

**Miscellanea**

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**TWELVE YEARS OF AID**

**Ignas K. Skrupskelis**

It is many years now, that the Lithuanians resettled in North America, have been enjoying a comfortable standard of living. Yet, these many years did not dissolve the bonds between them and the less fortunate exiles in Europe or those remaining behind the Iron Curtain. For these, the post-war years have been one continuous economic depression, and for those behind the Iron Curtain, also a period of intellectual oppression.

The prosperity of the minority stands in marked contrast to the deprivation of the majority. It is necessary, consequently, for the minority to share its prosperity generously, to alleviate the suffering of the majority. For this purpose, the United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America, Inc., was founded in 1944. Since then, supported mostly by private contributors, the fund has distributed several million dollars in money, food, clothing and medicines.

This aid, has reached thousands of Lithuanians dispersed throughout all of Europe and the other continents. An increasing amount of aid has crossed the Iron Curtain, for distribution among Lithuanians in Siberia. The fund has also acted to facilitate immigration. Immigration papers have been procured for some 3000 persons. Many of the Lithuanians coming to the United States, under the various immigration acts, have done so with the help of this fund.

The bi-annual congress of the United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America has just completed its work. It met in Detroit on the 23 and 24 of November. At this meeting, new directors were elected, accomplishments of the past were reviewed, and plans for the future adopted.

The board of directors consists of twenty-one members. Twenty-one prominent American-Lithuanians were elected. The executive committee has eight members, with the Rev. Dr. Joseph B. Koncius as president. Rev. Koncius has headed the fund since its founding. He has traveled widely, throughout Western Europe, personally investigating conditions.

During the last two fiscal years (July 1954 — June 1956) the fund has received \$252,301 in money donations and 577,033 in goods. There was also a balance of \$23,522 from previous years. If we subtract the \$43,734 balance and \$80,343 in operational and shipping costs, we find that \$148,419 in cash and 1,557,818 lbs of goods were distributed during this period.

To gain a better picture of the fund's operations, we can examine some of the recipients individually. Probably the largest single beneficiary, is the February 16th High School in Germany. This boarding school, having some 100 students has received almost 58,000 in money aid. Recently, the school purchased its own facilities, partly with the help of this aid. Another \$4,700 has gone to another Lithuanian school in Italy.

But most of the recipients are persons in need, the invalids or those with large families or the orphans. Twenty-two pounds of clothing have been sent to a needy person in Poland, another twenty-five pounds has reached Norway, or 39,030 lbs of food into Germany.

Approximately \$5,000 worth of aid has reached Lithuanians in Siberia. Many of the prisoners have been there since the World War II, others have been deported only recently, but all of them are desperately in need of food and clothing. Medicines are also sent, many of these in small standard packages which can only be sent four times each year. Some of the packages were returned with the comment that the prisoners have already been freed. Numerous letters of gratitude are received from Lithuania and Siberia.

For the next two fiscal years, the bi-annual congress has adopted a budget of \$915,000. The fund plans to concentrate its aid among the Siberian Exiles, as much as that is possible. The emergency in Europe has lost some of its urgency, due to emigration and a general European prosperity. Those in Siberia, at this time are in the greatest need.

For the future, the United Lithuanian Relief Fund of America, is planing continuous growth. The beneficiaries of the past are slowly becoming benefactors, helping those among their countrymen still in need. With the resulting increase in contributions the fund will expand its program, giving more aid to more needy Lithuanians.

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### LITHUANIAN STUDENTS MET IN CHICAGO

During the Thanksgiving recess students of Lithuanian descent from all parts of the U.S. A., gathered in Chicago where the annual convention of the Lithuanian Students Association, Inc., was held. This organization, which in the five years of its existence has grown to the extent that it now has almost one thousand members, forms the meeting ground for Lithuanian students attending American colleges and universities. The aims of the association, as listed in the charter, are as follows :

1. to promote cultural and social activities among college and university students of Lithuanian descent;
2. to promote the material welfare of Lithuanian students; and
3. to promote friendly relations between Lithuanian and other students in American colleges and universities and to represent the Lithuanian student body.

The members of the organization engage in numerous activities the publication of this quarterly being one of them.

More than 200 students attended this annual convention. Members from New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit and even such distant locations as Los Angeles met in Chicago to discuss the current problems of the Association. Those, who could not attend, were represented by proxy.

The opening speech of the convention was delivered by J. Karklys, President of the Association, followed by a solemn prayer for all deceased members and those who lost their lives fighting against Communism for freedom of Lithuania. Dr. P. Daudžvardis, Lithuanian Consul in Chicago, extended his personal greetings to the convention. The delegates were also welcomed by Dr. Bajerčius, Chairman of the Chicago Chapter of Lithuanian Community, Inc.

The participants elected V. Kleiza (Urbana, 111.) and S. Bobelis (New York City) as chairmen and Miss G. Stepaityte (Urbana, 111.) and D. Karaliūtė (New York City) as secretaries of the convention.

Numerous reports concerning different phases of activities of the Association were read to the convention. Officers informed attending members about the general standing of the organization, the various plans for the future, the financial status and other aspects. Other reports dealt with the problems of the year-book publication, the participation in the Baltic Student Federation of which this Association is a member, the difficulties encountered in publishing LITUANUS and other details. Delegates from different chapters throughout the U.S.A. reported on local achievements and problems of their organizational activities.

Although obstacles and difficulties exist, the general feeling, which one gained by listening to all these detailed reports, was that the Association has been successful in its numerous activities, and one has numerous reasons to believe that the future ahead of us is even brighter. A steady growth in membership was noticed; although many members graduate, an even larger number of young Lithuanians join the Association as soon as they start to attend colleges. An alumni organization is now in its developmental stages, and it is hoped that in the near future this group will start function as an independent unit.

In addition to purely organizational matters, the program was enriched by the inclusion of three discussion seminars. S. Simoliunas (Detroit) summarized the activities of the Association during its first five years of existence; J. Soliunas (Urbana, 111.) presented some valuable advice on local activities and the drive for new members; and A. Laucius (Chicago) discussed the role of the student in political movements.

A press conference was held for Lithuanian newspapers during which the participants were acquainted with the aims, activities and plans of the Association.

Several resolutions were passed, among them one expressing solidarity with Hungarian students spearheading the fight for freedom. In another resolution the convention expressed gratitude to Senator Knowland for his tireless efforts in behalf of the oppressed people and countries under Communism. A message of greetings was sent to President Eisenhower.

In summary, the convention was a success. It clearly indicated that the collegiate youth of Lithuanian descent does not lack enthusiasm and wholeheartedly supports the movement aiming at the eventual freedom of the motherland, which is the chief aim and hope of Lithuanians everywhere.

**V. Valaitis**

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**LITERATURE RECOMMENDED**

LITHUANIA (illustrated) V. Augustinas  
Pictorial presentation of the country. \$6.00

CROSSES by V. Ramonas  
A novel, depicting the life during the Soviet occupation of the country. \$4.00

THE EVENING SONG, compiled by F. Beliajus  
A collection of various tales from Lithuanian folklore. \$3.00

FREEDOM FOR LITHUANIA. Lithuania's Independence Day in the Congress of the United States. 1955, 75 pp.

LITHUANIA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM by E. J. Harrison  
Presentation of Lithuania's case in her struggle with the invaders.

THE STORY OF LITHUANIA by T. G. Chase A glance at the history of the country.

THE FOREST OF ANYKŠČIAI by Antanas Baranauskas A poem written originally in 1859. Translation from Lithuanian by Nadas Rastenis.

THE LITHUANIAN SITUATION by Prof. K. Pakštas  
A brief, informative publication, intended to acquaint the reader with the country of Lithuania. \$0.50.

EAST and WEST  
A quarterly review of Soviet and Baltic problems

LITHUANIAN SELF-TAUGHT  
Released by Marlborough