



**CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA**

No. 15

CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
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A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA NR. 15
Documenting Today's Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1972, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* has scrupulously documented the struggle for human rights in that Soviet-occupied country, on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea.

Laboriously typed in carbon copies, and passed secretly from hand to hand, the *Chronicle* is ultimately smuggled out to the western world, where it has caused a sensation.

The *Chronicle* describes the heroic efforts of some 3 million Lithuanians, 85.5% Roman Catholics of the western rite when the country was forcibly annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, to preserve the faith of their forebears.

It is a story of six dioceses with no resident bishop and no normal contacts with the outside world, trying to maintain traditional ecclesiastical forms of administration. In reality, all decisions are made by the state-appointed Deputy for Religious Affairs—an atheist.

It is the story of the struggle between clergy who have decided for one reason or another to cooperate with the regime, and stubborn dissident priests and faithful insisting on their rights under the Soviet Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Natural Law.

It is the record of heroic parents of children, who insist on rearing their offspring in the Catholic Faith, against all efforts by teachers and government youth leaders to dragoon youngsters into various Communist youth organizations.

The *Chronicle* is the record of mere school children risking the wrath of atheistic teachers and even of Security police, to go to church or sing in a choir.

Constantly harassed in one way or another, the religious believers of Lithuania find themselves in the position of second-class citizens.

Denied access to mass media to tell their story, or to religious literature to nourish their faith, the Catholics of Lithuania find it necessary to photo-copy such religious literature as they can lay their hands on.

Ironically, the Soviet Constitution, under which the people of Lithuania are forced to live, contains glowing guarantees of freedom of conscience, of assembly, of press, and of speech.

In practice, such constitutional guarantees are over-ridden by unwritten administrative decrees, verbal interpretations, and galling bureaucratic high-handedness, giving atheism the position of the established religion of the Soviet Union and its subject territories.

Issue No. 14 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* reports the latest attempts by the faithful to free from government-enforced exile—amounting to house-arrest—the beloved Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius of Kaišiadorys.

It describes state-tolerated activities of break-in artists vandalizing Catholic churches, harassment of priests ministering to the sick, and elaborate attempts to discredit the clergy.

Particularly strange is the willingness of the Communist regime to bring all the weight of state security machinery to bear upon such disproportionate targets as children who go to church.

The message of the *Chronicle*, loud and clear, is that the atheistic government is slowly strangling the Church in Lithuania, while doing its best to make it look like the Church is dying a natural death. The people of Lithuania are risking imprisonment, labor camp, and torture to make sure that we are not deceived.

In this translation, every effort has been made to remain faithful to the original in every respect, even at the expense of style in some instances. When absolutely necessary, a brief Translator's Note provides background within the text itself.

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translation Editor

CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA

1975 No. 15

Issued since 1972

In This Issue: The Readers of the *Chronicle* Write
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THE READERS OF THE *CHRONICLE* WRITE

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* has received letters from some readers, the thoughts of which reflect the attitudes of the Catholics of Lithuania and express their will. The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* completely agrees with the thoughts expressed in this letter:

"Recently it became known to us that Doctor of Biological Sciences Sergei Kovalev has been arrested because of the *Chronicle*. We, the Catholics of Lithuania, pray God to grant physical and spiritual strength to this scientist. Today the world desperately needs love. Jesus Christ has said, 'A man can not have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.' (Jn. 15.13). We believe that the sacrifices of Kovalev and others are not in vain.

"We bow our heads before Academician Andrei Sacharov, defender of human rights in the Soviet Union, and in his person—before all Russian intellectuals of good will. By their courage and sacrifice they have forced us, Catholics of Lithuania, to take a new look at the Russian nation. Their sacrifice is needed by all the hounded Soviet people; it is necessary also for the Catholics of Lithuania.

"We thank from our hearts the great Russian writer Alexandr Solzhenitsyn for his warm words to the Lithuanians and for his defense of Lithuanian affairs. Thousands of Lithuanians, especially ex-citizens of the Gulag Archipelago, pray the Almighty to bless him.

We thank the Episcopate of Australia, the opposition party of Australia and the government of Canada for their defense of Lithuanian affairs. Unfortunately we cannot thank the governments of Australia and New Zealand for the recognition of the occupation of the Baltic States. May God help them not to know the 'liberating' hand of Mao.

"While following by radio the Bishops' Synod in Rome, we were happy that some of the Fathers of the Synod—Cardinal Joseph Slypij, Cardinal Wyszinski, Cardinal Bengsch and others—defended so courageously the affairs of the persecuted Catholics of Eastern Europe. They were also the best representatives of us, the faithful of the Catholic Church in Lithuania.

"We, the Catholics of Lithuania, are delighted by the hunger strike of Vaclovas Sevrukas and Simas Kudirka, who wish to turn the attention of the world to the difficult condition of the Catholics of Lithuania.

"We thank the editors of the magazine *Kontinent* for their warm words to the Lithuanian nation and for their invitation to collaborate in this magazine. We believe that at this time Lithuania will be best represented by the intellectual strength of our brothers in exile.

"We thank those who made it possible for Radio Liberty to speak to Lithuania, and we desire that its program contain Lithuanian history, its cultural values, and documents about the struggle for the rights of man in the Soviet Union and in Lithuania.

"We follow the Lithuanian broadcasts of the Vatican, Rome and Madrid Radio and we thank their producers, especially for bringing into the open the concerns of the Lithuanian Catholics.

"The Soviet Government, through the Criminal Code and the State Security Committee, wants to destroy not only the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* but the Catholic Church of Lithuania itself. However, we the Catholics of Lithuania, are fully determined, with the help of God, to fight for our rights. We still desire to believe that the Soviet government will realize that it is making

a great mistake in supporting the atheistic minority, and turning the masses of Catholics against itself.

"We, the Catholics of Lithuania, ask our brothers abroad and all our friends throughout the world to inform all the people and the governments of nations of the infringement of human rights in Lithuania. Your energy and sacrifice, brothers and friends of Lithuania, are vitally necessary to us at this time."

CASE NO. 345

Prosecution of Case 345 began July 5, 1972, in order to undercut the "anti-Soviet activity of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*."
* * *

Even before the end of the trials of P. Plumpa, V. Jaugelis, P. Petronis and J. Stašaitis, Security people started a new hunt of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. By initiative of the Security Committee of Lithuania, many searches were made in Lithuania and in Moscow on December 23, 1974.

* * *

In the morning of December 23, 1974, about 7:30 a.m., Security agents broke into the apartment of Balys Gajauskas, in Kaunas, Spynų gatvė 3-8, and labored there all day. Gajauskas has already been in prison camps 25 years. As soon as his mother saw the Security people, she fainted and was taken to the hospital. During the search they took a list of 135 political prisoners and money, besides religious literature. In the opinion of Security, the money found in the apartment of Gajauskas was meant for the support of political prisoners. After the search, Gajauskas was taken to Vilnius and interrogated for three days by the Security Committee.

* * *

Jonas Petkevičius, residing in Šiauliai, who had been in prison camps for 18 years, was told to come to work iį hours earlier on December 23, 1974. When he arrived at work, he was arrested, taken to Vilnius and interrogated for three days.

* * *

On December 23, 1974, the apartment of Engineer Albertas Žilinskas (Vytenio g. 19-22, Vilnius) was searched. A. Žilinskas has spent

seven years in the labor camps of Mordovia. During the search one issue of each of the *Lietuvos Katalikų Bažnyčios Kronika (Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania)* and *Chronika tekusiųjų švytų (Chronicle of Current Events)* was seized, as well as several statements of the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights, presided over by Academician Sacharov. The next day the search was repeated. His office at work was also searched. A. Žilinskas was arrested, but released after a three-day interrogation.

* * *

Alvydas Šeduikis, a former student of the Vilnius Conservatory, imprisoned for four years, and currently organist at the church of Skuodas, was interrogated in Skuodas.

* * *

Birutė Pašilienė, residing in Giruliai, was interrogated for two days at the Security offices in Klaipėda, after a search of her home. She was asked about Simas Kudirka, whom she is aiding; about the *Chronicle*, and where she obtained *Gulag Archipelago*: from Gajauskas or from G. Salova? The husband of Pašilienė was also interrogated. Their son had been a prisoner in the prison camps of Mordovia.

* * *

Algis Petruševičius, residing in Kaunas, 25-čio g., who had been imprisoned in camps for twelve years and had lost his right hand there, was interrogated for two days at the Kaunas Security after a search of his home. Leonas Laurinskas, who arrived at the Petruševičius home at the time of the search was also held, but was released after a two day interrogation.

* * *

Antanas Terleckas, residing in Vilnius, Nemenčinės plente Nr. 68, a historian and economist, who had already been arrested twice, was interrogated at Vilnius Security.

Algis Baltrušis, residing in Vilnius, Dailidžių g., formerly imprisoned in the prison camps of Mordovia for four years, now working as a folk craftsman, was interrogated for two days following a search.

* * *

Jonas Volungevičius, residing in Vilnius, a former student at the Conservatory, once imprisoned for five years, was summoned from his place of work to Security headquarters, and interrogated for two days.

* * *

Valerius Smolkinas of Vilnius, had been formerly imprisoned for three years. During a search a copy of *Gulag Archipelago* was confiscated. The interrogation took two days.

Besides the above-mentioned, the following political prisoners were also interrogated:

Vincas Korsakas (from Lukšiai)
Katkus (from Plungė)
Bronius Guiga (from Kaunas)
Povilas Pečiulaitis (Kaunas)
Pupeikiai (husband and wife, Kaunas)
Jonas Protosevičius (Vilnius)
Kęstutis Jokubinas (Vilnius)
Justas Šilinskas (Panevėžys)
Janina Burbulienė (Kaunas).

All these interrogated were asked about the *Chronicle* and the translation of *Gulag Archipelago* into the Lithuanian language.

SEARCHES IN MOSCOW

On December 23, 1974, a search was begun early in the morning at the home of Sergei Kovalev of Moscow. The search began early and lasted for twelve hours. The search was made at the request of the Security of Lithuania, in connection with Case No. 345. During the search the following were confiscated: *Gulag Archipelago* (in Russian), *Chronicle of Current Events* and the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, a list of 135 political prisoners from Lithuania, statements, letters, notebooks, etc.

After the search, S. Kovalev and his wife were interrogated. Kovalev refused to cooperate with the interrogations concerning the distribution of information, because such an interrogation was a violation of the law.

On December 26, Interrogator Trofimov called Kovalev on the telephone and asked him to come to see the interrogator for ten minutes. On December 27, Kovalev went to the Lubianka and was

arrested. Immediately after the arrest he was flown to Vilnius and imprisoned in isolation by the Security Committee.

* * *

On December 23, 1974, at the request of the Security of Lithuania, searches were made at the homes of the following residents of Moscow:

Andrei Tverdochlebov
Mrs. A. P. Plusina
Galia Solova
Malvina Landa
Irina Korsunskaya

During the searches, typewriters and the whole *samizdat* were seized. The majority of the confiscated material had no connection with Lithuania.

* * *

AN APPEAL BY ACADEMICIAN A. SACHAROV:

"The arrested scholar Sergei Kovalev is a Doctor of Biological Sciences and a close friend. He is a man of great and strong spirit, a man of unlimited altruism. Very recently, I considered with him a New Year's petition concerning amnesty for political prisoners. Today he himself is in that category. The formal reason for arrest was an accusation concerning the publication of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. It seems to me a convenient cover for the government, that the interrogation and trial would take place far from his friends and would not become public. The life of Kovalev, an able and talented personage, was for many years dedicated to the defense of human rights and to exposing violation of these rights. He was a member, from the very beginning, of the initial Committee for the Defense of Human Rights, of the Soviet branch of Amnesty International, and the author and co-author of documents setting the direction of the basic fight for human rights in our land. Kovalev accomplished many difficult tasks without great publicity. For instance, it was not a coincidence that he was successful in making connection between the United States Embassy and the mother of Simas Kudirka, an accomplishment which finally resulted in freeing Kudirka. In May of this year, Kovalev, together with Velikanova and Chodorovich, announced that the publication of the *Chronicle*

of *Current Events* would be continued, and that they would take responsibility for its distribution. That was a brave historical undertaking. But at the same time, it was a challenge to those afraid of truth and openness. Yesterday's arrest is an act of vengeance against courage and decency.

* * *

"I appeal to the colleagues of Sergei Kovalev—the biologists of all nations. I appeal to Amnesty International; he is a member of this organization and his action agrees with its spirit. I appeal to the International League for Human Rights. I appeal to all who value goodness, virtue and intellectual freedom. I call for international action to free Sergei Kovalev."

Academician A. Sacharov
12/28/1974

* * *

On December 30, 1974, members of the initial group for the Defense of Human Rights in Moscow: T. Velikanova, G. Podjapolskij and T. Chodorovich distributed a statement signed by 52 individuals. The statement said, "Sergei Kovalev is a talented scholar, author of more than 60 scholarly publications... The defense of human rights is to Kovalev a natural extension of scholastic work: A scholar cannot condone lack of freedom of information, the imposition of identical beliefs, and lies. In his social action, Kovalev adheres to the same principles as in scholarship: full knowledge of facts, responsibility for the accurate dissemination of facts, and strict adherence to facts in conclusions. Also straightforwardness, and public knowledge... Kovalev publicly defended many unjustly persecuted people... We unite ourselves with Kovalev and his noble actions. We demand his release..."

On January 22, 1975, a search was made at the home of Tatjana Chodorevich (Moscow), a member of the organizing group.

ATTACKS AGAINST THE *CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA*

Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs K. Tumėnas writes in his article, "Freedom of Conscience and Soviet Law" (*Tiesa*, 11/22/74):

"Most religious believers completely agree with Soviet laws concerning religions. The majority of priests obey the laws. However, there are still some ministers of cult or believers who break Soviet law concerning religious questions and try to stir up the believers. *More and more clergy disassociate themselves from activists of such ilk and in their letters to the administrators of the dioceses condemn their activities*". (Underlined by the editors of the original.)

Who are these clergy, and in what letters do they condemn priests who transgress Soviet laws?

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* No. 12, contained an anonymous letter directed against "reactionary" priests and the *Chronicle*. Shortly, the administrators of all dioceses and the bishops received a second anonymous letter, angrier than the first. As an anonymous letter, it deserves no attention; however, in so far as it expresses the views of the Soviet government on the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, it is worthy of attention. We offer it slightly abridged and with a brief commentary of our own:

"First of all, please forgive me for taking up your precious time. I am a priest of the older generation. While meditating on the current condition of the Church in Lithuania, I had the idea to write you a letter. Please understand me correctly: It is not my intention to teach you, but merely to share my thoughts and to touch on some questions, which I am convinced are not only my concern, but the concern of most priests and the faithful.

"For some time now, there has appeared an illegal publication, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. I had the opportunity to read a few issues. On that basis, I would say that this is not a church publication but a thoughtless political action. The information contained in the *Chronicle* is onesided and frequently does not agree with the facts. (In Lithuania, only the Security speak like this — Editor). I felt great disgust at the arguments contained in Issue No. 10 of this publication: that Lithuania does not need any more bishops. In my opinion, Church life is normal only when there is no shortage of bishops, when every diocese has its own bishop-shepherd and handles its own affairs. Today the dioceses of Vilnius, Vilkaiviškis and Kaišiadorys have no bishops. (Everyone in Lithuania knows that Vilnius and Kaišiadorys have their own bishops, who at this time are exiled from their dioceses — Editor.)

"In the same issue, the authority of not only the bishops, administrators and priests, but the authority of the pope, who 'does not know what he is doing' is shamelessly destroyed in the eyes of the faithful. (Some of the clergy of Lithuania themselves publicly destroyed their authority, so it is not necessary for the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* to do so. The *Chronicle* has never stated that the pope 'does not know what he is doing', it merely believes that the Apostolic See was misinformed for a long time and did not have any objective information concerning the Catholic Church in Lithuania. — Editor.)

"What does all this mean?

"The publishers of the *Chronicle* have no regard for the common interest of the Church, ignore the orders of the Church, misinform the faithful and the ministers of the Church.

"In recent years, some priests instead of concerning themselves with matters of the faithful of their own parishes, began to intrude in the concerns of women's convents. (Perhaps it would be better if Security would concern itself with these matters? — Editor) They maneuver nuns and some of the faithful into illegal action, gather through them information for the *Chronicle*, take money from them allegedly to finance their activity, etc. So a handful of priests hampers the normal life of the Church. Moving from parish to parish, they more than once collected the signatures of the pastors for various documents which they had prepared. A large part of the priests who signed did so under pressure, since they were afraid that they would be called 'pinkoes' if they did not sign. Some priests who did not want to sign were threatened that secrets in their past would be made public. (This method is used only by officials of the Security Committee, not by the priests in Lithuania. — Editor)

"In my opinion, these activities only do harm to the Church and the faithful. It is completely understandable that the government should take steps and try to put an end to this activity. (When did an atheistic government begin to take steps that there would be no harm done to the Church? — Editor) The facts speak for themselves inasmuch as some nuns who formerly had high level office positions have lately been dismissed.

"There are perhaps few who believe that some years ago, government officials were ignorant of the wide publication and distri-

bution of catechisms and prayerbooks; however this was tolerated. Today, thanks to the *Chronicle* the means of publication have been liquidated, and it is difficult to obtain a catechism or a prayerbook. (Whose fault was it that as soon as the Soviet government established itself in Lithuania, it closed all Catholic presses, and continually jailed those who printed prayer books illegally? — Editor.)

"Thinking about the *Chronicle*, I came to the conclusion that it will not bring us any good either now or in the future; on the contrary, its appearance makes our work harder and worsens our relationship with the government. Without the *Chronicle*, by working wisely and farsightedly, it is possible to do more for the welfare of the Church, as was done before the appearance of the *Chronicle*. (By working farsightedly five years ago, only five candidates were allowed to enter the Seminary. — Editor.)

"The past proved by painful facts that any interference in political matters by members of the Church brings only misfortunes and leaves deep wounds. Therefore, some confreres would find it useful to learn from mistakes of the past and to draw the necessary conclusions. (To defend the rights of the Church and the faithful is not politics, but the duty of every Catholic, and an even greater duty of every member of the clergy. To concern oneself with politics at this time means to cooperate with Security officials, to attend various conferences organized by the Communists, to proclaim abroad that the faithful of Lithuania have complete religious freedom. — Editor)

"I cannot believe that you Ordinaries do not see all this.

"It is no secret to anyone that the initiators of this 'publication' are priests who have lost their sense of responsibility and sobriety. I assume that you are aware of this. Even so, I feel it my sacred duty to draw your attention to this, since I am concerned with affairs of the Church and the faithful.

"I will not sign the letter at this time."

* * *

On February 20, 1975, *Tiesa* announced the visit of a clerical delegation from the U.S.S.R. to America. Msgr. C. Krivaitis, Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius was part of this delegation. *Tiesa* writes: "The believers of Soviet Lithuania have all the oppor-

tunities they need to practice their religion. Neither they nor their children are persecuted because of their convictions. We, the clergy, have all the opportunities we require for our work," declared Monsignor Česlovas Krivaitis, Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, at a press conference in New York..."

This news raised a storm of disgust among the faithful of Lithuania. There are no prayer books, catechisms, students are persecuted for their faith, crosses are destroyed, religious literature is confiscated, and the work of the priests is restrained, while our clergy abroad speaks about freedom of religion... Some are doubtful—it may be that the administrator of the diocese did not say this. After all, Soviet correspondents know not only how to color the facts, but also how to write out-and-out lies.

The clerical delegation from the U.S.S.R. is organized by the officials of the country's Security Committee. Its purpose is to confuse people abroad, as if faith were not persecuted in the Soviet Union.

At the end of this issue, we offer a document which Soviet officials forced the priests to sign. It will help to understand to what extent the priests of Lithuania have been coerced.

On January 24, 1975, the newspaper *Soviet Teacher* in its article "Vatican Radio, the Liar" accused Vatican Radio of slandering the Soviet school system and teachers. The article states:

". . . To earn a 'medal' for atheistic activity is the aim of the principal of Pažaislis High School (Mrs.) Stasiukaitienė; History Teacher Mažeika of High School No. 5 of Klaipėda mocks students who attend church; the principal of Kražiai School, (Mrs.) Albina Žukauskienė reports to the government of the *Rayon* of Prienai about atheistic activity; students call her the red paragon of piety.

"Such 'facts' are broadcast by Vatican Radio. Actually, there is no Pažaislis High School, nor Principal Stasiukaitienė, neither in the *Rayon* of Kaunas, nor in Kaunas itself, within the borders of which Pažaislis falls; in High School No. 5 of Klaipėda, there is no teacher by the name of Mažeika; in the *Rayon* of Prienai there is neither a Kražiai School, nor Principal Albina Žukauskienė. There is a Kražiai High School in the *Rayon* of Kelmė, but even there no one has ever heard of a Principal or a Teacher named Albina Žukauskienė.

"It means that 'dead bodies' have been dug up and even slandered. . ."

This article tries to compromise not only Vatican Radio but also the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, issue No. 8 of which reported about Teacher Mažeika and Principals E. Stasiukaitienė and Albina Rinkauskienė. The author of the above mentioned article, Vytautas Mickevičius, acted dishonestly by purposely changing the names of the locations, writing "Kražiai" for "Skriaudžiai", and "Pažaislis" for "Pabaiskas". He also changed the name of Albina Rinkauskienė, calling her "A. Žukauskienė".

Vatican Radio, in one of its broadcasts, unmasked this lie. The "dead bodies" arose!

The *Chronicle* does not know where Teacher Mažeika works at this time.

On February 14-15, 1975, the Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius, Curate of Simnas Parish (Alytus *Rayon*) was interrogated at the Security Committee of Vilnius. The interrogators were Major Pilelis and Major Rimkus. The priest was asked about the arrested Nijolė Sadūnaitė. In the opinion of the interrogators, the Rev. S. Tamkevičius must be one of the publishers of the *Chronicle*. The Security officials expressed the hope that the Rev. Tamkevičius could still change for the better; however, they lost all hope of change for such priests as Račiūnas, J. Zdebskis, A. Svarinskas and J. Buliauskas. The interrogators reminded Father Tamkevičius that if the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* continued to be published in the future, prosecution would be brought against him.

The Rev. S. Tamkevičius declared that the publication or non-publication of the *Chronicle* does not fall within his competence.

In the opinion of the interrogators 50% of the material contained in the *Chronicle* is of a slanderous nature.

* * *

STATEMENT

To: The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of The Lithuanian S.S.R.

Copies to: Bishop Labukas

Chairman, Security Committee

STATEMENT OF REV. JUOZAS ZDEBSKIS,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF SLAVENTAI

At the trial of Petronis and others in 1974, my statement at the trial on November 11, 1971, was entered as evidence that the *Chron-*

icle offers fabricated facts, inasmuch as my statement at the trial had been completely different.

On April 29, 1972, a tape recording from my trial was played for a group of priests and government officials, as proof that my statement at my trial was not the same as the one published in the first issue of the *Chronicle*. Besides, in the presence of the above gathering, the Rev. S. Tamkevičius was publicly accused of fabricating my speech and even of sending it abroad.

In view of these facts I am obliged to explain as follows: The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, No. 1* has correctly published my speech as I wrote it while preparing for my trial. There was only one mistake made: When citing the Code of Canon Law, the number "3" was left out. Instead of canons "1329, 1330" the numbers were given us "129, 130".

Why is the tape recording not completely the same as the written speech? During the course of the trial, while I was speaking, the judge interrupted me with questions and comments; finally, while explaining the psychological motives of my behavior, he completely terminated my statement.

How did my statement at my trial reach the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*? I do not feel competent to delve into this question.

/s/ The Rev. J. Zdebskis

Šlavantai, 2/25/75

To: Chairman, Security Committee
Prosecutor, Lithuanian S.S.R.
Minister of Justice, Lithuanian S.S.R.

STATEMENT OF VLADAS LAPIENIS, RESIDING
IN VILNIUS, DAUGUVIEČIO G. 5-11.

"Speaking about the strengthening of Socialist justice, I have in mind two sides of the question. First of all, the strictest protection of the rights of citizens, so that no one, not even the officials, could ignore the laws. The second thing I have in mind is that all citizens should obey Soviet law, the rules of public order, in the strictest way possible." (L. Brezhnev, *All For the Good of the People—The Welfare of the Soviet Man*, 1974, 14.)

However, some Security Agents think differently about the protection of citizens' rights, and act accordingly. Here are a few facts:

The Code of Criminal Processes of the Lithuanian S.S.R, Article 192, states: "All confiscated items and documents must be listed in the records of the search, or in an additional list attached to the minutes; amounts and sizes must be shown. Confiscated items and documents must be packed on the premises where the search took place."

On November 30, 1973 Security agents under Senior Lieutenant Gudas, took all my religious books, typewritten and bound, including some which were copied by means of an "Era" electric copying machine, and manuscripts. None of these items were listed on the inventory, nor on the attached form, and the bags containing the books were not sealed when taken away.

I was accused several times of preparing religious literature, storing and distributing it; of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, etc. I was threatened with various punishments: with loss of my freedom for seven years, later—for two years, exile from Vilnius and other punishments. However, when I tried to defend myself against these accusations, the interrogators most often did not allow me to defend myself, stating that I am being interrogated not as a defendant but as a witness. In this regard they violated the Code of Criminal Procedure, Art. 17, which guarantees the right of the accused to defense.

The Code of Criminal Procedure of the Lithuanian S.S.R., Art. 18, states: "It is forbidden to try to gain information from the accused by the use of force, threats and other such means." But one of the Security people (He gave no name) constantly threatened and abused me during the interrogation: "You damned Jesuit! We will show you! You slander the Soviet government! We will fix you; we have fixed better men than you! You are a liar! Will you finally stop lying! You scoundrel! You criminal!", etc.

He telephoned from the interrogation office and ordered to reserve for me, "the greatest scoundrel", the dampest and coldest room in the half-cellar of the Security. He threatened to put me into prison for seven years; later he threatened to exile me from Vilnius, to take away not only my pension but also my wife's, to discharge me from work, etc. On November 22, 1973, the interrogator said to Senior

Lieutenant Gudas, "Did you let him (that is, me) go home? I told you yesterday that he cannot be released!", and the like.

When I showed him a character reference by the Party Member (Mrs.) A. Jankevičienė, Director of the Museum, he read it and exclaimed angrily, "What a stupid woman, to give such a scoundrel a good character reference!" Who knows me better, Mrs. Jankevičienė with whom I have been working for 17 years, or this Security agent whom I had met for a few hours?

I was forced by Interrogator Jankauskas to lie; that is, to confess that I received the *Chronicles of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* from the Rev. Buliauskas, who had allegedly been arrested and had confessed about this in writing. Actually Father Buliauskas was neither arrested nor gave such testimony. In this instance, the interrogator used lies and deceit. The question arises whether an interrogator twisting facts and forcing citizens to lie, can investigate the circumstances of a case completely, fully and objectively. By such words and actions the Security agents violated 1) Articles 10, 19, 96 and 97 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian S.S.R.; 2) Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the Constitution Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic; 3) The *Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man* and related articles of the Convention about civic and political rights of man.

Between May 20 and May 24, 1974, I was questioned by the interrogator about various books, brochures and writings. After the interrogation, reflecting on it calmly and seriously, I came to the conclusion that the brochures and most of the writings about which I had been questioned, could not have been my property, since they are not mentioned in the inventory of the search.

In connection with the fact that Security agents, during my interrogation, violated articles 17 and 18 of the Criminal Code of the Lithuanian S.S.R., suborning my statements through threats, deceit, lies and other illegal means, I repudiate all my statements from November 20, 1973, to June 28, 1974, whether they were verbal or in writing. If I agreed with statements gotten by illegal means I would knowingly cooperate together with the Security agent mentioned in this statement in a crime committed in violation of Article 18 of the Criminal Code of the Lithuanian S.S.R. Therefore, in agreement with Article 17 of the Criminal Code, I decline of my own free will to collaborate in the commission of a crime.

Even though article 125 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian S.S.R. guarantees citizens freedom of speech and the press by law, the facts are that the believers, especially the Catholics, are not allowed to print any religious books, catechisms, newspapers or magazines. The permit to publish *A Prayer Book* and *The Sacred Scriptures* was for such a small number that it satisfied only a few of the faithful.

There is a great hunger in Lithuania for religious literature, which forces us to copy religious books brought by tourists, using a typewriter, a copying machine "Era", or by hand. Security agents making frequent searches at the homes of priests and faithful, seize such religious books, interrogate these people, threaten them with prison or other punishments, and even arrest some of them.

When the path of discrimination against the faithful will be cut off the hunger for religious literature will disappear by itself.

During the interrogations I was asked a number of times about the *Chronicles of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. Its appearance was encouraged by the violation of the rights of the faithful, constraint of the freedom of conscience, the persecution of the Catholic Church.

In my opinion, it is not the fault of those who expose the violations of Soviet laws and international agreements regarding the faithful, but of those who commit these violations. Can it be considered a crime against the government, a crime against a person's liberty and dignity, or a crime against government order to bring into the open the harm inflicted on the faithful? Can information, even if it is very unpleasant, but which is neither lies nor slander, be considered anti-Soviet?

If the atheists and their collaborators, masquerading under the name of the government, stop persecuting the faithful, I am sure that the *Chronicle* will disappear.

As long as violations of the rightful order are announced in the Offices of Security, the prosecutor's office, and the court; as long as sanctions are applied and government officials do not keep Soviet laws in practice, it will be impossible to achieve Socialist justice.

I ask you to advise Security agents that the violations of the Soviet laws cease, that these officials would not be allowed to act as they wish in the future, and that the safeguard of the rights of

citizens about which Soviet Union Communist Party General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev speaks, would be guaranteed.

Vladas Lapienis

1974, October 15

(The statement is condensed. — Editor)

* * *

Following is a condensed letter of Engineer Vytautas Vaičiūnas to the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the L.S.S.R., and to the editors of *Tiesa* and *Kauno Tiesa*.

"*Tiesa* on November 30, 1973, writes: 'One of the most amazing manifestations of the triumph of Soviet democracy in our country is the firm right to freedom of conscience... No discrimination among citizens with regard to their rights is ever to be allowed.' (Lenin) After listing the main laws guaranteeing freedom of conscience, the article "The Law and the Religious Cults" states:

"The religious community is a union of believing citizens who have reached eighteen years of age." Where do the persons who have not yet reached the age of eighteen belong, if they are not members of the community? To whom shall we entrust their education? Perhaps to the atheists? How does this conform with Article 124 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.?

Continuing the list of various prohibitions, *Tiesa* states: "They (the faithful — Editor) have no right to form credit unions or to engage in philanthropy; to organize special services for children, youths or women; or gatherings, groups or circles for Bible studies; literary or workers' religious study groups, or similar gatherings."

Who wins in this case? The atheists have the right freely to express themselves over the radio and through the press, to organize groups, to open libraries. .. Like stepchildren we perform our religious duties secretly. The law guarantees rights to the atheists. For us, as for the harnessed blacks, only obligations are left.

"(...) The violation of laws concerning the separation of Church and State, and school from Church, which requires punishment according to Article 143 of the Criminal Code, is understood to be the organization and systematic activity in teaching religion to minors, in violation of the rules provided by law." (*Commentary on the Crimi-*

nal Code of the U.S.S.R., May, 1974, p. 225) "The violation of the rules provided by law is understood to be any kind or form of religious teaching to minors." (*Commentary*, p. 226) Nowhere is it clearly stated what laws and what rules are being violated, but only *it is understood, must be understood*. Why this contrived obscurity in a basic question regulating the relationship between Church and State? If the hunting regulations were explained in so foggy a fashion, our hunters would start seeing elephants...

"Reactionary priests try to create a furor about the alleged enslavement of the Church; they destroy the normal relationship of Church and State. This furor of theirs has no real basis... To satisfy the needs of the priests and the believers, the *Ritual*, the *Prayer Book*, the *Decrees of the Vatican Council*, the *Sacred Scriptures (New Testament — Tr. Note)* have been published."

Let us see what this literature contains: "...Pastors should visit homes and schools as much as is required in their role as shepherds. They must care with dedication for the youth." (*Decrees of the Vatican Council*, p. 219)

"It is important that all priests . . . should help one another." (*DVC*. p. 236)

It is difficult to reconcile these items with the article by P. Mitis, "Soviet Laws and Religion" (*KaunoTiesa*, Jan. 6, 1974), which states: "It is forbidden for the Church and the priests to teach children catechism, to involve minors in religious ceremonies... to organize various groups, meetings, group discussions... The priest has no right to take care of administrative—financial matters."

Whom, then should the priests obey: the Church or the State?

"Lay people may and should perform the vital work of the evangelization of the world. .. the action of the lay people is so necessary, that without it the active apostolate of the shepherds cannot succeed... Catholics... are duty-bound to seek the true good of the community and try to the best of their ability to see that the civil government acts justly and that its laws reflect the moral laws and the common good." (*DVC*, pp. 58, 359, 362)

These directives of the Vatican Council place a moral obligation on the laity. I therefore wish to call your attention to the morass of contradiction in which the conscience of the Lithuanian faithful finds itself. It seems to me, that this abnormal state exists because the inter-

preters of Soviet laws look at faith and the faithful through the glasses of old wives' tales about witches and enchanted castles...

P. Mišutis, in his article "The Soviet Law and Religion", states, "It is advisable to improve research into religiousness and to measure the level of performance of religious ceremonies..."

The Catholics of Lithuania may feel this interest as rude interference in the internal affairs of the separated Church, the sending of spies into the midst of the religious community, and rightly ask:

"What do you take us for? Juvenile delinquents? Is that why you have assumed the role of powerful protector and observer? If so, how long can such a state of affairs continue?"

If the interpreters of our laws were concerned with the faithful, they would not dare juxtapose against the main law of Christianity ordering us to love every human being as oneself, the prohibition: "They have no right to establish credit unions or to engage in philanthropy."

It is painful that the Lithuanian believer in performing his religious duties, feels as though he were walking through a minefield: If he breaks a "law", it is a crime against the government; if he ignores his conscience, he suffers spiritual agony. What is to be done?

If one cannot tolerate conflict with an atheistic conscience, it is even more true of the Christian conscience, which for us is the reflection of our Creator.

The faithful of Lithuania have reached a crossroads in their lives, where the directional signs announce: "To the right is the zone where laws govern; to the left—Christian conscience."

A decision must be made between these two. I would like you to spend a short time with the Catholics of Lithuania who have reached this point. Turn your attention to the tragedy of those fellow citizens who have come to this.. . I am afraid lest the historians put a third sign post at this crossroad: "The cemetery of the Lithuanian moral sense."

Vytautas Vaičiūnas

2/9/1975

My address: Kaunas, Hipodromo g. 46-35

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Vilnius. On May 16, 1974, Aloyzas Jurgutis, Head Lecturer at the Vilnius Conservatory, while traveling through Europe, crossed the Yugoslavian-Italian border illegally. Presently he resides in the United States.

During the latter half of September, 1974, Assistant Administrator of the Agitation and Propaganda Section of the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee, (Mrs.) Lamachin, called Director of "Žinija" J. Nekročius, and demanded that (Mrs.) M. Jurgutienė be dismissed from work. On September 22, (Mrs.) Jurgutienė had to leave her position.

(Mrs.) Jurgutienė was interrogated by Security several times. Security officials demanded that (Mrs.) Jurgutienė influence her husband not to take part in the activities of the Lithuanian emigrees. They promised in return, to let her, with her daughter Daina, leave the country.

Jurgutis' daughter Daina was also interrogated twice.

In charge of the case of Aloyzas Jurgutis in the Security Committee are Deputy Colonel Baltinis and Major Kovalev. Security officials try to besmirch Jurgutis in the eyes of the Vilnius intelligentsia, by describing him as an amoral man.

* * *

Kaunas. The night of February 10 to 11, 1975, in the labor camp of Praveniškiiai (Kaunas, 234251, oc 12/8) someone cruelly assaulted Virgilijus Jaugelis, who had been convicted in December, 1974. Jaugelis was assigned to the worst criminal brigade. It is widely believed that this beating of Jaugelis was not accidental, but the revenge of Security organs for his courageous stand during his interrogation and trial. For the present, Jaugelis has been taken to Vilnius and is in the prison hospital. Since his head is in a cast, it is believed that during the beating his skull was fractured.

* * *

At the end of December, 1974, (Miss) Genė Žukauskaitė was called for interrogation. Interrogator (Mrs.) Venckūnienė accused her of instructing children in the truths of the faith. She asked (Miss) Žukauskaitė where she taught the children, what their names are, what she taught them, etc. The interrogation continued for two hours.

Žukauskaitė stated that she did not teach the children but quizzed them to see whether they were prepared for First Communion.
* * *

Staff members of the Kaunas prosecutor's office, using information from the teachers, are interrogating those children who in the opinion of the interrogators were taught religion by (Miss) Žukauskaitė.

The inspector ordered K. Adomaitis not to attend religious school or church. (No formal schools of religion are allowed in Lithuania under the Soviet regime. — Tr. Note)

(Miss) Irma Adomaitytė was asked by her home room teacher to step in front of the class and to explain whether she believes in God and attends church. The girl affirmed that she attends church.

The mother of third-grade student of High School # 18 (Miss) R. Laurinavičiūtė, had been approached by the principal to persuade her not to take her daughter to church. Rasa and her brother were interrogated by the principal and a Security official. They asked them to say their prayers and then mocked them.

Fifth-grade student of High School # 18 (Miss) Nijolė Komisaraitytė, was also ordered to say her prayers.

Fourth-grade student of High School # 12, Danguolė Banaitytė, was also interrogated for preparing for her First Communion. Her father, upon being summoned to school, courageously defended his own and his daughter's rights.

* * *

On December 20, 1974, from early morning on there was great activity in the office of the Chief of Construction of the Executive Committee of Kaunas: There were preparations for some kind of interview. About 10 o'clock Engineer Vytautas Vaičiūnas was asked into the office and seated in front of a movie camera. He was given an article from a Lithuanian emigre newspaper to read, in which it was written how a search was conducted at the home of Engineer Vaičiūnas. When Vaičiūnas finished reading the article, a correspondent asked, "Are you happy that reactionary newspapers write about you?"

Vaičiūnas declared that the newspaper wrote about him without his permission. . . However this answer did not satisfy the correspondent.

"Nevertheless, are you happy with this report or not?"

"Why have you latched on to this question? After all, this is not an interrogation!" shot back the engineer.

While the camera continued to film, Engineer Vaičiūnas was questioned further:

"Now, after thinking about it soberly, aren't you sorry for your actions?"

"I am always sober."

"At any rate, are you sorry or not?"

"My actions are in accord with my conscience. I have not done any wrong to anyone. I have not harmed anyone, and my conscience is clear. There is nothing to be sorry for.. ."

It is believed that a film report is being prepared for journalists abroad, in order to compromise the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, and the underground activity of Catholics.

M a ž e i k i a i . On August 9, 1974, Father Stasiulis died suddenly in Mažeikiai. In 1928, he had published a book, *Blossoms of Samogitia*. Until 1944, Fr. Stasiulis actively collaborated in the press of Samogitia, under the pseudonym "Džiugas". During the post-war years he was imprisoned. In the prison camp he was kept for half a day in the morgue among the corpses in the belief that he was dead. When they came to bury him, they found that Fr. Stasiulis had revived. Even in his darkest days, Fr. Stasiulis did not stop writing. As soon as he died, Security personnel arrived at his apartment and conducted a thorough search concentrating on his writings.

To accompany Fr. Stasiulis to his place of eternal rest, a large crowd of people gathered, with over sixty priests.

Š i a u l i a i . Sunday, November 10, 1974, was a work day at the Fellowship of Lithuanian Blind based at the offices of the Manufacture-Teaching Combine of Šiauliai, as it was also in many other offices and factories. A worker at this institute, Jurevičius, did not come to work. Engineer Lukšas inquired the next day why Jurevičius did not come to work. The worker explained that the day before had been a Sunday, and that was why he had not worked. The engineer ordered him to write an explanation:

To: Director,

Fellowship of Lithuanian Blind,
Institute of Manufacture-Teaching of Šiauliai
Explanation of Painter Jurevičius

I would like to explain that on Sunday, November 10, of this year, I did not come to work because I am a Catholic and a believing man must keep Sunday holy. In the future, if it is required to work on Sunday or on religious feasts I will also be absent from work. The days on which I will not work, you may deduct from my paid vacation time, or I can make them up on non-working days.

11/12/1974

Jurevičius

* * *

Šiauliai. On November 14, a closed meeting took place at the Institute. The representative of the Party Committee of Šiauliai attended the meeting and berated the administration of the Institute because a cross had been made there—and placed on the Hill of Crosses by some workers.

The director of the Institute announced that on November 10, worker Jurevičius disobeyed the minister's order, and did not go to work. The representative of the Party Committee declared that freedom of religion exists in the Lithuanian S.S.R., and that the worker had a right not to work. The important thing was that he should not organize others to do the same.

Shortly thereafter, the Director of the Institute ordered:

"A reprimand to be given to the Building Renovator of the Economic Section, M. Jurevičius, for deliberate violation of work discipline (not reporting for work on November 10 without a valid cause)."

Jurevičius handed in a protest: "I protest against your order. In my statement, written on November 12, 1974, I gave a clear reason why I did not go to work—I am a Catholic and I perform my duties. On the nearest holy day (December 25) I shall also not come to work. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the U.S.S.R. Constitution, Article 124."

When he found out that Sunday, December 8, was also a working day, Jurevičius announced to the Director of the Institute in writing, that he would not come to work that day. Assistant Director (Mrs.) Maminskienė explained to Jurevičius that he was wrong in

announcing his intention not to come to work, and advised him to handle this matter differently: to work an extra day in advance, etc. When, on the advice of the assistant director, Jurevičius approached Engineer Lukšas, the latter declared that he could not release a worker from Sunday work. According to him, Jurevičius could take off any other day but Sunday...

* * *

V a r è n a. The church at Akmenė was being renovated. Officials of the *rayon* arriving to inspect the renovation of the church, announced to renovators Juozas Mazgelis and Aleksas Lubas that by working on the church they violated Soviet laws and that they were liable to 3 years' imprisonment. Since this was their first offense, if they promised not to renovate churches in the future, sentence would be suspended and only a fine would be imposed. And in truth, on January 8, 1975, the Administrative Fines Commission of the District of Varėna, presided over by Chief of Militia Rečkus, fined the above mentioned workers 25 rubles each.

The men punished paid the fine, but it was still not clear to them what law they had violated.

J u r b a r k a s. An artist residing in Jurbarkas, the retired teacher Verbickas, made a wooden sculpture of the Virgin Mary for the new altar of Jurbarkas church in 1972. During the blessing of the statue, the Rev. V. Byla in his sermon expressed his joy in the statue. Immediately after the sermon, a commission headed by Assistant Chairman of the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Jurbarkas, (Mrs.) Tamošiūnienė, presented itself to the pastor of the church, the Rev. M. Buožius, and demanded the removal of the statue from the church, since it was placed there without a permit. The pastor explained that it is not necessary to have a permit to decorate the inside of the church; besides, Verbickas gave the statue to the church and that was why he would not remove it. Then the commission demanded that Verbickas himself take the statue back. The artist explained that he had made a promise to his parents to make a statue for the church; he made it in fulfillment of their desire and under no circumstances would he remove it from the church. The commission said that it would force the pastor to remove the statue from the church.

Very recently, Artist Verbickas made a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the church. For the time being, the Executive Committee is quiet.

At Easter, 1974, the church at Jurbarkas was full of people. Many of them had come from the current District of Kaliningrad, where there is not one active church. The chairman of the Executive Committee of the town of Jurbarkas and the district party committee's propaganda and agitation section's instructor demonstratively walked around in the church, observing everyone and everything, even accompanying the procession. The chairwoman of the Executive Committee of the town even climbed up to the choir loft. No doubt she was interested in the singers, and besides the choir loft is a good point of observation to see what is going on in the rest of the church.

The pastor of the Jurbarkas parish had asked government officials many times for a permit to dig a well in the church yard; however, he never received one. In 1973, the pastor dug a well without a permit. A commission of the Executive Committee of the district, headed by Vice Chairwoman (Mrs.) Tamošiūnienė, demanded that the well be filled in and that an explanation be given in writing. The pastor wrote an explanation but did not fill in the well.

* * *

In the former rectory of the Jurbarkas church is a kindergarten. When the church bell rang, the children would ask their teachers to take them to church. Ten years ago the Council of Ministers forbade the ringing of bells so that they "would not disturb the children's sleep".

In 1974, the pastor of Jurbarkas, the Rev. M. Buožius, and the chairman of the parish council, Zinkevičius, approached Deputy Tumenas of the Council for Religious Affairs and asked that the ringing of bells be permitted. After ten years the permission was granted—the bells may be rung on Sunday for the Votive Mass and High Mass.

Š l a v a n t a i . On the evening of January 14, 1975, an attempt was made on the life of the Rev. Juozas Zdebskis. As he was driving his car between Meteliai and Sirijai (*Rayon* of Lazdijos), two cars driven by security people tried to cause an accident. Only the car was damaged in the accident.

* * *

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

K r a k è s .

To: Deputy, Council for Religious Affairs
Statement by the Rev. Juozas Vaicekauskas,
residing in the village of Pajieslis,
Rayon of Kedainiai

In the high school of Krakès, Rayon of Kedainiai, the children who attend the church of Pajieslis are persecuted and discriminated against. Believing children are mocked in various ways and are intimidated; they are even threatened with expulsion from school. Recently, students Palmyra Rybelytė, Zita Silkaitytė, Albina Miniotaitė and other girls were punished for attending church. They received the mark "unsatisfactory" in conduct on their report cards. Student Lionė Burdaitė received a strict reprimand. How the religious children are intimidated in the school of Krakès is made plain by the following fact: Even though there is a church in the village of Krakès, the children may not attend it because of persecution. They walk eight kilometers to the church of Pajieslis to go to confession. The children themselves told me in tears how they are ridiculed and persecuted because of their religious convictions.

The principal of Krakès school warned the girls that by going to church they besmirch the honor of the school. Last year, two ex-students of the Krakès school committed robberies, burglarizing even the church of Pajieslis. They really besmirched the honor of the school. One can understand the agony of the good, conscientious girls and their parents, when they are compared with thieves and robbers.

Can it be that the teachers of Krakès middle school expect to get good results in their atheistic work by using such rough and inhuman means? The faithful are very alarmed. Some of the parents are considering keeping their children from attending the high school of Krakès. The people of Krakès parish as well as of Pajieslis ask where they can turn so that their children would not be intimidated, persecuted and discriminated against.

The Rev. J. Vaicekauskas

1/28/75

* * *

Plateliai. In the Fall of 1974, ninth grade student Razgus of Plateliai High School was invited to a relative's wedding, which was celebrated in the Plateliai church. The principal of Plateliai High School, Stripinis, warned Razgus before the wedding not to enter the church.

After the wedding, Principal Stripinis berated Razgus for entering the church. According to the principal, Razgus is of age and does not have to obey his mother. The principal threatened that Razgus would be dismissed from the high school for attending church. His mother was summoned to the school to explain the conduct of her son. For attending church, Razgus' conduct mark was lowered, while on the bulletin board in the office of the collective farm, the cause of the lowered mark was given as the transgression of student rules.

* * *

Varėna. In the second high school of Varėna, before Christmas 1974, a teacher at the school, (Mrs.) Jankauskienė told the students: "Don't you dare take part in the solemn meal on Christmas eve (*Kūčios*). We will find out. Anyone who dares to eat the blessed wafer (*plotkelė*), will have his conduct mark lowered."

At the parents' meeting, Teacher (Mrs.) Jotautienė spoke: "Don't you dare celebrate *Kūčios* with your children. They don't benefit from it, because they do not understand anything about it anyway."

The people of Varėna ask: "Is it a crime to observe religious traditions, when the Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience?"

* * *

Druskininkai. In the sanatorium "Saulutė", where children rest and learn, in September 1974, the secretary of the Party organization, (Mrs.) K. Mockuvienė, approached the teachers demanding that they submit written statements of their stand on religion (whether he or she is a believer or not), and certify the statement with their signature. Allegedly, this is required by the *Rayon* government. Teacher N. wrote: "As long as science is unable to create a single living cell, I remain a believer."

Some time later, when (Mrs.) K. Mockuvienė met the author of the note, she reproached him, saying that he should have made a different statement, since the teachers' union is embarrassed that there are believing teachers. The teacher explained that as an older person

he should not be two-faced; besides he had not yet learned to lie. Just the same, he was willing to change the note. In the new note the teacher wrote the words of Putinas: "To believe is superstitious; without God all is empty and bleak."

At the meeting of the collective, Assistant to the Chief Physician (Mrs.) Glemžienė regretted that among the employees there are unenlightened people, who do not dare to speak with their own lips.. .

How can one reconcile the behavior of the Party organization secretary with the will of Lenin, who categorically demanded that no questionnaire, no document, contain the notation "believer" or "non-believer."

Šiauliai. On December 26, 1974, at a parents' meeting in the J. Janonis High School of Šiauliai, Teacher (Mrs.) Šleiniė spoke:

"Why do you parents force your children to believe? I asked the children if they know how to make the sign of the cross and almost all of them raised their hands..."

* * *

Palanga. In 1974, in the eight-year school of Palanga, student Rima Rimšaitė received only the highest marks. Because she would not join the Pioneers her conduct was lowered to "satisfactory".

Šilalė. In the middle school of Šilalė, Teacher Šerpitienė organized an atheistic circle and is trying to educate the students to be non-believers.

Eleventh Grade Home Room Teacher (Mrs.) Račkauskienė once exclaimed in front of the whole class: "If there is a God, let him pull out my tongue!" Once, when one of her students was being buried, she drove out of church, into the churchyard, all those students who came to honor their friend.

Shortly the fruits of the new education manifested themselves. On the night of January 7, 1975 three students of Teacher (Mrs.) Praskauskienė, Communist Youth Karžinauskas, Ciclica and Morozas, stole a car in Tauragė. In Laukuva, as they tried to move a fire truck, a watchman and a militiaman caught them. Karžinauskas severely wounded the militiaman with a knife. The lawbreakers will shortly be tried. In the opinion of the people of Šilalė, the teachers, who destroyed in the children the good instilled by their parents, should be tried along with the youths.

* * *

The conduct mark given to 5th grade student at the high school of Šilalė, Silva Račkuskaitė, was only "satisfactory" in the first semester (1974-1975), even though other less exemplary students received very good conduct marks. The main reason: Miss Račkuskaitė refused to join the Communist Youth League.

* * *

8th Grade Home Room Teacher (Mrs.) V. Vasiliauskienė asks parents not to interfere in the education of their children, leaving this work to the school. The opinion of many of the parents is that it is their duty not only to raise the child but also to educate it religiously.

The boarding girls of Šilalė High School decorated their room on December 23, 1974. Teacher (Mrs.) Auškalnienė tore everything down, called the girls dreamers and for a punishment forbade them to attend the carnival of the New Year tree. The crime—a room decorated for Christmas!

In September 1974, the home room teacher of grade IV of Šilalė High School, (Miss) Dabčikaitė, ordered all the students to take a piece of paper, and started to dictate a pledge to join the Pioneers. Two girls: (Miss) Drukteinytė and (Miss) V. Zieniūtė did not write. The home room teacher explained in class that the Pioneers would go to the movies, and would have excursions, while the non-Pioneers will not be able to take part. When the students of the class went to play, the teacher did not let (Miss) Drukteinytė and (Miss) Zieniūtė go with them:

"You are not Pioneers, so don't play together with them!"

The home-room teacher did not let other children: Sebeckytė, Pečkauskas, etc. play, because their parents would not agree that the children join the Pioneers.

* * *

Vilnius. In October 1974, the schools in the *Rayon* of Vilnius received a 20-page typewritten memorandum, "Recommendations of Methods Concerning the Strengthening of Scientific-Atheistic Education among Students in Schools of General Education". It was not shown in the recommendations who prepared them, when or where

they were prepared. The recommendations are written in Russian and they have four sections: 1) Formation of students' atheistic viewpoints and convictions in the educational process; 2) Specific work forms outside the classroom in the atheistic education of the students; 3) Atheistic work with the parents; 4) Atheistic work with believing students.

Typical excerpts are given below:

"The essential shortcoming in scientific-atheistic education is the lack of militancy in the fight against religious views, and poor individual work on believing members of students' families.

"The People's education force, the teachers, do not always come in time to the aid of children coerced by religious parents and the leaders of religious sects to take part in religious ceremonies, and attracted into a religious environment. In such instances, Soviet laws concerning the defense of children's rights are not fully utilized, nor are the laws about the dangerous influence of the churchgoers...

"The Church has been through all the ages and remains today the blood sucking enemy of the working people...

"Uncovering the classical essence of religion and its social function means in the first place organically to incorporate historical, sociological, and literary course material with today's phenomena and facts, unmasking the reactionary role of religion and Church in the ideological battle of two opposite social systems—socialism and capitalism.

"In reality, the battle between science and religion is not only not subsiding, but is gaining an even sharper character.

"In the atheistic education of students, questions unmasking religious morals should take a fundamental place. The preaching of love for all, including oppressors of the working people, is a hypocritical doctrine. Such teaching ignores and hides the actual existence in today's world of two opposite classes irreconcilable in their differences and interests, while ignoring the existence of two opposite ideologies—socialism and capitalism.

"Themes of Little Octobrist morning sessions... show the children the victory of mind over the fantasies of religion about the world and man.

"Various forms of atheistic home work should be used in school with middle and upper grades of students: discussions and lectures,

atheistic circles and clubs, evenings with atheistic themes, reading of atheistic works and their discussion in readers' conferences, film discussions, question and answer evenings, publishing of atheist bulletins, excursions to museums, thematic exhibits, photo exhibits, reviews of atheistic work in the class and in the whole school, etc. It is germane to conduct special atheistic discussions during conduct lessons in class... It is also desirable to organize lectures on some atheistic theme.

"Useful and varied is the activity of Young Atheist circles and clubs uniting representatives of various classes... As interest grows, especially among the young people, in the history, culture and traditions of our country, the teacher should avoid the danger of overrating the cultural mission of the Church (creating beautiful church architecture, attracting great painters to paint pictures on religious themes, etc.).

"Young Atheists Clubs should have the following sections: library, young correspondents. They should collect atheistic literature, prepare book reports, conduct readers' conferences, collect articles on atheistic themes from magazines and newspapers, assemble an album on atheistic themes, publish an atheistic wall bulletin, manuscripts of poems on atheistic themes, prose manuscripts, and digests. The lecture work section is made up so as to be headed by an experienced educator, a member of the *Žinija* association.

"By initiative of the Communist Youth League and the Pioneers ... giving everyone interesting assignments... an active community member is formed.

"The school must educate the parents in atheism and arm them with a minimum of atheistic knowledge.

"The most successful form of propaganda is a series of lectures... It is mandatory to prepare the lectures so... that without hurting the sensitivities of believers, they would have an atheistic core...

"It is wise to begin individual work with believing parents who foster religious viewpoints in their children, by initiating a relationship with them which will gain their confidence. Explain to them what difficulties parents create for the development of the child, emphasizing that contradictory influence of school and family on the children leads them to hypocrisy, lies, and at the same time emotional strain (fear of punishment at home, mockery in the classroom).

"With concrete facts the teacher convinces parents of the negative results of religious education. He invites believers as well as other parents to morning sessions, student celebrations, Pioneer meetings, etc. Believing parents will observe their son or daughter in the company of peers and see for themselves that the pedagogue is right: Their child, as a rule, is shackled, closed upon himself, constantly worried about something. It is obviously understandable that an upsetting question arises for the parents: Do they not impoverish their children's lives? Are they right? These thoughts are the basis of the psychological union between such parents and the pedagogues when struggling for the child.

"In individual work to overcome the religious views of parents, it is important to establish connections with unbelieving members of the family and influence parents atheistically through those close to them.

"It is important to work individually also with those parents who, not believing in God..., in keeping with tradition perform religious ceremonies, celebrate the feasts, keep holy pictures in their homes... Conversations with parents in this category may begin by immediately explaining the harm they are unconsciously doing to their children.

"The united efforts of school, family and community are the main conditions of success in educating the growing generation in the spirit of militant atheism.

"Teachers often say that it is difficult to form a relationship with a believing adolescent, difficult to conduct a conversation with him. Rejecting atheistic arguments, he withdraws within himself. Here it is a matter of a negative attitude formed in advance by the believer. The defeat of this attitude is the most important problem of the teacher... It is most often solved in roundabout ways, drawing the student into a system of real relationships, from which he had 'dropped out' by being a believer... His entrance into collective society must start with obligations, which will not arouse interior protest. Assignments must be chosen with the student's learning, interests and requirements in mind.. .

"It is necessary to draw believing students into circles—which will in the first place satisfy their aesthetic needs: choir, drama, dance, music, etc.; and to draw them into committees when preparing social

evenings or exhibits at school... At the same time to carry out with them the task of explaining the tie of religious ceremonies with religious ideology, bringing the student to a conclusion about the principles of his behavior.

"In planning the work of atheistic education in school, it is essential first of all to be guided by the Party organization's recommendations about atheistic work among the adult population and students.

"Thorough and purposeful atheistic educational work among students is one of the most important objectives of the people's organizations, pedagogic collectives at school and their social organizations."

Director of the People's Educational Section of Vilnius A. Ditkevicius, who had sent the above quoted instructions to the schools of the *rayon* on October 14, 1974, writes in his memorandum addressed to the principals of all the eight-year schools and the principals of the primary schools:

"We remind you that during the new school year the propagation of atheistic information among students and parents, now as before, is one of the most important objectives of the school... In connection with the fact that during the past 1973-74 school year district schools made very few excursions to the atheistic museum in Vilnius, we oblige you to bring this to the attention of the home room teachers and during 1974-75 to organize all the pupils of your school to visit the atheistic museum."

* * *

Following is a letter of one Lithuanian to the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* regarding the education of children in Soviet Lithuania. We withhold the name of the author.

"In the weekly, *Kalba Vilnius (Vilnius Speaks)* No. 42, historical studies candidate J. Anicas had an article, "We Are For the Freedom of Conscience". After reading this article, one shudders at how terrible this freedom of conscience is. It says that Soviet law forbids the teaching of religion to children not only in schools but also in the church and even in the family. Are such requirements not against human nature? After all, neither the state nor the Party gave parents their children or their right to them—nature did. They must bring

up the children according to their conscience and their most sacred convictions. No one is allowed to take this right from the parents.

"The community of believers of Lithuania looks at today's education of students as the drilling of new janissaries, inspiring in them the greatest hate of all that was most sacred to their parents and ancestors. (Janissaries—Christian children kidnapped by the Turks, were so trained in special schools in the spirit of hate, that later they would attack their own homelands, slaughter their defenseless parents and brothers, rape their sisters, trample icons and other holy things.)

"Let us look at the deeds of the new janissaries. Was there ever before in our land such drunkenness, immorality or robbery? Who destroyed the three crosses on the Hill of Crosses in Vilnius? Who tore down the stations of the cross in Vilnius and Vepriai, blessed with the blood and the tears of Lithuanians? Who destroyed and is still destroying the Hill of Crosses? Who has plundered and torn down shrines and crosses all over Lithuania? Was it not the new janissaries, educated "in the spirit of high Communistic morals"?

"The Turks, after kidnapping the children of Christians, used to train them in closed institutions. Now, every family is obligated to rear such janissaries. After all, our whole country is now a closed institution, where such training takes place. You cannot obtain religious books. Radio broadcasts from abroad are jammed. All are forced to believe lies propagated by the press, radio and television. Children and young people are forbidden to take part in the church choir or processions. Is this not training?

"Dear candidate of historical studies, decrees and laws propagated by you, restraining the fundamental rights of parents over their children, forbidding religious education in church and at home, are a sign of slavery. Until they are repealed, we and the whole world have the right and the duty to proclaim, 'The believers in Lithuania wear the chains of slavery!' "

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE *CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA*

During the post-war years, government organizations pressured priests of Lithuania to sign this document drawn up by the Communists:

"We strongly condemn and protest!

"The Pope of Rome, Pius XII, published a decree, which was proclaimed by the so-called Vatican "Sacred Congregation of the Chancellery" on the 13th of July, 1949, concerning the excommunication of all Catholic-Communists and their sympathizers from the Catholic Church. The decree forbids Catholics to join the Communist party, to support it, to publish, distribute or read Communist books, newspapers and magazines, or to contribute to them. The decree forbids administering Communion or other sacraments to those suspected of the above mentioned actions.

"The appearance of such a medieval decree, which is strongly condemned by a broad spectrum of Catholics, witnesses the concern of the leadership of the Catholic Church arising from the withdrawal of millions of Catholics from the reactionary course which is so passionately proclaimed by the Vatican. They renounce the reactionary Vatican policy, the politics of supporting aggressive imperialistic plans. Working Catholics throughout the world raise their voice louder and louder for peace, against war. This explains their agreement with and support of progressive organizations which stand for peace and the welfare of nations, in the first place of workers' and Communist parties, marching in the avant-garde of the battle for peace and democracy.

"The Vatican thinks that by threats and repressions, it can strengthen its diminishing influence with the masses of believers.

"Pope Pius XII with his decree proclaimed the condemnation of about **1/3** of the human race. According to the true essence of this proclamation 70 million members of professional associations, and likewise 600 million people whose delegates participated with Communists in the World Congress of Peace Advocates, would have to be excommunicated from the Catholic Church. Besides, the Pope threatens with damnation every citizen of any nation in whose government there are Communists, for obedience to the laws of such a country.

"The action of Pius XII is by no means accidental. In the camp of peace and democracy strength is unity. The closeness of the masses, of the workers of all countries, the workers who reject and condemn the aggressive plans of the English-American seekers of world domination—All progressive people, men and women, take part in the

movement for peace, without regard to their political or religious convictions.

"To split up the united front of the peace advocates, to break up the unity of the masses of the people—such is the objective of the reactionary forces. Today the Pope of Rome, Pius XII, is trying to fulfill this objective.

"The decree of the Vatican is a rude violation of the religious feelings of believing people. The decision of the Vatican is directed against those, who in the name of freedom and independence bore upon their backs the hardships of the greatest battles against the barbarians of Hitler.

"Moreover, it is universally known, that in the case of Fascism and Hitlerism, which carried out the most bloodthirsty crimes in the history of man, the Vatican assumed a position of complete assent and tolerance, basically fully and openly consenting. That is why this decision raises such deep disgust among the faithful.

"The decisions of the Vatican, like the North Atlantic Treaty and other acts of political aggression, praise the affairs of the same imperialist centers, which because of their greed, profit and desire to subjugate the whole world, are looking for an opportunity to ignite a new fire of war. Therefore, the decision of the Vatican is acknowledged by the vast majority of the faithful and the society of all Europe as a threat to the right of conscience and an attempt to revive the gloomy practices of the Middle Ages.

"We the priests of the Lithuanian S.S.R. soundly condemn the Vatican policy of provoking a new world war, and the policy of splitting the united front of the fight for peace—a policy directed against the working people, with the aim of aiding the imperialists and the big monopolists.

"We the priests of the Lithuanian S.S.R. firmly protest against the decree of Pope Pius XII, by which Pius XII has brought unspeakable harm upon the Catholic Church, and nailed himself eternally to the pillar of shame as an aggressive provocateur of a new world war. The demon of war, who once established himself in the young soul of Pius XII, has not left him at peace even now in his old age.

"We the priests of the L.S.S.R. invite all working people, Catholic or non-Catholic, believing and unbelieving, without distinction

of nation or race to draw even closer in the front lines of the united battle against war and for peace.

"Long live the unity of all workers in the battle against imperialists and exploiters!"

* * *

Here is how most of the priests acted when they were pressured to condemn the Pope unjustly:

The pastor of Rūdiškės, the Rev. Jonas Skardinskas, summoned to Trakai by the Chairman of the Executive Committee, and acquainted with the above text, stated to the assembled officials as follows: "You young people do not know the basic truths of the catholicism. The Pope is the Head of the Church, the Vicar of Christ on earth. And you suggest that I, an old priest, sign a document condemning the Pope. Young people, that is not a very nice way to act. Don't do this again."

* * *

The pastor of Valkininkai, the Rev. Pranas Bieliauskas, summoned before the chairman of the Executive Committee, found out the reason and asked the chairman to read him the document which he wished the pastor to sign. Afterwards, Father Bieliauskas asked him to explain the meaning of the statement: "The demon of war, who once established himself in the young soul of Pope Pius XII, has not left him at peace even now in his old age".

Stuttering, the chairman replied that he did not know how to explain it. Then Father Bieliauskas said: "Chairman, both of us are intelligent, educated people. What we do we do only after due consideration. This document contains things which are incomprehensible to us. Tell me, can an intelligent person sign a document which he does not fully understand? Therefore, I will not sign it."

The pastor of the Church of St. Theresa in Vilnius, the Rev. Juozas Vaičiūnas, after reading the document given to him by the deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs, B. Pušinis, asked,

"Deputy, I take you for a Communist-idealist. I am an idealist priest. I would never dare to suggest to you to defame the Party or Lenin. And if you did so, I would spit in your face. How dare you demand that I insult the Head of the Catholic Church, the Vicar of Christ? I never expected you to stoop so low."

Monsignor Jonas Ušila, rector of the Vilnius Seminary for about 40 years, was called in together with Msgr. J. Elertas by Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs Br. Pušinis, to sign the document against Pope Pius XII. The monsignor arose and declared:

"Minister, being in such a high position, you are not acting honorably. You dare to suggest that we sign such an uncivilized, poorly edited document against the Pope. Whom do you take us for? We are representatives of the Catholic Church, old priests. All my life I taught candidates to the priesthood and the faithful to honor the Holy Father and to obey him. You want me at the end of my life (the monsignor was in his eightieth year) to defame what is most precious to me, what I have believed, loved and proclaimed. That shall never be. We very firmly protest against the defamation of the Pope, the Head of the Church, the Church itself, and of the Priests. You persecute the Church, you have desecrated and closed our beautiful and precious shrines, you have turned monuments of beauty and art into warehouses; you have destroyed church property: organs, liturgical vessels, vestments, you have turned into valueless scrap priceless theological writings—books of the seminary and university libraries. You do not allow the seminary in Vilnius to function, you have closed the convents and confiscated their buildings and all the property, you have scattered the monks and the nuns and forced them to sign statements condemning the monasteries. You left them without a roof over their heads, without work, without a morsel of bread; you have forced priests and faithful to spy, to go against their conscience. You are trying to blow up the Church from within, you are trying to find traitors among priests and faithful. You may be able to find them, they are everywhere—you do not lack them in your own midst. Those who adhere to Catholic principles you slander, lock up in prison, or crowd into prison camps.

Know that you will not tear the Faith from our hearts by these acts of terrorism. The reeds will sway and bend, but the oaks will survive and produce young oaks stronger and more hardy. The Church has lived through many persecutions. She came out of every persecution brighter and stronger. She will honorably survive this wave of terror also. By persecuting the Church you will see contrary results: new heroes and martyrs will be born, who with their suffering and

their blood will wash away the stains of the weak-willed and the careerists, and will adorn the Church with the aureole of martyrdom, loyalty and love. There will be no lack of such people among us. When you martyr them, their places will be taken by others. Not only in the first centuries of Christianity was the blood of Christians and seed of the growth of Christianity, but this process repeats itself constantly and will continue to do so... Whatever terrible and disgusting methods you employ, you will not destroy the Faith, because Faith is not the work of men but of God. As God is eternal, so faith is eternal. Woe to you who try to struggle with God. I have finished. Now you may arrest me."

Having said this, Msgr. J. Ušila together with Msgr. J. Elertas left the deputy holding the dishonorable document in his hands.

It must be acknowledged that one or two priests turned up to sign this document. They were acknowledged as progressive priests "who understand well the spirit of the times".

If Soviet officials could force priests of Lithuania to sign a document against the Pope, it should come as no surprise to anyone that at the present time they force priests to go to conferences of peace advocates or to the U.S.A. to proclaim that the Church in Lithuania is not being persecuted. Hail to those who do not bow to force!

INFORMATION

On March 19, 1975, it will be three years since the appearance of the first issue of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. We thank everyone who in any way has contributed to the publication or distribution of the *Chronicle*. May God reward you all.

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