

bridges



LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

\$6

March 2023



3 Was Lithuanian Ruler Gediminas a Grand Duke or a King?
By Juozas Skirius



7 Descendants of a Lithuanian Refugee Family Proudly Present Their Heritage in the City of Lexington, Kentucky
By Janina Juškevičiūtė Adelhardt

our community

13 Lithuanian Independence Day Commemoration in Mundelein, Illinois
By Ramunė Kubilius



16 MEMBER OF NATO
By Tony Mankus

2 from the editor
By Karilė Vaitkutė

10 Lithuanian National Congress in New York March 13, 1918



20 The Lithuanian World Youth Congress

current events
21 Security. Ukraine. Covid-19. Business. General.

24 UNEXPECTED JOURNEY
By Juzė Avižienytė Žukauskienė

Front Cover: Lithuanian dancers celebrate Independence Day at the Lithuanian Youth Center in Chicago, Illinois.

Back cover: Maironis Lithuanian Saturday School students celebrate Užgavėnės at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago, Illinois.

bridges

Vol. 47 No. 2 / March 2023

Bridges is the English-language publication of the
Lithuanian-American Community, Inc.
lithuanian-american.org/bridges

EDITOR
Karilė Vaitkutė

ART DIRECTOR
Skaistė Bosas

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR, CURRENT EVENTS
Alan J. Stankus, P.E. (ret)

ADVERTISING & SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER
Tomas Petroliūnas

Editorial Office
139 Willow Blvd., Willow Springs, IL 60480
kariledalia@yahoo.com

Subscriber Services and Advertising
spauda@javlb.org

Facebook
facebook.com/BridgesLithuanianAmericanMagazine



Our thanks to
LITHUANIAN FOUNDATION
for its support of this magazine.
www.lithuanianfoundation.org

LAC, INC. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD
14911 127th Street, Lemont, IL 60439
finansai@javlb.org

All statements and opinions, including product claims, are those of the organization/advertiser making those statements or claims. The publisher does not adopt, or put forth, any such statement or claim as his own, and any such statement or claim does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the publisher.

BRIDGES (ISSN: 87508028) is published 10 times per year (Jan/Feb and Jul/Aug combined) by Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. SUBSCRIPTIONS: For subscription questions or address changes, write to spauda@javlb.org or LAC/Bridges, 6812 Meadowcrest Drive, Downers Grove, IL 60516-3523. Subscription rates are: US: \$50 per year or \$95 for two years.; International: \$60 plus postage per year payable in advance in US funds. COPYRIGHT: ©2022 by Lithuanian-American Community, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of the publication may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. PRINTING: Printed by Printing Center USA, Great Falls, MT.

from the editor

Dear Reader,

Against the backdrop of the occupational war in Ukraine, we, Lithuanians, are every day painfully aware of how precious and fragile freedom is. In the course of history, Lithuanian Americans have always defended and helped Lithuania in its aspirations to fight for Independence. While celebrating February 16th and March 11th, we always remember that a nation is strong when it is united, and all the Lithuanian diaspora in all parts of the world is part of the nation. We all seek to safeguard Lithuania's freedom and the freedom of our friendly nations that struggle for Independence. Let us celebrate our Independence proudly, and let us help Ukraine to one day achieve its dream to celebrate Independence as well.

Karilė Vaitkutė

Regardless of what part of the world we live in, we are part of one nation. After all, we share the same joys and concerns. Freedom provides us many opportunities, but it also imposes responsibility for our actions and the fate of our homeland.

Today we understand the significance of the statehood of our homeland more clearly. The war in Ukraine reminded us of the fragility of freedom and the determination to pursue it.

Today we have to reaffirm ourselves that Lithuania is very important to us with its freedom, human rights and countless opportunities.

Let us not take it for granted but let us learn to appreciate what we have created and let us continue to build and strengthen our homeland.

Let us be worthy of our freedom which is symbolized in the independence declarations of February 16th and March 11th.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,
Arvydas Urbonavičius
President of the Lithuanian
American Community





Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas as depicted in the *Sapieha* Genealogy in *Kodeń*, 1709



King Władysław II Jagiełło, detail of the Triptych of Our Lady of Sorrows in the Wawel Cathedral, Kraków.

Was Lithuanian Ruler Gediminas a Grand Duke or a King?

Will we restore the true historical titles of Lithuanian rulers?

Juozas Skirius
Vytautas Magnus University Professor

As Lithuania celebrates the 700th anniversary of the name of the city of Vilnius since it was first mentioned in written sources, we have an excellent opportunity to remember Gediminas, the founder of the capital city of Lithuania. It is also worth remembering what were the titles of Lithuanian rulers before and after the times of Gediminas. Were they called Grand Dukes of Lithuania? Did Lithuania have more than one king? Of course, these are not new questions. They have emerged every now and then in the past.

Mindaugas is called a king, and this title is not disputed. However, opinions differ on the status of other rulers of Lithuania.

Back in 2009, for the occasion of the millennium of Lithuania, Dr. Rasa Gečaitė published a courageous article based on documents, "The Desecrated Kingdom and Kings of Lithuania" (*Atgimimas*. February 27, 2009; <http://www.delfi.lt/archive/print.php?id=20758150>).

During the last decade alone, a wealth of information on the subject was accumulated. On October 4, 2013, the Humanities and Social Sciences Department of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences organized a seminar entitled "The Kings of Lithuania and the Status of the State of Lithuania in the 13th-14th Centuries". For this occasion, historian Auksė Ūsienė prepared a 10-page booklet in which she argumentatively discussed the status of the Lithuanian rulers (kam.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/lietuvos-karaliai.pdf).

In 2018, Prof. Alvydas Butkus published an article entitled "The Nature of Lithuanian Statehood and its Interpretations", in which he wrote about the titles of the rulers (<http://alkas.lt/2018/05/05/a-butkus-lietuvos-valstybingumo-pobudziai-ir-ju-interpretacijos>). The article was based on his lecture presented at the University of Daugavpils on the occasion of his being awarded the Honorary Doctorate.

The same year, Dr. Algimantas Bučys published his book, *Lithuanian Kings and the Kingdom of Lithuania de facto and de jure in Medieval Europe*, which saw its second edition already the following year. The book is devoted to the analysis of the historical titles of the rulers of Lithuania (until the beginning of the 15th century). The conclusions of his research demolish the outdated myth of Mindaugas as the only king of Lithuania. It is also interesting that the author mentions that St. Bruno Boniface baptized the Lithuanian king Netimeras in 1009.

We can find many more articles and opinions on the question of titles. However, it should be added that Lithuanian historians in the United States (Jonas

Dainauskas, Rimantas Kunčas-Žemaitaitis, Violeta Rutkauskienė, etc.) unambiguously said that Lithuania was ruled by kings until the beginning of the 15th century.

Thus, although there seems to be enough research and sources, the academic community is still dominated by the "traditional" view, and in school textbooks, students find written that the rulers of Lithuania were grand dukes, not kings. Why?

One reason was given to me by historian Jonas Dainauskas (1904-2000) in Chicago in 1998. Dainauskas said that he had been studying Lithuanian-Polish relations for 40 years and came to a less than pleasant conclusion. He said that Lithuanian historians were strongly influenced

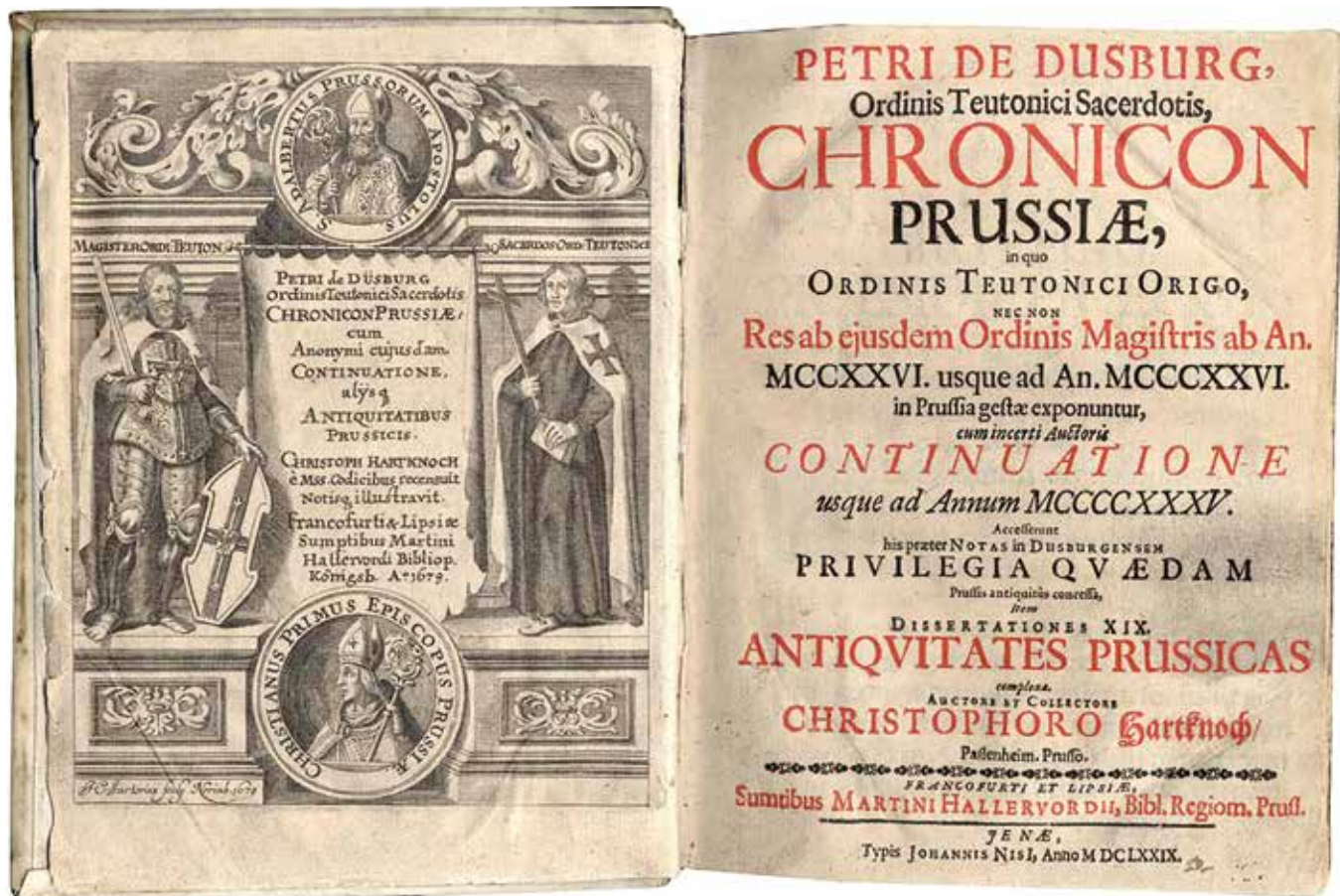
by Polish historiography. To better understand what the Lithuanian-American historian meant, we have to refer back to the texts of the above-mentioned authors.

The opinion in Lithuanian historiography that Lithuania had only one king, Mindaugas (1200 (?) - 1263), and that the Lithuanian kingdom under his rule lasted for about 7 years is not convincing to all those who are interested in the history of ancient times. Moreover, it seems strange that the Lithuanian state is probably the only European state that did not collapse after the death of its ruler Mindaugas but only grew in territory and strength. However, somehow and by someone, this kingdom was "renamed" as the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (hereafter referred to as GDL), and its rulers were called grand dukes. What is even more interesting is that in the 13th-14th centuries (before the beginning of Vytautas's reign), as some historians point out, there is not a single written document (except for the Slavonic chronicles) that would attest to the existence of the GDL. All the documents of the time (letters by Mindaugas and Gediminas, their treaties, letters and bulls of the Popes, chronicles of the Livonian Order, Peter of Duisburg Chronicle, etc.) mention the Kingdom of Lithuania and its kings (Latin: *Rex*, German:

Kunig). Only Jogaila, after his marriage to Queen Jadwiga, changed his title from King of Lithuania to King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. This is the first evidence of such naming. So why did historians call the rulers of Lithuania grand dukes (*velikij kniaz* in Russian)?

The answer may be short: it was strongly believed that only Christian rulers blessed by the Pope had the right to be called kings. This tradition dates back to the 8th century when the Pope blessed the Frankish ruler Pepin the Short, father of the future famous emperor Charlemagne. Unfortunately, however, this argument does not stand up to criticism, as it is contradicted by the writings of the Popes themselves, who refer to the rulers of Lithuania as kings and Lithuania as a kingdom.

In the early 14th century, for example, in the chronicle of Peter of Duisburg, Lithuania is repeatedly referred to as a kingdom, and Vytenis and Gediminas are referred to as kings of Lithuania. Peter of Duisburg describes Pope John's wish to baptize Gediminas, "King of Lithuania and many Russians", in 1324. However, Gediminas refused. Despite this circumstance, Gediminas is still referred to as a king in the Chronicle. In addition, Peter of Duisburg also mentions the Lithuanian king Pukuveras and his son



Cover of the *Chronicon terrae Prussiae* from the 1679 copy.

Vytėnis. He also mentions Treniota as the son of the King of Lithuania. Thus, even the hostile knights of the Teutonic and Livonian orders, as well as the popes and other officials who unsuccessfully sought the baptism of Lithuania and certainly had no intention of praising our rulers, called them with their true titles. Therefore, their documents should also be seen as indisputable legal evidence to call Lithuania a kingdom and its rulers -- kings. This is not a small detail but an essential point, because renaming a kingdom to the GDL "erases" the status of statehood and legitimizes a certain union of lands and subordination to another state, a kingdom. But none of the Lithuanian rulers before Vytautas the Great had any other ruler "over

their head", they were not vassals or sub-monarchs.

According to one of the most prominent contemporary historians of the Lithuanian language, prof. Zigmas Zinkevičius (1925-2018) "kings were of two types": 1) Rulers who had no suzerain above them, and thus belonged to no one, and who considered themselves kings, and were called so by rulers of other countries, even by the Pope (something similar was the case with the pre-Christian Scandinavians and Germanic people); 2) Rulers who were kings "anointed" by the Pope, like Mindaugas, who in 1251 was the first king of Lithuania. In 1253, he was crowned king.

The question is, where did the titles of duke and the grand duke come from and why did they become so common in Lithuania?

First of all, we do not know what titles did the Lithuanians themselves give to their rulers. We have no definite knowledge. It is possible that these titles were a priest, a commander, a ruler, or lord (*kunigas, vadas, valdovas, viešpats*), as this is the only way to translate the title of the Lithuanian ruler, *Hospodar*, which is used in clerical Slavonic writings. This situation understandably complicates the work of scholars.

Secondly, one of the reasons why our rulers are called grand dukes could be that from the beginning of the 14th century, Lithuanians began a successful military expansion to the East, annexing the Slavic-Ruthenian lands, which had previously been subject to the khans of the Golden Horde. The rulers of the Slavic lands were called *kniaz* (dukes), and the Slavs naturally gave the Lithuanian rulers titles that they themselves understood. However, at that time, this title in Slavic lands meant the title of the Khan's deputy. The Khans also appointed a chief deputy, the grand duke (*velikij kniaz*), who was subordinate to the suzerain Khan. In Latin, it is *Magnus Dux*. Thus, after the Lithuanian rulers were mistakenly referred to as grand dukes, they later came to be understood as vassal rulers (?). Slavic chronicles refer to Mindaugas as *velikij kniaz*, even though it is known with certainty that Mindaugas was already a king at that time. Thus, historians, especially



Lithuania in the 13th-15th centuries

Russian ones, consciously or unconsciously succumbed to the influence of the Slavonic annals.

But the greatest influence was made by Polish politicians, and later also by Polish historians, who began to apply the title of the grand duke of Lithuania to the rulers of Lithuania from the time of the Polish chronicler Jan Dlugosz, i.e. from the second half of the 15th century. The aim of their efforts was to show the world that in the past Lithuania was only a principality and Poland was a kingdom. They were also strictly adhering to these views in their scientific publications. For example, in the *Codex Diplomaticus Lithuaniae*, a collection of old documents published in Wroclaw in 1845, Lithuanian rulers are called kings in the documents themselves, but in the commentaries of the documents, the compiler of the collection, E. Raczyński, titles the same rulers as dukes. Another example would be historian M. Gumowski's work on seals in which he also falsified information: although the seal of any Lithuanian ruler bears the title King, in the caption, this historian wrote that it was the seal of the Duke of Lithuania (Dainauskas, J. *The Baptism of Lithuania and Lithuanians in the Year 1387*. Chicago, 1991, pp. 43-44).

Thus, from that time onwards, distorted titles have been consistently used, and the readers have been accustomed to the "dukes" Gediminas, Algirdas, Kęstutis, Jogaila, and the previous rulers. In fact, J. Dlugosz was probably the first to call Jogaila the Grand Duke of Lithuania. Jogaila himself did not use that title. His seals bore the inscription King of Lithuania.

When Jogaila became King of Poland in 1386, power in Lithuania was gradually handed over (1392-1401) to his cousin Vytautas as his viceroy. In 1401, Vytautas became Grand Duke of Lithuania and was only nominally dependent on Poland.

The Pact of Vilnius and Radom definitively establishes the title of the GDL. Vytautas, seeking full independence for Lithuania, formally sought approval from the Pope. He needed to break the de jure treaty with Jogaila in a civilized manner, while de facto he ruled one of the largest states in Europe. The Burgundian knight and diplomat Ghillebert de Lannoy writes very nicely in his diary in 1414 when he formulates the title of Lithuania and its ruler: "I have come to visit the kingdom of Lithuania and its king, duke Vytautas" because the king of Lithuania was Jogaila, but he was living in Poland, and the king of Lithuania was represented by the king, duke Vytautas (Dainauskas J., p. 44).

It should also be noted that in the chapel of St. Casimir in Vilnius Cathedral (17th century) there is a statue of Vytautas with a crown of a king rather than a grand duke, which is similar to the crown of the statue of Jogaila. The point is that they are both depicted and treated as kings. Interestingly, American historian Stephen Turnbull was



Sculptures of Lithuanian rulers in Vilnius Cathedral

the first to point this out in his book *Tannenberg 1410, Disaster for the Teutonic Knights* (Zemlickas' interview with historian Violeta Rutkauskienė. Science Lithuania. 2009, April 23, no. 8, p. 9).

In conclusion, it is perhaps appropriate to recall the words of Dr. Gečaitė: "One can only guess when our students will be given undistorted historical facts about the 13th-14th centuries; facts, based on authentic documents, not fabricated theories. Perhaps the present-day historians are still repenting for their pagan past and voluntarily carrying the cross of punishment over the desecrated graves of the Lithuanian kings. The dead know the truth, and the living should know it too." It should be noted that some historians have already given the readers a "golden mean" assessment - more often than not, they call the rulers of Lithuania not Grand Dukes but the rulers of Lithuania. This is already something. Moreover, history textbooks are constantly being updated, and we can hope, that one day, there comes an author who will write the titles of our rulers that are based on documents. Let us hope so!

Descendants of a Lithuanian Refugee Family Proudly Present Their Heritage in the City of Lexington, Kentucky

Janina Juškevičiūtė Adelhardt
Manalapan, New Jersey

Rene Juškevičiūtė Bauer and her husband George Bauer were recently invited to represent Rene’s Lithuanian roots in a Culture Day at the school of three of their grandchildren in Lexington, Kentucky.

Rene is a first-generation Lithuanian American, born to Lithuanian parents in displaced person camps in Germany.

Antanas and Anastazija Juškevičius brought Rene and their two other daughters to the USA after they fled war-torn Lithuania.

Rene and her sisters continued using the Lithuanian language at home and learning more at Lithuanian Saturday School in Elizabeth, New Jersey. While learning the customs and traditions of Lithuanian family life throughout their childhood, the sisters were invited to join a folk dancing group of young people at Holy Trinity Lithuanian Catholic Church in Newark, New Jersey in the early 1960s. Rene had been dating



From the left: George Bauer, grandsons Everett, Houston, and Adelyn, and Rene Bauer

her boyfriend, George, at the time and invited George to join the dance group. Folk costumes were made, and the dance group held regular rehearsals to learn a variety of traditional dances. The group performed at a number of Lithuanian picnics to gain confidence. Eventually, the highlight for all in the dance group was performing, together with Lithuanian dance groups from around the country and around the world at the New York World’s Fair held in New York in 1964.

We “fast forward” to Rene and George getting married a few years later. They started their family as they began their life together in Kentucky. They gave birth to and raised three sons. Through these past 22 years, their three sons and wives gifted Rene and George with ten grandchildren.

When Rene and George were invited to represent the Lithuanian heritage along with three of their grandchildren at the Rosa Parks Elementary school on January 26, they were more than happy to share and participate.

Rene and George proudly wore



Siblings Adelyn, Houston, and Everett



Siblings Houston, Adelyn, and Everett holding the Lithuanian flag for the parade of nations at school

the costumes they had kept. The grandchildren wore shirts with tri-colors and carried the Lithuanian flag in the parade of the 30 nations represented among the student population and their families.

In the current atmosphere of negativity and intolerance in our country, this was a beautiful example of gratitude for the freedoms and acceptance of the many ethnicities here in our country and in this school in Lexington, Kentucky.

What a wonderful way to have a learning opportunity for respect, interest, and acceptance of diversity. It was an experience well received there in Lexington. Wouldn't it be nice if many more schools could have this type of positive impact on the children in a learning environment?



Antanas with daughter, Aniela, in his lap; Rene on lap of mom, Anastazija Juškevičius around 1948



Anastazija, Rene, and Antanas Juškevičius in Germany around 1947



Aniela, Rene, Anastazija, and Antanas in Germany, 1949



Anastazija, Janina, Aniela, and Rene in a park in New Jersey around 1953



From the Lithuanian Day, June 14, 1964, New York World's Fair program. Lithuanian Folk Dance group from Newark, New Jersey. Rene Juškevičiūtė is front row, 4th from the left. George Bauer is in the back row, the last fellow on right wearing eye glasses.



Aniela, Anastazija, Antanas, Rene, and Janina in family garden in Elizabeth, New Jersey in 1960



Germany riverside family Janina in baby carriage, Rene, Aniela, Anasztazija and Antanas Juskevicius 1950.



Aniela and Rene Juškevičiūtės with George Bauer around 1962



Antanas and Anasztazija relaxing in their first home around 1957



Antanas joining in song at the Lithuanian Days, Frackville, Pennsylvania around 2004



Antanas became a baker of wonderful yeast cakes "Boba"



Aniela, Janina, and Rene bringing a cross in memory of their mother, Anasztazija, at Hill of Crosses



George and Rene Bauer with their three sons George, Daryl, and Gavin in Kentucky around 1987



Rene with Janina, Antanas, and Aniela greeting Janina, 1999



Rene and George dancing among the statues at Raganų kalnas, Juodkrantė, Lithuania, 2009



George and Rene Bauer around 2015

Lithuanian National Congress in New York March 13, 1918



The following is the translation of the article that appeared in the Draugas Newspaper on March 18, 1918. It describes the first day of the Lithuanian American National Congress that took place in New York on March 13 and 14, 1918. The Congress was a significant event in that it represented various Lithuanian American organizations and called for the United States' recognition of Lithuanian independence.

Nearly 1,500 delegates from all the colonies of the United States and Canada, representing close to one million Lithuanians living in America, gathered at the Madison Square Garden site for the purpose of making the demand for a free independent Lithuania.

The delegates came from all opinions and parties, but officially, no Lithuanian Socialists were present.

The session was opened by Mr. Julius Kaupas, a representative of the Christian Democrats, and began with the national and American anthems. It was very strange that there was no prayer at the opening of the Seimas, for prayer, whatever it may be, is encouraged in all cultured nations when any important work is

started, and our nationalists threatened that they would walk out of the Congress if a prayer was said.

Mr. Julius Kaupas, opening the Congress, welcomed all the delegates and then the election of the Presidium began.

By the time the election was completed, several speakers were present.

The first speaker from the Christian Democrats was Mr. J. G. Miliauskas from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He said that all the delegates had assembled for the purpose of bringing forth a voice demanding a free independent Lithuania, or a democratic republic. He said that a former President of the United States had said that we would only come to peace when we had settled the question of the fate of the small nations and satisfied them fully.

The second, Mr. J. Vinikaitis, of Brooklyn, New York, a representative of the Nationalists, the Democrats, began by denouncing the deeds and expressions of the Lithuanian Socialists. He said that from the very beginning, the Lithuanian Socialists wished to undermine the union of the Lithuanian Congress by

saying that the Lithuanians had no right to assemble and deliberate without them and that either the Lithuanians or Lithuania must remain with Russia, like Finland, or other small nations. Such people have dirty ideals and bloody hands. But then immediately the honorable speaker crosses the boundaries of the rules made by the commission and was very rude to the Christian Democrats.

The third speaker, priest J. J. Jakaitis of Worcester, Massachusetts, said that the Lithuanian-Americans had come to stake their claim and to show the maturity of all nations, and they must claim the rights of an independent Lithuania. He said that the Lithuanians had lost their independence about 123 years ago and that at the present time, they should take into consideration the situation of the refugees in Siberia and other countries and that their voice should be urging us to work even more consistently and to make as many sacrifices as possible on the altar of the fatherland.

He said that the Christian Democrats had fulfilled their duty by donating to the National Fund and that the National Fund had surpassed all the others and had contributed quite a lot to raise the Lithuanian name. The Christian Democrats made the largest donations during Lithuanian Day, and it is a pity that the money did not reach the hungry. I cannot express all the virtuous words and thoughts, but if the revered Father J. Jakaitis were to place that speech in our newspapers, there can be no doubt that it would be of great benefit to all of Lithuania.

The next speaker was attorney Baltutis, a nationalist democrat from Chicago, who spoke in about the same tone as the second speaker, Mr. Vinikaitis, but differed in that he used many words which would excite the representatives sitting on the two chairs.

After all the speeches, the election of the Presidium began: two candidates were put forward for the chairmanship: from the Christian Democrats, Mr. J. G. Miliauskas of Pittsburgh, Pa., and from the Nationalist Democrats, Mr. S. Gegužis. Mr. J. G. Miliauskas received 641 votes and Mr. S. Gegužis received 361 votes. Mr. J. G. Miliauskas remained Chairman and Mr. S. Gegužis remained First Vice-Chairman. The question arose whether to elect two Vice-Chairmen or four. Since the conference held by the Nationalist Democrats presented two candidates and the Christian Democrats one, there were misunderstandings and all sorts of demands. The vote for four vice-chairmen was 468 votes and for two vice-chairmen 360 votes.

The Vice-Chairmanship of the National Democrats shall remain with S. Gegužis as first Vice-Chairman, A. Staknevičius as second Vice-Chairman, J. S. Loppato as

third Vice-Chairman and M. Birštonas as fourth Vice-Chairman. The nominations for clerk, Mr. L. Šimutis and Mr. J. Tumasonis of the Christian Democrats and Mr. Narkevičius and Mr. Širvydas of the Nationalist Democrats, were unanimously adopted.

Resolution Commission: Mr. J. B. Kaupas, Father F. Kemėšis, Mr. J. E. Karosas, Mr. J. S. Vasiliauskas, Father V. Vasiliauskas, Mr. A. Bradchulis, Mr. B. Balutis, Mr. V. Jankauskas, Mr. J. Lopatto, and Mr. R. Karuža.

Press Commission. The second part of the session began at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

A question arises from the delegates concerning prayer and A. S. Bradchulis takes up and reprimands those leaders of his party who dare to oppose it. Mr. Pakštas echoes the stubbornness of the Nationalist Democrats. Mr. Liutkauskas, Mr. Vitaitis, and company shout and organize others to make a mess, breaking order, and at that moment they, or at least the greater part of them, appeared to be standing even further away than the right-wing socialists. Soldier W. Vaškevičius from Newark, New Jersey, speaks for the correction of the temper so that the Lithuanians will appear serious and mature. And finally, a prayer was said, and so some of the leaders of the nationalist democrats appeared to be bankrupt in spirit.

After that, the reading of many congratulations began.

The Resolutions Commission made various contributions and resolutions expressing sympathy and loyalty to US President Wilson. As for an independent Lithuania, the resolution passed with enthusiastic unanimity and the National Anthem was sung.

The second session ended with the adoption of a resolution that a representative of the Lithuanian nation is admitted to the Peace Congress.



DRAUGAS

LITHUANIAN DAILY FRIEND

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, PIRMADIENIS, KOVO (MARCH) 18 D., 1918 M.

Entered as Second Class Matter March 21, 1914, at Chicago, Illinois under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Lietuvių Seimas New Yorke.

Arti 1,500 delegatų iš visų Sąvienyty Valstijų kolonijų ir Kanados, atstovaujanti arti milijoną lietuvių, gyvenančių Amerikoje, susirinko į Madison Sq. Garden evetėling su tikslu, kad praveist laisvos neprigulmingos Lietuvos reikalavimą.

Delegatai suvažiavo visokių nuomonių ir partijų, bet oficialiai lietuviai socialistai nedalyvauja.

Seimą atidarė krikščionių demokratų atstovas p. Julius Kaupas ir pradėjo su tautos ir Amerikos žmonais. Labai keista, kad atidarant seimą nebuvo maldos.

Kadangi maldai, kokia ji nebuvo, pas visas kultūriškas tautas pradedant kokį nors svarbų darbą atkalbama, o mūsų tautininkai grasino, kad jie išeis iš seimo, jeigu bus kalbama maldai.

Pas Julius Kaupas, atidarydamas Seimą, pasveikino visus delegatus ir po to pradedo rinkimai prezidentūmo.

Įki rinkimai buvo nustatyti iš abiejų srovių, keletas kalbėtojų buvo.

Pirmasis nuo krikščionių demokratų p. J. G. Miliauskas iš Pittsburgh, Pa. Jis pasakė, kad visi delegatai suvažiavo su tikslu, kad išnešti balsų, reikalaujančių laisvos neprigulmingos Lietuvos, arba demokratiškos respublikos. Jis sako, Šv. Valstijų prezidentas yra pasakęs, kad mes eisime prie taikos tik tuomet, kuomet išriškime klausimą apie mūsų tautų likimą ir jai pilnai užganėdinsime.

Antras p. J. Vinikaitis, iš Brooklyn, N. Y., atstovas nuo tautininkų, demokratų, pradėjo pasmerkdamas lietuvių socialistų darbelius ir išsireiškimus. Jis sako, kad nuo pat pradžių lietuviai socialistai norėjo pakentti sušvažiavimui į lietuvių seimą, sakydami, kad lietuviai neturi teisės suvažiuoti ir tartis be jų, kad lietuviai arba Lietuva privalo pasilikti prie Rusijos, kaip Finlandija, arba kitos mašos tautos. Taigi sako, pasakykite, ar tie yra tikrais demokratais arba trokštančiais pilnos laisvės, ar tie, kurie norį prijungti prie nuslopintos barbariškos Rusijos. Tokie žmonės turi pūrvinus idealus ir kruvinas rankas. Paieka srovinius išsireiškimus laukiniams ir socialistams ir čia tuojuos kaip sykis gerbinamas kalbėtojas peržengia rubežius sutarties, padarytus rengimo komisijos.

Išlenda su savo mūšeliais kaip yla iš maišo ir išsireiškia labai nenusodagal ant krikščionių demokratų.

Trečias — kun. J. J. Jakaitis, iš Worcester, Mass., pasakė: kad Amerikos lietuviai suvažiavo pastatyti savo reikalavimus ir parodyti visoms tautomis pribendimą ir turi reikalauti teisių neprigulmingos Lietuvos. Sako, lietuviai neteko neprigulmybės apie 123 metai atgal ir kad dabartinis laikas turėtų atsižvelgti į padėjimą pašešonių Siberijoje ir kitose šalyse ir kad jų balsas tai buna musms

paraginimu dirbti dar nuoklian ir kuodangianis sudėti ankų ant Tėvynės aukuro. Pasakė, kad krikščionys demokratai savo priedorme pildė didamį aukas į Tautos Fondą, ir kad Tautos Fondas praženko visus kitus ir gana daug prisidėjo prie pakelimo lietuvių vardo. Krikščionys demokratai daugiausia ankų sudėjo Lietuvių Dienoje, o tik galia, kad tie pinigai nepasiekė badanjančių.

Negaliu visų tų praktinių kodžių ir minčių išreikšti, bet jeigu gerb. kun. J. Jakaitis pavestų tą kalbą į mūsų laikraštis, tai negali būti abejonės, jogei toji kalba padarytų daug nusdos visai Lietuvai. Sekantis kalbėjo adv. Baltutis, taut. demokr., iš Chicagos, maldang tuo pačiu tonu, kaip ir antrasis, p. Vinikaitis, kalbėjo, tik skyresi jo kalba tonui, kad pavartojo daug tokių kodžių, kurie sužadintų ant dviejų kodžių sėdinams atstovus.

Po visų kalbų pradedo rinkimai prezidentūmo: I pirmininkus paduota du kandidatai: nuo krikščionių demokratų p. J. G. Miliauskas, Pittsburgh, Pa., nuo tautininkų demokratų p. S. Gegulis. Pas J. G. Miliauskas gauna 641 balsą, o S. Gegulis 361, p. J. G. Miliauskas lieka pirmininku, gi p. S. Gegulis lieka pirmuoju vice-pirm. Kilo klausimas ar da vice-pirm. rinkti ar keturis. Kadangi taut. dem. laikytoje konferencijoje perstatyta du kandidatai, o nuo krikščionių demokratų vienas, tai kilo nesusipratimai ir visokie reikalavimai. Balsuojant nū 4 vice-pirm.: 468 balsai, o uī du 360.

Vice-pirm. lieka nuo taut. dem. S. Gegulis pirmuoju, nuo krikščionių demokratų A. Staknevičius antruoju, nuo taut. dem. J. S. Loppato 3-tuoju ir M. Birštonas 4-tuoju.

Perstatyti kandidatai į raštininkus, nuo krikščionių demokratų p. I. Simutis ir J. Tumasonis, nuo taut. dem. pp. Narkevičius ir Širvydas vienbalsiai priimti.

Rezoliucijos komisija: J. B. Kaupas, kun. F. Kemėšis, J. E. Karosas, J. S. Vasiliauskas, kun. V. Vasiliauskas, A. Bradchulis, B. Balutis, V. Jankauskas, J. Lopatto, K. Karūza.

Presos komisija: J. Ramanauskas, T. Šlamis, B. Vaškevičiūtė, Vilmoostas, Birštonas ir Dr. Drangelis.

Antroji sesija prasideda 3 valandą po pietų.

Kyla klausimas iš delegatų kaslink maldos ir A. S. Bradchulis užgiria ir papeikia tuos savo partijos vadus, kurie drįsta priešintis. Pas K. Pakitą atkartoja taut. dem. tūsiųpyrimą. Liutkauskas, Vitaitis ir kompanija rekia ir organizuoja kitus daryti be tvarkę, nesilaikydami tvarkos ir tuo momentu pasirodė, kad jie arba bent didesnis jų dalis stovi toliau, negu dešinieji socialistai. Del pataipymo n-pa kalba karolis W. Vaškevičius, iš Newark, N. J., kad lietuviai pasirodytų rimtais ir subrendusiais. Ir galutinai prieita prie maldos ir tuomet pasirodė pekuris taut. dem. vadai gatviniais švilps-

kais ir subankrutijusiais dvasioje.

Po to prasidėjo skaitymas daugybės pasveikinimų.

Rezoliucijų komisija patiekia įvairių įnešimų ir rezoliucijų išsireiškimui Sur. Valstijų prezidentai W. Wilsoni užstojaus ir tojališkums. Kas link neprigulmingos Lietuvos, rezoliucija sutusijastiškai, vienbalsiai pėreina ir užgiedama tautos himnais.

Antroji sesija suabėigo priėmus rezoliuciją, kad į taikos kongresus būtų primta atstovas ir nuo lietuvių tautos.

Kovo 14 d., pirmoji sesija prasideda 9 val. ryto.

"Dranga" rep.

our community

Lithuanian Independence Day Commemoration in Mundelein, Illinois

Ramunė Kubilius

Since February 16th this year fell on a Thursday, many Lithuanian American Community chapters and regions locally selected the most convenient weekend to commemorate Lithuanian Independence Day. Some perhaps decided to combine February 16th and March 11th (reinstatement of Lithuania's independence) commemorations. An event in Mundelein, Illinois was hosted by the Waukegan – Lake County (Illinois) chapter on February 11th.

The Lithuanian-American Community's (LAC) Midwest Region organized the Lithuanian Independence Day commemoration, and LAC chapters represented that afternoon included not only the hosting local community, but also other Illinois chapters-Chicago's Brighton Park and Marquette Park, also Cicero and Lemont; Indiana (East Chicago), and Minnesota. The cultural program included Midwest groups and music artists, as well as a special guest from New York City.

The afternoon began with Lithuanian language Catholic Mass at the Santa Maria Del Popolo Church, celebrated by Rev. Gediminas Keršys, who makes the trip from Chicago once a month to celebrate Mass at the church for Lithuanian-Americans of the area. The Lithuanian Independence Day commemoration's cultural program took place in the church's parish center. The small stage was decorated with photographs of the signatories of the 1918 Lithuanian Declaration of Independence, and next to it was a stand decorated with the text of the independence declaration act along with a Lithuanian flag, a great backdrop for those who wished to take



photographs (and selfies).

Before the music and dancing commenced, a few traditions were introduced by the mistress of ceremonies, Gabriella Tymarskis. Father Keršys gave the convocation, reminding everyone that maintaining Lithuanian traditions, especially during commemorations of historical events, is important to all Lithuanian-American communities, be they large or small. The American and Lithuanian flags were brought into the hall by members of the Lithuanian National Guard (šauliai) in the diaspora. LAC Midwest Chapter officer, Algimantas Barniškis, led the singing of the anthems of the United States and Lithuania. He invited everyone to stand in a moment of silence as he read the names of former LAC national and chapter officers from the area who had passed away in the previous year. The February 16, 1918 declaration of independence act was read by well-prepared and poised sixth graders who attend the Gediminas Lithuanian Cultural School of Lake County.

Jolita Vilimienė, the president of the LAC Midwest Region, distributed certificates of appreciation to a number of active LAC officers and former officers. She introduced fellow officers of the LAC Midwest Region and asked





that members representing the various LAC chapters in attendance stand to be recognized. Understandably, the group from Minnesota drew the largest applause, since they traveled the longest distance to Mundelein.

Tauras Bublys, chairman of the Lithuanian Foundation board, greeted the audience and reminded them that the Foundation is dedicated to preserving and fostering Lithuanian culture and traditions. Its grants and scholarships support community initiatives, especially those of LAC, and students. In its 65th anniversary year (2022), LF dispersed almost \$1.6 million in support of projects and student scholarships for recipients in the United States and Lithuania. Since its inception, LF has dispersed over \$25 million in support.

Gintautas Steponavičius, president of the hosting LAC Waukegan – Lake County Chapter shared his greetings to all attendees and introduced special guests in attendance, including Ramunė Lapas, editor of the Lithuanian language paper, „Draugas“, the longest continually published Lithuanian language newspaper in the United States, also dr. Robertas Vitas, chair of the board of directors of the Lithuanian Research and Studies Center and Giedrė Elekšytė, president of the LAC’s Cultural Council, and Juozas Polikaitis, former chair of the LAC’s national board of directors. The Lithuanian Consulate office in Chicago sent regrets since a schedule conflict prevented representation at the event.

After the talks and greetings, the cultural program commenced, offering great variety, ranging from Lithuanian folk dances, songs, poetry, and kanklės (traditional Lithuanian folk instrument) music. The folk dancing groups included the children’s groups, „Vėtra“ and the Gediminas Cultural School, adult groups „Laumė“ from the northern Illinois suburbs and „Puga“ from Minnesota, as well as the Chicago area senior (veterans’) group from the „Grandis“ ensemble, and the all-female group, „Rusnė“. Songs were sung by Algimantas Barniškis (joined for one by Alfonsas Seniūnas), also Ligita Barniškis. Patriotic-themed poetry was read by its author, Janina Sučylienė.



A number of the dances performed were familiar to those who have been to any Lithuanian folk dance event- including the traditional women’s dance of greeting with hats, „Kepurinė“, the whirling „Kubilas“, and the finale „Suktinis“. Other dances were perhaps less familiar, including one with only three dancers, aptly called „Trejinis Suktinis“ (a trio twirler). „Linksmapolkė“ (the „Happy Polka“), „Polka Op-Op“, and other lively dances set an upbeat tone, as did Simona’s performance of the popular Vytautas Kernagis song, „Mūsų dienos kaip šventė“ (Our days are a holiday), joined sing-along

our community

fashion by the swaying audience to whom the song's words were very familiar.

New York City-based Simona Smirnova was the special guest of the afternoon. She sang several songs, accompanying herself on the Lithuanian national stringed instrument, kanklės, and for some songs, accompanied by keyboardist Julian Davis Reid. As is often her practice during performances, she invited the audience to sing along and for one song, divided the audience in two to sing assigned phrases upon her direction. Simona's visit to the Chicago area included not only the set of songs performed on February 12th in Mundelein. She performed at a jazz evening on February 11th at the Lithuanian World Center in Lemont, IL, and more importantly, participated in a book release event that afternoon. The publication of her book of original compositions and kanklės notes, „Kanklės in New York“, was supported in part by the Lithuanian Foundation. Some audience members in Mundelein took advantage of the opportunity to acquire the book and obtain Simona's autograph. Simona's book release tour started in New York at the Lithuanian Consulate, and other cities in the tour include Los Angeles, Detroit, Cleveland, and San Francisco, including a trip across the Atlantic to her birthplace, Lithuania, for the Vilnius Book Fair and then Berlin, Germany, concluding the book release tour in Boston in April, where she once studied at Berklee College of Music. Those interested in



Simona's music and her new book can visit her website, www.simonasmirnova/nyc.

After a robust program, attendees and performers at the February 12th Lithuanian Independence Day celebration in Mundelein probably worked up an appetite. This was evidenced by the long line waiting to get a serving of traditional kugelis and sweets before driving home for an evening of watching football's „Super Bowl“ or other Sunday evening events.



MEMBER OF NATO

Tony Mankus

Chapter 1

The Funeral

I walked in through the double doors of the Heinz - DeLorian Funeral Home. An attentive staff member spotted me and escorted me into the main salon where the body of Peter Dobis, my father, had been embalmed, dressed, and laid out in a casket. Colleen, my stepmom, was already there, dressed elegantly in black. She had positioned herself in front of the casket to greet the guests as they arrived.

"Thank you for making the arrangements to get your father's body back to the U.S.," she turned to me as I approached.

"I contacted the U.S. Embassy in Vilnius. They were very helpful with all the details," I gave her a hug. "They also opened a file and are coordinating their efforts with the local police there."

"Did you get any more information about what happened?" she asked, alternating her cheeks for the ritual kisses.

"It was basically a car accident, as you know, but it's still an active investigation. I just received some pictures of the accident scene, . . ."

"I don't want to see them," she interjected, turning away slightly. Tears pearled up in her eyes. I rested my hand on her shoulder and pulled her gently closer. Colleen dabbed her eyes with a tissue from a nearby dispenser.

"Thank you for wearing the black suit," she said, brushing softly the sleeve of my jacket. "It's appropriate," she added, "and you look good."

I'm thirty one and she still treats me like a little boy, I thought to myself, but squelched the reflex to protest. It wasn't a good time for that.

"You bought it for my law school graduation six years ago - remember?" I managed a semblance of an agreeable smile, "I'm surprised it still fits me."

"Well, we're happy to see you," she went on, still in a dotting mood. "I wish you would come to see us more often."

I didn't answer. She knew as well as I did that my job with the law firm in New York City kept me on the move. I traveled all over the country for the insurance defense trials of our clients and didn't have the opportunity to come back to Chicago as often as she might have liked. Besides, I took the job there



to get away from the baggage that was weighing me down over here, including Lisa, my ex-girlfriend. We broke up after two years of exclusivity -- after our relationship fizzled out. She decided that her writing career was more important than marriage and children and I decided that I didn't want to settle down, after all.

I glanced around the salon. It had a familiar layout: soft lights, pastel-colored wall to wall carpets, small tables and tripod easels filled with pictures of Dad, a stand-up lectern with the obligatory guest book, the rows of cushioned chairs facing front and, of course, the casket with the body, surrounded by a multitude of flower arrangements. His face was pale, embalmed into a vaguely pleasant, but neutral expression. With his eyes closed, I guess the family and guests could add whatever images of the man they wished to remember.

I thought about what my relationship with Dad had been over the years. I loved him, of course, but I had to admit that it hadn't always been the best. He raised me, paid for my education, and provided me with a good home -- and I was grateful for that. But, as I got into my teen years, I began to feel that Dad was old fashioned, living more in the past than in the present. He talked a lot about Lithuania. It was the country where he was born and where he had lived throughout his youth. He also talked a lot about his difficult childhood under the Soviet Communist regime. I was more focused on the present. I was trying to get educated so I could make something of myself right here in the U.S. of A. So the strong emotional bond I had forged with him in my early years began to fade slowly as I grew older.

Guests were beginning to file in and I positioned myself next to Colleen, in front of the casket. We took turns greeting them and accepting their condolences. I didn't know most of them, but felt obligated to go through this social ritual. I know they were kind and well meaning, but I was never very comfortable at funerals -- certainly not at my own dad's.

"Why did Dad go there, anyway?" I asked Colleen

during a short lull in the procession. It was a dumb question, I know, but I needed to talk.

“He said he was trying to make some business connections,” Colleen responded. “He said he wanted to start a business there,” she added.

I was vaguely familiar with some of Dad’s plans in Lithuania, but I also knew that Colleen wasn’t enthusiastic about his ventures there. Shortly after she and Dad got married, he took over her dad’s construction business here in Chicago, although he had begun to neglect it lately with his frequent trips abroad.

“Well, he’s not going to start any business there now,” I blurted out. It slipped out of me.

“Oh, Jonas,” Colleen winced and turned back to attend to the next group of guests.

I thought about how I had enjoyed the several trips Dad and I made to Lithuania as I was growing up. Dad was proud to show me what great progress Lithuania had made since it declared its independence from the Soviet Union on March 11, 1990. I was impressed with old town Vilnius and historic Kaunas, the town where Dad was born. But as I got older, I began to realize that Lithuania wasn’t a dominant player in the geopolitical scheme of Europe. It was one of several small countries along the Eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, trying to hold its own amongst the bigger players in that part of the world, including “mother” Russia, which had occupied and oppressed Lithuania, on and off, for over a hundred and fifty years.

A slightly older gentleman, maybe in his late fifties, or early sixties, dressed neatly in a dark brown suit and tie, approached and offered his hand.

“Hello, Mr. Dobis,” he bowed slightly. “My name is Juozas Lauraitis. I was a good friend of your father. Please accept my condolences.”

I nodded and shook hands with the man, but didn’t say anything. I’d never seen him before. He had a European accent.

“Peter and I had lunch in Vilnius on the day he was killed,” Lauraitis went on. “It was a shock to all of us. I am so sorry for your loss.”

“Thank you,” I responded, mustering some civility. “Did you know my father well?”

“Yes, he was a dear friend.” Lauraitis answered. “We had known each other for many years - even before he and your mother emigrated to America in 1991. On his last trip to Lithuania we had talked about starting a joint business venture there.”

I nodded and continued to listen.

“We had lunch that day,” Lauraitis went on, “with two other men. After lunch, Peter left by himself to drive back to his hotel, and that is when he crashed.”

I drew Lauraitis off to one side, away slightly from the reception line. He may have been the last person to see my father alive and I thought I’d better find out what he knew.

“We’re still waiting to get the police report from Lithuania,” I said, “and the autopsy report from the coroner there. Have you gotten any more recent information on the accident?”

“I just heard this morning that the authorities had discovered traces of the Novichok nerve agent in your father’s blood and urine samples.”

My brain stopped functioning and I just looked straight at Lauraitis. I tried not to stare, although I’m not sure I succeeded. Holy shit! popped into my head and stayed there. I didn’t know much about Novichok, but I’d heard enough about it to know that it wasn’t something you could pick up at a corner drug store.

“The various versions of Novichok were developed by the Russians military in the 1970s and the 1980s,” Lauraitis went on. “They were designed to avoid being easily detected.” His face was dead serious. “The coroner sent the samples to a government lab in Germany to verify the results.”

I didn’t know what to say. My logical structure and the social skills I had built up over the years weren’t working at the moment. I exchanged calling cards with Lauraitis and promised to follow up with him in a few days.

Chapter 2

Novichok

It was early Monday morning. The interment for my dad, and the reception that followed, had been completed yesterday. I decided to stay home with Colleen for a few more days to help her through this emotionally difficult transition -- not to speak of the numerous details that had to be taken care of. But the weird death of my father hung like a pall over my emotional brain. I had trouble getting motivated to move past that conversation with Lauraitis at the funeral home. I had to deal with it somehow; I had to kick-start some logical process. I owed it to my father.

I plugged the power cord of my laptop into a wall outlet, opened a browser and googled the Internet for “Novichok.” Dozens of links came up. After browsing through several of them I surmised that Novichok is a deadly chemical, that it’s illegal, and that it’s tightly controlled by the Russian government. If true, it would’ve been naive to believe that my Dad’s poisoning by this chemical nerve agent hadn’t been approved and executed by the government of Russia — probably

by agents of FSB, the successor to the KGB. It didn't shock me that the Russian government was probably responsible for my father's death; what I couldn't get my head around was this: what the hell did Dad get himself into on those trips to Lithuania?

I decided that I would have to go to Lithuania. I wasn't sure of what I'd find there, if anything, but I had to try. I picked up my cell phone and dialed Doris Blanton, in New York City.

"Legal office," the receptionist answered.

"Hi, Becky; it's Jonas. Is Doris available?"

"Yes, she is, Mr. Dobis; I'll put you through."

"Jonas, take as much time as you need to put your family's affairs in order," Doris' voice chimed in after a few seconds. "I'm sure we can manage to keep this place running until you return."

"Thanks, Doris. Good to know that my boss has my back. But, listen, I've just gotten some weird news about my dad's death. Can you get clearance for me to fly to Lithuania for a couple of weeks?"

"What do you mean 'weird news'?"

"They found some Novichok in his blood stream."

"Novichok!?"

"Yeah."

"Are you sure about that?"

"It's being confirmed by an independent lab in Germany."

Doris was silent for a while. "That's big stuff," she said. "We need to get the State Department involved in this."

I waited for Doris to continue.

"Universal Indemnity Group, one of our insurance clients, is liable for your dad's ten million dollar policy. That's not peanuts – even for a big insurance company like UIG. I presume that the police there are investigating this?"

"Yes, but I don't think they give a damn about UIG's ten million dollar liability."

"Maybe not, but I hope they give a damn about the friggen Russians sloshing around in Lithuania. Lithuania is our NATO ally, you know."

"I have to fly out there, Doris. I have to see what I can find out. If I come up with anything maybe we can sue the Russian government in a U.S. court. If we get a judgment against them maybe we can freeze some of Russia's assets here."

Doris was silent for a while. "That's a thought," she said. "I'll talk to UIG about it. Maybe they'll even pick up the tab for your trip there. But there's bound to be some danger involved. I want you to know what you're getting yourself into before we OK this."

I shut down the phone and walked into the kitchen. Colleen was there already. She was still dressed in her pajamas, with a white housecoat over the top. She looked tired. Even though she was only my stepmom, for all intents and purposes she was my real mom now, the mom I had grown to love since she married my dad when I was eleven. With Dad gone, she was all alone now, except for my younger half-brother Mike. I felt bad for her.

I opened the refrigerator door and found some mango juice there. I poured it into a glass and sat down at the kitchen table. Colleen picked up the breakfast dishes I had left earlier this morning and started to place them in the dishwasher. It didn't look like she had any major plans for today.

"Can I get you anything else?" she asked, without turning her head from the sink.

"I'm OK," I said. "Are you going to be OK?"

She didn't answer.

"What are your plans now?" I prodded her.

"I'm not sure," she answered after a while. "I'll take a few days off and then help Mike at the office with the construction business."

"That sounds like a good plan," I said, trying to encourage her. "The business should be OK – with your help," I added. "Mike's been working with Dad for a few years now and should have a good handle on the nitty gritty stuff of the construction business."

"We'll be OK. How about you?" It felt like she wanted to switch the focus off of her. "Are you going back to New York?"

"I want to go to Lithuania," I blurted out.

Colleen finally turned to look at me. She walked over to the table and sat down.

"I need to find out what happened to Dad," I added.

"I know how you feel about that," she sighed, "but I don't want you to go there, Jonas. It's a dangerous place."

I drank some juice and didn't say anything.

"I just lost my husband; I don't want to lose my son, too."

"Those Russians, Colleen, they're bad actors. I'm sure they're responsible for what happened to Dad."

Colleen stood up slowly from her chair and walked over to my side of the table. She stood behind me and rested her hands on my shoulders. "Why don't you settle down, Jonas. Stay here with us. Forget about your law firm in New York and about Russia and Lithuania. Help us run the construction business here."

"I can't do that!" I almost snapped at her. With a softer voice, I added: "I promise to stay in touch with you and keep you informed."

"What's driving you, Jonas?" she persisted. "What's

going on? You were dating Lisa for several years here, before you left for New York. She really liked you — she really LOVED you, I thought. What happened, Jonas? Why did you guys break up?”

The image of Lisa; beautiful, feminine Lisa, flashed in my brain. I thought about how many times we made love into the late evenings and talked about our future together. But little by little, it seemed like we drifted apart. Our individual quirks and habits that had once been a source of delightful discovery became annoying after a while.

I shook my head and shut those thoughts down. I didn’t want to go down that rabbit hole any more, the one that circled round and round itself and led to nowhere.

“I don’t know, Colleen. I don’t want to talk about it now.”

“You want to see your mom again, don’t you?” Colleen sat down by the table again. “Maybe I haven’t been the mom you needed when you were a growing boy.”

An image of Aistè, my birth mother, flashed back into my brain. I remembered her as the beautiful and warm woman with blue eyes and golden brown hair that she was. My childhood memories of her were strong, as all childhood memories are. By age five I had barely begun to develop my own identity, so I was who she was. And then she was gone. There was an emptiness suddenly, a vacuum. I did not understand a vacuum.

Dad was still there, of course. He was kind and caring, but he was gone most of the day. I had the school teachers and the playmates and a nanny, but the vacuum was still there. Then Colleen came into Dad’s life – and mine. Little by little, the hole that arose in my heart when Aistè left began to recede into the distance, although it never went away.

“It’s water under the bridge now, Colleen.” I took her hand and held it in mine. “You became my mother when you started to see my Dad. I bonded with you from the very start.”

I gazed out the kitchen window, the same window I had gazed out of thousands of times before, the thousands of times that I had longed to grow up; that I had dreamed of a bright future when I would be an adult and when things would be less complicated and begin to make sense. They seemed so far away now, so vague, so naive.

TONY MANKUS is a private practice attorney who has been representing clients in tax controversies

and bankruptcy matters since 1986. He is married to Margarita Marchan-Mankus, a partner in the law firm of Mankus & Marchan, Ltd. Her focus is in Social Security disability cases and real estate. They have been married since 1983 and live in Lisle, Illinois. They have four grown daughters, all of whom have married and flown the coop, although they’ve blessed Tony & Margarita with three beautiful grandsons.

Tony has written a number of articles dealing with tax and/or bankruptcy issues that were published in various legal journals, including the NLA Review, DCBA Brief, and Federal Taxation – ISBA. Time permitting, he tinkers with more creative and personal writing. In 2013 he published a memoir titled “Where Do I Belong?” which deals with his WWII refugee past in Germany and his immigrant experience in America. In 2016 he published “Chicago Tango,” a novella-length legal/political thriller. Both were self-published with the help of Create Space and are available on Amazon.com and Kindle. He has also written some shorter pieces which were published in the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin, Rivulets, Lithuanian Heritage and Bridges. During his two-year stint in the Peace Corps in Ecuador (1968-1970), he also edited a bilingual magazine, called “El Ecuador.”

Tony’s literary website can be found at this link: <https://www.author-tonymankus.com>



The Lithuanian World Youth Congress

The Lithuanian World Youth Congress (LWYC), first held in 1966, has taken place every 2-4 years, convened in a new country where Lithuanian youth are active and established. The LWYC, the highest governing body of the Lithuanian World Youth Association, decides all directives, goals, and resolutions for the organization, votes on a new executive board, and brings together young Lithuanian leaders from around the world.

There are two parts to the Congress: (1) the conference of delegates and (2) the cultural and recreational portion. During the conference, delegates vote on new resolutions, changes to the organization's bylaws, choose the hosting country for the next LWYC and more.

The Congress is also an excellent opportunity to meet and form long-lasting friendships with Lithuanian youth from around the world. Participants expand their network at an international level - a valuable asset for a young adult. This aspect makes the cultural and recreational component of the LWYC just as important as the formal conference: participants spend time interacting, sharing ideas, and learning how Lithuanian youth from other countries express their Lithuanian identity. During the cultural component, participants will visit and explore major cities of the hosting country or countries, attend concerts, visit museums, taste the local cuisine, and partake in other recreational activities.

The cultural component of the congress is an excellent opportunity for the hosting country or countries to show to other participants the unique ways their local Lithuanian communities have preserved the Lithuanian culture, language and traditions.

THE XVII CONGRESS THEME IS "EVERYWHERE AND ALWAYS"

There are many Lithuanians scattered across North America, each with their own emigration story. There are active American- and Canadian-Lithuanians who arrived in North America very recently, while others are now third or fourth generation Lithuanians. Though there are many differences between all those who call themselves Lithuanian in North America, they all share a common ancestry and they are united by the desire to preserve and maintain the rich Lithuanian culture passed down to them through their parents, grandparents and ancestors. Though they may live far from their homeland, the Lithuanian diaspora does not forget its Lithuanian roots.

In 1940, the Supreme Committee for Liberation of Lithuania (VLIKas) wrote and released a document called the Lithuanian Charter while in exile, which describes the aspirations of the Lithuanian nation - to be independent and to preserve the Lithuanian culture freely. One of 13 articles in the Charter states,

"A person has the natural right to profess and cultivate their ethnic identity. A Lithuanian remains a Lithuanian always and

Žmogus turi prigimtąją teisę laisvai išpažinti ir ugdyti savo tautybę.

Lietuvis lieka lietuviu

**VISUR
IR
VISADA**

Savo tėvų išlaikytą Lietuvių Tautos gyvybę lietuvis perduoda ateities kartoms, kad amžinai gyventume.

LIETUVIŲ CHARTA

Jungtinės Amerikos Valstijos 1966	Jungtinės Amerikos Valstijos, Kanada 1972	Argentina, Urugvajus, Brazilija 1975/76	Didžioji Britanija, Vakarų Vokietija 1979
Jungtinės Amerikos Valstijos, Kanada 1983	Australija 1987/88	Argentina, Urugvajus, Brazilija 1991/92	Lietuva, Didžioji Britanija 1994
Jungtinės Amerikos Valstijos 1997	Australija 2000	Lenkija, Vokietija 2003	Kanada 2006
Argentina, Urugvajus, Brazilija 2010	Jungtinė Karalystė 2014	Suomija 2017	Lenkija 2021/22
VISUR IR VISADA WFLC, USA & Canada			Jungtinės Amerikos Valstijos, Kanada 2023

everywhere. They pass onto future generations the Lithuanian culture and traditions which were maintained and passed on by earlier generations."

It is from these words of the Lithuanian Charter that the committee of the XVII Lithuanian World Youth Congress (LWYC) has chosen the congress theme, "Always and Everywhere." Wherever they may be and regardless of their situation, North American Lithuanians cherish their Lithuanian roots. The LWYC committee invites all Lithuanian youth from around the world to join us next summer and take part in the Congress in both the US and Canada. Here participants will experience the Lithuanian culture and traditions which have been preserved on this side of the Atlantic for years.

current events

Security

The Lithuanian Defense Material Agency has signed a 45-million-euro contract with the US Government to acquire Switchblade 600 combat drones, launch and control equipment, training simulator, and maintenance. The US will also supply smaller and lighter Switchblade 300 combat drones. This capability is expected to be financed by the US Military Assistance Fund.

The Lithuanian Armed Forces consist of 11,500 professional soldiers, 5,400 volunteers, and 3,500 conscripts. The Defense Ministry is considering adding another division of 10,000 to 15,000 soldiers equipped with HIMARS rocket artillery systems.

The Lithuanian Defense Ministry is planning on spending 110 to 150 million euros to purchase 18 Caesar Mark II new-generation self-propelled howitzers from France's government-owned Nexter company before 2027. The new howitzers will backfill older equipment given to Ukraine.

The Seimas passed a new law banning Russians and Belarusians who do not have Lithuanian citizenship from possessing weapons. According to the National Security Committee, there are currently 294 Russian citizens and 46 Belarusians living in Lithuania who have obtained permits for possessing or carrying weapons. They have one year to sell them or give them up.

Vilnius municipality has begun removing statues honoring Soviet World War II soldiers from the Antakalnis Cemetery. The United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) recommends a delay in the removal of the National Museum of Lithuania, but the Interior Ministry and Vilnius authorities intend to remove the statues despite the UNHRC decision. The Russian Embassy in Vilnius called the action a "barbaric mockery" and called on international institutions to object.



US Vice President Kamala Harris met with Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė and reaffirmed the commitment to NATO Article 5 of common defense and confirmed that it would step up its military presence in the Baltic nations and change the status of the US forces in Lithuania to a "persistent rotational presence". She also congratulated the Prime Minister for receiving the Madeleine K. Albright Democracy Award.

Ukraine

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said that NATO countries (including Lithuania) should join Poland and the Czech Republic in sending tanks to Ukraine.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labor reports that more than 71,000 Ukrainians have arrived in Lithuania, with a weekly arrival of 100 refugees. The Ministry said that Lithuania could take 6,000-8,000 more refugees.

Good News - Bad News: Vilnius mayor, Remigijus Šimašius, announced that the local council would allow Ukrainians to continue to ride free on buses and trolleys in 2023. Bad News: The 520 bus and trolley drivers went on strike over pay not keeping pace with inflation and working conditions that do not include a

30-minute lunch break after 5 hours. The trade union will pay the strikers 40 euros per day.

The Bank of Lithuania sold 4,391 of a mintage of 5,000 pieces of 10-euro silver collector coins to raise money for Ukraine. The coins were sold for 96.8 euros, of which 70 euros were transferred to the National Bank of Ukraine's account for humanitarian aid. A total of 307,370 euros was transferred. The coin was designed by Ukrainian artist Svitlana Matvieienko. The front (obverse) of the coin features the Vytis of Lithuania and the Tryzub (Trident) of Ukraine.



The general assembly of the Lithuanian Orthodox Church condemned the Russian war in Ukraine and decided to accelerate the process of gaining more independence from the Moscow Patriarchate but refrained from joining the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Church stressed that it was "a morally and financially independent religious organization."

Belarus, a close Russian ally, told the UN that it would allow Ukrainian grain to transit its territory for export via Lithuania's ports. President of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda said that he considers the offer an attempt to escape sanctions. Ukrainian grain already travels through Poland and other countries to Baltic ports,

Covid – 19

At the end of December, Lithuania's public health authority reported daily 470 new coronavirus infections with 340 primary, 120 secondary, and 11 tertiary and one death with 155 hospitalized and 9 in the ICU. The 14-day primary infection rate increased to 174.2 cases per 100,000 people and the 7-day positive test rate

up to 15.3%. More than 1.2 million people in Lithuania have tested positive at least once.

The overall incidence rate for flu, cold, and Covid-19 was 1,843.5 cases per 100,000 people and increasing every week for flu and cold while decreasing for new Covid-19 cases. In one week, 156 people were hospitalized with the flu, including 122 children under 18. Six people were treated in the ICU, including 5 children aged 2-17. Two deaths from the flu were also recorded.

Business

Fertilizer maker, Lifosa, has resumed production after halting in September due to the lack of ammonia because of the spike in the cost of natural gas, one of the essential raw materials. Another fertilizer maker, Achema, has halted production after resuming production for only a month and a half because of rising gas prices. They anticipate resuming production in February 2023. They employ 1200 people.

Customs officials at the Klaipėda Territorial Customs Office confiscated a shipment from China destined for a consignee in Minsk, Belarus. The shipment contained 288 counterfeit Monopoly board games and 72 counterfeit Avengers toys.

With freight carriers facing a severe shortage of drivers, the Ministry of Social Security and Labor has increased the service sector allotment by 5,600 to 21,600 to allow easier recruitment of non-Lithuanians.

The European Investment Bank will loan 65 million euros-50% of the projected cost of 137 million euros for upgrading the quays and railroads in the Klaipėda seaport.

The Lithuanian Competition Council fined three major real estate agencies and the Association of Real Estate Agencies for colluding by agreeing not to solicit each other's clients and brokers. The Ober-Haus agency was fined 450,000 euros, Inreal was fined 124,700 euros, and Capital Reality was fined 69,900 euros. The Association was fined a nominal 4,500 euros.

PKC Group, part of the Motherson Group since 2017, with 2400 employees in Panevėžys and Klaipėda, will expand its operations by adding 100 employees to its manufacture of wiring harnesses for commercial

current events

trucks and agricultural machines. The new hires will include assembly operators, material handlers, quality technicians, and maintenance technicians. The Mothersen Group has over 300 facilities in 41 countries, and in 2021-2022 had sales of \$10.5 billion and is among the largest 25 automotive suppliers worldwide.

General

A hacker forum is offering for sale 487 million mobile phone numbers from WhatsApp users. Lithuania is one of 84 countries affected, with over 220,000 phone numbers for sale.

The Vilnius City District Court authorized the demolition of Moscow House, a planned cultural and business center, which was under construction between 2008 and 2016, because the construction was taller than described in the building plans and authorized in the building permit.

The Seimas is debating the decriminalization of "small" amounts of cannabis. For first offenses, the Seimas is considering warnings and fines of between 50 and 300 euros. For repeat offenses, fines of 300 to 1,000 euros would be imposed. President Nausėda opposes relaxing the laws because of concern about the spread of narcotic drugs among the youth.

The 2023 budget includes raising the non-taxable monthly income threshold by 16% from 540 euros to 625 euros, and pensions will increase to 542-575 euros depending on the length of service. The budget includes 1.848 billion euros for subsidizing electricity and gas costs for households and businesses and for investments in renewable energy.

Statistics Lithuania estimates that annual inflation is moderating: in September it was 24.1%, October 23.6%, November 22.9%, and December 18.9%. However, what hits people the most is that food prices increased 36.1% since last year and 2.5% in November alone. Prices rose especially for bread, meat, fish, and milk and less so for fruit and vegetables.

Kazimieras Masilionis, a 79-year-old millionaire landlord, has built his own church in the village of Rokoniai in the District of Radviliškis, about 15 miles west of Panevėžys. The million-euro private church is decorated with oak sculptures and antique furniture from Germany and is dedicated to Vytautas

Landsbergis, the first head of state of independent Lithuania, and to former President Vaidas Adamkus. Neither is aware of having a church dedicated to them, Masilionis said. "I feel very good in my soul, I can die peacefully now because I have fulfilled my promise—I said: whoever will expel the Russian army from Lithuania, I will repay them with whatever I can. And I did," says Kazimieras. He added that he does not want to accept donations, but there is a donation box in the church. "There wouldn't have been one, but they said it doesn't count as a church without it. Pilgrims come, they want to donate to the church, but there is no place to put the money," Masilionis laughs!



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

56. AN EASTER ROAST

It was turning to spring. During the day, the sun was already quite hot, but at night the temperature would drop to -25 or -30 C. Our food supplies were dwindling. We were beginning to save potatoes so that we would have not 2-4 pails for seed but at least 6-8. Easter was drawing near, our third in the hungry, unwelcoming Siberian land. I was wondering how I could improve our food, at least for that day. I went to Parbig to see whether my two Liudai had perhaps been successful in buying a kilogram of meat or butter somewhere. They were nearer the market. There, once in a while, the inhabitants of the distant taiga would bring some meat, even though a kilogram would cost one half of a month's earnings. However, on such an occasion as Easter, we could allow ourselves such a luxury. But I was returning empty-handed. No! Not quite. I was bringing back a small bundle of soiled clothing to launder.

As usual, the road was empty. After I had walked a good kilometer, I noticed at the forest's edge a group of circling crows, and below them several dogs. I thought that a rabbit or some other animal had been caught in someone's trap.

I went to look although I was afraid of dogs. The fight for food was always fierce. I came up.

There lay a horse, which had been partially burned. All around, there were remnants of unburned branches, ashes, and embers. Now, this was a find! The dogs and the crows were afraid of the fire, but I? I had nothing with which to tear off some meat. No knife, no ax.

It was already quite dark. I hurried home. Having run to a neighbor, I



borrowed an ax; from another one, a sled. I said nothing to the children. At about four o'clock in the morning, having taken the ax, the knife, and a sack, I hurried out for my roast. I was not sleepy. Everything was going well. The road was familiar; the night was almost white.

On my way back, I met the nosy Melstroy women. Each one asked what I was bringing on my sled.

"I got some frozen turnips from Pavlov," I answered. So that they would not feel the sack, I raced home without stopping. As soon as I got home, I lit the stove right away and began to peel potatoes. I ran to return the little sled and the ax and asked to borrow a pot for stewing. A neighbor, the wife of a captain, had such a thing. She lent it to me gladly. The stove was already full of good Siberian birch firewood embers. I pushed them to the sides, I took out a part of them completely, and, having filled the stewpot with meat, I pushed it into the stove.

The odor of the cooking meat immediately spread not only throughout our little house but also into the yard. The curious Michailovna came running up.

"Natasha, what are you baking here? Where did you get meat?"

"I was going to the market, but as soon as I had gone out onto the road, I met Zaciepin. He was going to sell some meat. His cow choked on a potato and he had to slaughter it." I was lying not very convincingly. However, she was naïve and would believe my story. Zaciepin had been our group leader in Komarovka and was now living 26 km away. Who would check if his cow had choked or not?

Yes!

Easter would be proper. We had meat, we would have bread, which I would bake from flour that I had saved during the week; we even had an egg each.

The only thing we were waiting for was the two Liudai. Perhaps they would not have to work that day. Sometimes one did not work on Sunday when it was a national holiday.

However, whenever it was not a national holiday, such as Christmas or Easter, that day there was usually a work day.

But this was the Catholic Easter, which did not coincide with the equivalent Orthodox holy day. Perhaps they would not find out, those people who were interested in knowing everything. And if they did find out, then our Liudai would have to work.

Since they did not appear, the three of us sat down at the Easter table. The meat was cheap and I had cooked a lot of it. We could all eat our fill. Horsemeat was not repulsive to me. I had already eaten some in Minsk after the Revolution in 1918. A horse is a clean animal; it feeds only on grasses. A horse was not like a dog or a pig. At about ten o'clock, the two Liudai, father and son, came home after all. I immediately pulled out the aromatic,

frizzling meat from the oven. When asked where I had obtained the meat, I again recounted my story of the choking cow. They were eating with great appetite and were joyful in the cozy warmth of the house.

But, my son Liudas, having eaten his fill, said, "I also tried to get some meat, but we were not successful. Friday, they were taking hay from Burka, and the horse, "Tractor," collapsed on the road and died. They did not even have time to slaughter it since they were unwilling to do so without the permission of their superiors. The veterinarian, after he had performed an autopsy, stated that the horse had collapsed from some very contagious disease.

Not only did he forbid us to take the meat, but he even forbade us to skin the horse. He ordered everything to be burned at once.

My Lord! I froze.

We were eating the meat of that horse.

My God! Was it possible that with my stupid lie and my greediness I had been the ruin of my family? What to do?

If I tell the truth, everyone will panic, and the situation will not be rectified. No one will be saved. Everyone was happy, and I looked haggard. I could not force out a song or a hymn. I was giving them a fragrant black current tea to drink. It did not even need any sugar since it was sweet from the berries. Petrified, I waited to see what the reaction would be and who would become ill first.

And nothing!

I felt nothing myself, nor did any of my four men. Thank God, everything ended well. There were no aftereffects even later. Perhaps the veterinarian had been mistaken, or I had steamed out all the terrible microbes while cooking the meat.

57. THE WAR IS OVER

May 8, 1945. It was Stasiukas' Name Day. He was sent to Parbig to bring back flour. He came back unusually happy. Having barely stepped over the threshold of the house, he joyfully announced that the loudspeakers were broadcasting the end of the war and the occupation of Berlin. The Germans were crushed. The Allied Forces had joined the Red Army. The Soviets had reached the Oder. All prisoners of war and detainees who were being tortured in German camps had been released. There was an unending stream of all kinds of information. But what could we find out when, in our entire habitat, not even the director was receiving a newspaper, and no one had a radio? One could not just stand in Parbig on the street near the loudspeaker. But the next day, I dropped everything and ran to Parbig to do just that.

Everything was bubbling and boiling.

The deportees were hopeful of returning home soon.

The women were waiting for their husbands, brothers, and sons. Those who had heard the news that husbands had been killed were bursting with tears.

The loudspeakers announced that that very day the Germans had signed an unconditional surrender and that the entire German General Staff had been arrested but only Hitler himself could not be found. It was said that he had killed himself, but not even his body could be found.

Was it true or not? Perhaps he had escaped? There was talk, guessing, as much as you like, but how much truth there was, was hard to say. Only one thing was clear: The War Was Over.

58. NEW WINDS

In the month of February, the War Committee called my husband.

“You are an officer?”

“Yes, I was.”

“In what army?”

“From the beginning of 1915 until the October Revolution in the Tsar’s Army; from 1919 until 1923 in the Army of the Lithuanian Republic.”

“We want to send you to the army as an instructor.”

(What a sensation! A deportee – an army instructor!)

“I hardly think I would fit. I am a war invalid, and I cannot orient myself very well in the present situation. It’s not the same spirit. Nothing will work out.”

New winds were wafting through the air. It was necessary to meet westerners. The “Red Army” was re-christened the “Soviet Army.”

Epaulets were brought back.

Instead of cubes on collars and stripes on sleeves, longitudinal strips and stars appeared on epaulets. The form and size of the epaulets were exactly as in the Tsar’s Army, and the ranks also. History repeats itself: these were the same epaulets, which, after the Revolution, the savage soldiers had ripped off the shoulders of officers with such passion, replacing the stars of rank with nails run through the shoulders of live men. This was quickly forgotten. Perhaps not everyone had forgotten. An officer from those times, someone with my husband’s knowledge of the old traditions was needed so that upon meeting westerners, the Soviet officers would know how to behave.

59. ELECTRIFICATION AND ELECTRICIANS

Yes.

The war, which had wearied everyone, was over. In Germany not only the cities seized, but also a huge quantity of all sorts of trophies and documents of personal and national importance seemed to have been seized as well. Those who had survived sent their families packages

from Germany with things of beauty such as had never before been seen in the Soviet Union. And the country was grabbing and transporting tractors, cars, electrical installations—in a word, whatever it found useful or pleasing.

Some things were brought even to such a remote corner as Parbig. Suddenly there was a need for electricians, motor experts, and mechanics. Technicians were in demand, so now, the superiors began to glance over at the Lithuanians.

In Parbig, there appeared a Latvian who had been an electrician in Germany and had twenty-five years’ experience.

He was appointed electrician for electric motors in the Manufacturing Enterprise. The whole town had to be provided with electricity. One person was not enough. They called my son Liudas. He was also offered to work as an electrician, as the helper of Kalnins, as the Latvian was called. This was a steady income, and besides that, he could use his knowledge and not just his physical strength.

“Ludis,”—that’s what Kalnins used to call Liudas—“can you calculate what diameter of cable we need for the Food Enterprise?” asked the superior. Kalnins was the superior, Liudas the apprentice.

“I’ll calculate it right away.”

Liudas had already finished “Aušra” High School in Kaunas in 1941. Physics, especially the course on electricity, had been his favorite subject: he knew it quite firmly. Knowing the strength of the current and the length of the line, this was not difficult for him to do. So, he was able to take a small piece of paper and a pencil and, using an unforgotten formula, he immediately calculated what the diameter of the cable had to be in a few minutes. Kalnins grabbed his note and ran to the director of the enterprise: “Vot eto tak uchebnik”—he should have said *uchenik**—(I didn’t sleep three nights worrying about this, and he answered my question in five minutes), recounted Kalnins with enthusiasm.

“Uchebnik” sounded funny to the director. As a consequence, he said, laughingly, “So, continue to study from the same manual.” (Uchebnik means “manual” in Russian). For Kalnins, who knew Russian poorly, “*uchenik*” (“manual”) and “*uchenik*” (“student”) sounded the same. For that reason, he did not catch on that he had just elevated his apprentice. Later he began to be jealous of Liudas.

Another time, the director, walking through the town, met Kalnins and Liudas.

The latter, having noticed how the lines were hanging loosely between the poles after the winter, said, “If I were an engineer, I would suggest that the lines be stretched taut. This is the work of winter. In the summer, when the weather is warm, the lines become longer, the wind

in swinging them can weave them together and sort them out.”

Kalnins became offended that an apprentice had criticized his work and mockingly began to call Liudas “Mr. Engineer.” “I climbed poles for twenty-five years,” he said, “and I know how much tension to put in the lines and when.”

After some time, a storm arose and the wind entwined the lines. There was a short. As a consequence, the lighting was disturbed. The director called for Kalnins. “Liudas told you that you had to fix the lines, so who will take responsibility now for the damage that has been caused? It seems that he understands better than you.” Obviously, Kalnins was offended because he saw a competitor in his apprentice.

At night, it was necessary for someone to be on duty at the electric station.

Most often, Liudas had to carry out that duty. The superior Kalnins would always find some reason or another to take off from the watch.

One day when we were in Parbig, Liudas said to me, “It seems—actually it doesn’t seem—but I know there is something wrong with our dynamo: it’s rattling, sputtering. I’m afraid there might be an accident. I offered to take the generator apart and check it out to find the reason. Kalnins yelled at me, saying that I’m sticking my nose where it doesn’t belong, that each machine, after a repair, loses 25% of its worth, and so on. He said to me, ‘You are inexperienced. Do you know how much work and knowledge is necessary to take a motor apart and put it back together again?’ But I’m afraid that one fine day a little blue light might flash and a puff of smoke will be the end not only of our station, but also of our lumber mill and other things.”

“So, talk to the director,” I said.

“I can’t. He’ll think I want to harm Kalnins and take over his position.”

After a few days, Kalnins, in chopping something, cut his foot and ended up in the hospital. Since he was temporarily in charge, Liudas went to the director and explained his fears.

“But are you capable of fixing this?”

“I believe I am, but I need someone to help me. I would like a mechanic to be present and the manager.”

Everyone gathered together, including also the director himself and his assistant.

“Do you hear how un-rhythmically the machine is droning? Something is grinding abnormally. It is absolutely necessary to check it and repair it,” said Liudas. The director agreed.

They rebuilt the generator and fixed it up. But Liudas demanded that it not be placed on the ground but cemented in place.

Everything was done. After four days, the station was running again. Liudas was jubilant. “Mamyte, come to my station and hear how my dynamo is cooing now.”

In truth, the generator was working smoothly, cooing rhythmically.

“Well, what does Kalnins say?”

“I went to see him, to boast, and he answered me angrily, ‘Well, Mr. Engineer, do you want to be the superior?’ How ignorant he is. Does he really think that I will get a few rubles more and be able to push into his place?”

Liudas, as an apprentice, was receiving 100 rubles a month, but after this rebuilding, they paid out the old salary for only one previous month of work, and for the next ten months, they added another 100 rubles and appointed him superior, and Kalnins electrician.

Another enterprise was established, MTS (Machine-Tractor Station). They brought in trophy tractors, combines, dynamos, and electric motors. Immediately, all the young Lithuanian men began to bestir themselves to learn to be tractor drivers and cab connectors. There were no obstacles here: they were all allowed to leave for half-year courses.

An engineer and some electricians who arrived from Tomsk set up another dynamo in the MTS. This was the second one in the region. They set it up, explained how to use it, and left. Later the dynamo began to malfunction, even though at the beginning it worked fine.

The president of the Executive Committee asked to see Liudas and ordered him to take over the second station and leave the first one to Kalnins, who had recovered.

Liudas looked over the second workplace and ran home frightened.

Mother was the best advisor. “Mamyte, I can’t take over the MTS. At the Enterprise, I know everything, like the back of my hand. Here there are a lot of machine tools that run on electricity and a lot of installations, and the machines are not all working perfectly. The grounding is bad; the control panel is not hooked up as it should be. I’m afraid that some motor may burn out, and I can easily wind up in jail.” He named a few inaccuracies although I didn’t understand much because I am a poor electrician and an even worse mechanic.

I advised him to go to the president of the Executive Committee, lay it all out before him, and on that basis, decline to be the superior.

Liudas did as I said. He explained everything in detail to the president and to the MTS director. They listened to him, listened and said, “Work.”

You know better than the one who directed the installations. If you see something is wrong, fix it.”

And that is how Liudas became an electrician. After a few months, he was sent to Tomsk for courses to perfect himself, to raise his qualifications. He returned from his

higher learning with good grades in his little book and some course credits. The director of the MTS boasted proudly, “We have an engineer with higher education.”

60. A COLD BATHING-PLACE

Before his engineering work, Liudas, with his father, worked in the felt factory, in a hot environment. When the felt-making season was over, around May, the workers were assigned to other jobs.

The father, as a second-category invalid, was assigned to guard the potato field, while the son, floated logs. Here the logs are not floated in bunches but in winter are piled straight onto the ice. When the ice melts, the logs float freely, pushing over one another in the river.

Sometimes a log catches on a root or stump and turns crosswise. Others catch on this, jam together vertically, horizontally, and diagonally.

Immediately a whole hill is formed—an enclosure—*zhator*. So that this would not happen, workers are assigned to regulate the logs. They walk along the shore where possible with hooks several meters long. When they encounter an obstacle, a swamp, a small brook, or the like, they jump up on the logs and, balancing like acrobats, direct the logs around the obstacles. Such a sport is very dangerous, and for this reason young, agile workers are assigned to the task. The logs bob easily in the water. If you step on one carelessly, the log will turn and you can easily slip down between logs and wind up at the bottom of the river. And that is the end! The logs will jam up and press together above the man. You can't push them apart or pull yourself away. And the logger must constantly run over the logs the way a pianist's fingers move over a grand piano. The workers always hold their tool, the above-mentioned hook, in their hands.

If someone slips down in between the logs, he lays his hook immediately across the logs and flounders to rise.

It is rare however to succeed in freeing oneself from the imprisonment of the logs without the help of others.

That is why one worker is not far from another.

One evening, towards dusk, in one of the many bends of the river, the logs began jamming together. Liudas, having noticed this, began to run across the river over the bobbing logs to the logjam. One log turned, and Liudas slipped down between the logs into the icy water.

Luckily, he was quick enough to turn his hook across the logs; otherwise, he would have plummeted to the bottom.

He began to yell. His companion came running up and helped him clamber out of the water. But where could he go, being soaked? There was no settlement nearby.

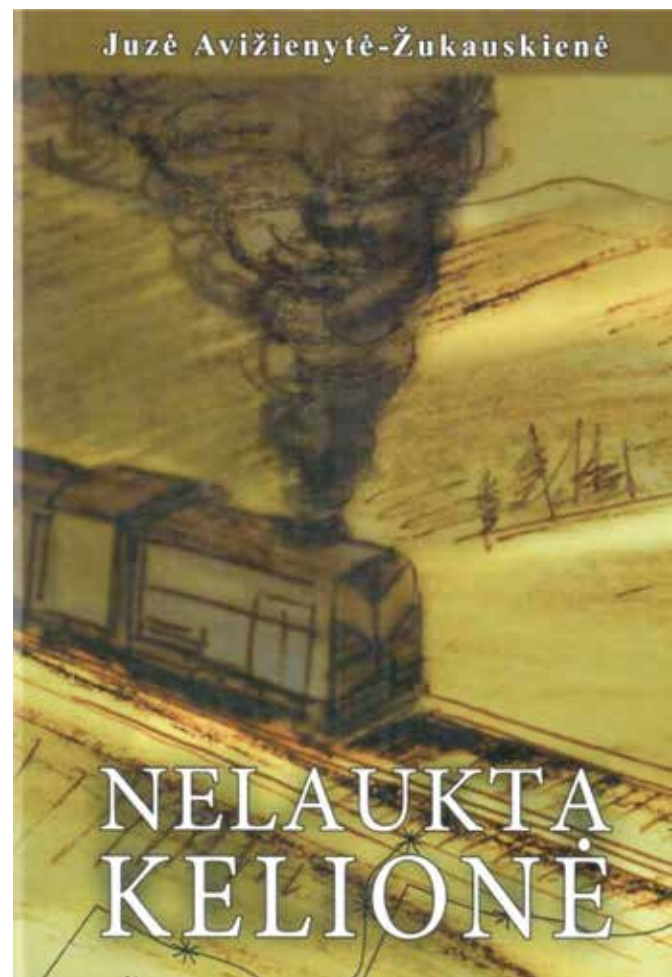
The boys immediately built a fire. Liudas pulled off his clothes and his shoes full of water. His friend, even though he was cold himself, shared his clothing. During

the thaw, it is not rare for the temperature to drop to -20 C at night. The boys, with chattering teeth, kept the fire going all night, drying the clothes.

After such a bath, Liudas became sick. But with great difficulty and a high temperature, Liudas made it to Parbig and again to the hospital. Pneumonia.

The good doctor Šakenienė took him under her care as she had in the past. A young doctor, Liudmila Vasiolova, recently arrived in Parbig, was especially concerned about him and extended much spiritual warmth. Here, everyone simply called her Liuda. Not only her name and surname were poetic, but also her character and her attractive appearance: dependable, slim like a young linden tree, blue-eyed with a beautiful face.

Although Liudas was recovering with the efforts of these two doctors, a commission of three doctors was formed to consider his case. The decision of the commission: “Cannot work in a hot, dusty environment, cannot do heavy physical labor.” That is how Liudukas became an apprentice to Kalnins around the middle of summer.



The book is available in Lithuanian at the Balzekas Museum Gift Shop.

Professor Giedrius Subačius Will Talk about Simonas Daukantas

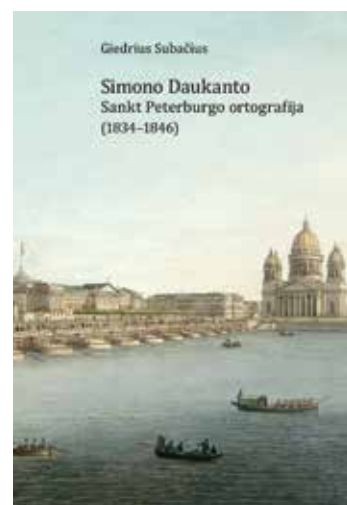
On April 15, 2023, at 2 p.m. the University of Illinois professor and linguist Giedrius Subačius will present his recently published monograph entitled "Simonas Daukantas's Orthography of the Saint Petersburg Period (1834-1846)". It will be an opportunity to learn more about Daukantas's life and work. I believe that Daukantas's personality, his work and his importance to our history are still not widely known.

What do we know about Daukantas? What don't we know about him? What will we never know about him? Professor Subačius is a true expert on Daukantas. He has written his dissertation about him, and recently, he has returned to the subject and published two monographs on Daukantas's orthography. He will talk about what Daukantas did in St Petersburg. For example, did you know that there he met Valančius and worked with him side by side, and even created his own "Samogitian Academy"? Was it easy and cheap to publish books at that time? Do you know that Daukantas published 13 Lithuanian books in Saint Petersburg and not all printers understood Daukantas's Lithuanian texts? What new methods are used today to find out when manuscripts were written? What can orthography tell us in general? Do you know that Daukantas's stable writing is linked to his spiritual upliftment and that the irregularity of his spelling is often the result of despondency, lack of harmony, and illness?

You will learn about all of this and more at a meeting with Prof. Giedrius Subačius on Saturday, April 15 at 2 p.m. at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago, 6500 S. Pulaski Rd.

And the next day, Sunday, April 16, at 11 a.m., Prof. Giedrius Subačius will give a tour of the Chicago stockyards area, where many Lithuanian immigrants worked (in the footsteps of Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*). The tour will begin at 4150 South Halsted St. Chicago (at the intersection of S. Halsted St. and Exchange Ave.).

For more information, call 773-582-6500 or e-mail: info@balzekasmuseum.org.



bridges

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

Please check all that apply:

- New Renewal
 Gift Donation

Mail to:
 LAC, Inc./BRIDGES Subscriptions
 6812 Meadowcrest Drive
 Downers Grove, IL 60516

Order online with PayPal at javlb.org

Make check payable to: Lithuanian American Community. Please mark "Bridges" on the Memo line.

Please send:

- 1 year electronic (10 issues via email) \$30
 1 year print (10 issues by mail) \$50
 2 years print (20 issues by mail) \$95

Your Name (please print)

Gift Subscription Name (please print)

Your Email

Gift Subscription Email

Your Address

Apt. No.

Gift Subscription Address

Apt. No.

City

State

Zip

City

State

Zip

March 2023



PRESENTS

JUOZAS STATKEVICIUS

COUTURE



FASHION SHOW

CHICAGO 2023

APRIL 15

Doors open at 8:00 pm

COMPASS ARENA

625 Joliet Rd
Willowbrook, IL 60527

For tickets reservation:

708-668-6214

bridges

VOLUME 47

ISSUE 2

LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN NEWS JOURNAL

