

Bridges

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Linksmu Kalėdu

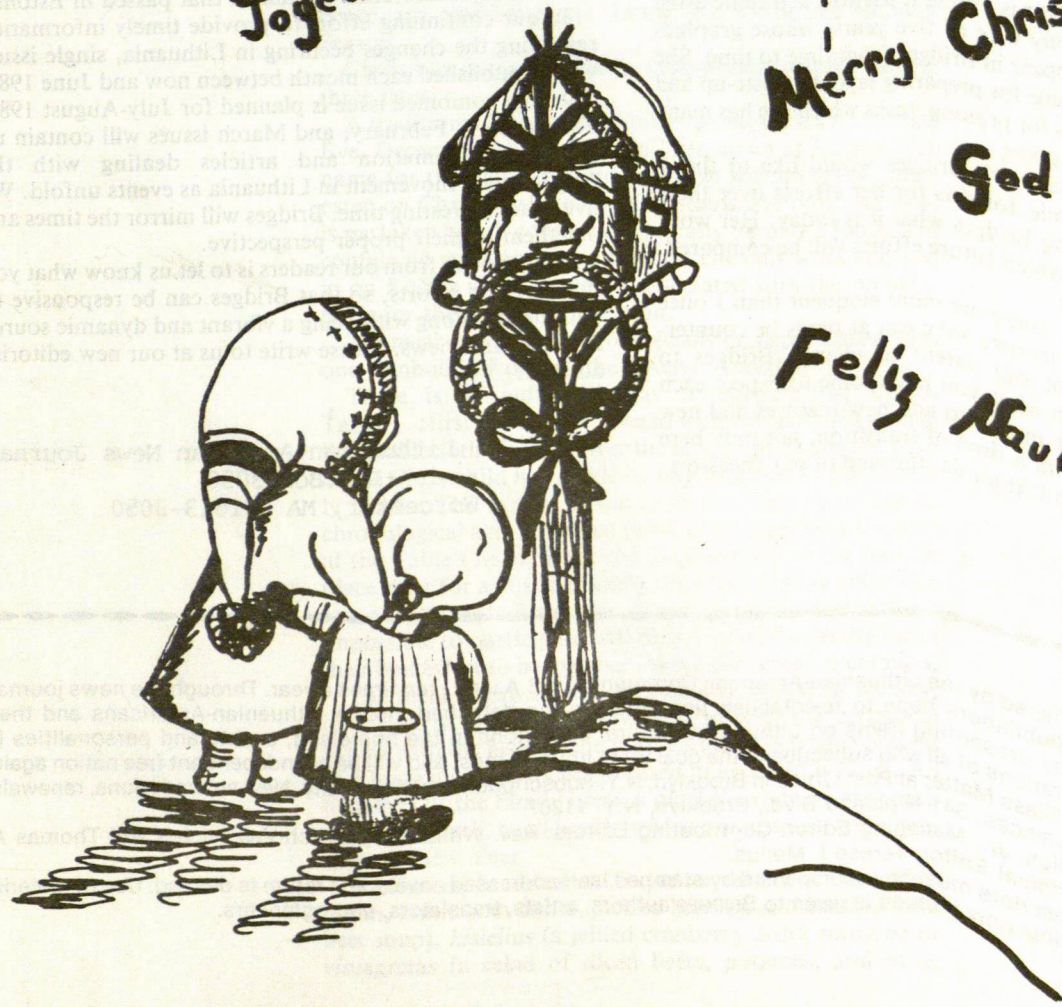
Joyeux Noël



Merry Christmas

God Jul

Feliz Navidad



Bridges in Transition

Starting with the December 1988 issue of Bridges—a new Managing Editor, a new Technical Editor, and a Contributing Editorial Board are taking on the task of bringing you 10 yearly issues of Bridges: Lithuanian-American News Journal.

The Contributing Editorial Board includes several experts in history, Lithuanians in America, and other areas of interest to our readers. Rev. William Wolkovich-Valkavičius and Thomas A. Michalski, Ph. D. both of whom are familiar to those who have read Bridges for many years, have graciously agreed to become contributing editors. As the months pass and the transition continues, other experts will be added to the Contributing Editorial Board.

The Technical Editor is Teresė I. Meilus, a graphic artist and photographer (my wife of five years) whose graphics and drawings will appear in Bridges from time to time. She will also be responsible for preparing layouts, paste-up and all other preparations for printing, tasks which she has many years of experience doing.

Everyone associated with Bridges would like to thank long-time editor Demie Jonaitis for her efforts over these many years in making Bridges what it is today. Her work will be the model to which future efforts will be compared. Širdingas Ačiū.

Change is healthy, someone more eloquent than I once said, but change for its own sake can at times be counter-productive. It is not our intent to change Bridges to something other than what you have come to expect each month, but rather we intend to add new features and new perspectives. We are in a time of transition, not only here at Bridges, but also in Lithuania, the land of our ancestors.

I'm born in the USA, as many of Bridges' readers are, but I've always been proud and acutely aware of my roots. Lithuania is currently experiencing a rebirth "Atgimimas". We read about the changes in the Press and see activity on the nightly network news. Who would have guessed even a year ago that these changes would occur. Several articles in this issue outline the events to which I refer.

Recently (November 16, 1988) the Estonian Parliament, the ruling body of our sister Baltic Republic, passed a sovereignty resolution, stopping just short of declaring the restoration of Independence. It will be interesting to see what course Lithuania will take in the next few months. As Bridges was going to press, the Lithuanian ruling body was considering a resolution similar to that passed in Estonia.

In our continuing effort to provide timely information regarding the changes occurring in Lithuania, single issues will be published each month between now and June 1989. The only combined issue is planned for July-August 1989. The January, February, and March issues will contain up to date information and articles dealing with the "Atgimimas" movement in Lithuania as events unfold. We live in an interesting time. Bridges will mirror the times and put them in their proper perspective.

What we ask from our readers is to let us know what you think of our efforts, so that Bridges can be responsive to your needs, along with being a vibrant and dynamic source for news and views. Please write to us at our new editorial address:

BRIDGES: Lithuanian-American News Journal
P.O.Box 3050
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Bridges published by the Lithuanian-American Community, U.S.A., Inc., ten times a year. Through the news journal, the publishers hope to re-establish ties between the detached mobile Lithuanian-Americans and their Lithuanian heritage by presenting items on Lithuanian culture, conditions in the homeland, events and personalities in America, and the aspirations of all who subscribe to the goal that Lithuania must and will be an independent free nation again.

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Eduardas V. Meilus, Jr., Managing Editor. Contributing Editors: Rev. William Wolkovich-Valkavicius and Thomas A. Michalski, Ph.D. Technical Editor; Terese I. Meilus.

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CHRISTMAS: LITHUANIAN STYLE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE TRADITIONAL CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

By Eduardas V. Meilus, Jr.

Linksmu Kalėdu, Merry Christmas, Joyeux Noel, God Jul or Feliz Navidad, in any language the wish is the same for peace, joy and happiness during this Christmas Holiday Season.

Christmas is truly a family celebration, usually lasting three days.

A traditional Lithuanian Christmas begins on Christmas Eve, December 24th, known in Lithuanian as *Kūčios*. The name for the day is derived from the solemn festive meal eaten on Christmas Eve. On Christmas Eve only one meal is partaken which consists of specially prepared foods that contain no meat or dairy products. The only work engaged in on *Kūčios* is that which is associated with the preparations for the *Kūčios* celebration.

The meal consists of twelve specially prepared dishes, each one symbolic of one of the Twelve Apostles.

There is a traditional way to prepare the *Kūčios* Table. . . . first the table is covered with hay and then a white linen tablecloth is placed over the hay, symbolizing the birth of the Christchild in a stable on hay, warmed by the friendly beasts. The family is seated at the table according to chronological age, the oldest member in attendance is seated at the Table's head, while the youngest sits at the foot. A place is set for a missing family member, missing either due to a recent death or that insurmountable distances make it impossible to participate. All members of the family make their best effort to be together for the Christmas celebration.

The meal begins as the stars become bright in the sky, in the early evening. Following a prayer, the ceremonial begins with the head of the family leading everyone present in a breaking of *plotkėles* (blessed unleavened wafers). All members of the family break a *plotkėle* while wishing each other good luck, good health, a Merry Christmas, and a prosperous New Year.

Traditional foods served include a variety of baked fish dishes, mushroom dishes, pickled herring, *salti barščiai* (cold beet soup), *kisielius* (a jellied cranberry dish), *misraine* or *vinigretas* (a salad of diced beets, potatoes, and other

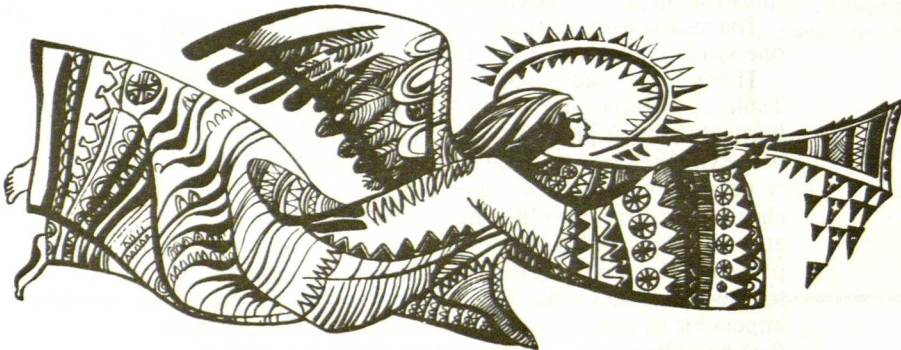
vegetables), *šližikai su aguonu pieno* (a small hard biscuit served with a milk of sorts, made of honey mixed with poppy seeds), *kompotas* (a soup of cooked dried fruits), among others. (See the *Gera Gaspadine* section of this month's "Bridges" for some recipes.)

When everyone has finished eating of the twelve traditional dishes, that which is leftover remains on the table. The meal ends with the singing of traditional Christmas songs.

After a period of carol singing and a time for reflection on the significance of the day, the traditions continue, just as they have been passed down from generation to generation.

Nearby is an evergreen, decorated with homemade ornaments of straw and lit candles. Underneath the tree is a hand carved wooden Nativity scene and finely wrapped packages. The tree, as is consistent with all evergreen symbolism, represents Christ, and the hope for salvation in all men. The lighted candles symbolize Christ, the light of the world, who comes each year at Christmas to all in a special way, to dispell all darkness and gloom, to replace it with the light of joy and happiness. The gifts under the tree represent the special gifts that Christ bestows on us all at Christmas.

Traditional also is the symbolic feeding of the souls. Bread and salt are placed under the Kucios table for the visiting souls.



Following the meal are burtai (literally translated as games of chance) to guess the future, with some degree of accuracy, I might add, about such topics as one's life, one's career, a possible upcoming marriage or details of the next year's harvest.

Molten wax is pured into a cup of water. The resultant wax figure is used to speculate on one's future career. The straw, which was placed under the Kucios tablecloth is drawn by all those who shared in the Kucios meal. The one who draws the longest straw will have the longest life, those who draw the shorter straws will have a shorter life.

The women of the family look to the Kucios traditions to give them some indication if they will be married and when. The women, according to one tradition listen from which compass direction dogs are barking, because it is from there that her suitors will come. In another burtas, the women, each in turn, run outside the house barefoot and randomly pick up some firewood. Each in turn brings the wood inside and counts the number of pieces carried in. If an even number of pieces was brought in, marriage is in her foreseeable future, but if an odd number results, she will remain single, well anyway, at least until after next Kucios. The slizikai (the hard biscuits served earlier at the meal) are counted by all family members after each grabs a handful. Again, as in the case of the wood mentioned earlier, an even number means marriage, and an odd number means staying single, for awhile at least.

Another tradition in which all participate requires a few items and is a variation on the popular shell game. Three cups are used. A piece of bread is placed under one of the cups, under the second - a rosary is placed and under the third - a golden ring. Again the women are given first choice. If the cup covering the bread is chosen, it means that she will toil hard for her bread her entire life. If the rosary is chosen she will enter the convent or if the ring is chosen, she will be married.

With these traditions completed and also after having exchanged gifts, the entire family sets out together for Berneliu Misios, literally, the Sheperd Boys' Mass - the first Mass of Christmas at midnight, together with the entire township, to greet the Newborn Christ in a special way. Traditional is a hymn, Sveikas Jezau Gimusis - Hail the Newborn king.

It is believed that precisely at midnight on Christmas, all the water in the rivers, streams, lakes, and wells changed to the best of wine, but only for a fleeting moment. Also, it was believed that precisely at midnight the animals would begin to speak. You are to be cautioned though, that, those who would make it a point to listen to the animals conversations, would hear the graphic details of his own death.

Some of the hay that was placed on the Kucios table is fed as a special treat to the animals, but as tradition has it, none of the hay from the table is given to the horses, because the horses did not warm the infant Christ in the stable at Bethelhem, as did the other animals.

After the midnight mass, the joyous celebration continues with community carolling for the parish priests. Following this, all return home for a bountiful breakfast, then all go to rest full of the happiness that the birth of Christ brings to all people.

These are but some of the many colorful traditions surrounding the celebration of a Lithuanian Christmas, traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation for ages. Since June 15, 1940 when the Soviet Union subjugated Lithuania, celebration of these traditions has been forcibly held in secret because the primarily religious observances has been outlawed by Soviet Edict. It will be interesting to see if the current rebirth "Atgiminas" movement in Lithuania will result in a change in conditions. Yet for nearly 50 years the Soviets regard any public manifestation of religious fervor as threatening to the state.

So as we prepare to celebrate Christmas here in the free world, let us be thankful for our freedom to celebrate Christmas in our own special way and let us also remember those who are forced to bear religious persecution, the denial of all basic human rights and who call out to us, to aid them in their quest for justice.

May the Joy of Christmas surround you
May the Beauty of Christmas bring you happiness
May the Significance of Christmas enrich your lives
And may the Hope of Christmas live within you for
all of time.



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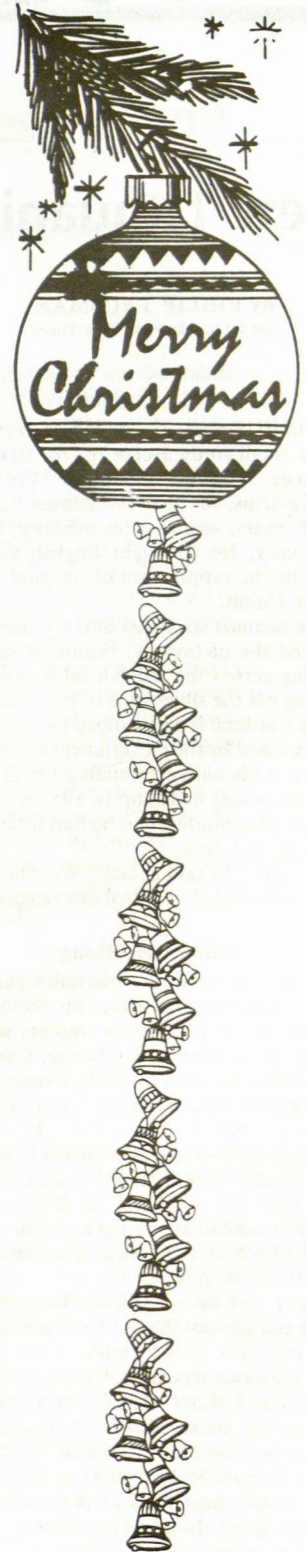


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Others About Us

New Lithuania Cardinal Part of Nationalist Surge

By PHILIP TAUBMAN
Special to The New York Times

VILNIUS, Oct. 23—It was perfectly still in the small study except for the ticking of a large wooden clock as Vincentas Sladkevicius, the first Lithuanian Cardinal in 300 years, searched his memory, than a dictionary, for the right English word to describe the suppression of religion in the Soviet Union.

The seconds stretched into minutes as he scanned the dictionary, beams of sunlight glinting across the red felt table cloth and glancing off the silver rims of his spectacles.

The Cardinal is accustomed to silence. He was confined by the Government to a remote hamlet in his native Lithuania for 25 years after becoming a Bishop in 1957 a quarter century of solitude when he had little to do but read and pray.

"Control," he said at last. "We don't want the Government to control our religious activity."

Nationalism Rising

As long-suppressed nationalist passions have surged to the surface in the Soviet republic of Lithuania in recent weeks, reshaping the political landscape, Cardinal Sladkevicius has worked quietly to encourage the change while preventing it from running out of control.

A grass-roots political movement, spawned by the nationalism, held its inaugural congress over the weekend in Vilnius, the republic's capital, approving a platform that would all but sever political, economic and cultural ties with Moscow.

"There can be an alliance between the church and the movement," the Cardinal said in an interview at his simple, wood-frame house in Kaisiadorys, a small town amid rolling farmland about 45 miles northwest of Vilnius. He spoke slowly in English, a language he taught himself during his 25-year exile in Nemunelio Radvilisks, a settlement of 200 people near the Latvian border.

"When good things begin, however, we must learn to wait and not be in a hurry," he said. "Everything good must grow. It cannot happen at once."

Although Cardinal Sladkevicius did not attend the two-day congress, more than a dozen of the 1,021 delegates were priests, several of them actively taking part in the discussion.

48 Years of Soviet Rule

The Cardinal's role and that of the church are important to the movement's future because Catholicism has remained a binding force among Lithuanians despite 48 years of Soviet rule in the Baltic territory and concerted efforts by Moscow to erase religion from Lithuanian life.

Native Lithuanians make up 80 percent of the republic's population of 3.6 million. Well over half of them are Catholic believers, the Cardinal said.

The Soviet Union annexed Lithuania in 1940, along with neighboring Latvia and Estonia. The three Baltic states were independent countries between the two world wars.

Cardinal Sladkevicius, dressed in a black cassock trimmed in red, welcomed two American visitors. An old peasant woman tended a small garden in the backyard that was strewn with the last leaves of autumn. A large redbrick cathedral stood nearby, overshadowing the town's squat Communist Party headquarters across the street.

Since Mikhail S. Gorbachev became Soviet leader in 1985, the Cardinal said, Government suppression of religion in Lithuania has eased slightly. Cardinal Sladkevicius, who is 68 years old, was named a Cardinal in July by Pope John Paul II.

"Gorbachev has made a beginning," he said. "There have been significant political and economic changes in our life, but so far very insignificant change in the sphere of religion."

125 Students in Seminary

The republic's sole seminary, in Kaunas, has 125 students, a fourfold increase over the number permitted before 1985.

The Cardinal said it might be possible sometime soon to send seminary students to Rome to study. The Cardinal and some of the seven other Lithuanian bishops have been able to travel to the Vatican.

In a good-will gesture to the church and indirectly to the political movement, the Government this year ended the 27-year internal exile of Bishop Julijonas Steponavicius and permitted him to visit the Vatican. He returned to a hero's welcome in Vilnius on Saturday.

In another gesture, the Government returned Vilnius Cathedral to church control. The cathedral, seized by the Government after annexation, had been used a museum of atheism.

Still Unequal Forces

But Catholicism and Communism continue to be unequal forces in the republic.

Dozens of parishes in Lithuania remain without priests and are to stay that way for the foreseeable future, the Cardinal said.

Secular authority is still strong. The Government body that supervises religion in Lithuania, the Council on Religious Affairs, still sets strick limits on the church.

When talking about the chairman of the council, Petras I. Anilionis, Cardinal Sladkevicius raised his left hand toward the ceiling in mock obeisance to a higher authority.

"I knew him when he was an altar boy," he said with a smile.

Was Ordained in 1944

Cardinal Sladkevicius, the son of a farmer, said he entered the seminary in 1938, when Lithuania was independent and supported four seminaries. He was ordained in 1944 when the republic, part of the Soviet Union, was under German occupation.

On Christmas Day 1957 he became a Bishop. He was summoned to Vilnius the next day to meet with Government officials, and before a week had passed was sent into an exile that lasted until 1982.

Asked about the future of Lithuania and the chances for regaining independence, Cardinal Sladkevicius once again turned to the dictionary.

"Autonomy," he said, his finger pointing to the word, "Yes, autonomy is possible." And independence?

"For God, all things are possible," he said.

Thousands March in Baltic Capitals, Airing Resentment

A CHALLENGE TO MOSCOW

With State Permits, They Cite Nazi-Soviet Pact and Use Nationalist Slogans

BY BILL KELLER

Special to The New York Times

Tens of thousands of demonstrators, some demanding independence from Moscow, marched through the capitals of the three Baltic republics tonight to mark the anniversary of the 1939 Nazi-Soviet pact that led to the Soviet takeover of their region.

Speakers denounced the official Soviet version of history, which says the republics—Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia—joined the Soviet Union freely. Witnesses said many banners and speeches directly attacked Soviet authority.

Officials in the three republics granted permits for the rallies, making this the first time they have sanctioned such an open discussion of this emotionally charged period in Baltic history. A year ago protesters marched in defiance of authority.

One-Sixth of a City's People

The official press agency Tass said that 100,000 people, about one-sixth of the city's population, turned out in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, and another 10,000 gathered in another Lithuanian city, Kaunas.

In Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, a crowd estimated at more than 8,000 filled the town hall and an adjoining hockey rink to hear speakers discuss the nonaggression pact of 1939, under which the Baltic states were annexed.

"The signing of the pact resulted in the occupation of Estonia," a crowd estimated at more than 8,000 filled the town hall and an adjoining hockey rink to hear speakers discuss the nonaggression pact of 1939, under which the Baltic states were annexed.

There were no reports of arrests in any of the demonstrations

Annexed in 1940

Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, after a period of independence that followed World War I, were annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940 under a secret protocol of the 1939 treaty.

The existence of the secret protocol became known at the end of World War II, when the Western allies seized it from the German archives and made it public. The key portion put Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Soviet "sphere of interest."

The official Soviet position, as stated last week, is that there is no proof the protocol existed and that the German copy made public in the west may be fraudulent. The Soviets say the Baltic lands willingly accepted Soviet rule.

This month, an Estonian newspaper became the first official Soviet publication to describe the secret protocol.

Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader, has called for giving the republics greater control of their economic affairs and equal status for their native languages, but Moscow has firmly rejected any talk of full independence.

The decision to permit the rallies appeared to be part of a policy of courting greater support in the Baltic republics by tolerating nationalist displays, even when they sometimes show hostility to Soviet power.

The authorities seem to hope that the sentiment for actual independence is limited, and that majorities in the three republics can be won over if Moscow respects their cultural heritage and offers a degree of home rule.

While the demonstrators use the catchwords and slogans of independence, the actual goals of most appear to be more limited—some form of home rule, including the power to limit the russification of their languages and cultures, and greater freedom to develop their economies.

The three republics are tiny, but they are important to Mr. Gorbachev as showplaces because they have taken to his program of economic decentralization much more readily than other parts of the country.

In Riga, where a year ago demonstrators and the police clashed in the streets, a crowd of 20,000 assembled today at the central monument to freedom and chanted slogans of independence, a participant said.

"Freedom for Latvia!" they shouted. A red banner declared implicit solidarity with other lands in the Eastern bloc by listing the dates of Soviet interventions in Eastern Europe: 1979—Poland, 1956—Hungary, 1968—Czechoslovakia."

Flags and Symbols

In Riga and Tallinn, demonstrators carried placards of the hammer and sickle joined to the swastika, and bore the flags that flew over the Baltic states during independence.

The Tass report of the large turnout in Vilnius was extraordinary, since on the same date last year only about 500 Lithuanians marked the anniversary.

Tass said a senior official of the Lithuanian Communist party addressed the crowd. The Tass report portrayed the gathering as having been held in honor of victims of Stalin, and omitted any mention of the secret protocol.





**LITHUANIA'S CARDINAL
VINCENTAS SLADKEVIČIUS**

Lithuanian Cathedral Returned

VILNIUS, Oct. 23 (AP)— Tens of thousands of Lithuanians carrying torches and their national flag marched yesterday to a cathedral the Soviet government said it will return to the Roman Catholic Church.

The procession began immediately after a Lithuanian nationalist group was told the government had acceded to demands to return the 14th Century Vilnius Cathedral to its original use.

The Vilnius Cathedral was a center of Christianity in the Middle Ages and its confiscation by the officially atheist Soviet government had angered many Lithuanians.

"It's been so many years, I just can't believe it," a 67-year-old Catholic woman said. The woman, who marched as the scent of burning candles and torches filled the air, said she had prayed at the cathedral as a girl, before it was converted into an art museum in 1950.

The announcement came at the end of the first day of a two-day conference of the

Lithuanian Restructuring Movement, a broadly backed group that is considering the most militant nationalist demands yet from the three Soviet Baltic republics.

"The Lithuanian government has decided to return the Vilnius Cathedral to believers as of Oct. 22," an official of the movement told more than 1,000 delegates and hundreds of guests assembled in the Vilnius Sport Palace.

Members of the audience took to their feet, clapping and cheering in the direction of the republic's new reform-minded Communist Party chief, Algirdas Brazauskas.

On Friday, Brazauskas told a news conference that services would be allowed in the cathedral every Sunday and that another church converted into a museum would be returned to its original use in March.

But Catholic officials were not satisfied and said they would boycott the Vilnius Cathedral until it was completely turned back to the church.

An estimated 4 million Roman Catholics live in the Soviet Union—about half of them in Lithuania.

The return of the cathedral was the latest in what many Lithuanians consider a dizzying period of change in the republic. Brazauskas is a product of that change. He was named to head the party just two days ago, replacing Ringaudas Songaila, a conservative who had expressed only lukewarm support for the restructuring group.

Brazauskas had no reservations.

"I'm sorry to say that in its evaluation of the movement, there were mistakes, and some were also made by the (party) Central Committee," Brazauskas told the 1,100 delegates in a speech.

Brazauskas met with Mikhail S. Gorbachev last week and said the Soviet president believes the Lithuanian group can help perestroika, Gorbachev's plan to restructure society.

Lithuanians Move to Limit Moscow Ties

BY PHILIP TAUBMAN

Special to The New York Times

Vilnius, Oct. 23—The inaugural congress of a grassroots political movement in the Soviet republic of Lithuania today approved a founding platform dedicated to curtailing, but not totally eliminating, Soviet rule in Lithuania.

With emotions and hopes running high, more than 1,000 delegates representing the new group, the Lithuanian Movement for the Support of Perestroika, voted at the end of their two-day meeting to endorse resolutions that would all but sever the political and economic links with Moscow that have existed since the Soviet Union annexed Lithuania in 1940.

A Rally by 200,000

After a last-minute appeal today for caution and patience from Lithuania's newly appointed Communist Party leader, Algirdas Brazauskas, the congress stopped short of calling for full independence, dropping from its platform a resolution calling for the right of the republic to secede from the Soviet Union.

Cheered by thousands of supporters who attended the meeting at the indoor sports arena in Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, and a crowd of more than 200,000 that gathered Saturday evening for a torchlight rally downtown, the delegates seemed, in a single weekend to vent decades of Lithuanian anger and frustration.

"After 50 years of repression, our nation is seeking to regain its liberty," Jurgis Oksas, a historian, told the congress on Saturday. He was one of dozens of delegates to address the often-raucous gathering from a lectern placed before a huge red, green and yellow banner—the Lithuanian national colors that until recently were illegal to display.

Another delegate, Antanas Terlackas, advocating immediate steps toward full independence, brought the delegates to their feet when he declared, "The Soviet Government must withdraw its occupational military forces from Lithuania."

Resolution Details

The resolutions approved by the congress, while not going quite that far, would give

Lithuania wide latitude in managing its own economy, establish a separate Lithuanian currency, permit the republic to maintain diplomatic missions abroad, make the Lithuanian language the official tongue, and expose details of the 1939 Soviet-Nazi nonaggression pact that sanctioned the annexation of Lithuania.

The meeting, which was broadcast live on Lithuanian television day and night, attracting hundreds of thousands of viewers, was the latest in a series of remarkable political gatherings in recent weeks in the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Estonia and Latvia, like Lithuania, were independent nations between the world wars and were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940.

Emboldened by Mikhail S. Gorbachev's call for increased democracy, tens of thousands of citizens in the three republics have established independent political movements that are challenging the Communist Party's monopoly on power.

Rewriting the book on permissible political activity in the Soviet Union, the movements have made demands for political, economic and cultural autonomy acceptable that only a few months ago were considered tantamount to treason. The movements rooted in long-suppressed nationalist sentiment, have thrown local party organizations on the defensive.

Mr. Brazauskas, the new Lithuanian party leader, was appointed Thursday, two days before the congress opened, in an apparent effort to defuse anti-party hostility in the reform movement. The new group, known formally as the Movement for the Support of Perestroika, is widely called Sajudis, or Movement.

Mr. Brazauskas, like his counterparts in Latvia and Estonia, quickly offered sympathy and cautious support to the new political force in his backyard, leaving the impression that the party is prepared to tolerate considerable change, but not outright independence, of the Baltic region.

A Model for Change?

Mr. Gorbachev seems to hope that the Baltic republics, more Westernized and industrious than other regions of the country,

can political change while avoiding the kind of nationalist tensions that have shaken the republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan this year.

Mr. Brazauskas, conceding party errors in the handling of Sajudis, including initial efforts to discourage its formation, told the congress in a speech on Saturday, "The goals of Sajudis reflect the interests of all people residing in Lithuania."

He added, "We should not be frightened by the fact that activities and views of Sajudis differ to some extent from those of the party."

Sajudis has made clear that it intends to nominate its own candidates for government and party posts in elections.

Mr. Brazauskas, who was greeted warmly by the delegates, told them that Mr. Gorbachev wished to extend greetings to the gathering and had told him last week that he saw in Sajudis "the driving force of reform capable of strengthening the authority of Lithuania."

Other Lithuanian party leaders sat grimly through the congress in the grandstands. Every time a speaker thundered against the established order, the party leaders, most of them older men in dark suits, seemed to flinch, then applauded weakly as hundreds of delegates turned to observe their reaction.

In a news conference Friday, Mr. Brazauskas said he was eager to improve relations between the party and the Roman Catholic Church.

Of Lithuania's population of 3.6 million, 80 percent are Lithuanian. The Catholic Church claims 2.5 million believers in the republic.

A number of delegates took pains to note that Sajudis does not advocate discrimination against nationalities that are minorities in Lithuania, including Russians and Poles. But the congress, like the initial meetings of independent political movements in Estonia and Latvia, endorsed a proposal to limit immigration into the republic.

Out of the 1,021 delegates to the conference, 980 were Lithuanians and 8 Russians. Sajudis says it has a membership of 180,000.

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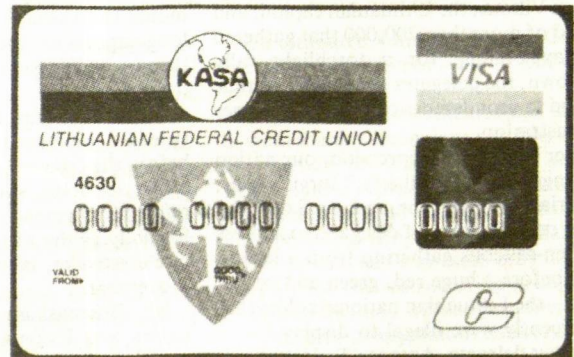
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60629 60650 Hickory Hills, IL
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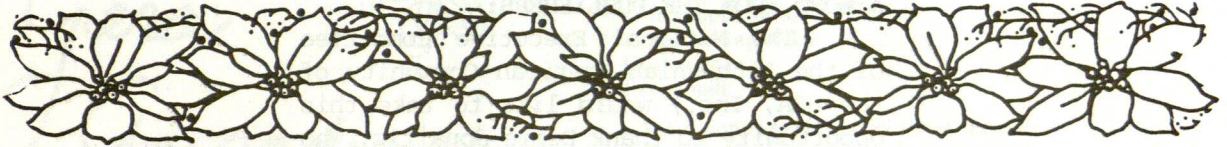
Lithuanian VISA Credit Card

KASA, the largest Lithuanian Credit Union in the world has come up with a Lithuanian first—a beautiful, authentic, genuine credit card. It is adorned with KASA logo, the stylized symbol of statehood—Vytis and the bold and beautiful tricolors of the Lithuanian flag. Furthermore, it is not just a display of Lithuanian symbols and colors—it is the real thing, a real VISA card that every Lithuanian can be proud of.

Most of us know how practical and useful credit cards are when shopping, traveling or renting a car. Many of us already own one or more credit cards that we frequently use. Why not add a Lithuanian Credit Union VISA card to our valued possessions? As you will find out, KASA credit card is less expensive to obtain and the credit rates are much lower than at most of the major banks. You can close your present VISA account and switch over to the KASA credit card service for the most practical display of smart financing and Lithuanian solidarity.



Call or write to the nearest KASA branch office listed in the BRIDGES ad below and request for information and an application for the one and only Lithuanian credit card in the world.



PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF SILUVA

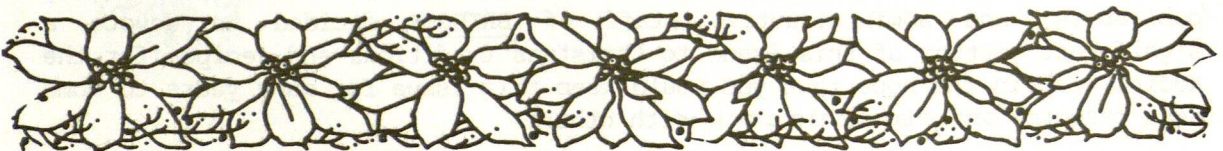
Holy Mary, Vessel of election,
 Mother of God and Mediatrix of all graces,
 Love came to you that memorable day
 When the Word took flesh in your virginal womb.
 You gave Him to us in human form
 To begin His Kingdom on earth.

As a sign of predilection you first appeared
 To the persecuted people of Lithuania,
 In the village of the Pines, in Siluva.
 You came to save the nation
 From the errors of the Calvinists,
 The destroyers of love and veneration
 For you as the Mother of God.

Holding the Christ Child in your arms
 You revealed yourself again as the Mother of Fair Love.
 Then freedom and peace descended on the land
 Of the people of Lithuania.

Dear Lady of Siluva, we beg of you once more
 To come to the aid of Lithuania
 As you did three hundred years ago in 1608.
 Come with your grace to a people who trust in you.
 Regain for them the right to love you and your Son,
 That freedom and peace may reign once more
 In a Nation dedicated to you as Mary's land.

Sister Virginia Marie Vytell, CJC



A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHERS:

The National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian-American Community of the USA, Inc., would like to take this opportunity to thank Demie Jonaitis, who for these last several years was editor of BRIDGES, for her fine efforts, her years of dedication and her unbridled enthusiasm in making BRIDGES such an interesting and informative news journal.

The words "Thank You" do not adequately sum up our feelings as the torch is passed to a new editorial staff.

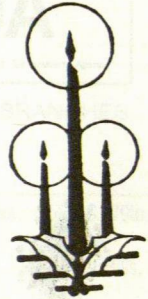
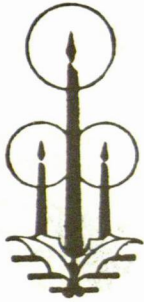
To Demie Jonaitis goes our best wishes with the hope that all she strives for in the years ahead becomes a reality.

With our heartfelt gratitude,
The Lithuanian-American Community
of the USA, Inc.

National Executive Committee

Dr. Antanas Razma

President

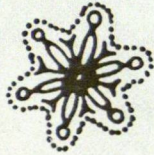
**A NOTE TO OUR READERS:**

It is the intent of the publishers and editorial staff to present timely and informative articles to our readers each month. This will continue to be our goal. If during this month of transition at BRIDGES it seems that some articles duplicate the just published October 1988 issue (specifically the Christmas/Kucios articles), we're sorry, it was not our intent to be redundant.

The celebration of Christmas is such a meaningful one for those of Lithuanian ancestry, that the traditions can be discussed from a variety of perspectives. Different perspectives can give a deeper insight regarding the significance of the day to you the reader. Therefore, the editorial staff, publishers, and administrative staff of BRIDGES decided to devote a significant portion of this issue to Christmas traditions and recipes for the Kucios meal in the hope that you would keep this issue for many years to come as a resource and share this issue with others.

1988/12-15
Bp (K) 1187

Gera Gaspadine..



POPPY SEED MILK AGUONŲ PIENAS

- ½ lb. poppy seeds
- 2 cups boiling water
- 10 almonds
- 2 cups milk

Wash poppy seeds in cool water. Pound them fine with a wooden pestle. Cover with boiling water. Blanch, peel and chop almonds, stir into seeds. Add sugar to taste, and when cool, pour in the milk. Pour over biscuits just before serving.

COLD BEET SOUP ŠALTIBARŠCIAI

- 3 bouillon cubes
- 4 cups boiling water
- 1 #2 can shoestring beets
- 2 to 3 blossoms fresh dill
- 1 stalk green onion
- 1 small cucumber
- 1 hard-boiled egg
- ½ pt. sour cream

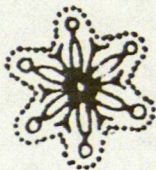
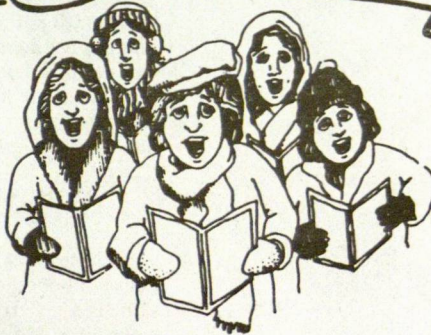
Dissolve cubes in boiling water. Add beets. Cool slightly. Add finely cut onion, diced peeled cucumber, finely chopped dill, and salt to taste. Blend in cream. Add diced egg. Chill several hours. Serve in chilled soup bowls with hot potatoes boiled in jackets. Buttermilk may be substituted for cream.

For variation, add small can deveined shrimp (well-rinsed) before chilling soup.

DRIED FRUIT COMPOTE DŽIOVINTŲ VAISIŲ KOMPOTAS

- 8 oz. prunes
- 8 oz. dried pears
- 8 oz. dried apples
- 6 cups water
- 3 to 4 tbsp. sugar
- 3 sticks cinnamon
- 6 whole cloves

Wash fruit. Soak each fruit separately in cold water overnight, allowing 2 cups water for each. In the morning, boil each fruit separately in the same water, adding a tablespoon of sugar, a stick of cinnamon and 2 cloves to each. Cool. Remove cinnamon and cloves. Combine fruits and syrups before serving.



FRIED HERRING
KEPTA SILKĖ

Soak herring overnight in cold water. Drain. Skin and slice (bones may be removed, if preferred). Dip slices in flour. Fry in hot oil until brown.

CHRISTMAS EVE BISCUITS
PRESKUČIAI, ŠLIŽIKAI

1 ounce yeast
1 tbsp. sugar
1 cup milk
½ tsp. salt
1½ cup all-purpose flour

Cream yeast with sugar. Add warm milk and salt. Sift in flour. Stir thoroughly. Put in warm spot to rise a little. If necessary, add more flour to roll. Roll about ½-inch thick with rolling pin on floured board. Cut into finger-width strips, then into bits of ½-inch or less. Bake in 350° oven until edges are light brown.



LITHUANIAN FLAGS: Tricolor of yellow, green, and red horizontal stripes are available in various sizes from the Flag Center - Flags for all occasions.

For more information contact:

John A. Ambrose
954 Beechwood Drive
Lansdale, PA 18446
Tel. (215) 855-7788

WOMEN'S LITHUANIAN NATIONAL DRESS /FOLK COSTUME: size medium made in Kauna is available through the Bridges Administration Office. For more information contact:

BRIDGES ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
341 Highland Blvd.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202
Tel. (718) 827-1351

FRUIT PUDDING
VAISIŲ KISIELIUS

Use fresh fruit or berries: apples, cranberries, currants, cherries, strawberries or raspberries. To 3 cups of berries or chopped fruit, add 3 cups cold water. Bring to boil. Force through a fine sieve. Sweeten to taste with sugar. Cool and measure. For each cup of pulp, take 1 teaspoon potato flour or starch. Stir enough cold water into the measured potato flour to make a thin paste. Stir the paste into hot fruit pulp, taking care to keep flour from lumping. Bring to a boil and continue boiling, stirring constantly, until mixture separates from sides of cooking utensil (about 5 minutes). Pour into individual dessert dishes which have been rinsed in cold water. Refrigerate. Serve with cream or milk.

HERRING WITH MUSHROOMS
SILKĖ SU GRYBAIS

3 herrings
½ lb. dried mushrooms
2 onions
2 tbsps. cooking oil

Soak herrings overnight in cold water. Skin, fillet and slice. Boil mushrooms in water until soft; drain and slice fine. Slice onions, fry lightly in oil. Add mushrooms and dash of pepper. Cool. In serving dish, place alternate layers of herring and mushroom. Let stand several hours. Garnish with parsley or onions.

MARINATED HERRING
MARINUOTA SILKĖ

Soak herrings in cold water for 6 hours. Leave in bones, or fillet, as desired. Do not skin. Leave herring whole or cut into generous slices. Make marinade by boiling equal parts of water and vinegar (quantity enough to adequately cover herring), to which have been added several peppercorns, 2 to 3 bay leaves, quartered onion, and a few grains of sugar. When cool, pour over herrings, let stand 1 to 2 days.



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