

FROM THE EDITOR

THE 75TH JUBILEE



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Every day an immense current of information carries us into who knows what bodies of water yet to come. Ceaselessly a profusion of various texts flows into an ocean in which everything is unrecognizably submerged unless it happens to stand out because of a jubilee. After all, Lithuanians the world over are famous for their appreciation of jubilees. It is just this that allows attention to be directed at something that rises up in an otherwise evenly flowing stream of information – the festive jubilee of a deserving personality, institution, event, or publication.

Even a cursory glance at this volume shows it to be more fragmented than is usual; its parts are connected by evident but not immediately recognizable ties. A broad section of academic papers making up the monographic part and devoted to Vytautas Kavolis's birthday (thus really celebrating a jubilee in what turns out to be a jubilee volume), then followed by texts named Discoveries and Retrospections and containing not only archival material prepared by Daiva Dapkutė that introduces some letters Vytautas Kavolis wrote to Kostas Ostrauskas but also a diptych authored by Violeta Kelertas in which her previously published Dionysian reminiscences about Vytautas Kavolis are supplemented by a new batch of Apollonian ones. These texts continuing the monographic part, just like the written record of Arūnas Sverdiolas' remarks presented at a conference, were consciously sought after in the belief that nothing reveals so well the nature of the issues discussed as their presentation in various genres. Even Mykolas Jurgis Drunga's review of a two-volume treatise on the 20th century history of Lithuanian music and on the official and personal connections between Soviet-occupied Lithuania and the diaspora weightily reinforces the emigration-related monographic part of this jubilee volume.

Another feature of the 75th volume is its anthropological and sociological orientation, laying bare the interdisciplinary line of *Deeds and Days*; specifically, the continuity between the humanitarian and the social sciences, as championed by Emilija Pundziūtė-Gallois, for example. Her study of Lithuania's diplomatic culture, particularly the heroic tradition of its diplomatic service, is carried out

by applying ethnographic methods, i.e., partially structured qualitative interviews and theoretical sociological approaches, to daily practice. In a similar way social realities – power relationships among language editors, authors of texts, and other actors in the field of language standardization – are investigated from the point of view of sociolinguistics by Eglė Jankauskaitė. Both of these studies correspond to Kavolis’s humanist practice of enriching the chosen subject with insights from other disciplines. But it is up to the readers of the entire volume to judge whether this jubilee volume succeeds in approaching the ideal of *Deeds and Days* to be a publication having a monographic part with a conceptual, unified, interdisciplinary, and firm backbone. For it is only such a journal that justifies its name, since individual articles on various subjects without regard to the context may be found in any collection of academic texts.

Returning once more to the essential theme of this volume, the necessity to devote the monographic part of *Deeds and Days* to the 90th anniversary of the sociologist, scholar of comparative civilizations, and champion of Lithuanian *cultural liberalism*, is dictated by the current hunger for noble ideas and the feeling of losing the mission of the humanities. As Kavolis wrote long ago, more than six decades before today, in the foreword to his edited book *Lietuviškas liberalizmas* [Lithuanian liberalism]: “remembering a human being means bringing to life his or her essential idea.” But this, according to Kavolis, is not “an imitation that has put many to sleep, but a discovery of the same faith in different circumstances and in an authentic experience of oneself.”¹

In later years Kavolis looked critically at the elevation of jubilees to a commanding importance that they did not deserve. He was especially bitter not toward persons but toward universities preoccupied with their anniversaries. In Kavolis’s view, this only showed the degree to which culture was paralyzed. Hence the Lithuanian Emigration Institute of Vytautas Magnus University in the pandemic year of 2020 organized a conference² in which the professor was remembered without the necessary live interaction among participants and the pathos appropriate for the occasion. Now the content of the journal’s monographic part is in fact a reflection of the conference’s work. This collection of articles (like the conference program) was not intended to call to memory all of the ideas that Kavolis raised on various occasions and developed in dozens of books in English and Lithuanian – this would have been a mission impossible. The papers published here spontaneously

¹ *Lietuviškas liberalizmas*. Edited by Vytautas Kavolis. Chicago: Santara-Šviesa, 1959.

² The conference called Footsteps of Vytautas Kavolis on the intellectual map of Lithuanians was organized in Kaunas on December 17, 2020 by Vytautas Magnus University’s Emigration Institute and the Library of President Valdas Adamkus in celebration of the 90th anniversary of the diaspora philosopher, sociologist, and historian of culture Vytautas Kavolis.

give access to one or another field of this scholar's interest and remind us of what already has become a creation of academic folk art or folklore.

By their texts the authors of the monographic part expose their deepest concern and further Kavolis's intentions independently of any jubilee toasts. This collection of very different texts brings to mind an attitude that was very important to Kavolis himself: for the sake of cultural history and the need to strengthen a nation's mental condition, the intellectual biographies of the most significant thinkers are of supreme value. It is to be more than hoped that the authors here assembled would feel sincerely happy if their efforts contributed at least a little to the appearance of such a biography of Vytautas Kavolis.

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