

## SELECTED LETTERS OF PRESIDENT STULGINSKIS

*The letters of a president are always of interest and their publication calls for no apologies. Even more so in this case, because these were written in remarkable circumstances.*

*Aleksandras Stulginskis served as the second president of an independent Lithuania; his last years were spent as a simple citizen in a Lithuania no longer independent. These letters date from the later years.*

*They are family letters, addressed to his daughter and her family who live in the United States. They are mostly about family matters, and the outsider at times has difficulty understanding just what is being talked about. They are filled with the usual cares and worries: how to find an apartment, where to escape the heat of summer, how to treat the pains and illnesses of old age. Their author works, and reads, and writes. There is not even a trace of the political questions to which he had devoted so much of his life. Important events are far away and he is no longer a part of them. All that remains is the hope that he will be permitted to live in the city where he had served as president and left in peace*

*Aleksandras Stulginskis was born in 1885, in a very large family of poor farm laborers. His parents eventually were able to rent a small farm, assisted by children who had emigrated to the United States. After completing the gymnasium, again supported by his brothers, Stulginskis attended the Catholic seminary in Kaunas, but upon completion, he decided not to seek ordination immediately. Instead, he went to Austria to continue his studies in theology and philosophy. He chose to remain a layman and entered the university of Halle, which he completed in 1913 with a degree in agriculture.*

*Upon returning to Lithuania, Aleksandras Stulginskis was active both professionally and in a number of patriotic and charitable organizations. He was one of the founders of the Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party and in 1917 was chosen chairman of its central committee. On February 16, 1918, he was one of the signers of the Lithuanian declaration of independence. Stulginskis served as minister in several of the governments which succeeded each other after the declaration of independence. In 1920, he was elected a member of the Founding Seimas and served as its presiding officer. According to the temporary Lithuanian constitution then in effect, the presiding officer of the Seimas served as the country's president. Stulginskis assumed this post in June of 1920. Later he was elected president in accordance with the permanent constitution and served until June of 1926.*

*After retiring from the presidency, A. Stulginskis remained active in government for a short time. But with the establishment of a dictatorial nationalist regime, to which Stulginskis was opposed, he retired to a farm.*

*Following the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Stulginskis was deported to the Krasnoyarsk region of Siberia in June of 1941. In 1952, he was sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment, but was released from prison in 1954, after Stalin's death. Stulginskis' wife Ona also had been deported in 1941, and was then living in the Komi A. S. S. R. Upon his release, Stulginskis joined her. In 1956, they returned to Lithuania where Stulginskis worked for several years in a nursery and then retired. His death came in 1969, seven years after that of his wife.*

*In preparing these letters for publication, it seemed best to leave most of them intact, in order to permit their author's personality to reveal itself. Occasional paragraphs, however, were omitted, those which seemed of least interest to the general reader. It also seemed best to omit all family names, reference being made only by the initial letter of the first name. The names of public figures were retained.*

I

A heartfelt thank you for the pleasant and interesting letter of 21.V. Don't send anything for the time being because we are planning to change our place of residence in a few months.<sup>1</sup> In 1954, Aleksandras arrived at Ona's, where she is obliged to live. Grandmother's status has changed significantly — she will be able to go to P.'s etc., and will leave perhaps in a few months, in the meantime the question whether Aleksandras will go to P.'s still remains, most probably he will settle near by. Ona's present residence does not bind him at all. The fruit too will be unnecessary because they will be available locally, we will also have rice. Perhaps, only vitamins and drugs.

[A paragraph describing their health is omitted.]

This present place of residence has become very irritating to me and I am getting ready to change it, I just want to wait until the question of pensions is cleared up, since the cases have already been initiated. I doubt very much whether anything will come of the godparents' invitation.

[Two short paragraphs are omitted.]

The two of us are still managing somehow. We send you and all your family heartfelt greetings, best wishes. With hugs and kisses,

Aleksandras

II

2.II.57

Beloved,

Thank you very much for the pleasant and interesting letter, from which it is evident that you no longer practice medicine, but are a home-maker. Parčevskis<sup>2</sup> used to say long ago that a woman is best at home-making, not medicine. Grandfather<sup>3</sup> has been living mostly in Dotnuva<sup>4</sup> lately, rarely visits Kaunas, perhaps will settle there permanently, but this will soon be known. The doctors have concluded that the weather in Kaunas is harmful to him. Many times he has gone to Vilnius to consult the doctors. If he settles in Dotnuva, or elsewhere, grandmother will join him. An accident happened to me, while running around Vilnius, I lost my new Parker pen, it was really a pity, because it worked so well. Here it is dangerous to keep a fountain pen in an outer pocket, it gets lifted, I kept mine in an inner pocket, but in my haste to get something else out of the pocket I must have caught it too, and it apparently fell out, I didn't notice it. Our fountain pens are inferior. If it isn't difficult for you, send one, possibly without a box. I have a box and I am not using it for anything. One of my old, old friends has asked me for a fountain pen too, and hair clippers size 3-4. He lives on a farm and cuts his own hair with hair clippers. For a long time now I have been in a bad mood. Just can't seem to clamber out of all kinds of difficulties. I have been working much though, that is my only consolation. I returned here yesterday, will leave again early tomorrow. I am still working under the supervision of the same agency. But don't you worry, I am not so badly off. Grandmother's health, as my own, is gradually weakening, age, conditions. .. [Several sentences describing their health are omitted.]

Greetings to all the relatives and friends. Wishing all the best of health and success. With warm kisses

Aleks

P. S. Several weeks ago I sent two packages by registered mail: an album of ancient folk architecture and readings in Lithuanian literature.

III

6.IV.58

Beloved,

I wish to congratulate you warmly on your birthday and to wish you and your whole family fine health, good fortune, and all those good things which your heart desires. We are celebrating Easter holidays here today. Greetings to all of you. [Several sentences are omitted.] The picture of C. and the enclosure arrived. Thank you. After I read your letter I felt somewhat uneasy that I was troubling you constantly with all sorts of trifles. We are not afraid of customs duty. But I believe that to send the hat just isn't worth it. Perhaps it will be possible to find one here. It will be cheaper. We paid 19 rubles for the air mail package. I just can't decide what to do with the material the sample of which you sent me — because it is beige, while the jacket is light grey. I am enclosing a sample of the jacket material, just in case, but if much time will be wasted looking for it, don't bother, I will do without. I will wear it to work everyday in the summer, because it is so lightweight. [Several sentences about health are omitted.] It would be good if you inquired at the agency [about the package] which you mailed on 24.1, because we have not received it yet, while some people have already received packages sent later than yours. Could it be that it is lying forgotten at the mailing agency? About two weeks ago we sent you a small package: a brooch for R., woven belts for the men. I believe that A.'s sister has woven two belts, when I get them, I will send them to you. She weaves very beautifully. Lots for building homes, it seems, will be assigned this spring.

They will probably give 15 ares<sup>5</sup> each. The Nemunas is still frozen — thus the danger of a flood still faces us.<sup>6</sup> [Several sentences are omitted.] I have heard that grandfather had been in a gloomy mood because he had many difficulties with the registration — the matter lasted half a year, he even had gone to live elsewhere. Letters have nothing to do with it. Let me know the birth dates of R., J., L. Stay well. All the best. Write. Warm kisses to you all.

Aleks

P. S. Kiss L. for me on his past birthday.

IV

30.111.59

Beloved,

A warm thank you for your pleasant letters of 4.III and 17.III and the photographs. Thank you, thank you. Next month there will be several birthdays — yours and in your family. Warmest greetings to you, to J. and L, and to all wishes of good health and all those good things which your hearts desire. Next Sunday I may be able to mail the books to you. They were purchased long ago, but I can't find any free time to mail them. It should be clear soon what I will do with the gardens. Perhaps it will be possible to arrange things in such a way that I will get rid of them altogether. It wouldn't be so difficult to grow them [vegetables], but it is awkward to sell them. It is neither convenient nor do I have the time to go to the market myself and there are losses when someone else sells them. Those who live by the market place, collect quite a bit of money for the vegetables — but since they have lived there for some time, they have both better gardens and the opportunity to sell them directly. In addition to that, they keep a cow each and in this way get more than a second income. Physically, I am still quite strong, incomparably stronger than my contemporaries, but I would not want to work more than two more years, because working conditions, the relationships with the co-workers are not very pleasant, they step impudently on each other's heels — (and there are a dozen or so of them). The job is near the city, everybody is trying to get in. It is impossible to get a job in my specialty<sup>7</sup> in the city, especially at my age. At the beginning, they suggested the provinces for me, but I could not resolve to go because of grandmother's illness. I believe that during these two years I will be able to get some kind of a small apartment, because to live in a room 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> meters by 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> meters much longer is very difficult. We have already lived in this tiny room for two years, and though the landlord promised, he has not even been able to put in a vent in the window! It may be possible to get a plot of land this spring to build a small house in the area which I like so much but all this building frightens me. One needs to have both a lot of time and exceptional cleverness, which I lack. Having spent ten hours at work, sometimes even more — there is neither time nor energy left to attend to the building of a house. If grandmother were strong, it would be a different matter. Finally, if you put all savings into a house, perhaps you will even lose your health — what good then is the house. Although last year I was very taken by the idea, now I am beginning to feel less enthusiastic — that is not for one my age. To have even a small garden and to putter in it in my old age would be my ideal, but that will probably remain a dream. J. writes often to D. and in each letter complains either about her illnesses, or her small room, or her landlord, or the fact that she is alone and lonely, bored and so on. I think that she is just used to grumbling and besides, she has no job and does not like to work at anything. I am more fortunate in that way. Up to my ears in work, never enough time, no chance to be either bored or ill. Early to rise — late to bed. [The remainder of this letter is omitted.]

Aleks

V

[6.IX.59]

Beloved,

Thank you very much for the letter. Nothing new has happened in our lives during this time. We had a dry and hot summer. The heat was very exhausting. Now autumn has begun, it is colder already. We are still waiting for the package, but I suspect we won't get it. Grandmother's health is fair, while I am getting along quite well. We still cannot get an apartment. I keep inquiring but cannot come upon anything anywhere. I would like to buy a small apartment, but that too has not worked out. I do not want to at all, but perhaps we will have to stay put right here.

There is a problem with the camera. Thank you for the kind offer. But I am afraid that it will be too expensive, I know that with you they are rather expensive, and in addition, 100% custom's duty. I believe that it is possible to get one here three times cheaper. For two rolls [illegible] of the material one can get quite a good camera here. And besides, while I am working I have little time to spend with such matters. I leave for work early, and return rather late — already tired. On Sundays, one has to go to the market for groceries, to the stores to shop, and all sorts of errands to attend to, so that little time is left for reading anything. Generally speaking, our life is very grey, few people come to visit, only G. and A. drop in. Of course, we don't go out anywhere either, thus I could send you few interesting photographs. [Several sentences are omitted.] J., it seems, has calmed down in the new place. We have no news concerning T., she neither writes nor comes to visit, nor answers letters. It seems, that everyone in her family has one screw missing in their heads. During the events of

1941, her brother threw himself under a train and died tragically, her sister has become quite insane. T. doesn't even come to get her dress, though she was told about it by letter. She impresses one as being very worn out. Winter is coming, it seems to me somehow it will be very difficult and sad.

I don't write very good letters. My letters always come out so sad, they probably only depress you, but don't take all these things very much to heart, in general our life is not so bad. We are well fed, not badly dressed. We have plenty of warm clothing and warm footwear. Kiss for me all of yours, greetings to relatives, (perhaps) they don't even remember us, best wishes to acquaintances and stay well. Write. All the best. With warm kisses.

Grandfather

P. S. We cannot break the habit of drinking coffee. The water here is inferior, the tea, not tasty — we don't drink it. There is no good ground coffee in our city. I bought a coffee grinder, it didn't work well, now it doesn't at all. One can get it ground only in Vilnius. When you send a package, put in some coffee. Your coffee is very good.

Idem

When looking for an apartment, we went to see the landlady where J. lived, and both of you after the wedding. She remembers J. very well.

VI

3.II.60

Beloved,

Thank you for the letter and the gifts. We still have plenty of medicine for high blood pressure, and supply J. with it too. They have begun to manufacture Vitamin B12 here in Kaunas and it will be available this month, if you haven't bought any yet, don't. [Several sentences are omitted.] The dimensions of the rug which O. has woven are 2.5 x 2 meters, converted into your yards, approximately 2.7 x 2.2. It costs a little more than half the price of a suit. But we decided not to put the rug on the floor, because it gets dusty, a vacuum cleaner is rather expensive, the rug has to be taken out to be dusted, etc., which would be too difficult for us, while the largest part of our lives is spent in that little room: it is a sitting room, a work room, a dining room, and partly a bedroom. Perhaps it would be best to put in linoleum and that would be enough, also it would cost about a third of a wool rug. In general, I would be against you sending any ready-made things, because it becomes expensive with the 100% custom's duty. I think, we will be able to get a rug woven for our "salon" wall, though that will not be very soon, because the woman who weaves them is loaded down with work. Let J. wear the muffler that G. sent him, towards the fall, I will send a similar one for a spare. Don't send drugs which We didn't ask for. With you, those drugs are terribly expensive compared to our drugs. We are happy that you overcame the intestinal flu. I think it would be very useful if each of the grandchildren would choose and then prepare himself for a particular profession. Life in our era is so uncertain, but if one has a profession, it is easier to find sources of income in all kinds of situations. We will make efforts to find a small room for J. somewhere, though that is very difficult. Of course, it would be best if she went to an old people's home to live, but she is as stubborn as a goat. Perhaps in time there will be a third room available here, in that case she could stay with us. I will have to get myself a camera after all, but now I have so little time, that it is useless even to think about it. I am trying to write articles for the special agricultural journals. For this, photographs are needed. By the way, would you send a catalog of books on agriculture, also a catalog of phonological atlases? These, probably, will go through: but men and beasts, [8](#) it seems, disappeared. Other books with similar content, perhaps, should not be sent. I went to Dotnuva and brought back a large batch of agricultural journals in German and English. Very special scientific journals. For the time being, I am translating titles of the journal articles and that is rather difficult for me. I learned English by reading literary works — the language there is much easier, but I have not read the special scientific literature. Here the heights are reached in the fields of chemistry, bacteriology, botany, zoology. I don't know the latest terminology in those areas, and you can't find it in the dictionaries. It has been fifty years since I studied these matters, what I knew I forgot, because during my life there was no need to be interested in them. I will try — perhaps, I will get used to it. It is difficult when one has to divide oneself among many different areas. [The remainder of this letter is omitted.]

Grandfather

VII

14.IV.61

Beloved,

Like it or not, I still wish to congratulate you on your birthday. Clearly, we are not immortal, one cannot cut out that truth. Such is the fate of everyone, but it is important to avoid great sorrow and to find the gentle joys of life in one's children, grandchildren, and in one's work, that I wish you from the bottom of my heart on your birthday. You write that you have

already lived many years, I have almost twice that number and it is nothing dreadful. I putter around, work, and am content.

Thank you for the pleasant letter and the photograph. The package arrived yesterday and in good order. Thank you very much for it. The nylon is very nice, but please write how much was paid for it. Custom's duty on them has increased. But why did you send G. two sets of hypodermic syringes and needles? One would have been quite enough, it seems to me I mentioned only one in my letter, and they are so expensive! I feel uncomfortable that I listen to these ladies, then write to you and in this way help you to pester your spouse.

[Several sentences are omitted.] Next month I will go to Žemaitija, perhaps I will succeed in getting a tombstone built on great-grandmother's grave. We have big news here — in a few days we will finally get a gas stove. I applied for it a year ago. Yesterday we ripped out the old wood-burning stove. I will have to take care of the operation of the stove myself, because it would be very unsafe to entrust grandmother with it — she forgets, while in this matter one has to be very attentive, I myself have had instruction in it. I have become used to cooking. It seems that G. will go on a pension this summer. We finally succeeded in finding documents concerning TVs employment. She is entitled to a pension, but it is not certain how much. I wrote to you about our pensions, please don't misunderstand that we don't have enough to live on, but since you mentioned your plans in one of your letters, I thought that you might need it for your plans. Concerning the rugs, you didn't say how much the customs duty usually is. It is understandable that a woolen one should not be purchased — that is a very expensive item. G. says that a nylon rug could be washed over a pole with a brush. I don't know whether that is true. We don't have such rugs here. If you finally decide to buy a nylon one, by any means don't buy a white one, but some brown or cherry color. That material which you sent to cover the sofa is very attractive. But perhaps it would be better to postpone the matter until next year, I haress you enough with my orders as it is, I feel embarrassed.

[The remainder of this letter is omitted.]

Grandfather

P. S. On 19.IV, grandmother, G., and I are going to the theatre to see Shakespeare's "King Lear." I have read it only in English, I liked it very much, but G. and grandmother have neither read it nor seen it.

VIII

8.VIII.62

My Beloved,

A warm thank you for your deeply heartfelt letter of 25.VII. It appears to me that you regard me too highly, after all I was not able to take it, I did make mistakes, but I don't give in, I am struggling with indispositions. This is my second week in a clinical hospital in D.'s care. The irregularities of the heart seem to have stopped. Today they took a cardiogram. Tomorrow we will see the difference between this and the cardiogram taken a week earlier. I think that I will stay here perhaps another week because at home not only no one is waiting, but everywhere one meets that fatal emptiness "no longer here"!<sup>9</sup>

[Three short paragraphs are omitted.]

It is not clear to me how I will live now that I am alone. I do not have relatives with whom it would be possible to stay. No close friends survive with whom I could spend a certain amount of time. The only solution would be to move to the godsons', but that kind of travel is difficult! Right now my first concern is how to divide grandmother's former possessions, may she rest in peace. None of her relatives visit us. Some things she has given away herself, some things we gave away together. I am also concerned about taking care of the grave, erecting a tombstone. I wrote to you about the tombstone and am waiting for your instructions. Also it would be very interesting for me to know how much the last two packages cost you.

It would be beneficial in my situation to move to another apartment, but that is impossible, because getting an apartment is a piece of luck that rarely happens. Generally, it is much more interesting to establish a home than to begin to break it up. My letter to R. has thus remained unwritten, right now I cannot concentrate, but later I will definitely try to write to her. With her letter and the photographs, grandmother had gone downstairs that fatal Saturday where a wedding was being celebrated, she showed the pictures around, and, I hear, looked at the newly-weds at the head of the table for a long, long time, perhaps became excited, because she returned as if she were intoxicated, I thought so then...

I think school will soon begin for the grandchildren, from my whole heart I wish them the best of success. How good it is to be young, how good it is to study!

Here we barely had a summer, it is cold all the time and it rains frequently. I invited you for tomato time, but I don't know if they will be ready, they are not setting fruit and when they do, they grow slowly. There are very few apples, pears, and all kinds of berries, with the exception of strawberries, and everything is very expensive.

Next week I will have to return home, if you only knew how much I do not want to be home.

I will wait for your letters — they are my only comfort.

Stay well, greetings to your family, all the best.

With kisses

Grandfather

P. S. I am enclosing several photographs, I will send you more later. Unfortunately, they break the heart.

Idem

IX

6.III.63

My Beloved,

It has been warm here for the last several days, water is splashing about in the streets, since, you see, Lithuania happened in the path of a warm current coming from the Atlantic ocean, however, it is rather cold at the neighbors'. One expects it will get colder here also. Today I made a trip to the artel, on Žaliasis Kalnas near the Jewish cemetery, which manufactures monuments. I didn't find out anything special. They have grey and red stone, not black, but they have taken steps to order the black labradorite from the Ukraine. However, they will not get it soon. Perhaps we should wait. A cement one, as G. suggests, seems to me too common. There are some things I wanted to write to you about O.'s husband. [10](#) As far as I know, in June of 1941, he was taken to Siberia, where he was kept in various camps, and did several kinds of work, mostly with hotbeds and in greenhouses. In February of 1952, a "Special Conference" in Moscow gave him 25 years in prison, including time already spent in the camps. After Stalin's death, in 1954, the chief prosecutor submitted a protest against the decision of the "Special Conference." After deliberating upon the protest, the Military College of the Supreme Court decided to release him from prison. Then he joined his wife in Kortkeros in the Komi Republic and worked there about half a year as a supervisor in a forest industry factory. Later, in the beginning of 1955, he moved to Pezmog, also in the Kortkeros area, and worked as an agronomist in the Pezmog sovkhov until December of 1956, when he returned to Lithuania. What he did on his return you probably know. Also, I don't know if you know, but when his father was young, his father's name was Valiuška. He assumed a new name, because with it, according to the order of the day, he could attain the rank of a nobleman, and noblemen at that time enjoyed all sorts of privileges. But since he was always poor, he did not actually take steps to become one, and the acquired name remained to this day. I heard that in your country steps are being taken for someone to visit your country next summer.

By the way, at one time, O. [11](#) was dismissed from her post as cook and telephone operator in the kindergarten because she was that wife. As usual, that happens as a result of jealousy and complaints.

[The remainder of this letter is omitted].

Grandfather

X

27.XI.63

My Beloved,

Thank you for the letter and the photograph. It seems to me that it didn't come out very well, but even so it is pleasant to see you all together.

All of us and all Lithuanians sympathize and grieve with you because of the tragic events in your country, and how can one not regret such a notable, wise, and very courageous (perhaps even too courageous) statesman, who fell tragically from some sort of scoundrel's ill-fated bullet. Having heard about the unfortunate event, my landlords flocked into my room in the evening after work to hear the news on the radio (their radio is not working). On Sunday there were many more people in church than usual. All seemed meditative, almost mournful.

I went to visit Petras [12](#) to bring news pleasing to him. It seems that E. had to pay for the hotel and for her meals 30 or 34 a day. It would appear her finances are not in too bad a shape, because during her trip she had to get a loan at a bank. According to their rules, persons in her position have a right, can get a loan at a bank and, if they don't repay it, their government pays for them, that's what I was told. I like this kind of an arrangement!

Today I went to the workshop to see how the work on the tombstone is progressing. It is half finished. The side to be polished is now being prepared, but the polishing will be possible only when it is no longer cold, because the polishing cannot be done in cold weather, the water freezes. The work is being done in an unheated shed. I am very glad that I did not buy from the speculators a tombstone removed from other graves. The one Ordered will be rather substantial and rather original, while those were very banal.

I have the recordings already, but I don't know whether I will be able to guess your taste. It seems that one may send only twelve records, I don't know whence and why this limitation. If you like them, I will send the second package towards spring. I don't have any experience at all in this area. Perhaps G. would be more experienced, but she is still in Vilnius, still nursing her leg.

[Two paragraphs are omitted.]

My radio is without a record player so that it is impossible to play records, I am not thinking of getting a phonograph — I don't like them and there is little time. I don't know why I have so little time.

If you meet B. again somewhere, relay to him many greetings and best wishes. I remember him often.

I asked you whether J. smokes because I was thinking of sending him an amber cigarette holder. The girls, my granddaughters, have grown into young ladies. You have a new worry, to dress them up, men don't think about such things, it is better for them that way. I have watched my relatives here, how the poor girls ache to dress better and...

I am very lonely now. When G. lived in Kaunas, she visited me often, but now even she is gone, it is uncertain when she will feel better and return, but I don't have much chance to be bored. For some reason my conversations with J. are not easy, somehow she lags behind — it is not interesting, but now, thank God, she is in better health, there is less trouble for me with her. She likes newspapers very much, especially the Polish ones. I have one or two or three acquaintances that I would like to visit. It is most convenient in the evenings, but in the evenings one has to listen to the radio and J. wants to listen too, but alone by herself she doesn't comprehend things, so that she is always asking me, when I will return.

Best wishes to all your family. Write! With kisses.

Grandfather

[ A postscript is omitted.]

XI

17.I.65

My Beloved,

Thank you for your letter of 12.25.64. I am glad that all of you are well and had a lovely holiday. Today I received two letters from M. from the south. It seems that the relatives have become rather Americanized. I will not be able to write to them, so I am asking you, when you have an opportunity, to thank them for the greetings and best wishes sent to me from the friendly south.

[Two paragraphs are omitted.]

This year E. visited Petras again.<sup>13</sup> She stayed at his home about 10 days. She came with her daughter (I think she is ten years old). She had a diplomatic passport, because her husband is a diplomat. She had asked for permission to visit her father in Kaunas. She took a plane from Belgium through Scandinavia (Sweden) to Vilnius. You should definitely get in touch with O.'s friend, he promised to write to us here an appropriate statement, he said this statement ought to help.

[A paragraph is omitted.]

I bought a lot of books, albums, some of them I mailed to you already, the others I am getting ready to mail. Give Baranauskas<sup>14</sup> to B. to read, when you have an opportunity, also when you have an opportunity, greet him for me.

There will be a lot of work for me in the spring, I will have to take care of grandmother's grave and make some kind of a little fence for J.'s grave, perhaps plant a hedge along the fence, prepare a grave marker. It is very convenient for me, because the graves are in the same area.

It seems to me that you are spoiling J. too much, it seems to me that if, at times, he eats less, his health will not be affected by it in the least. I was the youngest in a large family and my mother did not spoil me. I didn't like to fast, but especially, I didn't care for the soup made from coarse barley flour, the so called "za-cirka," in the evening, so that sometimes I pleaded with mother to make some coffee for me. She would roast some barley grains and make coffee from them, but one can put a little milk into coffee, although sugar we did not have, and I would happily drink coffee of this kind

in place of "zacirka." But what I found most tedious was tending pigs and geese completely alone in the vast fields, and I began to tend them when six years old. I was so lonely and desolate in those fields alone, but as you see, I grew up... and grew old...

[The remainder of this letter is omitted.]

Grandfather

XII

12.XI.65

My Beloved A.,

Thank you for the letter of 9.29. I settled the matter with the landlord in such a way that I paid him the rent for several months in advance and for the heating for this winter. I was unnerved by the circumstance that for several months he did not take any rent from me, what his reasons were for doing this is not quite clear to me, perhaps that was meant to be a prepayment for the car... I told him distinctly that one cannot even dream of it for at least three years, because R.'s send-off is here, and later on, J.'s, and so he calmed down...

On the 10th of this month I submitted to the Executive Committee my request with all the documents needed for the building of cooperative apartments. They promised to start building in 11/2 years, so that perhaps in two years I will have my own small apartment with bath and all the conveniences. They are planning to build in Žaliakalnis, not very far from Savanorių Blvd., but rather far from the center of the city, the apartment would be 16-20 sq. meters. Thus I will have to live in this apartment for another two years. Generally speaking, Žaliakalnis is considered to be better than Viliampolė. I am sorry that I kept hesitating and didn't do this a few years ago, but according to the Russian proverb, better late than never.

I am getting ready to go to Vilnius one of these days and I would like to give to professor that little radio which you left behind, and besides that, to buy a few things at A.'s.

Until now it has been comparatively warm here, but it is beginning to get cold, a severe chill is creeping towards us from the north..

My health is rather good. I had caught a cold on All Souls' Day, but am getting better now. Greetings to all. Write! Be well, all the best. With kisses

Grandfather

P. S. I am enclosing several photographs from Trakai.

XIII

22.1.69

My Beloved Daughter A.,

We buried Petras<sup>15</sup> on 18.1 in the Petrašiūnai cemetery. The area is very beautiful, near the main pathway.

He died on 17.1. Just at that time G. was in Kaunas. It is very difficult to prepare a wreath here in winter time. G. bought six vases of flowers and made a wreath from them. The casket was to be moved from the home at 4 P. M. It is about 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> km. from the bus stop to his home. I had hired a taxi-cab in the morning to pick us up at 3:15 P. M. We waited until 3:30 P. M. Not here. We were worried, if we took a bus we would certainly be late. But luckily, on leaving the house we were able to grab a passing taxi-cab in the street. It took us there and brought us back without incident. We also gave a ride to A. and her friend. When we arrived, there were crowds of people on the stairway and in the rooms. We made our way to where the deceased was. Both rooms upstairs were also crowded, and so many flowers, mostly in vases, that there was no room for our wreath, and rather beautiful flowers. I took pictures, I don't know whether anything will come out, because there was so little light. A lady I could not recognize took pictures also. She had a flash attachment on her camera, perhaps she will get something. She also took several pictures of me. If they come out, perhaps I can get them. We drove to the cemetery. The road is rather long. At the grave site, V. Gustainis<sup>16</sup> decided to deliver the eulogy and expressed well everything I was planning to say, and to repeat the same thing seemed uninteresting. E. is now living in Uruguay. They sent her a telegram asking her to come because her father was seriously ill, later — that he had died. His son inquired from Paris when the funeral was to take place. Of course, they replied to his telegram, but neither was present at the funeral. Of course, telegrams abroad take time, and there are problems with the visas. Last fall, E. and her daughter had flown to Paris with the intention of visiting her father, but couldn't get a visa, and so it remained. Thus at the funeral there were many beautiful flowers, many people, especially ladies. I was very moved, had a sleepless night, because I was both fond of Petras and respected him.



From time to time I visited him and watched him slowly growing weaker and weaker. It had been two years since he had left his room, lately he rarely left his bed, and could not see well enough to read, other ailments combined to finish him. He died a Christian.

Today I was called to the militia office, they informed me that the reply to my second application is also negative, no luck. I don't know whether D. has already left, at least she did not come to visit.

Several days ago, by registered mail, I sent you Maironis,<sup>17</sup> write when you get it.

[The remainder of this letter is omitted.]

Grandfather

P. S. Also knitting needles for D. and a padlock for V.

Idem

P. S. I received your Christmas letter only at the end of January. Thank you.

Idem

XIV

24.V.69

My Beloved Daughter A.,

Today D. came to visit. She told us much, praised everyone greatly, today too, at last, received two letters from you, I thank you very much for them. It took each two months, less two days, to get here. What bad weather! I was very pleased to hear that J. is continuing her studies; why not try to become more educated if all the opportunities are there. We, in our time, were glad to have at long last achieved a diploma. Although then, there was no need to reach higher scholastically. It is otherwise now. Thank you for sending the package, but I do not know when to expect it, if air mail letters take two months. Even if the yarn would turn out to be unsuitable, I will not have much trouble with it. I am well provided for in all things, I need nothing, so don't bother yourself about that. When I need anything — I will ask.

The memoirs are being written, however, even if they are finished, it is unlikely that it will be possible to send them to anyone, therefore, no promises. My helper's health is steadily declining, it's that heart that keeps failing.

It is a beautiful season here now, the orchards are blooming beautifully and for a long time, the weather is cold and that is good for them, they will be less harmed by all sorts of pests. There will be, it seems, plenty of fruit, I am so very fond of them. On the whole, the spring is very cold here this year, it drizzles sometimes. And in my little apartment it is not warm, only 55°. N. does not heat anymore.

[Two paragraphs are omitted.]

When I moved to this apartment, I petitioned to have a telephone installed, they promised it in two years, each year I go to inquire about it, always the same reply— in two years; ours is a very large and long street and the cable has not yet been installed. Thus it is not certain how many more two years we will have to wait. There was a promise to seed the area in front of the house with grass, and in the fall, to plant some trees, shrubs — we will see. On the entrance side, the tenants planted some arbor vitae, they also planted some flowers. The neighboring communal apartment looks more desolate, only a sad flower sticks out here and there.

Our house numbering has been changed, the number of our house now is no. 45 and not 21, however, letters come even if addressed to 21.

By the way, I sent you a beautiful and expensive amber necklace and Gogol's book *Dead Souls* and the Inspector *General*, they are very interesting, but the language is somewhat more difficult than that of Chekhov. Did you get them?

I am not planning to go anywhere during the summer, perhaps only to V.'s for a few days, when it becomes very hot here and the mood comes over. There are strawberries at her place.

G. and U. are getting ready to go to Palanga on June first, they will stay together in one room, perhaps it will not be too cold.

Do not send all the issues of the *National Geographic* at the same time, if they were to disappear, at least not all.

Treasure the Maironis,<sup>18</sup> let the children read it. The book is very well written, the author received a doctorate for it.

I'm glad I'm receiving letters from you again, it did get to be very lonely.

Be well, all the best. Write!

With kisses

Grandfather

P. S. I enclose a photograph. Thank you for all the film and the batteries. It is unlikely that the trip to Kaunas will take place.

The same

XV

13.IX.69

My Beloved Daughter A.,

Heartfelt thank you for your letters. I received the last one today. I had stopped writing to you because I have been really ill. On 27.VIII, I had a very severe heart attack. It was fortunate that at that time a nurse who gives me injections was here, so she called the ambulance right away. I was suffocating, had difficulty breathing. It seemed, that life was hanging by a hair. The ambulance arrived with drugs and an oxygen tent.

In no time, the attack passed and I felt well. From now on my health is looked after by D. and the nurse. I was given many injections as well as strophanthin. G. kept coming from Vilnius to nurse me. She suggested that I go to a hospital, but I preferred to be ill at home. D. and the nurse visited me every day. I had absolutely no pain, but I completely lost my appetite, and my strength has diminished. Today, for the first time, the doctor gave permission for a walk outdoors. On my return, I found your letter, so that I am answering both of yours.

Up until now I have been feeling very well and supposed that I was indestructible, so that at times I worked very hard, read, transcribed, became fatigued, had difficulty falling asleep at night, so all that added up and taught me how to arrange my life. Since, really, I am not 25 years old, but 85. Thank God, that circumstances were so fortunate and everything ended well. I am not feeling badly, only less strong.

Three-four weeks ago I mailed you a package with books: 2 vols. Tumas' *Pragiedruliai*,<sup>19</sup> It is 100 years since his birth, he is being honored here, and the tenth volume of Mykolaitis-Putinas'<sup>20</sup> works. Perhaps some of you will be interested in reading. Actually they are pretty good. Today is G.'s name day (she sends you her greetings), they are preparing a party for her here. So even the patient will have a chance for a good time.

In a few days I will write you a long letter with all sorts of requests, a whole litany of them has accumulated. Perhaps I will feel stronger then.

Here too the summer was very dry, everything burned, the grass turned yellow, but the harvest was not damaged — the grain harvest was very good. Toward the end of summer, it rained heavily, mushrooms sprouted. Now, whoever can is setting out for the woods mushroom picking.

Sending many hearty greetings and wishes to all relatives and acquaintances.

Stay well, all the best. Don't worry too much about that summer home.

Write! With kisses

Grandfather

P. S. We all think that it would be better if you came with J., like in former years, to Vilnius during the summer. It is not very comfortable in winter time because the weather here is so unsettled. Now, I will be more careful, God willing, perhaps I will live to see next summer.

The same

1 This letter was sent from the Komi Republic and deals with the possibilities and arrangements for returning to Lithuania.

2 Karolis Parčevskis (1875-1957), a physician and neighbor.

3 Mr. Stulginskis uses the word "grandfather" to refer to himself.

4 Dotnuva, a town 62 km. from Kaunas, site of the Institute of Agriculture.

5 About 16,000 sq. ft.

6 Nemunas, largest river in Lithuania, had one of the biggest spring floods in its recorded history in April of 1958.

7 Trained as an agronomist, Mr. Stulginskis worked with hotbeds and in greenhouses.

8 Probably a reference to Stasys Yla, *Žmonės ir Žvėrys Dievų Miške* (*Men and Beasts in the Forest of the Gods*), 1951, an account of the author's experiences in a German concentration camp, and a study of suffering and dehumanization.

9 This letter was written shortly after the death of Mr. Stulginskis' wife.

10 This is a reference to himself.

11 Mr. Stulginskis is referring to his wife.

12 Petras Klimas (1891-1969), Lithuanian diplomat, signatory of the Lithuanian declaration of independence, minister to France from 1925 to 1944.

13 Mr. Stulginskis is referring to Petras Klimas.

14 Antanas Baranauskas (1835-1902), Lithuanian bishop, poet, and social activist.

15 Mr. Stulginskis is referring to Petras Klimas.

16 Valentinas Gustainis (b. 1891), a journalist.

17 Jonas Maironis-Mačiulis (1862-1932), a poet and dramatist.

18 Probably a reference to Vanda Zobarskaitė, *Maironis*, Vilnius, 1968.

19 Tumas Vaižgantas (1869-1933), author and literary historian.

20 Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas (1893-1967), author and literary historian.



*Aleksandras Stulginskis, his wife Ona, and their daughter Aldona in 1926.*



*Stulginskis and his wife in 1957, after their return from Siberia.*