



CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
No. 23

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A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA No. 23
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

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Introduction

In 1940, when the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania by force, 85.5% of the country's more than 3 million inhabitants were Roman Catholic, 4.5% Protestant, 7.3% Jewish, 2.5% Orthodox and 0.2% of other persuasions.

In the two archdioceses and four dioceses were: 708 churches, 314 chapels, 73 monasteries, 85 convents, three archbishops, nine bishops, 1271 diocesan priests, 580 monks, of whom 168 were priests. Four seminaries had 470 students. There were 950 nuns.

Nuns cared for 35 kindergartens, 10 orphanages, 25 homes for the aged, two hospitals, a youth center, and an institute for the deaf-mute.

On June 15, 1940, the Red Army marched into Lithuania; the independent government was replaced by a puppet regime.

On July 14-15, rigged elections were staged. On July 21, with the Red Army surrounding the assembly house, the new People's Diet "unanimously" declared Lithuania a Soviet Socialist Republic.

On June 25, 1940, the Church was declared separate from the state, and the representative of the Holy See was expelled.

Parish lands were confiscated, clergy salaries and pensions were cut off, and their savings confiscated. Churches were deprived of support. Catholic printing plants were confiscated, and religious books destroyed.

On June 28, 1940, the teaching of religion and recitation of prayers in schools was forbidden. The University's Department of Theology and Philosophy was abolished, and all private schools were nationalized. The seminaries at Vilkaviškis and Telšiai were closed, and the seminary at Kaunas was permitted to operate on a very limited scale. The clergy were spied upon constantly.

On June 15, 1941, 34,260 Lithuanians were packed off in cattle-cars to undisclosed points in the Soviet Union. After World War II, the mass deportations resumed and continued until 1953.

Vincentas Borisevičius, Bishop of Telšiai, was arrested on February 3, 1946, and condemned to death after a secret trial. Before year's end, his auxiliary, Bishop Pranas Ramanauskas, was also arrested and deported to Siberia. Bishop Teofilius Matulionis of Kaišiadorys and Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys of Vilnius were deported to a Siberian labor camp. Archbishop Reinys perished in prison at Vladimir, November 8, 1953. By 1947, Lithuania was left with a single bishop, Kazimieras Paltarokas, of Panevėžys. He died in 1958.

In 1947, the last convents and monasteries were closed, their communities dispersed, and all monastic institutions were outlawed.

After Stalin's death in 1953, there was a slight improvement in the religious situation. Bishop Matulionis and Ramanauskas were allowed to return to Lithuania, but not to minister to their dioceses or to communicate with the clergy or laity.

Bishop Ramanauskas died in 1959, and Archbishop Matulionis in 1963.

In 1955, two new bishops were appointed by Rome and consecrated: Julijonas Steponavičius and Petras Maželis. Steponavičius has never been permitted to administer his diocese.

Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, consecrated in 1957, is also under severe government restrictions. In 1965, Monsignor Juozas Labukas-Matulaitis was consecrated in Rome to head the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkauskis.

Relaxation of pressure on religious believers soon revealed that the Lithuanian people were still deeply religious. It was decided in the mid-fifties to resume the attack. The principal means of attack would be unlimited moral pressure, since physical terror seemed only to strengthen and unify the faithful.

In 1972, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, clandestinely published in the country, began to reach the free world at irregular intervals. Primarily intended to keep Catholics in Lithuania informed of the situation of the Church there, these Lithuanian samizdat also serve as a constant appeal to the free world not to forget the plight of a people struggling against overwhelming odds to defend their religious beliefs and to regain their basic human rights.

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translation Editor

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June 13, 1976

LETTER TO HIS EMINENCE ANTONIO CARDINAL SAMORE AND HIS EMINENCE JOSEF CARDINAL SLIPIJ

To the Beloved Shepherds of the Roman Catholic Church and Friends
of Lithuania¹

His Eminence Cardinal Antonio Samore

His Eminence Cardinal Josef Slipij

Our nation on its way to Golgotha—in the Gulag Archipelago, Siberia, and in exile in the Western world—has met many remarkable personages. Some of them have extended a hand of physical and moral assistance, while others by their personal example and heroic

¹Cardinal Samore, an influential official in the Vatican, served in the Vatican Legation in Lithuania in the prewar years and is considered a great friend of Lithuania. Cardinal Slipij, leader of the Ukrainian Catholics, served many years in Soviet prisons. He was in the same prison cell with the Lithuanian priest, Pranas Radiunas (see note 3 below).

suffering strengthened our nation's resolve to struggle for God and for the most elementary human rights. To those noble spirits we are grateful, and we pray the Most High to grant them every kind of blessing.

Among those good friends of ours are you, honorable shepherds. Today, as we continue our life-and-death struggle for victory, oppressed as we are with difficulties, we wish to open our hearts to you. We trust you will hear and understand us.

To our misfortune, all who travel from here to Rome and back undergo briefings in Moscow and are required to render a written account of themselves. Objective information, therefore, is possible only from the deep underground. Even this reaches the West belatedly through the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church* or through individual tourists.

The atheists, supported by government propaganda and by the State Security Committee, are disseminating the idea world-wide that in Lithuania there is no religious discrimination, and that the Soviet Union does not even know the meaning of the term "political prisoner." To this propaganda wagon, even certain clergy are hitched.

Last year the Soviet Union sent to the USA a delegation of clergy of various religions, among them the administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Monsignor Česlovas Krivaitis.² The delegation failed in its purpose, because the Ukrainians and the Lithuanians demonstrated and showed the world the truth concerning the disguised persecution of the Church in Ukraine and Lithuania. However, the atheists attained this much: they compromised in the eyes of the faithful a high-ranking clergyman.

The Catholic public thought that on this matter Bishop Juozas Labukas, Chairman of the Lithuanian College of Bishops would have something authoritative to say, and that he would force the compromised clergyman to resign his post.

However, on his return Monsignor Krivaitis was met in Vilnius by Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas, pastors from Vilnius, and the Representative of the Council for Religious Affairs K. Tumėnas. During the testive dinner at his suburban villa, Monsignor Krivaitis told Tumėnas, "Minister, you gave me a very difficult assignment."

²**Monsignor Krivaitis visited the United States in February of 1976 with a "Delegation of Representatives of Christian Churches in the USSR" as a guest of the National Council of Churches.**

"But you carried it out honorably," the representative for cult encouraged the monsignor.

With the failure of one trick, the atheists seized upon another. By Vatican Radio we learned that from August 1 to 8, the 41st International Eucharistic Congress would be taking place. Immediately the rumors spread that a delegation from Lithuania would be bound for the USA, headed by several bishops. Now we know approximately the make-up of this delegation: Bishop Liudas Povilonis, Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas, Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, Canon Juozas Meidus, the Rev. Dr. Viktoras Butkus, Canon Čėsna, the Rev. Pranas Račiūnas MIC, the Rev. Jonas Juodelis, and the Rev. Vytautas Sidaras.³

After Easter, Bishop Labukas visited the exiled Bishop Sladkevičius and indicated that the Representative of the Council for Religious Affairs K. Tumėnas had assigned him the task of organizing the delegation. It must be recalled that the same Tumėnas had organized the delegation to Rome for the Holy Year.

One other circumstance must be noted. During the fifteen years of Bishop Sladkevičius' exile, Bishop Labukas had not visited the exiled bishop; and now, at the order of Tumėnas, he did not let eighty years of heavy burdens nor poor eyesight deter him.

The Catholic public has begun to be uneasy not only regarding the delegation being organized by atheists, but especially concerning the honored exile, Bishop Sladkevičius. It is thought that the plan is to compromise the former long term prisoners the Rev. Pranas Račiūnas and the Rev. Jonas Juodelis in the eyes of political prisoners who are religious believers. Undoubtedly this delegation, by its passive attendance, is supposed to demonstrate to the West the freedom of religion in the Soviet Union and in Lithuania.

Bishop Sladkevičius rejected this offer and staunchly refused to go to America. He demanded that reparation first be made—that after fifteen years in exile, he be allowed to assume the See of Kaišiadorys. At the present time, Bishop Sladkevičius lives under in-

³³The Lithuanian delegation to the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia arrived on July 28, 1976, consisting of nine clergy. Included in the delegation were Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis, Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas, the Rector of the Inter-Diocesan Seminary in Kaunas Rev. Viktoras Butkus, and a number of pastors and diocesan administrators. Bishop Sladkevičius refused to go, but two pastors, the Rev. Pranas Račiūnas and the Rev. Jonas Juodelis, who had spent time in Soviet Prisons, did participate.

human circumstances, discriminated against by both spiritual and civil authorities. The diocesan chancery of Panevėžys, urged by the government, at the death of the pastor of Nemuno Radviliškis, Bronius Šukys, forced Bishop Sladkevičius to assume the duties of pastor in this small village parish, and to be overwhelmed by the routine of minor repairs.

At the end of April, Bishop Labukas invited Bishop Sladkevičius to the Kaunas chancery. Bishop Sladkevičius went to see Bishop Labukas and once more stated that under the circumstances he would not be able to travel to the USA. Then Bishop Labukas said that in that case Bishop Sladkevičius could remain in exile for life, adding, "I told them that the 'Red Guards' would attack you." (Very often officials, diocesan staff, and some seminary professors call the most zealous priests by this Chinese name. This title was given to zealous priests by officials of the State Security Committee).

This attempt to pressure Bishop Sladkevičius into joining the delegation being organized by Tumėnas was made for several reasons. First of all, they wanted to compromise an honorable bishop in the eyes of the faithful. The atheists do not like martyrs. They prefer deserters and compromisers. Bishop Sladkevičius himself thought that he might not be allowed to return, and that he would be then placed permanently in a different exile.

At the beginning of this year (1975) the Representative of the Council for Religious Affairs, K. Tumėnas, gave lectures in all diocesan chanceries throughout Lithuania regarding the economic condition of the country and Church affairs.⁴ The conclusions arrived at by Tumėnas went something like this:

The ecclesiastical deans must see that the priests keep quiet, that they do not write protests. In that case it might be possible to an agreement with the Vatican regarding the appointment of new bishops. He promised he would allow the publishing of a limited number of prayer books. He staunchly refused to allow the publication of catechisms. Thus, the attitude of the civil authorities towards the Church has not changed.

Not long ago, Cardinal Alfred Bengsch visited Lithuania.⁵ It is rumored that Bishop Labukas has been invited for a return visit to

⁴See the account of one such "lecture" in this *Chronicle*, p.

⁵Cardinal Bengsch of Berlin made a whirlwind tour of Lithuanian dioceses on August 22-25, 1975. He obviously was on a mission of the Vatican

Berlin.⁶ On that journey he will be accompanied by the Rev. Dr. Butkus, who has the complete confidence of the civil authorities. Priests and faithful believe that through Bishop Labukas, the Soviet government will offer the Apostolic See a compromise: to allow Bishop Sladkevičius to return to the diocesan See of Kaišiadorys, while the See of the Archdiocese of Vilnius would go to the Rev. Dr. Butkus. Bishop Steponavičius would remain in exile for good. If this plan goes through, it will be the most painful tragedy of our religious life.

The rector of the seminary, the Rev. Dr. Vytautas Butkus, is an active participant in the communist movement of peace supporters. He travels abroad freely, spending at least a third of the academic year away from the seminary, whose spiritual life and morale are unenviable, causing concern among all. Because of the limits imposed by the government, the student body lacks quantity; and because of the negligence of the seminary administration, it lacks quality. The rector of the seminary leaves much to be desired in his personal life. Several years ago, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius wrote to Bishop Labukas calling attention to certain facts in the rector's personal life. Nevertheless, there is a rule among us, that he who is protected by the civil government goes unscathed by the Code of Canon Law.

If Father Butkus were to become a bishop, this would be a great misfortune for the Catholic Church and a great comfort to the atheists working to wreck the Church from within.

Honorable Shepherds, faithful friends of our nation, we ask you to place this complaint of our nation at the feet of the Holy Father.

The Editors of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*

Good Shepherd Sunday, May 9, 1976

to survey religious situations of the spot. For the response of dissident Catholics, see *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* No. 19, p. 3.

⁶There are indications that Bishop Labukas, the President of the College of Bishops in Lithuania, made a return visit to Cardinal Bengsch in Berlin sometime in August or September of 1976. No details of this visit are available.

A LETTER TO THE IRISH

TO OUR BELOVED IRISH BRETHREN:

On May 12, 1976, the Vatican Radio broadcast in Lithuania the good news that in March, a group of Catholics in Ireland tried to submit through the Soviet embassy in Dublin a petition to the Soviet government concerning the persecution of Catholics in Lithuania.

The Soviet embassy refused the petition, and the Irish Catholic group, after reciting the rosary at the gates of the Soviet embassy, dispersed. The rejected petition was published the following day in the capital city's press.

The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, in the name of the entire nation of Lithuanian faithful, cordially thanks the Irish for the moral support to the Catholics of Lithuania, who are waging a life-and-death struggle against so-called militant atheism, which is supported by the gigantic machinery of the government.

What terrible hypocrisy comes to light when we hear how the Soviet newspapers constantly proclaim that the Soviet Union supports the nationalists of Africa, when at the same time they ship to Siberia Lithuanians who love their own nation, shut them up in psychiatric hospitals, refuse to register them after they are released from camps, and throw them out of work. The Soviet press proclaims that the Soviet Union is assisting the Catholics of Northern Ireland by all possible means, including arms. At the same time in Lithuania the Catholic Church is mercilessly being crushed: Our venerable historic and artistic churches are being converted into warehouses and museums: e.g., the Cathedral of Vilnius—a picture gallery, the Church of St. Casimir—a museum of atheism. The morality of the nation is being destroyed, and the character of Lithuania is being damaged.

On June 15, 1940, the Red Army cut us off from the Throne of St. Peter and from the entire non-Communist world. News from the outside world, on account of various obstacles, reaches us, only in part and late. Nevertheless, we know and rejoice that Ireland contributes the greatest percentage of missionaries, that 91% of its Catholics attend church on Sundays, that in the USA the best Catholics are the Irish immigrants. Thus, we hope that this protest

by the Irish will not be the last!

Unfortunately, the Catholics of the West could learn from the Communists how to fight for one's principles. For example, the Communist (and even the non-Communist) press of the whole world cried out for years in behalf of Manoli Gleza. And they got what they were after! In the USA, they made a heroine out of Angela Davis, who had committed a criminal offense.

But when 5 million Catholics in Western Ukraine have not one official church, when Belorussia has been left with barely a few elderly priests, when they do not have a single bishop—even a secret bishop as in the Ukraine—the Catholic press is content with an occasional rare item. Ireland, which has suffered so much, understands what persecution of religion means!

The Catholic Church of Lithuania—the furthest outpost of the Church in Northern Europe, has been waging a one-sided battle against an atheism imported from abroad. Brother and sister Catholics of the whole world, help us! Your prayers and every act of protest will give us moral strength, will help us to win the right to worship God without restraint, and to feel like citizens with equal rights in our own homeland.

The only force that every offender, including militant atheism, fears is public opinion. The Jews have the resolute Senator Jackson. Can not Catholics have someone similar? Proclaim to the world that we Catholics not only do not have those rights which the Negroes of America have, but we do not have any press, not even a Catholic calendar, prayer books, or catechisms; that priests are imprisoned for teaching religion; that the youth are persecuted for going to church (believing youth in school receive only a passing mark in deportment). Proclaim to the world that the dioceses of Lithuania do not have a single Ordinary. Vilnius—the capital of Lithuania—has neither a bishop nor a cathedral. Two bishops—Julijonas Steponavičius and Vincentas Sladkevičius—have been exiled for fifteen years now without trial. The one seminary, that of Kaunas, used to produce barely a few priests a year. This number, on account of protests at home and abroad has increased to ten. But each year, about twenty priests die. The average age of the Lithuanian priest is over 60.

Our Irish brothers, train missionaries for Lithuania as well! Even now the Ukraine recalls with respect the sacrifices of Irish

priests in Lvov and elsewhere. In time, they will have to come to our poor homeland as well. . .

Your prayers and your resolute protest are our hope for survival and victory.

June 13, 1976

A PETITION FROM PRIESTS OF THE
ARCHDIOCESE OF VILNIUS

To: Secretary General of the Central Committee of the CPSU
Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union
1. Council of Ministers of Lithuania
2. Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs of the
Copies: Lithuanian SSR
3. Leaders of the Dioceses of Lithuania

Priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius

From:

A STATEMENT

The Penal Code of the Lithuanian SSR, speaking of exile (Paragraph 27), banishment (Par. 18), and the abrogation of the right to carry out certain duties or to do certain kinds of work (Par. 30), says that "exile is meted out as the basic punishment as well as a supplementary punishment and is set at two to five years; banishment—from one to five years; the abrogation of the right to carry out certain duties or to do certain kind of work—also from one to five years. In Addition, the Code of Penal Procedure of the Lithuanian SSR states: "Justice in criminal cases will be meted out exclusively by the court" (Par. 11).

How are we to understand the requirements of these codes, when it is the *sixteenth* year since the Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, has been relieved of his duties *without court action and for unknown reasons* and

sent to live far beyond the boundaries of the archdiocese, in Žagarė?¹

In an effort to request the return of the bishop to the post as Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, we, the priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, in 1970,, wrote a petition to the Council of Ministers of the USSR, which was signed by sixty-one priests; and in September 1975, we sent the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR a statement signed by sixty-six priests.²

When K. Tumėnas, the Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs gave certain priests a negative reply to the petition written to the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR, the priests asked the deputy, "What is Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius guilty of?"

"I do not know," replied the deputy. This means that *the bishop is guilty without cause*. What he is guilty of no one knows—neither the faithful, nor the clergy, nor the bishop himself. Even the deputy claims not to know. Where is the logic in that? If the bishop is guilty of no offense, then why is he in Žagarė, why is he not allowed to go about his duties as bishop; or if he is guilty, then why is the offense being kept secret even from himself?

The line taken by the Soviet government in regard to Bishop Steponavičius makes for wonderment. His consecration was coordinated with agencies of the civil government; i.e., the Soviet government agreed that he should be bishop. Why, then is it the sixteenth year that he is unjustly (without trial or proof of offense) kept from functioning, why may he not work according to his assignment by the pope to the Archdiocese of Vilnius, why does the civil government want to force him to work not in accord with the norms of church law and his own conscience, but rather according to the dictates of the atheistic government?

We, the undersigned priests, ask you in the name of all who signed the petition of September 1975 to the Council of Ministers

Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania No. 20, pp. 10-12.

²The letter of September 25, 1975, is published.

¹*loc. cit.*

²Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas of Panevėžys, born in 1930, was consecrated in 1969. He graduated from Kaunas seminary in 1954, was permitted to study in Rome, where he received the degree of Doctor of Church Law. He is a shepherd brought up during the Soviet period, apparently gets along well with the authorities. For this reason some dissident priests have expressed doubts about his loyalties.

of the Lithuanian SSR, and in the name of all people who love truth and justice, to restore Bishop Steponavičius to his former duties as Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Vilnius.

Lithuania, February 15, 1976

Rev. B. Laurinavičius
Rev. A. Petronis
Rev. K. Garuckas
Rev. S. Valiukėnas
Rev. A. Simonaitis

DEPUTY K. TUMĖNAS REPLIES TO ALLEGATIONS

This year, Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs Kazimieras Tumėnas began to "enlighten and educate" the bishops, the administrators of dioceses, and ecclesiastical deans. In February he gave a lecture at the diocesan chancery of Telšiai; on February 18, at the chancery of the Archdiocese of Kaunas; on March 18, at the chancery of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys; and on April 17, at the chancery of Panevėžys.

In his lectures, Tumėnas attacked the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

Tumėnas explained that relations between state and Church are improving. There are problems and difficulties, but these can be resolved.

Long experience shows that the Soviet government will maintain good relations with the Church only when the latter capitulates. At the present time, vital problems of the Church are going unresolved; e.g., the publication of catechisms, the question of the seminary, etc.; only new ways of destroying the Church are being sought.

As Tumėnas sees it, villages are shrinking and consideration should be given to the consolidation of parishes. However, he did not say that with urban expansion, consideration should also be given to the construction of new churches; for example, in the suburbs of Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Alytus, and other cities. In the development of Lazdynai in Vilnius there are 40,000 people, and there is no church.

Tumėnas admitted that at times officials act badly, tactlessly.

Why, then, are they not punished? They may terrorize believers, destroy wayside crosses, establish quotas for the seminary, exile bishops, and teachers may spy on churches with impunity and dragoon children who are religious believers into Godless organizations.

The Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs said that the Vatican Radio has taken a bad line. One can agree that the Vatican Radio could learn from Moscow Radio how to turn out propaganda. The broadcasts of the Vatican Radio at the present time are a great moral support to the Catholics of Lithuania and even to non-Catholics. Thousands of people listen.

The deputy for cult emphasized that a catechism would not be published. He stated that while there could be more relaxation, there would be none because then the *Chronicle* would claim, "We obtained it by our own efforts."

What is the *Chronicle* guilty of? Is it not true that, up to the time of its birth, two bishops were exiled, the seminary saw quotas established, believers were persecuted, etc?

The believers of Lithuania do not expect favors. They require not favors, but justice—the observance at least of Soviet law.

Tumėnas promised to grant in the near future permission to freely print 80,000 copies of a prayer book and to see about the problem of the production of religious articles.

Using the money of the faithful, the atheists are publishing books and pamphlets on a massive scale, while believers are not even allowed to reprint a catechism. It is not clear to Catholics during which five year plan the re-opening of shops for the production and sale of religious goods will be allowed.

The deputy for cult explained: "It is important that anti-Soviet elements not enter the seminary. It is too bad when young men come in with the wrong ideas. When they finish the seminary, they get involved not in the priesthood, but in the publication of the *Chronicles*. It is necessary to improve the quality of seminarians . . ."

The Catholics of Lithuania ask Tumėnas, the KGB, and all the others not to interfere in the affairs of the seminary, because the Church needs not security personnel in cassocks, but dedicated shepherds.

On September 15, 1975, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius wrote a petition to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Lithua-

nian SSR, requesting to be restored to his duties as apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius. On November 24, 1975, a similar petition was sent to the Chairman of the Lithuanian Council of Ministers by the priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius. Moreover, on October 4, 1975, the priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius wrote an open letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Lithuania concerning the falsehood of an article by instructor J. Aničas, a doctoral candidate in history, in which he tries to prove that in Lithuania there is complete freedom of conscience.

These communications, submitted in writing, were answered verbally by the Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs, K. Tumėnas and his associate.

The Representative summoned Bishop Steponavičius to his office in Vilnius. He gave him a vague reply, promising to confer further with Moscow. He affirmed that the answer to the question depended on negotiations between Moscow and the Vatican.

Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs Tumėnas replied to the above-mentioned petitions of the priests, but not to all the priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius at once.

In the spring of 1976, the deans of the aforementioned archdioceses were summoned to the chancery of the Archdiocese of Vilnius. Here Deputy Tumėnas spoke mainly about the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. He threatened to uncover it and to punish its producers severely.

The Deputy was angry because the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* writes even of such matters as the preservation of the ecology of Lithuania and about nationalism. These things concern them, too.

If Bishop Steponavičius wants to return to his duties, the Deputy continued, he will have to do certain things; e.g., forbid the *Chronicle*, with which the bishop himself allegedly cooperates.

Having good priests is also the concern of the Deputy, he said, and therefore, if anyone has any candidates for the seminary he should inform either the Deputy or Krivaitis (the Rev. Česlovas Krivaitis, Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius). The two of them would have to pass on the candidates together.

Moreover, Deputy Tumėnas summoned the priests of the following *rayons*:

On March 15, Šalčininkai; March 17, Švenčionys; March 24, Ig-

nalina; March 27, the *Rayon* of Vilnius, with the exception of the City of Vilnius; April 2, Trakai; April 7, Varėna.

In some *rayons* Deputy Tumėnas spoke; in others, his associate Ruslanas. Both said clearly that the petition of the priests for the return of Bishop Steponavičius to the See as Apostolic Administrator of Vilnius would not be honored because the bishop had not mended his ways. The main indication of his recalcitrance, added the Representative, was the bishop's appeal to the civil government, which even reached abroad.

In Švenčionys, Tumėnas' associate repeated several times that Bishop Steponavičius is unacceptable to the Soviet government. When the priests asked for an explanation of what the bishop was guilty, the speaker replied, "I cannot tell you." The priests insisted. The speaker, losing his poise, blurted. "The bishop, in administering the diocese, paid attention only to Canon Law. He paid no heed at all to the laws of the State. The Soviet government cannot allow the Church to be, as it were, a state within the state."

There can be no talk of the return of Bishop Steponavičius. "We need bishops who will pay attention not only to Canon Law . . ." As an example of a good shepherd, he offered Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas.

In Šalčininkai, the associate deputy said, "It does not appear that the bishop's attitude has changed, since he wrote his protest to the government in the tone of a prosecutor, blaming only the government for everything. He cannot be allowed to return to his duties, because there would be much unpleasantness in the future. It will be better if in Vilnius there is no bishop at all."

In Trakai, he affirmed that the bishop's return depended on him, the Vatican, and the government. "The bishop must be broad-minded."

In Varėna, to spite the priests, Deputy Tumėnas said, "If you want the bishop to return, go to the pope. We don't appoint bishops; the pope does."

At Ignalina, the deputy said: "We have invited you here to reply to your two petitions. In one of them you request the return of Bishop Steponavičius to Vilnius.

"Regarding Steponavičius, he has either not established contact with the Soviet government, or he has not fulfilled certain requirements of the law . . . Apparently, he felt that he had to have a serious disagreement with the government of the republic, and not just with Rugienis, as you wrote in your petition," The deputy alleged that Steponavičius wrote the government a letter "that wound up where it should and where it should not."

"It was explained to him that at the present time it is impossible for him to return to Vilnius. I have met with him, and I think that we will meet again several times. I have been working at this position since just recently; we will see how he behaves. I want to see, and he should see—his future depends on him. If he is seriously considering returning, he must change your attitude."

"Your communication regarding the Aničas articles constitutes an attack on laws now in effect and on the state . . . Aničas wrote his articles as a private individual—a correspondent of the Academy of Science, and not as an official."

(Now he is director of a section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, his articles would thus assume a different value.)

"Hence you should send your response to his article directly to him. There are some doubtful statements in his articles. I would differ with him on some of his writings."

A voice was heard from the audience: "If he wrote articles in the newspapers and spoke on television, let him now publicly retract. Even though we are 'private individuals' no one lets us write columns in the newspapers or speak on television . . ."

The deputy " . . . In our country it is forbidden to establish any kind of schools, organize illegal groups, clubs—even church-affiliated. Citizens can study religion privately. The children may be taught at home by parents, older brothers and sisters, or others . . ."

Voice from the audience: "How can parents or anyone else teach children religion if we are not allowed to print any religious publications, even the catechism?"

The deputy returned to the question of Bishop Steponavičius: "It is more difficult now for Bishop Steponavičius to return to Vilnius to work. About the question of his serving as bishop elsewhere,

we will see. The question is not unresolvable."

Voice from the audience: "And why can't Bishop Steponavičius do his work? For what offenses has he been punished by banishment from Vilnius?"

The deputy: "He has not been punished, but merely relieved of his duties."

(Laughter in the audience): "Is removal from duties then not a punishment? Perhaps it's a reward."

The deputy: "The government decided that it would not allow Steponavičius to work in Vilnius because he has been disloyal to the Soviet government."

Voices from the audience: "Specifically what has he been guilty of?"

The deputy: "I do not know. The Representative at that time was Rugienis. Ask him. He will explain. He will explain." (He repeated that in anger.)

The deputy responded to the last part of the open letter of the priests from the Archdiocese of Vilnius, in which they ask the government to abrogate all laws and regulations against freedom of conscience:

"I must say that among us there is not a single regulation contrary to freedom of conscience. There is none. Religious freedom is something else entirely. The Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and other freedoms named in the Constitution. As for religious freedom—there is no such thing among us. Religious activity assumes a state character and is regulated by the state laws.

"If it seems to you that somewhere there is in reality denial of the freedom of conscience, you have the right to ascertain this and to report it to us. I do not know of any local government regulations that deny freedom of conscience—I have never heard of any. Even the *rayon* government cannot promulgate such regulations."

Voice from the audience: "In my parish we had the following incident: One man, a believer, comes to church on Sundays, and since he knows how to play the organ, he plays for us during services. For this the supervisor told him in no uncertain terms: 'Choose between the Church and your job with us. If you want to play in church, you cannot work here.' "

The deputy: "That is not right. In such a case, let me know. I will intervene."

Voice from the audience: "It happens that something allowed by the government in one *rayon* is considered a criminal of-

fense in another, and we ourselves do not know how to act if there is no official direction from above."

The deputy: "Read the *Government News*. There you will find in the near future the laws for religious groups. In putting them together, the documents of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic were used as a guideline, with modifications to suit the needs of our country... As for the traditional Christmas visitation of parishioners, it is forbidden. Nor does that ruling contradict the principle of freedom of conscience. Basically, such visitations were tied in with collecting dues, and every kind of dues collection is forbidden."

Voice from the audience: "And what if the home visitation is done without any collection of dues? What if we merely visit parishioners to become acquainted with them? Even the *rayon* tax department demands that we tell them how many believers we serve. How can we tell the number in the parish if we are forbidden to visit them?"

The deputy: "Visiting the families of believers is not forbidden. You can visit them not necessarily in winter, around Christmas. You can visit them in the summer or in the fall. That is not forbidden."

Voice from the audience: "Believers out in the country are more apt to be free from work during the winter."

The deputy: "No escort is allowed. Besides, some people may not want the priest to visit them."

Voice from the audience: "But what if the faithful themselves invite the priest—even in writing? For example, in the Village of Didžialis in the Parish of Ceikiniai."

The deputy: "If you begin to go from house to house, you will be in violation of the rules . . . The public blessing of homes with all the trimmings is forbidden. Blessing from within—nothing special—you will be doing nothing very wrong . . . You are allowed to bless a new home."

Voice from the audience: "You accuse Bishop Steponavičius of last year giving the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* a copy of his petition to the Soviet government. But this has not been proved. What is the evidence that he did it himself?"

The deputy: "I do not know. Perhaps you were the one?"

Father Garuckas: "Or perhaps it was you. If we do not know for sure, then we have no right to accuse anyone. Someone else could have given the information to the *Chronicle*—it was no secret."

The Deputy, after a few moments, reacted with annoyance.

Father Valiukonis: "What can be done so that any young man really wishing to do so might be able freely to enroll in the seminary?"

The Representative: "If we decide that any candidate upon completion of his seminary course is going to engage in anti-Soviet activity, we will not allow such a person to enter the seminary."

Voice from the audience: "All the current candidates are products of Soviet schools—some of them, even of institutions of higher learning. Many have worked in various Soviet agencies or industries. They have performed well and have been awarded medals. How can you decide that they are going to engage in anti-Soviet activity? For example, the teacher Antanas Klikūnas of Telšiai was not accepted."

The deputy " . . . If you have candidates for the seminary, let me and Krivaitis know. We will be able to help them. By the way, it seems (he added with some sarcasm) that you lack candidates from Lithuania. As far as I know, you have a Ukrainian studying . . ."

Voice from the audience: "You know that Krivaitis is of no use to us."

The deputy: "Well, it seems to me that up to now no one has complained about Krivaitis."

Father Valiukonis: "What about the number of seminarians? Is it still going to be limited by the government?"

The deputy: "That question is being decided by the Ordinaries."

Fr. Valiukonis: "I wonder, if we asked the Ordinaries, whether they would concur with your statement. . ."

The deputy: "You can ask them."

Voice from the audience: "It would be very good if the Deputy would put in writing everything that he is saying today. It would then be clearer to us all."

The deputy: "The very reason that we have invited you all to one place is so that no written report would be necessary."

A PETITION BY THE REV. KAROLIS GARUCKAS

To: The Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union¹
The Representative of the Council for Religious Affairs of the Soviet Union
The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR
The Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs of Lithuania
The Chanceries of the Dioceses of the Church in Lithuania

From: The Rev. Karolis Garuckas² resident of the *Rayon* of Ignalina, Village of Ceikiniai

A STATEMENT

The Soviet press quite often carries antireligious articles. Some are personal in nature, while others are written by officials as if to explain Soviet laws. Among the latter should be included the article by the Deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs, K. Tumėnas, "Freedom of Conscience and Soviet Law" (*Tiesa*, November 22, 1974). This article raises a number of questions because reality shows something quite different.

The civil government requires that church committees be organized, even though Church law makes no mention of such committees.³ At the direction of the government, such church committees are to be elected by the faithful. However, officials of the

¹According to the editors of the *Chronicle*, this letter has been abbreviated slightly. Several concrete examples of regime pressure on the church have been omitted.

²The author of this letter The Rev. Karolis Garuckas, is among the more prominent dissident priests, a member of the Lithuanian group to monitor the implementation of the Helsinki accords.

³Church committees as parish governing bodies were resisted by the Catholic hierarchy ever since the Soviet regime began demanding their formation in the 1940's. With the rise of religious dissent in the 1970's, the regime has sought to strengthen the governing role of the committees and to establish a tighter control over them by the local authorities (e.g., through confirmation of committee members). The deputy chairman of the executive committee of a *rayon* is the local overseer of religious bodies. It remains to be seen if the committees can be transformed into obedient instruments of the regime.

rayon government try to take them over, striking from church committee rosters individuals they do not trust, even though these persons have never been guilty of any crime.

For example, in 1964, the authorities of Ignalina failed to approve the following individuals for the church committee of Ceikiniai: Deputies V. Talunčius, and V. Valėnaitė, and the road-builder A. Garla. So, even though Tumėnas writes that "citizens, regardless of their views, enjoy equal rights . . . to participate in elections and to be elected," the government of the *rayon* does not recognize these rights. The Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee of the *rayon*, A. Vaitonis, has often threatened to dissolve the present church committee of Ceikiniai. It is similar in other parishes as well. From what has been said above, one gets the impression that government officials are demanding church committees in order to use them for their own purposes—to destroy the Faith.

The article says that "The state does not interfere in the internal affairs of religious groups" and that "ministers and religious communities may be involved in religious activity."

Does the state not "interfere in the internal affairs of religious groups" when government officials, without cause, transfer priests and exile bishops; limit the number of candidates for the seminary, rejecting those who do not suit the civil government; and when they try to recruit them to spy for the atheists?

During funerals in some cities, it is forbidden to transport the deceased to a church or to accompany the remains to the cemetery with priests in attendance. In many places, it is forbidden to toll the church bells. Without *rayon* permission, priests are forbidden to help out out in other churches; in many places the priest is forbidden to minister to the sick in hospitals.

Although Canon Law requires them to, bishops are not allowed to visit every parish during each five-year period and to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation there. In 1973, the Alanta, in Šilalė (even though everything had been confirmed with the government in advance) a couple of days before the date set for Confirmation, after everything had been prepared and announced to the people beforehand, the government withdrew permission to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

"It is forbidden. . . it is impossible . . . it is not allowed . . ."- That is how "the state does not interfere in the affairs of the church."

Officials of the civil government examine church books and reprimand us if the records are not kept in accordance with all the rules of bookkeeping. Priests are forbidden to sit on the church committee, and ordinary people do the best they can with the parish books.

The interference of government officials in keeping the parish books would be understandable if any of the faithful complained. After all, in a family in which the husband and wife get along well together, the state does not interfere in their financial affairs and does not ask how much money was spent where.

The state does not allot one *kopek* for the upkeep of churches; on the contrary, it burdens believers with heavy taxes. For deciding matters, there *are* special religious centers—the chanceries—which even the state recognizes.

In our press much is written about freedom of conscience. The above-mentioned article by Tumėnas even carries the title, "The Freedom of Conscience and Soviet Law." This year in Helsinki, on September 1, the Final Act of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe was signed. The Soviet Union also signed it. In this act there is a line about respect for human rights and liberties: "The participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

I want to illustrate with a few facts how that freedom of religion is "safeguarded" and "implemented."

In 1960 I was summoned to the headquarters of the Ignalina *Rayon*. There they accused me, as pastor in Dūkštas, of planting flowers in the churchyard where German soldiers were buried. I was then offered the opportunity of working for the security organs to expiate this "offense" and others.

In June 1960, Representative of the Council for Religious Affairs, Rugienis,⁴ summoned me from Dūkštas to Vilnius and began to berate me angrily:

"Here you are back from prison camp and still you have not

⁴Justas Rugienis, and old Lithuanian revolutionary, was appointed to oversee religious activities in 1957. He was rather abrasive bureaucrat, apparently unable to deal with the rising religious dissent. In 1972 he was replaced as the Representative of the Council for Religious Affairs by K. Tumėnas.

learned your lesson! You won't be allowed to function as a priest. Look for another trade!" As a matter of fact, I have never been in a camp, nor have I ever been tried. Why the deputy confiscated my work permit at that time, I do not now know.

Rugienis, having relieved me of my duties, cannot assign a new pastor in my place without the bishop, and, yet, to leave a parish without a priest was just as bad, since a disturbance would have arisen among the people—the faithful would not have been satisfied without a priest.

Bishop Steponavičius refused to relieve me of priestly duties. He merely compromised, promising to transfer me to the smaller parish of Palūšė. Such behavior on the part of the bishop did not please the government. For this and similar "offenses," Bishop Steponavičius was exiled from Vilnius in the beginning of 1961. In his place was appointed the present administrator, the Rev. Česlovas Krivaitis, who eight months later transferred me from Palūšė to the still smaller parish of Paringis.

There, I functioned as pastor just barely one month, when the government, on June 23, 1961, once again took away my work permit. So that the people would not have cause for complaint over the loss of their pastor, Monsignor Krivaitis sent Paringis, a new priest. In this way I was left with almost nothing to do for a considerable time.

Similar things have happened to very many other priests. From this we see how the present chanceries of the dioceses are being forced to cooperate with the government and to harm the Church.

On October 30, 1967, I was summoned before the Security Committee of Ignalina, where three officials berated me for two hours for allowing minors to serve Mass and for allegedly wooing children — for giving three pieces of candy to children at the bus station— and for not asking permission of the *rayon* to have priests come to religious celebrations. For this I was threatened with jail.

On December 23, 1969, I was summoned by the security organs to Vilnius. There, they berated me for three hours on account of the same children, threatened me with jail, accused me of not conforming to the decrees of the Second Vatican Council, of doing harm to the Church and to the Faith, saying that such priests are displeasing even to the pope . . .

They then asked if I had been abroad. I told them that I had, before the war.

"Oh, before the war. . . Now, everything is changed there. You have to go along with progress . . ."

"Then let me go abroad now, to see," I asked.

"How can we let you go abroad? You would embarrass everyone! You should rather be confined in the hospital; perhaps then you would improve! Perhaps some decent idea would penetrate your skull . . ."

At the beginning of 1969, I received an official invitation from a physician to visit him in Leipzig, Democratic Germany, but they would not let me go.

One priest told of how security organs harassed him for days, until they forced him to agree "to work with them."

"But I won't do anything to harm the Church," he thought to himself. Some time later, the same priest complained to me, "Perhaps I did the devil's own work, writing to Rome praising a certain government candidate for bishop." In order to deceive the Vatican more thoroughly, he told me, letters are sent even via Poland, as though they were secret. . .

Whoever agrees to "cooperate", easily receives permission to build a fine home—even a villa—and to travel abroad; anyone who refuses is not allowed to repair even a farm building.

Especially subject to blackmail and recruitment are seminarians, Anyone applying for the seminary must submit his request well before he would apply to any other school, so that security would have enough time to terrorize and recruit for themselves these candidates for the seminary. For example, some years ago A. Klikūnas, a teacher at the middle school of Telšiai, submitted his application to enter the seminary.

Security organs then posed the condition that he "agree to cooperate." He refused, and they would not accept him for the seminary.

Obviously, such an "imprudent" person could no longer teach, but had to find another specialty and look for work elsewhere.

Seminarians are summoned to government offices on the pretext of conferring about their identification papers or military service matters. But in reality, they fall into the hands of security. There, they are forced to inform on one another. They are asked even such things as "which of the seminarians leaves the chapel last." It is said that many of the seminarians, young men in their prime, upon returning from such interviews, begin to cry like children. Many have their health ruined; their nerves are shattered.

At times, government officials, in the guise of good Catholics, come to drive the priest on a sick call, but in reality they take him to security headquarters to grill him and terrorize him.

Father Jonas Paukštys told me how security tried to force him even to break the seal of confession, threatening to punish him and to report him in the newspaper. Father Paukštys refused. Of course, they then wrote all sorts of things about him in the press.

Tumėnas writes: ". . .An atmosphere of public condemnations must be created against deliberate transgressors of the law, and especially against the organizers."

Even though believers constitute the majority of the residents of Lithuania, they are often subjected to this kind of an "atmosphere of public condemnation." Constant attacks are instigated against believers who are loyal citizens of the same state. Where can you ever hear or read anything positive about believers? Everywhere, they are portrayed as the most ignorant and harmful people. All means are used to put them down: the press, the radio,, television, the school . . .

The atheists are always claiming that there is freedom of religion. True, no one here publicly puts believers to death, as has happened more than once in the history of the Church. However, it is not necessary to kill a person on the spot. It is possible to destroy him slowly, by denying him basic needs.

On one occasion, a certain worker, warned not to go to church any longer, complained to me that his superior had told him, "If you continue to go to church, I have orders to fire you, giving as the reason not the Church, but some other excuse."

It is forbidden to go to church and there is no religious press, while atheistic propaganda against religion is cranked out full blast. Is this not a spiritual death watch?

The results of such propaganda and "atmosphere of condemnation" are various incidents which happen to the believers. Here are a few examples:

On July 27, 1967, Vice Chairman Maželis of the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Ignalina, while driving under the influence of alcohol, struck and killed Vincas Mečelė, a parishioner of Ceikiniai. During the funeral at the cemetery someone began to throw stones, bloodying the head of the father of the deceased, standing next to me. Afterwards, Ignalina security questioned me and berated me for urging everyone during this funeral to pray and to receive the sacraments, thus insulting the atheists.

On October 14, 1952, the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Druskininkai, via communication No. 473, placed the rectory

under the jurisdiction of the Parish Council of Kabeliai (the other parish buildings had already been taken by the government). Soon after, I moved to Kabeliai as pastor—October 24, 1952.

On November 21, 1952, at 9 p.m. a whole group of officials came from the *rayon* together with Chairman Bilius of the Kabeliai communal farm, and read me a new order from the government—to turn my house over to them. That night they measured the whole rectory and set a rent of 50 thousand rubles, saying that if I left the rectory to live elsewhere, I would not be subject to the payments.

The government harassed me in all sorts of ways, ordering me to abandon the premises as soon as possible. Under the rectory windows, they established a pig-sty. Once, when I was out, someone broke into the vestibule. Unable to break through the kitchen door, they tied it and went off.

On another occasion, Principal Gudelionis of the school in Kebeliai broke out the windows, frames and all. Again, Teacher P. Grigas of the school in Kabeliai blocked my path and began to harass me. When I went on, he shot by me. These are a few old facts.

Similar incidents recur constantly. On Good Friday, 1975, in the Cemetery of Panevėžys, about thirty crosses were wrecked and desecrated. On the first Sunday of Lent, in 1975, during services, someone broke out the windows of the church at Ukmergė. The faithful of Ignalina have complained more than once that the director of the Hall of Culture broke the windows of their church during services.

On August 13, 1973, in the church at Mielagėnai, the Blessed Sacrament was profaned. On November 26, 1972, the windows of the pastor Adutiškiai were broken out. These are all fruits of atheistic propaganda and of the "atmosphere of condemnation". Lithuania abounds with such crimes.

In view of the facts indicated, I request:

1. That the rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the USSR be confirmed for believers.
2. That all citizens be guaranteed equal rights to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and beliefs, according to the international agreement signed at Helsinki.
3. That an atmosphere of public condemnation be formed not against believers and the Church, but against all evil.

Ceikiniai, *Rayon* of Ignalina

The Rev. Karolis Garuckas

LETTER OF VLADAS LAPIENIS TO SECRETARY GENERAL
LEONID BREZHNEV

To: Leonid Brezhnev, Secretary General of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Honorable Leonid Ilych,¹

I address this letter to you in the hope that your personal intervention will help me to receive the justice which I have been unsuccessful in getting from the appropriate levels of appeal.

On November 20, 1973, agents of the State Security Committee of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR (the KGB) seized from my home many books of a religious nature. The seizure of the books was in gross violation of Paragraph 192 of the Code of Penal Procedure of the Lithuanian SSR because not all the books were included in official record of the search. Not one of the bags into which the books were placed was sealed. When I wrote a complaint to the Chairman of the KGB of the Lithuanian SSR and to the Prosecutor General of the USSR, I was promised that those books unconnected with the criminal case (What case? Against whom? I have not found out to this day.) would be returned.

After two years, on December 3, 1975, a security agent, Captain Marcinkevičius, returned some of the books seized from me and gave me a receipt to sign. When I requested a copy of this list, Marcinkevičius refused, explaining that only one copy had been signed. *In truth, however, a second copy was on the office desk.* Thus Paragraph 192 of the same Code of Penal Procedure was again transgressed since I needed a list of the books being returned to document whether I had received back all the books on the list.

Nevertheless, the KGB, without any explanation to date, has failed to return quite a number of books (See the attached list)² and my "Rheinmetall" typewriter. In this way they directly transgressed

¹The author of the letter, Vladas Lapienis, has been active in the religious dissent movement; his activities have been reported in the *Chronicle* (see, for example, No. 11, 15). According to the report of the Lithuanian group to monitor the implementation of the Helsinki accords Lapienis was arrested in Vilnius on October 19, 1976, and was charged with "duplicating and distributing religious and 'slanderosus' literature".

²Printed at the end of this letter.

paragraphs 10 and 25 of the Constitution of the USSR and paragraph 17 of the Universal Declaration Human Rights, to say nothing of the fact that as responsible employees of the government apparatus, they failed to keep their promise—something which surely does nothing to strengthen the authority of the state organs they represent.

"One can be injured not only by a bullet or by a blow of the fist. Often in life, a person, especially one of a more sensitive nature, is disabled by deceit, falsehood, slander, threats, angry words, and similar wrongs. Medical tests prove these statements" (*Tiesa*, January 21, 1975). Nevertheless, KGB interrogators questioned me for eight days, often treating me roughly, slandering me, threatening me with arrest, and the like. So it is they who are guilty of the offenses specified in Paragraph 187 of the Penal Code of the Lithuanian SSR. Particularly guilty of this were Senior Lieutenant Gudas and Major Markevičius. These people have got to understand that by such methods they discredit not only themselves, but also the government agencies which they represent. They discredit the Soviet government.

On account of the unjust and criminal actions by the KGB of the Lithuanian SSR, I have more than once presented complaints to the following: The Chairman of the KGB of the Lithuanian SSR (November 30, 1973), the Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR (January 4, 1974), the Prosecutor General of the USSR and the Chairman of the KGB of the USSR (June 12, 1974), and again to the Chairman of the KGB of the LSSR (October 15, 1974), but each time my complaints fell into the hands of the very people whose unjust actions I was complaining about.

No one is likely to contradict the statement: "Conduct against the law is a crime." But then it becomes clear that the central government turns offenses over to the offenders to be investigated. Is that normal? Can this be allowed?

Even though Soviet laws state clearly on this point that a person who has complained about some kind of acts by employees in state offices must receive a clear and rational reply from higher officials, it is now clear to me why I never did receive such a reply.

In the course of my interrogation I learned that for a long time, security agents had been observing every step I took, no matter where I went: to the library, to the store, or to see relatives. In the final analysis, it is their own business and that of their superiors, even though it seems to me that they could make

wiser use of their working time: I am no foreign espionage agent nor any underground political activist. But I was shocked to learn during the interrogation that by using microphones, they eavesdropped on conversations in my apartment. That is in direct contravention of Article 128 of the Constitution of the USSR, guaranteeing citizens the inviolability of a citizen's apartment and the privacy of correspondence, a direct offense against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 12, and against the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 17.

In speaking of the injustices and the persecutions I suffered, I have no right to cover up the crimes and persecutions that people of the same religious persuasion as I—people of faith—Catholics—suffer simply because they are believers.

"The state should not concern itself with religion, and religious bodies should not be entangled with the civil government. Everyone must have complete freedom to profess any appropriate religion or not to profess any religion at all. Any discrimination among citizens with regard to their rights, flowing from their religious beliefs, is absolutely forbidden. Even any references in official documents regarding this or that faith which is professed by citizens must be completely deleted. No government payments should be made to churches or to religious bodies, which must become completely independent (emphasis added—V.L.) organizations of citizens who are of one mind, independent of the government. Only the complete implementation of these requirements can put an end to the shameful and reprehensible past, when the Church was in feudal bondage to the state . . ." (V.I. Lenin, "Socialism and Religion," *Works*, Vilnius, 1952, vol. 10, p. 65).

You, Leonid Ilych, as Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, know better than I this and many other statements in the Constitution of the USSR (Par. 124, 125), in the Penal Codes of the Soviet Republics, and agree completely with regulations in a host of international documents signed by the Soviet government (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Ar. 18 and 19; Art. 5, 18, 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Art. 4 and 5 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

However, these instructions of the founder of Soviet law and these international commitments on the part of the government are not observed. So that I might not talk without proof, I hereby submit a number of facts:

1. Since 1940, Catholic organizations, monasteries, and convents have been banned.

2. Teaching of religion in the schools is forbidden, teaching catechism to children is allowed only for the parents; priests are allowed only to ascertain knowledge of the catechism by asking the children questions individually. For catechizing children, several priests have been sentenced to a year in jail, while many others were assessed fines (1975—the pastor of the parish of Kučiūnai, Father J. Krikščiūnas—50 rubles; that same year the administrative committee fined (Miss) E. Žukauskaitė 40 rubles, etc.). And yet the children of believing parents are forcibly taught atheism, a fact that clearly contradicts Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

3. There are times when the government forbids priests to function as priests; e.g., in Vilnius, the Rev. Vladimir Prokopiv, who completed theological studies in Rome; in Kaunas, Father Vladimir Figolis. Father Vytautas Merkys worked in a tree nursery for over ten years because the government would not allow him to work in any parish. 4. Bishop V. Sladkevičius of Kaišiadorys since 1957, and the Bishop of Vilnius J. Steponavičius, since 1961 have been relieved of their duties by the government, and exiled to remote corners of Lithuania, where they live to this day in exile, and without indication of any crime.³

5. Persons who have not attained eighteen years of age are forbidden by the government to participate in religious ceremonies, even though the parents of these children require that their children be allowed to participate.

Priests who forbid youngsters to do so would commit an offense against Canon Law. Many priests have been punished for allowing children to be at the altar, or to walk in a church procession, or to sing in the church choir; e.g., Father A. Keina was fined 50 rubles for allowing boys to serve Mass, Father P. Orlickas was fined the same amount, and afterwards he was transferred from the parish for playing volleyball with youngsters; Father Lygnugarys was fined

³**The exile of bishops Sladkevičius and Steponavičius is a major bone of contention between the religious activists and the Soviet regime. Bishop Sladkevičius was exiled because he was consecrated without the consent of the Soviet regime, while Bishop Steponavičius was denied office because of this opposition to Soviet interference in the internal affairs of the church. See *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 20, pp. 5-15; No. 14, p. 5.**

50 rubles for visiting a patient in the hospital in Naujoji Akmenė; Father Suklys was fined the same amount for allowing children to participate in a procession; the organist of the parish of Kabeļiai was punished for teaching children to sing in the choir, and the pastor of that parish, J. Lauriūnas, was fined for allowing the organist to teach their children to sing hymns. The pastor of Daugailiai, the Rev. Batuška, was fined 30 rubles for inviting priests from neighboring parishes to a religious festival . . .

6. For their religious beliefs, Aldona and Regina Bielskus were expelled from the University of Vilnius.

7. Bringing religious literature in from abroad and sending it in by mail are forbidden under the same law as is the bringing in of pornographic literature and of narcotics.

8. Catholic publications are completely forbidden; in Lithuania, not only are religious newspapers and magazines not published, but even catechisms are not allowed to be printed. Twice they allowed a prayer book to be printed and once the New Testament, but the numbers printed were so small that only a small fraction of the faithful could obtain them.

". . . We demand . . . freedom of the press," wrote Lenin. Without freedom of assembly, speech, or press . . ., all talk about tolerance and freedom of worship will remain a miserable pretence and a discreditable lie" (V.I. Lenin "The Autocracy is Wavering," *Works*, Vilnius, 1951, vol. VI, p. 312). However, the law guaranteeing freedom of the press, of association, of conscience, and of speech, is applied only to the atheists. Believers who have dared to implement this right guaranteed by the Constitution ended up in the prisoner's dock and later in the strict regime camps of Perm and Mordovia: P. Plumpa, 8 years; P. Petronis, 4 years; V. Kulikauskas, 3 to 5 years; J. Gražys, 3 years; Nijolė Sadūnaitė, 3 years and 3 additional years of exile.⁶ They were all accused of something they were completely innocent of; namely, the libeling of the Soviet system. They were guilty only of attempting to fulfill a Christian duty: They wanted to provide prayer books for the faithful in order to satisfy the spiritual hunger of believers, and they tried to spread religious literature.

9. The relatives and even the acquaintances of persons suffering for their beliefs are searched, questioned, and threatened: In Kaunas — M. Vitkūnaitė, N. Petruševičius, V. Gajauskas, M. Gavėnai-

⁶Trials of these religious dissenters are reported in *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 13, 16, 17.

tė, and others. In Vilnius, J. Lapienytė, K. Jakubynas, A. Žilinskas, A. Terleckas, and others.

10. Many believers are discharged from work without reason. On September 15, 1975, the Department of Public Education at the *Rayon* of Mažeikiai demanded the teachers A. Skirparas (with 27 years' seniority) and (Mrs.) Skiparienė (with 25 years' seniority) "voluntarily" to ask to be relieved of their duties because that year their son entered the seminary. In Vilnius, the children's music teacher A. Kezytė was relieved of her duties because she is a believer. In 1975, the KGB suggested to the administration of the University of Vilnius that they discharge (Miss) B. Kibickaitė simply because she happened to be visiting Nijolė Sadūnaitė when the KGB came to search Miss Sadūnaitė's apartment.

11. The priests V. Gelgota, A. Ylius, and P. Račiūnas were objects of newspaper articles in which they were slandered and vilified. These priests sent the editors of the papers letters of protest in which they showed that they had been vilified, but not one newspaper printed their letters.

12. In the "Decree on Separation of Church and State" there was an instruction to turn over church premises and articles "to religious organizations to use free of charge." The Supreme Soviet on April 10, 1942, by decree set the rent for the use of the premises at 1% of the assessed value of the premises per year. Since 1961 the assessment on buildings for worship has been increased one and a half times, and accordingly the rental has been increased one and a half times. Law is law and the Catholic Church pays the charge punctually. But every law ought to be logical.

We cannot understand why religious groups have to pay compulsory insurance fees on property that does not belong to them. And it is even more difficult to understand why, in case of fire or natural disaster, the insurance compensation is made not to the group which paid the insurance premiums, and which will have to rebuild the building, but to the owner of the premises (the Executive Committee) which does not appropriate any money for the maintenance of the premises, does not keep them in repair and does not turn over a single *kopek* of the insurance compensation received. (When the church at Dubingiai burned down, the insurance compensation was paid out to the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Molėtai; it was similar in other places.)

The history of the church at Klaipėda simply astounds us. The

church erected with the parishioners' money was not only not turned over to the religious group for its use, but in 1961 it was taken from the group and turned into a philharmonic hall. The government does not allow the reconstruction of a great number of churches which burned or were destroyed during the war (Sangradas, Gir-kalnis, Batakiai, Gaurė, and other parish churches). Moreover, religious sculptures and wayside crosses erected by believers are pulled down by the government (e.g., the sculpture of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the churchyard at Skiemonys).

13. The government is constantly interfering in the internal affairs of the Church, ordering whom to appoint and whom not to appoint as professors at the seminary, setting quotas for those applying to the seminary, and forbidding bishops and administrators of dioceses to assign priests to parishes without the permission of the deputy for religious affairs.

That is just a small part of the facts attesting to the fact that in Soviet Lithuania the law regarding the separation of Church and state is systematically being broken. At the same time, Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs V.A. Kuroedov has stated in the newspaper *Izvestia* (January 31, 1975):

"Soviet laws set special legal norms protecting the legal rights of believers, religious bodies, and ministers of cult from attack."

"Any kind of discrimination against believers and any abuse of their freedom of conscience is categorically forbidden,"

Far be it for me to doubt the word of such a responsible person, especially when the Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs says further:

"We do not intend to conceal the fact that among us there are occasional incidents when some local organs still fail to prevent unjust action with regard to the churches and the faithful . . . In all these cases, measures are taken to right the wrongs, and the parties responsible in these cases are punished in accord with the law."

The facts I have submitted indicate that the Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs is little acquainted or not acquainted at all with the situation of the Church in Lithuania. There has not been a single instance in which anyone having transgressed the law on separation of Church and state and having discriminated against believers was ever punished for his unjust actions. Just not long ago, in The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe the following was written:

"The participating States will respect human rights and

fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."

Precisely because, Leonid Ilych, your signature appears at the end of that document, I am of the opinion that I can turn directly to you.

The persecution of the Catholic Church is only one side of the coin. To cover the subject fully, it is no less important to focus attention on the results of this persecution. The lack of moral or spiritual education, or even the weakening of such education, the spread of atheism, with its nonbinding and very vague moral principles, has brought it about that in recent years criminal offenses have increased: The stealing of state and private property, robberies, burglaries and rape, drunkenness, narcomania, and sexual immodesty have reached untold proportions. Thousands of adults and young people in our republic are serving sentences in jails and camps. There are so many of these places: In Vilnius the jail O-Č, 12/36; the strict regime colony O-Č, 12/1, and O-Č, 12/10; in Pravieniškiai O-Č 12/2 and O-Č, 2/8; in Alytus 0-4, 12/4; in Panevėžys 0-12/5; in Kapsukas O-Č, 12/3. Camps for minors in Vilnius, Sniego Gatvė Nr. 2 VTK, in Kaunas O-Č TKN and others.

Even though it is painful for you to hear these things, nevertheless it is a fact that as long as atheistic education had not been introduced into the school, drunkenness, theft, and sexual promiscuity were infrequent phenomena. Nowadays, they are a daily occurrence.

It is rightly said that a strong family is the basis of a strong state. There is no doubt that atheism has weakened family ties, the number of broken families has increased, and the divorce rate is going up.

Can one speak of the strength of the family when in official publications it is proclaimed: "The teacher, forming the atheistic world-view of pupils, must most often destroy those religious views that the family has instilled in them" (B. Bitinas, *Questions of the Methodology of the Atheistic Education of School Children*, Kaunas, 1962, p. 2.)

But in destroying beliefs instilled by the family, the family itself is wrecked. Here are the results: In 1950 in Lithuania there were 23,245 marriages and 625 divorces, and now "the statistics in our republic show almost 40 divorces per 100 marriages. The divorce rate is growing not only in the cities, but also in the villages." (*Mokslas ir Gyvenimas*, 1976, No. 3, p. 30).

The first victim of divorce and the break-up of the family is the

child. Psychiatrists in Hawaii and Wisconsin, USA, affirm that "the parents' divorce constitutes an extended psychic trauma for the children . . . Therefore it is more correct to view divorce not as an event, but as a process that, by its painful duration, causes psychic disorders in the children." (The weekly *Kalba Vilnius*, 1976, No. 6, p. 13). Should we not look here for the reasons for the unheard-of-increase in delinquency?

Atheistic propaganda makes use of mass media—the press, radio, television, of teachers in school and agitators in offices and factories—propagators of atheism, who do not hesitate to employ the methods of their choice; the worn-out jokes about priests, slander of priests and the faithful, the long-ago-refuted pseudo-scientific arguments (e.g., concerning the historicity of Christ), and arguments causing trouble by their uniformedness. Believers, on the other hand, are not allowed to defend themselves.

As the experience of Eastern European socialist states shows, granting greater freedom to the Church has not only not interfered with the building of socialism, but it actually helps.

Of all Eastern European countries, the highest standard of living has been attained by the German Democratic Republic, which during the war suffered the most. Characteristic of that country is its high level of productivity and high quality. But the believers of the German Democratic Republic are not so severely persecuted, churches are not continuously closed down, Catholic and Protestant newspapers are being published. In 1972, the Catholic Church in the GDR published 292 titles (St. Benn-Verlag), and there are no more Catholics in the GDR than in the Republic of Lithuania. In neighboring Poland, believers publish many books, they have schools of their own, and in the state schools, religion is taught to those children whose parents desire it. The same situation exists in Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia; in short, in all of them, with the exception of Albania.

"Here in Europe, pretensions to world domination were transformed into political doctrine, and in the end, states whose riches served ends full of hatred collapsed," you said on July 31, 1975, at Helsinki. "That is why the time has come to make unavoidable collective conclusions from the historical experience."

It is impossible not to concur. Not only has fascist Germany collapsed, but so also has the Roman Empire, which for three hundred years had persecuted the Christians, while ageless Truth or

the faith of human beings survived, having withstood the viles *of* centuries.

Those who direct antireligious propaganda in Lithuania and organize the persecution of believers are in error if they think that by physically attacking them and making use of force, they will root the faith and convictions out of their hearts.

The Catholics of Lithuania do not ask of the state that which it is wrong to demand. They wish that the state apparatus were not turned against the Catholic Church and its rights, which are guaranteed by the Constitution, since "In their proper spheres, the political community and the Church are mutually independent and autonomous. Yet, by a different tide, each serves the personal and social aspirations of the same human beings. This service can be more effectively rendered for the good of all, if each works better for wholesome mutual cooperation, with consideration of the circumstances of time and place". (*Decrees of the Second Vatican Council*, Vilnius, 1975, p. 185)

I address this letter to you, honorable Leonid Ilych, requesting you to correct the mistakes made and to rectify the transgressions against international and Soviet law:

1. Not to discriminate against believers by discharging them from work, carrying out searches in their home, and threatening them and arresting them;

2. To discontinue administrative interference in the internal affairs of the Church;

3. To grant amnesty to all prisoners suffering in the labor camps on account of their beliefs (see No. 8 above).

4. To return the books and things unjustly seized from me and during the searches of others.

April 23, 1976

Respectfully,

(Signed) Vldas Lapienis, son of Antanas

Daugaviečio 5-11, Vilnius

Copies to: First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania Petras Griškevičius

A List of Books Taken From Me and Not Returned

1. *Lietuvos Katalikų Bažnyčios Kronika — The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania No. 1-6*
2. *Arkivyskupas T. Matulionis — Archbishop T. Matulionis*, 1972, 4 copies
3. Dr. P. Gaidamavičius, *Milžinas, Didvyris, Šventasis — Giant, Hero and Saint*, 23 copies (1 copy returned).
4. *Laidotuvių ir gavėnios giesmės — Hymns for funerals and for Lent*, 400 copies
5. J. Girnius: *Žmogus be Dievo—Man without God*, 4 copies.
6. A. Maceina'; *Dievo Avinėlis — The Lamb of God*
7. *Kratkij tolkovati k Novo Zavetu*. In Russian, 2 copies
8. *Prelatas M. Krupavičius*, 2 copies.
9. Stasys Yla, *Vardai ir veidai mūsų kultūros istorijoje—Names and Faces in Our Cultural History*, 4 copies
10. P. Maldeikis, *Meilė dvidešimtame amžiuje (Love in the Twentieth Century)* (1 copy returned) 2 copies
11. J. Prunskis, ed., *Mano pasaulėžiūra, Kultūrininkų pasisakymų rinkinys, (My Worldview: Statements by Cultural Leaders* 2 copies
12. P. Maldeikis, *Melas kaip pedagoginė problema (Lying as an Educational Problem)* 1 copy
13. P. Maldeikis, *Inteligencija ir jos tyrimas (Intelligence and Its Measurement)* 1 copy
14. A. Grauslys: *Ieškau Tavo veido (I Seek Your Face)*, 2 copies
15. Bishop V. Brizgys: *Negesinkime Aukurų (Don't Extinguish the Altar Fires)*, 2 copies
16. Stasys Yla, *Dievas sutemuose (God in Twilight)* 2 copies
17. J. Klumpys, *Petras Jurgis Frasati*, 1 copy
18. B. Brazdžionis, *Per pasaulį keliauja žmogus (Through the World Man Travels)* 1 copy
19. *Pasaulėžiūros klausimai (Questions of Worldview)* II d. 255 pp., 1 copy.
20. J. Grinius, *Tauta ir tautinė ištikimybė (The Nation and National Loyalty)* 1 copy

APPEAL OF THE FAITHFUL OF SIMNAI

To: K. Tumėnas, Deputy for Religious Affairs, Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian S.S.R.

Copy to: Bishop L. Povilonis, Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Kaunas

Statement of the Catholics of the Parish of Simnas

In the fall of 1975, the large parish of Simnas lost a priest — a curate—who was transferred on the order of the government. Only one priest — the pastor — was left to take care of the religious needs of the faithful. We have not been able to get another priest.

There are 85 parishes in Lithuania already, which do not have a permanent priest. In our diocese alone, there is no permanent priest in five parishes (Laukeliškiai, Patilčiai, Išlaužas, Riečiai and N. Uta).

Last year, after a long delay, by permission of the government, twelve candidates were accepted for the seminary; however during that same year, nineteen priests died in Lithuania. Two years ago, twenty-two priests died. Hence, the injury by the government to the faithful of Lithuania is obvious.

The Declaration of the European Council on Security and Co-operation, held in Helsinki in 1975, which was signed by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, L. I. Brezhnev, states that the "participating nations will honor the rights of man including freedom of thought, conscience, religion and convictions, regardless of race, sex or religion" . . .

We the undersigned believers of the parish of Simnas, ask you, the Deputy for Religious Affairs, whose main duty it is to mediate between the government and the Church, to take the steps that:

1. The quota of candidates to be admitted to the seminary be abolished, that the bishops themselves might select and admit all young men who wish to become priests, so that the church of Simnas might get another priest — curate, who is greatly needed.

2. At least a small catechism be published. Such a catechism was last published before World War II.

3. A larger edition of prayerbooks and of the New Testament of the Holy Bible be published.

Simnas, April 8, 1976

Signed by Several Hundred
Parishioners of Simnas

DEFENSE OF THE REV. J. ZDEBSKIS

To: Bishop L. Povilonis, Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkaviškis

Your Excellency:

On March 10 of this year, the Rev. J. Zdebskis, pastor of Šlavantai, was detained in Vilnius by the militia, and, with the aid of the Commission of Medical Workers, was charged with drunken driving. Since Zdebskis is known everywhere as a strict teetotaler and a fighter against alcoholism this event cannot be seen as anything but a well-thought-out threat against the authority of the priest. No one can assure us, that if this attempt succeeds, any one of us will not be similarly charged with theft, profligacy or other crimes.

We the priests of the neighboring parishes request Your Excellency to react to this event so that the injured authority of the priest would be reaffirmed.

Signed by Five Priests of the Lazdijai Deanery

To the Head of the Security Committee of LSSR

Statement of the Faithful of the Parish of Šlavantai
(District of Lazdija)

On March 10, 1975, in the city of Vilnius, Vilnius Automotive Inspection Officer Turevich detained our parish priest Juozas Zdebskis, who was driving a car, and declared him drunk. He demanded that the priest go to a psychiatric hospital to determine the degree of drunkenness.

At the above mentioned institution, without a blood analysis being made, even though the priest himself demanded one, a report affirming drunkenness was made. The VAI took away his driver's license and the *rayon* newspaper published a news item that a priest had been detained in Vilnius for drunken driving.

We the faithful of the Šlavantai parish know that our priests never use alcoholic beverages. This is also confirmed by three people who were riding with him, whose testimony was completely ignored at the time of the incident.

Such a rude insult to a priest affects us, the faithful, also. Can

it be that such means are used to promote atheistic propaganda? Therefore, we demand that the dishonesty of the VAI and the employees of the psychiatric hospital be investigated, and its consequences rectified by the return of the driver's license. We would like to have an answer as to who was responsible for such blatant misuse of the official power of the VAI and medical officials?

Please reply directly to the Rev. Zdebskis (Šlavantai **Rayon** of Lazdijai).

308 Signatures

Šlavantai
May 19, 1976

Prosecutor's Office, LSSR
Vilnius, Gogolio 4
1976.04.05. No. 2/1541

To: Juozas Zdebskis
Rayon of Lazdijai
Village of Šlavantai

Upon review of the circumstances brought out in your statement, it has been found that on March 10, 1976 you were operating a car while not in a sober state, this being witnessed by a statement of medical examination to determine the degree of intoxication. The statement affirms that in the course of the examination a state of light intoxication was established.

Under the circumstances, you were with good reason fined 30 rubles and suspension of your driver's license for the period of 18 months.

The Prosecutor's Office finds no basis for your protest of the decision of the head of the Department of Interior of the *Rayon* of Lazdijai, concerning your punishment according to the administrative order, for drunken driving.

Prosecutor, Common Care Department
(signed) V. Markevičius

To: Prosecutor General of the USSR, Moscow

Statement

By: Rev. Juozas Zdebskis, son of Vincas
Residing in the *Rayon* of Lazdijai, Lithuanian SSR
Šlavantai

I would like to bring your attention to an arrogant provocation committed against me by organs of the KGB with the help of officials of Automotive Inspection and the Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital.

On March 10 of this year, in my car, a "Žiguli" LLG 77-21, I was driving a sick woman, Zabelė Medonaitė, accompanied by her father, Medonas (They are both my parishioners, and I am a priest of the Catholic Church). Riding with us was Citizen Jonas Stašaitis, residing in Vilnius — Stalininkai, Vilniaus 7.

In Vilnius, about 10 a.m., I was detained by VAI Officer Jurevich, who stated that I am drunk. On the contrary, the priests of my diocese and all my parishioners know that I am a total abstainer. At the psychiatric hospital (vasaros g.) the doctor, without making any blood analysis, even though I repeatedly demanded it, wrote a statement confirming a light degree of intoxication. The results of this dishonest action was a fine of 30 rubles and 18 months suspension of my driver's license. Moreover, the *rayon* newspaper published an article which states that I could not resist the attraction of a drink, thus showing their ill will. At the same time they demeaned the Soviet government and a Soviet newspaper.

Please intervene in this unfortunately widely known matter, and reinstate my drivers license, which is vitally necessary for my daily work as a priest.

April 23, 1976

The Rev. J. Zdebskis

To: The Council of Ministers of the L.S.S.R.
Copy to: His Excellency Bishop L. Povilonis

On March 10 of this year in the city of Vilnius, a "Ziguli" automobile driven by the Rev. J. Zdebskis was detained. An auto inspector in a car, having charged the driver with drunken driving, took him to the Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital.

In the hospital, the previously prepared first act of a charade was enacted; that is, the degree of drunkenness was determined from the pulse rate. The second act of this charade was brought to a close with the confiscation of Father Juozas' driver's license.

The third act of the play will begin in 18 months, when Father Juozas tries to repossess his driver's license.

I would like to say a few words about the Rev. Juozas Zdebskis, whose name is well known not only to Christians but also to atheists. I had the opportunity to visit Šlavantai and to speak with the faithful of this parish. Everyone spoke respectfully of their pastor. Like a real father, he never sends away anyone who turns to him. Even that unhappy morning of March 10, he suffered while fulfilling the commandment of love of neighbor, driving to Vilnius his parishioner, an invalid. His whole life is a garland of struggle for the Christian ideal, and of good works. I have no wish to dwell too long on this question. In short: he is loved by the faithful, and condemned and slandered by the atheists.

I would like to bring to your attention the illogic of the perpetrators of this spectacle. The trip from Šlavantai to Vilnius takes at least three hours. It seems like a fairy tale: "He got up and got drunk". But this matter concerns a man whom no one had ever seen drunk. At the time of detention, there were witnesses who confirmed that Father Juozas had not even seen whiskey either the previous evening, nor in the morning throughout the trip.

This version cannot be believed by anybody. It is not even believed by the perpetrators of the spectacle; otherwise how can one explain the refusal to take a blood sample for analysis?

Was it not possible to think up something more clever to slander a priest? There are so many spectacles going on here that it would be impossible to record them all even on the hide of an ox . . .

On Christmas Eve, Christmas trees are decorated. On Christmas Eve Lithuanians, eating the blessed wafers of Christmas Eve by the decorated tree, forget injuries done to one another. Christmas Dinner is a feast of family reconciliation. Take a walk that evening in the streets of the city and you will see in almost every apartment a decorated tree. Everything seems simple and beautiful; only I don't understand why Lithuanians are forced to obtain Christmas trees in various illegal ways. As if to mock the faithful, Christmas trees appear at the stalls only when they are no longer necessary — after Christmas.

I do not understand why this annually repeated spectacle is necessary, especially when one can see a beautifully prepared Christmas program on television, broadcast from peoples' Poland. Our "scientific viewpoint" is afraid of a Christmas tree light lit a few days earlier.

Again: What is the contribution to atheism by the frequent destruction of the Hill of Crosses? Most likely, this explains their mission since no one ever heard of the atheists destroying the image of the devil. On the contrary, this form of folk art is especially respected by the atheists.

Do not deceive yourselves — baubles and winging crows which were hung on the cupolas of the Garrison Church of Kaunas during a common spectacle will never represent the earth and its satellites, but only atheist hatred of the faithful.

"The Church sincerely acknowledges that all people, believing and non-believing, must join in the creation of this world, in which they all must live together, and this is really impossible without a sincere and intelligent dialogue" (Decrees of Vatican II).

I wish this admonition were heard by everyone, since in the loam cultivated "scientifically" for many years the weeds of evil are not diminishing but increasing. Their fruits — drunkenness, adultery, divorce, venereal diseases, insane asylums, juvenile reformatories, prisons — attack like a fungus the foundations of the nation. Even the murder of unborn infants has become an integral part of family planning.

Let us look at life with open eyes and we will see that where there are no permanent values only street noises, the clatter of looms and lowing of cattle—man becomes empty, incapable of any noble endeavor.

Father Zdebskis fighting for the Christian ideal, radiating goodness, has suffered much already. The injuries inflicted on him are a new wound on the soul of believers.

I ask the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian S.S.R. to issue directions to the concerned agencies to restrain the perpetrators of the spectacles.

Kaunas
April 1976

Vytautas Vaičiūnas

(The letter is condensed — Editor).

THE MURDER OF STASĖ LUKŠAITĖ

Another Victim Claimed by the Grave . . .

Early in the morning of October 30, 1975, while it was still dark, near the ferry to Aleksotas in Kaunas, a killer lurked, impatient to fulfill his mission . . .

(Miss) Stasė Lukšaitė came down the wooden steps on the Aleksotas hillside on her way to church. The killer, waiting for a convenient moment when no one was around, fell upon his victim like a hungry wild beast. . . He threw her down, cruelly wounded her, and ran away, leaving his half-dead victim lying in a pool of blood near the stairs . . .

She was taken to the hospital where an attempt was made to save her life. However, because she was wounded too severely and had lost so much blood (There was hardly any part of her body not wounded, especially the head.), her noble soul departed on November 5 . . . She was received by Him, Whom she faithfully served all her life.

She was buried on November 7 in the Viduklė cemetery.

Her remains were accompanied to the place of eternal rest by many people and a crowd of small children with flowers in their hands. They brought flowers for her who loved them very much and taught them.

Stasė Lukšaitė was born on March 17, 1917, in the village of Graužai, Province of Viduklė. In her childhood she belonged to religious organizations as an *angelaiti*, and later as a *pavasarininke*). Feeling a call to devote her life to the service of God, she joined the Sacred Heart Sisters. Recently, she worked in a kindergarten and prepared children for First Holy Communion. Many of the faithful think that the preparation of children for their first confession was the main motive for the murder of Miss Lukšaitė.

Even while dying Miss Lukšaitė remained faithful to the Holy Gospel. Regaining consciousness before death, she said she forgave her murderer in the light-colored overcoat.

Those who try to hide murderers stated to the dead woman's sister, called for interrogation, that "this was an unfortunate incident, since the victim slipped while climbing the stairs and injured herself. To explain this event as "slipping" shows that it is essential

to mask the murderers with lies so that they will be bold enough to carry on their deeds when they are needed again.

Such murderers are spawned by the indifferent, and those who themselves trample truth and love, and are determined to destroy faith, and to turn our previously sacred homeland into a den of murderers and thieves . . .

And yet.

Not everything perished in the dark.
The heart welled up with warm blood
And never learned to obey force.
Mortuos voco! — I call upon the dead!

(Mykolaitis-Putinas)

The nation will not be calmed! In the ranks of today's young people there will be found those who will not be afraid of insane asylums, cold damp prison cells, barbed wire fences nor murder. Every drop of blood poured out by the innocent victims killed will be that seed blessed by God, from which the shoots of a new young generation will sprout forth. They will bring forth abundant shoots, blossom and produce new fruit for Church and nation!

Those who have died for the truth, for the love of Christ and His Church, will swell the ranks of millions of unknown martyrs and will adorn the Church and enrich the history of the nation.

At the graves of the dead will the nation's children meet,
And thoughtful, they will silently bow their heads
Here the cemetery trees will ever rustle and whisper
The *Angelus*.

The flowers will pray: "Our Father. . ."
And the birds in the boughs of the trees
From early morning on will sing "Eternal rest. . ."
While the souls of the fallen will rise to the Lord, in eternity . . .

NIJOLE SADŪNAITĖ IN PRISON CAMP

(Excerpts from her letters)

" . . . I am grateful to those through whose efforts I find myself here. I learned much and I experienced much and all this has been useful. After all, the good God. knows best what I need" . . .

"In six days it will be half a year since they took me from Vilnius, but it all seems such a short time ago, as if it were yesterday. And everything remains before my eyes — my "honor" guard, sharers of my fate, of whom there were many (they were all criminals, I was the only political prisoner), the last farewell look at the city, or rather at the train station, and the whole "romance" of the journey, which is indescribable — it must be experienced in order to feel life and to understand the necessity and value of love. I have the possibility of living through this romance a second time— when they take me into exile. And you can only envy me for this, although that is not necessary—all this is not for people in your physical condition.

"And how good it is that the small boat of our life is steered by the hand of a good Father. When He is at the wheel—nothing is frightening. Then, no matter how hard life becomes, you will know how to fight and to love. And I can say that the year 1975 has flown by like the wink of an eye, but it has been my joy. I thank the Good God for it."

"There is not much dust in our work area, although the material from which we sew gloves gives forth fibre glass dust. The work is tiring in its monotony, and when the frequent mechanical breakdowns are added, it requires patience. The mechanic does not come every day, often we have to wait until they are repaired, but our quota does not wait. . . ." (70 pairs of gloves per day have to be sewn.)

"On March 3, I returned from the hospital. At last it looks as though I will be up and about. Your diagnosis was most accurate—acute exhaustion.

"My "vacation" lasted for some time. I started it on October 18, worked only 6 days in November, spent December in the hospital and only at the end of the month was I able to sew for four days. January I divided in half—one half I worked, the other half I did not. February was spent in the hospital; so were the first three days of

March. Now I sew slowly, with pauses; when I feel weak I go outside into the yard to enjoy the fresh air and the sun. I fulfill my quota because we work only one shift. I can start sewing at 6 a.m. and I stop at 10 p.m. So, for the time being everything is going splendidly. Everyone loves me and I try to respond in kind. I am happy and satisfied."

"There are many old women as well as sick women here, so I am glad I was brought here according to my calling — to nurse and to love. And even though I miss you all very much, it will be difficult to leave here; I will be sorry to leave people who have become very close and dear to me. But then the good God cares best for us . . ."

"I receive letters not only from acquaintances, but also from those whom I have never met. The desire of people to help in any way they can, touches me so. How much sensitivity and sincerity there is in their hearts. How much joy this gives, lifts one up and encourages one to be better, to be worthy of this great love."

"Ten girls from Kaunas write: 'We are with you and intercede for you with God. Don't give up! Everything earthly can be borne by people of great spirit. Best wishes from the nation!' "

In spite of the harshest living conditions in the prison camp, the letters of Nijolė are full of good spirits, brimming with love and with the greatest concern for her relatives and everyone else. She never complains, — on the contrary — she rejoices in everything sent to her by the good God.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Vilnius. On February 15, 1976 there were special services in many of the churches of the archdiocese of Vilnius for Bishop J. Steponavičius in remembrance of his name day (February 16) and the 16th anniversary of his exile.

Vilnius. In May, 1976, a delegation of priests from the Soviet Union, organized by the KGB, visited the U.S.A. Taking part were priests from Lithuania: The Rev. Stanislovas Lydys, Pastor of the

Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, in Vilnius, and the Chancellor of the Diocese of Panevėžys, The Rev. Vladas Rabašauskas. What mission they had to accomplish could best be judged by Lithuanians abroad.

Vilnius. On May 5, 1976 at about 10:30 p.m. (Mrs.) Jadvyga Petkevičienė, (residing in Šiauliai, Lenino 42-1) a nurse at the Šiauliai Maternity Home, was detained aboard the Kaliningrad-Moscow train in the Vilnius railroad station. The arrest was supervised by Major of Security J. Markevičius. Mrs. Petkevičienė was taken from the train to the Vilnius Department of Transport Militia. In the presence of two members of Security and Inspector of the Militia Children's Room, Angelė Purickienė, a minute personal search was made. According to the statement of Major Markevičius, the purpose of the search was to find literature with an anti-Soviet content, items and documents necessary for a case. Inspector Purickienė stripped the detained woman in the presence of two invited witnesses, G. Sklerova and A. Lozenko, and thoroughly checked her clothing, her shoes, looked even at the soles of her feet, but found nothing "anti-Soviet". Major Markevičius interrogated Mrs. Petkevičienė about her reason for going to Moscow, reproved her for her presence at the Vilnius Supreme Court during the days of Sergei Kovalev's trial, for her meetings with the people from Moscow, etc. He also expressed his disapproval of the detained woman's husband, Jonas Petkevičius, a former political prisoner, for his past and his present activities.

After the search, Mrs. Petkevičienė took the next train to Moscow, where enroute she was constantly accompanied by "guardian angels".

In Moscow, spies lurked around the apartment where she stayed, and detectives hung about. The next day, on her way home, she was again "tailed" all the way.

The Petkevičius apartment in Šiauliai as well as their workplaces are constant objects of Security "concern".

Vilnius. At an open Party meeting of the Zoology and Parasitology Institute, which took place on February 28, 1975, Director of the Institute P. Zajančauskas, in speaking about ideological work, noted that during the past year the conditions had worsened significantly. The name of Junior Scientific Assistant Alfonsas Juška was mentioned in the press in connection with anti-Soviet activity.

It seemed a question whether such a worker could remain to work in the Institute in the future.

On April 10, 1975, the Scientific Council of the Institute deliberated the question of re-appointing A. Juška as Junior Scientific Assistant for a new term. After Scientific Secretary Šemetulskis named the documents presented by Juška, Party member J. Kazlauskas asked: "What about the matter previously discussed concerning Juška?" The director replied: "Yes, comrade Juška had made a mistake. We cannot ignore this. It is our duty to educate comrade Juška. I move that the scientific council not reelect Juška as a Junior Scientific Assistant, but to put him to work as an engineer".

Kazlauskas, as well as the director, did not speak out clearly but only in vague references.

In his new duties, Juška's monthly salary was lowered.

The director of the laboratory, A. Skirkevičius, began in various ways to obstruct A. Juška from completing his planned scientific works, from publishing scientific articles in the press, etc.

Juška had read a paper concerning his scientific accomplishments at the All-Union Scientific Conference which took place in Vilnius June 25-27, 1975 and was very well received. However, Scientific Secretary Šemetulskis pays no attention, and will not let him publish the article until Skirkevičius gives his consent. This the latter refuses to do. A. Juška approached the director more than once but the director avoids speaking about this question and keeps putting off a decision.

At the present time, Juška is being assigned work below his qualifications, work properly belonging to a laboratory assistant.

Vilnius. On November 28, 1975, the Vilnius soccer team "Žalgiris" played the last game of the season at home.

After a successful game (3:0 in favor of "Žalgiris") the crowd of thousands of spectators sang "A fortress on a mountain", "An oak tree grew in the forest" and other Lithuanian songs, and in various ways expressed their enthusiasm. In order to curb this, the militia and members of Security in plain clothes began to use force. However this merely incited the crowd, which spontaneously organized, and about 2,000 people, mainly youths, paraded twice around the stadium whence they turned to the center of the city cheering "Žal-gi-ris!" and singing Lithuanian songs. Even though the pretext for this parade was the inspiring victory of "Žalgiris",

it later became a kind of protest and a demonstration of the mood of the Lithuanian youth of Vilnius.

The parade, after continuing along the main street of the city (an attempt to disperse it near the Dzeržinski bridge failed.), and circling the block where the building of the Security Committee was located, and having "honored" with whistles and shouts the Security agents hiding behind the draperies, it was dispersed by large militia and security forces and special army forces of the Vilnius garrison. Some participants in the parade were arrested.

Vilnius. In the early part of May of this year, Representative Daunoras of the Administration of the Professional Union House of Vilnius, called the representatives of the Folk Song Club (Miss) Aldona Katkauskaitė and (Mrs.) Virginija Ašmantienė, and demanded that they write an article for the press of the republic, denying an announcement by Vatican Radio concerning persecution of the Folk Song Club. Daunoras promised to get costumes for the club, to allow the members to take part in the Baltic Folk Ensembles Festival in Vilnius, etc. The members of the club refused to write the article. It is interesting that after the above mentioned announcement by the Vatican, the "Evening News" and the radio made announcements about the club activities and presentations every weekend, even though none were organized. This ruse was discontinued when people who came to the non-existent programs in response to the notices in the newspapers, began to display their indignation.

Kaunas. During the Easter vacation of 1976 many of the seminarians did not have any peace. Security agents questioned them about where they got the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and *The Dawn*. They were also questioned how they commemorated the 16th of February. The seminarians were interrogated about some of the priests whom the Security agents considered reactionary; for instance the Rev. K. Žilius, the Rev. V. Cukuras and others. After the conversations, the seminarians were forced to promise that they would keep quiet about their meeting with the Security people.

Kaunas. On April 16, 1976, the Director of the Kaunas Industrial Training Union for the Blind, Antanas Ruginis, and Director of the Inter-District House of Culture of the Kaunas Association of the Blind, Smalogys, called workers and members of the amateur cultural

group, Antanas Jonušas and Feliksas Sinkevičius and asked them:

"How much does the priest pay you for playing in church at Easter? We will pay you an equal amount if you do not go there to play."

"I never lie to my friends. Therefore, if I promised, then I will go to play there," answered Jonušas firmly.

Sinkevičius added an explanation:

"I go to church to sing every Sunday, so I'll be sure to go there to play on Easter."

The director tried threatening to take away their horns, but since there is a shortage of musicians in the amateur ensemble, he was afraid to decrease their number.

On April 19, the conductors of the orchestra were summoned by Director A. Ruginis. The director berated them for not taking care of their collective, and for not warning orchestra members that they were not to play in church. A list of ten people was read, and every one marked "delinquent" had to go explain himself.

The Director of the Musical Collective J. Kairys explained that playing music in church is not allowed to anybody. In his opinion, thought should be given to the following year, so that the misdemeanor would not repeat itself. The best way would be to take the musicians to another district for their concerts.

The members of the orchestra were very insulted by the interference in their leisure time on their days off.

Kaunas. Vidmantas Povilionis, returning from the Mordovian Prison Camp on March 27, 1975, finally found work after a long search. On September 13, 1975, he started work as a laborer at the Kaunas union of bread baking institutions.

After a few months, he was promoted to the duties of engineer-technologist, and later he worked as the Union's senior engineer — technologist of quality control, for all purposes performing the duties of the head of technical control.

On March 26, 1976, Povilionis was summoned by the director general of the factory, who announced that certain officials were demanding that Povilionis be relieved of his duties, as one who has no right to work with people, that is, to be in a position of leadership. (A previous entry in his work booklet: "Released from work V SSP MI Lithuanian subsidiary, per letter from the KGB).

In this way, Povilionis after six months again became unemployed.

Kaunas. On May 4, 1976, a search was made at the home of sculptor Rimantas Šulskis, residing in Kaunas, V. Kuzmos g. No. 29a-2. The search was headed by Capt. Markevičius. The Security agents searched for the hiding place of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and for other anti-Soviet literature. In the course of the search, Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* was found.

Rimantas Šulskis, born in 1943, is a member of the Union of Young Artists of Lithuania.

Kaunas. On April 9, 1976, at the Security Committee offices in Kaunas, books seized in a search on November 26, 1974, were returned to (Miss) M. Gavėnaitė. Some of the books were not returned by Security. When asked to return *The Great Crossroads* by B. Brazdžionis (a typed copy) and the unfinished, typewritten *Problems of the Lithuanian Character* the Security agent replied:

"These are political; therefore, we will not return them!"

The Security agents for reasons of their own were especially polite when dealing with Miss Gavėnaitė.

Kaunas. Henrikas Klimašauskas is presently being held not at the Kaunas but at the Vilnius Security facilities.

Tauragė. Montvila, operator of a newspaper stand in the city, sold a few photo-copied Christmas cards before Christmas 1975. For this he was immediately discharged.

Telšiai. On January 15, 1976 (U.S.S.R. Deputy for Religious Affairs) Murnikov from Moscow and Deputy (for Religious Affairs in Lithuania) K. Tumėnas, came to the conference of the deans of the Diocese of Telšiai.

Tumėnas expressed his concern over the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* which is increasing tension between the state and the Church. If there were no *Chronicle*, conditions would be much more lenient. The publishers of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* are mistaken in thinking anything can be gained with the help of the *Chronicle*. They will not let anything be gained by it, therefore he urged the deans not to contribute to its publication. The deputy demanded that the publication of the *Chronicle* cease.

The deans, on the other hand, insisted that the publication of the *Chronicle* does not depend on them, but not one of them

promised the deputy to act against the *Chronicle*. (At least this much was good.)

Among other topics, the catechization of children came up. In the opinion of the deputy, there would be no concessions in this matter. Priests have the right only to examine the children's knowledge, but under no circumstances to teach them. The question of religious literature will be taken under advisement. New Missals and breviaries have been received.

Tumėnas was proud of the fact that the care of the needs of the sick in the hospitals is now guaranteed.

"There is the greatest freedom of conscience here. If anyone should interfere, give me a call," stated K. Tumėnas.

Mažeikiai. The government officials of Mažeikiai do not cease persecuting an old woman, (Mrs.) Gelumauskienė, because she had erected a cross next to her house (Aušros g. 7) (see *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, Nos. 19, 21).

When (Mrs.) Gelumauskienė refused to pay for the destruction of the cross, the Bureau of Work Performance, *Rayon* of Mažeikiai took Gelumauskienė to the people's court.

To the People's Court, *Rayon* of Mažeikiai

Plaintiff: Bureau of Work Performance, *Rayon* of Mažeikiai

Defendant: Gelumauskienė, Emilija, Juozo.

Desired settlement: 50 rubles

Statement of the Plaintiff

In accordance with Decision No. 180 of the Executive Committee of the Council of Deputies of the Workers of the *Rayon* of Mažeikiai, the Bureau of Work Performance of the *Rayon* of Mažeikiai on December 3, 1975 forcibly wrecked a constructed object built without a permit by Citizen Gelumauskienė, Emilija, next to her house, Aušros g. 7, and presented to her bill No. 111432 in the sum of 50 rubles, for the finished work (the finished work — destruction of the cross). However, Citizen Gelumauskienė did not pay. We ask the People's Court of Mažeikiai to find in favor of the Bureau of Work Performance and to order defendant Gelumauskienė to pay 50 rubles for the work and court costs.

Signed: Head of the Bureau of Work Performance,
Rayon of Mažeikiai, Makota
Bookkeeper, BWP (signature illegible)

"The delinquent" E. Gelumbauskienė was taken to court three times: The first hearing took place on March 11. The old woman refused to pay since she had not asked that the cross be torn down. The case was postponed until March 23. Mrs. Gelumbauskienė was told to produce witnesses that a cross and not some other structure was demolished.

On April 22, Mrs. Gelumbauskienė was not allowed to speak in court.

"Who tore down Gelumbauskienė's cross?" the representative of the Bureau of Work Performance was asked.

"To pull down the cross we had to take people from the street, since our workers would not do it," explained the representative of the BWP.

It was true. Of approximately 400 workers employed at the Work Bureau not one agreed to pull down the cross. Drunks from the street had to be hired to do it.

"So, how much did you pay for the wrecking of the cross?" asked the judge again.

"We paid 50 rubles," replied the representative of the BWP.

"How long did the work take?"

"15 to 20 minutes," broke in Mrs. Gelumbauskienė, "To cut down the cross, to tear up the little fence, to chop up the remaining upright does not take much time."

Mrs. Gelumbauskienė was told to keep quiet.

"You pay well for the destruction of a cross — in 15 minutes 50 rubles can be earned. I'll have to come to help you," spoke the judge. "And if they had asked for 100 rubles for the cutting down of the cross, what would you have done?"

"We would have paid even 100 rubles."

It is not yet clear what sum Mrs. Gelumbauskienė will have to pay for the desecration of the cross.

Palanga. Tourists from abroad, visiting Palanga, missed a masterpiece of art which had been located in Tiškevičius Park; a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

We would like to tell the faithful about the fate of this monument created by a French artist.

For many years, the extraordinarily beautiful statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus used to attract large crowds of people. Some knelt to pray, some stood deep in thought, others decorated the statue with flowers. Only the old atheists of Palanga could not pass it by in peace.

When the Red Army came, the time of destruction and wrecking of monuments began. The soldiers, after shooting up the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes on the Mount Birutė, conspired also against the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Once a few Red Army soldiers fired a burst from a machine gun at this work of art. Even though the bullets damaged it somewhat, the statue withstood the attack.

The atheists continually littered the surroundings, trampled and destroyed the flowers, but in the morning the faithful put everything back in order and again planted flowers. Thus for some time a silent battle between the atheists and the believers went on.

One night in 1948 the statue disappeared from the park in Palanga. The conspiracy was organized by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of Palanga Vilnius, assisted by his co-workers Aksijonaitis and Kuršys. They hooked up a tractor to the statue pulled it down and broke it up with hammers. Then they took it to a scrap yard. Even today there are many witnesses surviving who remember these terrible events. Some cried at the time; others reproached the officials: "Could it be that you don't even fear the wrath of God?"

After some time, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, Executioner Vilnius either bothered by his conscience or having lost his mind, hanged himself. Akcijonaitis was killed by the partisans, and the third executioner — Kuršys — is still alive.

Viekšniai. On December 5, 1975, hoodlums using rocks broke the windows of the Viekšniai church. One of the rocks landed on the main altar in front of the tabernacle. The old invalid priest took the rock from the altar and said:

"I will take this rock as a souvenir. It is worth noting, because this is the fruit of an atheistic upbringing."

In the cemeteries of Mažeikiai and Viekšniai, the monuments have been damaged and the corpses have been taken from the crosses. Why does the government not notice the hoodlums, while it persecutes children who attend church?

Ceikiniai. At the beginning of 1976, the people of the village of Didžiasalis, of the Parish of Ceikiniai, wrote to their pastor The Rev. K. Garuckas asking the pastor to call on them. (Each family wrote individually). Father Garuckas fulfilled the parishioners' wish on February 25.

The next day, Chairman Sorokin of the Council of Workers'

Deputies of the *Rayon* of Ceikiniai, and the Vice Chairman A. Vaitonis, of the Executive Committee of the Ignalina *Rayon*, warned Father Garuckas by telephone to discontinue these visits.

On March 3, Father Garuckas was summoned before the Executive Committee of Ignalina, where A. Vaitonis and Chief of State Security Paškevičius, of the *Rayon* of Ignalina, repeated the same order: "You may not make parish visitations." When the pastor repeatedly asked to be shown the law forbidding these visits, Vaitonis showed him some piece of writing, but would not let the priest read it properly, or copy it.

For visiting parishioners, the chief of security threatened to forbid Father Garuckas to perform his priestly duties for three years; this to be done not by him but through the deputy of the Council for Religious Affairs, K. Tumėnas.

In the morning, before work, Pranas Rakštelis using his own car, drove Father Garuckas to the Village of Didžiasalis, and in the evening when he had finished his work at the collective farm, he drove the pastor home. Rakštelis is a believer but because of circumstances and lack of principles he had joined the Communist Party. For driving the priest, the chairman of the collective farm "New Life" promised to punish him and to throw him out of the Party.

On March 9, 1976, Father Garuckas sent a statement about this matter to the Deputy for Religious Affairs, K. Tumėnas of the Lithuanian Council of Ministers, with copies to the chancery of the Lithuanian dioceses.

Biržai.

TO: Minister of Health Care
Statement of citizen Antanina Norkutė,
residing in Biržai, Basanavičiaus 6

On December 28, 1975, I suddenly fell sick and found myself in the 1st Internal Diseases Department of the Biržai Hospital. On January 3, 1976, Dr. Janulis came into my ward and said, "Since you called a priest yesterday, Chief Physician Dauguvietis has ordered you signed out of the hospital." This was heard by the women who were in the ward with me. During the night my condition deteriorated.

I found myself at home. Treatment was discontinued. My health became worse. There was no help. This shook me. After all, even the

worst criminals, when they are sick, receive medical help. What have I done? I myself worked for many years in medical offices. Now I receive a pension. And now there are doctors who disregard human rights and even dare to play with one's life. Chief Physician Dauguvietis did not even ask me whether I had really called for a priest before he threw me out of the hospital. As a matter of fact, I did not ask any priest to come. But supposing some one asks a priest to come, is that a crime?

Such conduct on the part of the doctor is not an accident. It is characteristic of the general personality and activity of Dauguvietis. The sick suffer because of this, they are indignant, and if they are silent it is because they are afraid of even sadder consequences. Some do not know what to do or where to turn.

It is hard to imagine what threatens the medical workers if they would dare to let in a priest to see the sick or even the dying. Much unpleasantness awaits those sick who dare to ask for religious care. That this is the truth few arguments are needed. I am a living example. Everyone understands that this is done in fulfillment of atheistic directives. But is the hospital an office for re-education for sick and dying people? Do the other offices know what goes on in the Biržai hospital? Why are some people allowed to do as they please?

I am writing this statement in order to explain why I sent you a telegram on January 3, 1976, to find a cause for my ill treatment. I understand that you have received the telegram, because on January 4, 1976, I was visited by a physician, and my treatment was continued at home. I thank you for the help given me, I doubt that I would have stayed alive without it. I hope that the other existing evils in the hospital will also be taken care of.

Biržai
January 12, 1976

Gratefully yours,
A. Norkutė

Gulbinėnai. The Control 'Commission of the *Rayon* of Pasvalys, for the Observance of the Laws regarding Cult, received tips that the pastor of the religious community of Gulbinėnai, S. Uždavins, ignoring Soviet laws, organized religious instructions for minors. Moreover, minors regularly assist at religious services in the Church at Gubinėnai.

The tips were checked out and found valid.

At a meeting of the *Rayon* Control Commission for Observance of the Cult Laws, after the consideration of the illegal action of the pastor of the religious community of Gulbinėnėi, S. Uždavinyš, it was decided to warn him. (Excerpt from the *rayon* newspaper of Pasvalys, *Work*, May 13, 1976).

Father Uždavinyš was present at the meeting of the above mentioned commission on May 6, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. After the meeting he was summoned by Security Agent Agent Ivaškevičius, who promised the priest a better parish and a promotion if he would be loyal to the Soviet government.

Šiauliai. On March 27, 1976, the church of Aukštelkė was broken into again. The intruders, it appears, were not so much thieves as searchers. They looked over the music sheets in a closet, apparently looking for forbidden literature.

Kybartai. At the beginning of May, 1976, unknown persons broke into the Kybartai rectory, which was being renovated, and examined all the church records. Without doubt, the intruders were not ordinary thieves. They were concerned not with money, but with literature.

Varnavo. (White Russian SSR). Local Lithuanians in the Village of Smilgiai, *Rayon* of Varanavo, were visited by ethnographers from Vilnius. The local people enthusiastically received Lithuanian booklets and listened to the songs and tales. Suddenly, the *rayon* deputy appeared, and demanded the passports and names of the ethnographers, ordering them to leave immediately and to cease encouraging nationalistic inclinations, or else they would all be arrested. At the same time, District Chairman Cironka, assaulted two girls who were taking pictures of old homesteads, forcibly seized their cameras, and exposed the film.

Intimidated, the local Lithuanians did not dare to defend the ethnographers. When the militia broke in, one of the women even knelt and begged that no fine be imposed for receiving the guests.

After the officials left, the hosts described the arrogance of the local government, whose aim is to break all ties with Lithuania.

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

Vilnius. The students of the Grade VII d of the High School No. 41 in Vilnius decided to commemorate the 16th of February (Lithuanian Independence Day — Tr. Note). It was suggested that the students come to school that day wearing traditional Lithuanian ties instead of the pioneer neckties. Some of the students wrote slogans such as "Freedom for Lithuania!" on the houses.

Student A. Nagrockytė told her parents the plans of the class, and they passed all the news on to Security, where they are employed.

On February 17, Security Agent Kazlauskas came to the High School No. 41. Home Room teacher (Mrs.) Nijolė Varnienė of Grade VII d, Nijolė Varnienė, and all the teachers who taught grade VI d that day (Živilė Baltaduonienė, Gražina Kazlauskienė, Janina Petkevičienė, and others) were interrogated. Security was very actively assisted by Principal Vytautas Banevičius and Extra-Curricular Activity Organizer, (Mrs.) Petkevičienė.

At the end of the trimester, during the meeting of the faculty, besides educational matters, this matter was also deliberated. Students Vytautas Jusevičius and Albinas Prakelis were interrogated by the principal himself, in the presence of all the teachers. The conduct mark of the more active students was lowered, and Home Room Teacher (Mrs.) Nijolė Varnienė, received a written reprimand for poorly performed work.

Principal Vytautas Banevičius continues his active cooperation with Security. On April 18 (Easter Day) he organized the Saturday student work force. As far as it is known, all the schools of Vilnius took part in this task on April 17 (Saturday); however, the School No. 41 had to work on Sunday.

The same kind of active cooperation was shown by Extra-Curricular Activities Organizer (Mrs.) Janina Petkevičienė, who took a diary away from the student (Miss) Simonaitytė and gave it to the principal. The latter gave the diary to Security Man Kazlauskas.

The diary made it clear that the girl is a believer. Before interrogating student Simonaitytė, Principal Banevičius ordered her to answer only the truth to his questions, since a believer may not lie. Then he asked such questions as: What church do you attend? What priests have you seen there? Did you take part in a procession? Maybe the priest gives you money? Where did you buy a prayerbook?, etc.

The atmosphere at the High School No. 41 became depressing. The eye of the Security intrudes in the most intimate matters of conscience of teachers and the students.

Kaunas. A. Patackas, a doctoral candidate in mathematics and lecturer at the Agricultural Academy, was recently discharged from work and forced into early retirement for "the observance of religious superstitions".

Kaunas. Chairman Zabulis of the Committee of Higher and Special Intermediate studies ordered that the Saturday student work should be *doue* on Easter Sunday; that is, the 18th of April.

Some of the high schools decided to schedule the student work aid for other days, fearing that the students might not come to work on Easter Day.

At the Agricultural Academy, Easter Sunday was declared a work day to compensate for the Saturday student work aid. Some students in higher grades announced in advance that they would not come to the activities on Sunday. And so it happened. Very few students were present at the Sunday lectures: In the first course of Forestry, only 50% were present, in the mechanization course, five out of seventy-two were present, and in some of the upper course groups only 4 to 5 students (out of 26-27) were present at the activities.

That student youth is not allowed to normally observe Christmas, is already taken for granted in Soviet Lithuania, but that Easter Sunday be made a work day is something new at the Agricultural Academy. The notice that Sunday (April 18) was a work day was signed by the new Dean of the Agricultural Academy Assistant professor Dorman-tas.

Krosna. The principal of the High School of Krosna, Dalius Mockevičius terrorized the girls of the 10th grade before Easter for attending church. He promised to catch those who take part in the Easter procession. Those who will take part in the procession will not be allowed to study anywhere.

Teacher (Mrs.) Navickienė calls those students attending church, cows.

Milašaičiai. (*Rayon* of Raseiniai) In the summer of 1975, a postal worker and her daughter were sorting correspondence at the post office in Milašaičiai. The young girl had with her her prayer book,

which she laid on the windowsill of the post office. At that time, Teacher Ušinskienė entered the post office. Seeing the prayerbook, she started to berate the girl, and became so furious that she (seized) the prayerbook and threw it into the trash basket. Pushing the girl roughly, she ran out of the door.

The girl took the prayerbook out of the waste basket, cleaned it off and kissed it. People who were present in the post office and who saw everything which happened, were incensed. How can Teacher USinskiene teach the children of the believers? Who gave her the right to push the girl around?

Sasnava. (*Rayon* of Kapsukas). The Collective of the High School of Sasnava decided to turn all the students into atheists no matter what.

As Easter Sunday drew near, the teachers, with Principal Juozas Zdanys, cornered the believing students during recess and tried to convince them not to attend church at Easter. Special zeal was shown by these teachers: (Mrs.) Beniulienė, (Mrs.) Žygmantienė and (Mrs.) Scepanskienė. They threatened the students with future unpleasantness, a lowered conduct mark, etc. In spite of this, a large number of student took part in the Easter services, 68 of whom walked in the procession of the Resurrection. This number was noted by the English teacher, (Mrs.) Jenkevičienė, who arrived in an autobus at the church during the time of the procession) and without restraint took out a copybook and wrote something in it, while a photographer who jumped out of the same autobus took pictures of the procession. After Easter, the teachers berated the students: for daring to take part in the services; and threatened them with the lowering of conduct marks.

Teacher (Mrs.) P. Beniulienė thinks she will turn students into atheists by mocking priests, church ceremonies, Christ and the saints. Here are a few of her atheistic methods: "Children, what nonsense is spread by the faith. It says that in heaven the devils heat ovens with kettles of tar and pitch. I wonder where they get the tar up there?" Here the teacher burst into laughter.

The teacher is not satisfied by such mockery repeated in almost every one of her classes. After Easter, she came into class and said: "We will organize a present for the 1st of May, an evening mocking religion. It is most important that there should be plenty to laugh at." Here she read a poem which disgustingly mocks Christ and the saints, laughing loudly after each stanza.

The teacher assigned a student, Juozas Kučinskas, who attends church, to recite this poem at the atheistic evening program. When he steadfastly refused, the teacher was angry: "Look, if that is how it is, you will not see a good mark from me." She carried out her threat immediately. Later, having asked this student to recite his lesson, and after he did well, she announced: "I am giving you only

On April 24, 10th Grade Home Room Teacher (Mrs.) Žygmantienė called student Elvyra Navikaitė to recite. She answered very well. Then the teacher demanded that the girl name all the students who took part in the Easter procession with her but the student refused to betray them. Teacher Žygmantienė gave student E. Navikaitė a "1" for recitation. When the student's mother approached the teacher regarding this matter, the home room teacher replied: "It is necessary for us to do this for atheistic propaganda."

Home room teacher Beniulienė of the Grade VII constantly threatens her students that those who attend church should not even prepare to enter an institution of higher education since her references for them will list them as fanatics, anti-social persons, etc.

A similar reeducation for turning students into atheists in the Sasnava High School is practiced not only by teacher (Mrs.) Beniulienė. Stupid and unconvincing nonsense is constantly told in the above mentioned style to students by the principal, Juozas Zdanys himself, by his assistant Bulota, by teachers Bulotienė, Daugėlienė and Ščepanskienė. After Easter they complained in class: "What a shame you have brought on the school! Ninety students were in church! How shall we explain this to the government of the *rayon* ?"

CORRECTION¹

The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania No. 21 contained news of the closing of the chapel of Kačergiškė, which was not completely correct.

The Rev. L. Savickas, pastor of Paringys, served also the chapel of Kačergiškė. After Father Savickas, the Chancery assigned to the small

¹By the editors of the original

parish of Paringys the Rev. V. Jašukas, who like the priests who were in Paringys before him, was assigned to serve also the chapel at Kačergiškė. Even though Paringys and Kačergiškė are close to each other, the road connecting them is so bad that Father Jašukas did not want to travel it. The believers of the District of Kačergiškė promised to drive the pastor to their chapel by horse and wagon every Sunday; however, Father Jašukas refused. He therefore went to Vilnius to see Deputy for Religious Affairs Rugienis, and announced that he would not serve Kačergiškė. Rugienis was very surprised to hear of the existence of a chapel in Kačergiškė. He had not known of its existence, since after the war, when all churches were being registered, the chapel was not registered and did not have a parish council. This was the reason for the closing of the chapel.

The faithful of the District of Kačergiškė many times approached Vilnius and Moscow in person and in writing without results: Deputy Rugienis did not allow services to be held in the chapel.

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