

Area Lithuanian groups rally to support secession

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Approximately 200 people took part in a rally at the Liberty Pole March 31, in support of Lithuanian efforts to assert independence from the Soviet Union.

Another intention of the rally, organized by the Rochester Lithuanian Youth Organization, was to urge President George Bush to speak out in favor of Lithuanian independence.

"The Lithuanian community can not understand why the president does not recognize the elected government of Lithuania," said Father Justin Vaskys, OFM, pastor of St. George (Lithuanian) Church in Rochester. "All the Lithuanians agree they are disappointed with the U.S."

"The American president is a spokesman for the free world," said rally organizer Paulius Klimas. "We need for him to speak out."

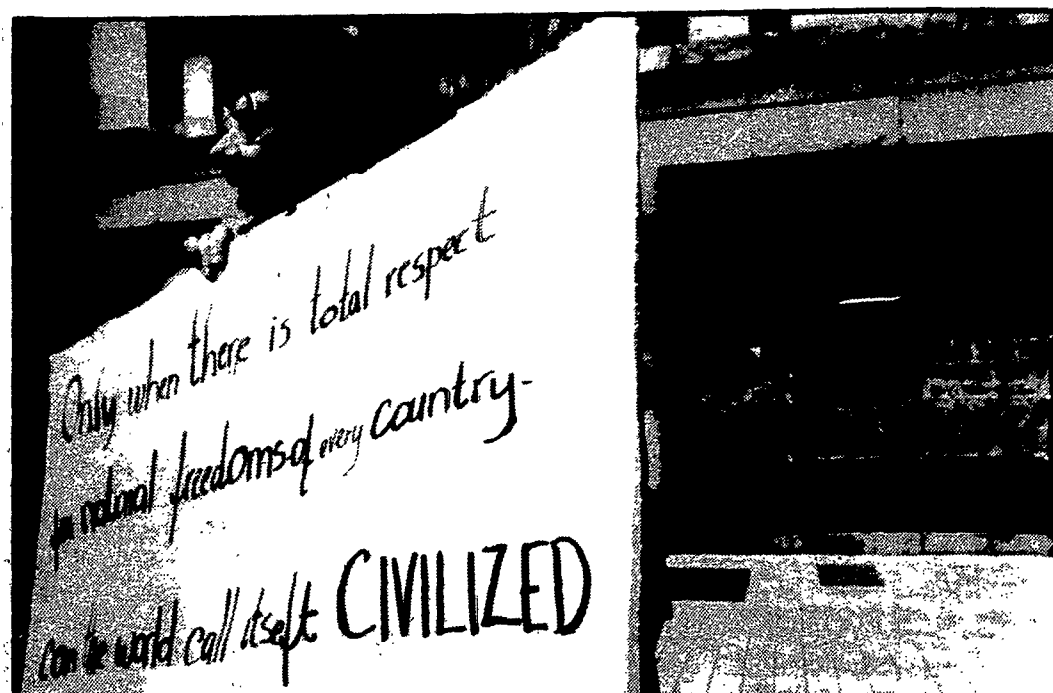
Lithuania seceded from the Soviet Union, March 11, claiming that the union of the two nations in 1940 had been forced. Soviet troops occupied the Baltic republic — as well as neighboring Estonia and Latvia — in 1939 as part of a Nazi-Soviet pact.

The people of Lithuania have never accepted that union, observed Ray Liutkus, chairman of the Lithuanian American Council in Rochester.

"The determination for independence has never died out — they've just been waiting to exploit the political situation," Liutkus said.

Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev's call for *perestroika* — and the recent events in Eastern European nations — gave the Lithuanians the impetus to assert their independence, Liutkus said.

Unlike similar efforts in Eastern Europe, however, Lithuania's move for independence has been met with increasing resistance by the Soviet Union. The Soviet



Birutė Dzenis sings the Lithuanian national anthem during a rally in support of that country's independence.

Congress of People's Deputies declared the Lithuanian secession illegal, and Soviet troops have occupied a number of buildings in Lithuania.

In addition, those who deserted the Soviet army — Lithuanian officials maintain that as an occupied nation, their men can not be forced to serve in the army — have been arrested and beaten, according to news reports.

Thus far, president Bush has cautioned the Soviet Union not to use military force, but he has not given the Rochester-area Lithuanian community — approximately 3,000 people — what they want, Klimas said.

"We're not asking for anything except recognition," Klimas said. "It would be a tremendous lift for the Lithuanian government. Other governments would follow."

Liutkus said the Lithuanian people are currently buying time and compromising in hopes of gaining world support for their cause. Lithuanians will not give up, he added.

"The people are very determined," Liutkus said. "One way or another, they intend to achieve (independence.)"

"They will resort to civil disobedience if



Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer
Young and old alike took part in last Saturday's demonstration.

they have to — they've been training," he continued. "They're ready for a long struggle. I had an uncle who was visiting here (from Lithuania) two weeks ago, and he said, 'We know how to starve.'"

DIOCESAN APPOINTMENTS



Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following appointments, which become effective June 26, 1990:

Father Philip J. Billote, from parochial vicar of Holy Trinity Church in Webster, to parochial vicar of the Corning-Painted Post Faith Community.

Father James C. Burke, from pastor of St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua, to pastor of St. Agnes Church in Avon.

Father Thomas W. Burr, from pastor of St. Joachim Church in Canisteo and St. Mary's Church in Rexville, to pastor of St. Anthony's Church in Elmira.

Father William Donnelly, from sab-

batical-assistance ministry at the Church of St. Mary Our Mother in Horseheads, to parochial vicar of St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua.

Father John H. Hayes, from parochial vicar of Our Mother of Sorrows Church in Greece, to parochial vicar of the Corning-Painted Post Faith Community.

Father Paul J. Ryan, from coordinator of the Tabasco Mission Team, to pastor of the Cayuga Team Ministry.

Father William V. Spilly, from pastor of the Cayuga Team Ministry to pastor of the Corning-Painted Post Faith Community.

Father Walter L. Wainwright, from pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Painted Post, to pastor of St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua.

Father George Wiant, from pastor of the Northern Cayuga Cluster, to pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Victor.



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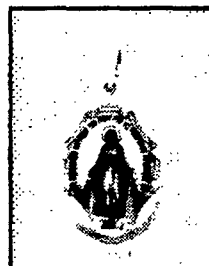
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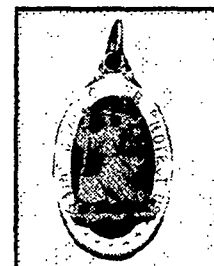
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