

February 16th

LITHUANIA

LITHUANIAN STATE DAY OF RESTORATION

N u t a r i m a s.

Lietuvos Taryba savo posėdyje vasario 16 d. 1918 m. vienu balsu nutarė kreiptis: į Rusijos, Vokietijos ir kitų valstybių vyriausybės šiuo pareiškimu:

Lietuvos Taryba, vienintelė lietuvių tautos atstovybė, remdama pripažintą tautų apsisprendimo teisę ir lietuvių Vilniaus konferencijos nutarimu rugpjūčio mėn. 18-23 d. 1917 metais, skelbia atstatanti nepriklausomą demokratiniiais pamatais sutvarkytą Lietuvos valstybę su sostine Vilniuje ir tą valstybę atskirianti nuo visų valstybinių ryšių, kurie yra buvę su kitomis tautomis.

Drauge Lietuvos Taryba pareiškia, kad Lietuvos valstybės pamatai ir jos santykiai su kitomis valstybėmis privalo galutinai nustatyti tiek galima greičiau sušauktas steigiamasis seimas, demokratiniu būdu visu joo gyventojų išrinktas.

Lietuvos Taryba pranešdama apie tai
vyriausybę, prašo pripažinti nepriklausomą Lietuvos valstybę.

Vilniuje, vasario 16 d. 1918 m.



The Act of Independence of Lithuania (a photo taken from a website of Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, www.lrs.lt)

The **Act of Independence of Lithuania** or **Act of February 16** was signed by the Council of Lithuania on February 16, 1918, proclaiming the restoration of an independent State of Lithuania, governed by democratic principles, with Vilnius as its capital. The Act was signed by all twenty representatives, chaired by Jonas Basanavičius. The path to the Act was long and complex because the German Empire exerted pressure on the Council to form an alliance. The Council had to carefully maneuver between the Germans, whose troops were present in Lithuania, and the demands of the Lithuanian people.

Publication of the Act was prohibited by the German authorities, and the text was distributed and printed illegally. The work of the Council was hindered, and Germans remained in control over Lithuania. The situation changed only when Germany lost World War I in the autumn of 1918. In November 1918 the first Cabinet of Lithuania was formed, and the Council of Lithuania gained control over the territory of Lithuania. While the Act's original document has been lost, its legacy continues. The Act formulated the basic constitutional principles that were and still are followed by all Constitutions of Lithuania. The Act itself was a key element in the foundation of Lithuania's re-establishment of independence in 1990.

16th FEBRUARY – SHROVE TUESDAY/ MARDI GRAS/ PANCAKE DAY (7 WEEKS BEFORE EASTER)



Shrove Tuesday's participants (from the left) – Kanapinis, Hungarian doctors, Bear and Witch, Crane

Shrove Tuesday or Mardi Gras /Pancake Day/ is a joyful holiday and noisy expulsion of Lithuanian winter since winter evil forces are afraid of the noise as well as masks that make chaos and noise.

On that day people have fat meals, in particular various pancakes of the circular form like folk suns. One of the Mardi Gras characters is thick, red faced so-called *Lašininis* (*Lardy*) who keeps fat in his hands and treats everybody with it. *Lasininis* is accompanied by Crane, goat, monkey, hen and a rooster.

All participants of the festival also make noise by playing some music using wooden spoons, grips, pins and rattles. So called *Hungarian doctors* offer the spoon of remedy to recover, but the very next day you will be able to talk with St. Peter (it means that medicine is quite dangerous). They also offer you alcoholic drinks as a part of a health course. All participants treat themselves (these medications might be beet juice or wine), while gypsies tell fortunes.

When so called *Kanapinis* (*Cannabinum*) appears, *Lašininis* (*Lardy*) starts hiding under the girls' skirts and benches. *Kanapinis* (*Cannabinum*) and his escort want to harm *Lašininis* (*Lardy*). When being found *Lašininis* justifies himself to be very good and of great help for everybody. But *Lašininis* (*Lardy*) is defeated by *Kanapinis* (*Cannabinum*) since the latter has a cardboard sword.

The participants chants: "Winter, Winter, run out of the yard, if you do not run, we chase you off by whips!".

SPAIN

16th Carnival Tuesday

