

# LITUANUS

LITHUANIAN QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Volume 45, No. 2 - Summer 1999

Editor of this issue: Violeta Kelertas

ISSN 0024-5089

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## DIASPORA STUDIES: TOWARDS A CURRICULUM FOR LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITIES

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In April of 1999 it was my honor to be a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Vytautas Magnus in Kaunas for an intensive three-week course. The subject of the Lithuanian Diaspora in the United States drew eighteen history majors, plus a few doctoral candidates who audited some of the lectures. The subject matter was fresh and little known, soliciting sustained attention.

An obvious obstacle to hurdle was the dearth of published material. Accordingly, I provided the students with numerous handouts of English and Lithuanian articles. They also had access to twenty copies each of four donated monographs. Leonard Šimutis of Chicago kindly sent copies of his father's memoirs of his visit to Lithuania in 1936 to the World Congress of Lithuanians. The other three books were this writer's diamond jubilee history of the Knights of Lithuania, a biography of Fr. Juozas Žebis, and a documentary of the blasphemy and sedition trial of Anthony Bimba in 1926 at Brockton, Massachusetts. Most of all, the university provided an adequate supply of Alfonsas Eidintas' invaluable *Lietuvių Kolumbai*. Thus, the students were easily able to read assigned excerpts in this variety of monographs.

My mentor, doctoral candidate Daiva Dapkutė, proved to be an invaluable guide, especially in offering slight revisions for the test I had prepared before my visit. This examination represented 70% of the final mark, with 30% deriving from seminar scores. Professor Milda Danytė and Ms. Dapkutė supplemented my lectures with seminars on related topics, also touching on the Canadian experience. As I was leaving, I learned that university officials were musing about making this Diaspora course a mandatory requirement for history majors.

The outline I devised encompassed the following themes:

- The four major waves of emigration
- The phenomenon of emigration and its reasons
- Statistics
- Demography
- The elusive concept of ethnicity
- Ethnicity propagators
- Ethnic profile of the US host society
- US history sketch; civil rights
- Parish beginnings and conflicts
- Three women's religious communities
- Leftists, socialism
- National Alliance of 1886 and its split, 1901
- Catholic Counter-movement and its organizations
- Political Conventions and activities for homeland
- The 1930s and homeland; excursions, basketball
- The Press
- Economic Life Cultural Life

Ideally, a more comprehensive course would envelop the Diaspora in Canada, England, Scotland, Australia, and South America. There were Lithuanians even in Johannesburg, South Africa! It remains for researchers more familiar with those parts of the world to locate and organize a bibliography.