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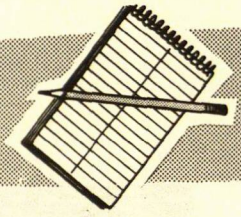
BY

RZ

Balzekas Museum of Lithuania, Culture
Chicago, IL 60629



From the Desk of the Managing Editor



Lietuva, tu man viena!

Lithuania, you are my one and only!

This sentiment pictured on the front cover of this month's *Bridges* sums up all of our emotions, goals and aspirations for the recognition of the Republic of Lithuania and the restoration of independence declared on March 11, 1990.

In the weeks that have passed, we all have experienced a roller coaster of emotions. The day the restoration of independence was declared, unbridled joy and pride in our heritage was clearly what all of us felt. When the tanks rumbled by Lithuania's Parliament, while helicopters whizzed overhead dropping anti-independence literature and when Soviet troops broke into Lithuanian hospitals to "retrieve" Soviet Army conscripts, our joy turned to uncertainty, sadness and fear for the safety of the Lithuanian people. It was said that independence and the future of the Lithuanian Republic hanged by a thread.

Mass demonstrations, letter writing campaigns, and visits with our U.S. Congressmen and Senators were conducted during the ensuing weeks, some of which have yielded positive results, such as the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 289 and the discussion of the question of Lithuanian independence during the pre-summit meetings held in Washington, D.C. between Eduard Shevardnadze and James Baker. Some political analysts say that the Gorbachev-Bush Summit is being

held one month earlier than originally planned because of the criticality of finding a swift resolution to the Lithuanian crisis.

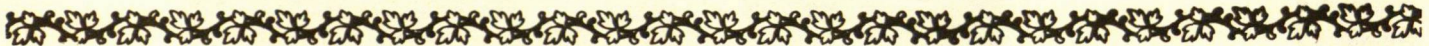
But, is it really a "crisis." In my view the declaration of the Restoration of Lithuanian Independence is the culmination of 50 years of the resistance to Soviet Rule. It is the culmination of nearly 2 years of activity by the Sąjūdis Grassroots movement. It is the Lithuanian Parliaments' response to the mandate given to it as a result of the democratically conducted elections during which a significant majority of pro-independence candidates won landslide victories. It is the will of the people made public after so many years. It is a decision that all Lithuanian-Americans support.

It's hard to believe that the Bush Administration subscribes to the long-standing policy that the Soviet Union's annexation and incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in to the USSR, as a result of the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was never legal, nor recognized by the United States. The administration seems to be deaf to the cries for recognition of Lithuanian independence. As candidate George Bush, he reiterated his support of this 50 year old policy, but as President George Bush his statements have been more discreet.

We call upon the Bush Administration to grant full diplomatic recognition to the Republic of Lithuania and the democratically elected government headed by President Vytautas Landsbergis.

Then, the "crisis" will be resolved.

Eduardas V. Mejlus, Jr.



BRIDGES

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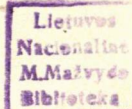
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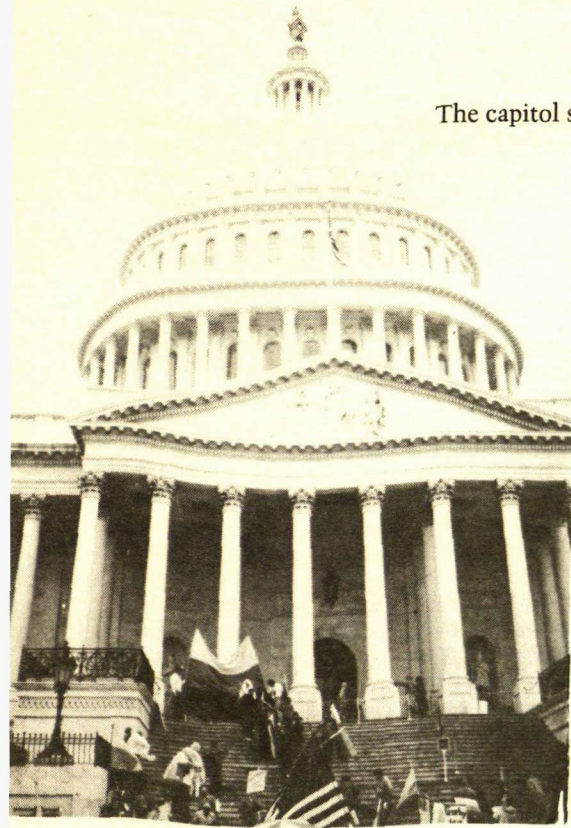
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The capitol scene. Photo by Lucija Savickas.



Demonstrations in Washington, D.C. An Eyewitness Report by Rita Likander

Ever since I was a little girl, my parents had drilled into my head that I am Lithuanian, that I should be proud of my heritage and that one day Lithuania will be free. Now I'm all grown up and not only am I Lithuanian, but all my friends are also Lithuanian, I am extremely proud to be Lithuanian and Lithuania is free (sort of!).

Lithuanians all over the world have been carefully, joyfully and tearfully following the events in their homeland since Lithuania declared the restoration of independence on March 11, 1990. The first reports from Lithuania on that day were wonderful — everybody was hugging and kissing each other and being totally amazed. People everywhere knew that Lithuania would be free one day, but nobody figured that "one day" would be so soon.

After the initial shock, anger and humiliation, Moscow started to react slowly at first, issuing ultimatums, promising talks and negotiations, then more forcefully — taking over buildings, taking Lithuanian citizens hostage and replacing members of the new Parliament. All along Gorbachev promised that no force would be used, that Lithuania can "secede" from the U.S.S.R. as long as Lithuania follows all the rules. During this time, President Bush played the waiting game, saying that the U.S. has never recognized the annexation of the 3 Baltic states, however not coming out and recognizing the new government of independent Lithuania.

Lithuanian-American communities all over America have been saying that President Bush should recognize the Republic of Lithuania, that America should be more supportive of President Landsbergis and his new government. Thousands of letters have been sent to senators and congressmen, urging them to push President Bush to recognize the Lithuanian government. Just as many telegrams have been sent to the President himself. The press has been writing very favorable articles urging the President to react strongly.

It was decided that stronger action was needed. The Lithuanian-American Community in Washington D.C. started organizing demonstrations and lobbying sessions in the Capitol itself. Lithuanians by the busloads were heading out to D.C. to demand that president Bush recognize independent Lithuania. Demonstrations have been held almost weekly, with different cities participating each time.

Lithuanians in Chicago finally got moving and eventually organized 6 buses to travel to Washington D.C. Even though many people couldn't actually go themselves, they donated money so that others could go. Chicago's entire Lithuanian community was behind the trip to the nation's capitol — everybody was with us in spirit, if not in body! We even got news coverage in the local papers and on local television as we embarked on our journey.

Chicago's delegation to Washington left at 8:30 PM Tuesday evening (April 3) and returned back to Chicago at 9:00 AM Thursday. It was an exhausting and emotional trip!! The ride to D.C. took over 15 hours and there are only so many ways to sit still for all that time.

The closer we came to D.C., the more excited everybody became — people were waking up, chattering and getting ready for a full day. The weather in D.C. was terrible — cloudy, gloomy and rainy. That didn't deter us from getting together with hundreds of Lithuanians from other cities to express our discontent with the President's reaction to the situation.

According to the program we had, the first event was the demonstration at 11:00 AM in front of the White House. Even though the buses were organized from Chicago, the program itself was set up by the Lithuanian-American Community in D.C. Due to a law regarding crowd control, no more than 250 people could demonstrate on the steps of the Capitol. Due to the fact that Chicago's delegation kept getting bigger all the time and also because other cities were also attending these demonstrations, we were split up.

All the Chicago buses, as well as the people from Cleveland, Tampa/St. Pete., Philadelphia and Baltimore were scheduled to start at the White House, while other groups from Boston, Worcester, New York and Detroit went straight to the Capitol.

In the drizzling rain, we unloaded our buses and proceeded to move toward the White House. Carrying multi-colored posters and banners, waving the yellow, green, and red tricolor of our nation and wearing our national folk costume we made an impressive sight. The crowd in front of the White House swelled considerably when all 300 of us joined its ranks. The flags were seen from miles around. Many of the posters shouted "Push Bush", "Broccoli — no,

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Demonstrators on the steps of the Capitol. Photo by Lucija Savickas.

Lithuania — yes", "Lithuania wants its freedom", "Red army go home", "How long must we wait — isn't 50 years long enough?". Some of the posters were very elaborate and very artistic, some were very simple, but they all got the message across! The crowd, making a gigantic circle in front of the White House, chanted saying — "What do we want? — freedom. When do we want it? — now. Who do we tell? — Bush", "No freedom — no summit", "No recognition — no reelection", "President Bush, Mr. Quayle, Lithuania is not for sale" which was later changed to "President Bush, Mr. Quayle — let's put you two for sale"/!!!/ and many others.

Despite the rain, people were in a remarkably good mood, hoping that this would convince Mr. Bush to recognize Lithuania. Two of the demonstrators were Lithuanian-Americans who had served in the Vietnam war and their posters proclaimed: "We fought for the spirit of America, where is the spirit of America now?" Present among the many Lithuanian flags were also Latvian and Estonian flags. The Baltic States were showing solidarity in this regard.

By about 1:00 PM, the demonstration had dwindled from about 1500 people to maybe 150 people. The rain did not scare anybody away, but all the cities had appointments to see their senators and congressmen between 1:00 and 3:30 PM. The demonstrators packed up their posters, banners and flags and moved on to conquer Capitol Hill.

Here everybody was met by Darius Sužiedelis, member of the Lithuanian-American Community in Washington and president of Lithuanian Youth Association — of the USA. He told us where to find the senators and the congressmen and also gave last minute pointers on what to say when addressing the politicians. Different groups had appointments for different times, so many Lithuanians teamed up and went to visit other senators. A large group from Chicago waited for over an hour to see Senator Simon, while Senator Dixon never showed up. Various Chicago groups and delegations visited the offices of our congressmen.

Lipinski, Russo, Hydes, Porter, Yates, Savage and others, trying to ask the congressmen to put some pressure on President Bush. The meetings were started by thanking each congressmen for supporting us so far and asking for their continued support. The spokesperson for each group then presented a list of things we were asking our

congressmen to do on our behalf. We asked them to push Mr. Bush in recognizing independent Lithuania, to do something about getting foreign journalists back into Lithuania, to ask Mr. Bush to invite President Landsbergis to address a joint session of Congress and to nominate Lithuania's President Landsbergis for the Nobel Peace Prize. Many of the people from our bus that went lobbying were rather disappointed with the congressmen's comments. It seems that most of the statements were said to placate us, to make it sound that we should be happy with what has been done so far. Mikhail Gorbachev was only trying to intimidate the Lithuanians, trying to provoke them into starting riots when he pulled foreign journalists out of



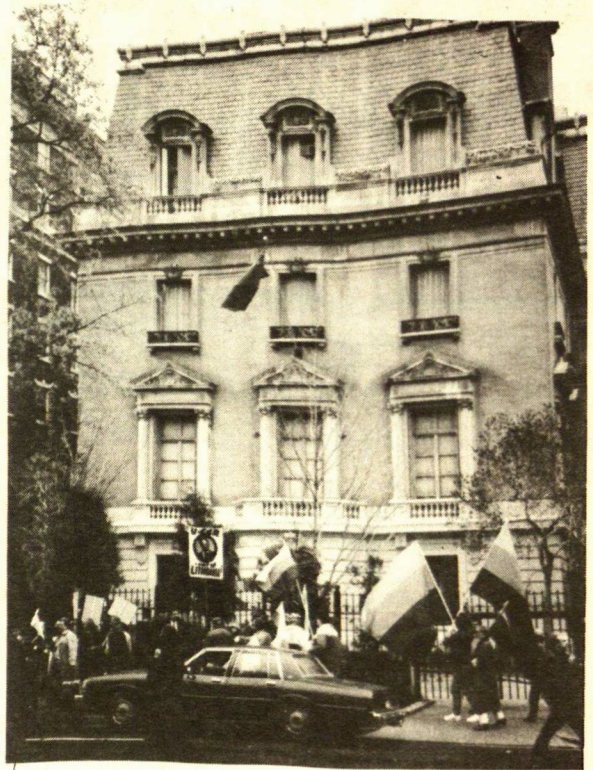
Demonstrators near the White House. Photo by Lucija Savickas.

Lithuania and started taking over buildings, we were told. Everything will be okay and one day (understood by most as Not right Now), Lithuania will be a free and independent republic, they told us. Most of the congressmen did like the idea of nominating Landsbergis for the Nobel Peace Prize and said that they would try to get Bush to do that. Visiting the congressmen was definitely a learning experience!!!

After these sessions in the House and the Senate, our buses picked us up for our third and final destination — the Soviet Embassy!! It was amazing and awesome to see so many people already there when we arrived. This demonstration was scheduled to start at 5:00 PM. The rain had stopped by now and people were definitely excited, nervous and very emotional. The sea of Lithuanian flags was so thick that you couldn't see anything else. There was a small group of demonstrators right in front of the embassy everybody else was across the street. Both sides worked together to try to coordinate the chants, cheers, boos and hisses. The crowd of Lithuanian-Americans with few other nationalities mixed in, went from almost corner to corner, 12 to 13 deep in some areas. Estimates put the crowd to be between 4000-5000 in front of the Soviet Embassy.



When do we want freedom? Now... Photo by Lucija Savickas.



The view in front of the Soviet Embassy. Photo by Lucija Savickas.

This demonstration was definitely the high point of the day. Members of embassy peered nervously out of the windows and were escorted out by back doors, while cameras perched on the roof scanned the crowd and recorded our every move. Everybody was hoping to see Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze who was in Washington conferring with Secretary of State James Baker. We really wanted to give him a piece of our minds!!! I have never seen so many police in my entire life!! They had paddy wagons, all their riot gear in backseats and they kept bringing in reinforcements!!!! (It was funny — but now we had a small taste of how Lithuanians in Vilnius are feeling. Lithuanians are a peaceful people armed only with posters, chants, songs, and love for their country, trying to deal with tanks, guns, force, and riot gear!!) The crowd of demonstrators in Washington was relatively quiet, singing the National Anthem and other patriotic songs several times. Chants, boos and hisses rang out when anyone walked out of the Embassy. I guess the policemen were really worried that we were going to storm the Embassy /maybe we should have!!/ It was definitely an exhilarating feeling and we're all glad we had a chance to be there.



Demonstrators for Recognition of Lithuanian Independence. Photo by Lucija Savickas.

We really didn't want to leave because we were afraid we would miss something, but we did have a long bus ride home. We loaded up our buses, brought as many Washington papers as were available and took leave of the nation's capitol.

Despite all the headaches that were involved in organizing the buses and the long bus ride, everybody was glad that they were part of the rally for Lithuania's

recognition. Was anything accomplished by these demonstrations?? We certainly think so. For one thing, it unified thousands of Lithuanians from all over America — young, old, blue collar, college educated, men, women, religious, non-religious to take actions for U.S. recognition of Lithuania. We were noticed and hopefully listened to. Our congressmen promised to continue their support and will try to make the President see the light. They will continue to push President Bush on our behalf. We won't give up. President Bush — WE NEED YOU NOW!!!

P.S. People are already gearing up for the massive demonstrations in D.C. and elsewhere during the summit meeting between Bush and Gorbachev scheduled for May 30 thru June 3. Contact your local Lithuanian-American Community Chapter for further details. See you there!!



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If you should have an interest in organizing a group, please contact:

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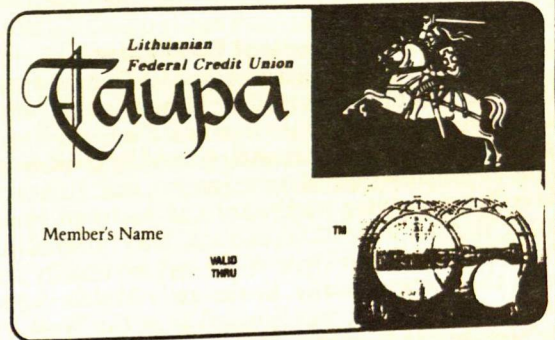
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Editor's Note: This article by one of the Bridges' contributing editors is the second of a series devoted to "Lithuania and Others." It is published in the hope of spurring thought and discussion on this timely topic. It is hoped that this article will be evaluated in this spirit and context, and that our readers will comment upon the issues raised in the piece. Representative responses will be published in future issues.

How To Live With The Bear Sajūdis, Lithuanians, Russians And Others

by Thomas A. Michalski, Ph.D.

Like it or not, today, about 10% or more of the population of Lithuania is Russian. To the east of Lithuania, with a total population of about 3.7 million, lies Russia, "The Colossus of the North" with a population of some 120 million. It does not take a political genius to discover that based upon simple numbers alone, Lithuania can never be totally "independent" of all Russian influence, no more than Canada can be totally free of American influence.

An Historical Overview

Lithuanian-Russian relations span 1000 years of history. The ancestors of today's modern Lithuanians at one time inhabited most of what we now call European Russia in prehistoric times together with Finno-Ugric tribes which were eventually pushed into Estonia and Finland. The Slavs began moving northward and eastward from the Pripet Marshes some 1000 years ago. They mingled in with the Baltic and Finno Ugric tribes and eventually assimilated them linguistically. In the early Middle Ages, the land we call Russia, was invaded from the West by the Lithuanians, and Teutonic Knights, and from the East, by the Mongols. As a result, the people we call Russians today are a mixture of Slav, Lithuanian, Finno Ugric and Mongolian stock. In 988 the Ukraine accepted Eastern Christianity from Constantinople, which later spread northward into the lands we now call Russia.

From the earliest times, Lithuanians resisted incursions of the Russians into Lithuania. In the 13th and 14th centuries Lithuania expanded eastward, incorporating Byelorussia, the Ukraine and parts of what we call Russia today into the Lithuanian Grand Duchy. There was little resistance to Lithuanian expansionism. In fact, many of the Eastern Slavic peoples including many Russians welcomed Lithuanian rule. Lithuania became the champion and defender of Russia against the Mongols. The non-Christian Lithuanian princes who ruled in the east oftentimes accepted Byzantine Christianity and Russian wives. Under their influence Church Slavonic became the language of the Lithuanian chancery and Lithuanian law. It was the pronounced policy of the Lithuanian Grand Dukes to unite all of Russia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia under their sceptre. They were well on their way to doing so. Yet, as Lithuanian power grew in the east, Eastern Slavic culture began to gain the ascendancy among the Lithuanian magnates and the Grand Ducal court. In the "natural" course of things, it seemed that Lithuania would become absorbed by the Russians culturally in the process, just as the earlier Balts, had been east of Lithuania proper.

With the acceptance of Roman Catholicism as the state religion of the Lithuania proper and the finalization of

that acceptance by Jogaila and Vytautas in the 14th century, Lithuania turned unequivocally to the west. The Lithuanians became Roman Catholic and the Russians, Russian Orthodox. The religious rift between the two peoples became irrevocable into our day. A new center rose in the east, Moscow, which under the spiritual guidance of the Russian Orthodox Church, became the "Gatherer of the Russian lands" and all Orthodox believers. The Russian Grand Dukes, then the peers of the Lithuanian Grand Dukes, assumed the title of *tsar* or *caesar*, and proclaimed themselves the successors of the Byzantine and Roman *caesars*. It was the destiny of Russia to reestablish the world empire of the past, an Orthodox Christian empire. It was the duty of the Russian Empire to reconquer all of the lands lost to the Lithuanians and to bring the Lithuanians into the "true faith" of Russian Orthodoxy. With the partitions of the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth in the 18th century, the Russian Empire annexed most of Lithuania proper. For almost 125 years, every effort was made to russify Lithuania and forcibly incorporate the Lithuanians into the Russian Orthodox state religion. As a consequence of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Lithuania was able to briefly reestablish her independence. With the signing of the Hitler Stalin Pact, Lithuania again found herself under Russian domination. Only the trappings had changed. The old tsarist Russian Orthodox messianism was replaced by Bolshevik messianism. The old tsarist autocracy was replaced by stalinism. Old uniforms and symbols were changed, the goals remained the same.

Russians and Lithuanians Today

Today there are some 144 million Russians within the confines of the USSR and only some 3.7 million Lithuanians. Within Lithuania proper there are some 200,000 Russians, broadly defined as such. Within Russia itself there are some 120 million Russians. The Russians make up slightly less than half of the total population of the USSR. Taken together with their Slavic cousins the Byelorussians and Ukrainians, they make up the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the Soviet Union. In the non-Slavic republics, particularly the Baltic States, the Central Asian states and the Caucasus they occupy the role of colonists and imperial administration and make no effort to assimilate into the local population. In some areas such as Estonia they outnumber the native population. Riga, the Latvian capital is an 80% Russian city. In Lithuania, they make up about 10% of the population and may be divided into two categories. The first are the Russians who have lived in Lithuania for generations. Many of them are Old Believers, Eastern Christians

persecuted by the tsar, and exiled to Lithuania as colonists. The second group consists of the Russians sent into Lithuania since World War II, as well as those attracted to Lithuania by a higher standard of living.

Russian Nationalists & "Internationalists"

All of the Russians in Lithuania today are not of the same opinion concerning the drive for Lithuanian independence. The same can be said of Russians in their homeland and elsewhere. One strong contingent emerging among the Russians is the Russian nationalist movement. The Russian nationalists fall into two categories. The first group is for "Russia First." It would itself "leave the USSR". It would divest itself of the Muslim Republics, the Caucasian Republics, the Baltic Republics and Moldavia. It would amalgamate with its fellow Slavic Republics of Byelorussia and the Ukraine into a "Greater Russia." It feels that as a movement it has been short-changed and Russia proper has become the "victim" of nationalist movements in other parts of the empire. Such Russians would be if not happy, at least positively reconciled with the "loss" of Lithuania and the other Baltic States to the Soviet Empire.

The so-called "internationalist wing" of Russian nationalists comprises those who would uphold the traditions of Russian imperialism. This group is heavily supported by the millions of Russians outside of Russia proper, particularly those who now hold positions of influence and power in the non-Russian republics. They view the nationalist movements in the non-Russian republics as a threat to their own privileged positions, much as the Boers in South Africa fear the African National Movement. They favor the maintenance of the imperial status-quo. They have drawn some Lithuanians, Latvians, and others to their side, particularly those who have collaborated most extensively with the occupiers and fear for their pensions. This group is loosely organized as "Pamyat" or "Memory" and "Yedinstvo" or "unity" in Lithuania. "Yedinstvo" is fighting to maintain Russian-supremacy in Lithuania. It has even turned toward agitating among the Lithuanian Poles and Lithuanian Byelorussians for support since the number of Russians in Lithuania is relatively small, but powerful and well positioned. "Pamyat" and "Yedinstvo" are successors to the Black Hundreds or *Juodasimciai* of tsarist times. They are chauvinist and openly anti-semitic.

Russians And Lithuanian Independence

In these miraculous times in East Central Europe, everything can and is happening. We have lived to see the crumbling of Soviet power all over East Central Europe. We uncritically have come to believe that somehow or another Lithuania will again be independent. Whether or not Lithuania becomes independent will to a great degree depend on the attitude toward Lithuanian independence by the Russians. If the nationalist wing of "Russia Firsters" becomes dominant, the chances for Lithuanian independence will be greater. If the "internationalists" come to hold the upper hand, the struggle for Lithuanian independence might be drawn out over decades. The simple fact of the matter is, Lithuania cannot achieve her independence without Russian cooperation, or at least "benign neglect."

The Russians have a cause to fear the unknown, the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, into a minimum of 15 separate countries. There are some Russians who would simply "let Lithuania go." Others will want to negotiate treaties which will guarantee, Russian access to the Baltic, and the rights of the Russian minority population in Lithuania. Then there is the question of Kaliningrad Oblast or Lithuania Minor which has been russianized since the end of World War II and is now a separated but integral part of Russia proper. At the very least, Russia will demand a non-aligned, neutral Lithuania, access to the Baltic and resolution of the status of the Russian minority in an independent Lithuania. At the most, Russia could engineer a 1990's "partition" of Lithuania with Vilnius and the Vilnius district becoming a mixed Polish-Byelorussian "autonomous region" with Russia together with a Russian Lithuanian Minor with Kaliningrad/Karaliaučius. An independent Lithuania could be drawn within its pre-World War II borders, with Kaunas as its capital. Whatever happens, living with the bear is a difficult proposition under the best of circumstances. Expecting a bear to share its honey is hope in the miraculous. So far Sąjūdis has managed to dance with the bear. Should the bear turn on Lithuania with all of its potential fierceness, the resulting tragedy would be too horrid to contemplate.

Political Action Fund Established

Political Action to ensure and hasten the Recognition of the Lithuanian Republic and its Declaration of Restoration of Independence by the United States is in desperate need of your financial support. A fund has been established by the Lithuania Federal Credit Union **TAUPA** of South Boston to help defray these costs. All contributions to this effort should be mailed to:

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11 nights Vilnius, 1 Helsinki

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Community with a Capital "C"

The National Executive Committee of the Lithuanian-Community, Inc. met March 24-25 in its Chicago headquarters. Much of the discussion revolved around events in Lithuania and what the Lithuanian-American Community can do, what friends of Lithuania in America can do.

The members of the National Executive Committee who live in Chicago had already met in recent weeks and had all members in frequent touch by telephone, thanks to teleconference capabilities. Several National Executive Committee members joined an ad hoc committee to organize a Mass of unity and Thanksgiving for the one week anniversary of the restoration of Lithuania's independence. The Mass took place on the first week anniversary of Lithuania's independence declaration, on March 18th at Nativity B.V.M. Parish Church, the largest Lithuanian-American Roman Catholic parish. News reports indicated that about 1000 persons attended. Cardinal Bernardin of the Archdiocese of Chicago participated. Afterwards Mass attendees were joined by Richard M. Daley, Mayor of Chicago, and by members of the Lithuanian Evangelical Lutheran Church who came to join in the rally and to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony. The Mass and rally received very good media coverage.

The President of the Educational Council, Regina Kučas shared her knowledge about efforts being taken by different Lithuanian language schools. Children in Chicago and Lemont wrote letters to the President, Congressmen, Senators, and to local television stations. Mrs. Kucas has also recently visited and become familiar with the conditions at the Lithuanian language schools in Los Angeles and in St. Petersburg, FL and discussed issues such as attendance, student capabilities, and other issues. There is a small Lithuanian language school in Moscow which both the Lithuanian-American Educational Council and its counterpart in the World Lithuanian Community will seek to support in whatever way possible.

The President of the Public Affairs Council, Arvydas Barzdukas announced that Tuesday, March 27 *The Washington Post* would feature a full page ad asking for moral and financial help for Lithuania. This was thanks to an anonymous benefactor. The ad has since had a very nice response in terms of financial contributions to the Lithuanian-American Community Inc's fund "Dovana for Lietuva" (Gift for Lithuania). Checks and requests for other information have already begun arriving.

Rev. Antanas Saulaitis, SJ, president of the Religious Affairs Council told everyone that Bishop Baltakis had called for March 25th to be a day of prayer for Lithuania. Rev. Saulaitis also reminded the National Executive Committee members that Bishop Brizgys, who was consecrated a Bishop in pre-World War II Lithuania, would soon be celebrating 50 years as a bishop. Testimonial activities are scheduled for June of this year.

Birutė Jasaitis, president of the Human Services Council, has been getting volunteers to help older Lithuanian-Americans send out telegrams to the White House. One volunteer logged in 279 telegrams in one day! The Human Services Council also had a fundraiser dinner March 24th which was attended by about 100 supporters.

The **Government Affairs Office** of the National Executive Committee has been tremendously busy. From the first days after March 11th, media and the general public have been contacting the office for information, interviews, and the like. The contacts Asta Banionis had established when she first took on her duties as Director of the office stood her in good stead. From the first, the Government Affairs Office was ready with suggestions for strategies: send telegrams (they set up a Western Union telegram to the White House which was changed at least three times to reflect changing events); contact your Congressmen to seek support for house resolution 289... Every day the strategy changes.

The Government Affairs Office sent out its first issue of "Zarijos." It is to be an English language newsletter committed to "bringing up-to-date information on the key issues concerning Lithuanian-Americans, keeping you informed on U.S. government initiatives favoring the Baltic States, and providing you with news about politically active Lithuanian-Americans across the country." The newsletter subscription cost will be \$25, and ordering information can be obtained by writing the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., Government Affairs Office, Suite 108, 2060 N. 14th Street, Arlington, VA 22201.

Volunteers have stepped in to help the National Executive Committee on several levels. Two examples: a brother and sister drove in to Washington D.C. on their spring break to spend one week helping out at the Government Affairs Office. **Asta Banionis** was thus able to go to Chicago for a National Executive Committee meeting, while her assistant, Darius Suziedelis and the volunteers staffed the office. Two young professional women in Chicago spent hours organizing a sample letter for Congressmen/Senators, including names and phone numbers of Senators and Congressmen for most of the Chicagoland areas where Lithuanians live. This monumental work was photocopied in large numbers and distributed at various events over the March 24-25th weekend. This letter serves as a model for what other chapters can do. Every volunteer effort is appreciated — these are people who do not just say: "The National Executive Committee should do..." but actually provide some concrete assistance.

Technology has been utilized to its fullest extent by Lithuanian-Americans in the weeks since March 11th. The Government Affairs office of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. and the National Executive Committee

headquarters office in Chicago were certainly an example of this. On March 10th a FAX message was sent from the Washington office to the Chicago office to help mobilize efforts for what seemed to be (and turned out to be) — Lithuania's declaration of independence from the Soviet Union. Several National Executive Committee officers began relaying this request to regional and chapter officers by telephone and via FAX. Messages were relayed between Washington and Chicago by various means over the ensuing weeks. Meanwhile, the Government Affairs Office kept FAX contact with Lithuania, with the Voice of America office in Washington D.C., with the Lithuanian Legation office in Washington D.C. . .

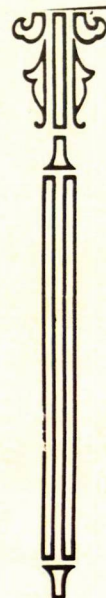
Grassroots efforts were spontaneously begun by many Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. chapter both at that time and since then. Here are a few examples. The Cicero (IL) chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community was able to take advantage of the visit of Congressman Richard Durbin for a press conference organized by the National Executive Committee in downtown Chicago. His visit to the Cicero Chapter meeting received good media coverage. In Lemont, IL, members of the local Lithuanian-American Community chapter, **Linas Norušis, executive vice-president of the Lithuanian-American Community National Executive Committee**, and other active Lithuanian-Americans took the initiative of starting a Lithuanian Hotline. Vowing to relieve the tension of the unknown, bilingual volunteers will man the phones at the World Lithuanian Center. Information will be gathered from authoritative sources such as the Voice of America office, the Lithuanian Information Center, and the Lithuanian Legation. This coordinated effort should, to some degree relieve other organization's offices from receiving phone calls from people looking for basic informa-

tion about upcoming rallies, the latest information from Lithuania, etc. The Lithuanian Hotline number is 708-257-6777. It should be mentioned that the National Executive Committee and other organizations providing start-up funding. How long such a hotline will be necessary remains to be seen.

By now, most Lithuanian-Americans know about the efforts of Congressman Richard Durbin, a Democrat from the 20th Congressional District. Richard Durbin's mother was born in Lithuania (she is now 81 years old and lives in the East St. Louis area of Illinois). Congressman Durbin's support for Lithuania has been proven on a variety of fronts. He met with Prof. Landsbergis during Landsbergis' visit to Washington D.C. several months (it seems several years ago). He and Congressman Miller wrote a letter to President Bush which over 100 other Congressmen signed. He was a sponsor of House Resolution 289. He visited Lithuania with three other Congressmen right after the February 24th elections, having been denied a visa to visit to observe the elections. Congressmen Durbin, Cox, Miller, and Sarpalius are truly friends of Lithuania.

When historians write about Lithuanian-Americans' efforts to help Lithuania, it is hoped that our efforts to unite for this just cause, seeking support from friends of Lithuania, urging appropriate response from our local governments and the branches of the U.S. government will be appreciated and evaluated. When all is said and done, our response to this urgent historic event should not be credited to one individual or to one organization because we are all striving for the same goals. The media wanted local events with which to tie in events in Lithuania. It is hoped that the many interviews and appearances many Lithuanian-Americans made will be seen for the kaleidoscope that we represent and that the various dialogs and cooperative efforts begun should continue: between Lithuania and the U.S., between Lithuanian-American organizations, between them and the media and the U.S. government.

(News items contributed by Ramunė Kubilius, of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. National Executive Committee



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Young Lithuanians will gather at the seventh Lithuanian World Youth Congress in South America during Christmas vacation of 1991-1992. Preparations are well under way in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, which sent delegates to a three-country meeting January 7-12 at the Lituania campsite near Sao Paulo. The conference elected Ariana Rastauskaite of Buenos Aires chairperson and selected the logo of the congress, the second to take place in South America. Alvydas Saplys of Toronto, president of the Lithuanian World Youth Association, participated at the meeting.

Later in January and February the organizational committees met with Dr. Vytautas Bieliauskas, president of the Lithuanian World Community, and with Henrikas Antanaitis, chairman of the VI LWYC in Australia two years ago, and a conference is scheduled at Camp Dainava

Delegates from Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay during their meeting at CAMP LITUANIKA in January. Photo by Rev. Antanas Saulaitis, SJ.



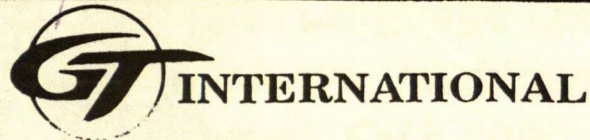
Ariana Rastauskaitė, chairperson of the VII LWYA Congress among the delegates at the Fourth South American Lithuanian Youth meeting in Brazil January 7-12. Photo by Rev. Antanas Saulaitis, SJ.

near Detroit for April 21-22. A special committee headed by former LWC president Vytautas Kamantas will assist in fund-raising and communications from its office in Grand Rapids, MI.

The VII LWYC begins in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on December 18, 1991 with a social and the official opening on the following day. The LWYA conference or study week December 20-27 will have a break day for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Four days will be spent in Montevideo, Uruguay after crossing the La Plata river in a chartered ship. On New Year's day, 1992, the participants fly directly to the Congress camp near Sao Paulo, Brazil with the closing scheduled in Sao Paulo for January 8.

It is expected that for the first time participants from Lithuania will be able to share in the experience. The Congress is sponsored jointly by the LWYA and LWC. The first LWYC was held in the U.S. in 1966.





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JUNE 7-22: — 16 DAYS — TOUR #9002. Lithuania 10 nights, Moscow 1 night; Germany 3 nights, including a Rhine River Cruise, wine-tasting tour of Heidelberg and more.
Chicago: \$2,475.00 New York: \$2,345.00

JUNE 29 - JULY 15: — 17 DAYS — TOUR #9003. SONG FESTIVAL. Lithuania 15 nights. Toronto departure for Helsinki, cruise to Tallinn, G.T. INTERNATIONAL motorcoach to Vilnius. Participate in all Song Festival activities.
Chicago: \$2,280.00 New York: \$2,165.00
(Join the group in Helsinki)

JULY 3-19: — 17 DAYS — TOUR #9005. SONG FESTIVAL. Lithuania 14 nights, West Berlin 1 night. Both Chicago and New York departures. Direct flight from Berlin to Vilnius. Participate in all Song Festival activities.
Chicago: \$2,095.00 New York: \$1,995.00

AUGUST 1-16: — 17 DAYS — TOUR #9006. Lithuania 10 nights, Vienna 2 nights, Budapest 2 nights, including a Danube River Cruise.
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Oktava — Lithuanian “Big Band” Sound

By Rita Likander

Among one of the many groups that have recently toured the United States from freedom-seeking Lithuania, the latest performers were a group called *Oktava* under the leadership of Mindaugas Tamosiunas. *Oktava* comes from a Latin word meaning eight. There are 8 members of *Oktava* — actually there are seven musicians and the bandleader. The group is made up of Mindaugas Tamošiūnas, who is not only the conductor, but a composer as well (he wrote the music to several of the songs the band performed during their concerts); Laima Tamošiūnienė, his wife, a talented and pretty lady who plays the keyboard; Dainius Pulauskas also on keyboard; Vytautas Mockunas — saxophone; Skirmantas Sasnauskas — trombone (who has also formed a jazz quartet group in Lithuania); Gintaras Šulinskas, guitar who not only plays well but writes music and sings very well; Eugenijus Kanevičius, or as he was better known to his friends as Augis — bass guitar (he also performs in Skirmantas' jazz quartet) and last but certainly not least, the keeper of the beat, the band's drummer Liudas Vaštokas, who also harmonizes with the soloists and sings several songs on his own. The musicians are all very talented people and most make their living by playing in this band. Some of them do supplement their income by playing nightclubs. The band is complemented by two very talented soloists — baritone Žilvinas Bubelis, who does a mean Elvis Presley, and tenor Liutauras Ceprackas who sings an incredibly high falsetto. Their travelling sound man is Virgilijus Vaitkus. On this, their first American tour, they were accompanied by the lovely Erika Meškauskaitė, Lithuania's Miss Gracija, an award-winning gymnast. The group's ages run from 23 to 38.

The soloists, Erika and the Bandleader in the foreground. Photo by Terese I. Meilus.



Contributing Editor Rita Likander
Photo by Terese I. Meilus

Oktava is widely acclaimed having won many awards for their compositions, performances, and concerts. They have toured 20 other countries, not counting their most recent visit to the United States and Canada. They are all professionals and they enjoy performing in front of a live audience. The two soloists especially enjoy the rapport they developed with the audience — the eye contact, the smiles, the clapping and applause. This band entertained, enchanted and performed for standing room only crowds in New York, New Jersey, Baltimore, St. Petersburg and Chicago. After their successful stay in Chicago, the group went on to conquer Detroit, Cleveland, Toronto, Putnam, Hartford, and Boston.

Since I presented a brief professional, statistical run down on the group, I thought I should add some comments about their stay in Chicago and what kind of people they are as individuals.

To tell you the truth, when I found out that Chicago was to play host to another group from Lithuania, I groaned and quivered. Enough is enough, I said. Give us a chance to



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Slide that trombone. Photo by Terese I. Meilus.

recuperate from the previous groups and I vowed not to have anything to do with this new group. All that changed when my sister brought home our two house guests and introduced us. As tired as they were, having just completed a 25 hour drive from Florida in a cramped, little mini van, they were very pleasant and friendly. We became fast friends. With the exception of the first night when they both pleaded total exhaustion, our two new friends were very talkative and enjoyed discovering new things in our town. Everything was exciting for them. Žilvinas and Liūdas lived with us for a week and after the first two days, they were no longer guests, they were family. Nightly teas (or should I say early morning teas?!) were a common occurrence every night at our house when the 4 of us (Žilvinas, Liūdas, my sister and myself) would sit in the kitchen, drinking cups of hot tea, discussing the days events as well as current events in Lithuania. On some nights, these tea sessions were replaced by the guys watching MTV (music videos) on television and getting more familiar with American rock music, dance steps and the newest videos. Since both of these guests are professional musicians, they have a big interest in current rock sounds and are especially drawn to American music. Žilvinas, and Liudas too, performed and sang songs during the concerts that were written or originally done by Eric Clapton, Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley.

Our first unofficial outing was to a bowling alley. Neither of these two guys had ever bowled before and found it amazing that you have to turn in only one of your shoes (as a security precaution, we tried to tell them), when renting a pair of bowling shoes. Their first attempts were funny, but they quickly caught on and had pretty decent scores by the end of the evening. After this we went to a local bar and introduced them to some American cocktails. It was here that they became better acquainted with another popular American pastime — pool. They had played pool before, but after daily practices in Chicago, they were actually playing very well by the end of their week's visit. They liked the Lithuanian club scene.

Of course we did the main Chicago tour — downtown, Sears Tower, John Hancock, State of Illinois building, Water Tower, some museums and anything else we could think of. They really did not have time to be bored in Chicago. Besides all the typical Chicago stuff, we also had some time to do the Lithuanian Chicago tour — Marquette Park, Darius and Girėnas monument, Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian culture, 71st Street (all the Lithuanian restaurants are located on this street), 69th street (infamous for its varied night life . . .) and of course the Youth Center which is where the concerts were held.



One must relax and enjoy, 'ya know. Photo by Terese I. Meilus.

After hearing them play for the first time on a Friday evening, I didn't know if I should be surprised or amazed. All that was missing was the bubble machine for the "Lawrence Welk" sound. I thought for sure it was going to be a boring evening as I watched all the much older couples swirling around the dance floor. There were no younger people dancing and the band wasn't making any moves to play "younger" music. They did eventually play some rock songs and all the females screamed when Žilvinas did his Elvis impersonation. The rest of the musicians are very talented and know their instruments well. The band played a great mixture of music from waltzes and tangos that the younger ones enjoyed as well, to rock numbers for the younger people that the older ones were also happy with. Their very varied repertoire includes songs by popular Lithuanian and non-Lithuanian composers, folk songs, songs with words written by Lithuanian poets Maironis and Bernardas Braždžionis, rock and roll songs by Eric Clapton and Chuck Berry, as well as several of their own compositions. Needless to say, we were all impressed with the Lithuanian big band sound.

Their week stay with us ended all too quickly. It was hard saying goodbye not only to our two boys, but the rest of the band members as well. I'm sorry that I didn't have a chance to get to know everybody better but something tells me that we will meet again — either in the States when the band comes back for repeat performances or in Lithuania when all of us will be there visiting. I know that they had a sometimes tiring, but never boring 2 month stay in the United States and Canada. They are now home with their families, their friends, their jobs and their everyday life, with wonderful memories of many happy times in North America. They should all be very proud of themselves knowing that their tour here was a huge success and that they made many people very happy. They were really a great bunch of people and I'm sure they've put others under their spell in the various cities in which they performed. I'm certainly glad that I didn't stay with my original negative attitude about another group from Lithuania and not having anything to do with them. I would not have made 12 great new friends. We'll all miss you, *Oktava*, and we wish you continued success as one of Lithuania's best bands. *Iki pasimatymo!!*

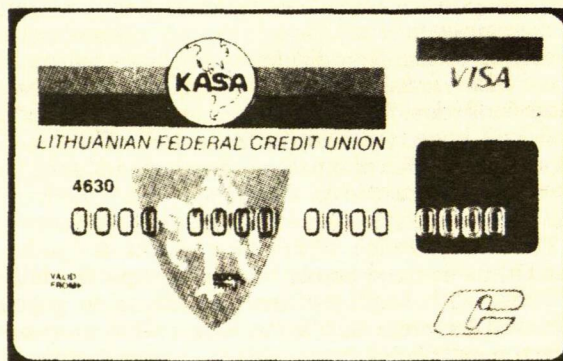


Getting "In The Mood" at Oktava's concert in Hartford, CT, seated from left: concert committee chairperson Zina Dreslius and helpers D. Gureckas, K. Likander, standing Mssrs. Nenortas and Orentas. Photo by Terese I. Meilus.

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Cooking Lithuanian Style

TORTE "NAPOLEON" NAPOLEONAS

4 cups flour
1 lb. lightly salted butter
1 pint sour cream

Sift flour onto pastry board. With pastry blender or two knives, gradually cut softened butter into flour until crumbly. Blend in sour cream. With hands, form dough into 11 or 12 egg-sized round balls. Refrigerate overnight in covered bowl. Before baking, let dough stand at room temperature about 15 minutes. Roll each ball almost wafer-thin on very lightly floured board. Roughly fit into 12-inch ungreased pie pan. Prick all over with a fork. Bake each layer at 350° 4 to 5 minutes. Cool. Stack layers atop each other. With very sharp knife, even the sides, saving trimmings for crumbs. Put layers together with

Filling

1½ lb. unsalted butter
2 cups powdered sugar
8 egg yolks
1 pkg. vanilla pudding mix
2 cups milk
½ cup half and half cream or Carnation milk
2 tsp. vanilla
juice of 1 lemon

Cream butter, yolks and sugar. Stir pudding mix into 1 cup milk. Bring to boil, stirring constantly. Gradually pour and stir pudding into butter and yolks. Scald and slowly pour in 1 cup milk, cream and vanilla. Slowly add heated lemon juice. Cool. Spread about 1 tbsp. between each layer. Frost sides and top with same filling, sprinkle with finely crumbed layer trimmings.

One or two layers may be spread with stewed apricot or apple puree or berry preserves.

PORCUPINES ĖŽIUKAI

10 egg yolks
12 egg whites
1½ cup sugar
1½ cup poppy seed
1 cup dry white bread crumbs
1 tbsp. melted butter
1½ tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. vanilla or grated lemon rind
½ cup almonds

Cream yolks and sugar. Add parboiled and drained poppy seed which has been sprinkled with a little flour and potato starch. Add egg whites beaten stiff. Combine well with other ingredients (except almonds). Bake in shallow cake tins 20-30 minutes at 350°. Cut a "foundation" piece of the cake in outline form of porcupine. Spread with filling, build up into a rounded porcupine body, using progressively smaller cut pieces of cake, spreading each layer with filling. Shape carefully to resemble porcupine. Cut a small, round piece of cake for head. Attach to body with tooth-pick. Use cloves for eyes. Ice entire cake. Prepared almond quills, insert all over the form to resemble porcupine quills.

Almond quills: soak almonds. Peel. Cut into lengthwise slivers. Brown very slightly in oven.

Filling: Beat 5 eggs in top of double boiler. While the eggs are heating, gradually stir in 1½ cup sugar. Heat and stir until thick. Cream 1½ cup of butter. Cool eggs, slowly beat in the creamed butter, a little at a time. Add vanilla or other flavoring.

Icing: boil together 2 cups sugar, ½ cup water and 1 tsp. lemon juice until quite thick. Beat well.

BREAD CIDER DUONINĖ GIRA

1½ lb. dried dark rye bread
1 gallon boiling water
1 lb. sugar
1 oz. yeast
½ Can raisins

Use small barrel or clay crock. Pour boiling water over bread. Let stand 6 hours. Strain through fine sieve or cheesecloth. Add sugar and bring to a boil. Cool till lukewarm. Add yeast creamed with small amount of sugar. Cool. Skim off foam. Pour into bottles, placing one raisin in each bottle. Cork tightly. Lay bottles on side in basement or cool spot. Ready to drink in 2 days.

LEMON LIQUEUR CITRINIS KRUPNIKAS

2 cups water
2 cups sugar
4 lemons
Rind of ½ lemon
1 pint grain alcohol

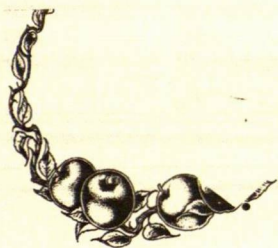
Soak the rind in ½ cup alcohol for 24 hours. Wash and quarter unpeeled lemons, add water, sugar and rind with alcohol in which it soaked. Boil carefully 15 minutes. Cool. Strain. Add the pint of alcohol. Bottle.

JELLIED PIGS' FEET KOŠELIENA

Feet and head of pig
(or equal parts calves' and pigs' feet)
1 large onion
salt
2 carrots
5 peppercorns
1 bay leaf

Singe and wash feet. Have head chopped in several pieces. Cut up onion and carrots. Place all ingredients in pot. Pour on cold water (2-3 quarts). Boil slowly until meat separates from bones. Strain liquid into bowl. Discard bones, cut meat into small pieces, add to liquid. Refrigerate until set. Invert onto plate.

Cooked meat and liquid can be spooned into muffin tins to make individual servings.



BEET SOUP WITH "LITTLE EARS"

BUOKĖLIŲ SRIUBA SU AUSIKEMIS

1 qt. water
½ onion
1 carrot
6 peppercorns
1 bay leaf
1 sprig parsley
½ stalk celery
1 tsp. butter
1 tbsp. flour
5-6 medium beets

Make bouillon of first seven ingredients. Strain, keep hot. Boil beets in water about 1½ hours. Peel and grate. Add pinch of sugar, salt, and ½ to 1 tsp. lemon juice. Melt butter, stir in flour, add to beets. Pour bouillon over beets, heat, do not boil. Place little ears in hot soup before serving.

"Little Ears"—

½ cup water
2 egg yolks
salt
flour
¼ lb. dried mushrooms
½ tbsp. butter
1 chopped onion

Soak mushrooms in cold water several hours. Rinse thoroughly. Boil in water till fairly soft. Chop, fry in butter with onion, adding salt to taste. Make a dough of the water, egg yolks, salt, adding enough flour to roll. Roll thin on floured board. Cut into 1½ inch squares. On each square put a spoonful of mushroom mixture. Moisten edges with egg white, fold over opposite sides to form triangle; press edges together tightly. Twist two ends of triangle up and over to form "ears." Boil about 5 minutes in plain bouillon, in tightly covered pan. Add to beet soup.

SAUERKRAUT SOUP KOPŪSTŲ SRIUBA

3 lbs. spare ribs
1 large onion
2 bay leaves
1 tsp. salt
5-6 peppercorns
3 qts. water
1 no. 2 can sauerkraut
½ head small cabbage, shredded

Boil ribs in water with sliced onion, salt, bay leaves and peppers for 1 hour. Add rinsed kraut. Boil ½ hour. Add cabbage, boil 15 minutes longer. Ribs may be removed and served separately, or the meat cut into pieces and placed in the soup. Serve with rye bread or hot boiled potatoes.

POTATO PANCAKES

BULVINIAI BLYNAI

6-7 medium potatoes
¼ onion
3 eggs
1 tsp. salt

Peel and grate potatoes and onion. Add well-beaten eggs and salt. Fry golden brown in small amount of hot fat or oil.

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Could An Independent Lithuania Make It On Its Own?

by Thomas A. Michalski, Ph.D.

One of the most ridiculous arguments recently offered by Moscow against Lithuanian independence which is incorrectly described as "separatism" is that Lithuania and the other Baltic Republics of Latvia and Estonia could not make it economically on their own. Since the very beginnings of the Russian occupation in Lithuania, Lithuanians in the homeland have been subjected to a barrage of propaganda from Moscow describing the "economic benefits" of "membership" in the Soviet Union. For a time, this propaganda was even believed and accepted by visitors to Lithuania from abroad. One visitor from the United States told this author "The reason shelves and stores in Lithuania are bare, is that Lithuanians have so much money, they buy up everything which appears immediately. Supply simply can not meet demand. In America, shelves and stores are full, because people are too poor to be able to afford to buy anything more than they absolutely need."

These days the old lies have been brought up-to-date. It is now argued by some Soviet apologists, that Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia simply could not survive economically without "membership" in the USSR. To listen to them, it would seem that Russia is a colony of Lithuania and the other Baltic Republics and not the other way around. They point to the fact that Russia provides Lithuania and her neighbors with cheap oil, energy and raw materials. To give "the devil his due," there is some merit in this part of their argument. An independent Lithuania would indeed have to purchase some energy and raw materials at the world market price, but they would keep the fruits, or if you will, "profits" of their labor. Nowadays, Russia might provide some raw materials, but it also takes away what is produced from them as well as the "profits." What is left, is not entirely left to the Lithuanians and their Baltic neighbors. Dozens of busses travel from deep within impoverished Russia to Lithuanian department stores, filled with passengers eager to buy what is left on the shelves, after "deliveries" have been made to other parts of the USSR.

The Balts are people of Indo-European and Finno-Ugric background. They have inhabited the area around the Baltic Sea for some 2000 years B.C.. They are mentioned by the Roman geographer Tacitus who describes them as successful farmers, cattle breeders, hunters and fishermen. In the Middle Ages, they were extremely prosperous and engaged in trade with the German States, England, Flanders, Holland and Denmark. They were the middlemen between western trade with the Russians and even Byzantium. This is a role they could certainly fill again today. Lithuania in particular grew to be one of the largest and economically most successful states in Medieval Europe. It began to flounder only due to the excesses of the nobility more interested in their own privileges and prerogatives than they were in the welfare of the country as a whole. As such the nobility and the Soviet Communist Party bureaucracy closely resemble each other.

Independence did not come easily to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia between the wars. By November 15, 1917, when they took advantage of Lenin's dictum assuring self-determination to all the peoples of the then Russian Empire, their economies were in shambles. After successfully fighting off German, and Soviet military forces, they established themselves as independent states. Whereas Soviet Russia became an international economic basket-case, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia became the "Little America" of the Baltic coast. They quickly redeveloped their farming heritage and created an export economy based on agricultural products, specializing in dairy products and meat. To a degree this export economy still functions, because Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian foodstuffs support most of northwestern Russia, especially the markets of Leningrad. Cooperatives flourished on the Scandinavian model and Lithuanian products were to be found on the tables of Germany and Great Britain.

According to William Hough an attorney specializing in international law, Lithuania became the most fertile and productive agricultural state in all of Europe, producing 110% of food products necessary for feeding its population; 89% of its rural population became landowners. By 1939 Estonia and Latvia had a standard of living on a par with Finland. Neighboring Lithuania was only a bit behind. If it were not for the Russo-Nazi Pact, Lithuania and her Baltic neighbors would today most likely be on the same or similar standard of living as Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

It might be argued by some that such indeed was the past, but modern Lithuania and her neighbors cannot survive today on the export of geese, butter and bacon alone. It might also be argued that during the period of Soviet occupation, Lithuanian agriculture was effectively destroyed and will never again rise to the position of preeminence it held before the Soviet occupation. In spite of overwhelming obstacles placed upon it by Moscow, Lithuania has begun to move in the direction of a modern technological society. Agriculture remains number one, but Lithuania also possesses nuclear power, a developing chemical industry and other light industry. Ask almost any Pole in Bialystok, Byelorussian in Minsk or Leningrader where his or her TV and vacuum cleaners come from and the answer will be "Litva," Lithuania.

It is not filioipietistic nor jingoistic to simply acknowledge the fact that Lithuania together with its Baltic neighbors possesses a wealth of human resources beyond those found distributed among equal numbers in neighboring Byelorussia and Russia itself. The level of Lithuanian education, despite restrictions and problems is high. The Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians are thoroughly western in their outlook. All three peoples may be described as "emotionally austere," with the makings of a disciplined and effective work-force, given the proper incentives of a free-market economy. *(continued on pg. 28)*

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Lithuanian-born Academic Calms Americans on Presidential Elections

The winter 1989 issue of the *Boston College Magazine* carries a masterful interview by editor, Ben Birnbaum, with Aleksandras Shtromas, a visiting professor of political science from the University of Salford in England.

Birnbaum posed seven "Worries" to the guest who "has been keeping an eye on our presidential elections, from far and near, for thirty-five years." During the past season, Shtromas was here on the scene to savor the quadrennial donnybrook.

The gist of his observations was: "Relax, take it easy. As daffy as the campaigns and elections seem to be, they somehow work." He was reluctant to attribute much independent power to the media, except that the public allows this exercise. Low voter participation itself is a message to politicians, remarks Shtromas. Extra strong leaders may seem desirable, but they might not be as welcome in a democracy as one might surmise. Meanwhile, a system of checks and balances appears to get results, though clumsily at times. Polls don't bother Shtromas. He views them as a chance for people to appreciate their voices. As to U.S. waning global power, it's "better to be weak in strength than strong in weakness, as the Soviet Union." Admittedly, the U.S. has trouble devising a solid foreign policy and sticking to it. Likewise, this country needs to find a way to cooperate more with western allies. In any case, such shortcomings that many thinking Americans deplore are the price of democracy.

(For a genuine appreciation of the above interview, let the reader find a Boston College alumnus or alumna, and borrow the winter issue.)

Biographical note: At the age of ten, Shtromas was confined to a concentration camp by the Nazis for several years in the early 1940s. Later, he pursued a law career in Lithuania and Russia. In recent years, he became a troublesome dissident, and managed to leave the Soviet Union, taking up residence in England. During his guest academic term in Boston, the outspoken critic of communism has been invited to various Lithuanian observances. His Lithuanian-born wife is Violeta Rakauskaite, a well-known "pop" singer, with many recordings to her credit. The mezzo-soprano's repertoire includes songs of six languages, sung in major Lithuanian communities of North America and Europe.

W.W.-V.

(Summary with permission of *Boston College Magazine*.)

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An Open Letter To President George Bush

The Honorable George Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

(From page 26)

All three nations are located in the center of northeastern Europe. Situated as they are near the high-wage area of Scandinavia, the Balts could easily attract manufacturing investments. Lithuania, in particular stands on both the sea and land routes between Russia and the west. Left alone to pursue her own economic goals, it is not inconceivable that Lithuania together with Latvia and Estonia could in some way become the economic center of the Baltic region, functioning as bridges between Europe and Eurasia. True, the price of oil and gas might be higher, but that is but one of the trade-offs which will have to be made.

One of the most ghastly suggestions intimated by the Soviet Union is that Lithuania will have "to pay" for her independence, that it will have to ransom herself out of the USSR. Since most of the industrial and other enterprises are owned by the central Soviet state, Lithuanians will have to "buy back" their own factories, ports, facilities, etc. from Russia as part of the price of their independence. It is amazing but some in the West seem to agree with the "reasonableness" of such buy-outs. How absurd! Russia should reimburse the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians for damages suffered by those peoples and countries during Soviet occupation, just as the Jews are "reimbursed" by West Germany for atrocities committed against the Jews by Germans during World War II. To require the Lithuanians to "reimburse" the Russians for their "investments" in Lithuania since the Russian occupation would be as ghastly, bizarre and grotesque as the West Germans sending the fuel bill for Auschwitz to the Israelis for payment!

Yes, Lithuania and her neighboring Baltic Republics can certainly "make-it". History indicates they did and could again prosper free of Russian rule. Perhaps, after all is said and done, that is the main reason the Russians will not easily let the Lithuanian and other Baltic peoples go. It can be expected that economic independence will not come easily. All sorts of political actions are tolerated and perhaps even encouraged now — but when Lithuania and perhaps her neighbors Latvia and Estonia really decide to "pack and leave" the USSR economy, we can expect if not the military, then the economic chariots of the Russian pharaohs to pursue their prey.

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the more than fourteen million members of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to move swiftly and surely to confer U.S. Government recognition on the legitimately elected government of the Republic of Lithuania. As part of this process, I urge you to exchange ambassadors and, with Congressional support, to extend MFN status to Lithuania.

Now, as never before, the brave Lithuanian people are looking for support from all nations that respect democracy and human rights. The AFL-CIO is proud of its fraternal association with the Lithuanian Workers' Union, a labor organization that is a part of the Sajudis movement. We are writing to you about our concerns in response to a direct appeal for help from the chairman of the Lithuanian Workers' Union, Kazimieras Uoka, and to an appeal from President Vytautas Landsbergis. In electing President Landsbergis, Deputy Uoka, and other Sajudis candidates to high office, the people of Lithuania have made a historic and fateful decision to proclaim their inalienable right of national sovereignty.

The people of Lithuania have spoken clearly and unequivocally for their national independence. This is why the AFL-CIO stands with President Landsbergis and all Lithuanian citizens and patriots. And this is why we condemn the tactics of intimidation and repression adopted by the Soviet Union against a democratically-elected sovereign state. Such violation of international law deserves to be criticized resolutely by the United States.

While the AFL-CIO welcomes the gradual opening up of the Soviet political system, we believe that Soviet progress in moving away from totalitarianism deserves to be encouraged further. The U.S., therefore, must not remain silent when significant Soviet abuses of human and national rights occur.

We are certain, as we were in our steadfast support for *Solidarność* in Poland, of the ultimate success of the peaceful struggle for national self-determination waged by the Lithuanians and other people forcibly absorbed into the USSR.

I hope that, in this compelling instance, the United States can speak out clearly and forcefully in behalf of liberty in a way that is consonant with our democratic tradition.

Respectfully,
Lane Kirkland
President
March 30, 1990

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