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LITUANUS DATA BANK

- Professor Zigmantas Zinkevičius, head of the Department of Lithuanian Language at the University of Vilnius, has just released the first of a five volume history of the Lithuanian language. Elected member of the Swedish Royal Academy in 1982, he presented a lecture at the Fifth Symposium on Science and Creativity (Chicago, 1985) centering on his research in the Yotving language. He presented samples of the ancient vocabulary from a manuscript which was discovered in 1978.
- Jonas Rutenis, a member of the World of Poetry, has won the Golden Poet Award for 1985. A resident of Cape Cod, Mass., Rutenis received his award during the Poets' convention in Reno, Nevada.
- Raymond Viskanta, Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Purdue University, was named W.F.M. Goss Distinguished Professor of Engineering, in March of 1986. Viskanta made his name in radiation heat transfer. The Goss Distinguished Professorship was established in 1964 to honor William Freeman Myrick Goss, who served as Purdue's first Dean of Engineering. Viskanta is the third Goss Distinguished Professor at Purdue.
- Algis Rukšėnas, author of the 1973 book *Day of Shame* which recounted Simas Kudirka's quest towards freedom, has just finished writing *Is That You Laughing, Comrade?* The book, a collection of anecdotes from life in the Soviet Union, will be published by Citadel Press, New York, and will be available to the general public in 1986.
- Algimantas Taškūnas has received the Lithuanian World Catholic Conference award for social service. Mr. Taškūnas has received the Lithuanian World Catholic Conference award for social service. Mr. Taškūnas is an Australian-Lithuanian, editor of the *Baltic News*, and works on behalf of the Baltic prisoners of conscience. The award carries a \$500 prize.

XEROX VERSUS VCR: THE FLOW OF IDEAS IN THE USSR

by VICTOR A. NAKAS

Special to the LITUANUS Data Bank

Remember the last time you needed to photocopy something at the office? Did the boss examine your sheaf of papers carefully before initialing them and call in his administrative assistant to countersign them? And how many times did you rush to beat the Friday afternoon deadline for xeroxing before the security guard arrived to lock the door to the room housing the copier and apply a wax seal to discourage weekend intruders? If this sounds like something out of George Orwell's 1984, it should: welcome to the USSR.

According to UPI correspondent Jack Redden (*The Washington Post*, January 6, 1986), a similar situation exists at a Soviet publishing house. It illustrates the Soviets' obsession with controlling the flow of information. Redden says that in the USSR there are estimated to be at most 50,000 copying machines — one for every 5,540 Soviet citizens. By contrast, in the United Kingdom 125,000 new copiers are purchased annually.

The manufacture of copiers does not rank high in the Five Year Plan. Annual production is said to be limited to a few thousand. By keeping tight restrictions on the quantity of copiers, Soviet authorities lessen the likelihood that sources of information other than those emanating from the government will be disseminated among the populace. Thus publishers of the Soviet underground press have to resort to typewriters and carbon paper to reproduce their material. Access to a

copier would save underground authors hours of tedious labor and enable them to devote more time to formulating and recording their thoughts — which is precisely why Soviet officials keep their copiers under lock and seal.

There is a special irony in the fact that the center of copier manufacture is in Lithuania, the leader among Soviet republics in the generation of underground publications. That the forbidden fruit grows in the dissidents' backyard can only reinforce feelings of frustration among those who yearn for freedom to propagate their views without state interference.

The proximity of the forbidden fruit to the dissidents must make Soviet authorities nervous. Relaxation of vigilance could make copiers available to individuals and groups seeking alternatives to the party line. Indeed, the dam that Soviet authorities have thrown up to keep out unsanctioned sources of information has chinks in it. One such chink is the proliferation of videocassette recorders (VCRs) and videocassette tapes. As *The Washington Post's* Celestine Bohlen reports (January 12, 1986), the Soviet government has embarked on a campaign to produce video programs aimed at countering the growing influx of illegal tapes from the West. Given the small size of video tapes, the ease with which they can be duplicated, and their increasing popularity, the Kremlin cannot apply the same heavy-handed methods it uses for controlling copiers. Soviet officials have had to go out into the marketplace and actually compete with western videocassette makers for the Soviet audience. But, as Bohlen reports, the Soviet authorities suffer the disadvantage that viewers in the USSR are attracted to western tapes precisely because they present an alternative to the Soviet experience.

Thus far the rage for western videos appears to be centered around music videos such as the Live Aid concert staged to benefit victims of African famine. To a westerner this is fairly innocuous stuff. To Soviet officialdom, however, it raises the disturbing question of where curiosity with the West might lead. For some Soviet consumers there may be a road leading from western music to western ideas to a western outlook. Thus, for example, a number of Soviet viewers could eventually move forward from Live Aid to films like "Out of Africa" (a paean to individualism) and "the Killing Fields" (a searing portrayal of totalitarianism), which contradict or even subvert the party line.

The differing Soviet approaches to Information dissemination, as illustrated in the cases of the copier and the videocassette, show at once the extent and the limitations of the Kremlin's power over the Soviet people. The Soviet state is not the monolith it once was; yet neither has it discarded many of its Orwellian features. Where there is little pressure for relaxation of controls — i.e. for easy access to copying machines — the state emulates the Stalinist model. Where popular circumvention of central controls becomes manifest

— i.e. the smuggling and viewing of western videocassettes

— the state makes limited accommodations. In the latter phenomenon there is modest hope for the future.

TASS AND EASTERN PRESS ON REV. ZDEBSKIS' DEATH

Activist Priest Buried on February 10

The Rev. Juozas Zdebskis, who perished under still unexplained circumstances on February 5, 1986, was buried on February 10 in Rudamina, Lithuania.

Father Zdebskis was one of five founding members of the unofficial Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' rights, which made its debut with a secretly arranged press conference in Moscow, in 1978. The Catholic Committee was forced underground in 1983 following the arrests of two of its charter members and a series of threats by Soviet authorities against the rest.

The press of Soviet-occupied Lithuania has remained silent about Zdebskis' death. On February 18, Moscow's TASS published an article by its political commentator Boris Chekhonin, who corrected the Western news agencies by stating that Zdebskis died not on February 6, as they had reported, but on February 5. He described the circumstances of the fatal accident that claimed the priest's life, on the basis of a telephone conversation with the representatives of the Lithuanian SSSR Ministry of the Interior.

The Swiss news agency KPA notes that since at this time more accurate information about the Rev. Zdebskis' death is unavailable, one cannot rule out the possibility that he did not die accidentally. The agency reminds that Zdebskis was persecuted and accused of "anti-Soviet agitation" for his defense of religious rights.

The *Linzer, Salzburger und Kalthner Kirchenzeitung*, the newspaper of three Austrian dioceses, published in its February 20 issue two articles about the Rev. Zdebskis' tragic death in Lithuania. The newspaper calls Zdebskis a "courageous champion of religious freedom." In 1984, he was imprisoned for a whole month, while in 1969 he was not allowed to function as a priest. In 1974, he was interrogated for two days by the security organs. On March 5, 1975, KGB agents driving two cars tried to murder him in a staged automobile accident. In 1976, he was deprived of his driver's license for eighteen months. In October, 1980, he received burn wounds. Early in December, 1980, he was briefly detained.

According to the Austrian newspaper, Father Zdebskis' crimes are: teaching religion, visiting inmates of the GULAG camps, a press conference he had organized in Moscow and a 1983 sermon on the persecution of religious believers.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

On March 22, 1986, the Fifth Annual Human Rights Conference, sponsored by the Baltic, American Freedom League, took place in Los Angeles at the Ambassador Hotel. The aim of the sponsors was to continue exposing rights violations occurring in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, three republics now under Soviet occupation.

A number of speakers presented wide-ranging reports on the current rights situation. Thus, Mr. Henno Parks reported on "Efforts to Free the World's Youngest Prisoner — Kaisa Randpere." Kaisa is an Estonian girl of three years of age. She is prevented by the Soviets from joining her parents who escaped to the West in late 1984. Mr. Atis Lejins presented "The Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise — An Evaluation." It turned out the extensive and sharp denunciations of the cruise by TASS which created an unexpected bonanza of attention by Western news media.

In addition to a number of other speakers, the conference heard Ambassador Herbert S. Okun, Deputy Permanent Representative of the U.S.A. to the U.N. The ambassador addressed the complex issue of U.S. foreign policy objectives which appear, at times, to be tactically opposed to one another. "On the one hand," said the ambassador, "stands our determination to keep faith with those of you for whom the dream of national liberation is vivid and real. On the other, it is our desire to pursue human rights objectives in a way that emphasizes these issues and leads to resolution of individual human rights cases. The first objective requires consistent denial that Soviet authorities have any rightful jurisdiction over the territories and peoples of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. The second requires a practical accommodation with those same authorities, with whom we must work to ease the burden of human rights abuse."

The ambassador pursued in detail apparent conflicts of these two policies. He also reassured the audience of the United States' express continuation of Baltic non-recognition policy. At the same time, he pointed out that "in virtually every high-level exchange we have had, we have detailed our specific human rights concerns and made clear their importance to the U.S.-Soviet relationship."

J.A.R.

HUMAN RIGHTS BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

Partial List of Lithuanian Writers Presently Serving Long-Term Imprisonments and Exile

PETKUS, Viktoras, born December 30, 1929.

Graduate of the University of Vilnius and specialist in Lithuanian literature. Arrested on August 23, 1977, nine months after participating in the work of the Lithuanian Helsinki Monitoring Group. Sentenced on July 13, 1978, to 3 years in prison and 7 years in a strict-regime camp and 5 more years in exile in the Soviet union for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda and involvement in religious work with young people." Previously imprisoned from 1946 to 1953 under Art. 58, and again from 1958 to 1965 under Art. 70. His address is: USSR 618263 Kuchino, Chusovskoy r-n, Permskaya oblast, uchr. VS-389/36-1. Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1981, 1983 and 1985.

SKUODIS, Vytautas (SCOTT, Benedict), born March 21, 1929 in Chicago, IL. USA.

Decent of geology at the University of Vilnius. Member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Monitoring Group. Arrested on January 9, 1980, sentenced on December 22, 1980 to 7 years in a strict-regime camp and 5 years internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." A member of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers. He is the author of a 300-page manuscript, "Spiritual Genocide in Lithuania," which was confiscated during a search. Serving his sentence in a Mordovian prison camp. His address is: USSR, Mordovskaya ASSR, 431200 Bareshevo, Tengushevsky rayon, uchr. ZhKh 385/3-5.

DAMBRAUSKAS, Liudas

Chemist, former dean of the Institute for Thermo-Insulation of Vilnius. In March, 1984, the KGB searched his apartment and confiscated his memoirs. He was arrested March 20 and sentenced on October 3, 1984, in Vilnius, to 3-12 years in a strict-regime camp and two years exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and activity." (Art. 68). During the Stalinist regime he

served 10 years in a strict-regime camp (1944-1955). He was sentenced to death but the sentence was remitted after Stalin's death and he was released. Dambrauskas is 64 years old.

IEŠMANTAS, Gintautas, born January 1, 1928.

Journalist and poet. Expelled from the Communist Party for writing poems advocating the secession of Lithuania from the Soviet Union. Arrested March 4, 1980. Tried in Vilnius in December 1980, together with I. Pečeliūnas and Vytautas Skuodis. Sentenced to 6 years in a strict-regime camp and 5 years exile under Art. 70 for circulating his articles and poems in the Lithuanian samizdat journal, *Perspektyvos*. His address is: USSR 618810, Permskaya obi., Chusovsky r-n, st. Vsesvyatskaya, uchr. VS-389/35.

PEČELIŪNAS, Povilas, born May 17, 1928.

Teacher. Arrested on January 9, 1980. Sentenced on December 28, 1980 to 3 years strict-regime camp and 5 years internal exile for writing articles in the samizdat journal, *Perspektyvos* and editing the samizdat journal, *Alma Mater*, of the University of Vilnius.

STATKEVICIUS, Algirdas (Dr.), born April 1, 1923.

Born of American-Lithuanian parents in Lithuania. Physician, psychiatrist, writer. Signatory of the Memorandum of 45 Baits; a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Monitoring Group. First arrested in 1951 and sentenced to 25 years under Article 58 (participation in the Lithuanian freedom movement) and spent five years in the Gulag camps. In May 1970, arrested again for writing three books: "Critique of the Communist Manifesto," "Conclusions from the Sociological Research in Lithuania," and "The ABC of Social Life." The court punished him with a "cure" in a psychiatric hospital. He was released after two-and-one-half years. On December 15, 1979, Dr. Statkevičius' sister in the United States received an urgent request to invite him to come to America. Early in January, 1980, his apartment was searched and on February 14, 1980, he was arrested. He was confined in the Chernyakhovsk psychiatric hospital. On August 12, 1980, he wrote to the Chairman of the LSSR Supreme Soviet, Barkauskas, asking for permission to join his sister in the United States. On August 8-11, 1980, he was sentenced, "in absentia," for a special "cure" in the special psychiatric hospital in Chernyakhovsk. He was moved to a special psychiatric hospital in Tashkent.

TERLECKAS, Antanas, born September 2, 1928.

Economist, writer. Arranged press conferences for foreign correspondents. Arrested on October 30, 1979, in Vilnius. Sentenced September 30, 1980, to 3 years in a strict-labor camp and 5 years exile. He was subjected to constant militia harassment and spent two previous terms in labor camps. He was charged with organizing press conferences and editing the underground journal, *Vytis*. His address is: 686410, Magadanskaya obi., Omsukchansky r-n, pos. Industrialny, ul. Sportivnaya, 5, kv. 17.

FOUR LITHUANIANS MANAGE TO ESCAPE IN 1985

Four Lithuanians have managed to escape to the West in 1985. The last escapee was a 34-year old employee of the Vilnius Housing Administration, who slipped away in November from a group of Soviet tourists in Marseille, France. The French authorities have granted him political asylum. The name of the escapee is still being withheld.

Alfonsas Sakauskas, a judo expert, swam to the Swedish shore from a Soviet fishing trawler, where he was hiding, in the summer of 1985 and received asylum in Sweden. Also that summer, Antanas Siškus did not return to his Soviet trawler from a brief shore leave in Halifax, Canada.

Bronius Venclova, a young historian and graduate of the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, reached freedom via Africa, where he was sent by the Soviets to work as a French-language interpreter and instructor. He escaped from the Congo to Zaire and then came to the United States.

ELTA

LITHUANIAN YOUTHS URGED TO REFUSE SERVICE IN AFGHANISTAN

Underground Organization's Appeal to Lithuanian Youth

The following appeal by Lietuvos Jaunimo Sąjunga (The Lithuanian Youth Association) was published in the second issue of the underground periodical *Juventus Academica* (1985):

Dear Lithuanian Youth! On the occasion of the International Youth Year, the board of the Lithuanian Youth Association addresses itself to each young Lithuanian man and woman, to all the members of our association.

The preservation of the spiritual values of our nation, of the spiritual and physical health of our youth depend not as much on our organizational or political unity as on our personal, individual readiness to wage spiritual and human resistance against the arbitrariness, terror, and the cultural and physical genocide perpetrated by the occupying power.

We have the right to have our own independent Lithuanian youth organization — we don't need any favors from the occupying power. The Lithuanian Youth Association is part of the World Lithuanian Youth Association, in various congresses our interests are represented by our elected deputy (see *Juventus Academica*, No. 1). We all together, the Lithuanian youth in the entire world, are a great power and we shall spare no effort to see our fatherland free, to have a genuine peace on earth, and to ensure that nobody's freedom is imperiled. We remember the words of a famous champion of human rights — our limited chances for victory should not diminish our efforts because it is these efforts that may improve our chances.

It has been five years now that our peers are senselessly perishing in Afghanistan, as they fulfill the so-called 'international duty' as members of the 'limited contingent of the Soviet armed forces' — in reality, becoming murderers and punishers, killing innocent people of a sovereign state, burning down its villages and cities.

We risk to become the shame of the entire humanity! Therefore, the board of the Lithuanian Youth Association emphasizes — on the basis of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, an ethical document, and guided by our conscience, let us boldly refuse to take the military oath and let us not be cowardly tools of the occupying power.