

DRAUGAS

THE FRIEND

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As the President Sees It

One of the main concerns of Lithuanian Americans, and perhaps all Baltic Americans abroad is the issue of the Baltic States acceptance into NATO. They see it as the only certain protection against possible aggressive moves from the neighbor in the East — Russia. On numerous occasions Russian President Boris Yeltsin and leaders of other parties, in particular, the newly reborn Communist Party expressed strong opposition to all three Baltic States joining NATO.

On July 6 of this year an alarming article was published in the Moscow based daily newspaper Izvestia. It consisted of a summary from a confidential letter sent to US President Bill Clinton on the subject of NATO and the Baltic States. The Baltic Freedom League, Inc., based in Los Angeles, CA, reacted to that article by sending a letter of inquiry to the White House. They got a prompt reply from the President of United States. We submit to our readers texts of both letters.

Mr. President:

A matter of extreme importance to the Baltic American Community needs clarification. Your prompt attention to our request will be sincerely appreciated.

On July 6, 1996, the Russian newspaper „Izvestia” summarized a confidential letter that the President of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, allegedly sent to you to “influence” your position on the issue of the Baltic States accession to NATO. According to “Izvestia”, the letter was “harsh” in tone and reiterated Russia’s opposition to the Baltic States membership in NATO.

The article further speculates that President Yeltsin’s letter did indeed influence you in favor of Russia’s demand to exclude the Baltic States from NATO.

While we categorically refuse to believe such allegations, the Baltic American community must know the truth. Recently there has been much discussion in the press about a possible deal in the works at the expense of the Baltic States between the NATO countries and Russia, in order to secure admission of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO. The Baltic States were violated by the Hitler-Stalin Pact, and betrayed again by the Yalta Agreement. We have a right to be concerned.

Therefore, we respectfully request that if in fact a letter was sent by President Yeltsin to you, that the text of the letter be made public as well as your response. Otherwise the incident will become reminiscent of the confidential messages exchanged between Moscow and Berlin prior to signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

We further suggest that because of the allegations by “Izvestia”, that your response include the following:

1. A statement enjoining the United States from being a party to any reproachment between NATO and Russia at the expense of Baltic interests, security and membership in NATO.
2. A strong unequivocal de-

claration clearly committing the United States to a policy of early admission of the Baltic States into NATO. Admission criteria should be based on meeting definite standards such as a viable democratic government, a free market economy, civilian control of the military and other criteria already established by NATO.

3. United States strategy to bring about early realization of Baltic membership in NATO.

4. A statement regarding the type and amount of assistance to be provided by the United States to the Baltic States in the interim period to help them meet the conditions which will make early admission possible.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are good neighbors to Russia, and hope to remain so. However, President Yeltsin’s alleged letter does not indicate such intentions on the part of Russia. The Baltic American community awaits the clarification of your position on the issue of the Baltic States accession to NATO.

Valdis V. Pavlovskis
President
July 11, 1996

Dear Mr. Pavlovskis:

I appreciated your letter concerning the security of the Baltic States and welcome the chance to discuss some of the points you raised.

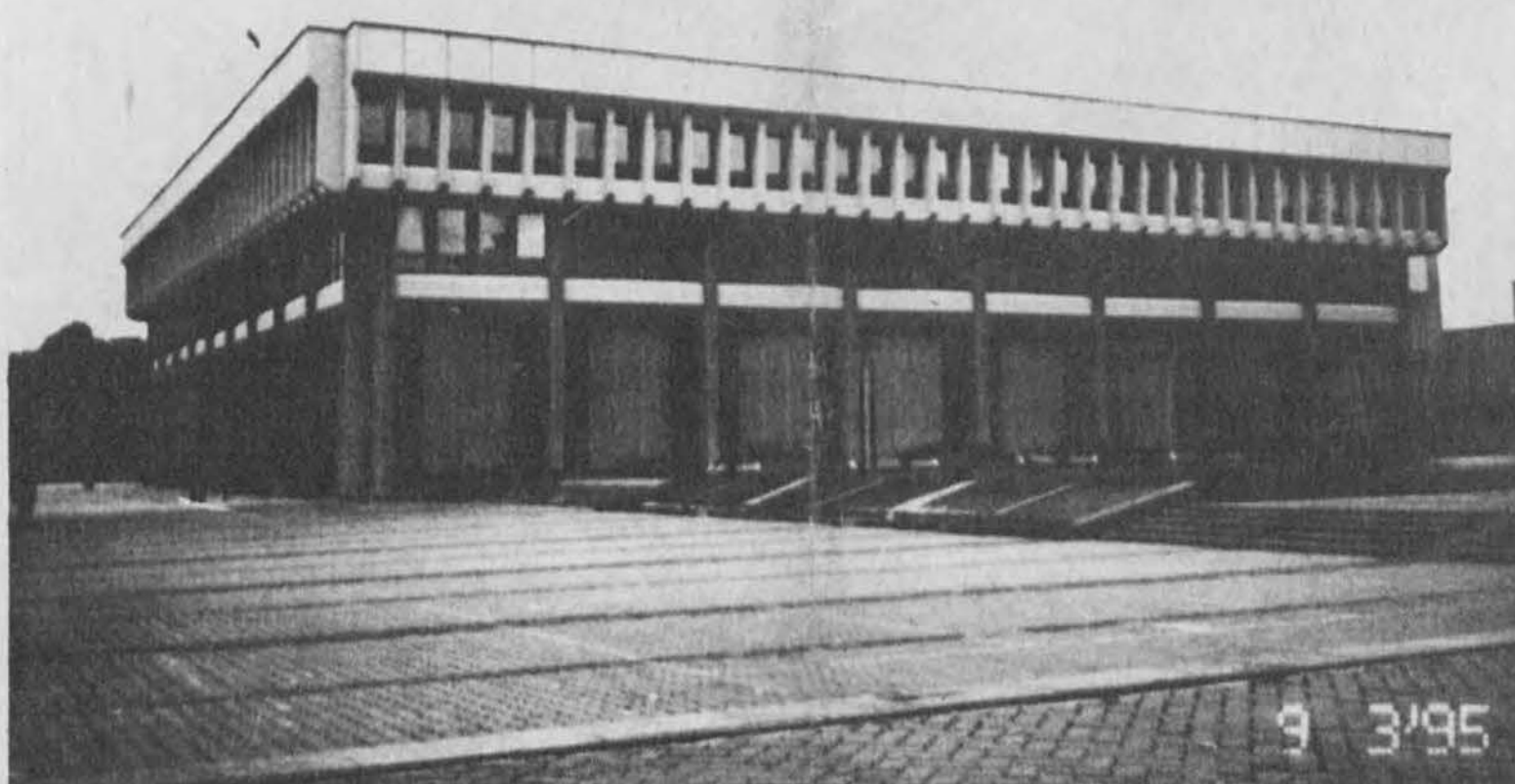
I want to assure you, unequivocally, that the policy of the United States toward the Baltic states remains constant; there has been and is no “deal” with Russia about the Baltic states. I met with the Presidents of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on June 25, and confirmed to them that the United States has an interest in the sovereignty, independence and security of the Baltic states. I also stressed that the process of NATO’s enlargement will be open to all of Europe’s new democracies, threatening no country and excluding no country.

The Russian government is aware of America’s support, and my strong personal support, for the aspirations of the Baltic states and the Baltic peoples for security, freed market-based prosperity and integration with the democratic community of the West. I conveyed this view to the Baltic peoples during my trip to the region in July 1994 and the First Lady did as well during her trip to Estonia in June.

We will continue to make our views known and take actions to support the integration of these courageous democracies with the Transatlantic community.

Sincerely,
Bill Clinton
August 6, 1996

• On September 12, Lithuanian Prime Minister Mindaugas Stankevičius left for Slovakia for a CEFTA prime ministers’ meeting. This past June, Lithuania signed a free trade agreement with Poland. Negotiations on an agreement have been completed with Slovenia and will begin shortly with Hungary. (JBANC)



The House of Parliament in Vilnius, Lithuania

Another Chornobyl in Eastern Europe?

„Are we risking another Chornobyl-type incident in Eastern Europe?” is the question being asked in Washington these days. The possible closing of the Department of Energy’s International Nuclear Safety Program by Congress is causing this alarm among nuclear experts. The program, initiated in 1992, received zero support for fiscal year 1997 by the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee.

The International Nuclear Safety Program originated from U.S. commitments made at the 1992 G-7 conference to provide assistance to Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, and Slovakia in reducing risks associated with the older Soviet-designed (RBMKs and VVER440/230s) nuclear reactor. (It was a RBMK reactor which exploded at Chornobyl in 1986.) Since international borders do not deter the effects of a nuclear accident, other nations in the region, such as Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, and Belarus, which do not have nuclear reactors have maintained an interest in the program.

In 1992, the U.S. Agency for International Development authorized \$25 million to fund the commitments made at the G-7 conference. The Department of Energy was assigned responsibility to support the eight host countries in bringing the operation of nuclear power plants up to international safety standards as quickly as possible.

Since its inception, the program has been expanded to include a broader range of safety-related activities and to all four Soviet reactor designs. The United States has already allocated \$180 million to the program and 18 nuclear power plants with 60 operating reactor units in eight countries participate in the program. (Lithuania has 1 plant in Ignalina with 2 operating reactors. Nearby is the Leningrad plant with 4 reactors.) The program is designed to support efforts to reduce risks associated with reactor operations and to transfer technologies to the countries enabling them to develop and sustain a safety infrastructure. For fiscal year 1997, the Administration requested \$66.2 million for this program. (Of the

\$66.2 million, about \$35 million is planned for programs in Ukraine.) On July 16, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved the full request for funding. That same day, the House Appropriations Committee provided no funding for the program. It is anticipated that neither the Senate nor the House will change the actions of its respective Appropriations Committees so the issue will be resolved by the House-Senate Conference Committee after both Houses of Congress have acted on the legislation.

Since grassroots support for the program could be critical, individuals (especially constituents) and organizations are encouraged to contact the House Conferees urging that they accept the Senate provision of funding the International Nuclear Safety Program at \$66.2 million. The anticipated House Conferees are Representatives John Myers (R-IN), Harold Rogers (R-KY), Joe Knollenberg (R-MI), Frank Riggs (R-CA), Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ), Jim Bunn (R-OR), Mike Parker (R-MS), Tom Bevill (D-AL), Vic Fazio (D-CA), Jim Chapman (D-TX), and Peter Visclosky (D-IN).

Efforts to encourage the Senate Conferees to remain firm in their anticipated Senate Conferees are Senator Pete Domenici (R-MN), Mark Hatfield (R-OR), Thad Cochran (R-MS), Slade Gorton (R-WA), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Robert Bennett (R-UT), Conrad Burns (R-MT), Bennett Johnston (D-LA), Robert Byrd (D-WV), Ernest Hollings (D-SC), Harry Reid (D-NV), Robert Kerry (D-NE), and Patty Murray (D-WA).

By Eugene Iwanciw

BORDER PATROL ASSAULT

Marijampolė, Sept 16 (ELTA) — A border patrol guard and the Lithuanian Marijampolė District Reketija border was assaulted Sunday by a masked armed person who tried to take from the patrol a Kalashnikov type sub-machine gun. The guard resisted and the assailant fled empty handed.

Border police officials state that it was the first such incident at the Lithuanian-Polish border since the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1991.

Photo by Frances Šlutas

Minister of Education Takes Part in Prague Conference

Prague, Sept 12 (ELTA) — Lithuanian Education and Science Minister Vladislavas Domarkas took part at the second Central and East European conference “Creating Information Society”, held in Prague on Thursday, Sept. 12.

The forum in Prague invited about 300 ministers, scientists and researchers from twelve countries in the region. The conference continued discussions of the most up-to-date information and communication equipment technologies and production issues.

Creating Information society is chaired by EU Commissar Martin Bangemann responsible for industrial, information and telecommunication sector. The forum was also honoured by Czech President Vaclav Havel.

Beside the minister of education the forum invited Lithuanian Ambassador to Prague Jurgis Bredikis and the specialists from Lithuanian information institute and Kaunas Technological University as well.

Lithuanian Sea Border Will Have Modern Radar

Klaipėda, Sept 12 (ELTA) — Commander of Lithuanian navy Raimundas Baltuška and the head of Swedish defence ministry Admiral Tornbjorn Hultman Tuesday signed a document transferring radiolocation equipment to Klaipėda.

The official ceremony was attended by Lithuanian Defense Minister Linas Linkevičius and Swedish Ambassador to Lithuania Stellan Ottosson.

More than two-million litas worth of radar equipment, installed in Lithuania with Sweden and Denmark assistance was already put into operation in the Baltic Sea surveillance posts of Nida, Palanga, and Klaipėda seaport.

Head of Lithuanian navy headquarters Vytautas Urbas told ELTA that the tasks provided in “Sea Surveillance System” project had to be finished in November. The project encompasses mounting and connecting of radio relay communication equipment and the whole complex monitoring centre.

The total price of this project equals to 8,000,000 litas.

Government Securities are out of Demand

Vilnius, September 11, (ELTA) — Total turnover at the National Stock Exchange 391st trade session held on Tuesday, September 11, was comparatively low, trade reaching 308,059 litas only in shares as government securities were out of demand.

There was not a single offer presented to buy or sell government securities during Tuesday’s session. It was the first case in the history of the Lithuanian Stock Exchange, when trade in government securities failed. Investors are scared away from T-bills as interest rates of government securities on the primary market are very low (just above 9 percent), and nobody desires to deal with them, experts noted.

During the session, share supply on the central market was 1.51 million shares, and their demand totalled to 468,000 shares. During the session there were shares of 82 companies traded.

Financial brokers presented 890 orders, out of which 77 were completed. During the session, there were 66 deals made on shares of seven enterprises. 89.2 percent of the deals were made on the central market, the rest being direct.

The largest increase at Tuesday’s session was in the value of commercial bank Vilniaus Bankas shares (20 percent). Vilniaus Vingis Co and Biržai dairy shares were also traded in 20 percent higher prices.

Litekas & Claw Co share prices reduced by 16.67 percent, Rokiškio Sūris Co share prices decreased by 3.28 percent.

The largest deal on the 391st trade session was made in Vilniaus bank shares, total sum of the deal reaching 224,400 litas.

In all, demand for shares of 23 emissions was higher than supply. Total number of registered securities on the central market was 405, with 178 of them fixed rate.

Latvia Seems to Recognize Curonian Spit

Vilnius, Sept. 11, (ELTA) — Lithuanian Prime Minister Mindaugas Stankevičius and Foreign Minister Povilas Gylys expect that Latvia is to recognize the Curonian Spit (Kursių Nerija) to be a part of Lithuania’s Baltic Sea coast.

Such a comment was made by them at the meeting of Stankevičius with Latvian Prime Minister Andris Skele, where they discussed the situation related to frozen negotiations on the marine border of both Baltic neighbors.

Positions of both states differed greatly before the meeting in the Latvian village of Nica. Latvia proposed to draw the border line taking Ventes Horn in the Curonian Lagoon (Kursių Marios) as a reference point situated on the Lithuanian shore and to ignore the long sand spit lying westward from Ventes Horn.

In this case, a potential oil field E-24 would fall to Latvia. Lithuania does not agree with the proposal on Ventes Horn, since this horn is situated in the inner waters of Lithuania.

Stankevičius told journalists after the meeting of the Lithuanian Defence Council that he agreed with Skele on how to treat Lithuania’s shoreline, but he did not tell any details.

“When the decision of negotiating delegations is made, you will be informed,” he said.

The Foreign Minister also was laconic.

“There was some hope, that Latvians did recognize Curonian Spit as the part of Lithuania’s shore. Negotiations are confidential, wait for concrete results,” he said. The next round of the talks is not determined yet, he added.

Gylys also refused to comment on Lithuania’s possible response, if Latvian Saeima (parliament) were to postpone ratification of contracts with AMOCO and OPAB on oil prospecting in the disputed area of the Baltic Sea.



A cozy street in Vilnius.

Lithuanians in Sports

MORE THAN A GAME: ITS A NATIONAL PASTIME

Basketball is the No. 1 sports in Lithuania, and has been for more than 50 years. The sport was introduced to the region by U. S. Olympic basketball team captain Frank Lubin, who coached in Lithuania — his father's birthplace — for three years after the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The sport caught on quickly; Lithuania won two European Championships in 1937 and 1939 shortly before being forcibly annexed by the Soviet Union.

While Lithuania's national identity was enveloped by the Soviet Union for more than 40 years following World War II, its passion for basketball endured. From the advent of the U.S.S.R. until its disintegration the core of the Soviet national basketball team were Lithuanians. The Soviet team that shocked the United States in the semifinals and won the gold medal at the 1988 Olympic Games counted four Lithuanians among its starting five. In the aftermath of that victory, the four men — current Sacramento Kings guard Šarūnas Marčiulionis, Rimas Kurtinaitis, Valdemaras Khomicius and current Blazers center Arvydas Sabonis — sneaked away to have a "Lithuanian team picture" taken. The four men hoped that someday, somehow, they would form the real thing.

Four years later, the players' Olympic dreams became a reality. Not only did a Lithuanian team compete in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Sabonis and his teammates offered their country hope for the future — and a sweet taste of redemption. Following Lithuania's 82-78 victory over the unified Russian team to capture the bronze medal, decades of pent-up emotion filled the locker room. "Everybody at once, without orchestration, joined together in the national anthem," says Phoenix Suns assistant coach Donn Nelson, who helped the Lithuanian team prepare for its Olympic debut. "Guys were crying like babies, I have never seen that much emotion in the locker room after a game."

Sabonis, a man of few words on most occasions, practically gushes when asked to recall that moment. "Playing for your country is something different. It is something unexplainable," he says. "It is a feeling you cannot experience if you are playing for money."

In August Sabonis returned to the Olympic Games for the third time. He once again sported the green, red and yellow uniform of the Lithuanian national squad. Like he did in 1992, when the Lithuania Basketball Federation voted Sabas the best player in the country's history, Sabonis will be carrying the team's fortunes on his formidable shoulders.

He also will appear in Atlanta with a new flock of fans, most notably from a city tucked away in the Pacific Northwest. He's always been extremely popular in his native land. ("There are hundreds of guys like me," says Marčiulionis. "You know, 6-5, 220 pounds. But there is only one Sabas.") Thanks to his impressive play during his rookie NBA season, however, Portlanders — and many other Americans who fell in love with Sabonis via ESPN's Sports Center

— have adopted him as one of their own. While most Americans will cheer for the US Olympic basketball team — better known as Dream Team III — you can be certain that a large smattering of Trail Blazers and Sabonis fans will be pulling just as hard for a team based halfway around the world.

In 1981, when he was 17, Sabonis first traveled to the United States as a member of a touring Soviet Union squad. On that tour, Sabonis scored 25 points, grabbed eight rebounds and blocked three shots during a victory over Indiana University. From 1981 throughout 1989 Sabonis led Žalgiris Kaunas, a Lithuanian team, to three Soviet championships and four runner-up finishes. He also helped the U.S.S.R. national team win a gold medal at the 1982 World Championships, a gold medal at the 1984 pre-Olympic tournament and gold medals at the 1985 European Championships and World University Games.

Though few Americans followed his progress at that time, several NBA scouts and general managers did. In 1985, the Atlanta Hawks tabbed Sabonis as their fourth round draft pick (77th overall), but the NBA voided the choice since Sabonis had not reached his 21st birthday — a rule, obviously, since changed. Six months later, Sabonis turned 21, and six months after that, the Blazers used one of their two first-round draft picks (24th overall) to select Sabonis. (Blazers general manager Bucky Buckwalter also used a third-round pick that year on another foreign player, Croatian Drazen Petrovic.)

Politics, and bad fortune, conspired to keep Sabonis beyond the Blazers grasp. Sabonis ruptured his right Achilles tendon in a game in 1987, and three months later, tripped on some stairs and ruptured it again. Sabonis had a hard time adjusting to the injury. When doctors told him the quickness and speed with which he had made opposing centers look as immobile as the Statue of Liberty would never return, Sabonis became depressed. Observers feared he had lost his desire for the game.

But after surgery was performed in Lithuania, he dove into his rehabilitation, which included therapy in Portland with the Blazers. Though the visit was controversial — US coach John Thompson accused the Blazers of a "lack of patriotism" for assisting Sabonis with his rehab — the hard work proved fruitful. Sabonis was a 7-3 wrecking crew at the Seoul Olympics in 1988. He arguably outplayed David Robinson in a semifinal matchup vs. Team USA, though the proud Spurs center grimaces today at the suggestion. Sabonis and his three Lithuanian teammates went home to the U.S.S.R. with gold medals. Home, however, would soon undergo some dramatic changes.

The following year was an emotional one for Sabas. In 1989, his friend and teammate, Šarūnas "Rooney" Marčiulionis, defied both the Soviet sports ministry, Goskomsport, and the Soviet government. At the time, the Soviet Union allowed its



Romas Gedeika (left) and Petras Vainius in Atlanta, GA, ready to greet Lithuanians, running the Marathon.

athletes to play professionally in other countries, but only after they were 30 years old. The athletes were not allowed to make more than the Soviet consul (about \$600 a month) in the country in question. Therefore, they all signed lucrative contracts, with the difference going back to Goskomsport.

Working with chess champion Gary Kasparov, who'd become an expert on Soviet law, Marčiulionis resigned from the Soviet national team and his club team in Vilnius, Lithuania, thus becoming an "international free agent." In June 1989, he signed a \$1.3 million a-year deal with the Golden State Warriors, becoming the first Soviet citizen to sign with the NBA. He also was the first Soviet professional athlete who did not have to kick back any of his salary.

Later, when Mikhail Gorbachev's "Glasnost" loosened the reins, Sabonis was faced with a decision. Should he follow his friend to the NBA, or play professionally in Europe? To the Blazers regret, he opted for the latter, signing with a second-division club team in Spain — a destination chosen by Soviet coach Alexander Gomelsky. He and other felt that

the less physical European basketball would help Sabonis' injuries heal faster.

"Gomelsky was the boss in Soviet basketball", Sabonis explains. "He suggested where to go. I listened very carefully. That was it."

"At the time, I had no choice but to wait to see what was going to happen with the pain. In the NBA, they play so many games and they practice very little. I felt that would have been too much at the time for me."

What if Sabonis had donned a Blazers uniform that year?

"If Sabonis had gone directly into the NBA, today he would have been the best player in the league, by far," says Lakers center Vlade Divac, who himself skipped playing in Europe and went to the NBA after playing just three years for the Yugoslavian club Partizan Belgrade. "He had talent that I have never seen in a man of his size. The speed, the quickness, the shot, the feel for the game... he had the whole package. Now, he plays on his experience."

While playing in Spain, Sabonis' confidence soared while his injuries stabilized. At home, however, change was

afloat. The splintering of the U.S.S.R. resulted in Lithuania's independence in 1990, punctuated when former president Vytautas Landsbergis faced down Soviet tanks on the streets of Vilnius. A dark, post-independence period ensued.

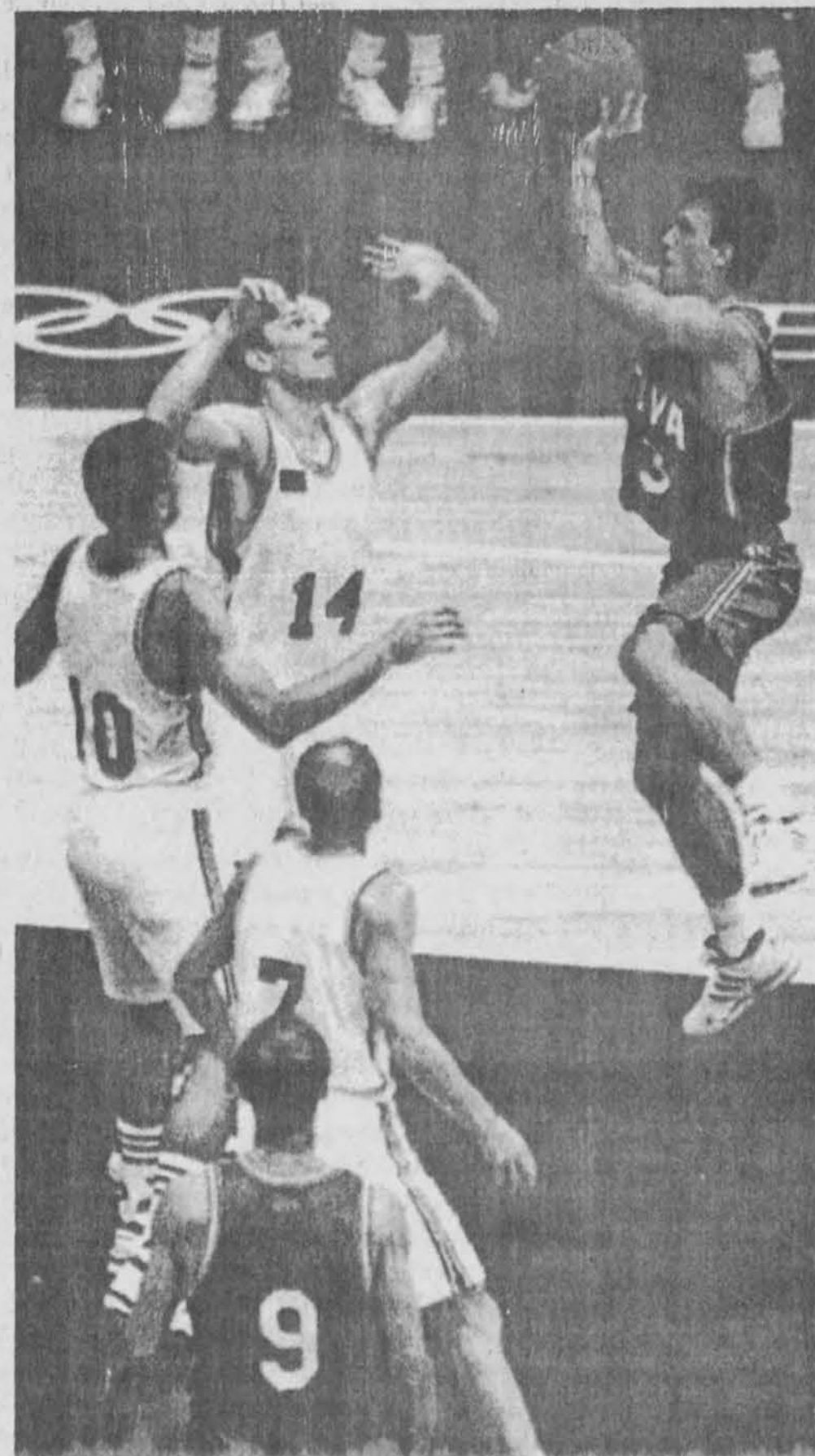
That's when Sabas, Rooney and the Lithuanian national basketball team provided a much needed assist. With the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona on the horizon, Sabonis pushed the Lithuanian basketball cause in Europe while Marčiulionis did the same here in the United States. Marčiulionis was responsible for getting Nike and the Grateful Dead to donate gear. He even talked his friend Don Nelson, son of then — Warriors head coach Don Nelson, into serving as an assistant coach.

Though they weren't expected to beat the US Dream Team at the 1992 Summer Olympics (which was ironic considering the U.S.S.R.'s 1988 victory over the United States hastened the inclusion of professional NBA players on the American squad), the Lithuanian team hoped to contend for a medal. After they lost in the opening round to a team representing what remained of the Soviet Union, Sabonis and Marčiulionis were told that despondent countrymen were committing suicide back home. The Lithuanian team got a second chance in the medal round and beat the Soviet squad to capture the bronze.

"After it was over, I felt relieved," Marčiulionis later explained. "There was huge psychological pressure on us. People in Lithuania looked at it like the good guys against the bad guys. I didn't see it that way because those guys used to be my teammates and my friends. Still, people in Lithuania were looking at it as payback for 50 years of oppression."

"These people went through a revolution," Nelson says. "People died. They stood in front of tanks, were shot, all in the cause of freedom. The guys on this basketball team are modern-day patriots. Basketball is their national passion. It's like Indiana. They have a perfect love affair with basketball."

Even with the galaxy of NBA stars soaring around him, Arvydas Sabonis was one of the highest-profile players in Atlanta this summer. The Lithuanian style of play is fast-paced; Sabonis was able to handle the ball more often and take more shots than he did this past season with the Blazers. Because of his size, Sabonis uses the rules to his advantage by drawing more fouls. "Every time [Sabonis] touches the ball, it's going to be a foul," says



Šarūnas Marčiulionis — at his best.

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NBA veteran Carl Herrera, a member of the Venezuelan Olympic team in 1992.

Preliminary competition in Atlanta was divided into two brackets. Lithuania played in the same group with the United States, Croatia, Argentina, China and Angola. The other group featured current European Champion Yugoslavia, Greece, Puerto Rico, Australia and Korea.

In addition to Sabonis, Lithuania featured two vets from the 1992 Olympic team — Marčiulionis and Kurtinaitis — along with Arturas Karnishovas, currently a top player in the Spanish League (who also played for P.J. Carlesimo at Seton Hall and was a member of the Blazers summer league team in 1994). Many of Sabonis' Atlanta Olympics rivals also were familiar faces. Divac and Miami Heat rookie Sasha Danilovic will play for Yugoslavia. The Croatia national team showcased Chicago's Toni Kukoc, Boston's Dino Radja and Toronto's Zan Tabak. These three teams — Croatia, Yugoslavia, and Lithuania — were expected to contend for the silver medal.

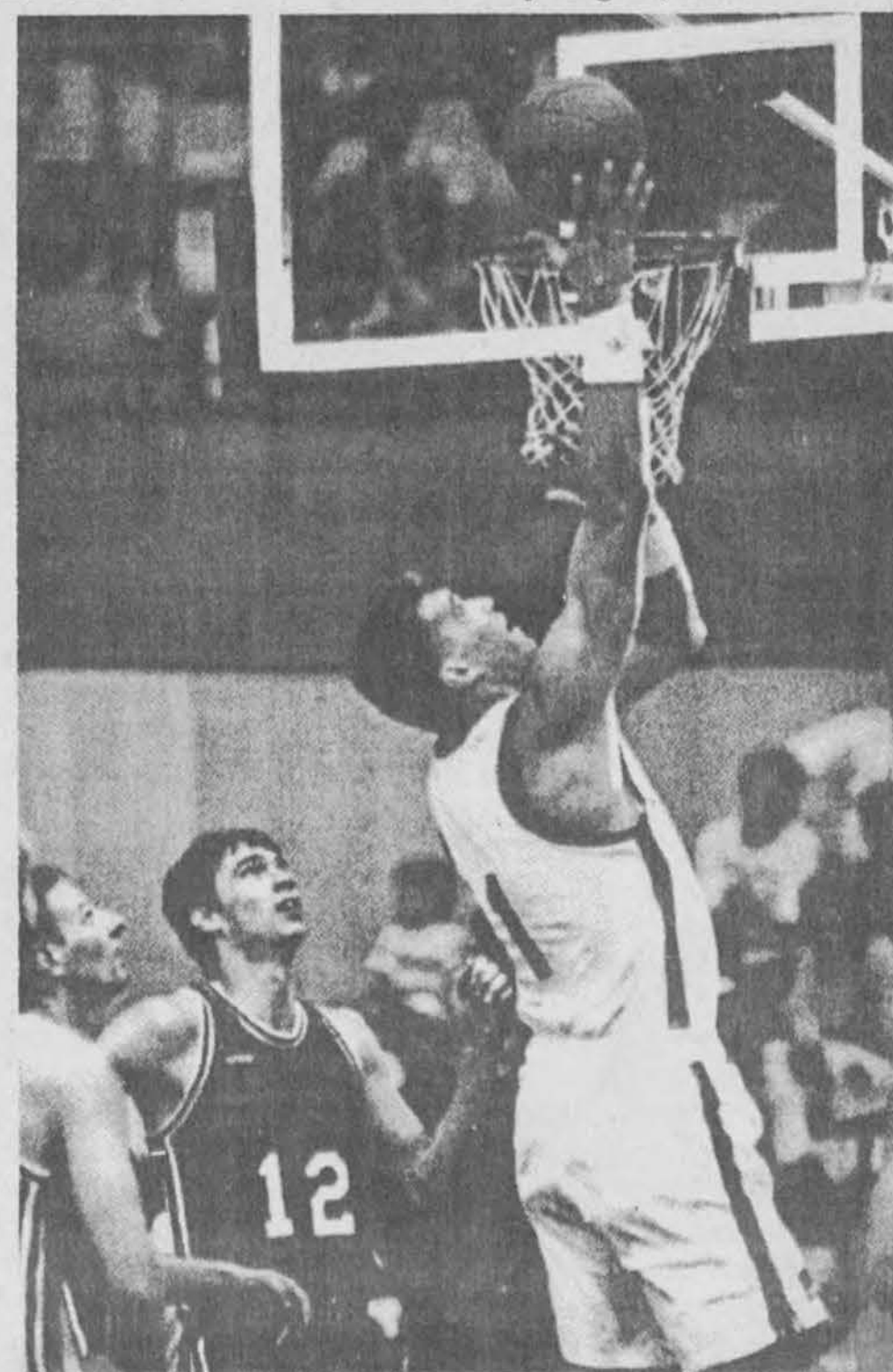
The gold, of course, was reserved for Dream Team III; no opponent came close to defeating the US team in Barcelona, and this summer was more of the same.

Before the Olympics everybody realized, that no medals will be awarded, however, until after the games are played. And in international competition sometimes the ball can take funny bounces as we found out when Lithuanians became the Bronze medal winners.

No one knew this better than Sabas. At the 1995 European Championship in Greece, on the eve of his journey to Portland and the NBA, Lithuania finished second to Yugoslavia in a chaotic game marred by several questionable calls. Sabonis fouled out with 10 minutes to play. "If the referring (in Atlanta) is going to be like it was in Athens this past summer, then Yugoslavia is a favorite for the gold," Sabonis says with a grin before the games in Atlanta. "Nobody else stands a chance."

In late May, Sabonis made one last Portland appearance before heading to Lithuania to prepare for the Olympics. He clearly was looking forward to the months ahead. Post-season arthroscopic surgery repaired his knee; Sabonis said he expected to be at full strength in time for the Atlanta games — and full of enthusiasm. "Any time you wear your country's uniform", he says, "is special."

With special acknowledgment to "Rip City" magazine, July/August, 1996



Arvydas Sabonis — one more into "the basket."

AN IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARY

On 25 December 1995 fifty years had passed since Major Jacobs, on behalf of occupied Germany's British Military Government, signed a permit to establish the „Baltic Camp University“. This marked the start of a unique phenomenon in the history of cooperation of the three Baltic nations.

The university was founded on 8 and 9 January 1946 in a meeting of 40 Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian scientists. Despite the fact that it was in operation only nine semesters (three and a half years), this is the historical event of a successful teamwork by the members of the three Baltic nations.

At present the joint effort of the Baltic States manifests itself in meetings of the presidents and the foreign ministers. In the military aspect cooperation expresses itself in the establishment of the Baltic Battalion with its blue-red-yellow colours and the English command language. About a common university there has been talk, but no action.

Let us hope that the above mentioned fifty year anniversary will help to induce the establishing of a Baltic university. This does not mean liquidation of the existing universities in Riga, Tartu and Vilnius. The national universities have a definite significance in the cultural life of the three Baltic countries. The task of a common Baltic University would be to facilitate research into problems which are common to the Baltic states.

Common problems

In foreign policy such a common problem is the attitude towards the giant eastern neighbour — Russia. At present Russia's craving is directed towards Estonian and it has erected a barbed wire fence around its claims against Estonia.

There is also the still not internationally fixed problem of previous Prussia which demands a speedy international solution. This is of special interest to Lithuania because Russia's military transports from and to former Prussia are passing through Lithuanian territory and this can endanger peace in Europe.

Recently there has emerged a potential conflict between Latvia and Lithuania. Certainly, the land borders between the two countries have been established on a permanent basis, but there are still differences in opinions as to the sea border. Rumour has it that in the sea between Latvia and Lithuania has been discovered oil, and a USA firm has approached the Latvian government for a concession to drill for oil. This was sufficient to induce the Lithuanian government to advance its own claim.

The United Nations organization is doing nothing to avert such potential conflicts. Its attention has been devoted to former Yugoslavia and to the disagreement between Russia and the Western powers about the Yugoslavian question.

Problems which cannot be solved by politicians need to be investigated and an answer found by scientists working closely together in an academic institution.

The Baltic University

This university established fifty years ago during extraordinary circumstances of postwar conditions in an occupied country proved that, in spite of different languages and national individuality, a successful cooperation of the three nations to achieve a great common aim is possible.

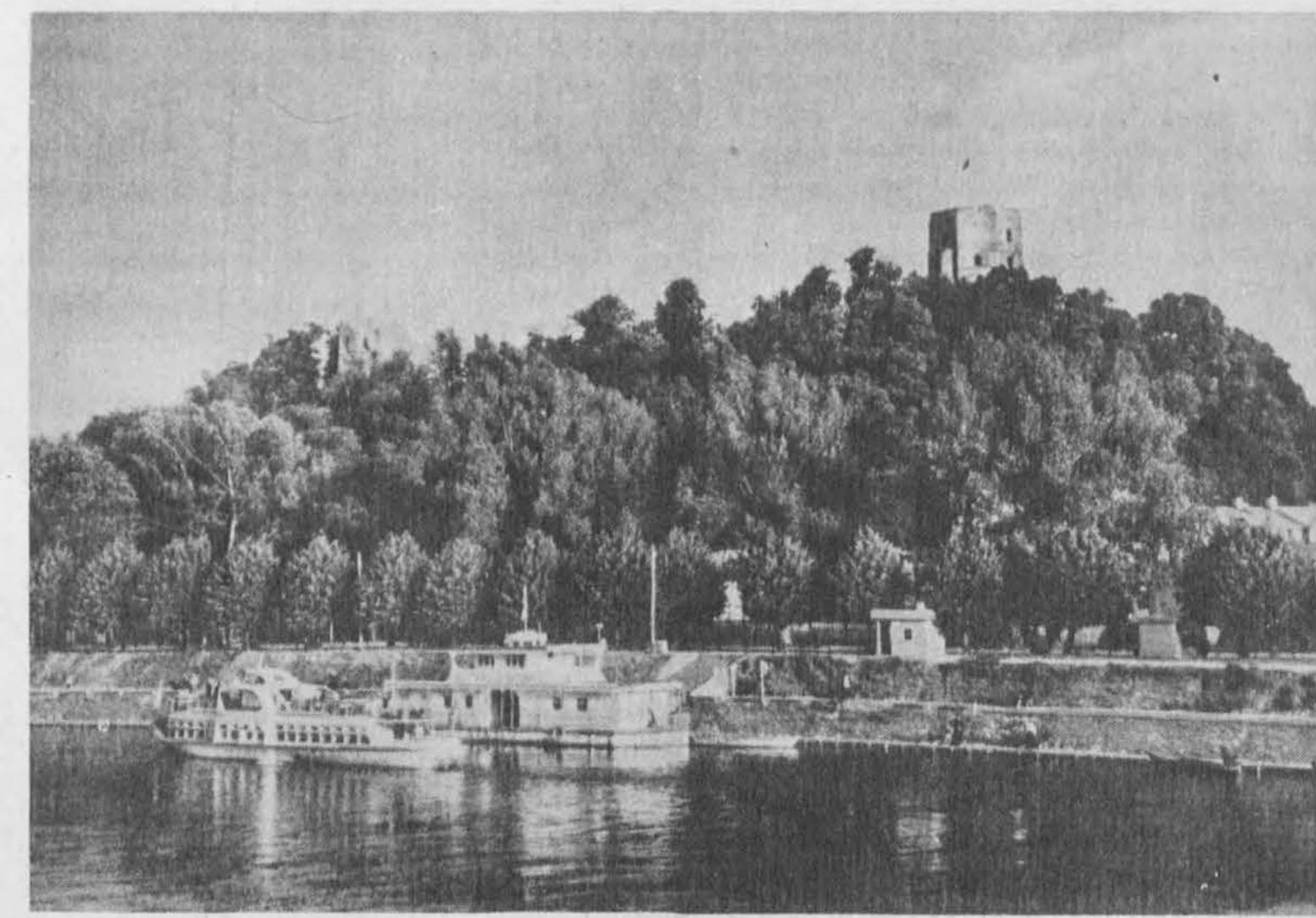
Despite hardships and adversities the university existed and worked because of the good relationship between the teaching staff and all other functionaries. When part of the teaching staff were denied remuneration by the authorities, those who were still paid shared their salaries with all others.

Literature about the Baltic University

There are two main works about the Baltic University: in Latvian and in Estonian.

1) Arnold Gramatinš, „Baltijas universitāte 1946-1949“ ([Germany] 1989), 213 pp., illustrated. Main parts: Preface. The University. In Hamburg and at Pinneberg.

Arnolds Gramatinš (born 1925 at Renceni, Latvia) studied architecture at the Baltic University, graduated 1950 in Stuttgart with the degree of Dipl. Ing. & Arch. and was occupied in Germany as an architect.



The Hill and the castle of Gediminas in Vilnius from the River Neris.

Although denoting himself as a compiler, he can with justice be regarded as the author. Valuable is the information based on documents about the establishment, the structure and activities of the university and its departments. The author has tried hard to collect reminiscences of the staff and students now living all over the world, but after a 40 years interval has not always succeeded. The difficulties are noticeable in description of the departments the author is not familiar with (for instance, the Department of Economics and Law).

Laudable is his effort to collect biographical data about the Latvian teaching staff at the University and of the authors of the articles of the book, as well as to include the exhaustive list of scientific works published by the University. Of equal significance are the published documents — the correspondence between the University and officialdom.

2) Elmar Jarvesoo, editor: „Balti Ulukool Saksamaal“ 1945-1949. „Baltic University in Germany 1945-1949“ (Toronto 1991), 518 pp., illustrated, with Summary in English and a separate „List of Contents“ (in English).

Elmar Jarvesoo was born 1909 in Estonia. Graduated from Tartu University 1934, studied at Helsinki University, graduated from Berlin University 1939 (Dr agr.). Docent at Tartu University 1941-1944, Professor and Dean at Baltic University 1946-1949, Docent and Professor at Amherst Uni-

versity, USA 1950-1977, then Professor emeritus. Editor of agricultural journals, author of scientific works.

His book „Balti Ulukool“ contains seven chapters. I. Foundation and fight for survival in Hamburg and at Pinneberg. II. Biographies and reminiscences of Estonian staff. III. Students' self-government. IV. „Scientibus et artibus“ (students' journal). V. Reminiscences. VI. English summary. VII. Register and sources.

In the second part of the book a few pages are devoted to the prominent Estonian Sir Arvi Paro.

Previous publications about the Baltic University

„Documents concerning Baltic University 1945-1947“, vol. I. Compiled by Richards Plūme, edited and introduced by Edgars Dunsdorfs. 38 documents, 50 pp. „Who is who? at the Baltic University“. Compiled and edited by Edgars Dunsdorfs. First edition: Pinneberg 1948, 156 pp. Second edition, incl. V. Stank's article „The Baltic University“ (1949), 176 pp.

„Information Bulletin DP Study Centre. Nos. 1-73 issued and edited by Edgars Dunsdorfs. Subsequently till no. 90 edited by Nora Purpeters, Lidija Perlupe and Eduards Šurms. Text in English and German, occasionally in Latvian and other languages. The title of the „Bulletin“ was frequently changed because UNRRA objected to the terms „Baltic“ and „University“. Eventually it was

named „BU Bulletin“ with the explanation by the editor (with tongue in cheek) that the initials BU denote in German „Bei uns“, in English „Between us“. „Baltic University in pictures“. First edition 1947, 24 pp. Second edition 1949, 24 pp. with partly different pictures.

Edgars Dunsdorfs

WE NEED YOUR HELP

When the first issue of English language edition of „Draugas“ came out in July of this year, we received many compliments and praises. Statements such as „it is about time“, „should have done many years ago“ and „know we, who can not read in Lithuanian finally will have weekly newspaper“ prevailed. As promised in that first issue, we started regular publishing on a weekly basis on the 13th of September. It was decided to start, even though the number of subscribers did not justify our decision. We intend to continue this effort for the next six or eight weeks hoping that many more will join the subscriber ranks. As you know, to publish a newspaper, one has to justify it financially. Today we are investing in the future expecting that we will get the needed number of subscriptions to continue.

I am hoping that you will help us to make the English edition of „Draugas“ a viable entity. Please spread the word with your Lithuanian American friends and others who might

Searching for our roots

Some decades ago, people, coming to United States of America, were urged to become americanized as fast as possible, and to erase any trace of their ethnic identity, including language, customs, and the way of life. America was called the great melting pot, where every nationality was supposed to blend in and conform to the standards of a typical American community. Of course this idea was more theoretical and in reality never really worked. Luckily in the mid 1960-ties it was abandoned realizing that ethnicity was more valuable alive then melted into a gray mass of humanity.

The pendulum eventually swung in the opposite direction: anything foreign or imported became desirable. Diverse ethnic cultures were not only acceptable but believed to enhance the overview of American life, like a many-hued tapestry blanketing this great country „from sea to shining sea.“

If we choose to acknowledge our ethnicity, it helps to understand who we are, why we are the people we claim to be. Every race, every nationality has its own characteristic — nurtured by history, beliefs, friendly neighboring countries and even foes. Finding all that we can about the land of our parents, grandparents or ancestors, we get to know the very depth of our own soul. But this knowledge also carries a price. Once we understand, we can never again fully disconnect ourselves from the land where our deepest roots originated.

Lithuanians, searching for their roots, are lucky. There is nothing shameful in the pages of Lithuania's history. We'll find much greatness, and much suffering. Throughout the ages, Lithuanians many times were enslaved by their enemies but their spirit was always free. Nobody was able to take away that which they held most precious: their religion, their language, and their beloved homeland on the shores of the Baltic Sea.

want to know about events, relating to Lithuania and Lithuanians are urged to subscribe. With your help we can make the English edition of „Draugas“ a success. The failure of this venture is not something I want to

Where in the whole wide world is there another nation who for 40 years smuggled into their homeland — with no financial profit, but only great risk of imprisonment and even death — not narcotics, not weapons, but books and newspapers so that everybody had a chance to read in Lithuanian, become educated and long for freedom? Lithuanians did — between 1864 and 1904 when the Russian czars tried to force their own beliefs and values on the occupied Lithuania.

What nation for fifty years suffered under communist atheism, but still remained true to God, their own language and homeland? Lithuania did. When the first opportunity arose, the „Singing Revolution“ was born for all the world to see and admire. Lithuanians didn't let Gorbachev's sweet-talk or threats sway them from the utmost goal — freedom. They didn't flinch or run away when Russian tanks crushed their bodies in Vilnius on that fateful night of Jan. 13, 1990. They paid the price and bought freedom not only for themselves but perhaps for all the other captive nations under Soviet rule. In the end even the mighty Soviet Union vanished but Lithuania is free and building a strong democratic future.

We, living in the United States, belongs to two worlds — American and Lithuanian. We are proud of them both, trying to fulfill our obligations as best we can. Because our everyday life is in America, we know this country more intimately than he one on the other side of Atlantic Ocean. But we should try to know more about Lithuania — past and present.

Like it or not, we are Lithuanians. No effort of our own, no force on Earth can change this fact. There is a saying: if you can't fight it, join it... One way to accomplish this, to be closer to the land of our ancestors, is through the weekly English publication of „Draugas — The Friend.“ Please become a subscriber and reader.

Help us to make the English edition of „Draugas“ the largest publication dedicated to English speaking Lithuanians and their friends.

Ignas Budrys
Administrator

AN EXPATRIATE'S JOURNEY

The Life and Legacy of Marija Aukštaitė

1 Until recently, the name of Marija Aukštaitė (1896-1987) has been virtually unknown in Lithuanian emigré communities in North America and in her native Lithuania. It is somewhat surprising that her weighty contribution as a social activist to the Montreal Lithuanian community between the 1930s and 1950s has remained largely ignored, and that her legacy as a poet, fiction writer, and journalist has been barely acknowledged in Lithuanian literary anthologies and encyclopedias (see, for instance, Gaida 1967:163, 210; Bradūnas 1968:16).

The past two years, however, have witnessed a growing interest in Aukštaitė's biography and career in both Canada and in Lithuania. Recently, a special exhibit commemorating the 100th anniversary of Aukštaitė's birth has been mounted in Prienai, and, as part of a show dedicated to distinguished Lithuanian-Canadian women, her manuscripts and publications have been displayed at the Lithuanian Cultural Centre in Mississauga, Ontario. As well, a number of articles introducing Aukštaitė have appeared or are forthcoming in various periodical publications.

It is obvious, however, that Aukštaitė's legacy calls for more thorough consideration, as it may prove to be of great worth and interest to researchers in both the humanities and the social sciences. Her autobiography, voluminous private correspondence, collections of poetry

and fiction, newspaper columns and journal articles not only bear witness to a remarkable life, but offer an invaluable resource to those interested in the history of Lithuanian immigration to Canada, in particular, to the preservation and consolidation of Lithuanian ethnic identity in the Canadian socio-cultural context.

This introductory essay aims to provide a more detailed account of Aukštaitė's biography and to assess her legacy in light of historical and social processes in Lithuania, between the years 1910 and 1930, and as an immigrant to Canada, during the period 1930-1950.

In order to better understand Aukštaitė's personality and her extraordinary life story it is essential to consider some of the influences that shaped her values and worldview during childhood and early adolescence.

Marija Aukštaitė (Katriutė Navikevičius), nee Ratkevičiūtė, was born on July 18, 1896, on a farmstead in the Garliava parish of the Prienai district of Lithuania, then a province of Russian empire. The principal factors that played an important role in the formation of her personality and views are readily apparent in her autobiography, *The Bygone Days of Childhood* (*Nubangavė kūdikystės dienot*), written in her distinctive poetic style. Born into a large peasant family which had to struggle daily to make ends meet, from her childhood days Aukštaitė knew full well the meaning of poverty and hardship. Although materially poor, the Ratkevičius family possessed an immensely rich inner world wherein human dignity and kindness, stoic endurance and perseverance, religious devotion and adherence to tradition were among the most highly regarded values, which they instilled in their children. It is precisely these values that tightly bound together this indigent peasant family, enabling it to survive against all odds.

In her autobiography, Aukštaitė mentions a storage

chest which served as a symbol of reverence for time-honoured family traditions and ancestral memory:

The chest (*kuparas*) is our family's greatest and most important treasure, for it was acquired with hard toil... The patterns (*raštai*) on the textiles kept in it recall memories that span generations of deceased forefathers... This chest contains our family's clothing and its entire history (1981:25).

Like a sacred relic, the chest was fondly kept in the larder, a room with special significance in the Ratkevičius household. It was there that...

...many a tear of grief was shed, birth was given, and prayers were said... The larder is an intimate space that holds our family together and provides us with a strong sense of belonging and continuity (Aukštaitė 1981:27).

It should be noted that Aukštaitė's autobiography can be read as more than just a poetic memoir of childhood experience, for it also has ethnographic value in its detailed descriptions of the way of life and world outlook of Lithuanian peasantry at the turn of the century.

It was during her years of early adolescence that Aukštaitė was first confronted with sickness and death and became aware of the human suffering and loss that they entail. Surprisingly early she was able to clearly define her own interests and values. As a young child, she realized that knowledge had an extraordinary, in her words, „mystical power“ of highest human value.

Aukštaitė's curiosity and desire to study was passed on to her by her father. Denied formal education because of his peasant roots, Ratkevičius taught himself to read and write and, at times of respite from backbreaking farm work, volunteered as a village teacher of Lithuanian, knowing well that such activities could lead to persecution by Czarist gendarmes. (As a colony of im-

perial Czarist Russia at that time, Lithuania was subjected to severe Russification and was under a press ban which lasted from 1864 to 1904). One of Ratkevičius's students, and subsequently a fine teaching assistant, was his daughter Katriutė (Aukštaitė).

To provide an adequate account of Aukštaitė's life in Lithuania before her departure to Canada in 1930 is not an easy task. Since archival records dating back to the period are extremely scarce, the researcher has to rely on rather inconclusive documentary data and reminiscences of her family members. It is known, for instance, that during the First World War Aukštaitė and her parents were hiding in the environs of Prienai, and that shortly thereafter she joined an underground liberation movement dedicated to driving German occupiers out of Lithuania. It has also been established that after the war she concerned herself with thousands of exhausted refugees returning home to war-ravaged Lithuania. As a member of the liberation movement, Aukštaitė acted as an organizer of numerous meetings and rallies, whose primary objective was the recruitment of volunteer soldiers for the struggle against both German invaders and Russian Bolsheviks, and to achieve complete national independence. During this period, her husband Antanas Navikevičius was one of the army volunteers.

Her activities at that time were not limited to organization and administration. Her contribution to the Lithuanian liberation movement also included work of a very practical nature; for example, she offered the Lithuanian Volunteer Army her services as a seamstress and knitter, as well as other kinds of concrete material help.

To be continued

AID TO LITHUANIA, INC.

BY ROBERT BORIS



Robert Boris.

Beginning as a very modest effort six years ago, this humanitarian aid project focuses on securing of medicine, medical supplies and equipment and then payment of transportation costs to Lithuania. Aid to Lithuania, Inc. (ATL) began with the support of Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid (Brooklyn), and the Knights of Lithuania, who coordinated efforts with World Medical Relief, Inc. Detroit.

During the next five years this organization has expanded and intensified. In 1993, ATL was granted 501 (c) (3) status by the Internal Revenue Service. During the first four years, ATL averaged four containers a year which included an eclectic assortment of medicine, medical supplies, and equipment. However in 1995, 15 shipments were made. This dramatic increase was due to a unique collaborative effort with "Catholic Medical Mission Board," New York (CMMB), who has made available solid container loads of prescription level medicine. As of August 1996, ATL has shipped an aggregate of 375 tons of medicine and medical supplies in 39 containers carrying a value of 35 million dollars. Of this amount 11 containers were provided by "Catholic Medical Mission Board." Their value exceeds 18 million dollars, making CMMB the largest supplier of medicine for charitable distribution in Lithuania. Transportation charges for these 11 CMMB containers alone, was approximately \$50,000.00 and paid for by Aid to Lithuania, Inc. ATL is proud to be a partner in this program.

Throughout this period, a high-level of personal involvement and volunteerism from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Michigan to Florida has sustained the mission. Individuals began collecting "manufacturer samples" from doctors and their friends, soliciting funds and organizing fund-raisers to help defray shipping costs. Noteworthy is the core group of volunteers who appear weekly at the World Medical Relief warehouse in Detroit, to sort, package and prepare shipping containers for shipment not only to Lithuania

but also to other areas where such supplies are also greatly needed.

This humanitarian project has brought together Lithuanian-Americans (including those of remote Lithuanian extraction) and non-Lithuanians and crossed the generation gap from the elderly to their grandchildren. It has united in common cause workers and contributors from each of the major immigration groups and their progeny. It has inspired and impressed non-Lithuanians, like a Latino-American lady, a mother of eight in California and an Episcopal doctor in Tennessee to individually collect sufficient supplies to fill a 40 foot container, as well as the Cardinal Archbishop of Detroit, Adam Maida who is of Polish ancestry, and has made significant financial contributions directly to the cause and lent his name in sponsorship of our annual golf-day fund-raiser.

The most notable achievement of ATL is getting people involved. It is their free participation coupled with the unstinting generosity of the donor organizations plus the support of the Knights of Lithuania, who initially covered the overhead, out of pocket administrative costs, that has brought about outstanding success. As a result, each dollar contributed to ship containers, can be factored into \$152.32 worth of humanitarian aid for the people of Lithuania. This return is, we believe, unparalleled.

There have been many dramatic highlights during six years, however we will list just a few, such as the arrival of our very first container in Kaunas on January 15, 1991, the day after the most heinous act of Soviet brutality, the attack on the unarmed Lithuanians at the TV Tower in Vilnius. The medications and supplies were immediately transhipped to Vilnius to be used in the treatment of the injured. How many wounded or injured were saved from further complications and possible death, by these newly arrived medicines is known to God alone.

A few years ago an American visitor in a hospital in Panevėžys noted a patient undergoing dialysis therapy with American equipment. The attending doctor affirmed that such therapy had become available only with the arrival of American equipment from ATL. Had the dialysis equipment and supplies not been available, the patient would have been left with a fatal prognosis and little hope for a happier outcome.

On August 10, 1995, Catholic Medical Mission Board made available 10,000 vials of Hepatitis B vaccine, which requires refrigeration and was therefore shipped by air cargo to Vilnius, at considerably greater cost



Special awards for Friends to Lithuania. Left to right: Frank Petrauskas, Lithuania's Minister of Health Dr. Antanas Vinkus, Robert Boris, Ona Šadeikienė and Paulius G. Bindokas, Advisor to the Minister of Health.

than normal ocean containers. Thus for the very first time, Lithuanian health care givers are protected from the scourges of Hepatitis. Efforts are underway to obtain more of this vaccine so that every doctor and nurse in Lithuania will be vaccinated in the future. Portions of Container #31, shipped on December 28, 1995 from Catholic Medical Mission Board were distributed to no less than 84 hospitals throughout Lithuania.

Along with the medical assistance program, ATL responded to the critical problem of hunger among the very young and elderly pensioners. Working with Archbishops Audrys Backis and Sigitas Tamkevičius, ATL has provided \$16,000.00 to the "soup kitchens" in Vilnius and Kaunas. During recent months, ATL has provided furnishings and supplies to St. Clare's Hospice, the first "hospice" in Lithuania. It is being established under the guidance and supervision of Sister Dolorita, OSF, a native of Elizabeth, NJ and a member of the sisters of Saint Francis of Pittsburgh. Sister Dolorita and Sister Michele Garas, a former Detroit, have made a tremendous impact on life in Utena since their arrival four years ago. ATL is privileged to be a part of this venture.

Yes, lives are being saved, disease treated and pain is being eased by our efforts! How many you may ask? Only God knows. But then, He is the only One who counts.

For further information or to make a donation, please contact: Aid to Lithuania, Inc. 4557 Fairway Court, Waterford, MI 48328, Phone: 810 682-0098, Fax: 810 682-5201.

THREE RECEIVE SPECIAL AWARDS

Three members of the Knights of Lithuania received special awards from the Lithuanian Minister of Health, Dr. Antanas Vinkus, on July 6, 1996. They received the awards while ending a tour of the Baltics, sponsored by Aid to Lithuania, Inc.

Aid to Lithuania, Inc. President, Robert S. Boris, along with Frank Petrauskas (C-140) and Ona Šadeikienė (C-102), were personally presented these awards in Lithuania. Dr. Vinkus presented this highest recognition by the Ministry — A Certificate of Thanks — (Padėkos Raštas) in gratitude for the outstanding work being done for the sick and needy in Lithuania.

Mr. Petrauskas of Syracuse, NY, has collected medicines worth millions that are sent to Lithuania through Aid to Lithuania. Mrs. Šadeikienė of Detroit, MI, has been a volunteer at World Medical Relief in Detroit for many years. All three are members of the Knights of Lithuania, with which Aid to Lithuania, Inc. (ATL) is affiliated.

Catholic Medical Mission Board, NY, provides the medicine while ATL covers transpor-

ON BEING LITHUANIAN

As we endeavor to identify the character of the Lithuanian nation through customs and traditions, perception and view of the world, we come to understand what it meant to be Lithuanian. By adopting and preserving the basic cultural traits of the Lithuanian nation we can remain Lithuanian even while residing far from Lithuania, our country of origin. But the most important national mark of a Lithuanian is not simply knowing Lithuanian customs and traditions (though this helps to remain close to one's origins). A Lithuanian's most vital national trait is the Lithuanian language.

Indeed it can be maintained that one cannot remain a true Lithuanian without the Lithuanian language.

Educated Lithuanians understood this as far back as the 16th century and resolved to combat the disdain and destruction of the Lithuanian tongue. This battle for the language's integrity had been launched much earlier. Canon Mikalojus Daukša, the first author of Lithuanian Proper, published his famous "Postile" ("Postilla Catholica") in 1599 in Vilnius. In the preface, he addresses his readers as follows:

"... Nations survive not because of their soil's fertility, the diversity of their clothing or the strength of their cities and fortresses, but primarily by preserving and using their own language which increases and sustains a common foundation, harmony and brotherly love."

Mikalojus Daukša eloquently addressed the Lithuanian nobi-

lity of that period (which had become quite Polonized), urging them not to forsake or disdain the tongue of their forebears. He condemned those who, while Lithuanian by birth, have forgotten their native tongue and are ashamed of it. Daukša writes: "No nation is so insignificant, no parcel of land so minuscule that it does not use its own language."

Over the centuries, the Lithuanian language has had to struggle against foreign attempts to belittle, suppress and annihilate it. In Lithuania Proper, the Lithuanian tongue was undermined by the Polish and Russian languages; in Lithuania Minor by German influence and repression. However, there was considerable opposition to these attempts to undermine and exterminate the Lithuanian language. At first, this opposition was timid and meager, but as early as the second half of the 19th century it overflowed into a strong current which led to the rebirth of the Lithuanian language and nation.

Lithuanians in our enslaved homeland were resisting attempts to destroy and weaken the Lithuanian language because they understood the language's importance to the nation's survival. The underground publication *Aušra* (February 1979, No. 15[55]) wrote as follows in an article entitled "Appeal to All the World's Lithuanians": "While fighting our oppressors over the centuries, we managed to survive only because we preserved and protected our native tongue... Let us remember that the fate of our language is the fate of our nation. If we do not respond today to the challenge fate has laid down for us, Lithuania may very well be completely removed from the future course of history. Let us do everything possible to protect our native tongue."

At all times, the strongest support for the Lithuanian language has come from the common people, the Lithuanian rural population. It maintained undamaged the Lithuanian tongue and national spirit. The enlightened intelligentsia which rose from the Lithuanian peasantry won the nation's freedom and independence especially during the period of National Rebirth (end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th centuries).

The science of comparative linguistics established at the beginning of the 19th century further bolstered the Lithuanians' devotion to their language and confidence in its worth. Comparative linguistics showed that the Lithuanian tongue is one of the oldest Indo-European languages and very valuable in researching the history of other languages and nations. Consequently, scholars began to show an interest in Lithuanian; they came to Lithuania to research it from the very nation's lips

and collected many ancient words, phrases, and expressions. At the beginning of the 19th century it was established that the majority of European and some of the Asian languages form the Indo-European language group. The language group divided into different branches some 5,000-6,000 years ago. Today some of the European languages which belong to the Indo-European group are: Irish, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, English, French, German, Dutch, Norwegian, Danish, Swedish, Lithuanian, Latvian, Russian, Polish, Czech, Slovakian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Greek and others. In Asia: Armenian, Persian, Indic and other languages. Thus when the Indo-European parent-language split into various groups or branches, its dialects over time produced the great family of Indo-European languages which today are spoken by about half the world. Scholars claim that Lithuanian has preserved more characteristics of the ancient Indo-European parent-language than any other existing tongue.

Linguists think that of all existing living Indo-European languages Lithuanian is the most similar to the ancient Indo-European parent-language forms, has changed the least and is therefore very important to modern language research or philology.

At present the world has some 2,500 living languages. A living language is defined as one spoken naturally by at least several persons in the course of their daily activities. A language dies — disappears — when no one speaks it any longer. Sometimes a dead language is still widely used in scientific terminology or literature as for instance Latin. This language has not been spoken for many centuries, but is still taught in schools and used today to coin scientific terms.

It has been determined that about one billion people speak English today. English has virtually become an international language and can be used to communicate in nearly every country of the world. The second place in numbers of speakers is held by Mandarin (Chinese) which is spoken by some 800 million persons. Spanish is ranked third with some 250 million speakers. Next to these enormous numbers, the number of Lithuanian speakers — only about 3 million — appears minuscule. Nonetheless, Lithuanian holds a vital place among living languages and we can be justifiably proud of it.

Lithuanians living in various

countries of the world come into daily contact with countless cultures, customs, traditions and languages. After many years, especially after the older generation which still remembered life in Lithuania and could easily distinguish what was characteristic of Lithuanians and what was not dies out, many customs and traditions, though still called Lithuanian, are strongly colored by the local environment. But the Lithuanian language is the most obvious mark of a Lithuanian and distinguishes him or her from any other nationality. It is therefore the obligation of every Lithuanian to learn, use and preserve the Lithuanian tongue.

By Danutė Bindokienė

THE LEATHER STRAP

She sat on a wooden stool in the middle of the front room, on a stool one would perch his tired feet. A green velvet dress, long and full skirted, draped the stool. Her short, straight hair is dark, nose pointed, eyes deep, dark and of no cheer. She had arrived just a few days ago from Europe. This was her brother's flat, a wife and a small child who adored the black background wallpaper with the large red and pink flowers where she slept. When I think back, she may have been waiting for a gentleman to take her out. After all, she came to find someone and marry. A stranger to this noisy child, her aunt, sitting on a stool draped with her dark green, long and full skirted velvet dress, holding a leather strap and swinging in a circular movement to keep this child, her niece, away.

Frances M. Šlutas

RUSSIAN THEATRE CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

On September 16 Russian theatre launched a festival, celebrating the 50th anniversary of its existence in Lithuania. The festival began with the play "Three Sisters" by Russian playwright Anton Chekhov. Celebrations will last a month and performances by Russian authors will be presented by many Lithuanian theatres as well, along with guests — Kazan Kachalov's theatre and Belarussian State Russian drama theatre.

In Vilnius the National Māžvydas library will open an exhibition featuring Russian theatre history.



Photo by Jonas Kuprys



Frank Petrauskas (left to right) Robert Boris and Paulius G. Bindokas, Advisor to the Minister of Health in Lithuania.

M.A.

LOOKING TOWARDS A BRIGHT FUTURE

BY NIJOLĖ SEMĖNAITĖ-ETZWILER

In 1993, my mother and I returned for the first time to Lithuania, the country we had been forced to leave as war refugees 50 years before. It was an emotional homecoming for each of us; for her, who had spent her youth there, who had had a child there, and lost a brother, it was a return to a time and place irrevocably changed. For me, who was raised as a Lithuanian in Chicago, it was a return to a place that had never really existed. And both of us carried the memory of those in our family who would never know the sweet joy of returning: my dead father, grandparents, aunts and uncle.

So we cried our tears, and said our prayers, but somewhere along the way, sorrow gave way to discovery, and together with my American husband, who brought no emotional baggage, we allowed ourselves to be carried away by the wonder and excitement of this beautiful country. I can easily say it was love at first sight. After two very short weeks, we left vowing to return as soon as possible.

This August, we kept that promise and came not as pilgrims but as tourists, determined to see as much of the country as we could. We had certain familiar goals: to visit relatives, to see old homes, to find childhood haunts, but they fit in comfortably among the tourist sights on our agenda. We criss-crossed the country, from border to border, touching Latvia at Stelmuzė, Kaliningrad at Pagėgiai, the western world at the Baltic, and starting it all at Vilnius in the far East.

My husband and I are particularly fond of architecture and we were amazed and delighted to find a whole new world of beautiful old buildings, many of them lovingly restored, but even the unrestored ones wonderful examples of their era. Churches, surprisingly intact, are glorious works of art, each a treasure of sculpture, icons, and architecture. Remnants of old towns, not only the extensive Senamiesčiai of Kaunas and Vilnius, but single streets in cities across the country, boast outstanding buildings that are a living illustration of architectural styles from medieval to baroque. Simpler life has also produced beautiful homes: the picturesque fishermen's houses along the Kuršių Marios, in towns quickly becoming tourist meccas, like Nida and Juodkrantė; wooden houses covered with gingerbread in every city; farmers' homesteads, lovingly restored at the mu-

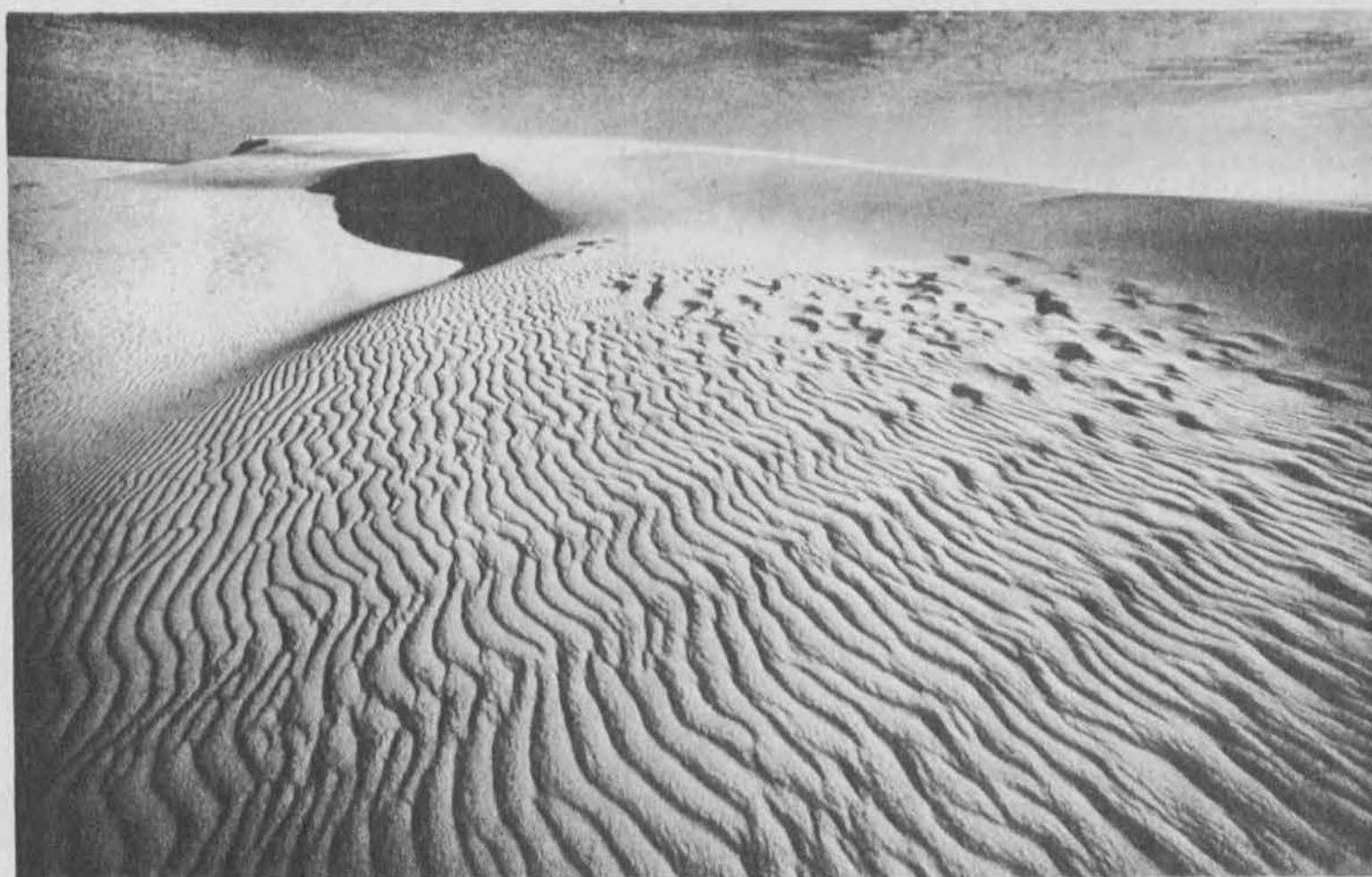
seum in Rumšiškės, and still found in villages in the country. Travel by car is a pleasure. There is a well-paved network of highways linking the major cities, with clean and comfortable rest stops that serve snacks or a full menu, including my favorite dish, cepelinai.

Although a city girl at heart, I do appreciate the beauties of nature, and was properly entranced by the lakes of Zarasai, the incredible sand dunes of Neringa, the beaches of the Baltic, the gently rolling fields, now full of grain, and everywhere, the forests of birch, oak, and pines. When you fly over Lithuania, what really catches your eye is how much of the land is still in forest. One of the unforgettable sights of our trip was the giant oak at Stelmuzė, said to be 1,400 years old. Like an enormous old man, it sits, propped up on two sides, just downhill from a lovely old wooden church, still used for masses, but also a museum of folk art, exhibiting the crosses and carvings of area artists.

To our joy, crosses and chapels appear across the country, at waysides and along roads, the true expression of Lithuanian folk heritage. That heritage is also alive in the many art galleries and shops that sell and display the works of contemporary artists. Every taste can be served, as artists run the gamut from traditional woodcuts to the most modern abstractions.

As much as Lithuania had changed for my mother in the 50 years up to 1993, so had it changed for all of us since that year. Selfishly, I rejoiced in the abundance of good food and especially good coffee (although I could find only one place, the elegant Astra in Kaunas, that served brewed decaf). Breakfast in a Lithuanian hotel can stoke you for a full day. Restaurant menus are an adventure in good eating, and especially in the provinces very lavish with salads and vegetables. There are even restaurants now that serve only ethnic Lithuanian dishes, offering a variety far beyond kugelis and koldūnai.

In the streets too, there is a marked change. The first thing you notice is how many cars there are; traffic is heavy and the Lithuanian driver fairly assertive. The look of the cities is brighter: gone is that drab gray that says "soviet" to all westerners. Buildings are painted, re-painted, being painted,



Sand dunes of Nida.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO PERINATAL CENTER'S VISIT TO LITHUANIA

BY FRANCES M. ŠLUTAS

The Perinatal Center's team inaugurated its sixth year in Lithuania with a four day seminar which commenced on June 18, 1996. This time the team was led by Dharmapuri Vidyasagar, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics, Director of Neonatology, and Co-director, Perinatal Center at UIC. Dr. Vidyasagar hasn't been to Lithuania in 5 years. This was his third visit. He was overwhelmed at the advances that the physician's, nurses and other medical personnel have made in the Perinatology and Neonatology departments. This was accomplished with the help of the UIC educational programs, the generosity of the Swiss government who donated \$4.6 million worth of Medical technology and humanitarian aid organization Lithuanian Mercy Lift. Other team members included were: Dr. Nagamani Dharmapuri, Pediatrician and Child Development specialist at UIC; Giuseppe

flowers are blooming everywhere, and marketing, that gifts of capitalism to the eastern world, has hit Lithuania like a rainbow. Not only have McDonald's, United Colors of Benetton, and other international companies found their way to Lithuania, but Lithuanian entrepreneurs themselves are opening new businesses to cater to every newfound demand. One Lithuanian told me, "We're like little children: for so long we didn't have anything, now we want everything and we want it right away." But alongside this veneer of prosperity there stands an ugly specter of third world reality: old women begging in the street, small children selling and begging. When we asked residents about the economic situation, they told us that pensioners cannot keep up with the rising cost of living; and many workers face the threat of unemployment. When I asked about agriculture, I was told that the cooperatives that had replaced the collective farms had failed and agriculture has become subsistence farming. As the private sector soars, it seems to leave the public sector behind, and the gap between the haves and have nots spreads. But when you think of how far Lithuania has come in only 6 years of independence, you must feel optimistic for its future. We never expected to see a free Lithuania in this century; that has been a miracle. Surely it should not take another miracle to see her people prosper in the years to come. I look forward to our next visit, when I trust that we'll find the country as rich in its standard of living as it now is in its culture.

pe Marraro, M.D., Pediatrician and Chief Neonatologist from Milan, University in Milan, Italy; Fran Jaeger, MSW, DrPH, Administrator of the Perinatal Network at the UIC; Dr. Arvin Shukla, co-director of the perinatal Center and Chief Neonatologist at Christ Hospital in Oak, Lawn, IL (Christ hospital is a member of the UIC Perinatal Center, and Frances M. Šlutas, R.N., LML member and co-ordinator of this program between UIC and Lithuania.

In August of 1994 the UIC was approved as a World Health Collaborating Center for Perinatal and Neonatal Health. Lithuania is included in this program.

Advanced topics in Perinatal Care included: Developmental evaluation of high-risk infants; Resuscitation and Ventilator Care; Organization, structure and administration a perinatal system, a quality improvement program; Factors contributing to perinatal mortality; Intrauterine infection and neonatal sepsis, Perinatal care system: regularizations and strategies.

The seminar was attended by pediatricians, obstetricians and neonatologists from all of Lithuania. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces especially those who have at-

tended seminars in Chicago and spent two months at the UIC hospital clinics.

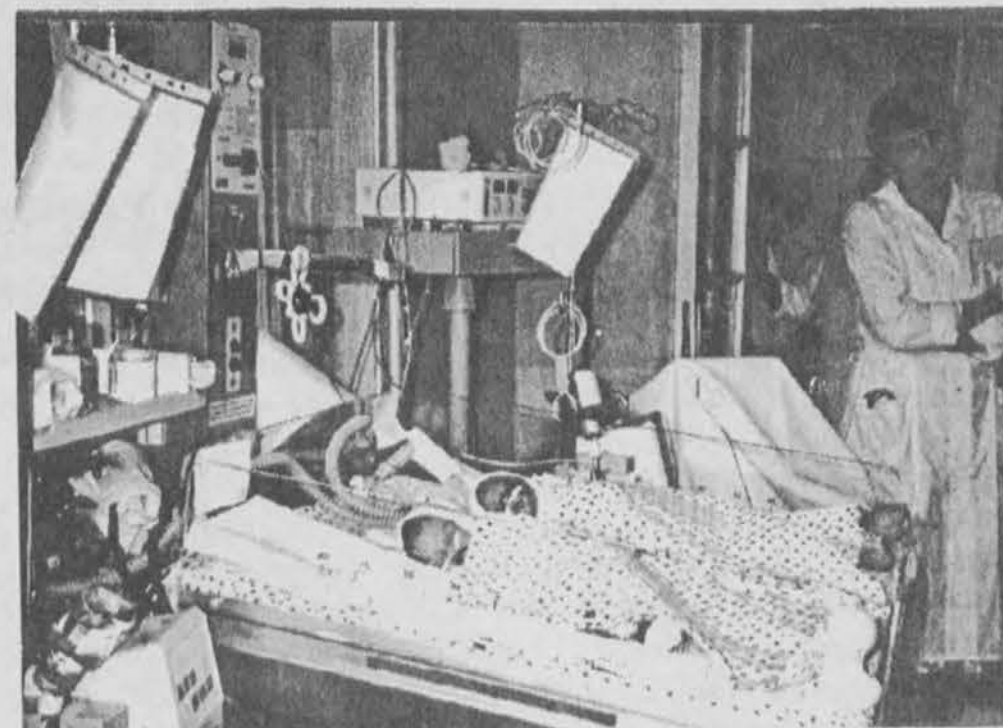
The host hospitals were: Vilnius University hospital Santariskės and the VU Faculty Women's Clinic. The Women's Clinics head physician was Dr. Gražina Drasutienė, who did an excellent job in arranging everything and making everyone's efforts commendable. The co-ordinator at the Ministry of Health in Lithuania is Dr. Vanda Vainauskienė. Dr. Vainauskienė was in Chicago in 1993. She had a very good opportunity to visit at the: State level; County level; various clinics and sit in on very many important meetings. She also met with all level personnel which enabled her to better understand the type of work we are doing here.

Visits to various university hospitals only enforced the improved quality of care. The former Soviet Union used to boast of a low mortality rate to the Western world which evidently was manufactured to make communistic life very idealistic. In reality, the first year after the coup things came to life. Infant mortality rate was high. In Lithuania, the infant death rate in was 16.4 per 1000 births in 1994. It has been reduced to 12.4 per 1000 in 1995. Each year, with the help of this program and the efficiency of the medical staffs in Lithuania 150 children have a chance to a normal life without the need for institutionalizing.



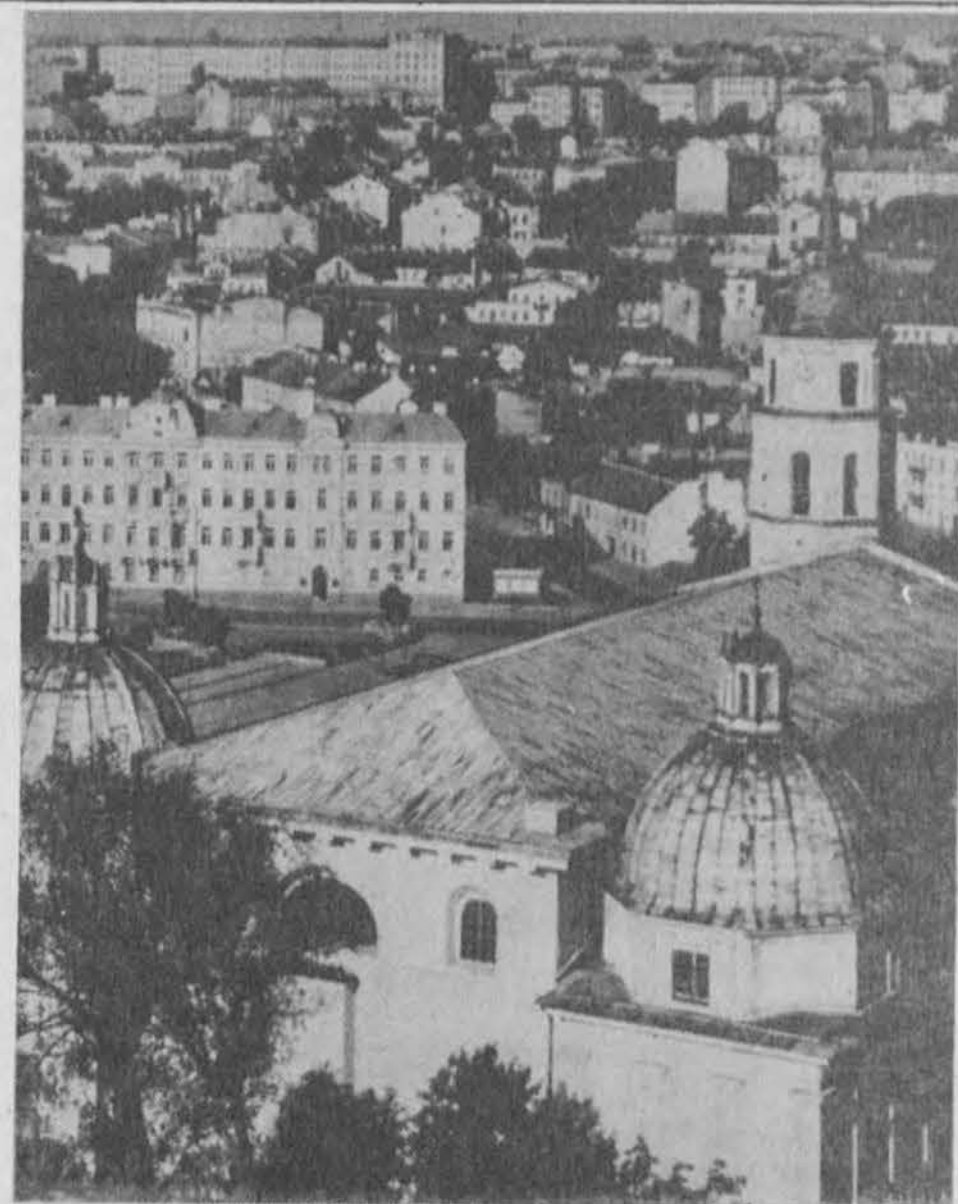
Minister of Health (left) Dr. Antanas Vinkus and UIC Prof. Dr. Dharmapuri Vidyasagar in Vilnius.

Photo by Francis Šlutas



Brand new twins born at the University of Vilnius Clinics.

Photo by Francis Šlutas



A view of Vilnius from the Hill of Gediminas.

WORLD EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS: POLAND 1997

From May 25 to June 1, 1997, the 46th World Eucharistic Congress under the banner of Eucharist and Freedom will be held in Wrocław. The motto of the Congress, which will take place for the first time in Poland, is "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5.1).

Numerous conferences, seminars and lectures in seven languages will be held in the city's churches and the People's Hall, which is a splendid modern building built in 1912. The pastoral and liturgical part will include a celebration of the Holy Mass accompanied by conferences.

The dispensing of holy sacraments, such as Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick will also take place. Other events planned during the Congress include a ceremonial Corpus Christi procession and a night watch for reconciliation of the Christians.

The Congress' organizers have also remembered about cultural events. They are planning a Jean Michel Jarre concert as well as a concert of the most famous Polish boys choir from Poznan. The participants most likely will have a chance to see one performance of the Polish national operas, Halka or the Haunted Manor by Stanislaw Moniuszko.

The capital of Lower Silesia, Wrocław is one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in Western Poland. Situated at the foot of the Sudety Mountains and on the banks of the Odra River, it is a unique city of 12 islands and 112 bridges.

Wrocław's complex and dramatic history is reflected in the city's monuments. The oldest part of the city, Ostrow Tumski, contains one of the most beautiful sacred architecture buildings preserved from medieval times. Wrocław Town Hall is one of the most splendid Gothic buildings in central Europe. The biggest baroque interior in Poland, the Leopoldine Hall, can be found in the 17th century University building.

The City of Wrocław is a thriving cultural center. Its theaters, including the Opera, Musical Theater and Philharmonic; various clubs, museums and galleries, provide a continuous series of artistic events. Internationally acknowledged musical festivals have become the city's cultural landmark. The biggest of them is WRATISLAVIA CANMTANS. The biggest cultural attraction is the Panorama Raclawicka. A gigantic rotunda accommodates 120 meters wide and 15 meters high panoramic painting which depicts the battle of Raclawice fought on April 7, 1794 where Tadeusz Kosciuszko defeated the imperial armies.

Wrocław, with a population of 650,000 inhabitants, is a wonderful city with fascinating history and unique beauty. Participants of the 46th World Eucharistic Congress, will have an opportunity to see and experience its various attractions.

Many bishops, clergy as well as lay people already expressed an interest in attending this unique event in the life of the universal Church. It is also an occasion to visit various religious sites, historical places, and attend cultural events.

As the enclosed letter indicates, our agency has been selected by Henry Cardinal Gulbinowicz, Metropolitan of Wrocław, to coordinate pilgrimages from the United States and is working closely with the Eucharistic Committee in Wrocław, Poland. May I just mention that on such occasions hotel accommodations are at a premium and Polish American Tours (PAT), working through Eucharistic Committee, has the advantage of providing the best of accommodations at an affordable price. We have many years of experience in organizing various pilgrimages to Poland and other countries for many priests and bishops throughout the United States.

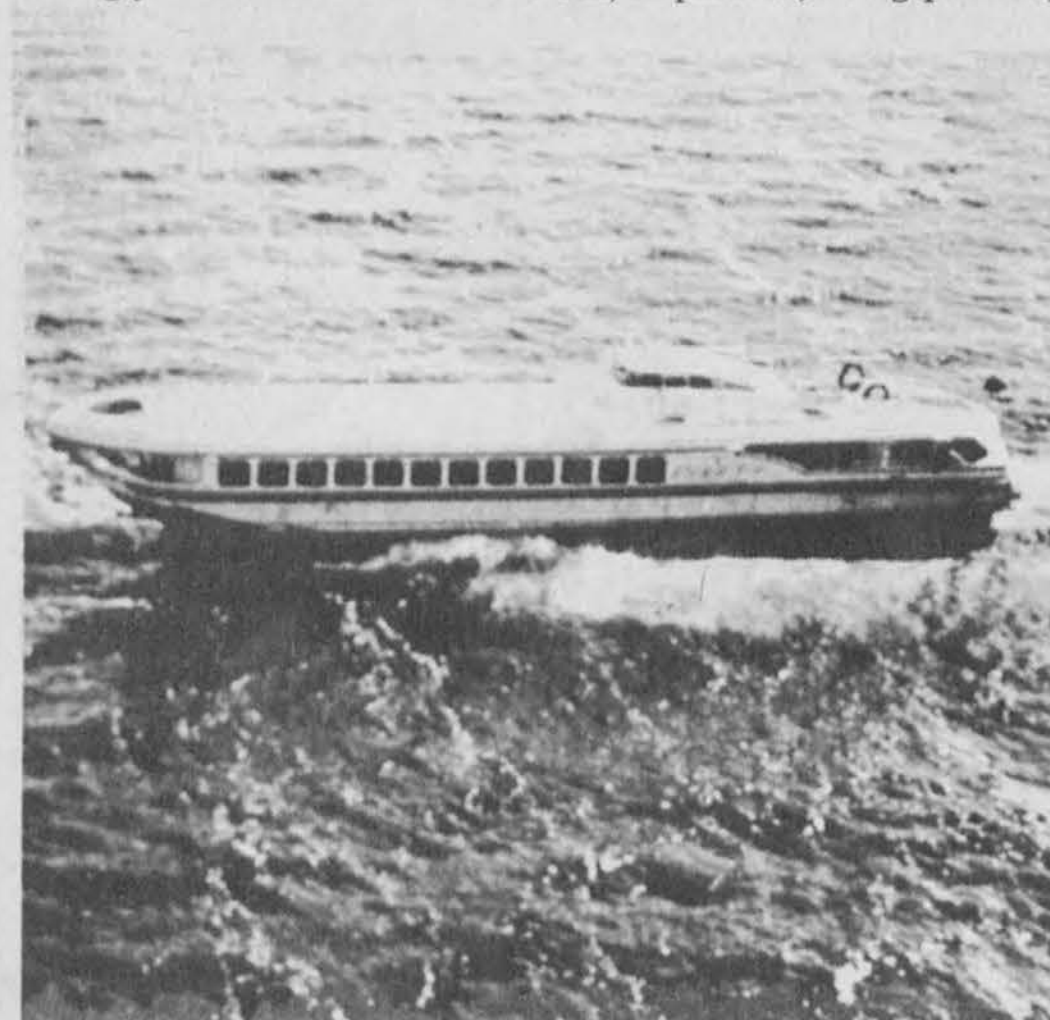
The Lithuanian Bishop Paulius Baltakis, OFM, (Brooklyn, N.Y.) has been invited by Cardinal Gulbinowicz to attend this important event for all Catholics of the world.

OUTING ENDS IN TRAGEDY

Kaunas, Sep. 05, BNS - When a cutter turned over in the Kaunas lagoon on Wednesday, five pupils of the Kaunas Jesuit high school drowned.

Pupils of the ninth grade in humanities on an outing requested the owner of a boat to sail them around the lagoon. A teacher, Alma Melnikienė, and, according to preliminary information, nine pupils boarded the cutter. The boat's owner allowed a girl to steer the cutter. She made a sharp turn, and the cutter turned over at a place where the water's depth was about 15 meters.

Other pupils who observed the tragedy from the shore called life guards for help who by accident were on shore after the end of the summer season, but they were unable to save five pupils. One girl was taken to the Kaunas Academic Clinic to be revived.



A tourist boat "Raketa" in the River Nemunas.

BALZEKAS MUSEUM OF LITHUANIAN CULTURE CELEBRATES 30TH BIRTHDAY



Stanley Balzekas, Jr.

The Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture was founded in 1966 as an organization dedicated to the collection, research, interpretation and exhibiting of folk art, fine art, historic artifacts and literature related to Lithuanian culture in the United States and throughout the world.

At the same time, Balzekas Museum is an advocate of multicultural exchange, constantly organizing temporary exhibits of local and international artists at the museum, serving as a major cultural institution and art gallery of the Chicago's South-West side.

In 30 years, the Balzekas Museum has grown from the small collection into a big cultural and civic center with Folk Art, Fine Art, Numismatic, Rare Maps, Performing Art, and Genealogy Departments, Library and Research Center. The Museum enjoys support of over 3,000 members, 7,000 donors and active supporters. Over 46,000 people visit the Museum every year.

Throughout its history, the Museum organized thousands of folk and professional art exhibitions by artists of national and international stature. It has also organized lectures, slide and video presentations, workshops, classes and other programs about folk art, fine art, music and literature.

The Balzekas Museum has archives encompassing tens of thousands of artists files, exhibition catalogues, photographs, recordings, sheet music, rare maps and prints. The Museum's library houses approximately 40,000 volumes and a collection

of over 300 rare books related to Lithuanian culture and history.

The Museum is a foremost recognized not-for-profit cultural organization dedicated to the cultural enrichment of the State of Illinois. The Museum is a member of many professional art organizations, such as the Association of American Museums, Coalition of Community Cultural Centers, Ethnic Cultural Preservation Council. The Museum presents outreach programs to youth, seniors and adult groups at local schools and libraries, as well as at many public, corporate and cultural institutions. It organizes daily programs for young people at its Children's Museum of Immigrant History. The Education in Arts component of the Museum accomplishes a very important art education role in the community.

Department of Immigration History and Genealogy, chaired by Jessie Daraska, enjoys enormous popularity. It organizes seminars and conferences on family research, genealogy trips to Lithuania. The department is completing Lithuanian Pioneer Project, research dedicated to arrival and lives of early Lithuanian immigrants of America.

The Museum publishes two periodical publications: bi-monthly "Lithuanian Museum Review", and semi-annual "Genealogija".

The Museum celebrates its 30th Anniversary with blockbuster exhibitions: Smuggled Art: Non-conformist Lithuanian art from Soviet Period in Private American Collections (March 8 - June 15, 1996); Perfection In Exile: Chicago Immigrant Art (September 13 - November 11, 1996), Freiburg 1946: Importance and Impact of the Ecole des Arts et Metiers on the 20th century Lithuanian culture (December 1996 - March 1997).

Lithuanian Museum is open 7 days a week, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission: \$4 for adults; \$3 - students and seniors; \$1 - children under 12. Members - free; address - 6500 S. Pulaski, Chicago, IL 60629.

Danas Lapkus,
Curator



Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago, 6500 S. Pulaski Rd.

VILNIUS AND MADISON, WI - SISTER CITIES

BY NIJOLĖ SEMĖNAITĖ-ETZWILER

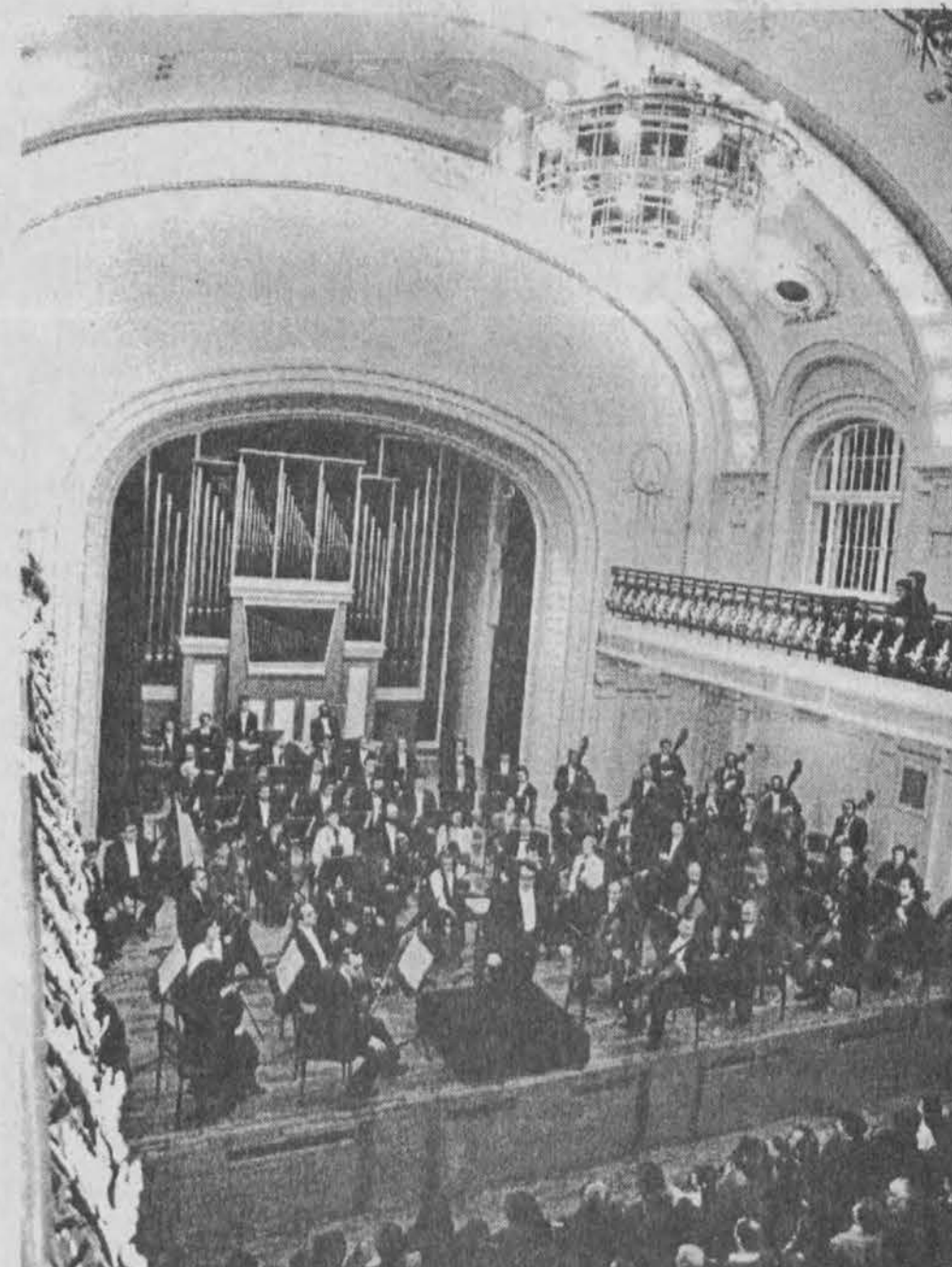
10 years ago an ecumenical internationally minded group of idealists, living in Madison, Wisconsin, proposed a sister cities union between Madison and a Soviet city of like size. Their goal was to further peace and understanding between the people of both cities through communication and exchange. When their first choice Tashkent, was rejected by Moscow, they requested and were granted permission to court Vilnius for their sister-city. To publicize

their efforts, and alert the public to the proceedings, they held a fair at which they displayed literature, artifacts and pictures from Lithuania. At this point, Madison's Lithuanian community, numbering no more than 10 families, entered into the dialogue. Although most of Madison's Lithuanians were overjoyed that their homeland was finally recognized by the general American public, they categorically opposed any reference to "soviet Lithuania" as

well as any dealings with Russians in Lithuania. They caught the eye of the local media and were allowed to present their viewpoint on the 6 o'clock news, they then went on to approach City Hall and present their conditions for a sister-cities relationship. The Lithuanians were joined in their demands by a Jewish organization who had its own list of conditions.

In the end, the demands were not met by the Soviet occupied Vilnius, and the Madison - Vilnius Sister Cities charter was not ratified in 1986. The Madison - Vilnius Sister Cities charter was signed in 1991, when Lithuania was already as sovereign country.

It was not not Madison's first, nor last, sister-city union. Madison is sister to 6 other cities around the world: Oslo and Freiburg. (Germany), in Europe; Managua, Arcatao and Camaguey in Latin America, and Bac Giang, Vietnam. Her relationship to Vilnius is based on their many similarities: they share a like population and climate, they are each the seat of government and the site of a major university, and both are urban centers in an agricultural land. From its inception, Madison Vilnius Sister Cities has promoted exchanges of students' academics, doctors, legislators, media, and artists. With the help of the University of Wisconsin, it has been particularly active in the field of medicine. It has co-sponsored visits by the Virgo Women's Chorus from the University of Vilnius, and has sent Credit Union personnel to Lithuania. It donates to the Sunlight Organization (Saulute), and is investigating corporate funding for Vilnius charities. Since the independence of Lithuania, Madison Vilnius Sister Cities has reassessed its role to provide practical assistance, while still continuing its people-to-people focus. From its original idealistic philosophy to its present pragmatic goals, the



The Lithuanian National Philharmonic orchestra

AABS/JBS VITOLS PUBLICATION PRIZE FOR SCHOLARS IN THE BALTIC STATES

To encourage the development of comparative Baltic studies in the Baltic states, the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies announces a publication prize for the best original scholarly articles written by scholars residing in the Baltic states who have received their highest degree in a non-Western country.

Three prizes, one each of the US \$500, \$300, and \$200 will be awarded to authors or co-authors of articles submitted by 1 March 1997 to AABS Executive Office, 111 Knob Hill Road, Hackettstown, NJ 07840-4222, USA. Prize-winning articles will be published in the "Journal of Baltic Studies." To be eligible for consideration, the articles must satisfy the following criteria:

1. They must be written in English or German.
2. They must be based on original research.
3. They must be previously unpublished in any language.
4. They must deal in comparative fashion with at least two of the three Baltic nations or their culture, or with their interactions with other nations or cultures in historical or contemporary perspective.
5. They must be approximately 5000-7000 words in length exclusive of scholarly apparatus (notes), and comply with the scholarly style requirements of the "Journal of Baltic Studies."

Contributions will be judged by a panel of judges appointed by the President of AABS, which will include the Editor of the "Journal of Baltic Studies" and may decide to award no prizes or to distribute the prizes differently. The panel's decision is final.

FRIENDS OF THE BALTICS AT WORK

Walter Perlick, Dean of the School of Business Administration at California State University Sacramento has an ambitious goal for his school. He wants to develop CSUS into a premier school of international business and where has he aimed his sights? Why, the Baltics and Eastern Europe of course!! Now, we here at the Friends of the Baltics already know that Eastern Europe is one of the hottest regions this decade for international business and soon others will also know. Dean Perlick and his School of Business Administration are presently completing the second year of a multi-year USAID funded project for Latvia, in which they have been providing instruction and counseling in the areas of taxation, entrepreneurship, international business, etc. The first group of Latvians arrived in Sacramento, California in the Summer of 1995 for 30 days of lectures and visits with businesses, non-profit organizations, and chambers of commerce. Those twelve individuals then returned to Latvia and conducted training programs based on the various business skills they learned. The second group of Latvians in the second phase of this program returned to Latvia only a week ago. Next Summer there will be a third and final group.

The final goal of this program is for the program participants to put together a Latvian development center that will help train other Latvians in the above areas. In effect, they are training a cadre of Latvians to train others.

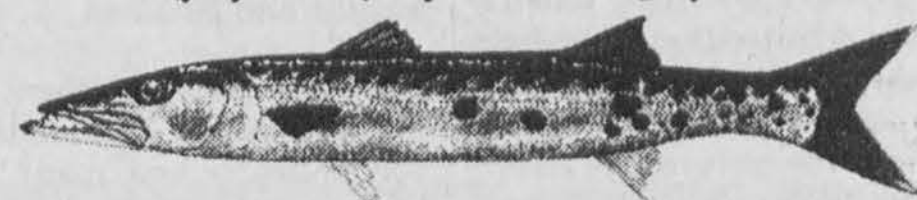
sister city relationship has grown and changed, but it has stayed true to its first purpose: to promote peace, friendship and understanding between the people of Madison and the people of Vilnius. The board of directors of MVSC is made up of Americans, Lithuanian Americans, and Lithuanians. They welcome your comments and suggestions. They also invite you to join the MVSC organization. For information, please write to Madison Vilnius Sister City Committee, P.O. Box 55034, Madison, WI 53705.

Dean Perlick's intent in going to the Baltic States in July, is multi-fold. First, he needs to establish contact with his Latvian counterparts to see that things are going as planned. And, secondly, he will establish contacts in Vilnius to develop new educational exchange programs or another program along the lines of the current Latvian program. After he finishes his business in the Baltic he will travel next to Minsk to begin developing support for a Byelorussian program. So, where does someone turn to for insider information on the Best of the Best Baltic contacts? Why, to Friends of the Baltics of course!! It didn't take us long (2 seconds) to recommend he contact Audrone Zubaviciene, Peace Corps Program Specialist for Small Enterprise Development in Lithuania. For those of us who know and love Audrone, we know she certainly knows many people! Once Friends of the Baltics introduced Dean Perlick and Audrone, via E-mail, they were off and running developing agendas and goals. The Friends of the Baltics is very grateful that Audrone will be able to facilitate Dean Perlick meeting the necessary people in Vilnius during July. With the vital level of support, at the highest levels, in Lithuania Dean Perlick will be able to recreate the same benefits and opportunities for Lithuanians that his Business School's program has created for Latvians!

It's been a pleasure to work with Audrone because of her great enthusiasm. Audrone says, "Friends of the Baltics is a great initiative. It gives us, Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, especially those who worked with Peace Corps Volunteers for some time, a wonderful feeling that America is not so far away and it is possible to find friends of the Baltics almost everywhere." We're positive that, because of Audrone, Dean Perlick will meet the right people and create a substantive international educational program that will benefit many Lithuanians!

"The Baltic Bridge"
July 1996

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A display case in the souvenir store at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture. The museum has many beautiful Lithuanian artifacts, books and gift items.