

STUDY DAYS

On April 26 and 27, some 70 members of the Lithuanian Student Association in the U.S. met in Philadelphia for a regional Study Days, the second such gathering to be sponsored by the association this year. The Philadelphia meeting was held at the University of Pennsylvania and Ravenhill Academy.

The principal theme of the weekend gathering was "The Lithuanian Artist at the Crossroads of Exile." The sessions were devoted to lectures by Dr. A. Salys, of the University of Pennsylvania's Baltic-Slavic Department, and Prof. J. Brazaitis, currently editor of the semiweekly newspaper "Darbininkas." Both speakers laid especial stress on the fact that no writer, artist or composer is entitled to use his exile as an excuse for turning out work of inferior quality. J. Baltrušaitis and O. Milash were cited as writers whose work, though created outside Lithuania, has still achieved lasting fame. Both speakers also pointed out the vital need for establishing closer cooperation between the older intellectuals and the younger generation, particularly the students. The latter were urged to contribute actively to American cultural work and to absorb the best of America's ideas while at the same time remaining true to their Lithuanian heritage and employing the knowledge they garner for the eventual liberation of the motherland. According to Prof. Brazaitis, it is only in terms of his national heritage that a person is capable of contributing to the world's cultural riches. A Lithuanian artist should not hesitate to produce works in which his Lithuanian background is evident simply because non-Lithuanians may fail to understand them. Truly superior works cannot be confined to a national group by that group's national boundaries.

A third session of the gathering was sponsored by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lithuanian Student Association; its aim was to acquaint the members with three of the large student organizations in the United States: the National Federation of Catholic College Students (NFCCS), the United States National Students Association (USNSA) and the Baltic Students Federation (BSF). The NFCCS and the BSF were represented by their national presidents, J. Harris and W. Salmre, and the USNSA was represented by its executive vice-president, D. Clifford. The three distinguished student leaders acquainted those present with the purposes of the organizations they represent, various phases of their activities, their organizational structure, etc. It would seem that more meetings of this kind would benefit both the American-born and the Lithuanian born student in the common quest for peace and worldwide freedom.

During the Study Days a banquet was held in the Coronet Ball Room with the purpose of fostering closer cooperation between Lithuanian students and the older generation of Lithuanians. Dr. A. Senn, Chairman of the University of Pennsylvania's Baltic-Slavic Department, was honored at the banquet for his important contributions to the philology of the Lithuanian language. Dr. Senn is a Swissborn scholar who was a faculty member at Lithuania's Kaunas University before World War n.

The Study Days were concluded with a ceremony at the Liberty Bell. A wreath was placed at the shrine in memory of Lithuanian students who sacrificed their lives in the fight against international Communism. The principal speaker at the ceremony at Independence Hall was Prof. J. Brazaitis, one of the chief leaders of the Lithuanian revolt against the Soviet occupation in 1941.

The program of the Study Days was recorded and was later transmitted to the country behind the Iron Curtain by the Voice of America.

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