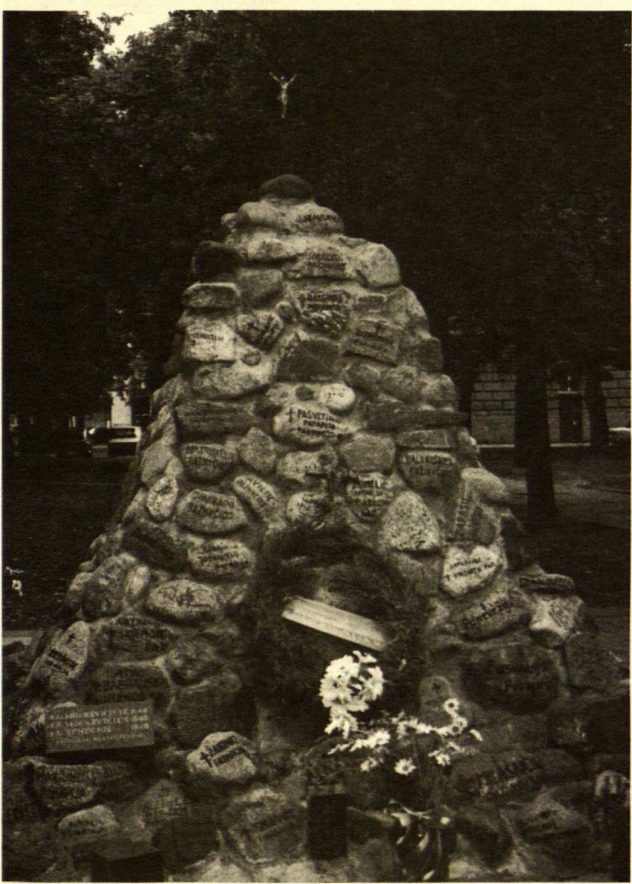


BRIDGES

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Monument outside of the former KGB building in Vilnius. It is built of rocks in the traditional form of an "aukuras" (a traditional pagan altar for holding the sacred fire tended by the vaidilutės, or vestal virgins), but topped with a crucifix to remember the victims of KGB torture during the Soviet occupation of Lithuania.
 Photo by Jeanne Dorr.

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To our readers:

February is always a hectic month for Lithuanian-Americans across the country. Organizers are scurrying to complete final plans for the annual independence day celebrations. Folk dancers are practicing those eye-catching formations and the folk dance teachers are praying that no one sprains his or her ankle at the last minute. The choral groups are rehearsing while their directors worry that the soloists not catch cold; and the independence day speakers are fine tuning their speeches, hoping to strike just the right chord. And let's not forget about the great cooks who are worrying that their cepelinai, and those lovely, scrumptious tortes, turn out just right.

February 16 is Lithuanian Independence Day, and Lithuanian-Americans have celebrated that day for 79 years. They have been the most loyal of Lithuanian patriots, even when Lithuania's independence seemed the most futile. President Clinton told the late Lithuanian Ambassador to the United States, Stasys Lozoraitis, that he was committed to helping remove the Soviet/Russian army troops from Lithuania in 1993 because he remembered his childhood friends in Arkansas who were of Lithuanian and Latvian ancestry. President Clinton explained that their devotion to their heritage had made a deep and lasting impression on him, so, in honor of his friends, he was glad to now be in a position to help Lithuania and Latvia. And he did help. Backed up by the provisions of the Byrd Amendment (Senator Robert Byrd) in the foreign aid bill, President Clinton was able to remind the Russians that if they didn't remove all of their troops from Lithuania, as planned, by August 31, 1993, he was going to cut off U.S. aid to Russia. The troops left, despite some last minute wheeling and dealing by the Yeltsin government.

When we gather together to commemorate and celebrate February 16, we affirm our belief in the values of freedom and democracy; the right of all people to choose their form of government, the right of a people to define their own identity, and the right of every individual to create his own destiny. We, as Americans, have been blessed to live in a country of such abundance and opportunity; a country where every individual can make a difference. We are also blessed to live in a country which allows us to freely practice, not only our religion, but our ethnic heritage. In celebrating the hopes and dreams of Lithuanians, we reaffirm our own values as Americans. We also have a lot of fun!

In this month's issue you'll find out that the Mayor of Philadelphia is a basketball fan and that the LAC, Inc. chapter in Philadelphia is doing well. Asta Banionis alerts us to the fact that all is not well with Lithuania's security and that U.S. support for Lithuania's continued independence is not what it should be. As promised, we have included an excellent article by Saulius Žukas on Martynas Mažvydas. Algis Rimas brings us up-to-date on economic

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data and Ramune Kubilius has provided a calendar of upcoming events. Jeanne Dorr and Edward Baranauskas in their respective articles commemorate the sacrifices made by Lithuanians in the past, and celebrate the dedication of Lithuanians today as they rebuild their country and their society. This February 16th let us pledge to improve our efforts to help them reach that goal.

Su viltim,

Jeanne Dorr



February 16 in Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. began its celebration of the 79th anniversary of Lithuania's independence on Sunday, February 16, 1997 with a Mass celebrated by Father Petras Burkauskas at St. Andrew's Church. The service commenced with a procession and flags of various Lithuanian-American organizations as well as men, women, and children dressed in traditional Lithuanian clothing. The offertory gifts included a Lithuanian cross, amber, black bread, as well as soil from Antakalnio Cemetery where the bodies of some of the victims of January 13, 1991 were laid to rest.

A formal program followed at the Lithuanian Music Hall. The Viltis Choir, under the direction of Anelė Kaulinis and assisted by Vytas Maciūnas, opened with the American and Lithuanian national anthems. Rev. Joseph Rymdeika offered an invocation, after which Edward Rendell, Mayor of Philadelphia, gave an official greeting and expressed gratitude to Lithuanian-Americans for all the contributions they have made to the City of Philadelphia. He was thanked by Roma Krušinskas, President of the Philadelphia Chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., who presented the mayor with a tri-colored Lithuanian basketball.

Millie Helt and Linas Kučas served as master of ceremonies for the February 16th event. Two keynote speakers were scheduled. However, due to illness, Paul Goble was forced to cancel his visit to Philadelphia. Dr. Goble is Assistant Director of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, as well as a frequent contributor of articles to **BRIDGES**. Donatas Skučas, Lt. Col. (Ret.) and Co-Chairman of the Joint Commission of the Lithuanian Seimas and the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. gave a very informative speech in Lithuanian with a summary in English.

The Joint Commission was established to provide a regular forum which would promote open dialogue between Lithuanian-Americans and Lithuania. We are very grateful to Mrs. Skučas who accompanied her husband to Philadelphia.

Greetings were read from the governors of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Representatives of the Latvian, Estonian, and Ukrainian communities each spoke briefly conveying the best wishes of their respective communities. Dalia Jakas, a representative of the Lithuanian Foundation, presented Vytas Maciūnas, principal of the Vinco Krėvės Saturday School, with a check in support of the Lithuanian language classes for children provided by the school. Both Philadelphia and South Jersey Chapters accepted donations to be used to help finance the many endeavors undertaken by the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.



Roma Krušinskas, President, Philadelphia Chapter of Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. presents tri-color Lithuanian basketball to Philadelphia Mayor Edward Rendell. The Mayor is a basketball fan. Photo by Jeanne Dorr.

After the speeches, the adult folk dance group, Žilvinas and the children's group, Aušrinėlė, under the direction of Estera Washofsky enthralled the audience with a lively, whirling performance. The dancers were accompanied by the Lithuanian Country Band. The program closed with a very moving rendition of "Lietuva Brangi" sung by the choir, dancers and members of the audience linking hands. A traditional reception followed the formal program.

The Philadelphia Chapter of the Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. would like to thank everyone who in any way made this program a success. A special thank you to all the members of the Knights of Lithuania Co. 3, Philadelphia, and members of the American Lithuanian Club of New Jersey for joining us on this very special day.

Asta Banionis

Countdown to Madrid

BRIDGES readers know that the most important foreign policy question facing Lithuania today is the status of its application to join NATO. In five months, on July 8-9, 1997 the United States and its 15 allies which make up the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will meet in Madrid, Spain and decide which of Eastern Europe's democracies to invite into NATO as new members.

The new Lithuanian government and parliament are intensifying the efforts of the country to qualify for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership. American volunteers have been recruited to work in Lithuania's defense structures to speed Lithuania's full compliance with NATO standards for interoperability. The efforts of the diplomatic team at the Foreign Ministry have been augmented by the parliament. Lithuanian officials have planned an intensive schedule of meetings with NATO members to acquaint them with Lithuania's ongoing efforts to meet all the NATO criteria. But there is a real question as to whether this intensified effort can bring the country up to par with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, the three leading candidates for admission to the defensive alliance.

The previous government, led by the Democratic Labor Party (LDLP), denied the Lithuanian armed forces the vital resources they needed to create a credible defense force over the last three years. Former Prime Minister Adolfo Šleževičius allowed the Ministry of Defense to draw only 33 percent of the modest sum of money appropriated by the Seimas (parliament) for the military. Mid-1996 the situation improved somewhat after the removal of Šleževičius and the appointment of a new Prime Minister, Mindaugas Stankevičius. He gave the Lithuanian military 66 percent of the amount appropriated for the armed forces. Even the most clever and articulate diplomats at Lithuania's Foreign Ministry cannot compensate for the basic deficiencies in the country's defense forces. Although Lithuania meets the NATO criteria for firmly rooted democratic institutions and a free market economy, it has a fledgling army which can make only a limited contribution to the common Western defense.

Now that the new government under Prime Minister Vagnorius has restored proper and full funding to Lithuania's armed forces, the defense ministry, the foreign ministry, and the Seimas are racing against the clock to improve Lithuania's chances for NATO membership on the first round of enlargement. Many observers of the

NATO enlargement debate feel that if the Russian Federation cannot stop NATO's enlargement, the fall back position is to try to prevent a second round of expansion, thereby limiting the spread of American influence in the region.

We already know that the Russian Federation is hard at work bullying the Europeans so that they will not even consider Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as possible candidates for NATO or European Union (EU) membership. The Russians are also lobbying hard in Washington, DC attempting to erode the support that Lithuania has enjoyed in the Congress and at the White House.

Certain officials in the Clinton Administration appear to be yielding to this pressure and are preparing a "Three for Three" policy initiative which will give the Russian Federation a green light to take back Lithuania into its sphere of influence. In other words, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic stay in the West under the protection of NATO, while Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are handed back to the Russians. To prevent this from becoming accepted policy we need your help.

During February we have asked all Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. (LAC, Inc.) chapters to send letters to their Congressmen and Senators alerting Members of Congress to help Lithuania maintain its security and independence. In fact, here's a checklist of what your local chapter should be doing. If you don't belong to one of the 64 LAC, Inc. chapters, you can initiate action individually or with your friends:

1. Send letters to your Congressman and Senators on the occasion of February 16th, Lithuania's Independence Day, expressing your grave concern for Lithuania's security and urging the House and Senate to make Lithuania's security a foreign policy priority for the United States. A good first step is to have your Congressman co-sponsor H.Con. Res. 10 which is a bill introduced by Congressman Gerald Solomon (R-NY). We've included a copy of H.Con.Res 10 at the end of this article.
2. A delegation of LAC, Inc. members should meet with the Congressman and Senators when they are home in the district.
3. Letter writing campaigns to Congressmen and Senators if they fail to commit to helping Lithuania.

4. Visit the editorial office of your local newspaper to get a positive editorial from the paper on Lithuania's application for NATO membership.
5. A telephone campaign to Congressmen and Senators if they fail to commit to helping Lithuania.
6. Have your City Council pass a resolution in support of Lithuania and it's application for NATO membership.
7. Solicit letters of support for Lithuania's independence and security from non-ethnic American organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the local branches of the Council on Foreign Relations, World Affairs Council, local Chamber of Congress, local Rotary (there are Rotary Clubs in Lithuania), local unions and other professional associations.
8. You may even have to stage an old-fashioned demonstration in front of your Congressman's or Senators' local (district) office.

Now, back to the Russians. The Russian Government released through its Embassy in Washington, DC a translation of President Yeltsin's February 11, 1997 policy directive identifying Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as "strategic objects for Russia's security". Through this document President Yeltsin and his government are rejecting Lithuania's right to be a sovereign and independent coun-

try which makes decisions about its own security needs. Instead, President Yeltsin insists that Lithuania's security depends on Russia's security. That the Russians are using these well-worn Soviet tactics is no surprise to Lithuanian-Americans, but what is surprising is the Clinton Administration's reaction to these demands by President Yeltsin. Silence!

The Russian government has taken the unusual step of releasing in Washington, DC a translation of this foreign policy directive. The Russians, obviously, wanted maximum U.S. press coverage as they assert their interests in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. They're testing the waters; probing the limits of U.S. government resolve to defend American influence and American interests in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The failure to react to President Yeltsin's outrageous demands concerning Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia is mounting evidence that the US State Department is giving a green light to the Russians to reassert effective control over the region.

Read for yourselves, what the Russians have in store for Lithuania, if they get their way:

Text reproduced from the press release issued by the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Washington considering relations with the Baltic states.

Embassy of the Russian Federation
2650 Wisconsin Ave.,
Washington D.C., 20007
tel. (202)298-5718
fax (202)298-5759

Press Release #6

February 12, 1997
Unofficial translation
Press-release of the Russian President's press service
1997 02-11-005

On instructions from President Yeltsin a long-term Russian policy has been developed with regard to the Baltic countries.

Strategic objective of Russia in the Baltic region is to fully realize the potential of goodneighbourliness

between Russia and the Baltic states, to create a constructive model of relations based on the principles of encouragement of regional economic integration and bilateral economic cooperation, the inseparability of the security of the states, respect for human and ethnic minorities' rights. The way to achieve this objective is to settle major problems which exist in both our bilateral relations and in the region as a whole on the basis of taking into account mutual interests. In our opinion to successfully move forward in this direction, the following decisions are to be taken:

1. Ensuring regional security. The entry of the Baltic countries into NATO would become a serious barrier between these states and Russia, would have an extremely negative impact on the prospects of formation of a long-term model of

constructive cooperation in the region. Conversely, the preservation of their status outside blocks could provide the basis for both joint and our unilateral steps, and very concrete ones at that, capable of dispelling still lingering fears in the Baltic countries for their security.

2. Protection of compatriots' rights in the Baltic states. This is a long-term objective of Russia's policy in the region. Among our priorities are the creation, through bilateral dialogue, of conditions for granting citizenship to all the Russian-speaking residents of Estonia and Latvia, who had permanent domicile there at the moment when these states proclaimed independence, simplification of naturalization procedures, ensuring of the right of citizenship by birth and the right for family reunification, a halt to oppression of Orthodox believers in

Estonia. This position of ours is based upon European human rights standards and has nothing to do with interference into the internal affairs of the Baltic states.

3. Development of economic ties. It is held back, among other things, because of unbalanced character of these ties. The opportunities for transit and reexport of Russian goods, first of all energy carriers and non-ferrous metals, have often been used in the Baltic states to the detriment of Russia. There is a need to strengthen state regulation and customs control as well as to ensure reasonable diversification of channels used for transit of Russian cargoes. Therefore Russia's policy towards the Baltic states, as approved by the President, envisages specific actions in a number of areas.

In general, we believe that the only solid basis for trade and economic cooperation could be that of mutual benefit. We see prospects in strengthening the position of Russian capital in the economies of the Baltic countries, in development of border area ties in the state interests, in creating favorable transport conditions for the Kaliningrad region.

4. Legalization of Russia's state border with the Baltic countries in accordance with international law. We resolutely reject Latvia's ungrounded territorial claims. Estonia's desire to withdraw the border issue

from the general context of normalization and development of bilateral relations is also unacceptable to us. We believe that the signing of a Russian-Estonian Treaty on the border should be accompanied by specific measures to improve the situation of Estonia's Russian-speaking population.

5. Elimination of criminal threats against Russia from the territory of the Baltic countries. This is an ever acute problem of security of the Russian society and its citizens. Alongside with the progress in cooperation among law enforcement agencies of Russia and of the Baltic states it is impor-

tant to ensure effective cooperation in border areas. It is in our mutual interests to combine efforts to fight illegal migration, organized crime, trafficking in arms, narcotics and strategic raw materials. We suggest using the potential of the relevant group within the framework of the Council of Baltic States more actively to this end.

6. Development of cultural and information cooperation. Russia has created conditions for fruitful and discrimination-free work of journalists, writers and artists from the Baltic states. We shall work to ensure a bilateral basis for

these mutually enriching exchanges which would help to overcome the still existing fears of Russian "cultural imperialism" in the Baltic countries. Russia is interested in using to the fullest extent the mechanisms of cooperation within the framework of the UN, the European Union, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and the Council of Baltic States in order to solve the existing problems and to form constructive and mutually beneficial relations with the Baltic states.

11 February, 1997

Through this directive, the Russian government is stating that it will maintain good relations with Lithuania only if Lithuania remains outside any military bloc; i.e., Lithuania must remain a neutral country without allies. Lithuania tried neutrality in the 1920s and 1930s and it didn't work! With the United States pursuing an isolationist policy, the Russians stepped right in and occupied Lithuania with the approval of Nazi Germany. Just for the record, let me alert **BRIDGES** readers that the Russian Federation's lobbyists on Capitol Hill continue to claim that there was no Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement in 1939, and that Lithuania was never illegally occupied by the Soviet Union. As Dr. Paul Goble is fond of saying, "If you liked the 1930s, you're going to love the 1990s". It is our role as Lithuanian-Americans to make sure that the conditions of the 1930s are not recreated.

The Russian government is asserting that Lithuania's admission into NATO would automatically be a threat to Russia. This assertion is preposterous on its face. Lithuania's armed forces are no threat to a country which has over 150 million people living in a territory stretching across ten time zones, possessing a 2-million man military and 10,000 nuclear weapons with multiple warheads. The Russian government claims that it is the strategic partner of the United States and does not consider the United States its enemy. The United States is the major military force within NATO. The Russians also claim to be friends with Germany, France, and the other Western European countries which make up NATO. Why then should NATO be a threat? And why should Lithuania's admission into NATO tip the balance and turn that organization into a threat to Russia? **The answer is that it does not.**

Then why are the Russians so adamant about preventing Lithuania from joining NATO? It is not a question of wounded pride as some apologists for Russian imperialism would have us believe. The answer is economics. Russia, whether it was czarist or soviet, has never been able to effectively compete for markets. It has needed to occupy a territory through military force to dominate a market or control a market. Now a "democratic" Russia has not yet used military force, but is insisting on a sphere of influence. If Lithuania is solidly rooted in the West, Russian companies will not be able to compete even in this relatively small market. Nor do the Russians offer any attractive ideas that would allow them to become a positive influence in the region. So the question of U.S. support for Lithuania's NATO admission is directly tied to the question of whether the U.S. is ready to support American interests in Lithuania and the growth of American influence in the region. Or will the Clinton Administration abandon American interests in Lithuania?

Only you and the U.S. Congress can prevent the Clinton Administration from abandoning American interests in Lithuania. The U.S. Congress must make it a matter of U.S. policy that Lithuania's security and continued independence is of vital interest to the United States. The United States must designate Lithuania as ready for additional assistance to prepare for NATO membership just as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia were last year.

Congressman Gerald Solomon (R-NY), Chairman of the Rules Committee, in the U.S. House of Representatives has been paying attention to the state of U.S.-Lithuania

relations, and developments in Central and Eastern Europe. In November, 1996 he was part of the U.S. congressional delegation which attended the meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly, the legislative branch of NATO. He has concluded that NATO enlargement needs to proceed as quickly as possible and that Lithuania needs to be included in the first wave of NATO enlargement. On January 21, 1997 he introduced a bill, H.Con. Res. 10,

“Recommending the integration of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization”. We encourage you to have your Congressman co-sponsor this worthwhile legislation. This bill is a good place to start in rallying support for Lithuania. It doesn't designate Lithuania for the needed assistance, but we can build on this resolution as the legislative debate proceeds on the issue. The text of the bill follows:

H.Con.Res. 10
In the House of Representatives
January 21, 1997

Mr. Solomon submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

Concurrent Resolution

Recommending the integration of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Whereas the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are undergoing a historic process of democratic and free market transformation after emerging from decades of brutal Soviet occupation;

Whereas each of the Baltic countries has conducted peaceful transfers of political power since 1991;

Whereas the governments of the Baltic countries have been exemplary in their respect for human rights and civil liberties and have made great strides toward establishing the rule of law;

Whereas the governments of the Baltic countries have made consistent progress toward establishing civilian control of their militaries and, through active participation in the Partnership for Peace and North Atlantic Treaty Organization peace support operations, have clearly demonstrated their ability and willingness to operate with the forces of NATO nations and under NATO standards;

Whereas each of the Baltic countries has made progress toward implementing a free market system which has and will continue to foster the economic advancement of the people of the Baltic region;

Whereas the Baltic region has often been a battleground for the competing territorial designs of nearby imperial

powers, with this and other factors contributing to a history of insecurity and instability in the region;

Whereas NATO has been a force for stability, freedom and peace in Europe since 1949;

Whereas NATO has indicated it will begin to invite new members in 1997;

Whereas Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, exercising their inherent right as Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe participating states, have voluntarily applied for membership in NATO: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that

(1) Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are to be commended for their progress toward political and economic liberty and meeting the guidelines for prospective NATO members set out in chapter 5 of the September, 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement;

(2) Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania would make an outstanding contribution toward furthering the goals of NATO should they become members;

(3) eventual extension of full NATO membership to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania would make a singular and lasting contribution toward stability, freedom and peace in the Baltic region;

(4) upon complete satisfaction of the aforementioned guidelines and all other criteria for NATO membership, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania should be invited to become full members at the earliest possible date; and

(5) Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania should be invited to attend the NATO summit in Madrid on July 7 and 8, 1997.

Then why are the Russians so adamant about preventing Lithuania from joining NATO? It is not a question of wounded pride as some apologists for Russian imperialism would have us believe. The answer is economics.

U.S. Technical Assistance

The President's proposed budget for fiscal year 1998 has also dealt a direct blow to U.S.-Lithuania relations by recommending the phase out of U.S. technical assistance programs to Lithuania with fiscal year 1998. This is a decision which could only have been taken by people unfamiliar with developments in Lithuania. Now, when there is a new reform government in place which is asking for the assistance of foreign technical experts, someone in the Clinton Administration has decided to no longer provide that expertise. This decision has a close resemblance to the Bush Administration's decision to not provide any assistance to the first reform government of Lithuania back in 1990-1991. Could it be that there are still bureaucrats and decision-makers in the U.S. State Department who want to see Lithuania fail?

We need the help of the U.S. Congress to restore U.S. technical assistance to Lithuania. And only you can get your Congressman to support this effort. Won't you help? Withdrawing such an important U.S. presence in Lithuania, while denying Lithuania NATO membership, is unacceptable. Congress can restore the assistance through its authorization and appropriation process. On this 79th celebration of Lithuania's Independence Day it would be particularly inappropriate to find that the current United States Congress would not continue our country's long-standing support for the people of Lithuania who have demonstrated their commitment to democracy and Western values throughout this past century despite the destruction of two world wars and a brutal, foreign occupation which lasted 50 years. Are we to sacrifice another generation of Lithuanians?

Events in Lithuania

From February 11 through February 25, 1997 the Lithuanian parliament, the Seimas held an extraordinary session. The session's agenda included amendments to legislation targeted to improve the fight against organized

crime. As part of that effort the Seimas amended the Constitution to provide that the Prosecutor General of Lithuania no longer be appointed by the President with the parliament's approval. The chief law enforcement officer of the country will now be nominated by the Justice Minister and confirmed by the Seimas. The Seimas had little choice when President Brazauskas on February 10 in a radio address threatened not to appoint a new Prosecutor General if Nikitinas left office. The Prosecutor General of Lithuania, **Vladas Nikitinas** had submitted his resignation under pressure from the press and the new parliamentary majority late in January. Although, President Brazauskas continued trying to prevent the resignation, the Seimas, having changed the constitutional authority, dismissed Prosecutor General Nikitinas on February 25. Justice Minister Pakalniskis is expected to name a new chief prosecutor shortly.

Vladas Nikitinas, a life-long Soviet-trained judge, had been a curious choice for Prosecutor General back in 1995 when President Brazauskas dismissed Arturas Paulauskas who had been Prosecutor General of Lithuania since March, 1990. Paulauskas had just won the conviction of mafia boss Boris Dekadnidze for ordering the gangland slaying of Respublika editor Vitas Lingys, when President Brazauskas removed Paulauskas as Prosecutor General, and appointed Nikitinas who had been the chief judge in the Dekadnidze case. A few weeks later, Brazauskas agreed to bring back Paulauskas, but as Assistant Prosecutor responsible for prosecuting individuals engaged in organized crime. During his tenure, Nikitinas proved an ineffective Prosecutor General. It's still not clear why he failed to support Paulauskas in the prosecution of the Kaunas-based crime boss Henrikas Daktaras, head of the Daktaras clan.

A new Minister of Finance has been appointed. On February 19, **Algirdas Šemėta**, a 34-year old economist-mathematician, replaced the former Finance Minister, Rolandas Matiliauskas, who was forced to step down at the end of January having served barely two months in the new government. After numerous press reports, Rolandas Matiliauskas admitted that he had defaulted on a loan he had received in 1993 from a now bankrupt bank, Kredito Bankas. As an employee of that bank he had received the loan under preferential terms (US\$18,000 at 3% interest) which were markedly less than the prevailing rate. In his own defense Matiliauskas claimed that he had not used the loan himself; that it had been taken out in his name for one of the shareholders of the bank, Genadijus Rapoportas. Matiliauskas insisted that Rapoportas was now responsible for the repayment of the loan and had promised to do so. However, Mr. Rapoportas has defaulted on other loans taken from the same Kredito Bankas - over US\$500,000 worth of loans. The bank itself is closed and the prosecutor's office is investigating the convoluted machinations that passed for normal banking practices at Kredito.

Matiliauskas is not a subject of any of these investigations. By agreeing to front for the loan which Rapoportas was seeking from Kredito Bankas he may not have known that he was helping the bank officers evade banking regulations; as a bank employee he may even have been pressured to sign for the loan. On the other hand, his public defense of the practice, on becoming Minister of Finance, certainly disqualified him from further government service. Prime Minister Vagnorius was right in asking for the young Minister's resignation. Of the 29 private banks which were established in Lithuania since 1990, more than 20 have been either liquidated or are in some stage of receivership. The LDLP government over the last four years had not enforced adequate bank regulation, directly contributing to the anarchy in the banking sector, both private and state banking. The new Finance Minister must be above reproach. The new Finance Minister working with the Central Bank of Lithuania must be able to instill public confidence in a properly regulated and secure banking sector. To do less would be to handicap the recovery and growth of Lithuania's economy.

On February 15, **Senator Richard Durbin** (D-IL) arrived in Vilnius for a four-day visit to Lithuania. He was accompanied by his older brother, William. It was Senator Durbin's fourth trip to Lithuania, over 18 years; his brother's first trip. Besides attending the Lithuanian Independence Day festivities in Vilnius on Sunday, February 16, they also traveled to Jurbarkas, the birthplace of their mother, Onute Kutkaitė. We'll have more on Senator Durbin's trip to Lithuania in our March issue of **BRIDGES**.

The Japanese government has opened its Embassy in Vilnius. It is the 24th foreign diplomatic mission to open in Lithuania; there are 70 foreign ambassadors accredited to Lithuania. Although the Japanese Ambassador to Lithuania, Takaya Suto, will continue to reside in Copenhagen, also serving as Japan's Ambassador to Denmark, the Japanese government has appointed Kinki Shinoda as Charge d'Affairs to Lithuania. He will be responsible for the daily routine at the Vilnius Embassy.

There is good news for the Lithuanian government on another diplomatic front as well. On January 30, 1997, a German court has told the owner of a car lot to move off of the plot of land in Berlin which formerly belonged to the Lithuanian Embassy. The pre-WW II structure was destroyed in an allied bombing raid during the war. The court's ruling came after three years of legal effort by Lithuania to recover its property. Lithuania's Ambassador to Germany, Zenonas Namavičius, who resides in Bonn, told ELTA, "This is a victory for justice". The Lithuanian government expects to rebuild on the site once the transfer of the German capital from Bonn to Berlin is completed. The original embassy was a villa with a considerable garden purchased by the Lithuanian government in 1926.

Lithuania has yet to recover its pre-WW II embassy in Rome, Italy which was handed over by the Fascist government to the Soviet Union in 1940 and remains in Russian hands to this day.

Local Government Elections

February 24 marks the beginning of the campaign for local government elections. Twenty-four parties have successfully registered candidates for the **March 23, 1997 election**. There is no shortage of candidates; 6,432 candidates are competing for 1,484 seats in 12 city councils and 44 county councils. The Conservative Party is running 1,410 candidates, the Christian Democrats 979, the Democratic Labor Party (LDLP) 742, the Center Party will field 643 candidates, the Social Democrats have 613 candidates with the smaller parties making up the balance. Candidates will be given free, but limited, TV time on national television and radio. Parties can buy newspaper advertising for their candidates as well as produce posters, flyers and other campaign material. Rejecting complaints from one of the minority parties, the Polish Election Action, the chairman of the Chief Electoral Commission, Zenonas Vaigauskas, insisted that Lithuanian will be used as the broadcast language on the government-provided free TV. Vaigauskas said that some time would be available for broadcasts in Russian, Polish and Belarusan during the course of the election campaign.

This will be the fourth local government election held in Lithuania since the restoration of independence in 1990. Because of recent changes to the Constitution, the officials elected on March 23 will serve for three years rather than two years. The recent changes to the laws on local government also expand the jurisdiction of local governments, while reducing the responsibility of the central government. We hope to bring you the election results in future editions of **BRIDGES**.

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Congressman John Shimkus

Tribute to the People of Lithuania (House of Representatives - February 13, 1997)

Congressman John M. Shimkus, a Republican representing the 20th District of Illinois in the United States Congress, is of Lithuanian ancestry. He was elected on November 5, 1996 to fill the seat left vacant by Richard Durbin, another Lithuanian-American, who was elected to the United States Senate.

Congressman Shimkus, led a "special order" in the U.S. House of Representatives in tribute to Lithuania's Independence Day. In past years, these special proceedings under the House rules have been led by such distinguished congressmen as Representative Christopher Cox (R-CA), Representative Richard Durbin (D-IL), Representative Frank Annunzio (D-IL), Representative Dennis Hertel (D-MI) and Representative Brian Donnelly (D-MA).

The remarks are taken from the Congressional Record for February 13, 1997, the day before the House went into recess for what is called, Presidents' Day District Work Period; i.e., the congressmen leave Washington, DC to work in their congressional districts:

THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE: Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Shimkus, is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

MR. SHIMKUS: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the people of Lithuania, who, through tireless perseverance, are celebrating their independence on Sunday, February 16.

Referred to as the crossroads of Europe, with the geographical center of Europe just to the north of the capital of Vilnius, Lithuania is a fascinating and diverse country rich in history and tradition. I am proud to be a descendent of a Lithuanian immigrant to the United States. My great grandfather, Casper Shimkus, came to this country in hopes of finding the American Dream. It is my pleasure to carry on his name and his Lithuanian heritage, a heritage strong in work ethic, personal responsibility, and the ability to overcome adversity.

As Americans, there are certain rights we take for granted, all of which can be found in our Bill of Rights. Lithuanians

have struggled for these rights, a struggle which has expanded the centuries.

Since the founding of the first Lithuanian state in 1236, Lithuania has been occupied by czarist Russia for a majority of the time, an occupation which lasted continuously from 1795 to 1915. During that time, the people of Lithuania were subjected to many hardships, including being unable to use the Latin alphabet, lack of religious freedom, and desecration of their cultural identity.

With the collapse of czarist Russia at the end of World War I, Lithuanians took advantage of the opportunity to regain their independence. On February 16, 1918, the Lithuanian National Council met and declared the restoration of Lithuania's independence. After defending itself against foreign armies traveling across the territory after the war, by the early 1920's Lithuania was a free nation rebuilding its own political culture and economic life.

This freedom was short-lived for the Lithuanian people. On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany entered into a pact which placed Lithuania in the Soviets' sphere of influence. On June 15, 1940, in violation of international law, the Soviet Union invaded Lithuania. The occupation by the Soviet Union lasted for about 1 year until Nazi Germany forced the Soviets out and then occupied this country.

It was during the next 3 years of Nazi occupation that most of Lithuania's 200,000 Jewish citizens were murdered. After the fall of Nazi Germany, the Soviets stepped in and again occupied Lithuania. However, the idea of an independent Lithuania never died. In the late 1980's, as changes were taking place throughout the Soviet Union, Lithuanians organized a powerful independence movement.

After four decades of suppression of their culture and heritage, the Lithuanian people rose up in peaceful protest. The continued protest and push for independence finally culminated in 1990, with pro-independence candidates winning a clear majority in elections to the Parliament of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. On March 11, 1990, the reestablishment of an independent Lithuanian State was proclaimed. After a final, unsuccessful coup

attempt by a few Soviet military units in 1991, Lithuania took its rightful place in the international community as a vibrant, independent country.

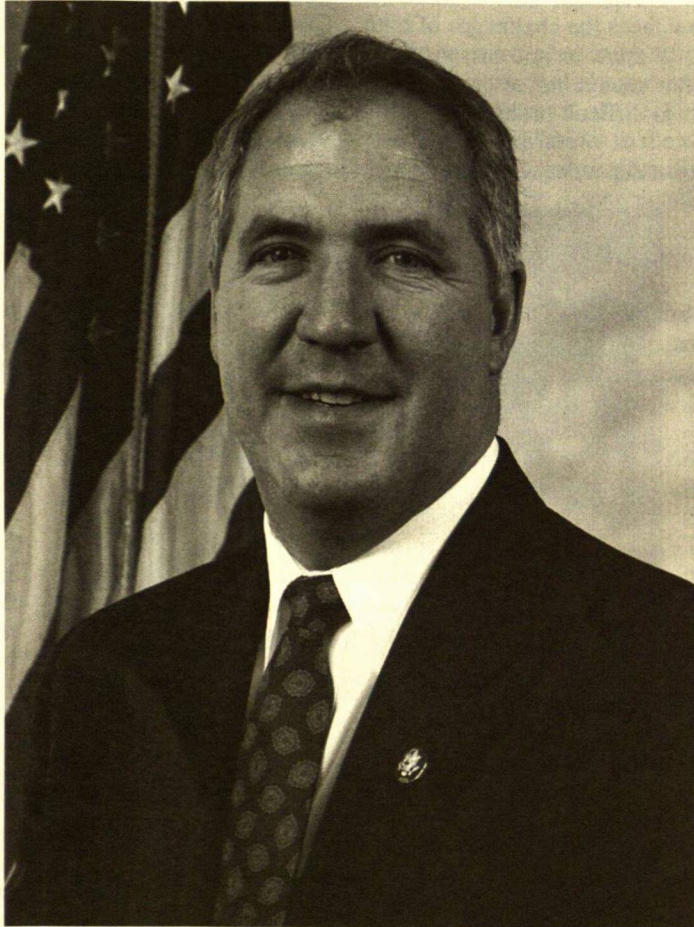
Now led by a parliamentary democracy, the determined Lithuanian people are beginning to feel the full benefits of freedom, religious freedom, a taste of democracy, and movement toward an effective free market economy. The United States must lend its full support to not only Lithuania, but to all the Baltic States now. This is not the time for our administration to waver on its position toward the Baltics.

With the instability of the political situation in Russia, it is in the long-term interest of the United States to promote democracy and free markets in the region, in hopes that it may counteract possible instability. It is now time for the United States to recognize the struggle the Lithuanians have had for freedom and democracy, and support these brave people for their determination and moral principles they exemplify, rather than sidestep the issue so that we do not jeopardize our relationship with Russia.

At this time, Lithuania is looking for an invitation for at least one Baltic country in the first round of NATO enlargement at the Madrid summit this July. This invitation would promote an alliance between Western ideas and the Baltic region, providing security so that the Baltic States may continue with their pro-Democratic reforms.

As Americans in the post-cold-war era, we all should be trying to promote peace, democracy, and free-market enterprise in the region, which could be achieved with the NATO expansion, including part of the Baltic States. It is for these reasons that I am a strong supporter of the concurrent resolution offered by the gentleman from New York, Mr. Solomon, recommending the integration of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into NATO.

Most of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all Lithuanians on their independence, and ask that my colleagues join in supporting this proud Nation. The fate of their liberty now rests on the determination of the Lithuanian people to preserve and protect a democratic government. As Americans, we should not only congratulate this country for their newly emerging democracy, but support their efforts to become a member of NATO.



Rep. John Shimkus, R-IL, elected to the U.S. House of Representatives November, 1996.

Biographical Data: John M. Shimkus

Born on February 21, 1958 in Collinsville, IL. In 1976, John Shimkus was appointed to the United States Military Academy at West Point. He earned a B.S. in General Engineering at the academy. After graduation he was trained as an Army Ranger and paratrooper. He served as an infantry officer, stationed in West Germany and in the United States. He is currently a Major in the United States Army Reserve.

After leaving the Army, John Shimkus returned to Collinsville and taught Government and History at the Metro-East Lutheran High School. He was elected to office in 1989, winning a seat as Collinsville Township

Trustee. The following year, he won an upset victory in the race for Madison County Treasurer. In 1992, he waged a hard-fought campaign for U.S. Congress, but was re-elected as Madison County Treasurer in 1994. In the national elections of November, 1996, he was elected as Congressman from the 20th District of Illinois with just over 50% of the vote. He now serves on the House Commerce Committee, appointed to its subcommittees on Telecommunications, Trade and Consumer Protection, as well as Energy and Power.

John Shimkus is married to Karen Muth; they have two children: David 4 and Joshua 2.

Edward Baranauskas

Lithuania and Her Future

After fifty years of Soviet occupation and Communist indoctrination, Lithuania now faces the challenges of both the present and the future. If there is one lesson to be learned from history, it is that change never comes easy. There are no simple answers to difficult problems.

After Lithuania regained her independence, social values began to change. Many were for the better. Some, unfortunately, were for the worse, such as a rise in criminal activities, hooliganism, neglected and abused children. Even homeless children appeared in the streets. Support programs for the education of young people began to decrease, such as students' clubs, after school activities and military sports camps.

The children are the future of Lithuania, for they are tomorrow's leaders and citizens of the nation. How to instill in their hearts a love for God and country, to be patriots and law-abiding citizens is of great concern for everyone. People began to discuss the problems of these young people and wanted something to be done. The officers of the Lithuanian Army feel that military service would be one way to achieve this goal. Army training would teach them discipline and responsibility. This, in turn, will lead to better moral behavior and good citizenship.

The army is trying to strengthen ties with schools near its bases by organizing meetings, sporting events and military sports camps. This would be a good beginning to inform

young people about military life and its problems. Discussions are underway to have field training maneuvers with 10th to 12th grade students, which would benefit both them and the army.

Summer sports camps for these youngsters were held as an experimental program at a few military bases to see what the public response would be. Last summer, about ten of them were located a different districts throughout Lithuania, two of which were financed by the Ministry of Education and the others by the army. It is encouraging to see more and more organizations supporting these programs.

Children from all walks of life are welcomed to the camps. Permission must first be granted by parents before they are accepted; exceptions are made for those children who have no parents, and to those who have been neglected at home.

This program has proven to be so popular with both parents and children, that plans are now being made to have more of them next year. In fact, many parents have told the army that they would like to have these activities during the children's Christmas and spring school vacations. Parents are pleased because kids have something to do, and that they have become better disciplined. The children

enjoy the novelty of sleeping outdoors, weather permitting, in tents just like the army does while on maneuvers. They learn athletic activities and get good food. Is there any wonder why they want to come back the following year?



These children attended one of the ten Lithuanian Army-sponsored summer camps for boys in August 1996. The youngsters are waiting to be called to receive their Certificate of Merit.



"One of the boys who has completed the summer camp receiving his Certificate of Merit from Colonel Feliksas Vaitkaitis. Vilnius, August 1996."

I had the opportunity this past summer to visit an army base on the outskirts of Vilnius. The occasion was the last day summer camp for fourteen young boys who were completing an eighteen-day stay. When I saw camera crews from two of Lithuania's television stations, I felt that I was about to witness something important.

The program began with a detachment of soldiers marching around the field in perfect step with the youngsters following them. I had such a feeling of pride, for this was the first time I ever saw the newly formed Lithuanian Army. The formation stopped on the opposite side of the field, turned, and faced the parents and a group of officers who were standing side by side. The ceremony that followed was very impressive, and reminded me somewhat of graduation day.

As each boy was called by name, he marched like a true soldier to the receiving line that was waiting for him. He was congratulated by one of the officers with a handshake, and presented with a certificate (Lith: Pažymėjimas) showing that he successfully completed the course at the camp. He then marched back to join the others who were waiting for their turn to be called. At the completion of the ceremony, Monsignor Alfonsas Svarinskas addressed the graduates briefly. He spoke of the youngsters who were about the same age as they are, and who played an important part in the partisan resistance during the terrible years that followed the Soviet occupation of Lithuania at the end of the war. Although he was no longer the Chief Chaplain of the army, he was invited to take part in today's activities because his successor, Rev. Alfonsas Bulota, was unable to attend because of illness.

The officers of the Lithuania Army should be highly praised for encouraging and organizing these summer camps. Today's young generation must know the sacrifices their fathers and grandfathers made in the cause of Lithuania's freedom, which they now enjoy. It will be up to them to preserve that freedom for the generations that will follow.

A few facts about the army. . .

All Soviet forces were withdrawn after Lithuania regained her independence, and as each military base was aban-

doned, practically everything of value was removed. The people who live in the vicinity of this base, I was told, took what little the Soviets left behind.

At the conclusion of today's program, Captain Gintaras Lukošius invited me to join his staff for refreshments at his office. I noticed that it was neatly and modestly furnished. As I sat there, I began to realize that a lot of money and hard work was needed to make this base usable and livable for the Lithuanian Army.

My hosts were pleasantly surprised to know that I was American born; that my parents came to the United States before the outbreak of the First World War, and that I served with the Marines in the war against Japan. Knowing my military background, we discussed some of the differences between the American and Lithuanian armies.

The United States does not have compulsory service, while Lithuania does. Every 18 year-old male is required to serve one year in the army; only students and those who cannot pass a physical examination are exempt. The draft takes place twice a year, in the spring and autumn.

A platoon of the Lithuanian Army based outside of Vilnius marching on the parade ground. August 1996.



The author of this article, Ed Baranauskas, standing in center with Professor Nijolė Janulaitienė to his left, met with the organizers of the summer camp for children, (from left to right), Colonel Feliksas Vaitkaitis, Captain Gintaras Lukošius of the Lithuanian Army, and Algirdas Kizevičius, a member of S.K.A.T. (Savanoriška Krašto Apsaugos Tarnyba/Lithuania's Home Guard).

American women who seek military careers are given the same opportunities as their male counterparts. They attend military academies, serve on naval ships, fly combat aircraft and helicopters, and receive training with ground

forces. Lithuanian women, on the other hand, serve as staff members and do clerical work. They do not train or serve with combat forces.

American chaplains of various faiths serve in the military. In time of war, they are exposed to the same dangers as the men they serve. Some lost their lives while tending to the wounded and dying. As

Lithuania changes from the Communist doctrine of atheism to a more Christian society, the government will, hopefully, find no objection to the assignment of chaplains in the military where requested.

I was greatly impressed with what I saw of the army and its officers. For their commitment to the welfare of the children,
 continued on page 22
 devo-

Saulius Žukas

Excerpts from “The First Lithuanian Book and Its Cultural Context”

The Cultural Context of the First Lithuanian Book
published by Baltos Lankos, Vilnius, 1995

Vilnius in the 16th Century

After its Christianization in the mid-14th century, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania entered into a dynastic union with the Kingdom of Poland. This ambiguous situation lasted until 1569 when, threatened with the extinction of the Jagiellian (founded by Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila) dynasty, both countries signed the Treaty of Lublin and concluded a defined union. This was a fatal act which led to the gradual erosion of the sovereignty of Lithuania despite the existence of two parallel governments, two armies and two administrations. By the end of the 18th century, the federal Polish-Lithuanian Republic was declining slowly but steadily, and was partitioned among its neighbors: Germany, Austro-Hungary and Russia, the latter taking the lion's share of the territory.

In the 16th century Lithuania was a multi-ethnic state with its capital Vilnius, a city of 20,000 inhabitants, dominated by the steeples of numerous Catholic churches interspersed with the onion domes of Orthodox churches, the minarets of mosques and the facades of synagogues. It was a metropolis of a well-organized and well-administered state, ruled by a few noble families: the Radvilas, Gostautas, Pacas and Sapiega families. The official language of the Office of the Grand Duke was Old Church Slavonic, which later, after some hesitation about the introduction of Latin, was replaced by Polish, the language of the Church and increasingly, of the nobility and gentry. Nonetheless, state rulers returning to Vilnius would be sumptuously welcomed with the singing of Lithuanian hymns. The Jews, who had come to Lithuania at the invitation of the Grand Dukes, spoke Yiddish, and the Tatars prayed in Arabic. It was a European Renaissance city with its gates open to the East.

Religious concord reigned in the capital and the whole country, stemming from the tradition of tolerance inherited from pagan times when the Lithuanian dukes sent to rule over Slavonic cities would peacefully convert to the Orthodox religion only to return to paganism when back at

home. This traditional religious tolerance went hand-in-hand with an understanding of ethnic interests. Tolerance towards Orthodox believers, who, together with Catholics, participated in the work of various state institutions, was later extended towards Protestants as well.

The Reformation movement reached the Grand Duchy of Lithuania soon after its emergence in Germany. In Lithuania, it was active for about a century and affected not only the views of the population, but also the economy and the politics of the state. Even before the beginning of the Reformation, Lithuania had been familiar with the ideas of the Renaissance, and people there created secular literature, wrote historical chronicles and poetry, although not in Lithuanian. Christianity had little impact on the population of Lithuania, particularly the lower classes, which became an additional argument of Protestantism against the mostly Polish clergy engaged in the unsuccessful introduction of Catholicism.

As early as 1520, the Kingdom of Poland began to issue edicts prohibiting the circulation of Protestant writings and studies at Wittenberg University. In 1535, these edicts also became effective in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Still, the religious struggle, conducted mostly as discussion, continued rather peacefully throughout the middle of the century. The Protestants had strong patrons and influential supporters - the Radvilai and other aristocratic families of the Grand Duchy - because the Reformation movement reinforced aspirations for independence from Poland. In 1563, the Seimas (parliament) of Lithuania adopted a privilege that granted freedom of religion to all faiths without any exceptions. At about this time, Lithuania became the center of the most radical Reformation trends in Europe.

The Protestant Reformation awakened Lithuania from cultural stagnation, inspired its social thought, literature and written language. It also provoked its Catholic adversaries into cultural activities, and in general brought Lithuania closer to Europe. Lithuania can take pride in the fact that for most of the latter half of the 16th century, it was the center of Christian European liberalism and progressive religious thought.

The cultural upswing of Lithuania can be explained by the active dialogue and debate among the different faiths which lasted for several decades and stimulated competing political and social allies to action. But we should also remember that in the 16th century, Vilnius was not only a city where Protestant and Catholic ideas intermingled. It was also a city where different nationalities lived side-by-side and communicated. The capital of the Grand Duchy became an important center of Slavic and Jewish culture. It was here that Franciscus Skoryna, a Belarusan with views similar to Protestantism, published his first books in 1522.

Vilnius became a refuge for Ivan Fedorov, the famous Russian printer, who fled Moscow after a mob incited by monastic scribes who feared competition had destroyed his printing shop. Vilnius became the second Basel (Switzerland) where printers competed with each other in printing books in different languages advocating conflicting beliefs. Freedom of opinion was surprisingly broad here. Alongside the Catholics, the Calvinists pursued their broad activities, and Orthodox priests had their own printing shop where they published treatises against Catholicism.

Nevertheless, the Counter Reformation gained the upper hand in Lithuania by the end of the 16th century primarily because Poland was very interested in maintaining Catholicism in the region and strengthening the state union with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. To fight against the Protestant Reformation, pro-Catholic forces invited the Jesuit Order to Lithuania. It immediately started to build a system of higher education as a counterbalance to the Protestant schools which had sprung up throughout the Grand Duchy. The Jesuits founded a college that was promoted to the status of an academy in 1579 serving as the basis of what is today Vilnius State University. The success of the Counter Reformation can be explained by the fact that the Protestant Reformation was driven by the will of high-ranking noblemen who protected and funded the movement. When these individuals died, the movement retreated from the state arena, but was able to survive in pockets on the land holdings of individual landowners.

¹It was the custom of the day for educators, clergy, and men of letters in the 16th century to adopt the Latin form of one's name. Therefore, Kulvietis became Culvensis; Rapalionis became Rapagelanus; and Mažvydas wrote his name as Mosvidius.

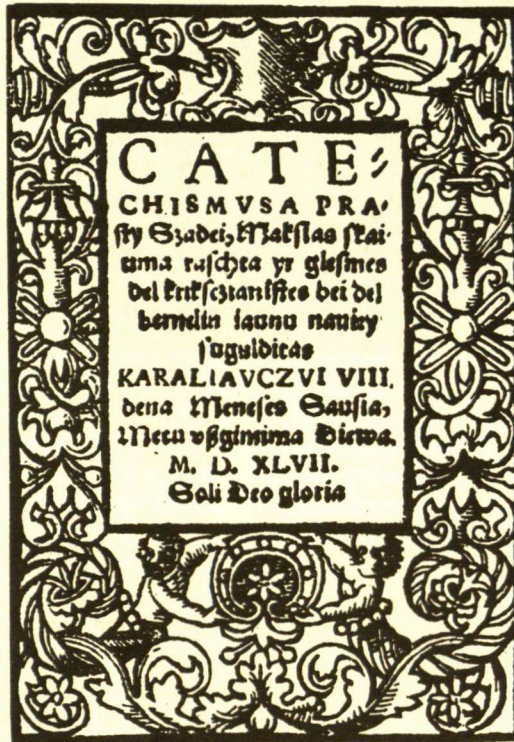
East Prussia

Lithuania's cultural development was also to be influenced by events taking place in the lands still ruled by its old enemy, the Teutonic knights. In 1525, the last Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, Albrecht of Brandenburg, proclaimed Prussia a secular state and, in two years, introduced Protestantism as the official state religion. It was ordered that sermons in Prussian churches should be preached in the vernacular. Since the country was colonized by the Germans, but inhabited by the Prussians and

a considerable number of Lithuanians (the territory was referred to as Eastern Prussia, or Lithuania Minor), efforts were made to develop the Prussian and Lithuanian languages. At that time, Prussia was politically dependent on the Kingdom of Poland, but its relations with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were good. To expand its political influence and rid itself of dependence on Poland, Duke Albrecht supported the Protestant Reformation movement in Lithuania and Poland. He supported academics and began the training of Lithuanian pastors who could work not only in Prussia, but also in Lithuania. In 1544, he founded Koenigsberg University which he advertised widely in Lithuania. To spread the Word of God in a language that people could understand, it was also necessary to have literature for the believers. Albrecht's initiative gave the surviving Prussians a catechism in Prussian (1545), and the decision was made to write a Lithuanian language catechism, even though Lithuanian was considered a language not much different from Prussian.

Little by little, Duke Albrecht rallied a group of active, enlightened Lithuanians and created suitable conditions for their work. The idea for writing and publishing the first Lithuanian book must have been born in this environment. Soon Martynas Mazvydas was invited to Koenigsberg.

One of the Lithuanians supported by Duke Albrecht was Abraomas Kulvietis (Abrahamus Culvensis¹), born circa 1510, who was a former student of Melanchthon, Martin Luther's like-minded colleague in Wittenberg. Kulvietis returned to Lithuania at a very propitious time, when young Grand Duke Žygimantas Augustas (Sigismund



The cover to Mažvydas' first book, the Catechismus.

August) of Lithuania, heir to the Polish throne, and his mother Queen Bona lived in Vilnius. Kulvietis' ambition was to play a role in Lithuania similar to that played by Luther in the German-speaking lands. Kulvietis proclaimed Protestant ideas publicly from the pulpit and attacked Catholic priests. When the Queen left Vilnius, the confrontation between the Protestants and the Catholics became more intense. Kulvietis left for Koenigsberg where he became Duke Albrecht's advisor and, soon, vice-rector of the preparatory school that was to be reorganized into a university. This was done in 1544 with the establishment of Koenigsberg University. Kulvietis was appointed to head the Chair of Greek Language. When the persecution of Protestants in Lithuania subsided, Kulvietis returned to Vilnius in 1545 to join the intense religious debates, but he died suddenly that same year.

Together with Kulvietis at Koenigsberg University, there was another prominent Lithuanian educator of the 16th century, Stasys Rapalionis (Stanislaus Rapagelanus). He also studied at Wittenberg. It is noteworthy that Martin Luther made the opening speech at the public dispute during the presentation of Rapalionis' doctorate thesis in 1544. Rapalionis was appointed head of the most important chair at Koenigsberg University, the Chair of Theology. Rapalionis was one of the most educated and enlightened professors at Koenigsberg University. He started translating the Bible into Lithuanian, later Mažvydas included one of the hymns translated by Rapalionis in his hymn book.

The Life of Martynas Mažvydas (Martinus Mosvidius)

The exact date of Mažvydas' birth is not known, but it is believed that he was born no later than 1520. The first established date in Mažvydas' biography is 1546 when the Duke Albrecht of Prussia sent a letter inviting him to Koenigsberg. During the Duke's visit to Vilnius a short time before, the Duke had approached Jonas Bilevičius, a Lithuanian nobleman favorable to the Protestant Reformation, and had asked him to recommend a few educated young men who could speak Lithuanian and would like to become Protestant pastors in Eastern Prussia. Accepting the Duke's invitation, Mažvydas arrived in Koenigsberg where he graduated from the University on August 1, 1546.

Mažvydas was not an ordinary student, which can be surmised from a letter Duke Albrecht wrote him in which he addressed him as an "honorable and educated" man. Mažvydas graduated from the University in under two years and was granted a bachelor's degree. He was in the first group of graduates of Koenigsberg University which included seven people. Mažvydas was the only Lithuanian among them. It is well known that soon after he started his studies at Koenigsberg University, Mažvydas handed in his *Catechismus* for publication at the beginning of 1547.

We do not know where Mažvydas was educated before he came to Koenigsberg. At that time many young Lithuanian gentry attended Kracow Academy or the universities of Germany and Italy. Mažvydas' name, however, has not been found among them. One thing seems certain, he could not have studied in Germany because even after his graduation from Koenigsberg University he wrote in a letter to Duke Albrecht, "I don't speak German at all", but "I say I know my mother tongue perfectly well." There is no doubt that he knew Latin and Polish because he used Polish sources while writing *Catechismus* and preparing other books for publication. Mažvydas may have been educated at one of the estates of a Lithuanian nobleman, possibly at the College established by Kulvietis. Whatever the case, Mažvydas was well known among the Calvinists and had earned the title of "Protomartyr" i.e., the first martyr. He added this title in signing a letter to the Rector of Koenigsberg University, although there is no direct evidence of Mažvydas' persecution or punishment.

Much of the information we have about Mažvydas' life in Prussia comes from his letters. We know Mažvydas was a poor man, entering the University he paid the smallest matriculation fee and he received a grant from the Duke while studying in Koenigsberg. Poverty and misery were to hound Mažvydas all his life. He always complained of this in his letters. For example, after he had already graduated from the University, he approached the Rector of the University in the autumn of 1548 asking him to procure some suitable clothes for him from the Duke for winter was approaching and he had "only torn and very shabby" ones.

In the spring of 1549, Mažvydas was appointed pastor of Ragainė parish which at that time was still a completely Lithuanian district. There he met the eldest daughter of the previous German pastor who had died leaving a large family. According to tradition, Mažvydas had to marry her and had to pledge to take care of her brothers and sisters to the end of his life. His material circumstances were never easy, and more than once, Mažvydas was forced to ask the Duke for some sort of support. For instance, he asked that he be given better and more closely located farm land. At the end of his life, Mažvydas wrote to the Duke asking him to be freed from unsuccessful farming by being given an annuity from the state treasury. The Duke refused the request.

Mažvydas' parishioners also gave him a lot of trouble. As he put it, "they thought little of Christian religion, and understood nothing at all about the prayers to God and the cannons of faith. They", he said, "tried to evade practising religion" and thus, church attendance was very poor. Mažvydas admitted that he had little hope of achieving any definite progress in his parishioners' religious habits. According to Jurgis Gerulis, a researcher of Mažvydas' heritage, the conflict was aggravated by the fact that "the Lithuanians had changed their religion not of their own free will, but were forced to do so by the authorities. The

day before they had been Catholics, the next day they were called Protestants. They seemed, however, to have remained what they had been - poor, overworked, and undernourished wretches. They did not care about the religious struggles of their lords; unlike the clergy, they simply had not time for scuffles or arguments over such problems." (*Tauta ir žodis*, IV, 1926, p.426-27).

It is not known whether Mažvydas ever visited Lithuania Major (the Grand Duchy) after his appointment in Ragainė, but the dedications in his books indicate that he had the Lithuanian reader in mind. His books seemed to circulate all over Lithuania, which was becoming more and more involved in the Reformation movement.

Mažvydas' books, his letters of high epistolary standards and other authentic facts of his biography allow us to consider him to have been a man of considerable erudition and literary culture, educated in the humanistic tradition characteristic of his time. Upon becoming pastor of Ragainė parish, he did not terminate his studies, but continued producing religious books in Lithuanian which were necessary for Protestant churches both in Prussia and in Lithuania. That was the reason why he was supported by the state authorities of Prussia. Mažvydas died in Ragainė on May 21, 1563.

Mažvydas' Catechismus

The first Lithuanian book is a publication of small format (18 x 11 cm), 79 pages long, printed in Gothic lettering (except for some titles and the text in Latin). The Latin text is printed evenly, but the Gothic letters of the Lithuanian text are often uneven and not clearly printed. The printing shop must have been of very poor quality. Insufficient attention was paid to typefaces; for example, when the printer ran out of one typeface, he simply replaced it with another. The number of copies printed was somewhere between 200 and 300. Only two original copies are known to exist. The book has been reprinted several times for scholarly purposes.

The first Lithuanian book is not only a catechism as the title indicates. It includes the first original Lithuanian text written in verse (such as the foreword), the first Lithuanian language primer, and the first collection of Lithuanian hymns. It is believed that Mažvydas was not the author of all of the hymns. The author of the catechism is not indicated in the title page, but the scholar J. Safarewicz has deciphered the author's name in the foreword written in verse: MATJNVŠ MASVJDJVS. The linguists Stang and Fraenkel have established that the text of *Catechismus* is

largely a faithful translation from Polish catechisms by J. Selucian (printed in 1545) and J. Malecki (1546). Latin sources were also used.

The book begins with a dedication in Latin to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This is an indication that the author had the reader in Lithuania Major more in mind than the reader in Eastern Prussia. The epigram speaks about the severity of the Last Judgement Day, and calls on people to convert to Protestantism.



There are still some doubts concerning the identity of the author of the Latin foreword, "To the guardians and servants of Lithuanian churches..." Researchers think that it may have been written by Fridericus Staphylus, a professor of theology at Königsberg University, who had lived in Lithuania and knew Lithuanian quite well. The

foreword criticizes the Roman Catholic Church which allows only the priests to read the Bible, emphasizes the benefits of the catechism as a primer of faith, and expresses regrets about the estrangement of Lithuanians from the true faith through their pagan beliefs and rites, which they practice quite frequently. We shall separately discuss in greater detail the Lithuanian language foreword written in verse.

The book also includes a Lithuanian language primer with an alphabet adapted for the first time to Lithuanian sounds which clearly follows the Latin pattern.

Catechismus itself is composed of the Ten Commandments, prayers, a few excerpts from the Bible which are the first attempts at translating the Bible into Lithuanian, and some other texts. The largest part of *Catechismus* is taken up by eleven hymns presented together with music in mensural notation. Investigators think that this collection of hymns was compiled by several people. Translations may have been made by Rapalionis, Kulvietis, and others, but the largest number of the hymns were translated by Mažvydas himself.

The Foreword in Verse

The first line of the foreword "Brothers and sisters, take and read me" has become a poetic cliché paraphrased in an infinite number of ways. At first glance, this foreword is a collection of simple admonitions, phrased in an archaic language that is difficult to understand. It is written in the form of a conversation or argument with hypothetical questions and answers of an interlocutor. The reader finds himself in the middle of a debate and is advised to make a

decision in favor of the faith advanced by the Reformation. The book addresses three different social strata of readers - the peasant, the landlord, and the priest. The longest part addresses the peasants, for they still need to be convinced of the advantages of the new creed. The advocate of the Protestant creed is, naturally, reluctant to permit a free choice between the old pagan gods and the new God. But his interlocutor does not agree with him. He says that the pagan customs, i.e., traditional life, is dearer to his heart. The nobility is addressed with the request not only to tell people to attend church, but also to keep an eye on the pastors and ensure that they teach people properly. If the pastors fail in their duties, the nobility itself should try to spread the new religion.

But the most important thing is man's ability to read and understand the truth of faith himself. Earlier, in the absence of printed books, the propagation of faith depended on the will of lords and pastors. Now the simple man will be able to do it himself because he has a book which is becoming the most important means in the propagation of Christianity. The book marks the beginning of a new and innovative stage of culture in which the flow of history can be clearly felt. It is the demarcation line between things that were and things that are to be, i.e., between the past and the future.

The verse which makes up the Lithuanian Foreword in the *Catechismus* marks the beginning of the printed Lithuanian word and the beginning of Lithuanian secular poetry. To the historian interested in the history of culture, the foreword offers rich material about the confrontation of Catholicism and the Protestant Reformation in Lithuania. To the ethnologist, it provides much information about old Lithuanian beliefs, and contemporary norms of morality and social relations. It is also one of the earliest attempts to articulate Christian culture in Lithuania.

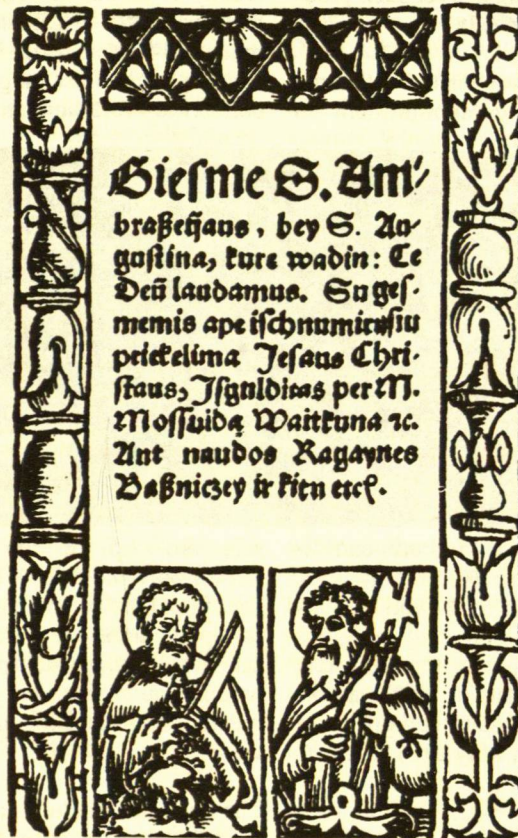
The Legacy of Mažvydas

In the history of Lithuanian culture, the region of Karaliaučius/Lithuanian Minor (Koenigsberg/ East Prussia)² was important not only in Mažvydas' time. In the 18th century it supported broad Lithuanian cultural activities, the publication of religious books, grammars and dictionaries, the recording of folklore and so on. The most important Lithuanian cultural event of that century was the publication of *The Seasons* (1765), a long poem by Pastor Kristijonas Donelaitis in hexameter and a masterpiece of Lithuanian literature.

In the 19th century, Lithuania, which had been incorporated into the Russian Empire after the partitioning of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, was exhausted by successive, hopeless revolts which were crushed by the Czars army and police. After the revolt of 1863, which was supported by large numbers of peasants, the Czarist regime prohibited the publication of Lithuanian books in the Roman alphabet. The ban met with an unexpected and tough resistance that lasted for all of its 40 years. Religious and secular books began to be published in East Prussia where the majority of the population in the border region was still Lithuanian. A group of

professional "book carriers", the *knygnešiai*, emerged to smuggle books, newspapers and other printed material into Lithuania. They were cruelly persecuted by the Czarist police. More than 2,000 people were punished for smuggling these books. This type of resistance played an extremely important role. The resistance against the Russians became not only wider and more popular, but it also made the Lithuanians accustomed to seeing written texts in their own language and promoted literacy. Very soon it became their primary symbol of identifying themselves with Europe.

continued on page 22



The cover to the second book written by Mažvydas, a hymn book, published in 1549. It was reprinted in 1897 and again in 1922.

²The Lithuanians owe a great debt to their cousins the Prussians (*prūsai*) who bore the brunt of Germanic expansionism first at the hands of the Teutonic Order in the 13th and 14th centuries, followed by gradual but intensive colonization by German-speaking settlers. They put up a tough resistance over those five hundred years, but eventually were annihilated. The Prussian language died about 1700, and perversely, the Prussian name was appropriated by the most militant nation of the German empire. The fact that Lithuania's cultural rebirth could find sustenance in the lands of the *prūsai* is a debt we have yet to repay to this noble nation.

Jeanne Dorr

Remembering the Victims of the KGB

February 16 and March 11 are dates that are near and dear to the heart of every Lithuanian regardless of where in the world that person is living; the first is the date of Lithuania's independence and the latter, the date of Lithuania's rebirth or restoration of independence; the ending of a 50-year occupation by the Soviet Union. But at what price were these events accomplished? How many lives were lost and how much blood was shed? How many people were broken both physically and mentally? How many families were destroyed? And so much of this destruction was rooted in the KGB building in Vilnius.

It was the summer of 1994 when I first visited the KGB Museum (the former KGB headquarters). The building itself is a large imposing building in the city. The guides are all former political prisoners who spent time there and know the building well. We were fortunate to have Mr. Stasys Katauskas show us through the building and tell its history. I was so emotionally overwrought I was unable to even snap a picture. I felt it would be almost sacrilegious to take pictures where so much suffering had occurred and so my camera remained in my purse unused.

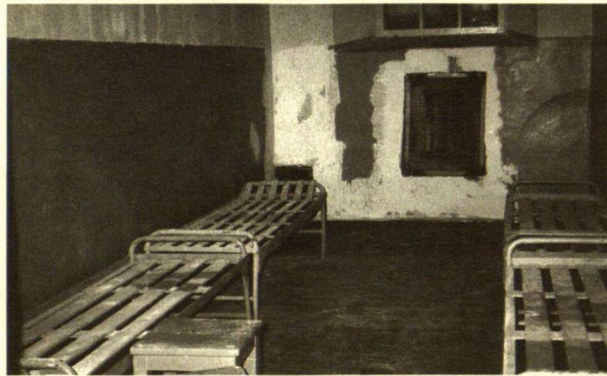
The only thought that kept turning over and over in my mind was, "How could one human being do this to another?" We left the building overwhelmed and with a new respect for the thousands of unsung Lithuanian heroes who were dragged through those doors, many never to return to their families. In my mind the story had to be written for the **BRIDGES** readers, not by experts armed with statistics, but told through the eyes and words of someone who lived through this nightmare.

As soon as I returned to Lithuania last summer I telephoned the museum and asked for permission to write the story. I honestly didn't know what their reaction would be, often such suffering is very personal. Unbeknownst to me I was speaking to Mr. Katauskas on the phone. I explained who the **BRIDGES** readers are and of their interest in Lithuania. When he graciously agreed to the interview I

told him I would need his time without interruptions and that I would also need to tour the prison without other tourists present. And ever so timidly I asked if I could take photographs. I could almost feel him smiling over the phone.

Once again I entered the doors of the former KGB building, but this time I was prepared mentally and emotionally. I was met by Mr. Katauskas whom I immediately recognized. He is a gentleman who reminds me of a statesman or a diplomat. He led me into his office which is lined with photographs of many of the partisans and their families. They are not pretty pictures and they need no words or translations. And again the same gnawing question - How could one human being do this to another?

In June, 1940 when the Soviet Red Army invaded and occupied Lithuania, the Russian secret police, (then called NKVD; later KGB) began to arrest and deport people from all over Lithuania to Siberia. At first it was the intelligentsia or the educated people. A year later, in June 1941, the massive deportations were underway. No one was safe; farmers, old people, and small children including infants were rounded up. No distinction was made as to their "crimes." The lucky ones were able to grab some food or water for the journey, the rest had nothing, and thousands died



One of the "refurbished" prison cells in the KGB building. In the days when political prisoners were imprisoned there were no beds. Prisoners slept on the floor.

along the way from starvation and the unbearable conditions. Children cried and begged for milk, there wasn't even water offered to them. The trip was made in cattle cars of trains. Between 50 and 70 people were packed into a cattle car; the journey from Lithuania to Siberia took approximately a month.

During the war many young Lithuanian men did not want to join the Soviet Army. Instead they united with other Lithuanians who would become known as the *partizanai*, the partisans. At one point, 40,000 partisans could be found in Lithuania's forest fighting for and dreaming of an independent Lithuania. The next decade would be a time of

small victories as well as terror for the partisans and the people who loved them. When they were caught, their bodies were brought and dumped in the towns, especially near churches, where passerbys could see them and learn the lesson of resistance.

The remainder of this article is the personal story of Stasys Katauskas. He was born in Varėna and in 1946 held a degree in mechanical engineering. Earlier he had been called to the army but because he was still in school he had not served. He was 24 years old when he was contacted that the partisans needed help. The meeting would take place in the woods. I asked him if he was afraid to go. His words to me were, "This wasn't a choice, I'm a Lithuanian." At the meeting he was told they needed someone to build radio equipment to reach Lithuanians who were living in Sweden and America. Once the equipment was built they would need someone to operate it. Mr. Katauskas explained that he could build the equipment but he had no idea where to find all the parts he would need.

At their next forest meeting, a farmer, using a horse and wagon, drove him about 15 miles where there were countless parts from all kinds of radio equipment. There were parts from all over Europe, America and Japan. The equipment had been stolen by different armies during the war and stored. The necessary parts were obtained while the farmer kept watch. Two radios were built; one was in the woods with the partisans and the other was hidden in Mr. Katauskas' house. Because of the different time zones involved he would be working with four other Lithuanian operators. Everything had to be perfectly coordinated. Mr. Katauskas and the others had their regular state jobs and there could be no suspicion cast on any of them. Unbeknownst to them, the man who was in charge of the five, was a KGB informer. He turned them all over to the Soviet authorities. They were betrayed by a fellow LITHUANIAN. The irony of the situation was that they had met only once and never had the

opportunity to use the equipment that cost them their youth and their freedom.

For the first year of his imprisonment he was held in the KGB building in Vilnius where his bones were broken and he was partially blinded. His accusers didn't want to kill him because he might be able to provide them with more names. At this point he was still more valuable alive than dead. When he could no longer endure the pain and torture he was transferred to a prison hospital. He began to regain his strength and gradually his sight. When he was strong enough to stand he was brought before the prosecutor.



Mr. Stasys Katauskas, holding the original keys which were used to imprison him and thousands of other Lithuanians at the KGB building.



Bags of shredded documents found in the KGB building in September, 1991 after the last KGB officials fled the facility. Some records had already been moved to Moscow, but many still remain unshredded.

Pages of charges were read against him as he stood and denied them. The prosecutor asked him why he signed this confession if he was not guilty. Although his sight was still not fully restored he asked if he could see the signatures on the pages. He sat at a table while he studied each of the pages. It was at this point he realized that half the signatures were forged. The interview was conducted in Russian and the prosecutor asked Mr. Katauskas if he was saying they forged his name. He had to weigh his words carefully because these words could mean the difference between life and death for him. He said, "I'm not saying you wrote this but neither did I."

Apparently they were the right words because the prosecutor called for handwriting experts. They had him sign his name on pages and pages - left hand, right hand, sitting down and standing up. They concurred that half the signatures were forged. Mr. Katauskas had signed his name several times when he

was originally brought to the KB building hence they had been able to copy his signature. For the time being his life was spared and he was brought back to prison. At this point he walked me over to the bulletin board in his office and showed me a picture of the man who broke his bones. He was again beaten over and over. He couldn't open his eyes and couldn't lift his hand. The pain was unbearable and he begged his tormentors to shoot him; he could endure no more. How could one human being do this to another?

He was again taken to the prison hospital. For many months there was a black scarf tied around his eyes. To keep from losing his mind he thought about the fields and the birds. But mostly he thought about his mother - how lovely and how good she was. I also thought about his mother and the agony she endured. She knew where her son was but he begged her not to visit him because she would probably be arrested. In his heart he thanked God; for as far as he knew his mother was still unharmed. He was sure he would never see her again and the thought of that was too much to bear. He walked to the window and removed the scarf from around his eyes and when he saw the light for the first time in months the shock was so great that it knocked him to the floor.

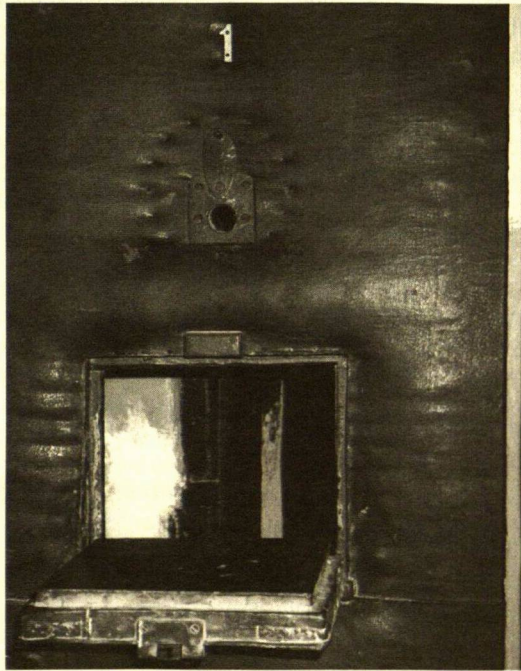
Now that he was pronounced healthy he was once again sent back to the prison to stand "trial." He was given a sentence of 25 years of hard labor and sent to the Ural Mountains. No distinction was made between political prisoners and hardened criminals. They were all thrown together and life was unbearable and dangerous. The few possessions they had were stolen, including their clothing and even their bread. This continued until Moscow eventually issued an order for political prisoners to be separated from other criminals. He was now moved to the coal mines where there were 20,000 prisoners from all over the Soviet Union and Soviet-occupied countries. It was here that Stasys Katauskas would spend the next 12 years of his life. After Stalin died the political prisoners began to be pardoned but the fact that they were in Siberia would mark them for many years to come.

As they began to come back to Lithuania they were unable to get jobs in their professions. They were, after all, enemies of the State. Stasys Katauskas finally got a job in a factory where meters for reading electricity were manufactured and he remained there until 1991 when events in Lithuania began to snowball with the independence movement.

It was the fall of 1991 when the Soviets faced up to the inevitable. The reign of terror was over. They had to leave the KGB building and they had to clear out quickly. There were foreign correspondents as well as former political

prisoners all clamoring to get inside this dreaded building. But most important - the microphones were on and the television cameras were rolling. Concerned about their departing image the remaining staff quickly began to shred the documents this infamous building housed and then they began a massive "refurbishing" campaign; walls were painted, seats were added to cells and floors were cleaned, as though cosmetic changes could ever wipe away the terror that was inflicted within those walls.

As Mr. Katauskas began our tour he took from his desk the heavy ring of keys which were the same keys that were used to imprison him and thousands of others. We descended a staircase where we came upon "holding" boxes (special prison cells). They were each about the size of telephone booths. It was here the prisoners were held. One of the "cosmetic" changes was to add a seat in each box, but in reality there had been only room to stand. Prisoners had to stand for many, many hours and think and worry about what was in store for them.



The door of one of the padded cells in the KGB building. The door has a peep hole and a door flap for passing things into the room. These were the rooms where prisoners were tortured and the cells were padded to muffle the screams of the prisoners.

We continued our tour and Mr. Katauskas described the different cells and their functions. He stopped at cell #20 which was the cell where he was, along with many others, held. It had cement floors and cement walls with only a pail for a toilet. Now there were beds in the cell, another cosmetic change; when Mr. Katauskas was in the cell there were no beds. Food was handed through a slot in the door. The prisoners were allotted 1/2 liter of water and 200 grams of bread a day. There was also a place the guards could watch through the door. If a prisoner tried to sit down he was quickly struck by

the guard, usually in the head. My guide told me the worst part was the cold. There was an open space for a window but it had no glass. He was so cold that he couldn't bend his fingers in the winter.

The most gruesome room was the one with the padded walls. Here prisoners were beaten senseless and some even had their insides ripped out as was the case of one of the last partisans who was captured. If you stop at this room and concentrate you can almost hear the piercing screams of agony. My God, if these walls could talk. How can one human being do this to another?

We moved on to another area where once a month the prisoners were forced to bathe in icy water for an hour. They were pushed into this room that had a cement floor and the iron door was slammed shut. If they lived it was fine, if they came down with pneumonia and died that was fine too. It meant there was one less mouth to feed. Some actually died in the water. This room was totally "redone" before the KGB left in 1991. They even covered the floors with parquet flooring, but there were too many people who remembered the room, so everything has been stripped away and left as it was originally.

There was also an outdoor square that had fencing overhead where some of the prisoners were allowed to get fresh air for ten minutes a day. Mr. Katauskas was not among these lucky ones since they were still trying to get him to reveal where the leader of his particular group was hiding.

Another room is filled with bags and bags of shredded documents because time ran out and they couldn't shred them all. Records for 48,000 people were housed in that building.

Further along was the final stop for some of the prisoners. More than 1,000 people were shot to death in this building. Their bodies were loaded onto trucks and dumped in a mass grave in a fenced area of downtown Vilnius. They thought no one saw, but one man who lived in the area knew. After independence he showed authorities where to dig and in one grave the bones of 706 people were found. I asked Mr. Katauskas what became of his accuser. He told

me they had one face to face meeting, but now the man crosses the street when he sees Katauskas.

Why did I choose this topic? Why not let the past be put to rest? I agree that Lithuania must put her past behind her and look forward. But we can never, never forget the people who held on to the dream of independence. I don't feel qualified to ever give advice, but with 30 years of experience teaching history, I urge the people who write the history curriculum in Lithuania to make this building a mandatory visit for all students somewhere between 9th and 12th grades. Very few families were not touched by the arrests and deportations.

The visit takes less than an hour, there is no fee, and it can easily be coordinated with other places of interest in Vilnius. To all the American visitors, take time to visit this building. You will have a far better understanding of what you see than anything you read. The museum has convenient hours and is located at Gedimino pr. 40 in Vilnius. Call first in case the schedule has changed. Tours are given in several languages but you might want to phone first if you need English.

To Mr. Katauskas, thank you for giving me the best history lesson of my life. To all the people who suffered through these times we owe you a debt that we can never repay. To those who died helping Lithuania all we can do is offer a prayer for them. But my question was never answered. How can one human being do this to another?

All photos by Jeanne Dorr.

Lithuania and Her Future, continued from page 13

tion and love for Lithuania, they deserve a loud "bravo" and a salute.

Excerpts from "The First Lithuanian Book and its Cultural Context," continued from page 18

In 1883, twenty years after the 1863 uprising, the first Lithuanian-language newspaper, *Aušra* (*The Dawn*), was published in Tilžė (Tilsit) a small town in East Prussia on the Lithuanian border. It was a secular, patriotic periodical and was soon followed by other publications, *Varpas* (*The Bell*) being the most noteworthy. The year 1883 is recognized as the date marking the beginning of the rebirth of the Lithuanian nation. Thus, the national and cultural revival of Lithuania began in a place where Protestant and Catholic cultures intermingled, and serves as evidence that religious differences can be no obstacle to common goals and projects. This atmosphere lasted until the Second World War when East Prussia was occupied by the Soviet Union and the local population, including the Lithuanians, were exterminated and replaced almost entirely by colonists from Russia.

Algis Rimas

The Lithuanian Economy in February

President Brazauskas gave his annual state of the nation address to parliament in mid-February. Referring to the economy, Mr. Brazauskas announced that having reached bottom, it had started to climb. As evidence, he cited steady gains in GNP growth, expanding exports, rising real wages, and a sharp drop in inflation. The outlook for the next year was described as buoyant.

The latest statistics bear him out. The GNP rose by 3.5 percent in 1996 and it may increase this year by a further 5 percent, after discounting inflation. Considering Lithuania's declining population, the GNP gain would amount to a solid net increase in the country's wealth. These productivity gains appear to be widely distributed as average wages increased by 18 percent, exceeding the inflation rate over five percent. Both the legal minimum wage and state pension payments were increased substantially in 1996. The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), a Paris-based international agency representing the world's developed nations, has calculated that, measured on a basis of purchase parity, Lithuanian wage rates recently surpassed those of the other Baltic states. The weighed monthly average wage currently paid in Lithuania amounts to \$520, compared to \$468 in Latvia and \$429 in Estonia.

January unemployment in Lithuania continued at a rate of 6.3 percent, despite further work force down-sizing carried out by various industrial firms. According to the labor exchange, unemployment is affecting mainly unskilled blue collar and agricultural workers. The labor market for professional and white collar employees reportedly is tight, especially away from the largest cities.

Last year, the U.S. rating service, Moody's, gave the country a solid credit rating, thus assuring a number of jittery investors. Another U.S. company, Standard and Poors, is expected to be called in for a second opinion this year. The ratings presumably contributed to a significant rise in foreign direct investment. The government's investment agency has announced that in 1996 foreign direct investment increased by about \$150 million to a total of \$510 million.

According to the labor exchange, unemployment is affecting mainly unskilled blue collar and agricultural workers. The labor market for professional and white collar employees reportedly is tight, especially away from the largest cities.

Omnitel, the U.S. telecommunications joint venture with Motorola, was the single largest foreign investor (\$40 million), followed by the U.S. tobacco company, Phillip Morris (\$38 million) and by the U.S. and Colombian company, Lancaster Steel, investment in the KlaipL3da oil products terminal (\$31 million).

The rate of inflation for 1996 was a mere 13 percent, small by the standards of the past several years when three digits were the norm. Inflation watchers became unnerved in January when the monthly consumer price index jumped by 2.8 percent, but then it fell to a more normal 1-1.5 percent range in February. The January rise was attributed primarily to the imposition of the 18 percent value-added-tax (VAT) to food items that had been previously untaxed. The industrial price index in January rose by only 0.5 percent.

On the negative side, the country is running a trade deficit of over \$940 million. Although exports in 1996 increased by 23 percent to slightly over \$3 billion, imports also rose, by 20 percent, to just under \$4 billion. The leading trading partners were Russia and Germany. The government's foreign debt has increased to over \$1.4 billion. The main creditors are the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank,

and the European Union. Unlike in previous years, most of the borrowing is for investment purposes, but over a fifth of the amount is earmarked to cover the budget deficit.

The deficit is being attacked through a combination of revenue increases and spending cuts. Increasing tax collections by using the carrot of tax reform appears to be a top priority for the new Finance Minister, 34 year old Algirdas Šemėta, who previously chaired the country's stock exchange commission. Mr. Šemėta succeeded Rolandas Matiliauskas who was forced to resign because of his involvement in questionable personal financial dealings when he was formerly working for a commercial bank. The use of the stick, consisting of tougher tax law enforcement, is also being threatened. Prime Minister Vagnorius has called for vigorous prosecutions of offenders. To reduce spending, his proposals include reducing the number of government workers. Their rolls are scheduled to be trimmed by over 1,000 positions. Some agencies are to loose up to 21 percent of their staff.

Despite recent economic gains, public opinion polls continue to show a high degree of popular discontent with their standard of living. According to data compiled by the Statistics Department, 52 percent of disposable family income is spent on food. Housing and clothing account for

another 10 percent each. An impressive 4 percent goes for alcohol and tobacco. Social indicators also show decreasing levels of family formation, falling birth rates, and higher levels of social disfunction such as crime, alcoholism and divorce.

Financial Markets Boom, Banks Reorganize

The Wall Street Journal's European edition featured a glowing report in February on Lithuania's recent economic performance and identified its stock exchange as being especially promising. After a take-off in January, the Lithuanian National Stock Exchange continued to post huge gains in share prices and volume traded. Many issues rose by over 50 percent and the volume traded increased over five-fold since early January. For example, shares in the television screen manufacturer, Ekranas, rose from a price of 2.1 litas per share to 6.7 after the company posted a 1996 profit of 87 million litas (the exchange rate is 4 litas to one dollar).

Local traders credited the surge to the entry of foreign investment funds into what is still a relatively thin market. Observers also started to worry that commercial banks and other potential buyers of government bills would abandon the bond market in favor of stocks. However, despite some softness in the bond market during mid-February, demand picked-up at month's end. A \$10 million issue of three month treasury bills was snapped-up at an average interest

rate of 9.7 percent. The stock market has also continued to act bullish through February.

To borrow more money long term, the Lithuanian government reportedly has invited 15 international banks and financial institutions to bid on underwriting a \$200 million treasury bond issue of 3-5 years maturity. The Japanese bank, Nomura, floated a similar \$110 million issue in early 1996. According to media reports, the invitees included such U.S. houses as J.P. Morgan, Merrill Lynch, Solomon Bros., and Morgan Stanley. Last year, a similar bond issue, for \$110 million, was floated by the Japanese bank, Nomura.

Lithuania's Joint Stock Innovation Bank, one of the banks closed during last December's banking crisis, will be liquidated and its assets sold, according to a government decision yet to be ratified by parliament. The government plans to fully compensate all individual depositors over a five year period and all corporate depositors over ten years. For private depositors, compensation would consist of \$2,000 in cash and the rest in treasury bills or commercial paper. Corporate depositors would get financial paper only.

The State Commercial Bank, which is operating under a partnership agreement with the Dublin-based Irish Allied Bank, plans to announce an open competition soon to sell its shares to private owners. Eligible buyers would be limited to financial institutions, both foreign and domestic. The State Agricultural Bank, recently placed under new management, reportedly also plans to privatize.

The Vagnorius government has tabled draft legislation before the Seimas to prevent money laundering through Lithuanian financial institutions. The Seimas has yet to debate the measure.

Energy and Agriculture Increasingly Driven by Market Forces

The electricity generating and distribution utility, Lietuvos Energija, signed a loan agreement with the U.S. company, Merrill Lynch, to borrow \$50 million for the purchase of fuel oil and natural gas. This is the first such loan for which no governmental guarantee was required by the lender. Of the \$50 million, only \$2-4 million will go to pay for fuel oil, the remainder is earmarked to reimburse the natural gas utility, Lietuvos Dujos, for past and current deliveries.

Lietuvos Dujos, mentioned above, wants to privatize itself, according to the company's director general, Kęstutis Schumacheris. According to the press, several natural gas companies are eager to buy shares. They include Russia's Gazprom, Gaz de France and Ruhrgaz of Germany.

Legislation would be required to enable sale of the utility's stock to private owners beyond the nine percent currently allowed.

The Lithuanian oil refinery, Mažeikių Nafta, is concerned over the recent announcement of the Russian Fuel and Energy Ministry that it plans to raise the export price of Russian crude oil to Lithuania by \$15-20 per ton, to \$135. The new price reportedly is the free market, Rotterdam price discounted for shipment via pipeline, in lieu of the more expensive sea transport price charged for deliveries at Rotterdam. Some Lithuanian observers accused the Russians of using the oil price threat for their political purposes. The Mažeikių refinery has been plagued by financial difficulties, low volumes and supply interruptions and this increase would only add to its problems.

President Brazauskas signed a decree establishing a state utility price commission. It will analyze energy prices, recommend on procedures for setting utility rates and act as an advisory body to the government. The World Bank reportedly recommended that such a commission be set up.

International advisers have consistently urged the government to dismantle energy subsidies, charge market prices for energy consumption, and conserve energy use.

The government's agricultural commodities support fund, set at \$50 million, reportedly will disburse \$4 million less in subsidies this year than in 1996. Price supports for grain will also be reserved for food grains only. The measures are part of an agricultural market-based reform plan. It includes more self-help programs for farmers, cultivation of non-traditional crops, and encouraging a shift of labor into agricultural services.

Vilnius Real Estate Market Flattens-out

According to the Vilnius daily, Respublika, Vilnius real estate prices stopped rising this winter, defying earlier projections of a steady escalation in the city's housing market. However, there are no indications of a decline. Sellers are increasingly offering extended financing terms to potential buyers to move property as more private housing becomes available. Average prices for apartments in the outlying areas of Vilnius during February were as follows: one room, \$10-14,000; two room, \$15-18,000; three room, \$21-23,000; four room, \$ 25-30,000. Prices in the more exclusive areas, such as the fashionable old-town, would be considerably higher.

Business Briefs

Sanitas, Lithuania's largest pharmaceutical company with 560 employees, reported its 1996 annual sales at \$11 million and after tax profits of \$2.5 million. Ninety percent of the company's product is exported, mostly to the countries of the former Soviet Union. Sanitas, whose major stockholder is a U.S. company, Century Holdings, plans to invest almost \$2 million in new packaging equipment. The company saw its share prices increase five-fold during the past year.

Mariampolė Dairy posted an annual \$1.6 million profit on earnings of \$46 million in 1996. The dairy is Lithuania's largest, employing 1300 persons processing 10 percent of all the milk produced in the country. It is 83 percent state-owned but slated for privatization.

Lithuanian Airlines declared profits of \$1.5 million on revenues of \$50 million in 1996. The state-owned airline carried over 183,000 passengers and almost 1500 tons of freight, a sharp increase over the previous year.

Vakarų Laivų Remontas (Western shipyards) also declared a \$1.5 million profit and earnings of \$28 million. The Klaipėda shipyard overhauled or repaired 134 vessels from 19 countries, including Germany, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

Utėnos Gėrimai, the country's leading beer brewery, signed an agreement with Pepsi Cola to bottle soft drinks. Part of the arrangement reportedly included a \$600,000 investment in bottling equipment by Pepsi.

Siemens, the German electronics and telecommunication giant, reportedly retracted its earlier threats to close its facilities in Lithuania. According to the Lithuanian media, a Siemens representative had complained in mid-February that the strong Lithuanian currency, tied to the dollar, was driving up manufacturing costs in its Lithuanian plant above those that could be realized in other Central European countries.

Lithuania's fixed exchange rate model has been controversial and opposed by many exporters. However, it is credited for contributing to monetary stability, reducing the rate of inflation, attracting investments.

Lithuanian Telecom, the nation's state owned telephone utility, announced that it would sell its shares to private investors in March. The government would retain approximately a third of the stock. According to the government minister responsible for privatization, Ms. Laima Andrikienė, the privatized utility would lose its monopoly position and competition from other telecom providers would be permitted.

Butingės Nafta, the state company charged with building the off-shore oil handling terminal, also wants to sell shares to the public. However, as of this writing, the Seimas cannot decide what percentage of stock should be retained by the state. The majority Conservative Party is pressing for a figure of 34 percent. To achieve government control, the Conservatives would also insert a provision that no other buyer could hold more than a third of the total.

Ramune Kubilius

BITS AND PIECES

LITHUANIAN FOUNDATION, INC.

The Lithuanian Foundation, Inc. (Lietuvių Fondas) awarded \$40,000 in support of Lithuanian language schools in the United States run by LAC, Inc. chapters. The LAC Education Council added \$9,950 from its own funds doanted during the annual fall fundraiser. The awarded monies supplement the schools' own funds collected from tuition fees and local donations to pay for rent, supplies and teacher stipends. The LAC Education Council currently helps to support 18 Lithuanian-language schools in the United States where 919 students are taught by 188 teachers. The student body is mostly grade school and some high school. Some schools draw adult students who wish to learn the basics of Lithuanian language, culture and history. Most of the schools are weekend schools, although a few offer evening classes during the work-week. The Education Council also provides some financial support for the only remaining Lithuanian-language Montessori school in America, "Žiburėlis", which is based at the facilities of the World Lithuanian Center in Lemont, IL.

LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE TEACHER CAMP

Lithuanian language teachers interested in attending the LAC, Inc. Education Council sponsored conferences should mark their calendars: the annual Teachers' one-day workshop will be held February 23rd at the World Lithuanian Center in Lemont, IL and the annual week-long seminar at Camp Dainava, MI will be held August 3-10, 1997.

Interested teachers should contact Education Council Chairperson Regina Kučas for more information about both seminars. The Education Council may be able to provide some support for teachers to attend these networking and practical conferences (support usually is for the registration fee, excluding travel expenses). Lithuanian-language courses for adults will be offered concurrent with the seminar August 3-10, at Camp Dainava. Registration fees include the course materials, housing and meals. The instructors and planners of both programs try to coordinate some activities so that all participants at the week-long events have opportunities to mingle and socialize in addition to attending their separate sessions.

For more information, contact:

Mrs. Regina Kučas
Chairperson, Education Council of the
Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.,
13648 Kickapoo Trail,
Lockport, IL 60441
(708) 301-6410.

BALSSI

The Fourth Baltic Studies Summer Institute will take place at the University of Illinois at Chicago June 16 to August 8, 1997. Courses are being offered in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian, with an intensive first year of each language accomplished in 8 weeks! The cultural component will consist of courses in Baltic Culture (first 4 weeks) and Baltic History (second 4 weeks).

There will also be a variety of guest lecturers from all over North America, an opportunity to live in downtown Chicago close to the ethnic communities and their museums, archives and cultural life, and participate in various events.

Students can enroll for language courses in Estonian or Latvian or Lithuanian (101 and 102) for credit in two parts of 4 credits each. Recipients of fellowships (for language study only) will be required to audit culture and/or history (3 credits each) to get an overview of the folklore, mythology, prehistory, literature and film, and to gain an understanding of the historical context of all three countries.

Language classes will run concurrently 4 hours a day 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Estonian will be taught by Ene Alas and Eero Pikat, Latvian by Prof. Dzintra Rodina and Lou Ann Staks, and Lithuanian by Jūra Avižienis and Prof. Loreta Vishormirskytė. Kristina Kelertas-Boving will teach culture and Prof. Julius Slavėnas will teach history, with classes meeting from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily.

Tuition is \$118/credit plus a non-refundable registration fee of \$30. Housing is available at the UIC Dormitory at \$21/day. Sublets in the neighborhoods or youth hostel-type housing are also available. Fellowship applications for language study only require: grade transcripts, 2 recommendations and a letter describing your reasons for study to be sent as soon as possible to:

Prof. Violeta Kelertas,
 Endowed Chair of Lithuanian Studies,
 Director BALSSI 1997,
 Dept. of Slavic and Baltic Languages (m/c 306),
 1610 University Hall,
 University of Illinois at Chicago, 601 S. Morgan St.,
 Chicago IL 60607-7112. USA
 Telephone: (312) 996-4412 Fax (312) 996-0953
 E-mail kelertas@uicvm.uic.edu

All inquiries regarding academic matters should also be addressed to the Director.

Registration is being handled by the Office of Continuing Education and Public Service (m/c 165), 1033 West Van Buren St., Suite 700N, Chicago, IL 60607-2919.

A Fax-on-demand 800 number for registration information is in place. Call 800-449-9102 from a touch tone phone. Fax requests are processed 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Fellowships will be decided early on, so don't delay, make your Baltic summer plans now!

SCHOOL OF NURSING DEAN VISITS U.S.

The dean of the Kaunas Academy of Medicine School of Nursing program, Dr. Arvydas Šeškevičius, was invited by the University of Michigan's School of Nursing to visit the United States. A cardiologist by training, Dr. Šeškevičius was one of several physicians who became instructors in Lithuania's college level nursing program which started in the years following the re-establishment of independence in Lithuania in 1990. At that time, there were no trained nursing faculty so MD's became involved in that capacity. Since then, the Kaunas program has established ties with nursing programs in Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Scotland. A nursing faculty member from University of Michigan, Dr. Violeta Barkauskas, who had spent six months as a Fulbright Scholar in Lithuania serving as a nursing faculty consultant, hosted Dr. Šeškevičius' visit. During his visit to the United States, Dr. Šeškevičius was also scheduled to visit Healthsoft Inc. Computer Development Program Corporation in Orlando, Florida and the Oakland University School of Nursing.

It was discovered that Dr. Šeškevičius' trip to the United States coincided with the planned trip of two sick children coming to the U.S. for medical treatment under the auspices of the generous "Healing the Children" organization. He was cautiously approached and very graciously agreed to watch over the five and seven year old boys during their trip from Lithuania to the U.S. His interests in humanitarian aid extend also to his volunteer activities in Lithuania, with his work with orphan children and the Lithuanian schools in the Vilnija region. The Daughters of Lithuania

(Lietuvos Dukterys) sponsored a welcome for Dr. Šeškevičius in Detroit's Lithuanian parish church after Mass in January.

(DRAUGAS, 1/16/97, from an article by Jūratė Pečiūra)

UPCOMING CALENDAR

Second Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe "Values and Norms of Society in Change"

August 20-23, 1997

Vilnius University

Contact: Prof. Ona Voverienė, Vilnius University,

Universiteto 3, Vilnius

LT-2734, Lithuania

tel. (372)2-634 018; fax (372) 2-614 829

Two plenary sessions and nine workshops in: Linguistics, Literature, History, Ethnology and Folklore, Political Science. Scholars from 12 countries have sent in proposals, including Australia, Japan, Sweden and Hungary.

16th Conference on Baltic Studies "Baltic Issues in International Perspectives" 30th anniversary of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies

June 19-21, 1998

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

Conference Chair: Guntis Smidchens,

University of Washington,

Dept. of Scandinavian Studies,

Box 353420,

Seattle, WA 98195-3420;

tel: 206/616-5224;

fax 206/685-9173;

e-mail:guntiss@u.washington.edu

A call for papers is now underway for presentations with a Baltic theme in: Anthropology/Folklore, Business/Economics, Geography/Earth Sciences, History, Linguistics, Literature, and Political Science.

(from Baltic Studies Newsletter, v.21 #1, March 1997)

A Shubert festival is being planned in Lithuania on the beautiful grounds at Pažaislis

June 1-August 31.

The host will be the internationally acclaimed Kaunas National Choir led by Petras Bingelis.

(from BALT-L web-site, March 1997)

BRIDGES

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