

bridges



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Front Cover: The Lithuanian Community of the USA, together with the support of the Lithuanian Youth Union of the USA and the Lithuanian Foundation, has implemented the project "Roots" on August 12-16, in Southern Illinois. Project participants: Gytis Kriaučiūnas, Morta Baltrusaitytė, Lukas Urbonavičius, Margarita Swisler, Petras Rušėnas, Vilius Žalpys, Austėja Stanevičiūtė, Marija Čyvaitė, Audra Kriaučiūnaitė, and Gerda Šimkevičiūtė. Photo by Daina Cyvas

Back Cover: On August 11, 2021, the disembarkation of the project "Roots" team took place in Lemont, on the Hill of Crosses near the World Lithuanian Center. Photo by Daina Cyvas

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from the editor

Dear readers,

Traditionally, September is the beginning of fall. Days are getting shorter, nights are getting longer, and we tend to reflect more on the work that has been done throughout the year. In this issue of Bridges, you will have a chance to read about a fascinating new project that the young people of the Lithuanian American Community accomplished this summer. A team of young men and women, led by Vilius Žalpins and Marija Čyvaitė, decided to participate in the project called „Roots” and fix a neglected Lithuanian cemetery in the south of Illinois. At the same time, they learned a chapter of Lithuanian American history. It is a meaningful project that should be continued next year.

History needs to be learned. Even if it is old. The history of our nation gives us strong roots. Another article in this issue is written by Prof. Juozas Skirius of Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University. In it, Prof. Skirius reflects on the commemoration of the May 3rd Constitution and gives us a chance to remember this chapter of the Lithuanian history.

As you might remember, I always encourage our readers to write their stories and contribute to Bridges. The stories of our lives are small pieces of colorful glass that together make up a beautiful colorful mosaic of our lives – the lives of Lithuanian Americans. Some of our readers respond to my call. In this issue, you will read a beautiful piece by Professor Giedrė Kumpikas about her trips to France.

September is also the beginning of the new school year. Students return to their classrooms. Even if some are still cautious of the COVID-19 virus and prefer to stay at home, many are happy to go back to the classrooms and interact with their friends and teachers. Lithuanian education in the United States is very strong. We have 41 schools in 22 states. We wish all the teachers and all the students a good, healthy, and safe new school year.

Sincerely,
Karilė Vaitkutė
Editor



Chicago Lithuanian Saturday School starts 2021/2022 school year. Photo by Rita Janz

Learning the Lithuanian American history in a unique way

Karilė Vaitkutė



Audra Kriauciūnaitė taking branches of sassafras trees away from the cemetery. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė

Where is Ledford? That was my first question after I learned that a group of young Lithuanian Americans is going to that town to fix an old long-unattended Lithuanian cemetery. Ledford, Dorrisville, Harrisburg. These are just a few names of little towns in Saline County in southern Illinois. They are unheard of for many. However, a hundred and more years ago, they were quite well-known locations for Lithuanian immigrants. These were coal mining towns, and Lithuanian immigrants looked for work in coal mines. Traditionally, we are used to thinking that coal mining was just in Pennsylvania. However, in Illinois, there were hundreds of mines as well. If we were to look at the data of the 1910 census, we would see that half of the residents of Ledford and Dorrisville were Lithuanians. To be exact, 75 of those who lived in Saline County said they were born in Lithuania. Muskavic, Mekionis, Maslaski... However, 489 residents told the census takers that they were born in Russia. Szerksnis, Balandis, Zimont... Of course, now we know that in 1910 when Lithuania was not an independent country, immigrants from Lithuania were identified as immigrants from Russia and were thought of as born in Russia. But the names tell us they were Lithuanian.

And so, what was quite a large Lithuanian community a

century ago, now is gone. Some died, some moved. There is nobody left to tend to the graves of Lithuanian ancestors. The idea to revive parts of Lithuanian American history through restoring old Lithuanian cemeteries came to Vilius Žalpyš, a Lithuanian American who lives in Portland, Oregon. A few years ago, he and a team of volunteers worked on a Lithuanian cemetery in Roslyn, Washington. Now he turned his attention to St. Casimir Lithuanian Cemetery in Ledford, Illinois. Together with a team of Lithuanian American youth, led by the Lithuanian American Youth Association President Marija Čyvaitė, Vilius set out for a five-day adventure in southern Illinois.

It is probable that St. Casimir Lithuanian Cemetery in Ledford, Illinois would never have been found if not for Augustinas and Aistė Žemaitis, a couple of enthusiasts who are charting the map of Lithuanian landmarks globally, not only in the US. They found this unattended cemetery and marked it on their map (<http://map.truelithuania.com/en/39-2/>). Of course, finding the cemetery was one thing, and arranging for it to be fixed is quite another. Vilius Žalpyš had to do his “homework” before he could bring a team of enthusiasts to Ledford. The history of Lithuanian Americans in the area had to be researched, the area itself had to be investigated, and permissions to

work in the cemetery and camp next to it had to be received. Vilius spent many hours doing all this volunteer work.

When I came to the location, I first encountered a young girl dragging a huge branch of sassafras tree on a narrow dirt road through the woods and then throwing it on top of a pile of similar branches. Those were all the trees and bushes that had to be cut to clean the cemetery area. Later in the day, a couple of local residents came with a chain saw and a dump truck and helped to do this hard job. Here we are sharing the thoughts of some of the participants along with photos taken by me and by Daina Cyvas that illustrate this fascinating, exceptional, and much-needed undertaking.



Raising the heavy fallen tombstones was a team effort. From the left: Margarita Swissler, Marija Čyvaitė, Lukas Urbonavičius, Vilius Žalpys, and Gytis Kriaučiūnas. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė

Marija Čyvaitė, 24, works at McMaster-Carr, an industrial supply distributor

In the fall of 2019, after I had returned from a summer spent in Lithuania and Kazakhstan with the project Mission Siberia, I met Vilius Žalpis. Both he and I were guest speakers at Lithuanian Youth Camp Dainava over Labor Day Weekend for a few days of lectures, presentations, and discussions organized by the Ateitininkai. I shared my experiences and thoughts about my experience while on the Mission Siberia expedition, and Vilius talked about his work looking for, discovering, and fixing up/cleaning old Lithuanian cemeteries across the US. He shared

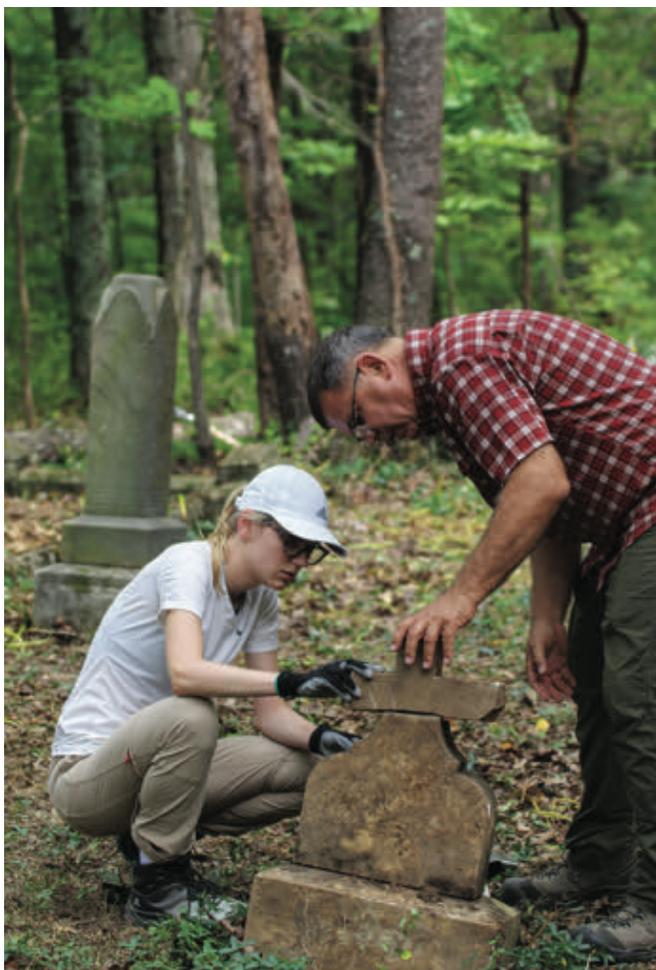
that he would love to find some determined volunteers within the Lithuanian community to travel with him to some of these cemeteries and spend some time cleaning them up. We began talking about the possibility of starting up a youth project, similar to Mission Siberia, for young Lithuanian-Americans during which they could visit Lithuanian US cemeteries and help clean them up. A year later, the Lithuanian American Youth Association and the Lithuanian American Community together with Vilius, and thanks to the generous financial support of the Lithuanian Foundation, began plans for such a project. And so the idea for “Roots” was born, which was to take place in the summer of 2021. I had a wonderful time



Participants of the “Roots” project lived in tents on the edge of the wooded area, in which the Lithuanian cemetery was hiding. Photo by Daina Cyvas



Participants of the “Šaknys” (Roots) project before leaving for Ledford, Illinois. From the left: Austėja Stanevičiūtė, Audra Kriauciūnaitė, Gytis Kriauciūnas, Morta Baltrušaitytė, Petras Rušėnas, Margarita Swisler, Gerda Šimkevičiūtė, Lukas Urbonavičius, and Marija Čyvaitė. Photo by Daina Cyvas



Gerda Šimkevičiūtė and Vilius Žalpyš fix a fallen tombstone. Photo by Daina Cyvas

planning and organizing the project “Roots” together with Vilius, Gerda Šimkevičiūtė (LAYA), and Arvydas Urbonavičius and Loreta Timukienė (LAC). I especially enjoyed being able to apply what I had learned during my time with Mission Siberia to this project.

I was blown away at how much we accomplished over just a few days of hard work in the St Casimir Lithuanian Cemetery of Ledford, IL. We completely transformed the cemetery: we cleared out almost every tree, cleared out all weeds and tall grasses, and readjusted many of the tombstones. We also made a map of the layout of the cemetery. We worked very hard in very humid and hot weather, we lived in tents and made our food over a fire, and we spent our evenings learning about the local people, the history of the Lithuanians who once lived and worked in that area, and discussing what our Lithuanian identity means to each of us.

The most difficult task was probably adjusting the headstones that had fallen over or sunken into the earth. The stones were very heavy and required three or more people to lift, adjust, and reset. There was a lot of heavy lifting involved when removing the parts of the trees that we had cut down. I was most surprised by the engagement we had with locals during our time in Ledford. It felt like we met nearly every person who lived in the town, and all of them were eager to meet us, learn about our purpose, and even help us out. I was very pleasantly surprised by the handful of locals who stayed with us for most of the time we were working and helped us with our work. The most fun part of the entire experience was bonding with the team. Our little village of tents and our outdoor kitchen felt like home by the second day. We worked together to prepare each meal. And we had many lovely, deep conversations around the fire every evening.

Should the “Roots” project continue? Absolutely! My initial goal for this project was that it would happen every year, always in a new place where there are Lithuanian cemeteries in the US, so that as many young people as possible can participate. This project is an excellent opportunity for young Lithuanians to learn about the history of the Lithuanian American community, reconnect with our community’s roots, and help preserve history. We learned a lot this year during our “Roots” trip, and we know how to make it better and effective in the next years.

Morta Baltrušaitytė, 27, a dental assistant

I originally saw a Facebook post about “Šaknys” but I didn’t think too much into it at first. However, the more I saw it on Instagram, the more I realized I wanted to participate. I have been trying to get more involved with Lithuanian organizations and this was a perfect opportunity.

While we were in Ledford, our main goal was to clear the area. We cut down many trees, weed-whacked a lot of overgrowth, and then moved on to the actual gravesites. We were able to stand up many headstones and using a new method of aluminum foil and a soft brush, read a lot of the headstones that seemed illegible. I also had the job of working with another volunteer to try and create a map of the area with coordinates of the entrance, surrounding perimeters, and each gravesite. At the beginning of the project, we estimated a total of 25 gravesites but by the end, we counted 98.

I believe that the most difficult part of the project was the weight of the headstones. They were so heavy that we simply couldn’t lift them and we needed different meth-



Morta Baltrušaitytė shows a foil with an imprint taken from the tombstone. Words on old tombstones were hard to read, and taking foil imprints made the job of deciphering the writing much easier. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė



Project “Roots” leaders, Vilius Žalpys and Marija Čyvaitė standing by the wooden cross they have just made and erected in the Lithuanian cemetery. Photo by Daina Cyvas

ods. I did find it interesting that one of the volunteers, that had come down from Indiana, ended up finding the headstone of her relative and even meeting a second cousin from the area she had never met before! The most thought-provoking part of this job was realizing the sheer amount of gravesites we found. I had never realized that there was a wave of Lithuanians that had gone down to southern Illinois and so many lost their lives during that time.

Audra Kriaučiūnaitė, 28, lives in Indianapolis, IN and works as a school-based therapist helping fifth and sixth-grade students with their mental and behavioral health issues

I learned about the “Roots” project through Marija Čyvas who reached out to me to tell me about the project and encourage me to apply. I was interested in participating in this project because I wanted to get more involved with the Lithuanian community, learn more about Lithuanian history, culture, and traditions, and meet other Lithuanians who are also passionate about staying connected to their heritage. I had heard a little bit about Mission Siberia through Marija, and thought this project sounded like a miniature version of that, but more accessible as it took place here in the United States, so I was excited to see what it was all about. I also love everything to do with nature, camping and living outdoors, so of course, that was a huge motivator also.

During the four days we were in Ledford, Illinois, we

transformed the cemetery, which was quite overgrown and had not previously been touched in many years. When we first entered the cemetery, I saw maybe ten to twenty headstones and sunken graves, but by the time we were finished, we had identified ninety-eight graves of those who had been buried there. We cut down many trees, cut out many plants and thorns, resurrected fallen headstones, and did our best to identify who each grave belongs to. We were fortunate to meet some of the locals in Ledford, Illinois who helped us tremendously by cutting down trees with chainsaws, providing dirt to fill in some of the graves, and providing access to a truck that helped us haul what we had cut down and removed out of the cemetery. Not only did they physically help, but they also provided information about the area and its history. A couple of locals even identified relatives of theirs who were buried in the cemetery, and one of the coolest things to witness was how one woman and man figured out how they were related by tracing their family histories. It was apparent that our work in the cemetery meant a lot to them and everyone involved. While not working in the cemetery, we learned more about the history of the Lithuanians in Ledford, Illinois as well as the history of Lithuanians who migrated to the United States in three waves (three distinct periods). We learned why it's important to know our family history and heritage. While the project was short, we accomplished quite a lot.

For me, the most difficult aspects of this project were some of the natural elements such as heat and many bugs including ticks, mosquitoes, and mites that we needed to

be on the lookout for. I also encountered my fair share of thorns in the cemetery while helping to remove the plant overgrowth. I think one of the most unexpected parts of the project was how much the locals got involved and how excited everyone was that we were cleaning up and transforming the cemetery. Some of the locals were not Lithuanian but showed great interest in learning about our Lithuanian culture from the significance of cemeteries and taking care of relatives who have passed, to what kind of foods we eat. It was also interesting to see how headstones could be read by taking a fresh sheet of aluminum foil and placing it on the headstone, then brushing it across with a brush. The words showed up so clearly on the aluminum foil when they could not be deciphered from the headstone itself. The most fun jobs were helping to cut down the plant overgrowth and helping to haul it all out of the cemetery - this is the majority of what I helped with throughout the project. Though overwhelming at times, this job was so rewarding because I could see my progress as I went along, and working alongside others gave me the opportunity to learn about the different projects they were working on within the cemetery. While I did not help out a lot with identifying the graves, it was definitely thought-provoking to see all the headstones of children in the cemetery. I wondered about each person who had been buried there and the life story and wisdom behind each name. How had they died, what had they experienced while alive, what wisdom had they gained along the way, etc.?

I absolutely believe the "Roots" project should continue!



St. Casimir's Lithuanian cemetery in Ledford, Illinois overgrown with trees and bushes. Photo by Daina Cyvas

While short, it left me with a much deeper appreciation of my Lithuanian heritage and a burning desire to continue to get more connected with the Lithuanian community and learning about Lithuanian culture and history so I can help to preserve it here in the United States. I am currently learning the Lithuanian language through an adult language class within the Indianapolis Lithuanian community, and hope to continue to grow in my ability to speak this beautiful language. I think about the tremendous impact this project has had in my life and the lives of everyone involved and think that this is just the beginning of the ripple effect. There are probably many more Lithuanian cemeteries across the United States that need to be restored and transformed, and more lives that can be positively impacted should this project continue. I would definitely participate in this project again and plan to do my part to encourage other young Lithuanians to participate by telling them about my experiences and teaching them about the importance of staying connected to their Lithuanian heritage. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this project such a success!

Austėja Stanevičiūtė, 24, a Ph.D. student in biomedical engineering

Immediately when Marija Čyvaitė shared the “Roots” project with me, I knew that I would love to participate. I have always been interested in expanding my knowledge in Lithuanian American history and reading the project description was truly inspiring. I couldn’t wait to contribute to the preservation of history with a motivating team.

I will never forget the time spent in Ledford IL. Each day was filled with surprises and emotions, as we cleaned up an abandoned and vandalized Lithuanian cemetery from the early 1900s. As a team of 10 and with the aid of locals, we cleared the overgrown trees and bushes, fixed and lifted fallen monuments, and recorded the grave coordinates. The work was a bit tiring on the hot days and we encountered many ticks and bugs, but it was truly rewarding to see the final results. I believe we accomplished beyond our expectations. The cemetery was completely transformed, and it was heartwarming to see that our efforts helped bring light and life back into the sacred place. It was remarkable that by the end of the project we had discovered nearly 100 graves.

During the Šaknys project, there were many unexpected events. The first day we got a flat tire in the middle of a rural area. It was getting dark, a storm was approaching, and the tools in our car were not adequate to change the tire. We were very fortunate that a local stopped by to provide us light and another brought us tools from their home.



Austėja Stanevičiūtė helping to clean the territory of the cemetery from the trees. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė

Throughout the project we had multiple guests visit us at the cemetery, who shared their family history and discussed their relatives who were buried there. As everyone was talking, a guest and local discovered that they were second cousins. It was incredible to witness how our project contributed firsthand to the reconnection of families through their roots.

Personally, I was truly surprised by how much the locals in the area contributed to the project. Their dedication and support were monumental. On our first day, the locals warmly welcomed us, and one individual had cut the grass so that we could have a place to set up our tents. JJ and Candace were two locals that even dedicated their entire weekend to helping us cut trees and remove the wood. Individuals also brought their tools, trailers, and snacks for us. It was a pleasure to get to know them and to learn more about Southern Illinois from their perspective.

One thought-provoking experience was deciphering one tombstone. Initially, no one had realized that there was writing on the side of the monument. It was a great

surprise that I had noticed that there were more engravings, even though it was in plain sight. The words were extremely faint and there was confusion as it seemed that there was writing in both English and Lithuanian. By applying the aluminum foil method to press into the engravings and after many trials and errors in word guessing, we were able to put together the pieces of the puzzle.

The “Roots” project was an extremely unique, rewarding, and memorable experience. It was a privilege to work with such a vibrant and caring group of individuals who were all united by the mission of preserving Lithuanian history. The memories made will last a lifetime from the fun time camping, exploring the area, pulling ticks out from each other, and making new friendships.

I envision the Root project to continue its mission for many years to come, as it was an unforgettable experience. It is a beautiful tradition that honors and preserves the history of Lithuanians. I know that there are many more cemeteries that Lithuanians have been buried in that are forgotten but I believe that everyone should have to be remembered so “Roots” is a great project to respect those who have been forgotten.

Peter Rusenias, 25, a springboard and platform diving coach

My father shared the information about the “Roots” project with me and I chose to apply because I am incredibly honored to be Lithuanian and care to be involved in Lithuanian events to uphold and preserve the tradition and culture the generations before us worked so hard to do. What did we accomplish during the four days in Ledford, IL? We bonded with fellow Lithuanians, learned about the history of Lithuanians in Ledford, IL, and restored a forgotten Lithuanian cemetery.

The most difficult job was when our pickup truck had a flat tire but then our car jack wouldn't lift the truck high enough so we had to ask strangers driving by to help us so a gentleman went home and brought his personal car jack.

The most unexpected encounter was how much the Ledford locals helped clear the woods with a chainsaw, brought a dump truck with fill dirt, and lent us their ATV to haul lumber out of the cemetery.

The most fun activity was when we would finish a hard day's work and go find a local swimming hole to bathe in and relax until we returned to the campsite for dinner. The most thought-provoking encounter was trying to understand the people who had been buried in the Ledford cemetery and the lives they had lived. Learning about the hardships the 1st wave of immigrants encountered and the difficulties they encountered when they moved



Peter Rusenias is driving a dump truck lent by Ledford residents. Photo by Daina Cyvas

to America was incredibly thought-provoking.

Should the „Roots“ project continue? Hell ya! It is an incredible opportunity for Lithuanian youth to learn more about the history and culture of the previous generations and it allows for the preservation of culture and history through the hard work shown by the members of the “Roots” project. Už Lietuvą!

Margarita Swissler, 28, a 1st-grade French Immersion teacher

My mom saw the information on the “Roots” project on Facebook and sent it to me. It looked like a really interesting opportunity. I have always loved the outdoors and history and since I have the summers off, I decided to participate!

We accomplished a lot in the few days we were there! We were able to transform the cemetery from an overgrown forested area with toppled gravestones to a serene clearing with re-erected monuments. We counted and mapped the graves we could find and compared names with local records. We learned about the history of the area and about the Lithuanian immigrants who settled there. We learned the process of how to properly reraise the fallen gravestones. We also formed bonds with some of the locals who were eager to help us and invited us back for the future if we ever want to return to continue the work there.

The drive down there was difficult because we got caught in a really bad storm and had to pull off to cover the back of the truck with a tarp. We ended up having to stay at a gas station for quite a while before the storm let up. The most unexpected thing that happened was when a lady from Indiana who had relatives buried in the cemetery came to visit us one of the days and discovered that



After the fallen tombstones were raised they had to be fortified with cement bases. Pictured from the left: Lukas Urbonavičius and Vilius Žalpsys. Photo by Karilė Vaitkutė

she was cousins with a local. He came to meet her and it was really special to be able to see that shared moment between them. We had a lot of fun together as a group. We went swimming at a swimming hole in the Shawnee National Forest which was really cool. At the cemetery, I think the most fun moment was just going back in the last morning and seeing just how much we had accomplished and comparing the before and after photos. The mapping was very thought-provoking. It was challenging to find a way to represent each gravesite with its approximate location.

Yes, I think the “Roots” project should continue. By visiting and restoring the cemeteries, it brings the history of an area and people back to life. It is a way of respecting our ancestors and it protects the history for future generations.



Participants of the “Roots” project stand by the tombstones they raised in the Lithuanian cemetery. Photo by Daina Cyvas



After working in St. Casimir’s cemetery for five days, the “Roots” project participants erected a Lithuanian cross they made. Pictured from the left: Gerda Šimkevičiūtė, Margarita Swissler, a local resident, Gytis Kriauciūnas, Audra Kriauciūnaitė, Marija Čyvaitė, Morta Baltrušaitytė, Petras Rušėnas, Austėja Stanevičiūtė, and Lukas Urbonavičius. Team leader Vilius Žalpsys is kneeling in front of the cross. Photo by Daina Cyvas

Historians about the Constitution of 3 May 1791 and Lithuania

Prof. Juozas Skirius

Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania



Constitution of 3 May 1791 by Jan Matejko. Foreground: King Stanisław August (left) enters St. John's Cathedral in Warsaw, where deputies will swear to uphold the Constitution. Background: the Royal Castle, where the Constitution has just been adopted.

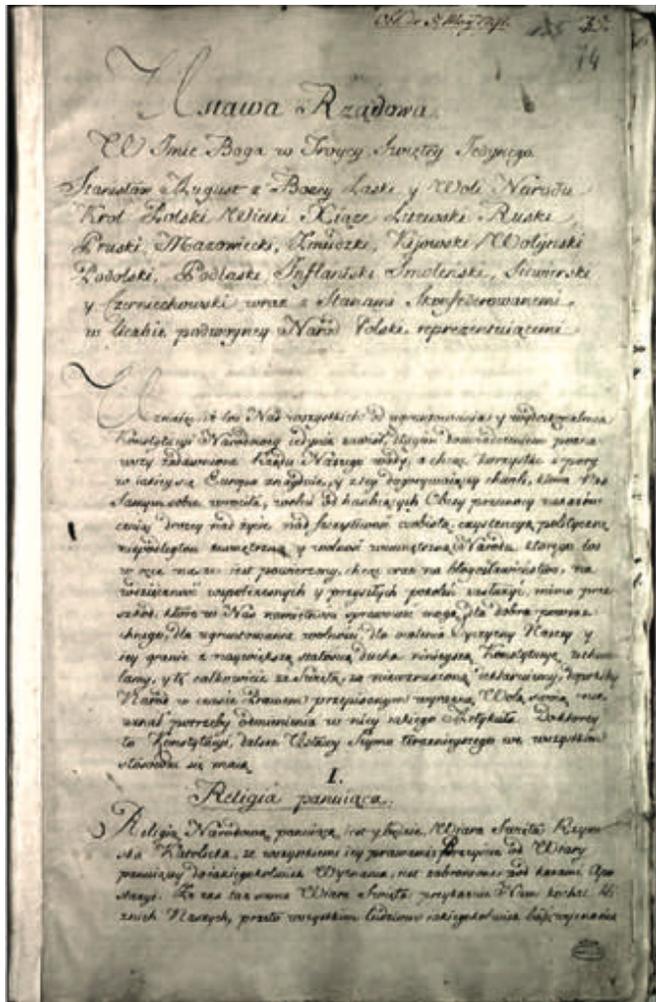
The media in Lithuania mentioned quite abundantly the document adopted 230 years ago by the Seimas of the Republic of the Two Nations (previously historians were referring to it as the Republic of Poland and Lithuania), which in its form and content corresponds to the concept of a modern constitution. It is rightfully considered to be the first written constitution in Europe and the second, after the United States, in the world. Published online articles (1) and documentaries show the positive side of this historic document. It is obvious and indisputable that by adopting this document, the Four-Year Reform Seimas sought to preserve the statehood of Poland and to defend independence in the face of deadly danger. It is no coincidence that Polish historians emphasize that after the First World War, the new Polish state was formed on the basis of the ideas of this Constitution. Not for nothing, since 1919, the Polish state legalized May 3rd as a Constitution Day, a public holiday.

When commemorating the 210th anniversary of the Constitution, Poland emphasized its democratic nature and the impact of its then-progressive ideas on the future creation of states that respect the rule of law. Compared

to the situation before, this Constitution had advantages: the Seimas abandoned *liberum veto* and replaced it with the principle of majority; townspeople were given the right of an advisory vote in the Seimas; the feudal lords were required to enter into agreements with their subordinates in order to ensure their legal defense and self-defense. On May 13, 2021, a Polish-made documentary, *May 3 Constitution and Present* (2), was broadcasted on Lithuanian television (LRT Plus). Well-known Polish researchers (and several non-Polish historians) extensively discussed the international conditions for the emergence of this document, emphasized the freedoms, and argued that "the history of the Constitution answers the question of why it is worth being a citizen and not a slave." In their opinion, this document is important as a tradition against any dictatorship. Assessing the significance of the Constitution, its comparison with the "soft revolution" emerges. Poland dominates in the film, and Lithuania, i.e. the GDL, no longer exists in it. True, there are several Lithuanian historians among the speakers, but unfortunately, they do not shine; their comments are just general short phrases that sound like they were "cropped".

The issue of Lithuania was not addressed.

True, it is not easy to objectively assess the May 3 Constitution of the Republic of the Two Nations. During the preparation and adoption of this document in the Seimas, in addition to the already mentioned ideas, there were other aspirations, the implementation of which had to painfully affect the interests of the second member state of this dual state, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, i.e. the problem of the future existence of the Lithuanian nation. As legal historian Vytautas Andriulis has pointed out, "the document basically tried to ignore the Lithuanian state powers, which supported the vitality of the Lithuanian-Polish Republic and which created one of the foundations for the existence of this republic." (3) Therefore, the May 3 Constitution is seen more as the result of the intellectual efforts of only a part of the state, the Polish part, which tried to deny the essential preconditions for the existence of this state. Why did this happen? The most famous Polish legal historian, Professor Juliusz Bardach, noted that the Crown Confederation, led by Marshal Stanisław Małachowski (the Lithuanian confederation was led by Kazimierz Nestor Sapiega, GDL Artillery General), was influenced by the French Revolution and its constitutional acts. Polish historians call the Crown Confederacy a "reformer of Western orientation." Resisting the division of the country into separate estates, the Jacobins proclaimed the unity and integrity of France. This is how the slogan was born: France is one and indivisible. One of the most important reformers, Hugo Kołłątaj, accepted and applied that slogan to Polish-Lithuanian relations. Acting secretly from the Lithuanians, Hugo Kołłątaj tried to unite the Crown with Lithuania (4). True, this was not only due to a Jacobin example. It was considered how to strengthen the weakened Republic of the Two Nations. It is interesting to note that such a conspiracy of the Crown Reformers is especially emphasized by the Polish historian Krystyna Zienkowska. She called the proclamation of the May 3 Constitution a conspiracy. This is how she even entitled her monograph: The May 3 Conspiracy (Spisek 3-go Maja). And so, the Polish confederates acted in secret. Since their "conspiracy" was actually successful, Lithuanian Marshal Kazimieras Nestoras Sapiega knew nothing about the work of drafting the Constitution. (5) The Constitution was drafted in such a way as to abolish the Lithuanian-Polish state dualism, the confederation. The state was referred to as a unified political entity, which was mostly referred to as Poland. It mentions only the Polish nation and the Polish lands. The term of the Republic of the Two Nations that was used in the documents adopted by the Seimas after the Union of Lublin (referred to as "constitutions") was no longer used. There were no longer any provisions for Lithuania, i.e. the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; even its name is not men-



Manuscript of the Constitution of the 3rd May 1791

tioned. The impression is that this is a Polish province where only the Polish highest court can operate. The idea of a strong center is clearly established, and no mention is made of the possible support of some traditions of Lithuanian life. (6)

Historians note that the Lithuanian nobility supported the Constitution more than it did not. How was it in reality? In this case, it is necessary to remember the resolution that Seimas adopted on October 20, 1791, the Statute of the Mutual Pledge of the Two Nations. Why was it adopted if there were no major problems? It should be noted that Kazimieras Nestoras Sapiega did not participate in the drafting of the text of the Constitution, so the proclamation of a unified state surprised him. Sapiega demanded that before it was published, the document be publicly reviewed. Fearing that the debate would irritate the very strong instincts of the old nobility, King Stanisław August Poniatowski rushed to explain that, in principle, only two provisions had value in the Constitution: 1. Royal elections are replaced by a hereditary

monarchy, as the election has become a destabilizing factor; and 2. Institutionalization of a permanent government (described as the guardian of rights). All other things, according to the king, could be debatable. And so, on May 5th, a new decree was issued, which clearly developed the idea of the Constitution, returning to the historical concept of "Both Nations". In mid-May, when discussing the Seimas law, the joint Seimas of the two Nations was also discussed. (7) Finally, on October 20th, a special statute was adopted to guarantee the protection of rights. It established the principle of the Crown and GDL Federation. The GD of Lithuania had to be represented in such a way that at least half of the officials and the management of the institutions were from the GDL. According to Juliusz Bardach, the positions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania have now strengthened. Until then, Little Poland, Greater Poland, and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were distinguished in Poland. Now, after supplementing the Constitution with the above-mentioned statute, the equality of the two nations has been emphasized. (8) Such concessions, more precisely a compromise, arose due to the dissatisfaction of the Lithuanian nobility. The first Lithuanian historian to describe the Constitution and its connection with Lithuania in detail was Adolfas Šapoka. Relying extensively on the works of Polish historians and available documents, he discussed the positions of the GDL nobility in the general Seimas and the GDL Seimas. He noted that only after October 20th, the vast majority of the nobility supported the Constitution. (9) Meanwhile, the cities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania immediately supported the May 3 Constitution, because its third article 'Towns and Townspeople' (based on the law passed by the Seimas 'Our Royal Free Towns in the States of the Republic) guaranteed citizens the personal inviolability right, they received the right to perform administrative and judicial duties, as well as to seek military ranks (except national cavalry). Already, the noblemen of the Seimas had to accept 24 so-called town representatives. Thus, there were already wider opportunities for citizens. (10) At the same time, the concept of the nation expanded - it included not only the nobility but also the townspeople and free peasants. Those who defend the state become responsible for the state. This was, as Polish historians pointed out on television, "a very important message in the Constitution about the state structure."

Unfortunately, the further course of events turned towards the Confederation of Targovice, the second and third partition of the state. For more than 120 years, both nations - Lithuanians and Poles - depended on strangers. They did not reconcile with that, and independence was alive in their memory. The constant fight for freedom (the support for Napoleon Bonaparte, uprisings of 1831 and

1863-1864, national movements in the second half of the 19th century) showed the aspirations of Lithuanians and Poles. They led both nations to the creation of modern Polish and Lithuanian states after the First World War. If the new Poland was formed on the basis of the ideals of the May 3 Constitution, the creation of the Lithuanian state took place on a purely national basis, based on the national theory of the French Revolution dating back to the 19th century, elevating the old Lithuanian state.

The Lithuanian television briefly informed about the solemn meeting dedicated to the Constitution in the Polish Seimas. The President of Poland, Andrzej Duda, and a guest from Lithuania, President Gitanas Nausėda, spoke. Attention should be paid to the statement of the Speaker of the Polish Sejm, Elzbieta Vitek, in which she clearly stated that the Constitution is a legacy of Polish history. No one is really trying to deny that. Every Polish citizen must celebrate this with the utmost respect this historical event. For Lithuanian citizens, this is an important fact of our history with Poles, which we must know and appreciate. It is necessary to see not only the importance and advantages of the Constitution but also the attempt to ignore the powers of the GDL statehood that supported the vitality of the Confederation of Polish and Lithuanian States.

1 Glemža L. Gegužės 3 d. konstitucija – viena pirmųjų pasaulyje ir Europoje <https://www.bernardinai.lt/2016-05-03-geguzes-3-d-konstitucija-viena-pirmuju-pasaulyje-ir-europoje/>; Bernardinai.lt archyvas. V. Liepuonius: Gegužės 3-iosios konstitucija galėtų tapti mūsų savasties dalimi <https://www.bernardinai.lt/2017-05-03-v-liepuonius-geguzes-3-iosios-konstitucija-galetu-tapti-musu-savasties-dalimi/>; Raila E. Dar kartą apie Gegužės 3 d. konstituciją, apie lenkus ir lietuvių istorijoje <https://www.bernardinai.lt/2018-05-14-dar-karta-apie-geguzes-3-konstitucija-apie-lenkus-ir-lietuvius-istorijoje/> irk t.

2 Dokumentinis filmas *Gegužės 3-iosios Konstitucija ir dabartis*.

3 Andriulis V. Lietuva 1791 m. gegužės 3 d. Konstitucijoje. *Atgimimas*. 1991, gegužės 2, nr. 19, p. 3.

4 Julisz Bardach. Keletas pastabų apie Gegužės 3 – iosios Konstituciją. *Šiaurės Atėnai*. 2000, gegužės 6, nr. 17, p. 10.

5 *Ten pat*.

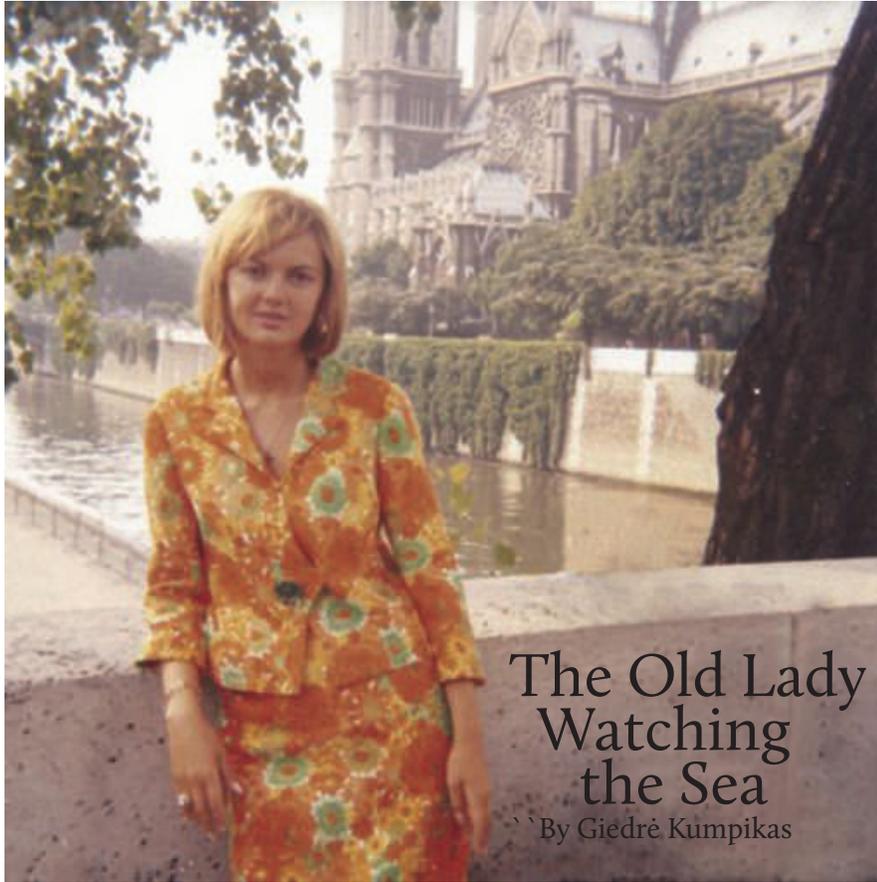
6 Andriulis V. Lietuva 1791 m. gegužės 3 d. Konstitucijoje. *Atgimimas*. 1991, gegužės 2, nr. 19, p. 3.

7 Juliusz Bardach. Keletas pastabų apie Gegužės 3 – iosios Konstituciją. *Šiaurės Atėnai*. 2000, gegužės 6, nr. 17, p. 10.

8 Juliusz Bardach. *O dawnej i niedawnej Litwie*. Poznan, 1988, s. 202-203, 421-422.

9 Šapoka A. Gegužės 3 d. Konstitucija ir Lietuva. *Lietuvos praeitis*. Kaunas, 1939, t. 1, 1 dalis, p. 185-187, 199-200 ir kt.

10 *1791 m. gegužės 3 d. Konstitucija*. Vertė ir sudarė Eligijus Raila. Vilnius: VDA leidykla, 2001, p. 17-18, 67-68.



Giedrė at Notre-Dame de Paris, 1964. Photo by Daniel Lalardie

Sometimes, we come across a scene whose image stays with us and comes back to mind now and then.

So, it was on one of my frequent visits to France, to Normandy more specifically, when I visited my French friends, who invited me to come to their seaside house in Réville, on the English Channel, or La Manche. They were a true French couple, stemming from the very roots of French culture - their language perfect, their sense of humor very Gallic, his especially. The great quality of the French is that they can laugh at the world, but also at themselves. The political discord can be virulent; if not violent, but then, everyone calms down, the delicious Brie comes out, and “*un petit rouge*” and all is well and friendly. It is a quality that has taken centuries to evolve and is unique.

I remember when I first flew to Paris, with a very proper letter of introduction from my father to his friend, a former Lithuanian regional consul, asking him to chaperone me on my trip to France. I was petrified to leave my hotel on the Boulevard St. Michel, but the gentleman came to pick me up, and we went on a little tour of a former Jewish Quarter, Le Marais. It was not an elegant quarter, but it had a distinct character. One of the images that I remember is that of an elderly man in the street

carrying a dead chicken by the neck. My father’s friend bought some raspberries in a local market, and with the box of raspberries, we got on the Metro. People looked at us quizzically while the gentleman said that I should eat some raspberries. I wondered if it was a Parisian custom to eat raspberries from an open box on the Metro, but “When in Paris...”. That day was my first encounter with an example of Gallic humor - funny, light, somewhat self-deprecating, and philosophical.

During our ride, the train suddenly lurched to a halt, and I stepped on a man’s foot. I immediately began to apologize profusely, “Excusez-moi, Monsieur!”

But he, very indulgently, turned to me and said quite philosophically, “Mademoiselle, si ce n’était que ça!” (Miss, if it were only that). To add to the charm of my first trip to Paris, his son Perkunas, tall and handsome, took me for a ride on his scooter. As he was weaving in between the cars on the Champs-Élysées, I was thrilled but also frightened and clung

to him for dear life. He drove me up the hill to Montmartre, where artists painted tourist portraits, and we sat at a famous café called “Les Cadets de Gascogne” after the famous play *Cyrano de Bergerac*. My escort ordered my first glass of wine in Paris, a Brouilly. Today, when I taste it, the involuntary memory of my initial visit to Paris floods over me, as in the Proust episode of the tea cake, *la Madeleine*.

My father’s friend suggested that I should not just stay in Paris but take the train south to his villa in Villefranche-sur-Mer where his wife was hosting the son of a well-known artist, Picabia. Having overcome my initial agoraphobia, I ventured south by train.

It is difficult to describe anything as beautiful as the Mediterranean - the perfectly blue water, the white and pink villas with their red slate roofs, the exotic vegetation, the houses, perched, some quite precariously, atop hills. There is great beauty in the world, but for me, it was, and still is, the most beautiful place I have ever seen.

Now, just to backtrack a little, ever since I was a little girl, I loved French. The language, the sound, the flow of beautiful words. Everything sounded better in French, whether one said, “Sit down on the bench”, which became “*Assieds-toi sur le banc*,” or “*le petit chien*,” or “*un bon-*



Giedrė at Villefranche-sur-Mer, 1975. Photo from personal collection



bon” which really meant “a good-good.” So, when I was accepted at Hunter College, because I had an excellent high school average, and Hunter was free for qualifying students, I immediately declared my major - French! All my immigrant friends enrolled in practical courses, which assured them jobs - biology and chemistry for the girls, engineering for the boys. But French? I heard constantly: “What are you going to do with French?” “How are you going to earn a living?” My answer usually was, “I don’t know, but that is the only subject that I like, more precisely, love.” I also liked and excelled in Latin, but I would

never be a true Classicist, it was too dry, too old. I had dreams of becoming a simultaneous translator for the UN, but the studies were expensive, requiring a year in Switzerland.

And so, I took wonderful literature courses with extraordinary professors who were from the Sorbonne; I went with other French students to see French films at the Paris Theater, eating French pastries bought on Lexington Avenue and laughed at the subtitle translations, while other spectators shushed us. Oh, those young carefree days. French became such an integral part of my life. My best friend was a beautiful French Moroccan girl, who helped my fluency, “untied my tongue” as they say, and I began to speak quite freely. With great regret, my studies ended. I attended two years of summer school to be able to graduate in three years so that I could get a job and help my parents. Life had been hard for them - having come from prosperity, then losing everything, their country, their language, their profession, their family.

I was very dutiful and caring, and an only child.

My first job at the age of twenty was in a French bank as a typist-translator. I was not a good typist, only thirty words a minute, but I knew French, I was young and decorative. However, when I was told that I would have only two weeks for vacation, it seemed totally insufficient. I was a summer child, the beach, the sand, the water. I complained to my friend who suggested that I take the

required education courses, thirteen credits at night, and then apply for a teaching position. I did as she suggested, and after ten months at the bank, I resigned my position without regret, because I learned that office work and office intrigues and politics were not for me.

My French Moroccan friend had begun teaching in a high school on Long Island a half-year earlier and suggested that I apply for a teaching position in her school.

And then, a miracle! Without any experience, I was hired as a French, German, Latin teacher in a Senior High School.

Those were wonderful years. I was young, my students barely a few years younger; there were quite a few crushes from the boys, but I took myself very seriously. I accepted their admiration but was always very proper. I subsequently earned my master's degree in French and even a Ph.D. It has been a rewarding, pleasurable profession, and it has never disappointed me.

And now, back to the title of this small essay of reminiscence. About ten years ago, I went to Normandy to visit a couple whom I had hosted in New York. They lived in a charming small town called St. Lô, which had been almost destroyed by Allied bombings, except for the church steeple. My young friends, quite the atheists, said that it was just a coincidence. I did not wish to argue with my hosts. They took me to a place that I had always wanted to see - Le Mont-St. Michel, an abbey built on a craggy mount in the ocean between Brittany and Normandy. It was a spiritual and beautiful place surrounded by water. How the monks and people were able to haul those boulders up and build such a structure was astonishing. We heard a young woman playing the cello in one of the upper chambers, the sound reverberating throughout the abbey, the evening light streaming beams of the setting sun through the chamber. As we left the abbey and watched the tide slowly moving in to separate the abbey from the mainland, and as we turned back to look at the abbey, majestic, mysterious, resplendent, and silhouetted in the twilight, my friend said, "I wonder what one could call that?" I answered without hesitation - "A homage to God."

On that trip, they introduced me to their friends, an older couple, Jean-Paul and Sylvine. They had a charming small country house on a large property. Jean-Paul grew all kinds of tomatoes and vegetables and flowers. There was a chicken coop, so an abundance of fresh eggs. That evening, the wine and conversation flowed, the dinner was French and delicious. I truly believe that there is no bad food in France, except, of course, now there is that invasion of American fast food.

My acquaintance with Jean-Paul and Sylvine developed into a warm relationship. I visited them again the year after, and they visited me in New York the following year. They fell in love with the wild nature of Montauk and lobsters and East Hampton. I took them to the ballet, at the Met, we drove up to Boston, to the Norman Rockwell



Giedrė with her friends, Sylvine and Jean-Paul Bellemain, July 2013. Photo from personal collection



At Château de Miromesnil, July 2017. Photo by Sylvine Bellemain



Menhirs, Brittany, 2014. Photo from personal collection

Museum. (The French have a fascination with Norman Rockwell).

I went back again the following year, and my friends drove me to see the home of Claude Monet at Giverny where I saw the famous water lily pond. It was as perfect as if Monet had just painted it. The colors of this famous artist's home were the classical yellow and blue, which we call French blue, but in France, it is simply "bleu-gris" or blue gray.

The year after, they surprised and charmed me with a monumental treat: a stay at the Château de Miromesnil, the birthplace of my favorite author, Guy de Maupassant, the subject of my Doctoral thesis. I had never slept in a château, and as I walked up the polished winding wooden

creaking stairs I wondered if I would be sleeping in the famous author's bedroom. I was told that I would not, but I still chose to imagine the possibility. The rooms had retained their nineteenth-century authenticity, whitewashed walls, small windows overlooking the grounds. And the grounds – they were extraordinarily lush and beautiful. I had not slept in the author's bedroom, but I did walk the magnificent grounds where he had played as a child.

I am so indebted to this wonderful couple. They showed me the wind-swept coast of Normandy and Gallic Brittany, the imposing medieval fortress city of Carcassonne; the slow, poetic meandering Loire River with its lovely châteaux. So much beauty; so much history; so much culture. *Oh, mes amis, mes amis*, I will always be grateful to you for sharing your beautiful country with me.

I believe it was in 2014 that I went with them to their house in Réville. It was a charming, small row house decorated with numerous nautical objects and had a huge, long garden. Jean-Paul had the proverbial green thumb. Here as well, there were so many beautiful trees, bushes, flowers, and exotic vegetation. I tried to ask him the names, but there were so many that I could not remember them. Our breakfast was always *café au lait*, fresh croissants, or *pain beurré* with *confiture*, homemade of course.

Every morning Jean-Paul would drive to the local *Boulangier* to buy fresh bread and croissants or brioches.

After breakfast, we would go to *la plage*, a short walk through a narrow passage between other seaside houses. As we neared the Channel beach, we passed a house with a small garden, the second from the end and the beach, and we saw an elderly lady standing there looking at the sea. She heard us, looked in our direction, and said sweetly "Bonjour." We all answered "Bonjour, Madame." We went to the beach, and what a lovely beach, so calm, so quiet, no radios, no barbecues, no food vendors, just people on blankets or chairs, and children playing in the sand or building sandcastles. What a cultural difference between our beaches, where you have loud music blar-

ing, people yelling, children screaming, and those infernal smelly barbecues surrounded by not-so-thin people.

The water of the Manche is quite cold, but it is not as rough as our Atlantic coast. The French are very structured as well as aesthetically oriented. Everything is regulated: breakfast, lunch, and dinner, no snacking in between. I suppose it is a good method not to gain weight, but for me, it was difficult, having bad snacking habits.

Towards evening, on the way back, we passed the house with the garden, and I saw that the lady was still standing there, quietly looking at the sea. We again exchanged our polite “Bonjour” but I was curious about her, why she was standing there almost all day just looking at the sea.

Jean-Paul explained to me that her seaman husband had never returned from his fishing trip and that the year after, her son had also not returned. It gripped my heart to see this lovely old lady, standing there facing those

engulfing waters, so serene, so alone, against all hope, and yet still hoping for their return. I suppose that just by standing and watching the water, she felt that she had a connection with her loved ones. And thus, it is that sometimes an image can stay with us and evoke different associations, and emotions.

As Victor Hugo wrote in his immortal poem “Oceano Nox”:

*Oh! combien de marins, combien de capitaines
Qui sont partis joyeux pour des courses lointaines,
Dans ce morne horizon se sont évanouis!
Combien ont disparu, dure et triste fortune!
Dans une mer sans fond, par une nuit sans lune,
Sous l'aveugle océan à jamais enfouis!*

East Hampton

July 27, 2021



current events

Security

...President Gitanas Nausėda met with Poland's Speaker of their Sejm (Parliament) Elzbieta Witek and discussed defense-related matters, including NATO's open-door policy toward Ukraine and Georgia, the alliance's position on Belarus, and the planned NATO summit in Vilnius in 2023. Lithuania and Poland supported the European Council's agreement not to hold meetings between Russia and the 27 EU member states as long as it showed no progress on human rights and continued to escalate tensions in Ukraine.

...The two-week 50th Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) annual exercise included 16 NATO and two partner nations involved 60 aircraft, 40 ships, and over 4,000 personnel. U.S. participation included the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit and sailors with the Expeditionary Strike Group 2 from Oeiras, Portugal. The U.S. Air Force provided KC-135 aerial refueling support of B-52 Stratofortress bombers with air control out of German-led Multinational Air Group from Uedem, Germany. For the first time, the NATO Space Centre was involved, and defensive cyber warfare tactics, techniques, and procedures were included. One exercise included clearing the Danish Straits of sophisticated sea mines and water-borne IEDs with unmanned mine countermeasures.

...NATO member states and allies, including Ukraine, participated in the two-week exercise Sea Breeze 2021 in the Black Sea, which involved about 5,000 personnel, including 40 aircraft and 30 U.S. ships, including the missile destroyer USS Ross. Russia had competing exercises including 20 planes and helicopters, including Su-24M bombers and S-400 and Pantsir surface-to-air missiles. The 1936 Montreux Convention limits the presence of foreign navies (i.e. U.S.) to two weeks in the Black Sea but Black Sea nations (i.e. Ukraine) can patrol as they wish.

...Germany has a contingent of 620 troops in the 1,300 force NATO Enhanced Forward Presence battalion-sized battle group in Lithuania. A tank platoon of 30 has been recalled because of evidence of sexual assault, racist and anti-Semitic behavior, including singing a song to mark Adolph Hitler's birthday in direct violation of a sergeant's order. Upon return to Germany, the platoon will be disbanded, and any soldiers found guilty will be punished. Other members of the NATO group include military personnel from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Norway.

...So far this year, the Ministry of Interior said that 508

illegal migrants have tried to enter Lithuania through the Belarusian border-twice as many as the combined numbers for 2018, 2019, and 2020. In response, the European Union's Agency for External Border Security (Frontex) will send 30 employees to strengthen the border, which is guarded by the Public Security Service and the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union. The Director of the State Security Department is concerned that the large influx of immigrants and the closer alliance of Russian and Belarus provide an opportunity for Russian intelligence agents to infiltrate Lithuania.

...Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė announced that Lithuania declared a state of emergency after a record number of illegal immigrants crossed from Belarus. Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis concurred that "Lukashenko seeks to weaponize migration to weaken our resolve for sanctions. Emergency or not-it shall not pass!" Earlier, The Interior Minister, Agnė Bilotaitė, announced plans to spend 150,000 euros to acquire modular units to house up to 800 illegal migrants (mostly Iraqis) who have arrived in the country and 50,000 euros for translation services. To date, almost 3,000 illegal immigrants have crossed the border compared to 81 in all of 2020. The European Commission is planning to allocate 10 million euros to cope with the influx of refugees. The Foreign Minister met with his Iraqi counterpart in Bagdad who promised to "investigate" the smuggling networks that bring refugees to Europe by air through Minsk in Belarus and then by land into Lithuania. The Associated Press indicates they plan to "form a committee" to clamp down on the smuggling by "malign actors" using criminal elements.



Lithuanian army soldiers install razor wire on border with Belarus in Lithuania

...Defense Minister Arvydas Anušauskas in a video meeting with his counterparts from Estonia and Latvia said "The current situation on the border is no ordinary migration crisis, it is a hybrid war against the stability of the

European Union, NATO, and particularly of the Baltic states". As a first step, the Estonian Minister of Defense promised surveillance drones and 100 km of wire fencing to help fortify the 680 km border with Belarus. Currently, only 78 km is fenced and only 265 km is covered by CCTV.

...Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė met with her Greek counterpart to learn from their experience in February 2020 dealing with a similarly sharp increase in migrant arrivals from Turkey after the Turkish President said he would not stop refugees who wanted to go to Europe.

...The Seimas approved new laws tightening the rules on migration and asylum which includes the detention of asylum seekers and curb migrants' right to appeal.

...The Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs accredited the Vilnius-based Belarus opposition leader Sviatiana Tsikhanouskaya and her team (The Belarusian Democratic Representation) as having an official status but not a diplomatic representation with usual rights and privileges. The recognition allows the group to work in Lithuania.

...The first international military exercise organized by the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade (LitPolUkrBrig), known as Three Swords 2021, joined the U.S. in a 2-week exercise in western Ukraine. This activity included 1,200 military personnel and 200 combat vehicles while Russian military equipment lingers in eastern Ukraine near Donbas.

...Poland will purchase 250 of the newest M1 Abrams main battle tank (M1A2 SEPv3) to replace the Soviet-designed T-72M1 and the PT-91 tanks. It will keep the German-made Leopard 2, A4, and A5 main battle tanks. Ironically, the M1 Abrams was designed to fight Poland when it was a member of the Warsaw Pact. The 40-year-old Abrams platform was designed to accept new technologies as they were developed including a 120-mm gun, depleted uranium armor, digital command and control system, thermal imaging viewer for the tank commander, remotely operated 50-caliber machine gun, and improved protection against remotely-controlled roadside bombs. The first Polish tanks will arrive in 2022 before many U.S. Army units receive the SEPv3.

COVID-19

...Lithuania outpaces Estonia and Latvia in residents receiving at least one COVID-19 jab. Lithuania has vaccinated 37%; Latvia 36%; and Estonia 25.8%;

...Taiwan has lagged behind others in the effort to procure coronavirus vaccines and has experienced a recent surge in cases. It has received 2.5 million doses from the U.S. and 1.24 million doses from Japan. Lithuania has promised to send 20,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Taiwan by the end of September. As a gesture, the Taiwanese food giant, I-Mei Foods, is sending more than 21,000 snack packs, including cream, chocolate, and strawberry puff cookies with the message, "Thank you Lithuania", printed on them. Taiwanese customers have gone on a buying splurge for Lithuanian products, including a ten-fold increase in purchases of Rūta chocolate and an increase in sales of Volfas Engelman beer. The Lithuanian charity, Krizinio Nėštumo Centras, which supports disadvantaged pregnant women, reports that it received 87 new donations from Taiwan in three days after the announcement of the vaccine donation. In the early stage of the pandemic, Taiwan donated 100,000 medical-grade masks to Lithuania. Lithuania's Minister of the Economy and Innovation said that a plan has been approved to establish a representative office in Taiwan to facilitate bilateral relations. Currently, Taiwan is represented by an office in Latvia that serves the three Baltic nations. Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen expressed gratitude to Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė and her government for the donation. "Like Taiwan, Lithuania, by the Baltic Sea, has been through great difficulties fighting for freedom and democracy. They share similar values, beliefs and can show a special empathy to Taiwan." Lithuania has also promised 100,000 doses to Ukraine, 15,000 to Georgia, and 11,000 to Moldova.

...Taiwanese officials greeted the arrival of Lithuania's donated 20,000 doses of COVID-19 at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport via Turkish Airlines with placards reading "Ačiū, Lietuva". This donation was part of the payback for Taiwan's donation of 100,000 masks to Lithuania during the early part of the pandemic. Taiwan's President also thanked Lithuania for its support of Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization. Taiwan plans on opening a representative office in Lithuania in the near future, the first new office in 18 years.

...46.1% of people in Lithuania have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine.

...The Ministry of Health has lifted testing and quarantine requirements for arrivals from Austria, Bulgaria, The Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia plus the Portuguese island of Madeira, the Spanish island of Mallorca, and the Greek island of Thasos.

current events

...Lithuania has issued more than 300,000 of the EU Digital COVID Passports to those persons who have been vaccinated.

Business

...Invest Lithuania's seventh annual edition of Lithuania's Global Business Services Report indicate that this sector increased employment by 4.5% to 20,170 specialists despite the pandemic. Eighty-five foreign companies were operating business service centers within Lithuania, including 11 Fortune 500 members, including Ameri-sourceBergen, IBM, McKesson, and Oracle. Centers that are expanding include Intrum, NASDAQ, and Norian. ...New centers have been established by Dexcom, EPAM, Itransition, MUFG Investor Services FinTech Limited, and Rocket Software. The survey indicated that the top five reasons why Lithuania does well: the availability of well-educated talent; the availability of multilingual talent; well-developed IT and telecom infrastructure; competitive labor costs; and lastly, Lithuania's stable political and economic environment. The full 28-page report is free and available on Invest Lithuania's website.

...The Bank of Lithuania has revoked the license of Finolita Unio for its suspected involvement in the German Wirecard money laundering scandal where 100 million euros were moved before Wirecard collapsed. Singapore-based Senjo Group, a Finolita Unio shareholder, and associated companies had borrowed 350 million euros from Wirecard, and the 100 million were listed as a loan repayment to Ocap, an associated company. Wirecard went bankrupt with a 1,900 million euro deficit in its balance sheet.

...With the European Union placing sanctions on Belarus potash used in fertilizers, Lithuanian Railways notes that of the 11 million tons shipped last year 2.5 million tons (23%) will be affected by the sanctions. Much of the potash is shipped by rail from Belarus to the port in Klaipeda for export.

...The Polish National Debt Registry (KRD) reports that among the largest debtors owing money to Polish companies are those from Lithuania (5.4 million zloty), Germany (4.3 million zloty), and Italy (3.9 million zloty). In total, foreign contractors owe Polish companies 26.7 million zloty. Some debtors are awaiting government support during the pandemic, while some fear that bankruptcy is only postponed and lack of payment may eventually cause other companies to go into bankruptcy like a line of dominoes. One Chinese company owes a Polish com-

pany half a million zloty.

...Press Glass, the Polish manufacture of insulating glass units, IGU's, for windows, doors, facades, and internal structures plans on establishing a new factory in the Kaunas Free Economic Zone with the capacity to produce 1.2 million square meters of double and triple IGUs. They plan on recruiting 240 specialists over the next 3 years. The new factory will join 14 others across Europe and North America including sites in Ridgeway, VA, and Stoneville, NC which together employ 4,700 workers.

...The Bank of Lithuania issued a warning to Binance UAB, a cryptocurrency exchange, about its unlicensed investment services provided in Lithuania. It wants Binance to ensure that its publicly available information complies with legal requirements and is not misleading. It wants the public to know that "crypto-asset related services are not regulated or supervised, thus consumers risk losing all their investments." As Lithuania's central bank, it noted that some crypto exchange platforms allow their customers to invest in cryptocurrency derivatives (such as futures and options), contracts for difference (CFD), and crypto-assets linked to securities. The Bank of Lithuania emphasized that these are considered financial instruments and that platforms offering them must be licensed as financial service providers. Lithuania joined the Cayman Islands, Italy, Japan, Thailand, and the U.K. in warning about Binance. In response, Binance has suspended British pound sterling withdrawals and euro deposits via Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) bank transfers.

...Lithuanian Railways, the state-owned railway company, may lose revenue of 19 million euros because of the European Union's sanctions against Belarus and the associated drops in the transportation of fertilizers (-14 million euros) and oil (-5 million euros).

General

...Hungary recently passed an anti-LGBTQ law, which elicited a letter in opposition signed by 17 European leaders who advocated fundamental rights and, in particular, the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. Although Lithuanian Deputy Foreign Minister Arnoldas Pranckevičius signed the joint letter expressing "grave concern" over Hungary's new law, President Gitanas Nausėda refused to sign the letter saying that "problems aren't solved by letters." The leader of the largest opposition party, Ramūnas Karbauskis, of the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union, supported Nausėda's refusal to sign the letter saying that 75% of

Lithuanians support Hungary's law. Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said that letters of this nature are not mandated by state institutions and that politicians who sign them decide on that personally. Other coalition members felt that the President should have signed the letter. Since 2012 the Non-Government Organization, Global Lithuanian Leaders, has given the Global Lithuanian Awards to professionals and organizations that bring merit to Lithuania. A number of them have said that they will not accept the award from the hands of Gitanas Nausėda.

...The corruption watchdog, Transparency International, reported that in a survey of residents who visited health care facilities, 19% of Lithuanians reported giving bribes to medical personnel. Similar surveys in Latvia reported 10% but only 2% in Estonia.

...The Vilnius Regional Administrative Court rejected an appeal by Russian pop star Philipp Kirkorov against the migration authority's ban on his entering Lithuania for five years because he supported the Russian annexation of Crimea. Likewise, Ukraine has him listed on those banned because they pose a threat to national security. Although born in Bulgaria, he is a five-time winner of the "Best Selling Russian Artist" title at the World Music Awards ceremonies.

...Pope Francis appointed a Lithuanian priest, the Reverend Msgr. Visvaldas Kulbokas, as Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine with the dignity of Archbishop. He was born in Klaipėda and ordained in Telšiai in northwest Lithuania. He has been a member of Pontifical Representations in Lebanon, the Netherlands, and the Russian Federation. Since 2020 he has been serving in the Apostolic Nunciature in Kenya.



Pope Francis meets with Archbishop Visvaldas Kulbokas, the Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine

...The Šiauliai regional court found Algirdas Paleckis, a former Lithuanian politician, guilty of spying for Russia and sentenced him to 6 years in prison, less than the 9 years sought by the prosecution. He was found guilty of collecting information between February 2017 and

October 2018 on behalf of a Russian intelligence officer and other Russian citizens for money and other remuneration. A Vilnius businessman, Deimantas Bertauskas, pleaded guilty in the same case and provided evidence, was exempted from criminal liability. From 1997 to 2001 Paleckis was the First Secretary at Lithuania's Permanent Mission to the European Union. From 2001 to 2003 he was the Head of West European Division at the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 2004 to 2007 he was a member of the Seimas. From 2007 to 2008 he was Vice-Mayor of Vilnius. In 2008 he founded and was the leader of the Frontas Party until 2014. He is the son of former Soviet diplomat, Justas Vincas Paleckis and the grandson of Justas Paleckis, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR from 1940 until 1967, who signed the deportation and imprisonment papers for hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians.

...A summer heat wave has set records in Lithuania. A high temperature of 33.1C (91.6F) combined with warm evening temperatures of 20C (68F) have increased demand for fans and air conditioners. Lithuania's biggest online shop, Pigu.lt reports selling three times more fans than last year. Another online retailer, Varle.lt, placed their orders in December and has completely sold out. Previously, heating has been more important in Lithuania than cooling. The International Renewable Energy Agency estimates that air conditioning use in the European Union may increase up to 72% by 2030, while they expect heating expenses are projected to decrease by a third.

...There is political disagreement over who should represent Lithuania at the European Council: the President or the Prime Minister? Former President Dalia Grybauskaitė favors the President (currently, Gitanas Nausėda). The Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats (HU-LCD), who won last autumn's Seimas elections favor the Prime Minister (currently, Ingrida Šimonytė). It is noted that Nausėda does not participate in European political party activities and he may not agree with policies approved by the Seimas. Nausėda said that he will represent Lithuania at all summits as did Grybauskaitė. The HU-LCD plans to adopt a law to allow sending the Prime Minister to European Union summits.

...It's not only illegal immigrants that are being smuggled from Belarus into Lithuania, Lithuanian Customs and Border guards confiscated 1.94 million euros worth of smuggled cigarettes being shipped from Belarus through Lithuania to Poland. The shipment was supposed to be a 20.5-ton load of wood but tapping indicated hollow internal spaces.

Graduation at Boston Lithuanian School

Lina Senuta
Boston Lithuanian School graduate, 2021



Lina Senuta and her brother, Augustas

May 16, 2021 is a day I will remember with pride. That very day, after what seemed an unusually long school year, I graduated from a Boston Lithuanian school with seven classmates: Tadas Baltaduonis, Kristina Gavelis, Nikolas Giniotas, Gabriele Keegan, Agata Markuns, Monika Sermuksnis and Sofija Slezas.

The festive mood began as soon as I saw my friends in

front of the St. Peter's Church in South Boston, in-person for the first time in the entire school year. It was amazing to talk and laugh together again, and feeling sentimental seeing classmates face to face. The school year during Covid was vastly different because every Saturday we could only meet with teachers and friends from our homes looking at computer screens, as opposed to at school, as well as not being able to participate in school and community events. That is why our in-person graduation was especially memorable and special. It started with a Lithuanian Mass at St. Peter's Church, with a large group of graduates' families, teachers, and member of Lithuanian school and a community. It was good to be among the people who over the years have become a part of my Lithuanian life in the United States.

After Mass, the school principal Gailutė Urbonaitė-Narkevičienė and the assistant principal Ramunė Keegan presented us with school diplomas and Lithuanian language proficiency certificates. We also received valuable gifts. From the families we each received a graduation sash that was made in Lithuania. From the school we received a Lithuanian flag, a graduation shirt, and a Lithuanian-English / English-Lithuanian Practical Dictionary created by Gailutė Urbonaitė-Narkevičienė. Lithuanian credit union Taupa donated \$50 each as an initial contribution to the graduates' personal accounts in Taupa, and the Lithuanian community presented \$25 gift cards.

While all eight of us graduates will be scattered as our roads diverge, we will forever remain friends. Wherever we meet, we will always rejoice in our friendship, share school memories and future plans. As Agata Markuns said in her "Graduates' Farewell 2021" video, "Happiness is found in the journey, not destination." The contribution that the Boston Lithuanian School gave us has helped shape our unique personalities with a broad worldview and pride in speaking a rare, beautiful language that almost no one speaks here in the USA.

I thank all the teachers for their patience and dedication. I thank my mother, father and brother for speaking only Lithuanian to me from birth. I would like to thank the Lithuanian community and Boston Lithuanian School for uplifting and believing in me in this journey, and supporting the pride of being Lithuanian.

Lina Senuta is a graduate of the Boston Lithuanian School and a rising sophomore at Duxbury High School, Duxbury, MA



Assistant Principal Ramunė Keegan and the graduating class's teacher for the last 2 years commends the school's principal Gaila Urbonaitė-Narkevičienė for her hard work and dedication.



All together again. From the left: Nikolas Giniotas, Sofija Šležas, Monika Šermukšnis, Gabrielė Keegan, Lina Senuta, Agata Markuns, Kristina Gavelis, and Tadas Baltaduonis.

UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Memoir of a Siberian Deportee

By Juzė Avižienytė Žukauskienė

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



Siberian Sky. Photograph by Rolandas Žygas

21. HUNGER IS NOT YOUR AUNT

In the morning, after the hanging of the dogs, the cleaning woman of our office, Tiotia Motia, told us the news: "You know, girls, Pyotr Ipolitovitch and his wife are taking the skinned dogs and are bringing them home on sleds." "Well, now! What will he do with them?" I asked surprised.

"What will he do?! He'll eat them," shot back Motia.

"Oh, it's better to die of hunger than to eat something so disgusting," we all answered spitefully.

"You wait, you just wait! You haven't seen real hunger! 'Hunger is not your aunt.' People eat worse things than that from hunger," Motia defended her "sensation."

A few days after this conversation, upon coming home from the office, I found that very same Pyotr Ipolitovitch Glushanin sitting in our chata. He had been an anti-aircraft artillery officer in the Polish Army. After Poland was defeated during the war against the Germans in 1939, he, being wounded, was interned with a part of the remaining Polish Army in Lithuania and, in 1941, was deported with us to Siberia.

The conversation was centering upon the thing of utmost concern - food.

"I, at least, was successful in provisioning myself with meat," stated our guest smiling.

"From where? How?" my husband started asking with zeal,

while I remembered Motia's announcement. I glanced at the captain questioningly.

"I got three pieces of 'Narim's mutton,' " again he smiled, yet he pronounced 'Narim's mutton' rather unusually.

My husband did not understand, and I had not yet mentioned about Motia's 'sensation.' My husband asked again, how Lady Luck had smiled on him so. Then, the captain said without a smile:

"Well, there on the hill, where they were strangling the dogs. Before anyone noticed, I grabbed three of them."

I saw that my husband was turning pale and would vomit, but the captain, not paying any attention, continued on: "You know, it's not bad meat at all. Please come over, I'll treat you."

"Ahh! Ugh! gagged my husband and ran out the door.

"Pszepraszam !* Excuse me! I did not think, that Pan Kapitan * (my husband was also a captain) would react so unpleasantly. I am really very sorry. I sincerely regret it." Captain Glushanin apologized once more and left.

*Tiotia - "Aunt" in Russian

*Pszepraszam - "Excuse me" in Polish

*Pan Kapitan - "Sir Captain" - a very polite form of address in Polish, whereby not only one's title or profession is used, but also Sir, Madam, Miss

22. THE FIRST FUNERAL

It was becoming bitterly cold. The temperature fell to between -42 and -46 C. The problem with food became more acute. Two old people would come begging from "Vostok," and, from our "Puti Lenina," one or two women would stop by, and, even though very timidly, would ask for a tiny bit of food, just for this once. Our family was considered "rich," because there were two men, and I worked in the office. And we were still successful in hunting up something to eat in the "free" Bolotovka, 10 km from us. Women with small children were managing with great difficulty. It was especially difficult for the former teacher Ignašiūnienė. She had three small children, the oldest of which was only 6. The mother was exchanging clothes without foresight for almost any food. But how many clothes could a deportee have?! Disregarding the cold, she exchanged a good winter coat for six pails of potatoes and one kilogram of butter. In exchange for a silk dress, she obtained some cotton from the medical assistant and made herself a three-quarter coat from a terry-cloth robe. And with it, she went to work.

During the winter, the "old contingent" coped with the work in the fields and farms, while the women who had been brought recently, as not yet hardened, were sent to in-ground cellars to sort potatoes. Many of them were frozen and rotten.

Death appeared in our midst. A 40-year old woman, Savickienė, died. Weakened, undernourished, scantily dressed, since, like everyone else, she had exchanged her clothes for food. The team-leader sent her, already coughing, to sort those frozen potatoes. She caught a serious chill, developed a croup-type double pneumonia and, having been sick hardly three days, died.

We gathered at the funeral and we all cried. Černiauskienė, who had a beautiful voice, began a popular hymn, which probably every believing deported Lithuanian knew by heart: "Marija, Marija, skaisčiausia lelija..." / "Mary, Mary, o brightest of lilies..."

It was not a funeral hymn. But no one had a hymnal, and we did not know the hymns by heart. Therefore, we all sang this one with inspiration and in ecstasy, and when we came to the words:

"Apsaugok Žmoniją" / "Protect humanity
Palengvink vergiją / Ease our slavery
Išgelbėk nuo priešo baisaus!" / Save us from our terrible enemy"

we all began to sob. The words stuck in our throats, the tears poured down in a stream. But still, we repeated that verse one more time.

Some Russians gathered and looked at us in astonishment and began to ask:

"Who was the deceased that you are all crying so much? Perhaps she was some famous person or a close relative? We mothers don't even cry so." We answered that she was a sister to us all, and to some a mother.

They, of course, did not understand that allegory. They did not understand the words of the hymn, and we thought that those words had been especially written for us, and we were calling for help with all our hearts from Mary, the Blessed Mother.

23. A SMALL SPARK OF LOST HOPE

Around the New Year, an order came from the regional administration that the new arrivals, that is, the people who had been recently brought, should receive a ration of 300 grams of bread a day from the collective farm stores. But no such luck! At once, the chairman, the commandant and the warehouseman reacted.

"What do they think up in regional administration? From what funds can we feed them? The collective farm can't settle its accounts with the government, we can't give a single gram for workdays, and these people don't earn anything..." I heard bits and pieces of a lively discussion. Immediately, an explanatory letter was written and the warehouseman was delegated to go to the regional administration, so that this order would be rescinded. And...it was.

One evening, when the commandant was at the office and

the chairman came by, I asked when they would begin to distribute the ration according to the regional order.

"As you see, people are starving and even dying..."

"Wait, you haven't seen anything yet! These are only the flowers, the berries will come later..."* uttered the seated store man with an angry smirk, smoking a hand-rolled cigarette. And the commandant just jumped:

"And who told you that there was such an order?"

"It's not important that who said it, but you yourself know that there is such an order."

"You know too much, and you even know that which does not exist and that which you should not know," said the commandant angrily stressing every word.

"After all, people did not come here of their own free will, they must be supported somehow," I defended my position.

"Never mind! You will survive on your old fat," stated the commandant angrily and mockingly and walked out of the office.

The farmers who were present and the chairman advised me, that I should refrain from such conversations, since it could have very sad consequences.

When I returned home, I told my family about this conversation. They also scolded me, that such talk served no purpose because it could bring about repression. When the deportees learned of this, there was a universal indignation.

"They take everything from us that they can and don't even give us what the government allots."

I came to the conclusion, that I had been foolish up to this point, that whatever was demanded, I tried to give. We had already given up clothing we needed ourselves and it was always the same: give and give! And for us, nothing.

"No! They will get nothing more from us!" I decided firmly. My family agreed, since nothing happened anyway to those who gave nothing.

* "These are only the flowers, the berries will come later." - a Russian saying, meaning that worse things will come. Its English equivalent would be: "That's only the tip of the iceberg."

24. I FIGHT

A few days later, the collectors arrived once more. Again, a meeting at the office. The people were assembling unwillingly, some were trying to hide. They had to be urged there several times. The agitators, the deportees, and the locals: the commandant and the chairman explained that the heroic Soviet Army had defended our capital from the Fascist scum. The soldiers needed clothes, food, and arms. In short: our region promises one tank. A lot of money is needed. It has been calculated that each working citizen

must give 300 rubles. The audience is silent. Finally, a rustling and murmuring begin. Some try to slip out quietly from the office. I was among that number.

The light in the office stayed on until the morning. The agents did not leave even the following day. To extort 300 rubles from people who had nothing, who barely had anything to eat, was not easy. But, if the plan was not carried out, the agent himself risked being thrown in jail or sent to the Front.

In the morning, as soon as I came to work, I was asked to the chairman's office. I knew that this bode no good, but I was determined to resist, to give nothing more.

When I had left home, my whole family asked me not to provoke dangerous discussions, and my middle son, Stasiukas, holding on to my hand, walked me to the door and begged me:

"Mommy, just don't get excited! Defend yourself coldly, in English-style."

And so, upon entering the office, in which were seated the agent and the chairman, I remembered Stasiukas' advice and decided to be strong and very cool.

"Well, Žukauskiene, how much did you bring? Your family must give 1200 rubles."

"I have no money and I brought none. Besides, during the meeting, I heard that a worker must give 300 rubles. Why does my family deserve such an "honor" of 400 rubles? Only three of us work for nothing and two children go to school."

"In the summer, your second son was also working."

"Fine! I agree: whatever the four of us earned in seven months, I give you everything to the last "kopek."* Comrade Chairman, write it down, that whatever has been earned in my family's account, - since we have not yet received anything - transfer everything to the Defense Fund."

The chairman bent down as if to look for something in the drawer and answered nothing, but the agent, with a raised voice, shouted:

"Don't try to be clever! I don't care about your accounts, give me the money!"

Once again, I answered coldly, even very coldly:

"I have no money, I already said so, and secondly, I am not deaf, I can hear a normal voice, besides I am a Soviet citizen and I have the right to ask you to address me with the formal 'You' and not the informal 'Thou.'** The agent became furious:

"The right! The right! Jurists have arrived! Just think!"

"We did not "arrive!" We were driven here by force. As far as my right to the "You" form, it was already in 1918, under Lenin that the law was passed - all functionaries and officers, as cultured Soviet citizens, would address their subordinates and ordinary citizens with 'You' and not the informal "Thou."

The agent became confused, looked at the chairman.

The latter always addressed me with the formal 'You' and sometimes even with a sign of respect, that is, with my name and my father's name.

"Well then, one has to look for money. If one doesn't have any of one's own, then one has to borrow some," the agent addressed me without using 'You' or 'Thou.'

"I have no place to look, since I lost none, and to borrow some, from whom? Everyone here is a beggar."

The agent turned red, but controlled himself from swearing and only said:

"Good! I'll draw up a statement right away, then 'thou' will see." In the threat, 'thou' surfaced again.

I remained silent. Scowling at me, he took a piece of paper. He was watching to see what impression his threat would make. I continued to be silent. He was disappointed. Usually, the intimidated local inhabitants, at the mention of the 'statement,' would immediately begin to beg, to promise, while the women would usually begin to cry.

The agent snorted, thought, wrote for a long time.

I leaned my back against the wall and sat quietly. He kept casting glances at me to see if I 'will come to my senses,' if I will become frightened. He wrote for more than a half-hour. The chairman was smoking a hand-rolled cigarette and I, leaning against the wall, my eyes half-closed, half smiling, waited. Finally, he finished.

"Here, sign it!"

"I have to read what 'thou' 'scribbled' there," also changing to the coarse 'thou', I stretched out my hand.

"I'll read it to thee."

"Excuse me, I am literate myself, I wish to see it with my own eyes, otherwise I will not sign."

"Here, read it!" the agent extended the 'statement' to me. He watched me with angry eyes to see how he will 'stun' me.

What dreadful things he had written there: "Žukauskienė 1) is involved in anti-Soviet agitation, 2) is destroying discipline at work, 3) is sabotaging, 4) refuses to pay government taxes," and so on, of course, all this was not expressed so clearly, so concisely, and with many grammatical errors. It meant that for each one of those points paragraph 58 of the penal code is applicable, which means, 10 years of prison.

Everyone watched attentively, to see what impression all these 'horrors' would produce on me. They waited that I also, as was usual, would begin to cry, to beg, that I would run to look for money somewhere, in order to get it at any cost and buy myself out of prison.

In the meantime, I was reading and smiling ironically. While the agent was writing, I had the time to think over how I would behave even in the worst situation. Emphasizing my words, I asked:

"When and whom did I agitate against the state?"

"Well, even here, didn't you say a lot?"

"So you consider my words agitation and your own as the state? I refuse to admit it. 2) 'is destroying discipline at work'... My, my! How strongly put. I am not destroying anything; I and my family are working. What kind of an imposed discipline is this, those state principles, that each newcomer can destroy them so easily? Just you try, all of you agitators, leaders, functionaries to destroy my convictions. Do you understand what you wrote here? Shame!"

I started to be unwisely excited.

They became abashed, tried to yell at me, I began to regain my equilibrium. Finally, I was in control of myself and said:

"Give me a pen, I'll sign,"

The agent held out a pen to me. Taking the 'statement,' on which there remained a little empty space, I began writing somewhat on a slant, as resolutions are usually written:

"Lies, slander! I am not agitating anyone..."

The agent jumped:

"What art thou writing there? Thou only has to sign."

I raised my hand palm up toward him:

"Easy, easy! Sit there quietly. Thou was writing almost an hour, I did not disturb thee, and now, be thou nice and don't disturb me!" I continued writing.

"I do not destroy the discipline at work, since I myself work 18 hours a day, I do not engage in sabotage, I do not refuse to pay taxes, only, at this moment, I have no money. I allow my family's and my total income, the whole sum, to be transferred to the Defense Fund and I sign."

They put their heads together to read it. The commandant entered.

"What can one do with the likes of these? They don't pay taxes and they ruin the statement!"

The latter read everything through. He looked me up and down with blood-shot eyes and angrily, in a hard tone said:

"Fine! We'll take care of her. We'll find a place for such a one. We have to send her away!"

I became frightened. I did not know how or where they would send me. What would my children and my husband do?

"Leave! Wait outside the door!"

I waited, half dead. "But, I won't give in," I thought. I wanted terribly to run home and tell my family everything; but I knew that at this hour, no one was home. My husband and my older son were working, and the two younger ones were in school.

The "rulers" wrote and deliberated for a long time. Finally, the door opened and the agent gave me a packet. The envelope, made from an old newspaper, was pasted together with a steamed potato - the office had no glue -

the address: "Vysokoyar Central Soviet."

"Nothing terrible," I relaxed and wanted to run home.

"You'll bring it there and you'll give it to the chairman or the militiaman."

"Fine. But, Vysokoyar is 30 km away. And it's already afternoon, how can I go across the taiga? I don't even know the way."

"That's not our business. You got what you wanted. But, leave right away," said the agent, and the commandant added:

"I'll come to check in an hour."

I ran home. My little one and Stasiukas had already returned from school. I immediately sent Stasiukas to get my husband from work. He and my son returned right away since they worked close by in the felt factory. I recounted my 'battles' to them. They all became very upset. My little one began to cry, clutched me, and pleaded:

"Mommy, don't go anywhere! Don't leave us!"

I saw that the eyes of the other two and my husband's were filled with tears. It was very difficult for me to leave my children, my husband, my warm abode and to go out into the unknown. I was almost tempted to go back to the office and ask for mercy, - not for myself, but for my children. But, I immediately overcame this weakness. I imagined how our torturers would rejoice and triumph having defeated us. In the end, what good would my 'atonement' do if I had no money, and I had none.

"No, my dears, I must go. Nothing terrible will happen. Don't be afraid. Remember that I know how to take care of myself," I calmed them, but my own heart was far from calm.

I bundled up with whatever I had, I stuck the packet over my bosom and I started out. The cold was more than -40 C. I stepped lively so that I would reach the next settlement Svietlo-Zelionoe before dark.

My hands and my knees hurt terribly from the bitter cold, I rubbed my face constantly with my gloves so that it would not freeze. I reached Svietlo-Zelionoe before it became quite dark.

Many Lithuanian deportees lived there also. I stopped at the abode of Aleksienė, the wife of the former Minister of Agriculture. She and her three daughters lived in a separate chata from the Russians. She received me in a friendly manner. We slept on plain plank-beds. She covered herself with a scarf, I with my coat. When it was light, I prepared to continue my journey. Aleksienė worried about breakfast. My God! What could they give me, they had nothing to eat themselves! I categorically refused breakfast and I marched out. I still had over 20 km to go. Only the taiga and no more settlements.

At the edge of the village, the Lithuanian Alaunė overtook me. He was a blacksmith and somewhat richer.

His wife also came running out. I told them where I was going.

"You probably haven't eaten? Come in, at least you'll have some hot soup, otherwise, you'll freeze. Such a long way! My God! My God! And why do they torture people so? They sent a few of us already. Don't worry, nothing will happen to you there. Maybe you'll have to chop wood, but not for long. As long as you don't get frostbite."

They gave me some hot soup and even a small piece of bread for the road, and a wool scarf to tie around my hands.

"You'll return it on the way back."

Oh, how grateful I was to these people, whom I had never met before, for their sincerity and care. I set forth on an unknown road under deep snow, which barely trod upon. The cold was burning. I constantly wiped my face with the borrowed scarf. My tears froze on my cheeks, my eyelashes and eyebrows were covered with hoar-frost.

I reached Vysokoyar at twilight. I asked where the Regional Soviet was. Covered with hoar-frost, stiff from the cold, I stepped into the office. A cozy warmth wafted over me, like a blessing. I had dreamed of nothing else as I walked, only about a warm abode.

And here it was warm and even a lamp with a glass on it was shining. Everywhere else there were only oil-wick lamps. I shook off my frost-covered scarf, I wiped my eyebrows and eyelashes. With stiffened hands, I took out the cover letter from under my coat and, after asking if he was the Regional Chairman, I presented the packet to him.

Where are you from? What kind of packet is this?" the

chairman looked me over questioningly.

"I am from Komarovka, the Lenin's Way Kolkhoz, and what is written there, I don't know."

He tore off the newspaper envelope and began to read. With curiosity and, I must admit, with concern, I watched the expression on his face.

His face became angrier and his brow contracted in a frown. I saw that he was angry. I was already prepared for an attack. But, to my great surprise, the chairman looked at me rather with compliance and sympathy.

"So, why do you not want to pay taxes?" he asked, not angrily, not insultingly, and not sternly; I really did not expect that.

"I would gladly pay if only I had the means.

We were only brought here last summer. You know that. When we were taken, we were not able to bring everything, and whatever we brought, we have almost exchanged all of it for food. It seems to me, that it is not a secret to you that we earn nothing here, even though we work day and night. We have no money. The people who were brought here were not rich people, but ordinary working people, who lived on a salary. Here, at Vysokoyar, there are also deportees who were brought together with us from where we came. Obviously, you see what they have," I related to the Regional Chairman as convincingly as I could.

He asked me a few more questions about my family, about my specialty, about my work and salary in Lithuania. Then, a simple question, just as everyone else asked, why it was I and not my husband, the head of the family, who came.

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