

GARSAS • Lithuanian U.S. Alliance of America

English Section

Edited by P. P. CINIKAS, M.I.C.

LITHUANIANS IN AUSTRALIA

A great number of Lithuanians have fled from their country along with the Germans who were retreating from the Soviet front during the 2nd World War. The Germans allowed the refugees into their country for they were desperately short of manpower. It was not easy for the refugees in Germany as there was acute shortage of food.

After the war was over all refugees were collected into displaced persons camps.

Lithuanians lived in Germany for about 5 to 6 years (1944-1949) cherishing hopes to return to their own country. These hopes then diminished and all started to look for new countries to start new lives.

The majority of Lithuanians migrated to the United States of America and Canada, but some have chosen other countries, among which was Australia. It is believed that about 12,000 to 15,000 Lithuanians migrated to Australia between 1949-1952. Now there are only 10,000 left: some having migrated to the United States of America, others having died of old age.

Lithuanians settled mostly in Australia's major cities: Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane. Few are living in country towns.

The beginning in Australia was unbelievably hard. First of all the Australian scenery was frightening: grey grass, grey tree leaves, harsh hot sunrays in summer transforming all greenery into a bleached shade of yellow. Initially all migrants experienced this very unpleasant feeling when brought from ships to dusty Bonegilla and Bathurst migrant centres where they had to live in overcrowded conditions. The tin huts were unbearably hot in summer and icy cold in winter. All migrants were issued passports in which men's occupation was described as "laborer" and women's as "domestic". Men were sent to various jobs: wood cutting, railways, cleaning, etc. Women with children were sent to small country town camps: Cowra, Parkes etc., which were similar to Bathurst and Bonegilla: hot, dusty, depressing. The women without children worked as maids, kitchenmaids, cleaners, factory workers, etc.

Soon after the Second World War was over, Australians de-

cidated to have an influx of migrants into their country without making proper arrangements for increased population with regard to housing, schools, teachers, etc.

Lithuanians are a nation of people who are accustomed to work hard, to save. Soon nearly everyone had saved sufficiently to purchase a block of land and to start building their own homes, thus their biggest problem — housing, was overcome.

Lithuanians regard education for their children as the most important aim in life. They encourage them in every possible way to complete the studies they undertake. There is quite a high percentage of young Lithuanians in Australia who, after having graduated from universities, still seek higher degrees, thus becoming lecturers, researchers, professors, surgeons, etc. There are very few Lithuanians in Australia who have been unable to obtain graduate certificates.

Lithuanians in Australia formed a very strong community which fulfills a lot of functions: cultural activities, Sunday Schools, sports and various gatherings enabling Lithuanians to meet each other. Lithuanian youth is occupied with various activities: sports, folk dancing, chess, etc. Lithuanian youth in Australia leads a dignified and clean life.

Today it is obvious that Lithuanians in Australia have done well: they own their own homes without encumbrances, cars, TV sets, radiograms, washing machines, etc. Their homes are tastefully furnished and decorated, also kept spotlessly clean. They love to entertain friends, their bank accounts are quite "handsome". Now they venture out to travel around the world, the main purpose for travelling being to visit Lithuania, as there are still many relatives living under most severe Soviet regime. On these visits Lithuanians travel loaded with clothing and footwear which they distribute among their relatives.

There is a general belief among Lithuanians living in the free world that Lithuanians living in Australia are not as well off as Lithuanians in USA or Canada.

Aren't they?



Edis Palubinskas, Australian basketball star, who was recruited to play basketball for Louisiana State University in 1972. He is known as the "Tiger from Canberra". Americanized Palubinskas toured Europe last summer with the All-Star Lithuanian Americans and caused a sensation with his rugged type of basketball playing.

Let's see what has become of Lithuanians in Australia whose passports were marked: "laborers" and "domestics". True, at first they worked hard in factories, railways, in cleaning jobs, etc. but they slowly moved into better-class occupations: taxi drivers, office employees, home builders, shopkeepers, building partners, real estate agents, etc. There are quite a few Lithuanians who have become wealthy as real estate agents, factory owners, home builders, taxi-fleet owners. There is a great number of families who, besides owning their own homes, own a few flats or a house for renting thus having ascertained security for their old age.

Lithuanians in Australia, when they look back at their very beginning in this country smile, shake their heads and ask themselves:

— Was it really me then suffering such a hardship, or is it just a bad dream?

Lithuanians are living in Australia peacefully and contentedly now, due to the democracy and freedom which Australians were able to establish in their country. There is no racial hatred. The living standard is very high and there are many possibilities for future prosperity.

Lithuanians, living in Australia, remain tightly bound among themselves and with all other Lithuanians throughout the world. Their one strong desire is that in their lifetime Lithuania should become free again. Despite the good living conditions in their adopted country Lithuanians experienced deep sadness in their hearts because of their countrymen in their old country Lithuania who are still suffering unbelievable hardships under the Soviet occupation.

Agnė Lukšytė

Lietuvių Dienos Spt. 1973

CHRONICLE OF THE LITHUANIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

(Issue No. 4, 1973, Part One)

"The Chronicle of the Lithuanian Catholic Church," is an underground periodical. Issues one and two were received last November. The third issue is still missing. Patterned after the well known Russian-language "Chronicle of Current Events," the Lithuanian periodical presents a detailed survey of religious development and governmental persecution in the Soviet-occupied country. Following is the first part of the "Chronicle" (No. 4) in English translation.

Party Criticizes Itself for "Administrative Attacks"

On August 12, 1972, an article by K. Rimaitis, "The Church People Are Adapting Themselves," appeared in the newspaper "Sovjetskaya Litva." It said among others that in the fight against religion "untold harm may be perpetrated by administrative attacks, all kinds of insults of the feelings of the believers. Incorrect methods of the fight against religion not only fail to destroy the basis for the spread of faith, but, on the contrary, lead to the increase of religious fanaticism, to secret forms of rites and cult, foment dissatisfaction and distrust among believers, and incite them."

K. Rimaitis repeats the old principle of the atheists, demanding a compromiseless fight against religion. In case of a fierce reaction by the believers, this principle allows for a retreat, in order to allow the believers to quiet down and, after finding the best manner of fighting, for another blow.

The reaction of Lithuanian priests and believers against restrictions of religious freedom began in the summer of 1968 and reached its culmination early in 1972. The arrests of priests Juozas Zdebskis and Prosperas Bubnys unleashed a flood of protests by the believers, describing the persecutions of the faithful. The Soviet government paid no attention to these protests of the people and did not react to them, treating them exactly as the 1968-1971 protests of the clergy.

Believers Demonstrate at Priests' Trial

The first most distinct conflict between the faithful and the government officials took place on the day of Rev. J. Zdebskis' trial in Kaunas, Ožeskiė Street. The militiamen had to use force to disperse the crowd that had gathered by the court-house to honor the priest on trial.

The concern of the authorities became especially grave when they heard that signatures were being collected to accompany a memorandum to the Soviet government. Government officials thought that this time, too, they could pass the appeal of the believers in silence. Yet the memorandum of the Catholics triggered a chain reaction of unexpected events. The document signed by 17,000 believers, transmitted to the Secretary General of the Central Committee via the U.N.O. Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, soon became known to the entire world. Public opinion greeted the bold action of the faithful and condemned the restrictions of human rights in the Soviet Union.

As the situation grew more and more complicated, the Soviet government decided that it needed rectifying: Monsignor C. Krivaitis, Administrator of the Archbishopric of Vilnius, was compelled in April to declare to the foreign countries that religious freedom existed in Lithuania. The faithful in Lithuania found out about this in-

terview with the "ELTA" news agency only through foreign radio. There are rumors that Administrator C. Krivaitis gave to the correspondents a rather different version from the one that was published officially.

Bishop Forced to Sign Misleading "Pastoral Letter"

On April 11, all bishops and administrators now in office were summoned to the curia of the Archbishopric of Kaunas. They were forced by the government officials to sign a so-called "pastoral letter." The government sought to use it to compromise the organizers and the signatories of the memorandum. Although on April 30 some priests read from their pulpits the above mentioned letter, changed, abbreviated, or complete, the expected results never came about: Some listeners did not understand what exactly was being condemned in the letter, while others became indignant and painfully experienced the government's effort to use the spiritual hierarchy for promotion of atheism. The foreign press soon published reports about the shameful act of coercion.

The security officials were trying to unearth the organizers of the memorandum and the channels by which information on the Lithuanian Catholic Church reached the West, they were surprised by the tragic events of May (1972). On the 14th of that month a young man, Romas Kalanta, immolated himself in the park of Kaunas, in protest against the violation of freedom in Lithuania. Everybody was deeply moved and commented about this tragic protest against national rightlessness, coercion, and the Soviet government's arbitrary treatment of nations. The impeded funeral was transformed into an elemental demonstration demanding national and religious freedom. The army and the militiamen managed to take care of the demonstrators by using harsh means, but the government bigwigs became disturbed — it turned out that freedom was desired not only for the priests, but also by "their own people," i.e., the young people educated in the Communist way since early childhood. Among the arrestees there were komsomols, born and matured during the years of Soviet rule.

The tide seemed to ebb in the summer of 1972. There were only several assaults by Soviet officials against children who were preparing themselves for their First Communion: in N. Radviliškis and Sunskai. Several priests were sentenced by administrative order for failure to remove children from the altar. The Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs, J. Ruginis, almost completely stopped persecuting priests.

Regime Seeks to Convince West of Normalcy

Doubtlessly, it was a conscious atheist move seeking to restore tranquility in Lithuania and simultaneously to do some rebuilding of their prestige which had declined in the world opinion. They may have even sought to convince the world and the Vatican that the disturbances were triggered by the tactlessness of a few officials. Therefore, all that was supposed to have been liquidated. The life of the faithful was ostensibly back in its normal groove.

How do the believers themselves and the priests evaluate the present situation of the Lithuanian Catholic Church?

(Continued in the next issue)

PEOPLE EVENTS PLACES

Violeta Nesukaitis, Canada's table tennis champion who was one of the team members that visited China in 1972 and caused the great break through into China, is considered one of the top table tennis stars of Canada and is one of the players that is giving Canada worldwide status in table tennis competitions.

Billy Jankunis, of Staten Island, N. Y., billed as the "World's greatest high school high-jumper", has leaped seven feet one and one half inches, last summer. He is graduated from Midland Beach high school, N. Y. and his coach has high hopes for him in the coming years for Olympic competitions. During the Sears competitions at Des Moines, Iowa, he lost out to Terry Burris of Whitehall high of Columbus, Ohio, and was placed second when he missed the bar at seven feet.

Valdas Adamkus, assistant director of the Midwest Environment Controls, has been named "The Man from EPA" by the NBC television network and has featured him on several nationwide "Today" programs.

Sister M. Gregory (Josephine Lukauskas), member of the Congregation of St. Casimir, died Oct. 15th, at the St. Casimir Infirmary, Chicago, Ill. She entered the community from St. Francis parish, Lawrence, Mass., 49 years ago. She spent most of her life as a teacher in the various schools conducted by the Sisters of St. Casimir.

The Lithuanian Opera Group of Chicago will present Verdi's "Masked Ball" immediately after Easter at Maria High School auditorium. 150 people are involved in the presentation of the opera by all-Lithuanian talent from the Chicago area. V. Marijosius will direct the orchestra; A. Gecys and Alice Stephens will train the choirs; Adolph Valeska is designing the settings; Kazys Ozelis will be stage director.

Dr. Valerija Birute Raulinaitis, director of the Veterans Administration hospital of Leech Farm, Pittsburgh, Pa., since 1971 is the only lady administrator of a vet hospital in the United States.

Angela and Leonard Simutis commemorated their 55th wedding anniversary at home in Park Forest, Ill., where their numerous family gathered to greet them. Leonard Simutis was president of the Lithuanian R. C. Alliance of America for more than twenty years before he retired during the last national convention in 1972.

The "Lithuanian Festival" (Sept. 24 — Oct. 2) sponsored by the Talman Savings and Loan Association of Chicago attracted over 40,000 visitors to its exhibitions of Lithuanian folk art, sculpture, amber, books and paintings. The arrangements for the various exhibitions were made by Sisters of St. Casimir, Maria High School, Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture, Lithuanian Consulate of Chicago and various cultural groups of Chicago. The Lithuanian festival surpassed the various other nationality festivals conducted by the savings bank. Sept 30th featured outdoor programs of song, dance, food and live exhibitions of artists at work.

Virginia Radinas represented Australia in the World Beauty Contest.

Justin Mackiewicz, president of the board of Standard Federal Savings and Loan Association of Chicago, at the age of 85 is the oldest active president of a savings and loan association in Illinois. He commemorated the occasion with an open house at his desk in the bank Sept. 22nd.



The Museum and Archive of Lithuanistics in Adelaide, Australia.

VINCAS MYKOLAITIS-PUTINAS

MIDNIGHT

There is but one and only hour —
The midnight gay,
When to the distant stars above
You stop and pray.

Forever glowint silent skies
Such joy impart,
It seems that all the stars descend
Into your heart.
Entire existence blends to one —
The azure blue,
Which like a calmly rolling sea
Submerges you.

There is no sky, there is no prayer,
There is no sin;
Whatever word your heart may say —
Heaven will win.

(Translated by Nades Rastehis)

"POLISH PORTRAIT"

An Autobiography, by Michael Twardowski, The Third Press, New York, \$6.95; account of aristocratic country estate owners' life from before W.W. I to Poland's end under Nazis and Reds.

Author (a count), ultra-patriotically claims that Polish Army "was performing a great civilizing task in the eastern provinces, teaching the growing youth... of the fundamentals of a more civilized life" — that's about Ukraine; Poland omitted the name of Lithuania, once a greatest state in Europe — from Baltic to Black seas — after its political union 5 centuries ago, called itself Polish Commonwealth — confirmation of only one half of it by treaty with Soviets was disappointment to this school of Polish patriotism; "Baltic States traditionally attached to Poland and her civilization now came within the Russian sphere of influence

flagrantly denies existence of their historical independence and antagonism toward Russians. Author's: "Germans tried to promote discord between Lithuanians and Poles" "doctrine" is false — I, the reviewer here, a Lithuanian (volunteer in Lithuania's army fighting for independence against Russians, also living through hated German occupation before that), know that: Author calls an "earnest effort" the Polish ultimatum to Lithuania in 1938 — to establish diplomatic relations despite Polish occupation of one third of Lithuania, or to be totally occupied; and, author doesn't even mention that resurrected Poland had organized an abortive "insurrection" to forcibly "rejoin" Lithuanians whose struggle for total independence was caused by polonization and russification of the country.

Arėjus Vitkauskas

Are You Proud of Your Lithuanian Ancestry?

Certainly you are, and you should be.

Prepared by JOSEPH B. LAUČKA

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CROSSES (KRYŽIAI)

Vincas Ramonas
(Translated by Milton Stark)

Do you know why they deported him to Siberia? Did you hear? What whiskey does! The man had been drinking and began to complain that it was hard to live, that the Bolshevik system was no good. They came in canvas shoes, robbed the leather from all the stores and shipped to Moscow. No leather, no work for Valiukas; also no bread. And the man blurted out: "If man is only an animal, then why don't they strip him of his skin too? At least there would be some sort of material for footwear." So Giruzis informed against him.

Kreivenas hastened away. It was as though he were afraid of being late somewhere.

Grustas menaced him with his finger and went home himself. Having watered the calves, he left the stable with the pail and was bound for the house. Chancing to glance in the direction of the burial ground, he saw a man there, cutting down the cross. Dropping the pail, he climbed over the fence and ran across the pasture.

"Kreivenas! Man! What are you doing?"

Kreivenas faced about, scowled fiercely and swung the ax harder yet. The cross cracked, leaned farther over and slowly fell to the grass. The crossbeam caught on a linden and, springing off, fell beside the fence.

"What have you done? Was this cross in your way?"

"Yes. It's crowded. So crowded that I'm going to cut down the lindens too. There will be more arable land."

"Do you lack land? Man, man! There will be more than enough, you'll see."

"Why should decayed posts like this be left standing? Finally, is this my land here, or yours? Why do you stick your nose in other people's business?"

"In other people's business! Posts! It may be just a post to you, but people used to gather here, they used to come singing hymns, they used to kneel down and pray. They prayed to God, for everyone, for everyone — for the dead and the living. And for me, and for you."

"For me? I didn't ask them to pray for me and I'm not asking them to."

"You despise the cross.... You and others like you. But what kind of cross have you hung on all of us? You, all of you, for whom there is no God. Is it not your children who are slaughtering us now? Here is your own Joseph... Giruzis. He betrays innocent people to the hangman. He goes to arrest them himself. He arrested Arminas, he arrested Puceta."

"Arminas arrested Puceta?" Kreivenas drew back.

"He had you denounced too, only Balaika took your part. That's our cross, all these Giruzises. And who is to blame? You and others like you. God knows, maybe we're all to blame. For the sins of all of us... Maybe God will forgive us if we bear this cross patiently. We didn't obey God as we should. And if we did love Him, then we forgot that we must lead our erring sons back to the path of right. We made no effort. We were content with ourselves. But now maybe we'll change for the better..."

"Change for the better, go on sighing, but there's no reason why I should sigh. Ignorance speaks from your lips. Finally... what's the big fuss over... He shouts... as though somebody killed a man... Why, tomorrow or the next day, it would've toppled over of its own accord. What's there to SHOUTABOUT Can't you see it's all rotten?"

Grustas sighed weefully. That sigh annoyed Kreivenas so much that he jumped forward, tore off the leaden crucifix and held it out to Grustas.

"Take it with you. You can cast yourself a bullet to shoot the devil."

Kreivenas, the hero of Crosses, expected social and economic salvation in the Soviet system. This made him a loyal servant of the regime. The moment Kreivenas expresses his disillusion, the Communists crucify him.
(Baltic Literature — Aleksis Rumbulis)

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"Congressional Record", 1973 m. leidiny sen. James L. Buckley įdejo Vliko pirm. J. K. Valiūno pareiškimą apie Helsinkio įvykius liepos pradžioje. Visi biuletenio gavėjai, ypač kraštų, kur vartojama anglų kalba, prašomi padauginti ir jį paskleisti tarp lietuvių ir svetimtaučių. (Elta)

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Thank you for your interest and cooperation.

Lubomyr R. Wynar, Director
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