. We sated our appetites and felt warm and comfortable. We were almost cheerful. Then some Germans, our neighbors, came to call on us. One of them Kuosa, was an Austrian with nothing but hatred for Hitler and Germans in general. The other was a lance-corporal from Dresden. Both of them were dreaming of home. It was only natural to sing a song. Lithuanians are good Christians and on such memorable occasions they start with hymns.

Soon we took up more cheerful songs. Advent was over and to mark its end several bottles were still waiting for us.

"Well, let's have a drink!"

"*Prosit! Bis zum Grund!*"

The lance-corporal was delighted with our Christmas tree. The candles were so tiny but burned like real ones. Kuosa asked him if he knew what these candles were made of.

"Some sort of paraffin, like all candles."

Kuosa hooted with laughter. No, they were not made of paraffin. They were made of lard. Only such lard as you would refuse to eat," said Kuosa.

"We eat every kind of lard."

"Even so, you don't eat lard made from Jews."

"What's that?"

"You use such lard for industrial purposes, such as manufacturing these lamps. The candles were made from these lamps. You use it also for making soap and machineoil."

The lance-corporal was all ears.

"D'you know where the Jews are now?"

"They've been driven into the crematorium," said Kuosa.

"What's a crematorium?"

"A furnace to burn human beings in."

"*Verflucht!* Who burns human beings?"

"Some people burn human beings. They've burned quite a number already. About six million."

"Ja. Germans are practical. But you haven't any proof."

"Haven't I? It's quite easy to prove," said Kuosa. "You're doubtless aware that nothing is wasted in your country. In Berlin the engineers made an estimate of the commercial value of materials pouring down the sewers. They constructed special filters and strainers, and in the course of a year they collected pure spirit to the tune of ten million marks."

"Out of the sewers?"

"Entirely out of the sewers. You can be sure this German brandy we're drinking has come out of a cesspool. Why not? It's not a bad drink."

"Go to hell!"

It was not particularly appetizing, but there was nothing to worry about. You could drink the brandy. Our guests drank too. The spirits had a good color. Who would have known that they come from the sewers?

"What about the lard?"

"From a practical point of view nothing is to be wasted, everything must help to keep the war-machine going. Have you never seen soap, wartime soap, with two letters on it, J and F? They mean "*Judisches Fett.*"

"*Donnerwetter! Sakrament!*"

The lance-corporal bent down and began to retch as if he were sea-sick. To relieve the heavy atmosphere, we filled our glasses and drank together. "*Bis zum Grund!*"

(Translated by Raphael Sealey)

A Russian was convicted by a Soviet court for calling the Minister of Culture a fool. He got 20 years—five years for slander and 15 years for revealing a state secret.



The young learn Russian in Lithuania. "A genuine occupation is consummated when not only the territory but men's minds and hearts are occupied."

DILEMMA

TRAGIC FATE OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN LITHUANIA

The tragic dilemma of Lithuanians engaged in the teaching profession is described in "Serfs — from a Pedagogue's Notebook", published in the Lithuanian underground journal *Aušra*:

Do we believe what we try to impress on our students? Do we believe in the so-called Communist morality, which transforms life into a moral ruin, wherever it takes power? Do we believe in social equality and justice, when millions of people are reduced to serfs in kolkhozes, imprisoned in slave camps, exiled for their convictions; when the state employers can dispose of all the workers' labor and pay without being accountable to anybody and when they can squander at will the money generated by the people's labor, while leaving the people in poverty; when, at the same time, the ruling class, the Communist feudal lords, especially the upper crust, lead a life of luxury and overabundance? Do we believe in the Soviet democracy, in the "freedoms" of expression and of conscience (which it proclaims), when we are afraid to utter aloud even an innocent critical remark?

If we don't believe in it, why then do we lie to ourselves and, most importantly, why do we try with such slavish obedience to persuade the young and trusting people that it exists and to poison their minds with lies? And if we do believe? Then it is even worse: then we already are spiritual cripples

with brains that have been filtered through, for whom even the plus two is no more four.

Do we, teachers, ever give a thought to what a role we are playing in the nation's struggle of destiny, what is our responsibility before history? . . . The Lithuanian nation today stands before a dilemma — to perish or to survive. We have been thrown into a horrifying melting pot of nations, in which only remnants of more than one nation are afloat. We are being poisoned by terrible moral poisons . . .

Some forces in our nation resist this slide to ruin. The nation feels instinctively what brings her peril and defends itself in all possible ways. However, this resistance is more of a spontaneous nature, while the enemy forces are acting in a planned and organized way. They use as tools all the official institu-

tions, including the schools. In addition to a neutral task — teaching, they have been charged with the inculcation of an ideology that is alien to us. A country is most thoroughly enslaved not when a foreign state brings in its troops and introduces its garrisons, but when the desire for freedom and independence is extirpated from a nation's consciousness. A genuine occupation is consummated when not only the territory but also men's hearts and minds are occupied.

We, teachers have been charged with eradicating from the children's hearts all that was instilled into them by their parents, all that our nation has treasured and valued for centuries . . . We are afraid to utter an independent thought, but at the same time we try hard to persuade the inexperienced children that we are living in the freest and most democratic countries. We are training the children who have been entrusted to us not for our nation, but for the rulers of a foreign empire. We are rearing obedient subjects for them, including even the future janissaries, whom they will send to enslave other nations (as is already the case in Afghanistan).

Thus, whether we wish it or not, today we already are the government's tool, the hirelings of a foreign country that has enslaved us, the agents of its designs and goals. But it depends on us to a great extent what kind of tools we shall be: good or bad.

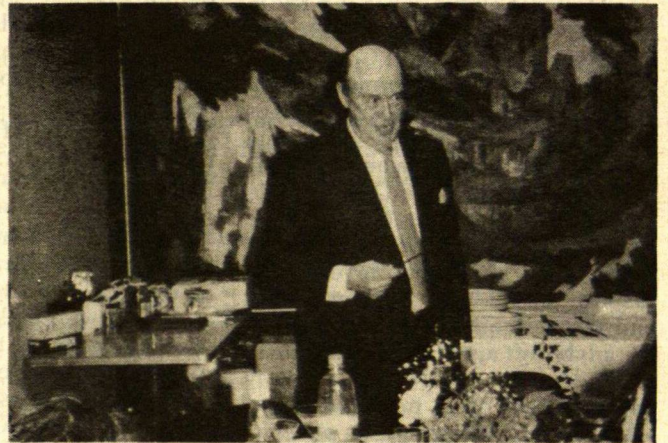
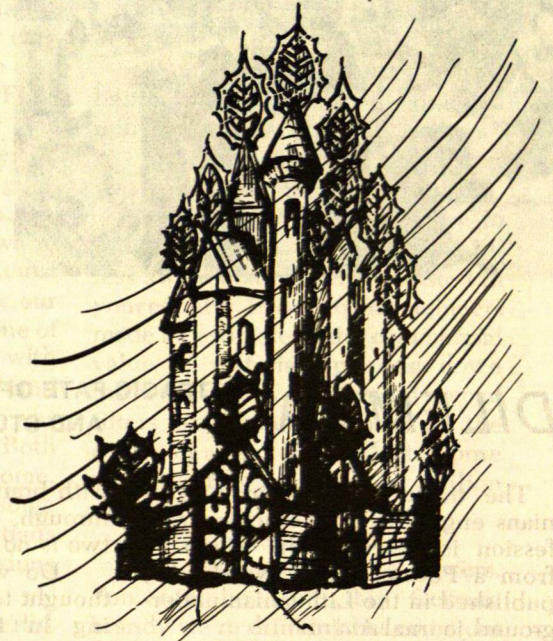
(Elta)



"That's the one!"

FESTIVE EVENING

WITH
OUR
POETS



● *Novelist Nelė Mazalaitė-Gabienė, who patriotically and warm-heartedly encourages authorship, financed the \$1000 Maironis Poetry Award and the \$1000 Gabe Poetry-for-Youth Awards, honoring the memory of her husband Juozas Gabe who had a profound love for literature and creativity.*

● *Paulius Jurkus won double honors: the Gabe Poetry-for-Youth Award and the Baronas Novel Award which was made possible by Julija and Emilis Siniai of Calif. His translated poem and art work are reproduced from JUODVARNIAI, his book-length fantasy for children.*



● *Poet-priest Leonardas Andriekus chats with Brother Vilius OFM, a virtuoso pianist who enriched the evening with an impressive recital.*

● *A large appreciative audience attended the feast of poetry and music in Brooklyn's cultural center Židinys. Brazdžionis' satire, Jurkus' amusing fantasies and*

Zitkevičius' wit were a wholesome tribute to the strength of our people in the face of adversity and foreshadow a promising future for Lithuania. Brazdžionis evoked thunderous applause when he exposed the "Cult of Terror" among the communists: "They fear those whom they have enslaved! They fear the small word — freedom!"

PAULIUS JURKUS

THE FOREST



*How deep and endless is the forest
And sister must pass through!
The dusk begins to flood the pathways
With shadows painted blue.*

*The little shadows, growing weary,
Curl up on twig and log
While sleepy wells are yawning under
Coverlets of fog.*

*Just the oaks — those bearded giants,
Guards of midnight woes—
Roar with rage and wail with sorrow
For reasons no one knows.*

*Sister listens in the darkness
To the mournful oaks:
Maybe witches ride the treetops
Leading fairy folks.*

BERNARDAS BRAZDŽIONIS

SPRING'S JOURNEY

*Under chestnut branches, winds like urchins roistered;
Under chestnut branches, little children played.
What a time that was, the chestnuts quick with blossoms—
God, the shimmering and brilliance of that May!*

*So the springtime — like the gallant god Apollo,
Dapper, wearing leaves of laurel in his hair—
Carried lives of millions in its hand, and hastened
Past the children, past the chestnuts everywhere.*

*Under birches, blowing, piping, Pan disported.
Youthful, under birches, stood the newlyweds.
Like two doves, they dwelt in dreams aglow with blossoms
While the sap of birches, sweet and silent, bled.*

*Down the roadways, springtime — like the god Apollo,
Dapper, wearing laurels on its head — pursued
Ever onward as it carried buds, by millions,
Past the youthful newlyweds, the birches too.*

*Under osiers, jackdaws cawed their dies irae;
Two old people under weeping willows sought
From the snowy ash a plank to make their casket,
And the grace of happy dying from the Lord.*

*Springtime — like the dapper god Apollo, laurel
Leaves upon his head and shoulders — travelled fast,
Bearing fruits, by millions, past the weeping willow,
Past the aged couple, past the snowy ash.*

*Were you not the one who played beneath the chestnuts?
Have we not stood under birches — you and I?
Does not time run out for all as for the oldsters?
Will not hours that glow for us soon ashen white?*

*Then the springtime — like the dapper god Apollo,
Laurel leaves upon his head — in passing by
While the bells toll, "Requiem aeternam dona . . ."
Will not stop to ask who lived, nor who had died.*

● (Above, left) Poet Bernardas Brazdžionis, the winner of the Maironis Poetry Award, is a prolific master of style and subtle emotion. Here, he drinks to freedom with Stepas Zobarskas, a writer known on two continents and the publisher of Manyland Books, who has made the English speaking world cognizant of Lithuanians, their literature, language and culture.

● (Right) Master of satirical verse, Leonardas Žitkevičius received the Gabe Poetry-for-Youth Award.



LEONARDAS ŽITKEVIČIUS

NIGHT AND THE MOON

*Night has no need of the moon
That shatters the darkness of space
But the moon has need of the night
So that light can shine from its face.*

*The world is now dark, without light.
What full moon could shatter the night?*

Courtesy: The Literary Review
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Demie Jonaitis translations

Kristina Repševičiūtė

THAT MOST AMAZING, UNBELIEVABLE EVENT:

LAST SUMMER'S FIFTH WORLD LITHUANIAN YOUTH CONGRESS IN CHICAGO

The Fifth World Lithuanian Youth Congress was truly an amazing affair. For someone like myself, who comes not from Chicago or Cleveland, but from Australia — and the “wrong” side of Australia at that — to witness such an event was unbelievable. It was a culmination of knowledge, talent and materials contributed by Lithuanian youth from around the world. And the single most outstanding feature of the Congress was the actual number of young people involved — not just participating but organizing as well.

The first event of the Congress was naturally the *Atidarymas* in Chicago. This was followed by a week of *Stovykla* held at Oberlin College in Ohio. For those of us attending the Congress as *Dalyviai* rather than *Atstovai* — that is delegates rather than representatives — this was probably the best part (apart from the parties) because the programme included many things that were not necessarily of an intense nature. Even so, the *Stovykla* was not intended as just a good time — there were bugle calls and buckets of water for those who thought that daytime was for sleeping!

Bad weather on the first day of *Stovykla* forced the daily Mass to be said indoors. That evening entertainment consisted of small skits produced by each of the participating countries and due to their impromptu nature most were very amusing. Even our West Australian *Dalyviai* were seen to make fools of themselves pretending to be Aborigines and trying to depict Ayres Rock.

Every day there was a major seminar — *paskaita*, as well as a variety of *užsiėmimų* — activities. Personally I attended only one of the seminars, the theme of which was “The fate of modern day Lithuania”. This was in commemoration of Human Rights Day and included a talk by Rasa Razgaitienė, a member of the Americans for Due Process Group, who spoke about Lithuanians who are waiting to be tried for alleged war crimes.

After this we all broke up into small discussion groups and I went to hear Saulius Kubilius speak about his work with Vatican Radio in Italy transmit-

ting Lithuanian radio programmes to Lithuania. Although this is a totally activity I don't think that some of the material broadcast would particularly impress the Russian Government.

On another occasion I sat in on a talk by Vldas Samulevičius who is visiting from a part of Poland known as Suvalkų Trikampis. From him I learned that this small area of Poland is probably more Lithuanian than present day Lithuania due to the relative freedom of Polish rule as compared to Russian rule. Samulevičius spoke mainly on the current situation in the town of Punska. One of the subjects he covered that I found interesting was the education system. In Suvalkų Trikampis all schooling is done bilingually, that is both in Polish and Lithuanian. The only reason that Polish is taught is because the Government sets all major exams and so the students do them in both languages.

I found the tutorials on Lithuanian traditions and customs particularly interesting. Arvydas Žygas, who gave the talks, has himself been to Punska (in Poland) three times and has accumulated much information on this subject from books as well as from talking to many very old and knowledgeable people. His main theme was the reasoning behind and the similarities between the pagan rituals of early Lithuania and the Christian rituals of modern day Lithuania.

On Thursday all activities were postponed so that an attempt could be made at recreating Lithuania as she was during Independence. Some people formed into political parties and rallied for votes while others entered sporting events to relive the Lithuanian Olympics of 1938. In the evening a *kavinė* (cafe) was recreated including

Time for Laughter

A commissar was visiting a collective farm in Lithuania and asked the farmer about his crops. The farmer said, “The crops are fine — the potatoes are so plentiful — if we put them in one pile they would touch the foot of God.” The communist said, “Just a minute — in Soviet Lithuania there is no God.” The farmer said, “Well, there are no potatoes either.”

old style music, dancing and entertainment.

As a matter of fact every evening we were entertained by either resident performers or visiting actors such as the satirical group “*Antras Kaimas*” and the dancing group “*Grandinėle*” from Cleveland.

After *Stovykla* all the *Atstovai* went to Trent University in Peterborough Canada for ten days of heavy discussions and decision making known as *Studio Dienos*. The middle weekend was designed as a recreational break and on the following Monday I went to the university to investigate the *Studio Dienos*. What I found was something very similar to Parliamentary discussions in that all details were examined and debated to the fullest. Some of the subjects discussed included motivation of youth, how could more Lithuanian youth be incorporated, how can we help present day Lithuania and the like.

In the afternoon once again a number of lectures were given on subjects such as “The History of the World Lithuanian Youth Association.” A talk given by Rev. Trimakas was particularly interesting since it gave some of the findings by the questionnaire that most of us filled in a few months ago. Some of the more interesting points raised I thought were that on a world wide basis only 62% of Lithuanian youth contributed to Lithuanian activities last year — Australia having the highest percentage of all at 71%. 70% of Australians would visit Lithuania — independent or not, if they could, while 15% of world wide youth already have. And of course as with everything else the percentage of female interest is higher than that of males.

The *Uždarymas* (closing) of the fifth World Lithuanian Youth Congress consisted of a weekend in Montreal with not too many official functions, a great deal of merriment and lots of sadness too.

Australia now has the task of making the sixth World Lithuanian Youth Congress a success and upholding the standard set by the previous Congresses. I hope all goes well because from what I've seen it's going to be a mammoth task.

(Courtesy KAS NAUJO? Australia)

CULTURALLY THRIVING



Photo: M. A. Lepera

ST. ANDREW'S IN PHILADELPHIA

Perhaps one of the most active Lithuanian churches in the city of brotherly love is St. Andrew's. It was established in 1924 and was the 3rd Lithuanian parish in Philadelphia. Reverend Joseph Čepukaitis was appointed pastor. In 1942 an opportunity had arisen for Father Čepukaitis to purchase a former Episcopalian Church,

at 19th and Wallace. The first Mass was celebrated in the new church on Holy Thursday 1942.

After World War II, with the influx of Lithuanian immigrants St. Andrew's flourished. It became the center of many cultural events, and Father Čepukaitis made the preservation of true Lithuanian Culture and Heritage the hallmark of the parish.

December 6, 1966 Rev. George D. Degutis became St. Andrew's new pastor and is serving until the present day. The assistant pastor is Rev. Kajetonas Sakalauskas.

An active Saturday school is still being provided for the children at St. Andrew's. Every Sunday a Lithuanian Mass at 10:30 A.M. is celebrated. To the present day St. Andrew's is thriving in all aspects of Lithuanian culture, activities and organizations.

In 1984 St. Andrew's will be 60 years old. To its priests and all the parishioners we wish a warm *Ilgiausiu Metų!*

St. Andrew's Church, 1913 Wallace St., Philadelphia PA 19130. Telephone: 215 765-2322.

PRINCE DIMITRI GALLITZIN On the Frontier of Western Pennsylvania

A Russian prince who was actually a Lithuanian became the first man ever ordained to the Catholic priesthood in the United States. He was Prince Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin.

Stasys Maziliauskas tells this interesting story in this book *Pioneer Prince in USA* (Amberland Publishing Co., 159 pp. \$10 plus \$1.50 postage. Available at BRIDGES.)

Prince Gallitzin was a Lithuanian but his title of nobility was recognized as Russian, since the czars had seized his noble country. The prince's father, disillusioned by the liberalism that was sweeping Europe, and France in particular, sent his son to the New World for his final education.

There, caught up in the pioneer spirit of the country, Prince Gallitzin gave himself to the service of people. In 1795 he was ordained, and he soon became the apostle of the frontier of Western Pennsylvania.

The author describes the heroic work Father Gallitzin did and his great labor for the Church. He threw himself fully into the life of his new country

and, for a while, even took an "American name — Augustine Smith.

Lithuanians have contributed so very much to the life of the Church in the United States. This book pays just tribute to one of our real pioneers.

(Courtesy: *The Priest*)

AČIŪ LABAI WE NEED YOUR HELP!

\$100.00 — Domicela Genaitis, Brooklyn, N.Y.

\$40.00 — Aušra Boken, N.Y., N.Y.

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GERA ŠEIMININKĖ**COOKING LITHUANIAN STYLE**

Every district in Lithuania has its special dishes; therefore slight variations occur in menus for traditional holiday dishes. The basic dishes for the *Kučios* are the *kūčia* which is a mixture of cooked grains of wheat, barley, oats and peas, mixed with honey sweetened water and milk of ground poppy seeds. Other foods are: red beet soup, fish (usually pike and herring), soup of *slizikai* (hard baked small dumplings) oat and fruit jellies.

**DRIED FRUIT COMPOTE
DŽIOVINTŲ VAISIŲ KOMPOTAS**

2 cups cut-up mixed dried fruit
1 cup sugar
4 cups water
cinnamon orange peel.

Boil water, add some of the sugar and cook the fruit. First cook the light-colored fruit: apples, pears. Remove when done, and add dark colored fruit to the liquid: prunes, cherries. Compote cooked in this manner will look attractive, because the light colored fruit, cooked separately, will not lose its

color. Also the cooking time for various fruit is different; cooking each kind separately we avoid the danger of overcooking some of them. When dark fruit is cooked, remove from liquid, add remaining sugar and spice to the liquid, simmer. Strain, let cool, and pour over fruit.

**OATMEAL PUDDING
AVIŽINIS KISIELIUS**

6 cups water
3 cups oatmeal
6 cups flour
salt.

Mix flour with warm water, add a crust of black bread, cover and let stand in a warm place about 12 to 20 hours to sour. Then mix well, strain and simmer until it thickens. When done, pour into prepared mold and chill.

Serve with poppy seed milk or with sweetend milk.

When cooking pudding, cut up dried fruit can be added.

**CHRISTMAS**

The following 4 records of Lithuanian music are available for \$20.00 (postage included):

Lithuanian Men's Choir of New York, 12 selections; Lithuanian Chapel of Our Lady of Šiluva dedication ceremonies musical highlights; Kazys Yakutis, baritone. 11 selections of songs and arias. Kalėdos (Christmas) Montreal Lithuanian Christmas music: Bridges, 341 Highland Blvd., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11207.

A certain Vilnius family, fond of telling jokes, owned a parrot. One day it disappeared. They hunted high and low but it was nowhere to be found. Without wasting any time the parrot's owners rushed to the K.G.B. "Why come to us?" the secret police wanted to know. "We do not have your parrot." "Never mind, Comrade Commander. It's bound to be brought in soon and I just want to tell you that I don't share its opinion."

Bridges published by the Lithuanian - American Community of the U.S.A., Inc. Through this newsletter, the publishers hope to re-establish ties between the detached, 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.

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