

# Bridges

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Unify, world-wide, to secure the survival of Lithuania!



Courtesy of "Lithuanian Family Traditions" by Stasys Yla

## THE NUPTIAL BED *the dream - and the reality in Lithuania*

Weddings used to last three days, lively with food, drink, folk song and dancing which rousingly re-enacted the drama of marriage and the pathos of a young girl's leaving home to live with in-laws. The matchmaker whose sweet talk

about the in-laws' affluence initiated the festivities was, in the long run, hanged in effigy for his unrealistic promises. A touch of the matchmaker's fantasies appears above in Irena Mitkus' sketch of the folkdance *Sutiktuves* in which the

bride is welcomed to her new home: the nuptial bed billows so downy, deep and white, as though it were created by summer clouds.

Compare it with Buračas' photo of an actual welcome bed, page 9.

The monument in Perloja declares eloquently:  
"Vytautas the Great, you will remain alive  
as long as there is one Lithuanian left on earth."

quiet respect they left a bouquet of flowers at the base of the monument. Soviet guards arrested them. Three of the students were dismissed from the university and the rest were warned, with less severe forms of punishment. (From *Kviklys*' "Churches of Lithuania.")

### The Death March

**E**stonians, Latvians and Lithuanians planned in Washington, D.C. a duplication of the "Death March" of 1941 to commemorate, on June 14, the victims of the mass Baltic deportations by the Soviets.

Baltic Americans organized to gather in Lafayette Park in nightshirts, pajamas and chains, to begin their march to the Soviet Embassy, thus, simulating Baltic deportees being dragged from their homes and later herded by burly guards into cramped symbolic cattle cars.

Radio and TV interviews are being arranged with the grandchildren of families who had relatives and friends deported in the mass Soviet purges of 1941.

*Ojars Kalnins*

### Black June Commemorated

**T**wo Lithuanian human rights activists who attended President Reagan's meeting with dissidents in Moscow issued a call to publicly commemorate the mass deportations of 1941, when an estimated 36,000 persons were deported from Lithuania during June 14-22.

Soviet authorities broke up a gathering of 3000 in Vilnius last month to mark the 40th anniversary of another deportation of as many as 200,000 Lithuanians by Stalin in May 1948.

In this latest call to mark "the first wave

of Stalinist terror", Miss Nijolė Sadūnaitė, an activist nun and Mr. Antanas Terleckas, a Lithuanian nationalist, urge Lithuanians to gather in Vilnius' Cathedral square on Tuesday, June 14 at 7 p.m. to "honor the memory of those who fell victim to criminal Soviet policies." Fr. Jonas Kastytis Matulionis has joined them by issuing a concurrent call to prayer and encouraging his fellow priests "to pay tribute from the pulpit to the sufferings of our homeland and our martyrs."

On the evening of June 14, 1941 the Soviets began a massive deportation program, arresting individuals and entire families in the middle of the night and loading them into freight cars for transport to northern Russia, western and eastern Siberia, Kazakhstan, and the Soviet Far East. According to eyewitness testimonies, large numbers of deportees died, both on the way to exile and after they arrived, due to the cold, starvation, overcrowding, disease, and other abuse.

Each June 14 since the deportations, memorial services in the Lithuanian diaspora world-wide have marked what has been termed "the black days of June." Since 1982, the U.S. Congress has passed resolutions making June 14 an annual observance of Baltic Freedom Day. Pravda has denounced President Reagan in the past for declaring "Baltic Freedom Day", professing that "Reagan's aides apparently did not explain to him that Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were an inalienable part of the Soviet Union of their own free will and not 'subjugated peoples', as was seen from the Californian ranch of the American President." The United States does not recognize the incorporation of the three Baltic states into the USSR in 1940.

*(Lithuanian Information Center)*

## WE MARCH AND MARCH

### The Bouquet for a Nation's Hero

**S**everal years ago, nine students from the University of Vilnius toured Dzukija where they came across this monument to Vytautas the Great in Perloja, an area Lithuanians have inhabited since the Neolithic Period. The message reads: "Vytautas the Great, you will remain alive as long as there is one living Lithuanian on earth." The students made no speeches. With

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## Life-Long Traumas Abroad

Families who fled from the occupation still suffer life-long traumas, even after nearly a half-century. Most of them held key positions in free Lithuania. Having lost their homeland and careers, they have spent a lifetime trying to preserve what they could of their Lithuanian heritage. *Bridges* has told you of their successful organizations, especially in Chicago. Their cultural activities flourish. Their children distinguish themselves academically and professionally. But the loss of their homeland remains painful.

## Those Who Remain in Lithuania

We picked up two issues of *Tiesa* published in Lithuania, and we read letters from the subscribers who ask:

Why are so many fish dying in our rivers?

Why have all my bees been dying off?

Why have our cows stopped giving milk in the usual quantity?

Why have laboratory investigators found that many of our potatoes and carrots have too much nitrate and are unfit for consumption?

Another citizen writes: "My wife and I bought a co-op apartment. To pay for it, we saved money for years by buying cheaper food and clothes. We have finished paying, but we do not really own our home. We can not will it to our children when we die, even though they live in overcrowded quarters and need space and privacy. The state will take over our hard-earned apartment."

## Two Achievements

As we commemorate another Black June this spring, we take pride in the special achievements of our self-giving people on both sides of the Atlantic who made possible the publication of these unusual publications:

1. The sixth, and final, volume of the series about *The Churches of Lithuania* by Bronius Kviklys in U.S.A.

2. The spectacular album (125"x112") *A Book About Vilnius*, a compilation of the work of Jonas Kazimieras Vilčinskis (1806-1885) whose prime concern was the preservation of Lithuanian culture. Considering the shortages of paper and the political condition in Lithuania, the publication of such an important book is indeed an achievement.

Both books will be discussed in the next issue of *Bridges*.



Vincentas

Sladkevičius

Lithuania's

first

publicly-named

Cardinal

Pope John Paul II has named 25 new cardinals from 18 countries including a prelate from Lithuania. He chose Vincentas Sladkevičius, 68, as Lithuania's first publicly-named cardinal. Sladkevičius is the apostolic administrator of Kaišiadorys and was appointed president of the Lithuanian episcopal conference in April.

From 1963 to 1982, he was "impeded" by Soviet authorities from performing his religious duties and was virtually confined to his residence, according to the Vatican.

Bishop Sladkevičius becomes the second resident cardinal in the Soviet Union. Cardinal Julijans Vaivods of Latvia was elevated by John Paul in 1983.

In January, the communist press daily *Tiesa* made a massive attack against the Lithuanian patriotic and religious movement in a series of articles by Arnoldas Čaikovskis who, reporting a "conversation" with Bishop Sladkevičius, declared that the Bishop disagreed with "The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania," the oldest and most highly regarded underground periodical in Lithuania.

The Bishop allegedly stated that the Chronicle was "illegal", and, while life in Lithuania was "improving", the

Chronicle was "fomenting distrust" among the clergy that was "harmful".

In addition, Čaikovskis maintained that Bishop Sladkevičius had expressed his displeasure with the activist priest Rokas Puzonas and had admitted that the Lithuanian Bishops' Conference was "too hasty" in refusing to launch an official publication (under government censorship. *Ed.*).

The Bishop's reply was prompt and unmistakable. In his mid-January sermon to his congregation, he said that the *Tiesa* article was a "pure lie." The correspondents of the CP daily, he said, were "almost aggressive." To their question why the Church hierarchy refused to publish a Catholic periodical, he replied that "it wouldn't be of the kind the Catholics need. We need a newspaper similar to those the Catholic dioceses are publishing, for instance, in the German Democratic Republic." The Bishop characterized the maligned Father Rokas Puzonas as a "good, exemplary priest", which is also the opinion of all priests. As for the underground Chronicle, he stated that "it is a necessary publication, because it exposes and objectively describes all the difficulties facing the Lithuanian Church and the faithful, who are discriminated and attacked by the atheists and the officials."

*"The more religion is oppressed, the more it grows."*  
—Pres. Ronald Reagan

# *Bridges* AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Waiting in line to get into the White House for a seminar May 3 on religious intolerance in the Soviet Union, I was standing behind two archbishops of the US Catholic church. Directly behind me were several representatives of the Hari-Krishna sect, yellow-robed, green salve marks streaking down their foreheads. Further back, bearded rabbis in traditional black suits and hats resembled figures from the Old Testament in a modern setting.

The ecumenical nature of the occasion was truly impressive. Just a few minutes earlier, a cardinal of the Ukrainian Catholic church, a white-robed, elderly, and bearded figure, with a gold crucifix dangling on his breast, was escorted from his limousine directly inside as one of the scheduled speakers representing various faiths.

The line was a long one, and moved slowly with the dignity the occasion and the setting demanded. Once inside, in an arched hallway, guarded by men and women in bemedalled uniforms, I noticed, to our left, the famous White House "rose garden." Only, at this time of year, there were no roses, but white and yellow tulips. To our right was a Victorian, wood-panelled library, with a fireplace and lots of inviting shelves lined with leather-bound books. Sneaking a quick look inside, I saw the collected works of Benjamin Franklin, the poems of Walt Whitman, and the novels of Henry James. I couldn't help wondering if anyone in the White House ever had the time to read there. Further along were displays of dinnerware crafted in Brooklyn for Mary Todd Lincoln. A full-length portrait of Jacqueline Kennedy hung close by from a wall. The very air of the place inspired a hushed sense of history, and, with these American icons of the Lincoln and Kennedy eras, reminded us of the great triumphs and great tragedies in this House.

We proceeded to the locus of the seminar, the East Room, which runs the breadth of the White House, a magnificent hall with three crystal chandeliers, their prisms refracting the light into the brilliant hues of the spectrum. The East Room is used for many purposes, such as gala social events, Presidential press conferences and treaty-signing ceremonies. The President and Gorbachev, for instance, signed the INF treaty last December in this Room. It was indeed an historic and elegant setting befitting the gravity of the subject to be discussed.

Some three hundred members of various religions and press organizations had been invited to participate. The

editor of *Bridges*, Demie Jonaitis, was among the invitees, but requested me to substitute for her. Representatives of those faiths directly affected by the Soviet's anti-religious policies (i.e. Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox, Lithuanian Catholic, Russian Orthodox, evangelical Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim) were asked to address the seminar, to be followed by eye-witness accounts of the personal victims of Soviet persecution. Remarks by the President at the end gave the proceedings an official sanction at the highest level.

The seminar's topic was "Religious Rights in the Soviet Union." Its other purpose was to help arm the President at his summit meeting in Moscow with the views and petitions of American religious leaders.

In the meantime, pre-summit maneuvering on the religious issue had been going on for some time. During the April visit to Moscow by State Secretary Schultz, the Soviet leader expressed considerable annoyance with the President's "lectures" on human and religious rights. He claimed these were unwarranted intrusions into the Soviet's internal affairs. Then, as if to undercut what he still expected to hear from the President, he met with the head of the Russian Orthodox church and issued an unprecedented statement. "The Soviet Union," he said, "had made tragic mistakes in its past treatment of the church." He then pledged that the "State would no longer interfere with the rights of believers to practice their religion." These extraordinary remarks, however, were met with considerable skepticism by the religious leaders at the White House. Obviously, the seminar, in a sense, was the President's own way of sending a shot across Gorbachev's bow.

## Behind the Facade

A common theme ran through the presentations: that glasnost, at best, had meant only a marginal improvement in the official attitude toward religion, and, at worst, was a cleverly-orchestrated use of propaganda intended to mislead Western opinion with a few church re-openings and other costless gestures. The harsh reality, they maintained, was that, while the Leninist doctrine of religious suppression had been eased somewhat here and there, the underlying hostility of the state remained unchanged. Some of the speakers even cautioned President Reagan from being manipulated by Gorbachev on this issue. They urged the President to push aside Gorbachev's publicity curtain by meeting with victims of persecution and underground leaders, and visiting churches not on the official schedule.

Remarks of particular interest at the seminar included those of the only non-clerical speaker, Mr. Peter Reddaway of the Kennan Institute. He excoriated the Soviet Union for its "catastrophic lack of churches," the "career discrimination" inflicted on believers, and the "worst persecution of religion in history." Cardinal Lubachivsky, of the Ukrainian Catholic church, declared with much emotion, that, although Stalin had tried to liquidate the Ukrainian church in 1946, Christ refused to die." According to Father Victor Potapov of the Russian Orthodox church, about two hundred persons remained imprisoned for religious reasons, and some had even been sentenced recently in spite of glasnost. The Islamic representative complained there were thirty-four Moslem nations and fifty million adherents of Islam within the Soviet Union, yet the number of mosques had been "radically reduced" and persecution intensified since the Iran revolution. One of the "witnesses," pastor Stefan Matvyuk, a Baptist, presented a chilling account of Soviet brutality. He had been sentenced to twenty-five years, released, then re-arrested, his home burned, and his youngest son murdered. His "crime" had been to refuse cooperation with the KGB by acting as an informer.

Another 'witness' speaker, a Hari Krishna representative, was invited to address the seminar, although he had not been officially included on the printed list of speakers. He recounted that, since the end of 1987, three adherents had died of abuse by Soviet authorities, and that another had been killed in July of 1986 due to excessive 'punishment.' All this inhuman behavior, he noted ironically, had taken place despite the official policy of glasnost and perestroika. This statement, and that of the Russian Orthodox churchman, contradicted the President's assertion that no one had been apprehended in the Soviet Union for religious reasons during the past two years.

### **Bishop Baltakis Appeals to the President**

Bishop Paul Baltakis, OFM, who exercises jurisdiction over Lithuanian Catholics in the Free World, was the second religious speaker. His remarks were concise and effective, and were picked up by President Reagan in his subsequent address. As an example of the gap between Soviet words and deeds, Bishop Baltakis brought to the attention of his listeners the publicly-expressed pledge of the Soviet Commissioner of Religious Affairs to release all Lithuanian prisoners of conscience by last November. To date, at least thirty-four remained imprisoned. Among them were Fathers Svarinskas and Tamkevičius, Petkus, Gajauskas and others, whose release the Bishop asked Reagan to pursue.

Bishop Baltakis then cited the tragic case of Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius who has been exiled without trial for twenty-seven years, and whose exile continues to the present day despite glasnost. Among other examples of anti-religious behavior was the Soviet's flagrant interference in the administration of the sole Roman Catholic seminary in the country, an interference which went so far as to replace suitable candidates for the priesthood with "undesirable" ones. For all these reasons, he warmly supported the recommendations made to the President by thirty-two members

of the House of Representatives on April 27, urging Reagan to meet with Lithuanian religious and human rights activists. Among these, the Congressmen mentioned Bishop Steponavičius, Sister Nijole Sadunaite, and Father Jonas Kastytis Matilionis. Such meetings would be "a source of great moral sustenance" to a church struggling "to keep from being overwhelmed" by the might of an atheistic state.

Finally, Bishop Baltakis entreated the President to seek the return of the "Cathedral in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius to religious use during this year." The Cathedral, built six hundred years ago on the ruins of a pagan temple, was "the symbolic center of religious worship for the Lithuanian people" who have "never accepted its seizure and desecration by the Soviet government" into a museum.

### **The President Will Not Forget**

After the main speakers, applause began to ripple through the East Room as the blinding glare of television cameras announced the entrance of the President. His appearance was remarkably youthful for a man of 77 years who stopped a would-be assassin's bullet early in his first administration, a man who possessed the rare ability to combine the awesome power of his office with a personal charm that reached out to everyone of the hundreds in front of him in the East Room.

Speaking with obvious sincerity on a subject which he has made a cornerstone of his policy, the President assured his listeners, "I promise that (your words) will not be forgotten when this meeting is ended...I will carry (them) in my heart when I travel to the Soviet Union and I will say that the most fitting way to mark the millenium of Christianity (in the Ukraine) would be granting the right of all the peoples and all the creeds of the Soviet Union to worship their God in their own way." He then added, as if in an aside intended for Gorbachev, "The 20th century teaches us that the more religion is oppressed, the more it grows."

Pronouncing their Lithuanian names perfectly, the President singled out Father Svarinskas, gravely ill and still imprisoned, and Bishop Stenavičius, in prolonged exile, as prime examples of glasnost's shortcomings. He also criticized the limited progress thus far on Jewish emigration, the trickle of Bibles allowed the millions of Christians, and the continued severity of Soviet policy toward the Ukrainian churches and those in the Baltic nations.

The applause was prolonged and enthusiastic for the President as he concluded his remarks on an up-beat note, recognizing, among all the negative signs, some "encouraging" ones, but insisting that much more has to be done. In typical Reagan fashion, the President summed it up by saying, "What has happened is just the beginning."

Attending the seminar was indeed an experience to remember for many reasons, its ecumenical nature, its White House setting, its insight into the status of religion in a militantly-irreligious state. Memorable too was the President's determination to keep religion on the chess-board of super-power politics.

Thomas Michalski, Ph.D.

**"Kas bus, tas bus, O Lietuva nepražus."**  
(What will be, will be, but Lithuania will not perish.)

## One Perspective from Gediminas Hill

- PART TWO -

*A personal report based on a two-week visit to Lithuania*

It is generally difficult for one of good will, a guest in another country to write about the negative side of life of the country visited. Americans of Lithuanian heritage upon return generally describe Lithuania either very negatively or very positively. This is understandable. Very few Lithuanians or Americans of Lithuanian heritage are partisans of the Soviet regime. Many Americans of Lithuanian heritage also travel to the country with fixed opinions which will never change. They approach Lithuania in a romantic way, ignoring all the positive and negative features of Lithuanian life.

The most negative feature of Lithuanian life is the pervasive influence of the regime on all aspects of contemporary Lithuanian life. As one highly placed individual in Lithuania put it, "Lithuanians must be able to feel they are masters in their own household." This, they are not. Geopolitically, they are locked in between the Baltic Sea to the west and the massive Eurasian continent dominated by Soviet power to the east. The population which numbers some 2.9 million persons could be physically annihilated and deported or massacred by the Red Army within two weeks. Soviet Latvia is to the north and Soviet garrisons are stationed in Poland to the south. America is perceived as far away and unwilling or unable to help in any positive concrete way. Lithuanians point to the lack of concrete American support to the recent uprising in Poland, and former uprisings in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. They are also very sensitive to the havoc wrought on the economy in Poland by Solidarity or rather the failure of Solidarity in Poland. It is generally held that the USSR will not willingly concede "one foot of territory" even though most Lithuanians look upon Soviet rule as a "usurpation" of Lithuanian sovereignty. As such, they have had to learn how to live under, with and alongside a system they cannot shed.

Some Lithuanians look at the present situation as the "beginning of the end" of the Soviet imperial system. Cracks have appeared in the Iron Curtain. To the south, Poland languors in post-Solidarity depression and economic disarray. To the east, the Armenians are asserting their nationalistic demands against the Azerbaidzhanis. Moscow itself is experiencing fresh waves of unrest particularly among the in-

tellectuals and the Gorbachev wing of the ruling Communist Party. "Glasnost" or "openness" in Lithuania is pursued with a vengeance. These days no one and nothing is beyond criticism. There are few taboos with the exception of a call for severance from the Soviet Union, within the press. Privately, Lithuanians express a desire for Finlandization of their country, that is a status wherein the nation would be a nation state under Soviet influence but not Soviet domination.

By American standards, the Lithuanian Soviet economy is a disaster. Granted, everyone is minimally taken care of financially. People are fed, housed, clothed, educated, live and die and receive medical treatment of questionable value due to the lack of medicines. Salaries are low, prices are high and the shortage of goods can be compared to wartime Britain or perhaps to the times of the Great Depression in the United States. Salaries are fixed. Pensioners receive about 50 rubles a month. Workers, about 150 rubles. Some receive from up to 200 to 300 rubles a month. The ruble is set at about 60¢. Rents are about 27 rubles per month. Telephone calls are about 2 kopecks. Students receive progressive stipends depending upon their grades. The cost of decent meat is up to 10 rubles a kilo—about a pound. Goods are scarce, very scarce in comparison to the superabundance of goods in stores in the United States and Western Europe. Yet, in comparison to life in most of the third world countries such as these of South America and Africa, life is good. Yet, the Lithuanians also realize, based on reports of the increased numbers of Lithuanian travellers abroad, that life in Lithuania should approximate the economic standards of Denmark or Finland.

Comparatively, Lithuania is still the "Little America" of the Soviet block. Incentive is not high to produce. Goods are "ripped off", from centers of production, on down. Some articles of clothing are high. A fake leather coat is sold at about 103 rubles, fur hats at about 100 rubles. Jeans for from 70 to 200 rubles. Service in stores is poor. One has to line up to order an item, say cheese, they go pay for it in another line, then return to pick up the item, standing in a third line.

Some stores have adopted the American "supermarket" style. There are few computers or even cash registers in stores. Bills are computed by use of an abacus, brought to Russia by the Mongolians centuries ago. Life is particularly

tough on women, who have to stand in line for basic products after a long day of work. There are few appliances.

Apartments are scarce and small and are allocated by square foot. Most urban Lithuanians live in apartment houses, some as high as six floors, but there are no elevators. At night the passages are dark. Construction is poor. Buildings erected some four hundred years ago are in better shape than those begun some ten years ago. There is little pride in work. Most people strive for second incomes in devious ways to supplement their incomes. Yet, when there is so little to buy, money is not needed. Rubles are relatively worthless and speculation is rampant and a way of life. There are shortages of many items, including coffee and lately, sugar.

Violent crime, as read in the New York newspapers, is rare in Lithuania. Economic crime is rampant. Alcoholism is a national epidemic. Lithuania is the second most heavily drinking state among the fifteen states of the USSR, which is indeed saying a lot. To counteract the epidemic, near-prohibition has been introduced. Alcohol above 40% may not be produced. The cost of alcohol has been hiked. As a result, bootlegging has become rampant and a "lifestyle". A temperance crusade has been launched, but seemingly under the tutelage of the Communist Party and is not considered "reputable". Lithuanians indeed like their strong drink. Historically, the Russian Government made alcohol readily available to the masses as a means of social control. It remains to be seen what impact the restriction on alcohol will have on Lithuania and Russia. What was tolerable while drunk may not be tolerable sober. Drug addiction is surfacing as well. Opium is produced from poppies and the cultivation of poppies, even in private gardens, is now forbidden by law. Such drugs are shot intravenously.

Abortion is the most prevalent means of birth control and a national scandal little spoken of openly. There are no officially reported cases of AIDS in Lithuania although there have been reports of the disease in Moscow some 700 kilometers away.

The "classless society" is hardly "classless". In Lithuania, status is not achieved through money as in America. Status is achieved through education and placement in the social system. In Lithuania, the upper classes are those in the government, party, army and educational system as well as artists, and to a degree, performers. The middle class consists primarily of white collar workers of various stripes. The lower class is made up of collective farmers. Yet, even here there is a paradox. Collective farmers are comparatively well off as they are nearer the food supply. As one travels through the countryside, one notices significant new construction of very fine looking houses. Life in the cities for most is tougher in many ways unless there is a relative down on the farm who is able to provide foodstuffs fairly regularly.

Lithuanians seem rather class-conscious, compared to Americans. Those with a little more education or status do not associate with those they do not consider their equals as readily as in America. The most negative sides of the national character seem to be jealousy and envy. The system

has also made Lithuanians less open than in the United States and elsewhere. There is a certain personal insularity in every person met, even within families, a misplaced competitiveness.

Lithuanian hospitality is gargantuan by American standards. Visitors are very well treated. Tables are loaded down with the best food and drink the country and individual means allow. Contacts with those from abroad are eagerly sought and cultivated. Lithuanians freely, but circumspectly, seek to exchange ideas, hopes, dreams and a view of the future. There is a concerted drive to further develop relationships with Lithuanians or persons of Lithuanian extraction and heritage overseas. The further development of such relationships is a difficult and tedious process.

Until recently travel by Lithuanians abroad was severely restricted. Travel to Lithuania was very restricted. Now the country seems to be opening up. Visitors who covertly "took off" to nearby villages to visit their home towns now receive permission to travel extensively though some restrictions do apply. The exchange of ideas is still limited. Lithuanian publications printed abroad are not easily found in Lithuania. It is still difficult and risky to bring certain publications into the country. It is difficult to send books or any other item out of the country without paying an export duty and overcoming the troublesome and incompetent Soviet bureaucracy. Books are often "ripped off" travelers by the Soviet authorities in Moscow, and placed in the depositories of the Lenin Library, never reaching Vilnius or Kaunas. Other items are stolen in the post office for their market value.

Lithuanians regularly listen to the *Voice of America* and *Vatican Radio*. Polish TV, quite often, is also received in the Kaunas area, but not in Vilnius where the majority of Polish-speaking persons in Lithuania reside. Society is becoming more open but in a guarded manner.

"Persitvarkymas", better known here as "perestroika", is viewed with hope but not much faith. People hope things will indeed change for the better. Few believe things will. Yet, there is a feeling of anticipation in the air, an air of rising expectations. What will happen if such expectations are not met, remains to be seen. Ironically, even the apparently most trusted and most committed Communists in Lithuania, and there are very few Communists in the country, encourage agitation for complete Lithuanian independence in America and elsewhere. Their reasoning is quite simple. Such agitation allows them to nudge, bargain and negotiate better conditions from Moscow, offering the central Soviet authorities a "lesser of two evils", that is more independence within the Soviet system, if not full independence from the Soviet system. The forthcoming Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan offers some hope of an eventual voluntary withdrawal of Soviet power under yet unknown conditions in the distant future. Yet, no one expects to see such events in his or her lifetime. Such would seem to be the mood of the country as observed by this author. Perhaps all of this could be summed up simply with the old Lithuanian refrain, "*Kas bus, tas bus, O Lietuva nepražūs!*" "What will be, will be, but Lithuania will not perish!"

## The Soviet Union Is Still an Evil Empire

Not long ago, when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev performed a token gesture in behalf of human rights by freeing a relatively insignificant number of political prisoners, President Reagan responded with headline-making praise. Later, when speaking with a group of foreign correspondents at the White House, the President agreed with one of them that Gorbachev was "a real friend." Striving to create a cordial atmosphere for their upcoming meeting in Moscow, Reagan overlooked the many times he had called Soviet leaders liars and cheats, and managed well to stifle his "evil empire" stance.

Let us study briefly the U.S.S.R. scene before the summit meeting. Nary a whiff of *glasnost*, the new spirit of "openness," had reached into the dreaded work camps and jails that remain filled with countless political and religious prisoners from all parts of the farflung empire, including Lithuania. Almost 100 of the most "dangerous" of the activists continued to be stashed away in mental institutions. In Moscow, the KGB agents—members of the Kremlin's version of Hitler's Gestapo—still closed in protesting citizens whenever they tried to talk to foreign reporters, especially television journalists.

As the summit meeting drew near, Gorbachev was quoted as saying that the Russian Orthodox Church had been mistreated in the past. No mention was made of the Roman Catholic Church.

A timely political cartoon appeared in *The Miami Herald* and it was picked up by other newspapers. It showed a short, smiling Gorbachev putting the finishing touches on a tall skeleton he had dressed up in white tie and tails. The skeleton's skull is labeled "Human Rights." The caption reads, "There we go...must look nice for our visiting presidential guest, yes?"

Our country had no choice but to engage in a state of detente, of relaxed relations with its leading adversary. The communists have made great strides in some areas of technology, particularly in weaponry, since they came into power in 1917. The huge number of highly-devastating nuclear missiles amassed by both sides prompted this shift in policy.

Over the years, Americans have had a schizoid-like relationship with the U.S.S.R. On the one hand, we have been spending hundreds of billions of dollars yearly for military defense against an attack by the Soviet superpower. On the other hand, our industrialists, agriculturists and bankers—all with the blessing of the government—have helped greatly to prop up their flawed and failed economic system.

Who built huge plants for them, including the world's largest truck and tractor plant? Who fed them for decades with low-priced grain? Who loaned them sorely-needed dollars? Yes, yes, yes. We did.

Look what this writer came across shortly after President Reagan bashed the Soviet Union and called it the "evil em-

pire." One morning while reading the front page of the business section of *The New York Times*, I began to groan. Its feature story was about executives of New York-based international banks eagerly looking forward to restart making loans to East Bloc countries.

A few weeks later, buried inside the main section of *The Times*, there was a one-inch-deep news item headlined, "NATO Starts Maneuvers." Now why were they maneuvering? Sure—it was to be in shape to thwart a possible attack by the same countries to which our banks are loaning money.

Months later, I did groan, for a news story told of the banks planning to make low-interest loans to the Soviet Union. Imagine, they were making loans to the communists at a lower rate than to most American business concerns and individuals.

The main reason for Reagan's mission to Moscow was to join Gorbachev for the formal signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Even as he left for Helsinki, Finland, aboard Air Force One, the treaty still had not been approved by the Senate.

Hard-line conservative Republicans, once the most dedicated supporters of the President, made a last-ditch effort to block passage of the INF Treaty. They cited the failure of the Soviets to live up to earlier agreements. Meanwhile, the leading think tank, RAND Corporation, released its estimate that the U.S.S.R. would have a 5 to 1 advantage over NATO forces in conventional and chemical weapons once our Pershing missiles and cruise missiles were removed from West Europe, as proposed by the treaty.

In Helsinki, the President took advantage of a splendid opportunity to speak out in behalf of human rights. This was an appropriate place for a widely-telecast address on such an important subject. It was here, in 1975, that many nations, including the Soviet Union, signed an agreement of which one section dealt with fundamental human rights—freedom of thought, religion and conscience. Needless to say, this proved to be one more agreement that went unfulfilled by the Soviets.

In his major speech, Reagan praised the Soviet leader for his *glasnost* campaign but said that Soviet human-rights performance fell short of compliance with the Helsinki accords. He called on Gorbachev to free all political prisoners, allow immigration, lift restrictions on religious worship and permit political and union activities independent of the Communist Party.

On his first day in Moscow, the President followed a schedule pre-arranged by the state department. His plan was to do what he did best—communicate to the people. The idea was not to speak so much about arms control, but instead to concentrate on human rights.

In the morning, a visit to the Orthodox monastery of St. Danilov enabled him to speak out for religious freedom. In the afternoon, at the U.S. ambassador's residence, he met



with a large group of refuseniks and other dissidents. He told them—some of whom were in tears—that human rights would play a fundamental role in our country's dealings with their government. Afterwards, a Soviet official called the group a bunch of malcontents and accused one of them of being a former Nazi.

On the next day, in a speech to students at the prestigious Moscow State University, which Gorbachev had attended, Reagan talked of the values of the West, explaining how in the United States the people—"we the people," he said—told the government what to do—and it was not the other way around.

After each opportunity, the President had to address the subject of human rights. Gorbachev's aides understandably became distressed. That evening, at a state dinner, a rankled general secretary referred to Reagan's intrusion in domestic affairs as he toasted his guest of honor.

There was one fine day made even brighter for Gorbachev. President Reagan, standing within the buttressed walls of the Kremlin, told him that he no longer sees the Soviet Union as "the evil empire." "You are talking about another time, another era," he said to reporters who had followed the pair on a walking tour of the grounds of the former headquarters of the Soviet government and the well-known Red Square, site of the awesome May Day parades.

Meanwhile, in Washington, the INF Treaty was approved by an overwhelming majority of the senators. The signed documents then were flown to Moscow in the custody of the President's chief of staff. Along with him came the majority and minority leaders of the Senate. At the ceremony during which the treaty documents were signed and exchanged both highly pleased superpower leaders were flanked by their influential countrymen.

The fourth summit meeting between President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev served

both leaders very well. Reagan's image, somewhat tarnished in recent years by scandals and other setbacks, was enhanced sufficiently so as to assure him of a high place of regard in history books of the future. Gorbachev's position was bolstered for the important upcoming Communist Party conference.

Just hours after President Reagan departed from Moscow after his five-day stay, Gorbachev told several hundred peace activists the Soviet Union "would not accept advice on how we run our affairs." He said, "We do not need anyone else's model. We do not need anyone else's values." A few days earlier, he had told reporters that he "was not filled with admiration" for Reagan's meeting with the dissidents and refuseniks.

However, in order to gather widespread support for his *perestroika* ("restructuring") program that calls for vast reform of an economy that has gone from bad to worse, the Soviet leader realizes that worthwhile inducements must be offered to large blocs of his citizens. This explains why some improvements are now taking place in the area of religious rights.

In the U.S.S.R., there is talk of legalizing the underground Ukrainian Catholic Church. In Lithuania, the Soviet region with the most Catholics, authorities there are reported to have pledged to restore some churches and enlarge a seminary. Yet such promises if fulfilled do not mean that freedom is on the way for our brothers and sisters in faith and culture. Look at the situation in Poland.

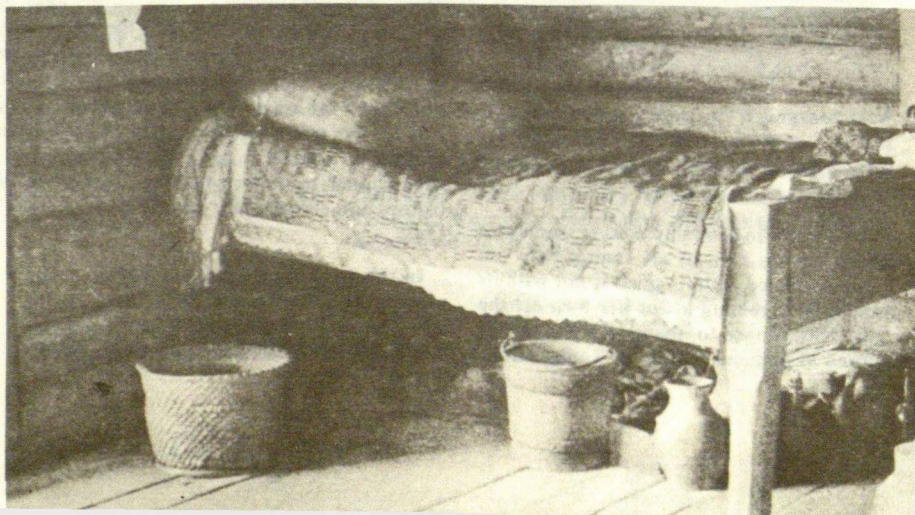
While the guest of honor in the lair of the smiling Russian bear, President Reagan swallowed the "evil empire" charge he had aimed squarely at the Soviets in an earlier time frame. But let him ask the Lithuanians. Let him ask the Latvians and Estonians. Let him ask the many millions more of the oppressed peoples in East Europe. They would tell him, "The Soviet Union is still an evil empire."

## Joyous, Teary Weddings in Lithuania, 1934

◀ Gentlemen, in full regalia like this, transported the dowry to the bride's new home with her in-laws.

◀ Crowning the day's festivities was this snug, one-legged bed prepared for the first night of the newlyweds.

*From the archives of Balys Buračas photos*



## Introducing Lithuanian Art '88 in Canada

The Lithuanian Canadian Community is hosting the Eighth Lithuanian World Festival and the Fourth Cultural Congress in Toronto, Ontario. The Congress includes performances, exhibits, workshops, and seminars on literature, music, drama, visual arts, linguistics, and family life. The works displayed in this exhibit reflect the varieties of their cultural experiences.



ANTANAS TAMOŠAITIS, "Criss-crossings in the Cosmos," 1987, oil, 36" x 24"



ANASTAZIJA TAMOŠAITIS, "Glimmers of the Moon," 1987, oil, 36" x 24"

## The Wonders of the Universe

Antanas and Anastazia Tamošaitis, a husband and wife team, have both spent a lifetime researching and exploring the roots of Lithuanian authentic art forms. They have scrupulously incorporated their findings in their own art, such as weavings of Lithuanian national costumes, decorative Easter eggs, sashes, paintings and tapestries. The direction of their personal art is, as expected, marked by the predilection for treasures found in folk art. Even their abstract art shows the unmistakable influence of folk traditions in their choice of colors, subject matter and design. Their statements about their most recent work stress the tendency toward universality, especially when they speak about their interest in cosmic panoramas—of skies, moons, and planets. In Antanas Tamošaitis' oil painting "Erdvės vingiai" (Criss-crossings in the Cosmos) he visualizes the rhythmic patterns found in creation, "the comings and goings of the stars and the travelling of our Sun, which sometimes appears bright, sometimes sad and pale; but its path through the skies is always uniform; the Moon changes its shape and mood as it moves through the night amid patterns of stars." Nevertheless, the artist looks at these wonders through the frosted glass of his old country cottage. His oil paintings recall the pattern created by frost on a window. It gives him an infinite variety of geometric zig-zags on the plane of the canvas to create shapes, moods and themes.

Anastazija Tamošaitis also speaks of the universe and its observable wonders in her painting "Mėnulio prošvaitės" (Glimmers of the Moon). Her moon "shines through the mysterious branches of the forest, changing substances into shadows, shapes into fairy tales, trees into beings." But the mystery of the night appears mixed with colors and motion as if it were a close-up of an old-fashioned Lithuanian skirt on a dancer dancing in the moonlight. It is apparent that the picture was created by the same hand and the same heart that did the earlier wall hangings "Eglė, žalčių karalienė," which refers to the popular Lithuanian fairy tale "Eglė, the Queen of the Serpents."



ANASTAZIJA TAMOŠAITIS, "Eglė, Queen of the Serpents," 1970, tapestry, wool on cotton, 64" x 121 cm. From the collection of Leonas and Ieva Adomavičius, Canada

## Lithuanian Art by Algimantas Kezys

Can Lithuanian art be defined? Attempts have been made but a consensus is hard to reach on just what constitutes ethnic—or Lithuanian, as in our case—art. For the sake of discussion one can probably say that ethnicity in art is that element in the creative process of an individual or group which shows the influence of past traditions.

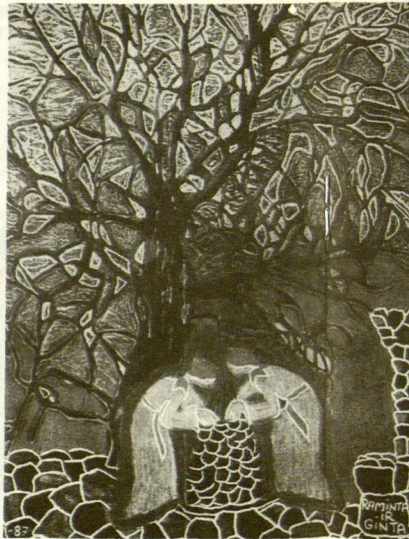
Lithuania as a nation has a long history dating back to the twelfth century. The traditions of its artistic endeavors are also deeply rooted in its people. The "authentic" elements in this tradition are considered to be those which have originated with the practitioners of folk art. Those intuitive artists were "unspoiled" by exposure to foreign influences or higher education but relied for their inspiration on natural talent and belief systems.

An artist who grows up among the people practicing this kind of art cannot help but become imbued with its spirit if not with its practice. In creating his or her own art the artist may choose to abandon what he has learned at home as a child or young adult,

or he may incorporate the acquired ideas and feelings into his own work.

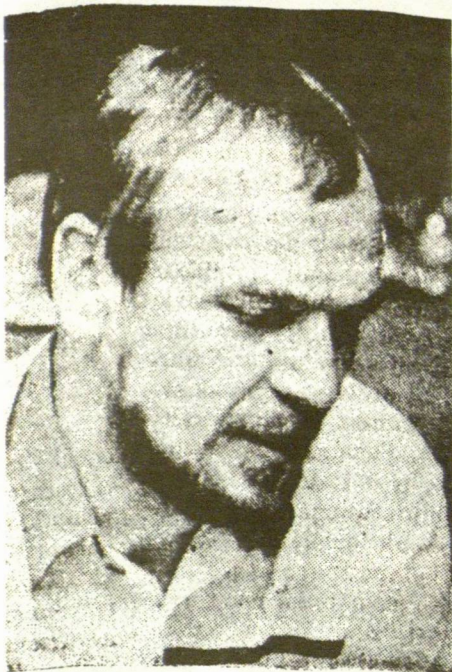
In compiling this survey of artists of Lithuanian descent living in the West, I found that many of them still possess a definite connection with their ancestral background. Often they are influenced by its traditions and boldly incorporate its best elements into their universal art. Some of them have achieved recognition just because they have adopted a style, a subject matter, or a feeling for color and composition which is uniquely theirs. This, of course, should not diminish the stature of others who work well outside their ethnic dimensions. Ethnicity is not a must for artistic expression, but where it is an important element, it is interesting to discover what it is and how it works. Its deep-rooted tradition gives us a sense of history and elevates this art above everyday fads.

In this exhibition an attempt is made to present the latest work of Lithuanian artists living in the West (Europe, South America, Australia, the United States and Canada).



Magdalena Stankūnas, 1988, "Guardians of the Eternal Flame".

## American Critics Acclaim the Genius of Eimutis Nekrošius



**Eimutis Nekrošius,  
Director of the State  
Theatre of Lithuania**

### "A Memorable Uncle Vanya"

The remarkable production of "Uncle Vanya" that the State Theatre of Lithuania has brought to Chicago for the International Theatre Festival is no conventional, realistic rendering of Anton Chekhov's drama.

The actors of this company and their director, Eimutis Nekrošius, are reaching for something much deeper and darker than surface naturalism. What they want is nothing less than the essential spirit of the play, and their method in digging for this soul of the drama is that of super-realism, or surrealism.

The stage of the Royal-George Theatre, where the production will give just three more performances this week, has only a few pieces of furniture and an architectural framework to suggest the upper-class country estate where the action occurs. Nekrošius is not interested in painting a detailed picture of a small, self-contained world. Everything in his setting, every stick of furniture and every prop, is an active factor in expanding the play. A candle, a clock, a chair, a fur rug and a painting are more than decor; they are vibrant characters in the drama as well.

The human actors do not confine them-

selves to the four walls of their stage world. They batter down the imaginary fourth wall separating them and the audience. They pour out the frustration, anger and desperation of their characters so directly that there doesn't seem to be anything holding them back in their rush of emotion.

Their characterizations are tilted to the point of mad distortion. The petty professor who holds the whole household in bondage by his nagging presence reels on stage leaning against his cane at a dangerous angle and crazily ringing a hand bell for service. When his beautiful and bored wife trembles with passion in her love for another man, she shakes as if she will fall apart. The estate's impoverished hanger-on constantly sidles up to the wife's glass perfume bottles and lovingly sniffs them, as if hoping that the perfume will lend his lumpish nature the exotic qualities he sees in the upper-class gentry above him.

The object of these exaggerations is to achieve purity and clarity of understanding, but along with an almost innocent, unpolluted stream of delivery, there is an extremely complex and sophisticated theatrical presentation, in which Nekrošius underlines Chekhov's text with vivid stage images of his own.

A hushed scene between the besotted Dr. Astrov and the plain, unhappy young woman who loves him (a magnificent portrayal by Dalia Overaite) ends with an overturned bottle of vodka dribbling out its contents. The sickly old professor, whining about his lot in life, suddenly uses his cane to lift up the skirts of his young wife in a quick show of lust.

When Vanya lashes out in uncontrollable rage at his empty life, the doctor uses a chair to trap his prone, thrashing figure in a tight, crude cage. And always there are the servants, picking up the messes caused by their masters' petty quarrels, leering knowingly at their folly and waiting for their downfall.

Most of this is brilliant theater; some of it—including, unfortunately, the last few seconds of the play—is predictable schmaltz.

All of it is a production the likes of which we have not seen and are not likely to see again on stage in Chicago.

**Richard Christiansen**

(Chicago Tribune)

### "An Astonishing Uncle Vanya"

A director has come halfway around the world from the small Soviet republic of Lithuania to present an "Uncle Vanya" as personal and astonishing as anything that has come before it. What makes this State Youth Theatre of Lithuania presentation of the Chekhov play at the Alley Theatre extraordinary is the taciturn, almost demonic vision of its director, Eimutis Nekrošius. Rarely has a production been so clearly the mark of the person behind it—or a work of theater been so disturbing and hypnotic.

Nekrošius' "Vanya" won't cater to the accustomed spectacle of a bored and disaffected gentry, on long, languid Russian country afternoons, lamenting opportunities lost and the dullness of life.

It opens—stunningly—to loud, snatches of the plaintive Jewish prayer for the dead. In the high-ceilinged gloom we make out an eclectic collection of chairs, settees, a table and a lone upright piano.

A man—Astrov—is placing suction cups on a reclining figure masked by chairs. Behind them a huge painting of Russian woods with two, maybe three dwarfed and solitary figures dominates the scene. All is still, stylized, eerie. The first word spoken—softly, insistently, over and over—is "Wait." Wait. Wait.

From there, events rush and tumble. Characters enter, talk, to one another, to themselves. They slink, sashay, dance in and out of the dark, oversized room—trapped animals pacing in a large, once luxurious, now-crumbling cage.

A complaint that the furniture needs dusting brings in serfs in soft slippers who slide on the floor as if it were a skating rink, largely oblivious of their masters. They survey the problem and do nothing. The music is now Klezmer merriment. In these slothful, comical rustics is a hint of real danger and the revolution to come....

This is a theater of images and layered meaning. Things are rarely what they seem. When plain little Sonya (Dalia Overaite) tells her gorgeous stepmother Yelena (Dalia Storyk), "You're so beautiful," it is a statement steeped in rage. Her hands fly up ready to scratch. And when the two unhappily reach an understanding, they embrace, waltz

silently up and off the stage, locked in each other's gaze, while the Hebraic liturgy exclaims, "The holy ones, the holy ones, who shine in the firmament...."

This is not the only masterstroke of superimposed business. The production is full of them. And yes, there is plenty of tampering with the script, including a mock suicide (Astrov's) and some breathtaking byplay with a collection of perfume bottles (a consummate apotheosis to the play).

Sacrilege? Ordinarily, yes. What makes such handiwork acceptable here, against all odds, is its dark illumination of the playwright's intent. Nekrosius may cast his own spell, but at no one's expense. There is something majestic and profoundly serious about his production, Grand Guignolesque in its bathos, comic in its tragedy, cynical in its comedy, subliminal in its unabashed collection of overt, symbolic moments.

The production doesn't just shun realism, it rigorously avoids it. When Astrov and Yelena face off, they do it at opposite ends of the stage, one foot up on a chair, like jousting ready to mount.

Yelena is the hub, but she is also stalked by Sonya's anguish, by the foolish, tongue-tied presence of the furtive Telyegin (Juozas Pocius) and by her self-centered husband Serebryakov (Vladas Bagdonas), austere and alienated and old enough here to border on Machiavellian senility. These are all people in sad and magnificent ruin.

That's the intricacy Nekrosius is able to weave into this "Vanya," a play he had (deliberately?) never seen performed before he directed it. (He is now working on a "King Lear," which he has also never seen on stage.)

A company of superbly coordinated actors buoys the concept. Such enviable fine tuning is never an accident. The actors rehearsed "Vanya" for six months and have been playing it for two years as part of a much wider repertoire.

This writer was lucky enough to see Nekrosius' production of "A Day as Long as a Century" at the company's home base in Vilnius three years ago. It was a mythic and politicized adaptation of an epic novel by Chingiz Aitmatov boldly presented in pre-glasnost days.

Next week, Houston gets to see "Pirosmani, Pirosmani," a homegrown work that has earned the director high praise at home and in Europe where he is just beginning to be recognized. "Vanya" and "Pirosmani" then move on to Chicago. Neither is headed for Los Angeles—yet. But if there is any justice, this theater and this director should top the list of companies invited to take part in the 1990 Los Angeles Festival—if we can wait that long.

**Sylvie Drake**

(Los Angeles Times)

## Pranas Lape Comes to Dinner

**T**he best conversationalists are people whose stories have a definite beginning and a definite ending. The bores are the ones who talk on and on without ever making a point.

The other night we had Pranas Lape, an old friend, to dinner and I got thinking afterward that he's one of the best conversationalists I know. He has original ideas, serious thoughts, and usually punctuates them with a twist that makes a everyone laugh.

Pranas lives a monastic existence on the coast of Maine, painting huge canvases of abstract art and living off the fish he catches, the vegetables he grows, and the mushrooms he finds in the woods. He buys an occasional bottle of ketchup toward the end of winter when the things he froze don't taste as good as they did when they were fresh. He can live, he says, on \$3,000 a year.

Pranas left Lithuania as a young man 30 years ago, and he still speaks with a heavy accent. He uses the English language with great directness but with very little regard for traditional grammar.

"Put all the MX missiles together in one six-pack on a remote island in the Pacific Ocean," he says. "Make them so they could be shot off by remote control from someplace else. Tell the Russians exactly where the island is. Keep a few nuclear weapons on board submarines and heavy bombers. If the Russians ever declare war on us, they'd first have to destroy that island with all our missiles 'six-packed' on it.

"Our missiles would be destroyed, we'd know we were at war with Russia, and we could strike with our other weapons."

Everything at dinner reminds Pranas Lape of a story. He has a Lithuanian friend who exchanges letters with her family in her Russian-dominated homeland. The letters are often censored, so the woman arranged a code with her family. They include pictures with their letters. If the picture shows the family standing, things are going well. If the family is sitting, things are not so good.



**Composition, oil, by Pranas Lape whose work is featured at the Lithuanian Cultural Congress in Ontario, Canada.**

"So," he says, "I taste both wines. I cannot tell the difference!"

"Last time she get letter," Pranas says, "they are lying on floor."

We had wine with dinner, and even that reminded Pranas of a story. A summer neighbor of his, Roger Fessaguet, is one of the fine chefs in America and owner of La Caravelle Restaurant in New York. Roger invited several other chefs to Maine for a weekend and Pranas was asked to dinner. One of the chefs, a renowned wine expert, had brought several rare old bottles of Bordeaux. When the first bottle was opened, each guest tasted it. Some expressed doubt about the wine. Others, not wishing to offend their friend who had brought it, withheld their opinion.

When the chef who had brought the wine tasted it, he quickly spit it out.

"Undrinkable vinegar!" he declared.

A second bottle was opened. Each chef tasted it and their reaction was good this time. Then the expert who brought it swished it around in his mouth.

"Magnificent," he said. "One of the best I have ever tasted."

"So," Pranas said at our dinner table, "I taste both wines. I try first one, then other. I cannot tell difference. Both same!" He roars with laughter.

If every table had a conversationalist like Pranas, we wouldn't need television.

(New York Times)



## DAINAVA

**F**or those interested in combining summer vacation with a fantastic learning experience, this is the place for you:

A Lithuanian language course for beginners and intermediate level students offered in a Lithuanian atmosphere. The one-week language course also features instruction in Lithuanian song and folk dance. All other program points will be conducted in Lithuanian.

The teachers are experienced and will utilize a good practical approach. The cost of the camp and course is very reasonable.

Time: August 7th to 14th. Place: Lithuanian Camp Dainava, Manchester, Mich. Registration fee: \$5. For more information: Bronius Krokys, 1124 Hedgerow Lane, Philadelphia, Pa.; Tel. (215) 671-0397.

## AUŠRA

**What:** A Lithuanian Ethnic Camp which is God-oriented, encouraging patriotism and love of America, as well as developing an appreciation for the customs and traditions of the Lithuanian heritage.

**Who:** Boys and girls between the ages of 8 through 16.

**Where:** St. Mary's Villa, Elmhurst, Pa.

**When:** July 10th through the 23rd

**By Whom:** The Sisters of Jesus Crucified

**Cost:** \$10.00 registration fee and \$85.00 per week.

For further information, contact:  
Sister M. Angela, C.J.C.  
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*P.S. — The Lithuanian-Catholic Alliance Foundation is offering free tuition to the members' children or grandchildren for Camp.*

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15.00—Dalia Vidunas, Fogarty Epping, NH  
10.00—Marion Cathell, Akron, OH; Ted Navickas, Couer d'Alene, ID; Joseph Taskonis, Lake Geneva, WI; Katherine Uknes, Brooklyn, NY

10.00—Alfonse Balsis, Cape May, NJ; K & M Bagdonavicius, San Antonio, TX; Joseph E Jacobus, Fair Lawn, NJ; Betty Geenty, Jackson, NY; Mr. McCracken, Venice, FL; Louis Stukas, Morganville, NJ; Virginia Pauza, Rochester, NY; Reeder Family, San Bernadino, CA

6.00—Don Oksas, Grand Rapids, MI  
5.00—Aldona Affleck, Annandale, WA; Albert Kleponis, S. Boston, MA; John Ketarkus, Racine, WI; C. Genevich, Bklyn, NY; Helen Zmij, Valley Stream, NY; V. Adamaitis, Annandale, VA; A. Lukosevicius, New Monmouth, NJ; Stanley Schapals, Waukegan, IL; Rita Gilmore, Pacific Palisades, CA; Stanley Romanoski, Morgantown, W VA; Rimantas Bitenas, Elizabeth, NJ; Frank Zebuda, Schenectady, NY; Loretta Peterson, Gates Mills, OH; Karen Wishner, Cleveland, OH; Irene Beyers, Portland, OR; Constance Renker, Cleveland, OH

5.00—Anne Navarro, Huntington Beach, CA; Marlene Aglinski, Pittsburgh, PA; Adam Brokas, Buffalo, NY; Joyce Ellen Kasel, Norwood, ME; John Lucas, Lindenhurst, NJ; V Juskevicius, Nashua, NH; Arlene Stolarich, Haddonfield, NJ; Renata Puntolillo, No. Arlington, NJ; A. Akelaitis, Flemington, NJ; Barbara Gagner, Enfield, CT; Mr. Zeikus, Macdael, CA; Mr. Gendrolis, APO, NY; Mr. Petraitis, McAfee, NJ; Puknys & Puknys, Dover, NJ

5.00—J F Paulonis, Pt Lookout, NY; Millie Pietz, Bronx, NY; Joyce Ellen Kasel, Norwood, ME; Vytautas Kovalis, Elizabeth, NJ; Mrs. Peter Barz, Woodhaven, NY; Jonas Klivecka, Woodhaven, NY; Robert Novak, Los Angeles, CA; M/M Surdokas, Baltimore, MD; Josephine Walsh, Quincy, MA; Wanda Husza, Utica, NY; Algirdas Vaitkus, Newbury Pk, CA; Alexander Vincukus, Woodside, NY; Emilia Sadonis, Verona, NJ; Vicent Mackelis, Linden, NJ; R. Mack, Coxsackie, NY; Ed. Lubamersky, Laurel Springs; Mrs. John Sakal, Howard Beach, NY; V.R. Gediminas, Woodhaven, NY; Mary & Allison Koberg, Temple Hills, MD; A&W Trakimas, Redondo Beach, CA; J Hayes, Westboro, MA; Juozas & Rasa Juska; Vytautas Jonaitis, Grand Rapids, MI; Vytautas Maceikonis, Sterling, NJ; Anna Levonowich, Kenosha, WI; Ellen Sykes, Seattle, WA; Mrs. E.M. Henry, Staten Island, NY; Helen Bookis, Cleveland, OH; J G Reilly, Laramie WY; P M Barkus, Arlington, VA

## APPEAL

FOR OUR

LITHUANIAN COLLEGE

IN ROME

**T**he Lithuanian College of St. Casimir in Rome is not only a seminary but also the only Lithuanian spiritual center in Rome and all of Italy. Besides, it is and will remain in the future, the only unofficial permanent link of the Lithuanian faithful, especially those outside of Lithuania, with the Holy See. Until now, the College has been supported by Lithuanian Benefactors in the free world. If some day in God's plans the doors to Lithuania's freedom open, the Lithuanian episcopate will already have its College in the center of Christianity built on strong foundations.

I turn to you with the matter which should have been raised several years ago: the further support of St. Casimir's College and especially the guaranteeing of its future. We turn to you at this present time for various reasons: the depreciation of the dollar to half its original value, the constant increase of the already high cost of living in Italy, the urgent and necessary renovation required for some of the College's buildings, as well as more rapid growth of the College's Support Endowment Fund.

The question of the College Support Endowment Fund is quite urgent. We began it in 1984, on the occasion of the St. Casimir's 500-year Jubilee, when the Knights of Lithuania "adopted" the College (71st National Convention—Chicago) and began to send donations to this Fund. The Knights of Lithuania's contributions so far total more than \$50,000.00. On this occasion, we wish to express much appreciation and thanks to all the Knights for their generosity and continuous support. But they cannot carry the weight alone. We invite every Lithuanian priest and layperson in the free world to contribute to this Fund.

With the blessings of H.E. Bishop Paul Baltakis, O.F.M., we turn for the first time to the whole Lithuanian Catholic community

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inviting all to help us: Once a year to make at least one material donation to the only Lithuanian Seminary outside of Lithuania. Not every family can offer to God a son or daughter, but every family can and is obligated to help the cause for vocations, not only through prayer, but also through material support.

**Msgr. Algimantas A. Bartkus,  
Rector**

Please make checks payable to Pontificio Collegio Lituano, S. Casimiro, Via Casalmonferrato, 20 00182 Roma, Italy

## 7th Annual Baltic Youth Congress

August 11-14, 1988

This year's Baltic Youth Congress will be even more international than past efforts.

We are pleased that the 1988 BYC will take place at the Ukrainian campground in Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania, at the foot of the Poconos. Jim Thorpe is only two hours by car from New York City; one hour from Philadelphia; three hours from the Baltimore/Washington area.

The beautiful setting encourages use of the pool (with a great view of the mountains!), tennis courts, volleyball courts and a softball field (BYO Bats, mitts and balls).

As always, a great program of leading Baltic and non-baltic speakers is being put together (maybe a congressman or other politico). Plus:—an opportunity to participate in folk dance or theater workshops; local tours; and plenty of time and events to relax and get to know fellow Balts (and a few Ukrainians to boot!).

Practicalities: There are cabins with beds, but those who would prefer to camp are welcome to pitch tents. The arrangements, food and the Ball on Saturday. Early bird registration is \$75.00 for the weekend, if you register by July 15, 1988. Otherwise, Thursday/Friday-Sunday costs \$80.00; Saturday-Sunday costs \$50.00; and if you are just going to be able to attend the Annual BYC Ball and attend breakfast on Sunday, the cost is \$25.00. Checks can be made payable to "BYC 1988".

For more information feel free to get in touch with: Baltic Youth Congress, 5911 Edsall Rd. #1106, Alexandria, VA 22304 or get in touch with Rima Silenas at 4500 Connecticut Ave. NW #606, Washington, DC 20008 [(202) 364-6424].



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# The Eons of History Preserved in Baltic Amber

The Emperor proclaimed,  
"We will conquer."

For several centuries before and after the birth of Christ, the inhabitants of the Baltic region did not transport their amber along the trade routes to the south, but traded it instead to Germanic tribes, their immediate neighbors. Trade centers developed in Samland at the mouth of the Nemunas River in the area of the present Klaipeda (Memel), as indicated by the large quantities of Roman coins and artifacts found there.

Emperor Nero regarded amber so highly he described his beloved Poppea's hair as having the color of amber. Other ladies of Nero's court dyed their hair to match the color of this gem. Since yellow was held in esteem as an imperial color, the demand for amber, as well as its value, increased so much that Pliny tells us "the price of a figurine in amber, however small, exceeded that of a living, healthy slave."

At the beginning of Nero's reign, the demand for amber was so great that to obtain a supply for gladiatorial exhibitions, a Roman knight was sent to the north in search of the actual source. Some historians believe this to be one of the most significant historical events of the Roman era because it opened direct trade with Baltic cultures. The manager of the gladiatorial spectacles, Julianus, commissioned the knight to cross barbarian territories, a feat never before attempted by a Roman.

In attempting to obtain amber from the northern territory for Rome, the knight first had to travel across Roman territory, across the Alps and down the Danube to Carnuntum. The amber coast was eventually reached, but no exact description of the knight's route is recorded. It can be assumed that he followed the amber route along the Marsch River to the Danube, crossing over land to the Vistula River, which empties into the Bay of Danzig. Thus, the existence of a main route for procuring amber for Rome was established.

In all, about 13,000 pounds of amber were brought back to Nero. He not only adorned the Circus with amber, but made it available to gladiators to wear as charms on their breasts to assure them victory. Amber pieces were occasionally studded decoratively, like sequins, over the entire garment of a gladiator. One gladiator's amulet of amber was found with the words "We Will Conquer" carved on it. In Italy, Aquileia became the main Roman center for importation of

amber, since it was located at the end of the route to the amber coast. Aquileian workshops manufactured decorative carvings in amber. It was customary to give small amber carvings of ears of corn and fruit as New Year's presents. The significance of such gifts is related to the magical properties of amber as well as to the carved forms.

Amber carvings from the Aquileian workshops are of high quality and are truly exquisite objects of art. So abundant had amber become that the Emperor Elagabalus, in an extravagant display of luxury, paved a portico of his palace with pulverized amber.

The last Roman to write about amber was Tacitus (55 A.D. to 120 A.D.). In his *Ger-*

*mania*, he described the tideless Baltic as a sea beyond Sweden in an easterly direction "sluggish and almost without movement; which seems to surround the whole of earth because the last rays of the setting sun, until sunrise of the next day, keep the sky so bright that it darkens the stars."

The eastern Baltic sea in midsummer does not darken at night because of its far north latitude. Tacitus was no doubt attempting to describe these "white nights". He probably refers to what is now familiar as the aurora borealis, which can often be seen from the Samland coast: "Imagination adds that the gods and the flaming coronets on their heads become visible."

**Patty Rice**

(From "Amber, The Golden Gem of the Ages.")

## Scientists in 1988 proclaim, "We search for answers."

A scientist at the University of California has found the oldest evidence of land mammals on Caribbean islands, a tuft of animal hair preserved in amber. The 40-million-year-old hair came complete with an infestation of parasites the size of fleas.

In reporting the discovery, George O. Poinar Jr., an insect pathologist at the university's Berkeley campus, said the evidence should shed new light on the origins of life in the Caribbean. When and how the islands were populated is a question that has stumped experts.

The age of the hair, Dr. Poinar said, suggests that the islands may have been occupied by a diverse animal population much longer than some scientists assume. Until now, the oldest traces of land mammals there were only 100,000 years old.

The amber, fossilized resin from coniferous trees, was dug out of the La Toca mine in the northern mountains of the Dominican Republic. Encased in the amber were 50 strands of hair from what was probably some kind of rodent, and four specimens of parasites. Two were fur mites, and two were beetle larvae related to forms known today from beaver fur. The types of parasites, as well as the general structure of the hair, were the clues scientists cited for thinking that the animal was a rodent.

Dr. Poinar surmised that the animal probably had brushed up against a tree and the hair came off and got stuck in the sap that eventually hardened into amber.

Perhaps the animal was scratching its infested back.

Discoveries in amber have recently produced a number of surprises. An 80-million-year-old bee, which doubled the previously known age of bees, was found in amber from New Jersey. Another piece of amber contained a bubble of ancient air that made scientists think that the atmosphere dinosaurs breathed 80 million years ago was richer in oxygen than today's. Dr. Poinar himself reported last year finding a 40-million-year-old frog, the oldest amphibian to be found in the Caribbean.

Davie E. Webb, a University of Florida specialist in ancient animal populations in the Americas, agreed with the analysis of the rodent-like fossil. But he said more details about the type of animal were required before any assessment could be made of the discovery's broader implications regarding the spread of animal life into the Caribbean.

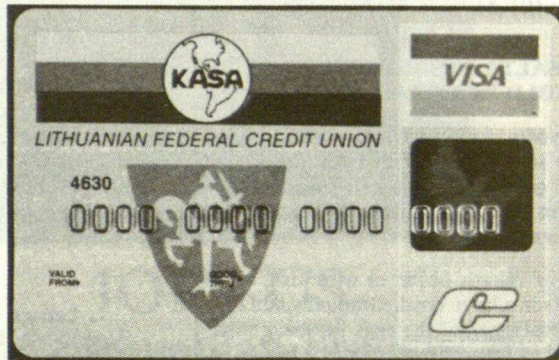
But Dr. Poinar said the new evidence called into question the theories of many scientists that the Caribbean islands were populated in the more recent past, in geological terms, and this probably occurred when animals "sailed in" from the continent on drifting debris. He said the hair in the amber supported theories that the islands were once connected to either North or South America, or both.

(New York Times)

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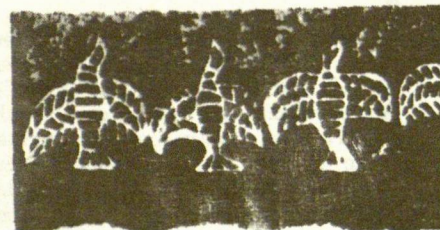
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# Lithuanian Cooking

with Aldona Marcavage

## ŠALTA PASUKŲ SRIUBA COLD BUTTERMILK SOUP

3 egg yolks  
½ cup sugar  
½ tsp. grated  
lemon rind  
1 tsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. vanilla  
1 quart buttermilk  
¼ cup whipped  
heavy cream

With an electric beater or wire whisk, beat egg yolks in a large bowl. Gradually add the sugar, beating until the eggs fall back into the bowl in lazy ribbon when the beater is lifted. Add the grated lemon rind, juice and vanilla. Slowly beat in the buttermilk, until soup is smooth. Serve in chilled bowls. Float a spoonful of unsweetened whipped cream on the surface of each serving.

## DANUTE'S KEPTA VERŠIENA VEAL CUTLETS

Slash thin, pounded slices of veal in several places so the meat will not curl during cooking. Flour one side only lightly. Meat ¼ pound butter until fragrant. Place 1 ½ lb. veal slices in pan. Do not crowd. When juices appear on upper side. (about 3 min.), turn the meat and continue to sauté a few minutes. Remove from skillet and keep warm. Sauté ½ med. Bermuda onion, sliced thin. Keep warm with veal. Deglaze pan juices with ¼ cup Madeira or Marsala wine (or 1 tb. lemon juice) Season to taste. Pour sauce over cutlets serve at once.

## DUONINE GIRA BREAD CIDER

1 ½ lb. dried dark rye bread  
1 gal. boiling water  
1 lb. sugar  
1 oz. yeast  
½ cup raisins

Use small barrel or clay crock. Pour boiling water over bread. Let stand 6 hours. Strain. Add sugar and bring to a boil. Cool to lukewarm. Add yeast creamed with a small amount of sugar cool. Skim off foam. Pour into bottles, placing 1 raisin in each bottle. Cork tightly. Lay bottles on side in basement or real cool spot. (If basement is not cool enough—refrigerate after one day—or bottles may explode). Ready to drink in 2 days. Delicious! *J. Daudzvardis*

## YOUR LETTERS UNITE US

I enjoy reading every page of your publication which keeps me in touch not only with what is going on in the Lithuanian community but also reminds me so vividly of my Lithuanian heritage, history, etc. Do keep up the great work. Don't ever let your energy and enthusiasm wane, for we would all be at a loss!

*Adele Dauzickas  
Florham Park, N.J.*

**Letters like yours, Adele, reinvigorate that "energy and enthusiasm".**

Although I enjoy your magazine immensely, may I suggest you also consider featuring articles on Lithuanian Protestantism, i.e., Evangelical Lutheran; Evangelical Reformed! Your articles on Roman Catholicism have been long and very detailed. Please do not fall into the "Polish vice" of confusing religion with nationalism. After all, the first book in Lithuania was prepared by a Lutheran pastor. The great Lithuanian epic *The Seasons* was also the work of a Lithuanian Lutheran pastor, and a more modern Lithuanian was Martynas Yčas, a lay leader in the Reformed Church.

*Richard White (Vaitunaitis)  
Baltimore, Md.*

**You're right, Richard; emphasis has been on Lithuanian Roman Catholicism because that is where all the "action-for-freedom" has been, for many years. Bridges readers, however, can tell you that we have run articles about the debt Lithuania owes to her Protestants whose work helped preserve our language and sense of nationhood.**

**We have translated and written about Donelaitis, with much reverence and appreciation. You write well. We need you to write essays as lively and informed as your letter.**

It goes without saying that the article in *Bridges* about amber was instrumental in my sending you this clipping from the *New York Times*. It may be of interest to our readers.

*Helen Matulionyte  
Maspeth, N.Y.*

**The item you submit, Helen, will give our Lithuanian Americans insight into the historic value of amber. See page 16, for your story.**

I was very pleased to read Albinas Azukas' article in *Bridges* about Thanksgiving Day. I especially liked the respectful treatment he gave to native American beliefs. I am Lithuanian and have worked with the Seneca Indians for five years now. Their plight often reminds me of our people's during the last century.

*Ben Kroup  
New York State Office  
of Historic Preservation  
Waterford, N.Y.*

**Ben, it's such a pleasure to find more and more Lithuanian Americans whose finely downtrodden people involves them in working to better their lives.**

We look forward to receiving each issue of *Bridges*. During the year 1988, Holy Cross Lutheran Parish in Collinsville, Illinois, is observing its 40th anniversary. We set aside the entire month of May as "Lithuanian Heritage Month", to honor the Lithuanian immigrants who, through the years, were the strength of the parish. Keep up your good work.

*Robert Samuel Galinet  
Collinsville, Ill.*

**We are grateful, Robert, for your informative letter. Please help us make *Bridges* a truly "good work"; send us more information about our Lithuanian Lutherans.**

Would you be interested in printing in "*Bridges*" my poem "Time". The Board of directors of "World of Poetry", which is based in Sacramento, California, has voted unanimously to honor me with the Golden Poet Award for 1988 in recognition of this poem of mine in a recently conducted Free Poetry Contest.

*Ted Navickas  
Coeur d'Alene, ID*

**We congratulate you, Ted. We Lithuanian Americans take great pride in the accomplishments of our young people. Yours is a fine poem. But it does not relate to a Lithuanian theme. If we could persuade groups of our young people from Eastern, Central and Western USA to work as guest editors of *Bridges*, we might be in the position to publicize achievements.**

We enjoy getting *Bridges*. My children tell me they've renewed their subscriptions and they are keeping their copies for their children.

*Cecilia Stulgaitis  
Sylvania, OH.*

**Your experience, Cecilia, confirms our belief that *Bridges* must continue publishing. Thank you**

# Why

## We Are Late

At times *Bridges* arrives belatedly because printing machines break down or matters go awry at the post office. This month, a different problem materialized. Our colleague-printer Joe Tysliava stopped at my office at 8:30 a.m. to pick up the editorial material for the June issue. At 9 a.m., he telephoned us with the bad news: while parking his car, he was accosted by a white man with a knife who demanded, "Your wallet or your life, man!" Joe put up a fight and incurred knife wounds. The thief, unable to overpower Joe, snatched the package of June material for *Bridges* which had taken three weeks to prepare and away he ran. (Imagine his reaction and expletives when he looked into the contents of the package!)

Joe was given tetanus shots for his wounds. Our administrator Fr. Peter Baniunas tried to alleviate our editorial wounds by suggesting we combine the June issue with our July-August issue. "Nobody is going to prevent us from putting out that June issue," we protested and back to the editorial desk we went to reconstruct the whole issue. Only Al Cizauskas was able to supply us with a copy of his article. Everything else was irretrievably gone. We could not get together a most engaging vignette of stories about Lithuanians with different interests such as Borneo, successful investments and astronomy for which Dr. John Bernotavicz of Hyannis, Ma. had sent us clippings.

Fr. Peter Baniunas' volunteer assistant, did a noble job in reconstructing the *Labai Ačiu* column. If your name is missing, let us know and we'll add it to the following month's list.

Also missing is the article which I wrote with a proposed plan for the future of *Bridges*. Although I have been advising Bendruomene leaders for a half year that I cannot continue editing *Bridges* and must go on to other work, I have not had a response from them. Perhaps July-August will awaken them to respond to the reality of this crisis.

Considering the growing influx of subscriptions, the generous donations and the increasing numbers of warm-hearted letters we receive, I cannot abandon *Bridges* on any specific self-elected date. If our readers have ideas to propose, we want very much to hear them. With our love of all that is Lithuanian, we are linked into one community; we will work something out.

**Demie Jonaitis, Editor**



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Padre Antonio Švedas, MIC

## Minkevičius was his name

This incident occurred in the time of the Argentine Dictator Peron. It took place when the Peronists were riding high and it was dangerous to go contrary to the notorious trend of Peronist thought. A Lithuanian-American from Pennsylvania, with the distinctive name of Minkevičius dared to stand up and defend his own principles.

He was a supervisor in a factory in La Plata where, one day, a Peronista, a rabid follower of Peron, became destructive. He began to destroy the factory electric lights. Giving vent to his fury, he got a strong club and began demolishing all the light bulbs. When Supervisor Mr. Minkevičius was informed, he fired the man and ordered him to leave the factory. The individual became very insolent and blustery and refused to consider himself fired. He told Minkevičius bluntly, "You can't fire me, for I belong to the Peronist Party!" What did Minkevičius do? Pre-arranged for the whole matter to be

publicly brought into the court. He hired a lawyer to defend his case, and one of the main arguments used during the proceedings, was that the yokel was causing the Peron Party to fall into disrepute, with such uncalled-for behavior. The judges recognized this as a cogent point of argumentation. They asked if there were any witnesses. Minkevičius and his lawyer had arranged for that eventuality and witnesses came to testify in favor of Minkevičius. They strongly reprimanded this Peronist goon. He was forced to seek employment elsewhere.

Minkevičius said after the trial, "Now I can look at any man in the face, for I stood up for my principles, besides protecting factory property."

So it is *bravo* for Minkevičius, for his courageous stand—a public spirited Lithuanian-American who wasn't afraid to defend the rights of mankind. In the words of Confucius, "To see what is right and not to do it, is want of courage."



Cross-country skier  
Vida Venciene of Vilnius  
won gold and bronze medals  
in the Olympics in Canada

## THE OLYMPICS AND THE RUSSIANS

For those of you who view the Olympic Games as a competition between nations, here's a scoop you won't read about anywhere else: *the Soviets came in second in Calgary, Canada.*

Sure, according to the official medal count, the Soviets won 29 and the East Germans won 25. But five of those Soviet medals don't belong to them. Why? Because they were won by Baltic athletes. And as we all know, the Baltic States don't belong to them

either. Here's the rundown of "captive" Baltic medals:

Latvia won two medals—a gold in the 2-man bobsled, captained by Jānis Kipurs; and a bronze in the 4-man bobsled, also led by Kipurs. Lithuania also won a gold and bronze—both by cross country skier Vida Venciene, in the 10K and 5K women's events. And Estonian Allar Lavendl won a bronze in the Nordic combined.

So, if you take away the Baltic medals, the

Soviets ended up with a total of 24, one less than the East Germans.

By the way, the Soviets like to brag that the USSR consists of 15 independent republics. Isn't it time that each of these 15 countries fielded their own team in the Olympics, rather than pooling all their medals to the credit of Moscow? Perhaps we should start a campaign for the 1992 Olympics: "Break up the Reds!"

(Courtesy Latvian Newsletter)