

Žiema stepėse.

Atimū vėjas šilėra, kausia stepie balti stulpai,
O arėlūnai vėr trė traukis, tīs pavargė, jau ođai.
Stepie lygius jėr bė kelio o šta žiemo vėžiūai,
gal vėžinoti tū ant kelio, vėgal kėbėlėnų trėtėn?
Apėmė vėr kėpėb žiūgė, kur kėbėm vėr pasėmė,
Ar bėgėk pėriētis kėmė, pėrėlė, gal rėkėi mūmīt.
Tū žėmėmėgus vėgėlėtis vė ar žėmė, kėpėra,
Tū pavargė, vė kėdė, ar vė vėgė o mūmė męš,

Previously unpublished poem written and sent from Siberia, by a deported Lithuanian school teacher in 1953

Dear Colleague,

The past two months have been extremely busy. I thought that an update about the Hope and Spirit project is in order. This program commemorates the tens of millions victims of Stalin's genocidal atrocities, and celebrates those who were able to survive through the resilience of their human spirit.

On January 7, a busload of historians, who were attending the annual American Historical Association meeting, arrived from the conference in downtown Chicago. I gave them a tour of the exhibit. It was very gratifying to have a professional historical association pay so much attention to this neglected chapter in the world's history.

On January 21, with the assistance of Luka Saparnis and Sam De Sando, we performed an illustrated reading of letters from Siberia. This actually was quite an emotional experience--I had to control my own tears at times. We hope to have the readings recorded and released on DVD's and YouTube.

On January 27, I was honored to give a personal tour of the Hope and Spirit program to the Board of Directors of the Illinois Humanities Council. These dignitaries came in from across Illinois (and one from Princeton University in NJ), for their quarterly board meeting. I was told that the reason they chose the Balzekas Museum was precisely because of my exhibit. They had read Mr. Bill Hageman's article about this program in the Chicago Tribune, and wanted to see it.

Upcoming, February 10, readings of poems from Siberia. In reviewing the letters on display, I found three poems sent by a deported Lithuanian school teacher, to her relative living in Montreal, Canada. These are quite moving poems, previously unpublished and not read in public. Ms. Audre Budrys will do the honor of reading these poems. In addition. Ms. Irena Valaitis, who was deported as a young teenager, will recite her own poem and discuss her experiences growing up in Siberia. This program will be in Lithuanian.

February 25, we will be showing a newly produced documentary film, Children of the Ice. This will be the North American premiere showing of this film. It was created by TVEuropa in Vilnius, Lithuania. It truly is a superb film reviewing the suffering of deported children, and also the extensive use of Stalinist propoganda to "educate" the non-deported ones. The film will be presented in English.

Finally, the Man of the Year event (reception scenes and my acceptance speech) is available on YouTube. If you have a chance, take a look:

<http://plioplys.com/video.php>

So, I have been extremely busy. Hopefully all is well with you.

Sincerely,
Audrius V. Plioplys MD, FRCPC
<http://www.plioplys.com/>



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