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YEAR OF FAITH, UNITY, YOUTH

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Vytautas F. Beliajus

Easter tide

from Verba to Jurginės

During the long Lithuanian winter the snow-packed fields were white and crisp. As we walked in the sub-zero cold our steps were accompanied by crunching sounds, as if the snow protested at being stepped upon. We awaited spring eagerly. Spring, as I remember it, was a definitely marked season. The sun shone brightly, glistening rivulets carved paths in the ice, and the song of birds was heard everywhere. All of these changes heralded the coming of spring and of a very busy season that would end the period of Lent.

Our area of the country strictly observed Lent with the mortification of flesh. No meat was eaten for forty days, nor was butter permitted. If one wanted to drink milk, it had to first be diluted with water. Ours was a never-ending diet of herring and potatoes — the staple fare of farm populace throughout the year and especially during Lent. No wonder, then, that Easter was awaited with anticipation.

In addition to Easter Sunday there was an Easter Monday, and even an Easter Tuesday. But Easter Tuesday was called *tinginių šventė* — “the lazy people’s holiday.” Many people extend the holiday season from Palm Sunday until the day which honored St. George: April 23 (that is, if Easter didn’t fall after St. George’s Feast Day). The solemnity of Holy Week seemed always overlooked somehow. Maundy Thursday was considered a morbid day of obligation “requiring” church attendance. Good Friday received less attention from the Catholics than it did from the Protestants, especially Lutherans.

During Holy Week everyone was feverishly engaged in the arduous tasks that holidays always engendered

Although the home of the Lithuanian peasant was always clean, custom required for Easter an especially thorough housecleaning and furniture-scrubbing. Weather permitting, all of the furniture was moved outdoors to be scrubbed. Then the house was cleaned and all of the furniture put back.

Palm Sunday was called *Verba* in Lithuania. To call it “Palm Sunday” would have been a misnomer, because none of the Lithuanians of my day had ever seen a palm tree, or even a palm branch. In its stead, they used the branches of *verba*, a dwarf juniper with bluish-green berries. On Palm Sunday people went to church carrying bouquets of decorated *verba* branches in order to re-enact the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Our use of *verba* was the chief difference between the Palm Sunday ritual observed in the Prienai area and the way it was practiced elsewhere. We transformed our *verba* branches into works of artistic beauty to better suit their special purpose.

Verba grows everywhere in Lithuania. One is free to cut its branches at any time for they are green all year round. However, on the day before Palm Sunday we children took special delight in choosing and cutting the evergreen branches of *verba* because after all, only one day remained before they would be groomed and festooned, to be offered to the scrutiny of everyone at Mass.

I recall well how, on one particular Saturday preceding Palm Sunday, we

(Continued on page 3)



A. TARABILDA

LITHUANIAN FOLK ART



Rūpintojėlis —
Lithuanian peasants
portrayed their
beloved Saviour
as profoundly
concerned:
"His hand
upon his bony
knee,
He sits in sorrow.



WOODEN CHRIST

Faustas Kirša



"Šventa Marija"

In his father's home an old man of a hundred
Carves a little god of miracles and wonders.

His son was exiled from their farmstead to Siberia:
He chisels pain upon the face of the Almighty.

He whittles — woodchips fly — and soon a godling gazes
At the godwright who is carving his Creator.

Pain has crucified his heart and all his being:
He spears the side and spikes the feet of his Redeemer.

To crown the little Lord with twisted thorns, he tortures,
Hacks, and tears white wood, he slashes and he gouges.

A living wooden god is born, a spirit harrowed:
His hand upon his bony knees, He sits in sorrow.

To ease an anguished heart — such heaps of woodchips risen—
The Lord Himself arises from the godwright's chisel.

The godwright glows for it's a miracle he's seeing;
A coronet of sun rays spikes the head of Jesus.

He strips and planes away the last of all the splinters;
Then his lips move slowly and he softly whispers:

"I doubt a hunk of wood, God, needs my hands and labor
To be a miracle created by my Saviour.

"O Lord, through agony, with both your temples bleeding,
You wiped away my tears and turned my pain to sweetness.

"If you are making miracles, may I request you:
Protect the innocent and chastise all transgressors."

To church he bore his godling: people from all over
Saw the little Lord and mended their behavior.

"Forgive me for my wayward youthful days," he pleaded,
With his lips upon the wooden wounds of Jesus.

(Demie Jonaitis trans.)

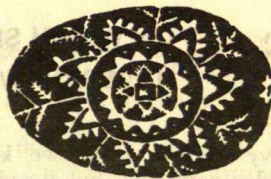


(Continued from page 1)

youngsters went sloshing along the road, muddy with melting snow and ice, to the *pušynas* where the *verba grew thickest*. Gleeefully we skipped about, carefully selecting the best branches we could find. After we returned home with enough branches for each member of the family, the womenfolk hurled themselves into the task of decorating them, with us their avid assistants. We helped them fashion flowers of many shades and shapes from colored paper. Our scissors clicking, we converted streamers of paper into roses, lilies, asters, zinneas, and other flowers. Then we secured them neatly to the boughs. Intensely preoccupied with this task, but enjoying our participation, we anxiously awaited the verdict and final approval of our elders.

The church in Prienai was colorful on Palm Sunday, not unlike a greenhouse, and the pleasing aroma of pine filled the sanctuary like a heart-lifting incense. In the hands of every parishioner was a bouquet of green *Verba* adorned with paper blossoms. It was amusing to see the special pride each person took in his or her own creation. The glances of worshippers wandered here and there to take note of other bouquets and what flowers were imitated and what colors were used. When the service was over and the *verba* had been blessed by the priest, these little masterpieces were brought home to decorate the icons that hung upon the walls and to protect the house from lightning and sickness.

The day before Easter was equally busy. Housecleaning, cooking, baking, and the creation of Easter eggs comprised the order of the day. Cleaning and baking held no fascination for us youngsters, and we always seemed in the way of the older generation. But when it came to coloring Easter eggs, we paid the greatest heed, watching with utter fascination how an ordinary white egg was transformed before our eyes into a jewel-like creation. Pots of hot water, pots of dyes or boiled onion skins, and containers of melted beeswax were everywhere about. The job of coloring a *margutis*, as we called an Easter egg, required painstaking patience, artistry, and a real deftness of hand. Because melted beeswax tends to cool quickly, a piece of match-sized wood was dipped into the molten wax, brought to the egg, and applied to the design as quickly as an eye's blink. Wherever the wax was applied, the dye wouldn't take. Onion skin, beet juices, oak bark, and other vegetable dyes were used to color



St. George and the Dragon



the *margutis*. This particular Saturday always seemed to be the shortest day of the year because so much was going on. Too suddenly, it seemed to us, the time arrived for the "big people" to leave for vigil services at church. These lasted the whole night long and into the following Easter morning, when the Easter food that each family had brought with them was finally blessed.

Traffic on the *plentas* increased greatly during the Saturday afternoon hours, and consisted mostly of pedestrians. Although it was all of seven kilometers to the parish church in Prienai, the villagers thought it more pleasing on a balmy spring day to walk rather than ride in a bouncing cart. Then, too, riding in a vehicle did nothing to enhance the dignity of grace of gaily-clad femininity. It was the custom for maidens to raise beneath their waistbands, the better to display the white undergarments with beautifully-knit and crocheted lace edging or embroidery. Their head kerchieves were tied loosely about their necks and their hair was crowned with headcombs entwined with leaves of rue. The women and girls walked barefooted with their shoes thrown over their shoulders or tied in a bundle along with the food snacks. In the creek just outside

These festive Easter scenes are described in V. F. Beliajus' soon-to-be-published memoirs

town they would wash their feet. Then they would put their shoes back on and continue into Prienai to the parish church. Our Easter parade was not of bonnets, as in the United States. Rather, it was a fashion show of ankle-length undergarments that were impossible to display adequately while riding in a cart. Before entering the church the women unfurled their skirts, letting into full view the colorful aprons.

Early on Easter Sunday, even before we children were awake, there appeared Aunt Skrupskas with an abundant quantity of Easter eggs. Once awake, we proceeded at once to break their decorated shells, forgetting the tremendous artistic effort it had taken to create them just the day before. We ate the boiled eggs ravenously or we played games with them. Rolling eggs was a favorite game to play on Easter Sunday. The sumptuous Easter dinner was usually a late meal because those who had spent the night in church went to bed after breakfast.

Easter Sunday there was always an abundance of eggs in a dish on the table. When visitors arrived, each would take an egg, as would the host. They would crack egg against egg for good luck. Then the eggs were peeled, topped with strong horseradish, and eaten. Drinking and chatting always followed.

When the Easter joys had come to an end, we eagerly awaited the arrival of *Jurginés*, the Feast of St. George, which falls on April 23. It was a holiday marked by *atlaidai*, celebrations of special religious devotion.

Lithuanians have always harbored a special affection for St. George, manifested in various ways in art and popular tradition. For example, the noble dahlia is known to Lithuanians as *jurginis* (St. George's flower). When St. George's Day arrived the village women brought their *jurginis* bulbs out of the cellars for planting, thus signaling the "official" beginning of all work in the fields. Early in the morning on St. George's Day I could be found at my Aunt Skrupskas' side. We entered the garden with spade and hoe, pruning, digging, and re-setting and planting the tubers of *jurginis* in their allotted places of honor. Whether my help was indispensable to her I do not know. Yet my help, such as it was, always proved fruitful for me because I got to keep the surplus seeds and bulbs. These eventually ended up in my own personal flower plot just outside my bedroom. Because it was named for St. George, the *jurginis* was one of my favorite flowers. When the planting was finished,

(Continued on page 14)

MX: TWO MISSIVES

ON WHICH SIDE ARE YOU?

HAVE YOU WRITTEN TO YOUR CONGRESSMAN?

**President Ronald Reagan's Letter
to Mr. Jonas Urbonas
Chairman, Pub. Affairs Comm.
Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.**

On March 12, the United States and the Soviet Union will once again face each other across the arms negotiating table in Geneva. We will approach the talks with our hopes high, but our feet planted firmly on the ground. If successful, we will emerge with an agreement that is fair to both sides. To achieve that, our negotiators must know that they have the committed and unified support of the people of the United States

That is why I am writing to you today. Before this month is out, Congress will make a decision which will have a crucial impact on those negotiations and on our security for the remainder of this century.

America's defenses today are stronger than they were four years ago, and we are all more secure as a result. In the years ahead our safety will continue to rest upon our ability to maintain that deterrent strength that has kept America and the West free, independent, and at peace for three decades. By the mid 70's, the components of that capability — and especially the land-based missile leg of our strategic triad — had become increasingly out-of-date.

This problem has not burst upon us unexpectedly. Previous administrations saw that our old systems were becoming outmoded. But we treated it like an old bridge that creaks and shudders every time you drive a

heavy truck over it; we knew it needed replacing, but dreaded the expense and hoped we'd stay lucky and the bridge would stay up.

I don't think we should rely on luck anymore. I'd prefer to rely on steel. When the bipartisan Scowcroft Commission looked at the condition of our strategic deterrent, it recommended deployment of 100 Peacekeeper (or MX) missiles.

The Peacekeeper is one of the most modern, reliable, thoroughly impressive strategic weapons America has ever produced. During the past ten years the United States did not deploy a single one of these missiles. However, in this same period, the Soviet Union has tested four new systems, and has stationed in its land-based silos more than 600 missiles equivalent to the Peacekeeper, with some 5,000 warheads targeted on the American deterrent. This gross imbalance must not continue. We must replace the bridge.

I have asked the Congress to support our defense modernization, including the Peacekeeper missile, and to send a signal to the Soviet Union that America is united behind its negotiators at Geneva.

Your voices must be heard. In America. The people are the government, and when they speak, those in Washington pay attention. If we are going to send a signal to the Soviets that we are strong and united behind our Geneva negotiators — you must first send that signal.

The Peacekeeper missile is our "bridge" to a safer future.

position that the MX is part of the U.S. defense posture and negotiating strategy at the Geneva talks. The U.S.C.C. strongly supports the resumption of the U.S. Soviet negotiations; as bishops we pray for their successful outcome. We do not enter the MX debate to provide new strategic or technical advice. Rather, as our opposition to the MX arises from a prudential but soundly based moral judgment, so our intervention at this time reflects the conviction that key moral values are implicated in the legislative decisions you face.

In their pastoral letter of 1983, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*, the U.S. bishops opposed the deployment of weapons which are themselves "likely to be vulnerable to attack" yet also possess a capability of rendering the other side's retaliatory forces vulnerable. Such weapons, the pastoral observed "may seem to be useful primarily in a first strike." We specifically noted that the MX raises such fears.

Testifying on behalf of U.S.C.C. before the House Foreign Affairs Committee a year after the pastoral letter's publication, Cardinal Joseph L. Bernardin of Chicago and Archbishop John J. O'Connor of New York took up the question of what the bishops meant by their "strictly conditioned acceptance" of the strategy of deterrence. They made the point that such acceptance requires ongoing scrutiny of weapons proposed for addition to the deterrent force. They then proposed two criteria for assessing any new system: its impact on the dynamic of the arms race, and its cost. "If a particular system is found to be of dubious value (i.e., not absolutely necessary to preserve our deterrence posture) and yet is certain to cost large sums of money, then these two criteria lead us to recommend against the system in question."

Our concerns about the MX have intensified since the pastoral letter was written. Significant numbers of expert analysts raise the same objections that we cited in 1983. Simply from the point of view of its relationship to our deterrent posture, we believe the MX should be classified as a "system of dubious value."

Perhaps even more important for us as bishops and pastors is the second criterion. Plainly the United States faces a period of severe budgetary constraints over the next several years. The Federal deficit imposes an obligation, at once fiscal and moral, to scrutinize expenditures with great care. Testifying for U.S.C.C. on March 7 of this year, Archbishop O'Connor addressed the pressing human needs seen every day in New York and throughout the nation. These needs touch matters of basic human dignity: the fact of hun-

**Bishop James W. Malone's Letter
to Each Member of Congress**

I write as President of the United Catholic Conference to urge you to vote against funding for the MX missile. The U.S.C.C.'s opposition is based on two considerations: the potentially destabilizing impact of this weapons system on the nuclear arms race, and its cost, viewed in light of pressing human needs here and elsewhere in the world.

I am aware of the President's

ger in our midst, the homeless who walk the streets, the lack of access to adequate health care even for middle-class households. Beyond our borders, the needs are still more desperate. Starvation in Ethiopia and grinding poverty in Central America have complex causes, but it is clear that the drama of life and death being played out daily in these and other parts of the world requires sustained humanitarian and economic assistance from the United States.

Faced with these fundamental

challenges to human life and human dignity at home and abroad, I am compelled as President of the U.S.C.C. to urge you to vote against funding the MX missile. It is our considered judgment—not as strategists, certainly, but as religious leaders—that sufficient evidence has been brought forward concerning the potentially destabilizing impact which this weapons system may have on the arms race, to support the conclusion that these funds ought instead be used to meet the human needs enumerated in this letter.

OUR EASTER BOMB

An episode from the autobiography of a famous painter, 1876 - 1966

Antanas Žmuidzinaičius

Noone at home knew what my brother Mikas and I were concocting. We were making a bomb. The kind of bomb which would scare the wits out of the *davatkas* (fanatically devout women) who, Easter Eve, habitually fell asleep in church.

We found a thick birch branch, drilled a hole in it, and cut it down to size. We filled the hole with gunpowder, stuffed oakum over it, added crumbled brick, and on top we nailed down a wooden plug. Set in the gunpowder, dangled a cord which we had soaked in a mush of crushed gunpowder and water. So that the bursting bomb would meet with greater resistance and magnify the sound of explosion, we wound tarred hemp twine around it. Then we rolled it in sand and our bomb was complete.

Before dawn on Easter, Mother, Juzė, Mikas and I drove to church in the *brička*. Father allowed us to harness two of his best horses, Jermaka and Reive. Reive's foal was left at home so that his mother, racing home from church would run all the faster. After the Mass there was always a race. Whoever arrived home first—it was said—would be the first to harvest the fields next summer. Young people were very enthusiastic about the races and Mikas who handled the horses was deter-

ined to win. We hid our bomb in hay under the seat.

We got to church and it was still dark. The others went inside while Mikas and I tied up the horses and gave them hay. We could see as we looked inside that many of the women leaned against the walls and were fast asleep. We hid the bomb under a tree near the fence in the churchyard. I handed him the matches and he lit the gunpowder cord which began to hiss. We jumped away and ran into the church, where we fell to our knees behind a pillar.

There was a terrific explosion. The windows rattled. The sleeping women jumped and began to bless themselves. Men and boys ran out to the courtyard; we followed with innocent faces.

The horses were jumping up and down, pawing each other and causing the wagons to roll over into one another. The whinnying! the kicking! Our own horses, further away, stood calmly munching hay.

After the long chanting of hymns and the procession around the church, the blessing of Easter food began. Women had brought their cakes, hams, cheeses, eggs, sausages and puddings. It was believed this blessing would prevent the people who had fasted so long and so hard from getting sick when they over-stuffed themselves on Easter delicacies.

Mikas and I didn't wait for the end of that ceremony. We rushed to our wagon, ready to set off on the race home. Some wagons were already ahead of us. Mikas, standing, brandished his horsewhip: "Careful, child, careful," warned Mother. I held on to my seat.

We passed some wagons. Some passed us. Someone hurled a rock and caused a wagon to keel over. The Žvinakiai family won the race. Whether that year they were the first to harvest, I don't remember, but I know that our Easter breakfast was truly out of this world.

The week that followed was, for us, foreboding. People gossiped about the Easter morning bomb. Some claimed they had seen Mikas and me crouching under the tree at the fence. Juzė said to me, "I do not doubt it was your work. Wait till Father learns about this."

And learn he did.

Low Sunday, Father and Mother drove Mikas and me to church.

After Mass, the priest sent a messenger after us: he wanted to see the whole family! I could hardly breathe. Especially when we walked into the rectory. What splendor!

"Now you," the priest addressed my Father, "you who read goodless publications, you lead your sons astray . . . They bomb our people at Easter just before the Resurrection!"

Mother moaned, "So, our dear sons have cooked up for us such a fine mess . . .!"

"We'll discuss this later," snapped Father.

After dinner, Father lit his pipe and asked Mikas questions. "What did you do Easter night in the church courtyard?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all."

I stood, came forward and said, "We just wanted to wake up the old women who were sleeping in church."

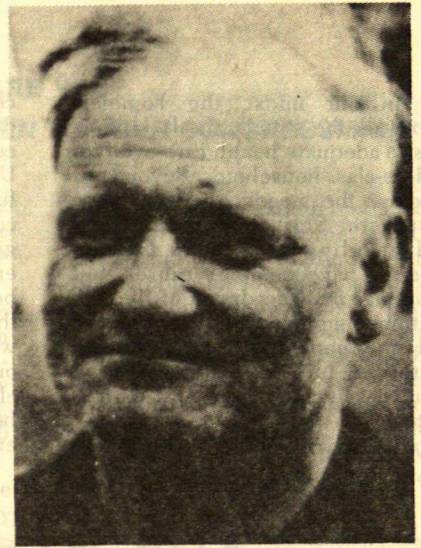
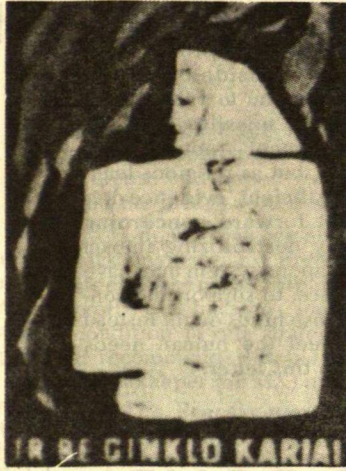
Father thoughtfully sucked his pipe: "Na, this time I will forgive you, because you have told me the truth."

Mother tried to explain to us that what we had done was a sin against God and we must confess it.

The next Sunday morning, Mikas and I stood in front of the church. As we approached the confessional, we exchanged rueful grins.



Sofia Binkiene with daughter Irena hid many Jews. She has published a book "Soldiers without Weapons" about Lithuanians who fought to save Jewish lives.



Dr. J. Stakauskas, priest and Vilnius archives director, gave many Jews refuge.



Marija Mikulskyte helped hide and feed Jewish families



J. Jankauskas smuggled weapons to Jews; the gestapo shot him.



Ona Šimaite helped — was sent to a concentration camp

"JERUSALEM OF LITHUANIA", compiled by Leyzer Ran, is a 1000-page, 3-volume documentary of the 500 years of rich intellectual and creative life Jews enjoyed in Vilnius until all that was dear to them was destroyed by the German, then the Russian invasions. The publication cites the Lithuanians who risked their lives and freedom to save Jews.



M. Jurkutaitis smuggled food to the ghetto sufferers

HOLOCAUST: THE BRAVE AND THE STRONG

Fr. William Wolkovich - Valkavičius

When innocent people
become victims

OSI: THIS IS JUSTICE?

There's a saying among historians that one who ignores the past is in danger of repeating the errors of the past.

The United States system of law has allowed us to survive many a crisis for over two centuries. Nevertheless, from time to time, zealots have assaulted our tradition of "due process", temporarily eroding the American spirit of fair-play that underlies our legal procedures. On such occasions, innocent people have become victims.

One of the most hideous examples that comes to mind is the case of Leo Frank, the Jewish manager of a pencil factory in Atlanta in 1914. On the basis of flimsy evidence, rumors and a mood of anti-Semitism, Frank was convicted of killing Mary Phagan, one of the factory employees. Just as Frank was about to be hanged, the governor of Georgia changed the sentence to life in prison. This commutation caused emotions to run wild. A lynch-crazed mob snatched Frank from jail, and butchered him to death. That was seventy years ago. In December of 1982, the press reported a startling confession out of Nashville. Alonzo Mann, a teenage office boy of that factory had seen Jim Conley, the drunken janitor, carrying away the dead girl's body, after his futile attempt to steal her weekly pay. The janitor threatened to kill the eye-witness if he ever divulged what he had seen. Fear sealed Mann's lips for all these years until his conscience perforated his silence. Nearly seven decades later, the slain Leo Frank was proven innocent.

Six years later the United States went into convulsions in the throes of the so-called "Red Scare." There was a postwar frenzy against all foreigners, radicals, and especially suspect bolsheviks. In August 1919, Alexander Mitchell Palmer, the U.S. Attorney General, set up in his department an anti-radical "General Intelligence Division." The mood of hysteria came to a climax January 2, 1920, when Palmer's agents of the Department of

Justice seized thousands of people around the country in poolrooms, clubs, and private homes, damaging and destroying property as they carried out their raids.

"Local Men are 'Red' Suspects" screamed the headlines. Who were these "monsters" ready to overthrow the government? Most of them were simple Lithuanian immigrants — common laborers in local mills and factories. It is true that they had abandoned their religious practices. In the minds of the Lithuanian churchgoers, these fallen-aways were called socialists, atheists, bolsheviks. They were undesirable. And so their names were passed on to local police, and these names in turn were inscribed on lists in the hands of the Justice Department making these immigrants subject to arrest. Fortunately, that spring, cooler heads prevailed. Around the nation responsible voices lashed out against the flagrant disregard of legal process.

Now sixty five years later we find ourselves confronted with another vexing problem of justice. Here is the background. In the past decade, there has been an intense revival of awareness about Hitler's slaughter of Jews. A few years ago by congressional amendment to the immigration laws, the OSI — Office of Special Investigations — was established in the Department of Justice. Its purpose was a noble one — to pursue Nazi collaborators of World War II. All well and good. But is it possible that the OSI, despite the good intentions of its officials, is so enthusiastic about its goals that it is veering away from sound, traditional legal methods of fair-play?

Are you aware that the first OSI director in 1980 made a secret agreement with Soviet officials to collaborate in accepting evidence supplied by the KGB — the Russian secret police? Under such circumstances, what chance does a defendant's attorney have to cross-examine witnesses overseas? What

chance is there to inspect the original accusatory documents to verify their authenticity? In at least one case already, United States vs. Kungys, heard in the New Jersey federal district court in the fall of 1983, Judge Dickinson R. Debevoise ruled for the defendant, rejecting most of the evidence supplied by the Soviets, and criticizing OSI attorneys' behavior.

Furthermore, in its effort to strip a defendant of citizenship and strive for deportation, the OSI deliberately uses a civil proceeding, not a criminal one. Do you realize what this means? If you steal as little as a six-pack of beer, and have no money, you are entitled to tax-paid attorneys to defend you, all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary. This is not true in a civil case. Yet a competent defense can cost a half million dollars or more! Nor are you allowed a jury trial, a cherished right in our legal tradition. Finally, it's always good to remember that one is presumed innocent until proven guilty, and should be so treated. But is this happening?

In the fall of 1983 there was an OSI case pending against a Latvian in Hartford. The man was dying of cancer. Still the agents persisted in pressing the case. The defendant died on January 25, 1984, but his attorney refused to confirm or deny the death. Why? As he stated in a letter to the judge: "I did not wish to promptly disclose my client's death to the Office of Special Investigations because I did not wish them to send a representative to my client's funeral for the purpose of taking photographs of the corpse or to harass or annoy my client's widow."

The OSI had done precisely that in an earlier case of that same lawyer. He wanted no repetition. Let me give one more example of method of operation.

Here is a wire service story from UPI that appeared November 28th, in

(Continued on page 12)

EMPRESS ELIZABETH

Albert Cizauskas

Elizabeth inherited many of the physical and personal traits of her Lithuanian mother, Catherine I—beauty, vitality, a genial disposition and common sense. From her giant of a father, Peter the Great, she inherited his genius for government and his restless urge to transform a semi-barbaric country into a major European power.

Elizabeth was only 18 when her mother died. Her education had been meager but her "extraordinary beauty and vivacity" made her a general favorite. During the reign of her cousin Anne, however, she led a precarious existence due to Anne's envy of Elizabeth's good looks and popularity. Elizabeth was the type of woman who delighted equally in strenuous masculine pursuits, such as hard riding and hunting, and in the more delicate graces of the ballroom where she excelled as a dancer. On top of this, she was also the daughter of the great Peter with a better claim to the throne than the reigning Empress. Such a woman was indeed a potential threat to unseat the dour and sedentary Anne.

Partly to deflect Anne's suspicions and partly to savor the delights available to a Russian princess, Elizabeth abandoned herself to a frivolous and sensual existence. Rumors abounded of her numerous lovers and escapades. One of her favorites, incurring the jealous wrath of the Empress, had his tongue cut out and was banished to Siberia. But Elizabeth enjoyed her role of heedless libertine so genuinely that she managed to survive a decade of Anne's envious watchfulness.

Following Anne's death in 1740, a regency was formed under her grand-niece in accordance with the late Empress' wishes. Elizabeth's position worsened because, even though the logical successor, she had been purposely thrust aside in favor of Ivan VI, the infant son of the grand-niece, whose claim to the throne was extremely tenuous. Rising dissatisfaction with the regency rendered her situation all the more untenable, exposing her to the bleak prospect of banishment to a nunnery, a favorite Russian expedient for neutralizing troublesome women.

Elizabeth Acts

Finally, urged on by her supporters as the danger of apprehension daily became more imminent, Elizabeth took action. Dressed in a military uniform, which set off her figure to advantage, she rode to the barracks of the sleeping palace guards late in the night of December 6, 1741. Appearing before them she called out: "You know whose daughter I am. And I

come to you in my father's name. Will you follow me?" The mesmerized guards, whom Elizabeth had earlier taken the precaution of befriending, followed her with enthusiasm. As Russian soldiers, they had detested the large number of foreigners, especially Germans who had held high posts in Anne's government and had been retained by the regency. Peter's daughter, they believed, would oust the foreigners and restore Russian blood and vigor to the Russian government.

Having put her cards on the table, Elizabeth, hitherto self-indulgent and indolent, acted swiftly. She ordered the apprehension of the government's leading ministers and went herself to the bedroom of Ivan's mother, uttering the grim words: "Time to get up, sister." By early morning, the government was securely under her control. In military uniform, she showed herself to cheering crowds and received the homage of enthusiastic boyars and the military. Among her first acts was the imprisonment of the infant Czar and his parents, the regents. She also deposed the non-Russian ministers who were condemned to death. Elizabeth, however, in a surprising exception to the prevailing mores of the time, opposed capital punishment. She rescinded the death penalty, exiling them instead. Her supporters, on the other hand, were lavishly rewarded with honors, wealth and high positions.

Elizabeth's coronation exceeded in splendor all previous coronations, even in a country accustomed to royal extravagance. Festivities were stretched out over a month, with ballets, operas, dinners and balls following one another in glittering profusion. In the midst of all this, Elizabeth somehow found time for religious ceremonies and private prayer. She shared with her countrymen that mingling of sensuality and religious fervor that has always been a mark of the Russian personality.

Sex and Success

Elizabeth's appetite for excessive luxury and dissipation marred an otherwise notable reign. While sympathetic to cases of misery when these came to her personal attention, she was unable to appreciate the relationship between the worsening lot of the peasants and the heavy taxation needed to support the prodigality of her court. In addition, she had inherited from both parents a strong sexual drive which she indulged without restraint as Empress. She is believed to have married secretly a handsome Ukrainian peasant, squandering huge sums to maintain him and his numerous relatives. But



she also took her pleasure indiscriminately with others: a hidden staircase led from a secret apartment to her boudoir so that her lover for the night could remain incognito.

None of Elizabeth's undesirable traits, however, prevented her from becoming an effective ruler. She streamlined the administrative apparatus of the government, installed able Russians in all top policy-making posts and adroitly utilized the various skills and personalities of her ministers, rising above the constant intrigue and jealousies that surrounded her.

Another praiseworthy aspect of Elizabeth's reign was her strong support for learning and the arts. While the Germans had been dispossessed of their

preeminent role in Russian political life, the Italians succeeded them in music and architecture and the French in literature and social etiquette. Baroque palaces transformed St. Petersburg and Italians musicians and composers found enthusiastic welcome. The theater also flourished. The plays of Corneille, Moliere and Racine were favorites at the court. French influence extended even further. Elizabeth herself corresponded with Voltaire who wrote a monumental history of Russia to please her.

Elizabeth's strong suit was foreign policy. One of the most intense rivalries of European history revolved about her bitter duel for many years with Frederick the Great of Prussia. Daughter of a Lithuanian mother, she understood the menace of an expanding Prussia and through her stubborn resistance subdued one of history's most able warrior kings. In doing this, she involved all the great powers of Europe in a struggle called the "Seven Years' War," the first truly "world war" in the sense that it encompassed for the first time the British and French colonies in North America. Before Elizabeth, Russia had been an awakening giant; under Elizabeth the giant stretched across the European continent, permanently altering its balance of power.

Perhaps the single act of the Empress that had the most profound influence on Russia had nothing to do with war or diplomacy. Unable to bear children, Elizabeth, who had a strong sense of family, sought to ensure to her nephew the succession to the throne. He was Peter, the son of a sister who had married a minor German prince. Peter, however, was sickly, semi-retarded and intrigued by all things Prussian. It was not surprising that aunt and nephew developed an intense dislike for one another. But it was Elizabeth's selection of an even more insignificant young German princess as Peter's bride that changed the course of Russian, and European, history. The young bride eventually became Catherine the Great. Thus, Elizabeth, who had purged her government of German advisers and had pursued an inflexible anti-Prussian policy, had chosen a Prussophile nephew to be her successor and, for his wife, a German princess who eventually became the most successful ruler of Czarist Russia after Peter the Great.

The Finale

Two decades of high living finally took its toll of the "most beautiful woman in Europe." Her figure had become swollen and she had to be carried from room to room. She would not, however, deny herself the richest of foods now that other pleasures had become impossible. Finally, on Christmas day, 1761, Elizabeth died from the over-indulgence of a lifetime.

Frederick of Prussia, surrounded by Russian armies and facing annihilation, rejoiced. He had little doubt that the Empress' nephew, who was widely known to admire Frederick as much as he detested his aunt, would lift the siege. Peter did, permitting Elizabeth's implacable enemy to survive because she had died.



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**ALL DEPARTURES FROM
NEW YORK AND BOSTON**

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE

"Their language represents one of the highest achievements of all mankind..."

—IMMANUEL KANT

Anatole C. Matulis

In the course of the past centuries the pages of German literature reflect a prominent number of writers who, in one respect or another, embraced the Lithuanian national cultural element in their literary contributions. A list of these authors is composed of such monumental names as: Kant, Lessing, Goethe, Sudermann, Wiechert and Miegel.

The reader might find it remarkable that suddenly this diminutive and seemingly insignificant country of Northern Europe, hardly known outside the limits of continental Europe, captivated the minds of the past and present German literary peers.

EUROPE'S DEBT TO LITHUANIA

Lithuania is a country to which Europe is indebted for her preservation from the conquering hordes of Tamerlane. Lithuania, once the largest European state, is currently situated to the east of the Baltic Sea, to the south of Latvia, to the west of the Soviet Union, and to the north of Germany. It lies on a great plain, occasionally broken by a caravan of verdant hills and the somber waters of rivers and lakes. In the winter, deep snow lies upon its dormant face — in the spring, it is decorated by jocund, colorful crown of wild-flowers. The yellow fields of ripe grain and the richly green meadows are symbolically reflected in the two of the three colors of the Lithuanian national flag — the third represents the color of blood sacrificed upon the altar of freedom.

ANTHROPOLOGICALLY ...

Anthropologically, the Lithuanian people are to be classed as members of the dolichocephalic group; not assumed to be of Teutonic, Scandinavian, or Slavic origin. Their pre-historical existence is still surrounded by a veil of mystery; one periodically evoking numerous scholarly speculations. A typical Lithuanian is fair-haired, blue-eyed, tall of stature and of strong athletic appearance.

KANT AND THE UNIQUENESS

The uniqueness of the Lithuanian language attracted the early attention of Immanuel Kant, who was born in Prussian Lithuania and enjoyed an adequate knowledge of the Lithuanian tongue. He urged the preservation of the Lithuanian language, as the key to the secrets of philology and history. The linguistic treasures of the Lithuanian tongue since Kant's observations have continued to impress the corps of eminent philologists of the Western world. Isaac Taylor commented "if we confine our attention to contemporary forms of speech, and compare, for instance, modern Lithuanian with any of the vernacular dialects of India which have descended from Sanskrit, we find that the Lithuanian is immeasurably the more archaic in its character... It may be surmised that if we possessed a Lithuanian literature of a date contemporary with the oldest literature in India, it might be contended with greater reason that the cradle of the Aryan language must have been in the Lithuanian region." Benjamin W. Dwight considered the Lithuanian language "...of very great value to the philologist. It is the most antique in its forms of all living languages of the world, the most akin in its substance and spirit to the primeval Sanskrit." Theodore S. Thurston cogitated that:

"The richest cultural heritage of the Lithuanian people is their language, which represents one of the highest achievements of all mankind. It surpasses all other European languages in its wonderful grammatical structure. It can clearly be seen, by a study of the highest developed grammar and the natural and beautiful sounds of their language, that the Lithuanians indeed possessed a creative genius in a very early era of our civilization. The vowel system of the Lithuanian language is the most ancient in its style. It antedates Sanskrit, Latvian, Greek and Latin, in that order... Lithuanian language is very important in the field of comparative philology, and it is re-

garded by renowned philologists as the key to the civilization of mankind."

These prominent English speaking philologists did not stand alone in emphasizing the salience of the Lithuanian language. The French memorable geographer and scholar Elisee Reclus injected that if the value of a nation in the sum total of humanity were to be measured by the beauty of its language, the Lithuanian language most certainly would place Lithuanian first among the nations of Europe. It is, therefore, not surprising that the discovery of the Lithuanian nation and culture was achieved through the abundant interest in the singularity of its language.

A remarkable number of twentieth century German writers embraced the Lithuanian people and their cultural characteristics in their prose works especially Hermann Sudermann, Ernst Wiechert and Agnes Miegel who stand unchallenged in their unique treatment of the cultured Lithuanian character profile in our modern era.

OUR DEBT TO LUTHERANISM

The seed of German interest in the Lithuanian nation obtained its initial nourishment from the dynamic expansion of Lutheranism. Early in the sixteenth century the Duke Albrecht of East Prussia ensuing Martin Luther's advice, concerning the achievement of universality for his new church, emphasized that the missionary work in East Prussia needed to be administered not solely in German but also in the Lithuanian tongue. In subsequent years, the University of Konigsberg began to award Lithuanian nationals appropriate stipends in order to encourage learning among the heterogeneous population of East Prussia and simultaneously to create an intellectual nucleus for the propagation of the Lutheran faith. The direct outcome of this practice was the first Lithuanian book in print. It was composed by Martinus Masvidius (ca. 1520 - 1563) and published in the year 1547 under the auspices of Duke Albrecht.

OSI: JUSTICE

(Continued from page 7)

one of the local newspapers. The story about a dying Yugoslavian is captioned: "Accused Nazi war criminal refused bail in L.A." A squad of police with drawn guns surrounded this dying man's home and took him by ambulance to the courtroom. Wheeled into court in a hospital bed "he appeared unaware of what was going on around him in the crowded room." He is now dying in a prison hospital. Every precaution is being taken that he not escape!

The Leo Frank lynching took place in 1914 because due process was violated, and an innocent man died a violent death. During the Red Scare thousands were mentally and emotionally scarred because due process was thrown to the winds. The OSI functions in your name and mine, and in the name of the United States government. I respectfully raise the question: is not the OSI in its methods departing from time-honored due process? And if so, we have the same climate that made Leo Frank's lynching possible, and that generated the shameful Red Scare with its outrageous violations of lawful procedures.

What's going to happen in the days ahead? Understandably, the Jewish community is concerned about punishing Nazis. I predict nevertheless that once the Jews in this country become fully aware of the OSI methods, fair-minded Jews will be among the loud voices raised against deviations from due process. Jews have a tradition of intellectual honesty. They know only too well that failure to observe due process was an essential ingredient in the Holocaust. The slightest departure from due process anywhere can make victims out of any "undesirables." After all, at various times in U.S. history and in various parts of the country Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Irish, Germans, Blacks, Chinese, Japanese, Hispanics and many others have been undesirables. I predict too that once the reconvening congress of 1985 becomes sufficiently aware of the OSI methods, the traditional spirit of fair-play will come to the foreground. Congress will subject the OSI to careful scrutiny and accountability. If we are going to prosecute people about happenings of more than forty years ago, we had better be utterly certain of our evidence, and we had better honor due process to the fullest. Otherwise we will create more Leo Franks in our midst.



Gintė Damušis, Ints Rupners and Juta Ristoo on their way to the UN session on disarmament.

Since 1940 Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been occupied and stripped of their independence. Their national, cultural, religious and political identities have been repressed by the Soviet Union.

Since 1940, there have been people who have refused to submit. They are the people who wrote their true thoughts when only officially prescribed ones were permitted. They are the people who practiced their religion when their churches were closed. They are the people who spoke their minds when the penalty for it was imprisonment — or worse.

All those who dared to keep their independence have paid dearly for it. They have been arrested for signing petitions. They have been sentenced for attempting to cross the border without a permit. They have been sent to labor camps for belonging to an organization defending an individual's rights to practice religion openly. They have been deported for monitoring violations of civil rights that are guaranteed by law. They have been committed to psychiatric hospitals. And when all these measures failed, they have been exiled. Some have been murdered.

BATUN (Baltic Appeal to the United Nations) is a world-wide organization of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians. It works to bring the story of the Baltic States to the United Nations.

Since 1966, BATUN delegates

have called on representatives of the member states of the United Nations. They have informed these representatives of the denial of self-determination that exists for the Baltic peoples. They have presented documents on human rights violations there. They have sought the UN's help in raising the world's consciousness about these issues.

Every year, BATUN sends representatives to Geneva to meet with UN delegates at this special session. Human rights violations in various parts of the world are discussed here, and BATUN seeks opportunities to generate official discussion about the violations in the Baltic states.

BATUN participated as an official Observer at the Second Special Session on Disarmament at the United Nations in 1982. At this session, BATUN submitted a petition signed by 38 Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians calling for the Baltic States to be included in a Nordic nuclear-free zone. The petition, written in the fall of 1981 and smuggled out of the Soviet Union, became part of the official documentation.

These are only some of BATUN's activities. To continue them, BATUN needs your help.

Send contributions or request for more information to:
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PROCLAMATION

THE SUPREME COMMITTEE FOR THE LIBERATION OF LITHUANIA

We proclaim to the world the brutal crimes of the Soviet occupying power against the Lithuanian nation and state in violation of international law and specific treaties:

- The occupation of Lithuania;
- The denial of the right to self-determination;
- The colonial economic exploitation;
- The colonization of Lithuania with settlers from other parts of the Soviet;
- The systematic Russification from kindergarten to the university;
- The ban on Lithuanian schools in Lithuanian communities outside of Lithuania's borders;
- The illegal drafting of young Lithuanians into the Soviet military service;
- The sending away of young Lithuanians to work in the distant reaches of the Soviet empire, as a condition for the completion of their education and

the acquisition of professional experience;

- The discrimination against native Lithuanians by the favored treatment of Russians in employment, housing, education and services;
- The denial or restriction of the right to move about freely and to take up residence in one's native country;
- The denial of the right to freely leave one's country and to return to it;
- The denial of the freedoms of thought, conscience, convictions, exchange of views, assembly and press;
- The arbitrary interference into private lives, homes, correspondence and family relations;
- The extreme restrictions imposed on communications with Lithuanians abroad, sending and receiving of international mail, telephone and telegraph messages;
- The discriminatory restrictions on the confession and practice of faith, as well as the teaching of religion;
- The persecution and discrimination directed against religious believers who have been thus transformed into second-grade citizens;
- The arbitrary arrests, deportations, and confiscation of property;
- The inhuman and humiliating treat

ment of Lithuanian citizens by incarceration in concentration camps and special psychiatric hospitals;

• The arbitrary transportation outside of Lithuania's borders of political prisoners or individuals who were forced into special psychiatric hospitals as a punishment for their views.

• Our struggle in exile against the power that holds Lithuania occupied has been finding an increasingly wider response during recent years. This is attested by the statements of Western governments and parliamentarians, the resolutions adopted by Western parliaments emphasizing the illegality of Lithuania's enslavement, and the comments of the press. The conviction that the freedom of nations and individuals is an indispensable condition for the maintenance of permanent peace is now gaining currency all over the world.

• Lithuanians believe that their nation will survive and will preserve its unique culture until the end of time. Their most important task is to protect the physical and spiritual life of each member of their nation, in particular its greater treasure the children, and to raise them as healthy and enlightened patriots as well as members of the community of nations.

Aldona Marcavage

Cooking

EASTER BREAD
VELYKŲ PYRAGAS

2 pkgs. dry yeast
1/4 c. lukewarm water
1 c. scalded milk
1/2 c. sugar
1/4 c. butter
2 eggs beaten
4 1/2 - 5 c. flour

Soften yeast in lukewarm water. Add butter and sugar to scalded milk and stir until dissolved. Let cool. Add eggs and yeast to milk mixture and beat well. Add 2 c. flour; beat for 2 minutes. Add enough remaining flour to make a soft dough. Knead on lightly floured board until satiny. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease surface. Cover; let rise for 2 hours in a warm place. Punch down; cover and let rest 10 minutes. Shape into 2 round loaves; place in greased baking pans. Cover — let rise till double in bulk. Brush top of bread with beaten egg before baking. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes.

HORSERADISH
KRIENAI

Peel and grate fresh horseradish roots. To 2 cups grated horseradish add 2 tb. sugar and 1/2 cup white vinegar. For color add a bit of beet juice, or grate a little raw beet. Spoon into jar with tight cover — refrigerate.

THE KISS

A train was speeding through Hungary. In a compartment sat a little old lady, a pretty Hungarian girl, a Russian soldier and a young Hungarian. Suddenly the train entered a tunnel and everything became very dark. First came the resounding of a big kiss, then the vigorous slap of a cheek. The train returned once more to daylight.

The old lady thought, "Well, that's a fine young woman. Someone stole a kiss and she smacked his face."

LITHUANIAN SAUSAGES
DEŠROS

hog casings
10 lbs fresh butts or pork shoulder
2 lbs onions — about 4 cloves garlic
1 ts. pepper
1 tb. allspice
1/3 cup salt

Chop onion and garlic. Cook in a bit of oil until onion is transparent. Cut meat in small pieces (slightly frozen meat cuts easily) — or put through coarse grinder. Add onions, pepper, allspice and salt. Mix well. Stuff into washed casings. Boil in water 45 - 60 minutes. To reheat, brown in oven or skillet.

(Courtesy of J. Daužvardis)

SNOW DROPS

SNIEGUOLĖS

1 cup soft butter
1/2 c. sifted powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
2 1/4 c. sifted flour
1/4 tsp. salt
1 c. finely ground nuts

Cream butter, sugar, vanilla. Stir in flour and salt. Add nuts. Chill in freezer 1/2 hour. Roll into 1 inch balls and place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes. Just until the cookies are set, but not brown. While still warm roll them in powdered sugar. Cool. Roll in powdered sugar again. Makes about 4 dozen. Stored in cardboard box lined with and covered with tissue paper, will keep well for a long time.

The young woman thought, "I wonder why that fellow kissed the old lady and not me. He must have got mixed up in the dark."

The Russian soldier thought, "That Hungarian fellow kissed the girl and it was me she slapped."

The young Hungarian, looking through the window, suppressed a smile, "How well it turned out. I kissed my own hand and smacked the Russian soldier. How rarely does one have such luck."

(From LAIŠKAI LIETUVAMS)

EASTERTIDE

(Continued from page 2)

we would all recite a prayer with the intention that St. George bless our garden with a profusion of bloom.

St. George was a warrior-saint (currently "demoted" by the Catholic Church) who killed a dragon all by himself. According to Lithuanian myth and folklore, the fearless prince lived "way back when." The land St. George lived in was ruled by a friendly king who had but one child, who happened to be the most beautiful princess in the world. At the same time, deep in the forest, lived a dreadful dragon with nine heads who menaced the royal city. The only way to appease the dragon was to keep him continually fed with young virgin maidens. Otherwise, he would threaten to destroy the city and all of its inhabitants. Many people lost their lives trying to slay this indestructible dragon. One brave man did manage to chop off one of the dragon's heads, but four other heads immediately sprouted up in its place.

Now that he was a twelve-headed dragon, he became even more ferocious and more fearsome, and his anger increased with every thought that someone would dare attempt taking his life. In vengeance he demanded that the king feed him his one and only beloved young princess, else he would destroy the city and its population. There was a great consternation in the land, for all the subjects loved their king and his princess. All were downhearted and all prayed for a miracle.

Then, lo and behold! A young prince, handsome and virtuous in shining armor, who had heard of the good king's predicament and the terrible fate awaiting his young and beautiful daughter, rode in from a distant part of the kingdom and went all alone into the forest to face the frightful dragon. Near the dragon's lair he met the monster, who was shooting horrible flames from both nostrils. In his fearlessness George rode his steadfast steed straight upon the formidable creature and slew him forthwith. The noble prince had risked his young life, but not for any material reward such as marriage to the rescued princess or a king's crown that he might wear happily ever after. Instead, he had been motivated solely by the desire to save the lives of the princess and of all the people, and to rid the land of the dragon's constant menace. George was acclaimed a saint for his selfless act, with April 23 set aside to commemorate him.

In reality, April 23 was the day that

Lithuanians of the heathen era had dedicated to the earth goddess Žemyna. On this day the entire family was wont to circle their fields twelve times. Could this have been how the figure "twelve" became incorporated into the legend of St. George? After the fields had been circled, a freshly-baked loaf of bread was buried in the ground as an offering to Žemyna. This custom of planting bread continued after the Christianization of Lithuania, except that Žemyna was replaced by St. George. As for the *jurginis*, it certainly is a handsome, princely flower. What other flower could better bear the name of a noble prince?

BEST SELLER

Recently the third edition of a remarkable Lithuanian prayerbook *Marija gelbėk mus* ("Mary Save Us") was printed in Italy. This book which was smuggled out of northern Siberia in 1959 was written and handmade by four Lithuanian girls.

Up to the present, it has been the best selling Lithuanian book in the world. So far it has been translated into Italian, German, English, Spanish, Chinese, Dutch, French and Arabic.

"Mary Save Us", bound within a beautiful hand embroidered cover, reached the free world in 1959. A special English edition was published in 1965 which happened to be the sad 25th anniversary of the occupation of Lithuania by Soviet Russia.

The brief prologue to the prayerbook was written on February 16, 1953. It states: "Frances, We send this prayerbook to you that you may feel, think, and worship the Lord together with us. Lionė constructed it, Valė drew it, Levutė glued it together, and I wrote it. Ad(ėlė)."

1984 marked the 25th anniversary of these "little pieces of waste paper on which are recorded the pent-up religious feelings. . . No more beautiful or promising document could come from a Siberian prison. It is proof, if proof is needed, that a cruel master may kill the body but never the spirit."

The late Richard Cardinal Cushing summed it all up when he spoke about these young girls: "What an example these youngsters should be to the modern teen-agers who have lost their feminine charm in a world of secularism and materialism! Pray for all prisoners of the communist conspiracy; living martyrs are they all. Pray for them and with them through this booklet."

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is a highly successful financial institution with its central offices in Richmond Hill, a prominent residential section of Queens County in the City of New York.

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LEGATION OF LITHUANIA
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ĄČIŪ LABAI!

LETTERS

APRIL

IN

LITHUANIAN HISTORY

6 — 1919 Antanas Smetona is elected President of Lithuania

7 — 1882 Born: writer A. Žukauskas - Vienuolis

9 — 1938 "The Italian Pope finds it difficult to address the nations on Easter in view of the serious defection of his nation in invading a harmless nation in the best German Nazi fashion." — Owen Norem.

10 — 1890 Born: statesman and diplomat V. Sidzikauskas

14 — 1834 Born: J. Kolesinskis, activist in the 1863 insurrection, exile in Siberia, the first organizer of a parish in USA

16 — 1362 Crusaders demolish a castle in Kaunas.

17 — 1906 The American Lithuanian Catholic Federation established in Wilkes - Barre, PA.

20 — 1873 Born: poet-diplomat Jurgis Baltrušaitis

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LET'S NOT START ANOTHER WAR

By V. Šarka

Having read K. Jankūnas' report on the Lithuanian Community Convention (*Pasaulio Lietuvis*, No. 12), I was somewhat surprised that, already, voices are being heard demanding that BRIDGES, a journal subsidized by the Lithuanian American Community, U.S.A., Inc., [which represents individuals with a wide variety of viewpoints and differing commitments] should merge with the more recently established newspaper *The Observer*, essentially a Roman Catholic publication.

At the Convention, someone voiced the opinion that competition between these two publications has been growing. My personal opinion is that BRIDGES certainly did not begin this competition. BRIDGES, has, through many years, weathered many a storm; *The Observer* appeared quite a bit later. Therefore, dear brothers, for goodness' sake, do not start a new war and then blame it on the innocent.

BRIDGES has developed into an original, attractive and punctual publication. One would not wish that such a journal become a political football. BRIDGES certainly does not need any radical surgery. It would be a loss if an attempt were made to alter the format and content of BRIDGES. I would like other readers of BRIDGES to comment on this matter.

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