

bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

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NEWS JOURNAL

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Front Cover: Fall comes in Lithuanian colors. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė.

Back cover: Once Upon a Halloween. Photo by Viltė Vaitkutė.

bridges

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from the editor

Dear Reader,

In your hands, you are holding the November issue of Bridges. The year is coming to an end. Fall is usually the time of year when we start looking back at the results of our labor throughout the year, the harvest of what has been sown and what has grown.

Since the end of the pandemic, the Lithuanian American Community has been busy organizing events and meetings. In the middle of October, the organization held its second session at the Lithuanian Center in St. Petersburg, Florida. Many prominent guests participated, and many topics were discussed. I hope to elaborate on the resolutions of the session in the next issue of Bridges.

The topic I would like to touch upon here stems from this very active work of Lithuanian Americans. The chapters are vibrant; there are many schools open, and many events are happening. Lithuanian Americans participate in the life of Lithuania quite actively. And yet, one of the most painful issues is the issue of double citizenship. Those who immigrated from Lithuania after March 11, 1990, and would like to take American citizenship cannot do that if they don't want to lose the Lithuanian citizenship that they acquired by birth. It does not matter if they were born in Lithuania; it does not matter if they speak Lithuanian fluently; it does not matter if they are active in Lithuanian organizations and work towards helping Lithuania and maintaining and fostering the Lithuanian language, culture, and tradition in the US. Therefore, another referendum will take place in 2024. Then all citizens of Lithuania will have a chance to express their opinion on the matter of double citizenship.

For now, I would like to remind you that as of November 28, 2015, an amendment to the Law on Citizenship came into force, allowing persons to hold multiple citizenships. As a result of this amendment, persons who were either exiled or left from the occupied Republic of Lithuania before March 11, 1990, as well as descendants of such persons, can acquire Lithuanian citizenship and not lose their current citizenship. If you are a descendant of a Lithuanian citizen, who lived in Lithuania from February 16, 1918, to June 15, 1940, you could become a Lithuanian citizen.

We can see how his citizenship law might be a reason for heated arguments and disagreements as it might not seem fair towards the recent immigrants from Lithuania. Especially since they put all their hearts into the work for the benefit of Lithuania and maintaining Lithuanian culture and traditions while living abroad.

Wishing you a peaceful month of November,

Karilė Vaitkutė
Editor

LITHUANIAN CHORAL ENSEMBLE DAINAVA CELEBRATES ITS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Highlights of the ensemble's history

Karile Vaitkutė

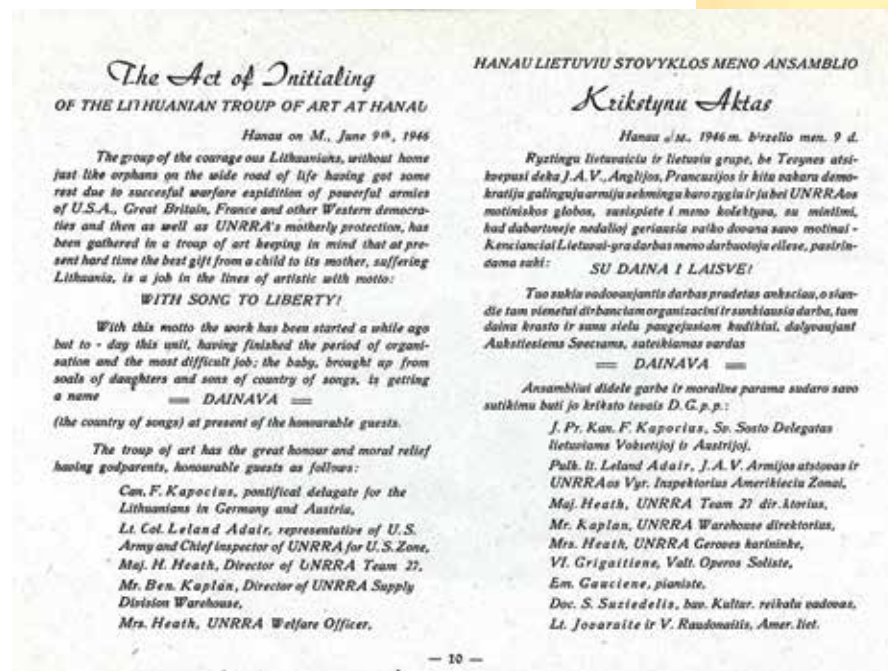
ENSEMBLE ORIGINS IN THE HANAU DP CAMP IN GERMANY

If we could just turn over the shoulder and look back into the past, into the very origins of the Dainava ensemble, perhaps, at the very beginnings of that long long river of time, we would see the figure of a lonely man in his thirties emerging from the dense fog. He would be sitting in an open coal wagon on a cold winter night in January 1946. He would be riding through the native land of the German humanist Goethe and the famous folklorists Brothers Grimm. However, the landscape would cause no admiration. On the contrary, it would make one sink into a profound sadness: towns and cities destroyed by bombs, walls shattered by bullets, and explosion holes in fields soaked with the blood of people and animals. That lone man in an open train carriage is shivering from the cold. He is Albinas Dzironas, a resident of the Displaced Persons (DP) camp in Hanau, one of hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians who found themselves in German DP camps, fleeing their homeland and death brought by the Soviet invaders. Albinas and his compatriots have become refugees, exiles, people without a home, without a place in

*You have accomplished so much with so little
The best of good fortune to you all.*
Senator Harry P. Cain
State of Washington



Lietuviu Meno Ansamblis
Lithuanian Song & Dance Troup **DAINAVA**



the world, but with the still smoldering hope of returning to a liberated Lithuania... How to strengthen this hope? How to strengthen the spirit of the people? People who have lost everything that gives meaning to life - their homes, their jobs, their professions. People whose loved ones are dead, killed, murdered, lost, and exiled. And just think about it: these people still want to sing and dance! It may seem strange because there is nothing to celebrate. But song and dance are exactly the things that give a person the spiritual strength to survive the tragic moments of life. Jokingly I could say that scien-

together with Latvians and Estonians. There seemed to be no shortage of people who wanted to sing and dance, but there was a lack of a professional, serious, and firm leader and conductor. Such a person had to be found and persuaded to come to live in the Hanau DP camp. Albinas Dzirvonas was doing just that - traveling three hundred kilometers on a cold January night from Hanau to the Dillingen DP camp, where Bronius Jonušas, a well-known orchestra leader and conductor, lived.

Did Albinas Dzirvonas succeed? The short answer is yes! It was a great success. By the way, Dzirvonas was one of the "three musketeers"



Hanau lietuvių
DAINAVOS
ansamblio
pastatyta 1947mt.



VI. Adomavičiaus
foto montażas.



who, together with Eduardas Daniliūnas and Jonas Juozevičius-Juodis, seriously started to set up a new representative song and dance ensemble. The cultural affairs of the camp were at that time headed by Prof. Dr. Simas Sužiedėlis, without whose help, according to the recollections of his contemporaries, the work of the ensemble would not have been possible.

Let us jump forward in time. Bronius Jonušas set strict requirements for future choir members. Not just anyone could sing, but all voices were tested by professional opera soloists and musicians. Within three weeks a new repertoire was prepared and the February 16th concert took place! It was the first and very important concert of the ensemble. It not only lifted spirits and raised hopes for the Lithuanian Independence Day,

but also proved that the ensemble is capable of performing professionally, challenging classics from both Lithuanian and world music, and can represent Lithuania's cultural forces. It is worth mentioning that the Hanau DP camp was very close to Frankfurt, where the military headquarters of General Dwight Eisenhower, the former Allied commander of the American zone of occupied Germany at the time, was located after the Second World War, and where dignitaries were able to attend the concerts.

On June 9, 1946, a concert was held at which the newly formed ensemble was named Dainava. This day is considered to be the ensemble's "christening" day. The concert was attended and the "baptism act" was signed by such dignitaries as Fr. Feliksas Kapočius, the Lithuanian National Delegate to the Holy See in Germany and Austria, and Lieutenant Colonel Leland Adair, a representative of the U.S. Army and the Chief Inspector for the American Zone of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), Major Harry Heath, Director of the 27th UNRRA Unit, Ben Kaplan, Director of UNRRA Warehouses, Muriel Heath, Head of UNRRA Social Division, Vladislava Gri-gaitienė, soloist of the Lithuanian State Opera, Emilija Gaučienė, pianist, Prof. Dr. Simas Sužiedėlis, Lithuanian-American M. Jovaraitė, and V. Raudonaitis. The Act of Baptism announced that the ensemble was cre-



ated "with the idea that in the present sorrowful times, the best gift of a child to his mother - suffering Lithuania - is to work in the ranks of the art workers, having chosen the motto 'With a song to freedom!'"

The professionalism of "Dainava" and the breadth of its repertoire have given the ensemble the opportunity to perform not only in its own DP camp in Hanau but also in other cities and to a wide range of audiences. In the choral competition of the Song Festival in Würzburg, Dainava was awarded the first prize. Dainava has performed a total of 174 times in Germany. The conductor Bronius Jonušas was assisted

by the leader of the folk dance group Juozas Žygas and the choirmasters Vladas Adomavičius and Jonas Adomaitis. Kęstutis Miklaševičius was the administrator of the ensemble from 1947; Albinas Dzirvonas, Eduardas Daniliūnas, Jonas Rimkūnas, Vytautas Rukuiža, Mečislovas Krasauskas, Jonas Juodzevičius, Povilas Skridaila, Jonas Tamuliūnas served on the board of directors of the ensemble in different years.

Dainava was not limited to choral songs and folk dances. On the occasion of the ensemble's two-year anniversary, a play, "Kryžkelė" (Crossroads) was staged by writer, actor, and director Antanas Škėma. The pli-



ght of Lithuanian refugees at that time was painful. Many of them, at the crossroads of their lives, had to live through soul-rending contradictions and choose the direction of their lives: whether to stay and live in their Soviet-occupied homeland, or to go out into the forests and fight the enemy in a guerrilla war, or to flee to the West.

In 1948, emigration to the West began. Lithuanians from the Hanau camp also began to leave - to the United States, to Canada, to Australia... Bronius Jonušas, the conductor of the ensemble, decided to leave for Canada. Then Stepas Sodeika became the new leader of the ensemble. In order for the ensemble not to disintegrate, the idea of emigrating to the same country and the same city for all the remaining members of the ensemble emerged. If all ensemble members would live in the same city, the ensemble would live on. Chicago in the United States of America became that city.

AMERICA, AMERICA...

And who would have thought that so many Lithuanians would spend their lives in this country... Who would have thought that the singers would end up in Chicago, where they would find another Lithuania -

a Lithuania created by Lithuanian Americans?

If we were to look back over the shoulder again and return to the year 1950, we might see the conductor of Dainava, Stepas Sodeika, standing in front of the Holy Cross Church on Wood Street, on the south side of Chicago. Perhaps he is looking up at the steeples of the largest Lithuanian church in Chicago and cannot believe that fate has brought him here and that he, under the tutelage of the priest-pastor Anicetas Linkus, will now be the organist of this church. As far as the eye can see, there are only Lithuanians around the church. Here are their homes, here are their stores, banks, theatres, newspaper publishing houses, banquet halls, taverns, pharmacies, doctor offices, schools, sewing shops, canteens... We can imagine how many Lithuanians there are in Chicago if the parishioners of Holy Cross alone number almost five thousand. And this church is not the only Lithuanian church in Chicago. There is also St. George Church, St. Mary's Immaculate Conception, Divine Providence, and the Gate of Dawn... You can get dizzy thinking about your destiny and looking up at the tall church towers. From his childhood on the banks of the Nemunas River near Jurbarkas to studying and later teaching at the Klaipėda Conservatory, from singing at the Kaunas State Opera to directing choirs in exile camps in Germany...

Just two months ago, on August 9, 1950, Stepas Sodeika disembarked from the ship that took him from Bremen to New York. And now, on October 8th, the first concert of Dainava will take place at the Holy



Cross Church. Many of the singers have moved from Germany, and even more, have joined the group in Chicago. The ensemble has grown and strengthened, and now about 80 choir members will sing in the concert. It is a great joy to see the recent arrivals and the American-born Lithuanians working together so well. This concert, for example, will feature Algirdas Brazis, a Lithuanian-American soloist with the Chicago Opera. The concert is religious, but it will begin with Česlovas Sasnauskas's "Protect Us, Lord", because only with Lithuania in one's heart can one try to endure this exile, this emigration. Only by keeping Lithuania in our hearts, it would be possible to preserve the spark of hope of returning to our homeland. If



that spark burned brighter in Germany, here, across the Atlantic, so far away from Lithuania, it can fade more easily. Therefore, one of the main tasks of Dainava is to prevent it from fading away. To sing, to create, to perform... To present Lithuanian songs to Americans, to teach the younger generation of Lithuanians our songs, customs, and culture, and to keep it from drifting away and dissolving into the vastness of America.

A few months later, on January 27, 1951, the first Dainava concert was held at the Lindbloom School in Chicago. The program consisted of songs by Lithuanian composers. Soloists Algirdas Brazis, Stasė Klimaitė, Genovaitė Peškienė, and the choir performed songs by J. Žilevičius, M. Petrauskas, S. Šimkus, A. Kačanauskas, V. Banaitis, V. Jakubėnas, P. Sarpalius, and other composers. The concert concluded with the soul-stirring "Farewell to the Fatherland" by S. Šimkus. However, hope was still not fading away - maybe the farewell is not forever. Already after the first concert, Dainava was accepted into Lithuanian-American society. The ensemble was supported by the Lithuanian Consul in Chicago, Dr. Petras Daužvardis, the editors of the *Draugas*, *Naujienos*, and *Sandara* newspapers, Margutis, Barcus, and Šaltimieras radio programs, the Lithuanian American Council, the Lithuanian Community, the Lithuanian Theatre, other organizations, and individuals. This was a great beginning of Dainava activities in America.

Later it became clear that neither the commemorations of February 16th, the artistic programs of the anni-

versaries of Lithuanian organizations, the various cultural events, nor the song and dance festivals would be complete without Dainava performing in them. But it was not only among Lithuanian-Americans that Dainava was famous. The ensemble, under the direction of Steps Sodeika, has also sung at venues such as the Eaton Auditorium in Toronto, Canada. The concert was a great success and was praised by the Telegraph, a local Canadian newspaper.

A year after their first performance, on October 7, 1951, the singers found themselves on Chicago's biggest and most important opera stage, the Chicago Civic Opera House (20 N. Wacker Dr.). Here they sang at the invitation of the Marian





choir was accompanied by soloists S. Klimaitė, G. Peškienė, and S. Liepa. Also, on August 31, 1958, during the World Lithuanian Community Session. "All the sidewalks near Carnegie Hall were flooded with Lithuanians. [...] The choirs gathered in the evening. [...] All the choristers are working. Only after work did they get on the buses and go to New York. There, after getting off the buses, some of them had not yet had time to clean up and gathered in Carnegie Hall for rehearsals. There were about 200 choristers in all. The choirs rehearsed until midnight while they were being put together and prepared for the concert. [...] It was a bit hot in the hall. The choristers were fanning themselves with the bagpipes."

Fathers to help raise the funds needed to build a school, a printing press, a chapel, and a convent. The choir was accompanied by famous soloists - Metropolitan Opera soprano Polyna Stoska, Algirdas Brazis, whose last concert in Chicago would be his last before he left for the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and Stasys Barauskas-Baras, an equally famous tenor who was a favorite of Lithuanians already in Germany. We might add here that all the recently arrived singers, including the talented Stasys Baras, rehearse Lithuanian songs in the evenings, instead of resting or having fun, after twelve-hour shifts of hard work in factories, workshops, and elsewhere. By the way, ticket prices for the concert at the Lyric Opera House in Chicago ranged from one to two and a half dollars. The concert was recorded by the US radio station "Voice of America", so Lithuania could also hear the voices of Chicago Lithuanians. The concert was well received by Chicago critics in the major newspapers, the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun-Times.

cert river under the direction of Stepas Sodeika would flow. Every year, concerts marking Lithuania's indepen-



Another of the most prestigious venues in the USA is Carnegie Hall in New York. This is where Dainava performed on April 20, 1952. The

dence at the Lithuanian Maria High School, concerts of religious music at the Holy Cross Church, concerts marking the anniversaries of various Lithuanian organizations... But let's not forget that Dainava is not just a choir. Dainava is an artistic ensemble that strives not only to sing but also to act. In Chicago, Stepas Sodeika collaborated again with the actor, director, and writer Gasparas Velička and recreated the song and dance montage "Nemunas žydi" (The Nemunas River in Bloom), which was shown in Germany. Symbolically, the singers found themselves back on the banks of the Nemunas, dancing, singing, and remembering their homeland. And not only in Chicago but also in Cleveland, Detroit, and Toronto. And in 1954, another work appeared on the stage - the operetta "Hay Cutting" by Mikas Petrauskas and Petras Sarpalius. A year later, A. Merkel's musical picture "Wedding without courtship" was presented, followed by another rural life picture "Wedding."

Stepas Sodeika, who gave the Dainava ensemble solid foundations, did not live to see its twentieth anniversary.

Internationale Konzertdirektion Jonny Bernstein
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KONZERT DES LITAUISCHEN DAINAVA-CHOR

Musikdirektor:
Gemischter Chor und Männerchor „Dainava“
Dirigiert: BUCSUS JONKCHAS

Nationaltänze (Leitung J. ZYGAS)
Am Flügel: EDGINS VONIMA

VORTRAGSFOHGE:

I. Gemischter Chor	
1. Einheitslied	I. Žilvinas
2. Hinter den Seen, hinter den Bergen	K.V. Butkus
3. Unser Schicksal (Waldlied)	B. Jonaitis
4. Man soll das Tüchlein (Waldlied)	J. Siska
5. Nach Hause (Volklied)	B. Jonaitis
6. In blauer Weise	St. Siskas
II. Männerchor	
7. Siedle, Vierzehn, das Pferd (Volklied)	J. Zilvinas
8. Schaft bei Du, mein Vaterland (Text von Matzeus)	J. Siska
9. Ständchen (Text von O.L.B. Nijol)	Ad. E. Marulatis
10. Weiße Blumen (Golds. E. Siskas)	J. Siska
11. Die Tote sind gelassen	St. Siskas
12. Schmelzer-Walzer	B. Jonaitis
III. Männerchor	
13. Regenmelodie	Nationalhymne
14. Der Schimmel	Nationalhymne
15. O die schöne Nacht (Text von Matzeus)	A. Jonaitis
16. Mein altes Kerkelch-Haus (Golds. L. Adamavicius)	St. Siskas
17. Keweenaw-Gesang	L. Butkus
IV. Gemischter Chor	
18. Abendlied	St. Siskas
19. Der letzte liebe Abend	K.V. Butkus
20. Jenseit die See	I. Žilvinas

Anmerkungen vorbehalten

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CHICAGOS "DAINAVOS" ANSAMBLIS TORONTE

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pavasario sezonui stato muzikalinį vaidinimą
EATON AUDITORIJOJE

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- Gasparas VELICKA — autorius ir režisorius
- St. SODEIKA — ansamblio vadovas, dirigentas
- A. VALEISAITE — šokių vedėja
- A. GRIGALIONAITĖ — šokių vedėja
- B. PAKSTAS — instrumentalinės dalies vadovas
- P. KAUPAS — dailininkas dekoratorius

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Lithuanian National Ensemble
DAINAVA
from Chicago

presents a musical performance
"THE BLOSSOMS OF THE RIVER NEMUNAS"
a program of national songs and dances

Colorful Costumes Native Instruments
75 participants

Ensemble conducted by STEPONAS SODEIKA

Saturday, May 17th, 1952 - 7:30 p.m.
Studio One - Radio Station WHK
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TICKETS — \$2.50, \$2.00, \$1.50, \$1.25 (tax included) at St. George's Auditorium Sunday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Drive, 6820 Superior Ave., P.P. Mallin's Real Estate, 6800 Superior Ave. and on performance day at the box office of Station WHK. For reservations phone UT. 1-6473.
Entrance to WHK Parking Lot from Prospect Ave. - Free
ARRANGED BY ATEITIES KLUBAS

sary. On March 15, 1964, the conductor passed away. He was in his sixties, the youngest of the seven Sodeika siblings. A large number of mourners participated in the funeral of this musician, conductor, and leader. He was loved and respected by all. Not only Dainava members but also members of other Chicago choirs, leaders, and representatives of various organizations accompanied Stepas Sodeika on his final journey. His legacy is not only his leadership of Dainava, the promotion of Lithuanian composers, and hundreds of concerts in the USA and Canada, but also his original works - songs and hymns, published in 1968 by Vldas Jakubėnas in Chicago. In memory of the beloved leader, Dainava released a CD of religious songs, "Glory to You, Lord."

To be continued.

current events

Security

Three new army bases will be built in Pajūris in the Šilalė District, Rokantiškės in the Vilnius District, and Šiauliai. The construction should be completed in 2024. Each base will have administrative and special-purpose buildings such as barracks, canteens, headquarters, medical facilities, sports facilities, warehouses, garages, fueling stations, and car wash. Up to 2,500 soldiers or civilian employees of the National Defense System will be able to work in the three facilities. The total cost is 168 million euros, covering 15 years, which includes 2.5 years for design and construction and 12.5 years for maintenance. The Pajūris and Rokantiškės bases will be built by Salvinta, part of the Darnu Group, while



the Šiauliai base will be built by Partnerystės Projektai Keturi, part of the Eika Group.

The USS Kearsarge (LHD-3), a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship, visited Klaipėda as the flagship of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit. Simultaneously, part of its Task Force, an amphibious transport dock ship and a dock

landing ship, conducted a port visit to Riga. The Kearsarge is the largest U.S. warship to visit Lithuania. It measures 257.3 meters long, 60.1 meters wide, and has a draft of 10.5 meters. It was manned by 1,500 crew members.



Lithuania's Foreign Minister, Gabrielius Landsbergis will meet with Foreign Ministers from Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and Poland to discuss banning Russians from their region in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Lithuania is forming a volunteer reserve company within the engineering battalion. The company's management will be handled by professional soldiers, and all other duties are assigned to soldiers called up for voluntary non-permanent military service and troops from

active army reserve. Duties reconnaissance and mark-
cles, bridges, roads as well
explosives. On the con-
install barriers and fortifica-

In the year since the Lithu-
permitted to deny entry
have sent almost 13,000
rus. Some attempts were
person. Last year almost
crossed into Lithuania from
Presidential election which
Lukashenko, President



will include engineering
ing of barriers, water obsta-
areas contaminated with
struction site, they will also
tions.

anian border guards were
to irregular migrants, they
people back to Bela-
repeated by the same
4,200 irregular migrants
Belarus after a disputed
was "won" by Alexander
since 1994.



Ukraine

Lithuanian President
Gitanas Nausėda pre-
sented Ukrainian Presi-
dent Volodymyr Zelen-
sky with the highest state
decoration, the Order of
Vytautas the Great with
the Golden Chain, "for
his merits in defending
freedom and democratic
values in Europe together
with the Ukrainian peo-
ple." Nausėda and Lithu-
anian Defense Minister
Arvydas Anušauskas vi-
sited Kyiv and addressed
the unicameral Parlia-

ment, Verkhovna Rada, saying that "the threat posed
by Russia's imperial ambitions to the security of the
entire region" and thanked the Ukrainians for defend-
ing not only their country but also Europe as a whole.



All people fleeing Ukraine, both Ukrainians and non-
Ukrainians, will be able to travel free on Lithuanian
Railways within Lithuania. Passengers will be asked to
show passports and registration cards provided by the
Migration Department.

At a NATO donors conference in Demark, Lithuania
asked NATO to backfill weapons that it has already
sent to Ukraine. This includes armored personnel car-
riers, mine clearance SUVs, air defense systems, anti-
tank weapons, mortars, and various vehicles.

The Lithuanian Red Cross recently used Taiwan's Minis-
try of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) donation of \$1 million to

current events

provide stored-value shopping cards for Ukrainian refugees at a refugee center in Vilnius. Each card has stored 130 euros and can be used to buy daily necessities such as food, medicine, and stationery at designated shopping malls. Each person can obtain one card per month over a three-month period. The MOFA also donated \$500,000 to Maisto Bankas, a food bank, for the distribution of packaged food throughout Lithuania.

There are about 100,000 Ukrainian refugees in Moldova. Lithuania has offered to take up to 2,000. Lithuania has already provided humanitarian aid worth 500,000 euros to support Ukrainian refugees in Moldova.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda said he supports a European Union ban on Russian tourist visas.

Lithuania will send 30 instructors in 2 groups of 15 to train Ukrainian troops in the United Kingdom. They will join 1,000 British military personnel, who will train 10,000 Ukrainian volunteers with almost no military skills. Currently, Ukrainian military personnel can take five training courses in Lithuania. In October, the

instructor will offer 24 courses, including weapons handling, battlefield first aid, field survival, patrol tactics, and the legal foundations of armed conflict.

Covid-19

Early this year, Covid cases were running at 14,000 per day; now it ranges from 900 to 1400 per day, with often less than 5 deaths per day. Out of the population of 2.68 million, about 1.2 million Lithuanians have been vaccinated (48%). The first case of monkeypox was detected this summer. The Health Ministry has ordered about 1,400 doses of the monkeypox vaccine, which will be administered after a high-risk exposure. There is no plan for preventive vaccination.

Business

The high price of natural gas has forced Lithuania's biggest fertilizer manufacturer, Achema, to shut down the production of nitrogen-based fertilizers. Natural gas accounts for 70% of the cost of nitrogen-based fertilizers and will be non-competitive with fertilizers from the U.S. and Russia. The company will still produce resins and technical gases. Some personnel will be retained to maintain the equipment, but the rest



will be furloughed. The Labor Code requires that Achema pay the equivalent of 40% of the average salary to its employees during downtime. The local mayor hoped that the company would provide higher remuneration.

Klaipėda, Lithuania's seaport, handled 20.5 million tons of cargo in January-July 2021. Last year it handled 19% less, a drop of 53% in bulk cargo, which was partially offset by a 15% increase in general cargo to 10.3 million tons. In terms of TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units – 20'X8'X8'), it handled 70,000 in 2019 but only 40,000 recently.

Taiwan's largest manufacturer of passenger vehicles and trucks, Tangeng Advanced Vehicle Co. will join with Lithuania's Vėjo Projektai, a manufacturer



of electric buses, to manufacture electric vehicles and liquid-cooled battery modules in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Finance Ministry reports that the European Commission approved the Program for the EU Funds Investments 2021-2027, which provides 7.45 billion euros in investment for Lithuania. About 47% of the funds will be allocated for investment in innovation and green transformation, and 30% will be directed to improving education, healthcare, and culture.

General

Lithuania's fifth largest city Panevėžys, in the north-central region, is threatened by a failed floodgate in the Ekranas dam, which allowed water to flow into the Nevėžis River, which may overflow its banks at the lowest level.



In regular times, the Sugihara House-Museum in Kaunas receives about 20,000 Japanese tourists a year, but with the pandemic, it has dropped to only 1,000. The house was the home and office of Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese consul, who is credited with saving thousands of Jews fleeing the holocaust by issuing visas out of Lithuania. The ambassadors of Japan, the United States, Israel, Germany, Poland, and the Netherlands sent a letter to the Lithuanian Culture and Education Ministers requesting that Lithuania assume support of the

current events

Sugihara House-Museum to the estimated 150,000 euros per year.

The Seimas revised this year's budget and allocated 1 billion euros to cushion inflation by raising pensions, other social payouts, and non-taxable income and will offer gas and electricity subsidies. However, Gediminas Šimkus, Board Chairman of the Central Bank of Lithuania, stressed the need to maintain fiscal discipline to avoid adding more fuel to inflation and to use targeted measures to help the most vulnerable. He said that before new measures are undertaken, the effectiveness of measures adopted last spring should be assessed for effectiveness.

Although Lithuanian beer with a production date after February 24 (the infamous date of Russia's invasion of Ukraine) is banned from being shipped to Rus-



sia, beer is being delivered via clandestine channels. Volfas Engelman has terminated a major distributor, Lukritma, who was found to be shipping beer to Russia, and is investigating the Lithuanian logistics company, Girteka, whose trucks with Russian plates were being loaded with Volfas Engelman beer. Apparently, tensions with Lithuania over Ukraine, the Suwalki Gap, and Kaliningrad have not slaked the Russian taste for Lithuanian beer.



UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Memoir of a Siberian Deportee

By Juzė Avižienytė Žukauskienė

Translated from the Lithuanian by Giedrė Kumpikas, Ph.D., niece of the author, and Isabel Kumpikas, sister of the author

46. NEW WORRIES

We were not destined to be happy for long with our earnings. The bookkeeper Knysh, a former convict who had served time for some fraud or other, got a job here as an "expert," although he was unable to make up a correct semi-annual balance. The bank withdrew its credit and, as a result, we received no pay. We did not even have enough money to buy out our bread ration.

The bookkeeper held himself very high but had little education, understood very little about bookkeeping, and... "got stuck" in balancing the books.

Then, the director, who had so virulently attacked me for the sacks of grain, now came to ask me... no! to order me to go and help the "bookkeeper." I did not want to go to work for people who held themselves so high and knew very little.

"I am not a specialist. I am not familiar with production bookkeeping," I tried to excuse myself.

"I know who you are. I am ordering you and you will work," he commanded me sternly, but still, instead of *Tu*,* he used *Jūs*.*

I thought that this might be useful to us: once again, we would receive pay, even retroactive, that is, for the past.

I started to organize the documents. Chaos, disorder. Knysh tried to justify himself that he had only taken over the bookkeeping two months ago and that the person who had worked before him had left everything in disorder.

I began from April, that is, from the time that the quarterly balance sheet had been submitted. I also found quite a few of Akulov's "transgressions." Knysh was fired. I became the bookkeeper. It came out that the director, of course with the knowledge of the "bookkeeper," had appropriated 3,600 rubles. Clearly, I did not want to stick my head into someone else's swindling. Akulov was considered a very good bookkeeper. He was working in the regional center. I went to see him to ask him to explain about the 3,600 rubles. He asked me to bring the documents, so that, in the evenings, he would help me correct



Siberian Sky. Photograph by Rolandas Žygas

the balance.

I brought the books, he balanced everything, but I asked him to sign since these were his and Knysh's documents.

"All right, I'll sign, I'm not afraid!" was his haughty reply. And so, I made one more enemy. Akulov, as a strong worker, was a big authority. He started agitating against me wherever he could, and he especially set the manageress of the bank's current account against me.

However, I had much to do there and quite often. Needless to say, the militia, the commandant, and the prosecutor found out about everything. One time, I ran into the commandant who asked me:

"Well, how is everything going? How is the bookkeeping coming along?"

"Fine. The bookkeeping is in order, the shortage has been liquidated. We are receiving our pay normally."

"Well, but Shatkovskaya (the bank's current account manageress) said: *"Ona svoim dokumentem nevierit."* - She doesn't believe in her own documents.

"It seems to me, that not only I, but Shatkovskaya "*moim dokumentem vierit.*" - believes in my accounts, - while I did not believe Akulov or Knysh, especially Akulov, and Shatkovskaya probably did not believe Akulov either since she did not accept his balance."

"We know, we know. *Malodec** - Excellent! Keep on working, don't give in to swindlers! " He was being familiar.

The work went on as usual. The tobacco had been loaded and shipped off on the barges. We were cleaning the tobacco warehouse. The stronger ones were readying the wood for the winter and the forest for construction. Still others were preparing the feed for the director's cow and the station's horse. At the same time, construction was going on. The former sauna of the old landlords was being reconstructed into living quarters. An abode was being readied for those orphans, whose beautiful, spacious house had been appropriated by the station. My children and husband were working on the rebuilding. And what construction workers! They had never held either an ax or a saw in their hands...

But a Russian proverb states: "When there is no fish, even a crab is a fish." - "*Na bez ryby i rak ryba.*" The nineteen-year-old Gosha, who had been born here in the taiga, was appointed chief constructor. The director himself was constantly coming around. First, they threw together a "barracks," five meters long and four meters wide with one door and one window. This was assigned to our family. For plaster, we used mud from the riverside and cow dung. Lime for whitening had already been brought in the spring by the barges which had come to pick up the tobacco. They fashioned a small kitchen.

We were pleased to have gotten this "palace." As I mentioned before, according to the director's rearrangement, the sauna (a low, little structure) of the farmstead owners themselves was being redone into living quarters. But it was discovered that, once the corner stove in the sauna had been removed, the whole corner had rotted out.

"The construction workers," Gosha, Kornyl, and my children became frightened and did not know what to do. They informed the director. He solved the situation very easily.

"No problem! We'll board up the hole, fill it in with clay and it'll be fine."

No sooner said than done. He even cut out a larger window and the four underage youngsters moved out of their father's house into the sauna.

Fall was approaching. Everyone was digging up potatoes after work, taking in vegetables, while we had nothing planted since we had only arrived here at the end of

June. The nettles and orachs were ending. We used to get bread but, when there was nothing else, neither potatoes, nor vegetables, nor any fat, - even the director didn't dream about meat, - a hungry winter was awaiting us.

After the people had dug up their potatoes, we used to run and dig for potato tops. At night it was already -10 or -15 C. We would find one or two frozen or partially rotten small potatoes, and even that was a lucky find.

When people had chopped off their cabbage, we would go and pull out the stems with their roots. No one would leave behind even a leaf, not like in Lithuania, but even the roots were some sort of food. I would cook them for a long time. The children would gnaw at them, suck at them, and would rejoice that it was good, just as if they were pork ribs. And the water had the aroma of cabbage and with bread, this was also delicious.

As a bookkeeper, I had a lot of work. Tobacco was brought from all the collective farms. The station had no kerosene, there was no way of lighting the lamp or heating the drying room. There was no way of determining the percentage of the humidity of the tobacco. Some collective farms used to bring an almost green mass. The laboratory worker used to ask me that I also had to absolutely help her determine visually that percentage of humidity.

The tobacco was transported by oxen in small quantities from various locations. Much work was needed to write out the receipts, to determine the percentages.

Besides that, there was other work to be done. The day was short, and we had no light. The most complicated was to put together the five-day balances. I used to write and count sometimes by the glow from the stove. Nearby was a "*Pichtovy zavod,*" - an enterprise, which from a certain species of fir trees, called *pichtovy*, used to press oil. Some people would get a small bottle of this oil and would light little glimmer lights. My husband was also successful in begging for and receiving some of this oil and I would put the documents in order.

I was sitting as if in a sack. No news from the outside world! At the collective farm, at least, I used to snatch and read or at least look over the commandant's or collective farm president's newspaper, but here, nothing. We were fed only by rumors. Some recounted that the Germans had already occupied the Caucasus and Stalingrad and that they would soon row over the Volga; those who were a little closer to the administration, gave their versions, - that the Germans were being beaten on all fronts. It was impossible to believe anyone. Nevertheless, with taut nerves, we all awaited some sort of end to the war, and, at the same time, freedom. For on our temporary identification forms it was stated that we were deported for five years. And three had already passed. The days dragged on, hungry and miserable, and the end of the war was still not in sight.

Tu is the familiar form of address

Jūs is the polite form of address

Malodec - a "great fellow", referring to some excellent accomplishment

Orachs - plants from the genus *Atriplex*, having edible, spinach-like leaves.

47. THE "HAT'S" ACTIVITIES

An official letter came from Novosibirsk, that our Station was allotted 60 liters of spirit alcohol, 8 kilograms of oil, and 50 kilograms of flour as a reward for the best workers. It had to be picked up from Novosibirsk. We were jubilant and were waiting for the "hat" to return and to bring back those products assigned as a premium. Of course, we all expected to receive a little portion, while Stasiukas, who had come up with the invention of an efficient press to flatten the tobacco leaves, with which it was possible to produce 5-6 norms, hoped to get the most.

But no such luck! The "hat" returned, rolled the barrel into the warehouse, the sack and the oil into his own hallway, and... not a peep! I reported the doings at the Station, what had been accomplished during those two months while the director traveled back and forth to Novosibirsk. I also informed him about that rational press with which 5-6 norms were completed...

Days went by, weeks, and not a word by anyone about the premiums! Not only nothing about the premiums, but it was the third month that we did not receive our pay. Whoever had their own vegetables, potatoes, was surviving. Our family was only getting that bread ration and we did not have any money to redeem it. My husband, being of poor health, became totally weak.

One worker offered us a skinned dog for 50 rubles. I was revolted. But...hunger is a great stimulant. If, in normal circumstances, a person had not had anything to eat for an entire week, he might adhere to the principle: "rather die than eat something disgusting." But, when a person has been systematically starved for three years, and when not only his own death but that of his children stands before his eyes, he becomes resolved to anything.

I was apprehensive that once I saw "Narim's mutton," as a Polish captain had once called it, I would vomit. However, when one dark evening, on a child's sled, that young man brought the frozen "mutton" (the head and the feet had been chopped off), if I had not known that it was dog meat, I would really have taken it for mutton. It was not so terrible after all. And in the morning, when the smell of roasted meat filled the air, everyone ate with great appetite, while I kept quiet...and rejoiced. As soon as I received my salary, I immediately paid those 50 rubles.

And here again another bit of luck: another worker, a

young man from Zakotskot promised us some blood and discarded parts of real meat. Here is how this became possible. They used to slaughter animals, froze the meat, and transported it to Tomsk. They had to cut out the bloody parts. These were small pieces of lungs and throats, which they would distribute to their workers.

The director assigned one of his fawners, a woman Pole by name, as a night guard.

We were surprised. The cold was more than -40C. To stamp one's feet during a long winter night in the snow was not a great pleasure, especially, since up till now, no one had guarded the Station. But soon the reason became clear: the "administrators" wanted some alcohol. To take it during the day, openly, even the director himself didn't dare, and to distribute it to everyone wasn't worth it... And so, when everyone, or perhaps not everyone, was asleep, the guard's songs - "chastushkas" - could be heard. I listened one night, then another, and became interested in what kind of joy had come over Pole, to be singing in such bitter cold. I asked her if she wasn't afraid of getting a sore throat.

She said that she was afraid of falling asleep, and it was possible to "warm up" the throat.

It turned out to be that I was not the only one who had noticed.

That guard duty had been set up for this reason: As soon as the settlement (2 barracks and one small house) had fallen asleep, the director, having taken a tea kettle, would sneak into the warehouse. And so that no one would hear the creaking snow under his feet and the unlocking of the warehouse door, the guard would begin to jump around happily and sing. When the director slipped into the warehouse, she would lock the door. While the pouring out of the alcohol and the pouring in of water was taking place, everything was "in order:" The guard was singing, which meant she was not sleeping, the lock was in place...

Who could object or even suspect?!

And yet, someone did survey those operations. Especially since our "hat" began to stagger more often. That he was constantly drunk, even I noticed.

One time I asked him when the workers would get their premiums.

"What premiums? For what?" jumped the "hat."

"Well, there was a directive from the Central Office that our Station was allotted 60 liters of spirit alcohol, 8 kilograms of oil, and 50 kilograms of flour to reward the best workers. After all, there are workers who produced 6 norms," I spoke calmly.

"Where is such news from? It's a provocation, or what?" shouted the "hat."

"It's not a provocation! I received that directive myself and signed for it. You got those products from Zaciepina

in Novosibirsk. You brought them back!" I pronounced the last words with emphasis.

The "hat" went wild:

"You know too much. That can end sadly for you!"

"For whom?" was my answer.

"I am the director; I am the master. I do as I want!"

I turned around and left. I could not complain to anyone. I became convinced that the name here was unimportant, whether it was Agbulin or Permiakov or someone else, whoever gets near that trough, bends down over it and tries to eat as much as he can.

After that conversation, I received a copy of the director's order that I, "being incompetent to take care of the bookkeeping, was fired." No one had the right to fire a bookkeeper without the authorization of the Director of the Central Office. I showed him that. As luck would have it, one late evening, that young man from Zagotskot, carrying a bucket of blood, bumped into the "hat" when the latter was carrying a tea kettle with alcohol. I wanted to pay him and return the bucket. However, the young man, saying that he didn't need anything, hurriedly ran off.

After about an hour, a pounding on the door and the screechy voice of the "hat:"

"Litovcy*, open up!" I opened the door.

"What happened," I asked.

"Who was here? What did he bring?" screeched the "hat."

I looked at him with derision. I calmly pulled out the bucket from underneath the plank bed, pushed up my sleeve, and breaking through the ice with my hand, scooped up some bloody bits of meat and lifted them out of the bucket. Blood was dripping from my hand. I pushed the bucket closer toward him.

"Look. One young man from Zagotskot sold a dog. During the day he has no time, and he's shy, so he brought it now."

The Tatar became limp, his director's tone disappeared, he shuddered and in a very calm voice said:

"Don't eat it, better throw it out."

"And what will you order us to eat? You know yourself that we, except for those several hundred grams of bread, which, you know very well, we get with interruptions, have nothing else. This is not Lithuania, here even for money you can't get anything. Everyone here is so rich (I wanted to say "beggars")."

He answered nothing and left, far from so belligerent as he had been when he came.

I saw that the relationship being such, it would be impossible to work. So, having discussed it with my family, we all went our ways. Both Liudai (father and son) got jobs at the regional center in Parbig in the wool-fulling factory; Stasiukas and I, nearby, a couple of kilometers away, in the grain preparation station at Zagotzern.

The little third--grader, Juozukas, remained with us. We obtained living quarters in the barracks dormitory.

One day, upon returning from work, I found a summons to come to the militia station at 8 o'clock. I became worried. What could it be that I should go so hastily, late at night? I decided not to go that night.

Even though I am "brave," but, after a day's work in the warehouse, exhausted from dragging sacks of grain, on a frightful night, on a snow-covered taiga road, when the cold stiffens all your joints, I could not force myself. I asked the director to allow me to go the next morning.

Before crossing the threshold of that famous office, I ran over to see my husband and son.

They also became worried, even more than I did.

The militiaman on duty, having glanced at the summons, indicated which office. There sat the Division Chief of the Regional Militia and one other official. I gave him my summons. The Chief pulled out from a drawer a sheet of paper filled with writing, covered it partially with a book, leaving only the signature "Žukauskas."

"Is this your signature?"

"No," I answered.

"Then, perhaps, it is that of one of your family?"

"Also, no! I know all my family members' handwriting. This signature is not of any of them."

"Hm!" muttered the Chief.

"And what is written there?" I asked.

"Ah, it's about Agbulin," said the Chief unwillingly, "why do you have to know if you did not write it?"

In the weeks afterward, the rumor was spread that Agbulin had appropriated the goods destined as premiums for the workers and that the militia knew about it. But...soon everything became quiet. Agbulin was an old meritorious Bolshevik, having actively destroyed bourgeois in his time. He was protected by his red book - his Party membership card. Besides that, apparently, other officials also got some of the alcohol. And so the workers remained without premiums.

48. WE CHANGE OUR WORKPLACE

In my new workplace I definitively decided not to accept any higher positions that might be offered to me, but rather, to remain a simple average worker. It was better to lug sacks of grain than to become involved in the swindles and intrigues of the administrators. Besides that, the rumors were heard that the Soviets had withstood the Germans at Stalingrad, that they were getting a large supply of weapons from somewhere else, that French pilots, who had left their occupied country, were fighting above Stalingrad, that the Germans had been beaten in the plain of Kursk.

If we had not been receiving any news before, now, in

Parbig, there was a radio loudspeaker attached high on a pole over which reports from the information bureau about the victories of the Soviet Army were constantly broadcast. Endlessly, the voice of Director Zevitan could be heard and he always ended his announcements with the slogan, "*Smert fashistam!*"*

But the war brought death not only to Fascists, - local women would get more and more frequently "*pocheronye*," that is, death announcements about the loss of their husbands, brothers, sons. And so, not much joy from the news about the victories of the Soviet Army.

Our clothing was completely worn. After our "sale" in Komarovka, we were left with only what we were wearing. We were receiving some pay for our work, but there was nothing to buy anywhere. In the store, everyone, not only deportees, was able to redeem the bread ration and once a month, 400 grams of salt per person. The local old-timers covered themselves with that which they had managed to exchange from the deportees for potatoes, milk, and vegetables and always grumbled that the clothing was not durable. Besides these clothes, most of them had furs, mostly from dog fur and hard-felt boots. The less wealthy were satisfied with "*fufaikas*"* - cotton felt jackets. Since the beginning of 1942, we had only obtained one pair of "*pimy*" * for our whole family.

The father and the son, Liudas, worked in the warmth of the fulled-wool factory. All they had to do was to run to the workplace and back. Stasiukas and I worked in a cold warehouse. He would sometimes even have to drive some fifteen kilometers into the taiga for hay and wood. And so he would most often wear those felt boots.

We became very weak. My legs began to swell again. My teeth became loose due to scurvy. Once again, festering sores began to appear on my legs. Worst of all, I had nothing with which to bandage them. I tore up handkerchiefs because they were "unsellable," unexchangeable "valuables." I used to cut a small strip from my underwear, I used to rinse the used rags and would glue them back on my sores.

We lived in a common barracks with seasonal workers who had been sent from the collective farm. I was embarrassed to dress my legs more often, I did not want others to be repulsed and, of course, grumble. I should go to the hospital but it was still very cold, -35C and to wade through the snow for 8 kilometers, I did not trust my aching legs. It was impossible not to go to work, because, without a certificate from the hospital excusing me from work, I wouldn't even get those grams of bread, with which I more or less sustained my life.

One time, Stasiukas, having returned from trans-

porting hay, brought back a piece of tarpaulin. He ran to the forest guard, borrowed a small hatchet and fashioned out wooden soles. Having found a piece of twisted wire, he broke off small hooks and nailed together some wooden clogs.

What joy and triumph! Everyone was looking, touching them and praising him for his ingenuity. What a strong sole, it doesn't get wet through, it is not like bast sandals. As one who could not walk, I was assigned to mend sacks. I felt happy. I was sitting and it was warm. Besides, I would be able to "manage" a piece of thread or a patch. Our clothing was full of holes and one couldn't get any patches or thread anywhere. There was nothing in the store and using flax was forbidden. On the other hand, working in the warehouse, we could chew on grain, of course, if Ivanicha (the warehouse woman) or her assistant were not nearby.

One time, we were working in the oat section. And they were not very "edible." We would chew them, suck on them and spit them out. But here, the ten-year-old son of a guard, climbing about on the partitions, in one high bin, tightly nailed-down to the floor, noticed some peas. He soon announced this happy news to us. One young worker immediately organized a "grabbing."

Looking around if Ivanicha was not nearby, we stood watch, and Marusia (so that worker was called) and Vitia (the pea finder) crept up to the second floor by the pea bin. They were below, on the first floor, but from the beam, it was possible to jump into the bin. The child jumped from the beam into the bin, and filled his pockets and cap with peas, while Marusia, untying her scarf from her head, holding on to one corner herself, gave the second one to the "grabber." He, holding on to the partition and the pulled scarf slipped back down again.

Immediately we all ran together to share our "loot." Each one of us got a handful. But!... Oh, horrors! From our joy we forgot about the guards, we all put the peas into our mouths and chewed. But suddenly, someone whispered frighteningly:

"Ivanicha!"

We all shoved the peas where we could think of. I had no pocket so I pushed a handful into a pile of oats and with a breaking heart, poured out my "luck." Marusia slipped her handful in the scarf into the breast pocket of her overalls. The little pocket was small and bulged out. It was especially noticeable since she was rather full-breasted. The child put the cap with the rest of the peas on his head. And here the little peas began to plop, plop past his ears. He pressed the little cap on his head and shot through the door.

We, probably, were quite nervous and Ivanicha noticed this:

"What is it? What are you up to?"

"Don't you see, we are scooping grain into sacks," one of the women answered insolently.

She looked us over with angry eyes. I was hurriedly scooping grain from that spot where I had poured the peas into a sack that was being held. Who would find a couple of grams of peas in such a sack!

Ivanicha was perceptive. She immediately went up to Marusia, touched the little pocket...

"*Nu i poshiol grom po peklu!!!* - It began to thunder in hell!" She called the assistant right away. The search began. Of course, they did not find anything on anyone, but they dragged Marusia off to the office. They weighed the "grabbed" peas. It appeared there were even...30 grams.

At once, they reported it to the militia. Marusia was summoned to the Regional Center where she spent ten days in the guard-house, they cursed her out, threatened her, and let her go. Yes, to touch government-owned grain (especially one grain) or to touch another thing - was a terrible crime. Why did Ivanicha cause such an uproar for 30 grams of peas? It was clear, she, the director, and the assistant had scooped up not only 30 grams. For the shortage, there might be some noise. And here was a documented "grabbing." We are clean, we are watchful: the workers are stealing. But hunger is a great motivator. Despite big punishments, very few did not give in to the temptation to pour a handful or two under the bosom or into a pants pocket, since it was too dangerous to pour into a pocket, - it would be discovered too easily in a search.

One time, it happened that my son Liudas had to work with a horse to whom had been allotted 2 kilograms of oats. Having poured out the oats for the horse, he could not resist the temptation, he swallowed a couple of handfuls. Being half-starved, instead of chewing them and sucking on them and then spitting them out, as the warehouse workers used to do, he swallowed the oats with their shells. Acute intestinal pains began. He managed to get home somehow. He was writhing, groaning, screaming, and turning black. Once I determined the cause, I ran as quickly as I could to those children whose house the Station had taken. I begged them for several potatoes. I grated them and poured boiling water over them. It turned into a watery, viscous paste. Liudukas drank about a couple of liters. That caused rumbling sounds in his intestines and, finally, it forced the elimination. His intestines were apparently injured because not only the oat shells were coming out but also a substantial amount of blood. It was terrifying to tell anyone about it, even if that person did not want to cause any harm but would laugh about it to someone else, and he to a third party, - the rumor would go where it shouldn't.

To turn to the hospital was also frightening. The hospital would give a certificate that he ate oats destined for

a government horse. Oh, what a life! Living in Lithuania, even during the war, I never imagined that a human being could endure so much. The greatest dream - bread! To eat one's fill just once!

Our clothing and shoes were completely worn out. What would happen next? For one month's wages, we could get a pail of potatoes. Even this was not so easy to find, who had them for sale or who would agree to sell them.

Clothing, not even clothing, patches or a piece of thread was anywhere to be had. But we were still clinging to life, we were still not losing hope that someday we would be free. For in our temporary certificates it was written, that we were deported for five years. We had endured already three and a half years, one and a half years remained.

49. ALLELUIA

It was turning to spring. The station ran short of flour for bread. It was impossible to bring any from the Tomsk base because the road was thawing. Transportation was only by horses or oxen. The better horses had been mobilized, a part died, only very few were left. Besides, to travel by them back and forth to Tomsk was 300 kilometers until the last snow turned to slush and looked like rivers. Only the hospital and the prison received the reduced bread ration, the rest had to feed themselves "*na ponozhom kormu*" - whatever feed you find under your nose. Of course, this did not concern the officials.

If someone reads my memoirs after a couple of decades, I doubt that this person will believe that human beings living in such a way and nourishing themselves this way would still be able to work. No one will believe that the connection with the *oblast** - large region - city was only by horse. The *oblast* took note of the difficult situation and sent a telegram that the region could get grain from the Zagotzern government fund and could grind it locally. But the ice in the river had not thawed yet and the only water mill could not work. And so we remained with no food at all.

Working in the warehouse, we still chewed grain. Going home, we disregarded the control and still "managed" to bring home a handful of grain. After frying it on a dry skillet, we ground it and used it to cook a watery barley soup without any fat or milk. But here was a problem again. While frying the grain it gave off an aroma that could not be hidden. Frightening! Stasiukas himself would ask the girls sent to work from the collective farm, not to throw out the potato skins. We were already living in our own *chata*. (How we obtained it, I shall recount later.) The collective farm girls would bring potatoes from home.

Those potato skin "presents" we would wash thoroughly and also fry in a greaseless pan. The aroma of the fried potato skins would smother the aroma of the grain. Besides, even the barley would be thicker.

Easter was nearing. Lo and behold, one day, the Director of the Fir-Tree Oil Base came to ask, if the "guys," that is, our sons, would come and clear off the snow from the warehouse roof. For the job, they offered four liters of milk and supper, because they could only begin after the work ended in the grain warehouse, that is, after six o'clock. The children accepted with glee.

After work, they ran as quickly as possible to clean off the snow. The width of the roof was 60 meters bilaterally, five meters on both sides, in other words, an area of 600 square meters.

The depth of the snow was about half a meter. To clear off 300 square meters of snow for four liters of milk! But, they were tempted by the supper.

The Director of the Base and his wife had been teachers from Ukraine, deported here fourteen years ago. They already had a cow, rabbits, chickens, and their own vegetables.

Immediately after work, the children would run and clear snow. They worked until late at night. When they returned, they were perspiring, exhausted, but content that for supper they had received potatoes and a glass of milk. They worked six evenings. We expected to receive some milk for Easter. I saved the "barley." But, the Director declared that it was not enough to push the snow off the roof, it had to be shoveled further away from the walls. He could not give any milk since the "guys" had eaten more than they earned.

The children lost their eagerness. To push the snow off the roof was easier, but to shovel such a mass away from the walls by three meters, even supper was not worth it. The snow was heavy already, slushy. That is why the Director had hired "guys" to clear it because he himself did not have the strength. By leaving it, the roof might collapse. The children, disappointed, refused.

It was Easter, and we were hungry and exhausted, we could barely walk. I was cooking plain, stolen wheat grain and we all sang "Alleluia!"

Suddenly, the door opened. We were frightened. Our hymn ended. We thought that Ivanicha, having smelled the aroma, would stir the pot and we would wind up in jail. But, it was not Ivanicha. Lord! We didn't even want to believe it! Gusiatsinskis entered, the Director of the Fir-Tree Base, and brought us a pail of *sauerkraut*, with some pickles in it and a "*gusiska*" - a three-liter jug of milk.

What joy...to the point of tears! He had even refused to give those four liters that the boys had earned, and here was a bonus, a pail of cabbage!

I thanked him as best I could, while he said rather

shyly:

"My wife and I thought it over, that it was so much work and it's Easter, we have to make the boys happy."

"God will reward," and he left.

50. ONE MORE NEW "PALACE"

I mentioned before that we were again living in our own *chata*. Here no one restricted us and we did not interfere with anyone. Our settlement - the wharf.

Here all the bases were concentrated: industrial merchandise; the grain preparation station; the meat preparation station - mostly from wild animals and partially animal meat received from people as their imposed duty; the fur and fir-tree oil stations. This place had received the name *Melstroi* apparently, from a windmill that was built some time ago. At present, the windmill had been transferred to the Regional Center, only the "*storozhka*" - the guard's hut - had been left. This was the last little landing dock on the river Parbig, on which only small boats could navigate - tugboats with barges. In the spring, when the water would rise, all the goods of the taiga would be shipped out: grain, meat, furs, tobacco, lumber, and in exchange, on the same boats, were brought necessary goods: salt, petroleum, flour, and other things.

The above-mentioned guard's hut belonged to the Group of Enterprises, to which the windmill also belonged. Since my husband and my oldest son worked in the Enterprise, the Director offered them to buy the little house, even with some privileges - to pay it off.

Who would not want to have one's own, even a poor little place?

Although that "house" was only seven and a half square meters, the walls of thin, rough-hewed beams, the ceiling, - it was the same as the roof - from the tops of the same rough-hewed beams, chopped off with axes, while the branches, had, apparently, been knocked off with the butt of an axe, because, from under the plaster, their broken-off ends were sticking out. There was no stove, the floor had rotted out, two small windows without frames or glass were boarded up with sticks. But we were still very pleased. The little house was surrounded on three sides by the river and on the fourth, a little stream. Here, Ivanicha would not smell the aroma of frying grain so easily.

But troubles began again. The neighbors met us with great hostility. Up till that time, they used to keep their calves and chickens in the little house, and now, by the Group Enterprise Director's order, they had to let us have the premises.

"Why did you barge in here? How will you live here? Everything is damp and smelly, there is no stove.

And where is the garden? Fools, you are paying such money! This little barn is not worth 30 rubles and you are paying 500!" The closest neighbor, Michailovna, said rather angrily shaking her head. She was angry because she had to take her calf and chickens into her own chata. She had no barn, the cow used to stand in a shed attached to the wall of this house. The second neighbor - a forest guard, took to some more surreptitious means; but, about that, later.

We paid no attention to all this. Stasiukas set to work immediately. The smaller Juozukas helped him also. My husband and my oldest son lived at the Center, in the group barracks.

The children immediately shoveled out the dung, pulled out the remnants of the rotted floor, dug out more than a meter and a half in depth for a basement, so that no foul-smelling earth would be left. We knocked off the plaster from the walls and the ceiling. Together with the plaster, poured down the bedbugs.

Since there were four of us working, the director good-willingly allowed us to cut out floor planks at the group enterprise saw-mill. At the carpenter shop, they made frames for the windows, a new door; permission was given to obtain glass, tiles for the stove, and 10 kilograms of lime. The Regional Superior issued an order that the closest 15-are lot to the *chata* was to be given to our family as a garden.

Very soon, our little house was shining with new windows, newly plastered, dazzlingly white walls and ceiling, pleasant warmth was emanating from the new stove. There was no shortage of wood here - all around rustled the forest taiga. The new board floor was fragrant with the pleasant smell of cedar. Oh! How happy we were! No less than at the time in Komarovka, even though this "palace" was worth incomparably less than the other one.

Spring. The frozen ground thawed. We had already obtained a spade at Komarovka, and so, after work, in shifts, we started digging up the garden. The ground was hard - having been beaten down for decades by people, horses, and wagons traveling to the mill. For three years it had not been trampled on and was overgrown with thick grass, and therefore, fertile. It was difficult to dig but we did not mind. But where to get the seed? Meanwhile, the neighbors, especially the forest guard, had a great desire to make us move out. When we would leave for work, he would start to dig the ground right under our windows, since it was the most fertile. Upon returning from work, we protested, showed him the official letter from the Regional Commission that this land belonged to us.

"It's not the first year that you are living here, so why didn't you need this lot up till now?"

"It's none of your business," the forest-guard shot back arrogantly, "we want to and we dig, we moved here first." And when we went to work, he hurriedly planted potatoes.

We wound up having to complain to the Regional Superior. Immediately, the Industry Group Enterprise Director arrived. He restored order.

"Pick out your potatoes right away! You have been told, that the land near the house is allotted to its owners, and you, "*zhadiuga*" - greedy bastard - you have one and a half hectares of land and you are trying to muscle in here! Krutikov - you crook...when I swing at you, you'll know what it is to respect Soviet laws," threatened the Regional Superior. While Krutikov was standing, turning red and stammering that the garden next to the hut was "*nepolozheno*" - not assigned.

"I know better what's assigned and what isn't! Look! We have an expert here!" continued the Superior harshly.

"And you, if some blockhead tries to intrude, let me know immediately, I'll take care of him at once."

The Superior left and Krutikov, like a beaten dog (all of his belligerence gone), whined to us:

"Well, now what will we do? We dug, we planted, we put in so much work, we pulled out so much sod! And the seeds, can we pick out all of them?"

"All right, this year you planted, let it be, but see that next spring you don't raise any conflicts," we behaved without rancor. The man was overjoyed, he even lent us his spade.

My husband, having obtained the Commandant's permission, sailed by steamship 32 kilometers to the settlement of the "free people." For my gold ring and a tablecloth, he got a pot (two pails) of potatoes. The locals had no potatoes to spare. We already had experience from Komarovka: we spread them apart in a warm spot, covered them with a very thin layer of black soil, and watered them. The potatoes soon let out shoots and began to take root. We carefully took off the shoots and planted them. The potatoes let out the second ones. These too, we planted in good, fertile soil. The third shoots we cut out with the ends of the potatoes and planted those also. It was already June 14th. The soil of Siberia is a giving one: there, you just have to touch it and everything grows luxuriantly. Unfortunately, the climate is harsh: even in the month of June, in the forest and on the North shore of the river, one can come upon unmelted ice, if not snow. During the day, the sun is hot, but at night, the frost continues for a long time. For this reason, for the night, we used to cover the young shoots with earth, and in the morning, we dug them out again. Other shoots, - cabbage, Swedish turnips - the women used to plant in boxes which they would cover at night with braided grass coverlets.

CABBAGE ROLLS or BALANDĖLIAI

In general, balandėliai are dishes in which the meat filling is wrapped in the leaves of various plants. The origins of this dish may go back to prehistoric times, as baking leaf-wrapped fish and meat on a campfire is one of the oldest food production techniques in the world. There is

just a small difference between leaf-wrapped campfire-baked dishes from their "cousins" simmered in water or sauce. Below are a few recipes for balandėliai that show their origins, evolution, and journey to Lithuania.

AUTHENTIC RECIPE:
GREEK DOLMA WITH MUTTON (CLASSIC)

YOU WILL NEED

- 50 grape leaves
- 300 g meat (lamb)
- 5 onions
- 250 g rice
- 50 g melted butter
- 20 g each of finely chopped coriander leaves, mint, dill
- Salt, black pepper

FOR THE SAUCE

- 4 glasses of kefir or sour cream
- 4 cloves of garlic

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

The lamb should be minced with the onion and salted to taste. Then add the half-cooked rice, the chopped herbs, and the melted butter and mix well. As the dolmades will still be stewed, the rice should be undercooked so that it does not overcook during the stewing process. Rinse the grape leaves in boiling water to make them more pliable, but do not boil them to prevent them from being too soft. If you buy canned grape leaves, they do not need any additional preparation. Wrap the stuffing in the softened leaves. The amount of stuffing depends on the size of the leaves but the stuffing must not overpower the flavor of the leaves. Place them in a thick-bottomed skillet lined with vine leaves. Add water or broth to cover dolmades halfway and simmer over low heat. If you are making a Greek dressing, it is really simple - squeeze the garlic juice into the kefir or sour cream, stir it in and add chopped herbs (for example, dill).



AUTHENTIC RECIPE:
GREEK CABBAGE DOLMADES

YOU WILL NEED

1 white cabbage
500 g minced meat (lamb, pork)
250 g rice
1 onion
2-3 garlic cloves
100 ml oil
Salt, black pepper, oregano

FOR THE SAUCE

2 eggs
Juice of 2 lemons
50 g butter
50 g flour

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

Since the leaves of cabbage are much thicker than those of grapes, the cabbage must be boiled, cooled and have its leaves separated. Some chefs first split the cabbage and cook the individual leaves. For a beginner, this may be more convenient as it is easier to control the tenderness of the leaves. If you cook the whole head of cabbage, it will be difficult to determine whether the inner leaves are cooked. Once the leaves are cooked, cut off the "veins" and start on the filling. Chop the onion and fry it in oil, add the meat, oregano, and a little water, and sauté. Then add the uncooked rice, stir and sauté everything in a pan to soften the rice. Wrap the prepared filling in the cabbage leaves. Place the dolmades in a heavy-walled pot lined with cabbage leaves, add water, and simmer. For the sauce, fry the flour in the butter, add the liquid that has formed in the saucepan, wait until it has cooled, add the eggs, and stir, then add the lemon juice and heat just enough to thicken.

AUTHENTIC RECIPE:
LITHUANIAN BALANDĖLIAI

YOU WILL NEED

1 white cabbage
10 dried mushrooms
200 g minced pork
1 onion
2 eggs
200 g rice
50 g bacon
10 ml sour cream
Salt

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS

Just like the Greek version, the cabbage must be boiled, and cooled, the leaves separated and the "veins" cut off. The rice is also cooked and, once cooked, then fried with the bacon. Make them with chopped salted, hot or cold smoked bacon. In the old culinary tradition, bacon should be sliced finely and fried. The bacon bits must be crispy, lightly browned but not burnt or darkened. A 17th-century Radvillian cook had even devised a way to have bacon bits during Lent. His method was frying finely chopped cubes of white bread in oil. The bread cubes are crispy, just like real bacon bits. For the balandėliai, fry the cooked rice with the bacon bits. Add the onions and the sautéed mushrooms together and fry them as well. Then add the minced meat, salt, and eggs. Wrap the stuffing in the cabbage leaves, place in the pot with the mushroom broth, add the sour cream and simmer.

Source: *Istorinė Lietuvos virtuvė. Maistas ir gėrimai Lietuvos Didžiojoje Kunigaikštystėje* by Rimvydas Laužikas (Historical Lithuanian Cuisine. Food and Drinks in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania). Translated by Karilė Vaitkutė

EVERYWHERE AND ALWAYS

Maksimas Milta

It took me a while to realize what happened during the most emotionally fraught forty-eight hours of my life in the US.

Over the weekend, I was at the Lithuanian American Youth Union convention in Florida. The annual meeting of the Lithuanian American Community was also held. Although the St. Petersburg Lithuanian American Club looks just like the Palace of Culture in Kybartai or Mosėdis, the energy in the Club this weekend would be the envy of both, the Mažvydas Library in Vilnius and many national celebrations in Lithuania. I would compare such a scale of inclusive and immediate solidarity for the sake of the idea of Lithuania only to the singing of the National Anthem on July 6th.

I cannot forget the weekend because I witnessed the dissemination of several ideas of Lithuanianness, which from the outside, seem to be contradictory to each other. On the one hand, second and third-generation seniors, wholeheartedly committed to the cause of Lithuanians, sitting on the Council of the Lithuanian American Community, and arguing about every comma in the report. On the other side are the Lithuanian-American youth, who are as relaxed and empathetic as pos-

sible. They spent every weekend of their childhood in Saturday schools and summers at Camp Neringa, Lithuanian Youth Camp Dainava, or Lithuanian Youth Camp Kretinga. They are 22-25 years old, studying and working in the usual things that have nothing to do with Lithuania, but their jokes, entertainment, and most importantly, their relationship with each other, is based on such a warm and sincere Lithuanianness that I can't put into words. In addition to the young people, some have moved to the States for their studies from independent Lithuania. Some of them work for big companies, live in big cities, and develop their businesses or careers. Finally, the event was attended by Ambassador Audra Plepytė, members of the Seimas, and representatives of other Lithuanian organizations operating in the USA, Canada, and internationally, bringing even more diversity and warmth to the expression of Lithuanianness.

Maybe it is a consequence of our provincialism or our constant fear of extinction, but I feel that Lithuania has a monopoly on the issue of Lithuanianness. In Vilnius, Kaunas or Klaipėda, only what comes from Lithuania is considered Lithuanian. I disagree with that. I prefer the idea of a global Lithuania. I am talking about the fact



that by fully involving the diaspora, by learning from and together with Lithuanians living abroad, Lithuanianness strengthens and flourishes. I am not talking about a self-contained expression of Lithuanianness, quite the opposite. In my eyes, the idea of Lithuanianness is strong and alive when it is not limited to an exclusively ethnic expression. I was born in Vilnius, as were my father and grandmother. My grandfather



was born in Lavoriškės, just outside Vilnius. I spent my childhood between Vilnius and Minsk, so the expression of my Lithuanianness that I believe in, represent and cherish is identical to the idea recorded in the Catechism of the Lithuanian during the uprising of 1863-64: "A Lithuanian believes in freedom and respects the Statute". Last weekend inspires me that it is the idea of an open and inclusive Lithuanianness



that ensures the continuity of generations, interconnectedness, and interaction with the Diaspora that is alive and will continue to live.

The Lithuanian Charter, issued by the VLIK in 1949, expresses the moral principles by which the



Lithuanians of the world were encouraged to live. The second article of the Charter states: "Man has the inherent right to freely profess and cultivate his nationality. A Lithuanian shall remain a Lithuanian EVERYWHERE AND ALWAYS [...]". In my eyes, this is an extremely powerful imperative. It is the theme of the 2023 World Lithuanian Youth Congress, which will take place between Boston, Camp Neringa in Vermont, and Montreal. I feel a personal responsibility and desire to contribute to a closer connection between the Lithuanian diaspora and Lithuania. I guess I am trying to compensate for my inability to grasp my identity during my childhood growing up between Minsk and Vilnius. The first step was taken this weekend -- I was elected to the Board of the Lithuanian American Youth Association, where I will be working on education issues.

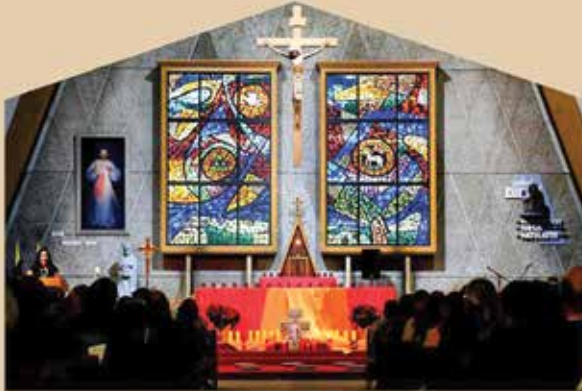
Marija, Maja, Migle, Simonas, Brigita, Indre, Lukas, Lina, Alina, Austeja, Monika, Naglis, Laura, Sabyna, Simas, Gintaras, Nerija, Elvija, and all of you - everyone else - you are unreal! Thank you so much for your trust and an incredible weekend! I hope not to disappoint you and to see you at the Congress in June!





TAIZĖ VAKARAS

GIESMĖS, SKAITINIAI, MEDITACIJA



penktadienis, lapkričio 18 d. 2022
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