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## CURRENT EVENTS

### SOVIET ARREST OF AMERICAN-BORN LITHUANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST REPORTED

Vytautas Skuodis, whose arrest by Soviet security police was reported in a UPI dispatch from Moscow on Jan. 14, is an American by birth.

Skuodis was a lecturer in geology at Vilnius University. Before being forced into internal exile himself, Dr. Andrei Sakharov announced that Vytautas Skuodis had been arrested as a result of searches carried out two weeks ago. The report states that "Mr. Skuodis was accused of having signed an appeal for the revocation of the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact and the removal of foreign troops from the Baltic territories." (See: *Lituanus* Spring 1980, p. 5)

Based on information supplied by Andrei Sakharov, UPI reported that Skuodis had been arrested for signing the Baltic 45 memorandum, which on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, demanded that the Baltic states be granted their guaranteed right to self-determination. However Skuodis' signature was not among the 45.

Baptismal records at Our Lady of Vilna Church, Chicago, show that Vytautas Skuodis was born on March 21, 1929, and baptized Benediktas Vytautas Skodžius at Our Lady of Vilna Church, Chicago, Illinois 60608. Skuodis' baptismal certificate designates his mother as being Elizabeth Markevičius, father — Petrus Scott-Skodzius.

Others arrested for signing this memorandum marking the 40th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact include Antanas Terleckas, Julius Sasnauskas, Jonas Petkevičius, Algirdas Statkevičius, Mečislovas Jurevičius and Arvydas Čekanavičius. However, only Skuodis is known to have been born in the United States.

In a letter to President Jimmy Carter dated November 28, 1979, Skuodis reports searches of his apartment and repeated interrogations of his person by security police. The letter, written over a month prior to his arrest, has just now reached the West.



*Vytautas Skuodis*

Edward Capras Caprata	16 Jan 1924	Feb 1929	2237 W 23rd Pl	Edward Capras Helena Wedasz
Albertus Budaevich	25 Jan 1929	7 Apr 1929	2328 W 23rd Pl	Aleksander Budas Constance Skapska
Benedictus-Vytautas Scott Skudzius	21 Mar 1929	21 Apr 1929	2131 W 23rd Pl Chicago, Ill	Petrus Scott-Is Elizabeth Martoni
Silvia-Ladovika Brodusieviciute	14 Jan 1929	28 Apr 1929	2342 W 23rd Pl Chicago, Ill	Adriana Ladova Ladovika Ladova
Eva Zakaravaus Kas	8 Jun 1928	2 Mar 1929	2216 W 23rd Pl Chicago, Ill	Joseph Zakaravaus Petronella Zakaravaus
Frederic Henry Marion	21 Nov 1928	5 Mar 1929	2320 W 23rd Pl Chicago, Ill	William Marie Marion Green

Photograph from the Baptismal Registry at our Lady of Vilna Parish recording Skuodis' American birth (third line from top).

The letter to President Carter and in another public appeal by Skuodis, dated November 25, 1979, seem to clarify the reasons for his arrest. In a public appeal to the religious believers world-wide, Skuodis describes Soviet violations of believers' rights in Lithuania. He reports having written a work entitled *Spiritual Genocide in Lithuania*, which analyzes Soviet atheistic literature published during 1940-1979. The study is 240 pages, illustrated and supplemented by statistics. However, in the course of an eleven hour search conducted at his apartment on November 24, the manuscript of his still incomplete book was confiscated.

The general conclusion reached by the author is said to have been that Soviet atheistic propaganda is marked by unscientific method and shameful contradiction.

To date a number of international scientific organizations have responded to an appeal issued by the Lithuanian World Community on behalf of Vytautas Skuodis. The following organizations have already expressed their concern and indicated that further action in defense of Skuodis is being studied:

American Institute of Professional Geologists, Association of American State Geologists, International Association of Sedimentologists, Geological Society of America, Association Internationale de Geologie de l'Ingenieur - International Association of Engineering Geology, International Union of Geological Sciences, and International Society for Rock Mechanics.

Information on Vytautas Skuodis and the following translation of his letter to President Carter was provided by the Lithuanian Information Center (Rev. Casimir Pugevičius, executive director) 351 Highland Blvd., Brooklyn, NY 11207.

## VYTAUTAS SKUODIS' LETTER TO PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER

I Benedict Scott, or Vytautas Skuodžius, otherwise known as Vytautas Skuodis, hereby inform you, Mr. President, that living in Lithuania, in the U.S.S.R. to date I still consider myself a citizen of the U.S.A.

I was born March 21, 1929, in Chicago, the son of U.S. citizen Peter Scott, who from 1910 to 1930 lived in America. Certificate and Record of Birth Registered No. 13870. Certificate of Baptism, Our Lady of Vilna Church, 2327 West 23rd Place, Chicago, IL 60608.

I am a geologist, employed at the University of Vilnius as an instructor (Docent) in the Department of Hydrology and Engineering Geology. Since June 15, 1940, seeing the constant offenses against democratic freedoms and human rights, I have been involved in the Lithuanian national movement for democratic freedoms and human rights in Lithuania, which are constantly and systematically offended in the land of my fathers, Lithuania.

On November 24, 1979, my apartment was subjected to a search lasting eleven hours. In the course of it, the manuscript of my still incomplete book, *Spiritual Genocide in Lithuania*, various notes, various underground publications produced in Lithuania, etc. were confiscated.

That evening they took me away for interrogation, which lasted two hours. On November 25, I was summoned from the university. I was interrogated for three and a half hours. On November 27, I had to go to the cellars of the security police myself for questioning. During the interrogation they demanded many times that I betray other persons participating in the

democratic movement and in the underground press, reminding me at the same time that they had obtained enough evidence from me for a criminal case.

By this letter I assure you, Mr. President, that no matter what difficult trials await me in the future, I will always remain faithful to the principles of the defense of human rights, by the same token defending the honor of the land of my birth, the U.S.A., and of the land of my forebears, Lithuania. May my sacrifice provide a strong foundation for new fighters for human rights and for the implementation of democratic freedoms in present-day Lithuania.

Through you I proclaim to the entire world: If during the constant threats and interrogation my heart, which has recently suffered an attack, gives out, do not believe official reports of suicide, similar to those announced about the death of Dr. J. Kazlauskas, a professor at the University of Vilnius. If instead of prison, they confine me to a psychiatric hospital, please know that I ended up there for not acquiescing to the continuing occupation of Lithuania and the suppression of democratic freedoms there.

If I am sentenced to long years of imprisonment, please believe me, that I shall thus give meaning to my life as a son of the oppressed Lithuanian nation.

That I, Vytautas Skuodis, am the same Benedict Scott can be confirmed by Father Kazimieras Kulbis, whom I met on two occasions when he visited Lithuania. His address is 4940 Washington St., Hillside, IL 60162.

I live with my wife, Irena Skuodienė, and my daughters, Giedrė and Daiva Skuodytės, in Vilnius, Vandentiekio g-vė, 44 bt. 4. The address of my mother, Elžbieta Skuodienė, born 1902, is Panevėžys, Gogolio gatvė 65 bt. 2.

Very respectfully yours, V. Skuodis  
November 28, 1979