



**CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
No. 33**

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IN LITHUANIA

No. 33

**A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA No.33
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, 2.4% 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 27, 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.

ecclesiastical forms of administration. In reality, all decisions are made by the state-appointed Deputy for Religious Affairs—an atheist.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translation Editor

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Lithuania..... May 31, 1978

THE NEW CONSTITUTION
DISCRIMINATES AGAINST BELIEVERS

On March 19, 1978, the LSSR Supreme Soviet Presidium issued a decree proclaiming open debate on the new LSSR Draft Constitution. Earlier, when the USSR Draft Constitution was still under consideration, Lithuania's clergy and laity submitted their requests to Moscow. We are reprinting below other statements expressing the will of the believing people of Lithuania, which was completely ignored by Soviet officials.

To: The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR
From: the Priests of the Kaunas Archdiocese, a statement on
the new Draft Constitution.

The very brief time allotted for debate on the new draft Constitution forces us to urgently make several comments on this new

document which is to become the main body of law for many years to come.

Many priests have already presented their requests and comments of the Soviet Union draft. Unfortunately, their requests did not meet with any response. It seems that the voice of Lithuania's believers carries no weight in Moscow and no one sees any need to listen to it. It should be completely different in Lithuania where the great majority are believers and Catholics. We hope that here it will not be a voice crying in the wilderness. That is why we are writing.

In its present form, the new draft Constitution does not meet the needs of the faithful of Lithuania. Most of the articles which concern us directly are worded in an unclear and vague manner and, in fact, differ little from the old, other than in numbering. This version of the current Constitution, if it is not amended, will meet the needs of only a small portion of Lithuania's inhabitants—the atheists.

We therefore wish to point out certain articles which, in our view, must be worded more precisely to avoid painful misunderstandings in the future.

Article 32 states that "Citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are equal before the law, regardless of descent, social or economic position, race or national origin, sex, education, language, relation to religion, type and nature of employment, place of residence and other circumstances."

To date, under the Lithuanian SSR Constitution now in effect, Catholics and believers have been second-class citizens:

1) They could not assume responsible positions in government and education;

2) In daily life and in the press, they have constantly been ridiculed, debased, called "backward", "primitive", "spreaders of superstition" and the like, while, in the meantime, the University of Vilnius, founded in earlier times by the Jesuits, is preparing to celebrate its 400th anniversary;

3) They do not enjoy equal rights with the atheists in the fields of culture and art.

We therefore propose to replace the term "relation to religion," which is meaningless, with "regardless of religious and philosophical differences."

Article 39: "Citizens of the Lithuanian SSR have the right to rest. This right is ensured by the establishment of a workweek not to

exceed 41 hours for blue and white collar workers, by shortening, the workday for certain professions and industries, by shortening night shifts, annual paid vacations, weekly days of rest. . ."

"The state farm determines the work and rest shifts for state farm workers."

Nearly half of all inhabitants live in the Lithuanian countryside. Most of them are state farm workers. They earn their living which is the basis of all spiritual creativity and the impetus to progress. It is no secret that state farm workers work seven days a week in the summer and are completely at the mercy of the whims of state farm officials. There are still not that many good state farms in Lithuania. Thus, state farm workers cannot fulfill their basic needs, as human beings or as believers.

We therefore ask that art. 39 be worded as follows:

"Citizens of the Lithuanian SSR have the right to rest. This right is ensured by the establishment of a workweek not to exceed 41 hours for blue and white collar workers and state farm workers . . ." Completely delete the words: "The state farm determines the work and rest shifts for state farm workers." Otherwise, state farm workers will continue to have no rights. It is unjust and detrimental to exclude state farm workers from the basic law!

Article 50 states: "Citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, i.e., the right to profess any religion whatsoever or not to profess any, practice religious cults or conduct anti-religious propaganda. It is forbidden to stir up discord and hatred in connection with religious beliefs.

"The Church in the Lithuanian SSR is separate from the state and the school from the church."

This article differs from the old Constitution only in the number assigned it! In this instance, the situation of believers is the same as that of state farm workers—they have only duties, but no rights. They are left at the mercy of various types of executive committees.

1) We are not allowed to have religious literature. Not a single catechism has been published in Soviet Lithuania. And the future holds no prospects! Very limited editions of prayerbooks have been published at times, but this in no way fills the needs of believers. We do not have a single Catholic newspaper, magazine, calendar or religious book. The decisions of Vatican II were available only to priests (!), each parish received several copies of the New Testament. Liturgy books, printed on newsprint, are completely

falling apart. In the meantime, atheists publish literature in tens of thousands of copies and have radio and television programs at government expense—in other words, from the money of believers also, for they pay taxes.

2) Many artistic churches (especially in Vilnius) have been closed and converted into concert halls (the Cathedral of Vilnius, the masterpiece of Stuoka Gucevičius), atheist museums (St. Casimir's Church in Vilnius), philharmonic halls (the Church of Mary, Queen of peace, in Klaipėda), or just turned into warehouses. Vilnius, the capital of Catholic Lithuania, has neither a cathedral nor a bishop! This is a mockery of religion, of believers' feelings and, finally, of art itself. And why even mention the need to build new churches in Elektrėnai, N. (aujoji) Akmenė and the new sections of larger cities. For many believers live and work there also.

3) Two bishops—Julijonas Steponavičius and Vincent Sladkevičius—have been exiled from their dioceses for seventeen years and are not allowed to perform their duties, without anyone knowing at whose order, for what and for how long. The lone Kaunas Theological Seminary (the others were closed down in 1946) has a limited enrollment and the bishops are not allowed to use their discretion in choosing candidates to the priesthood. As a result of this arbitrariness on the part of atheists, the number of priest has sharply declined and they are quite advanced in age and are therefore no longer able to properly minister to the faithful (one priest.. sometimes serves two or three parishes).

4) We Catholics are not allowed to contact our fellow countrymen or our brethren in the faith throughout the world, nor are we granted the possibility of exchanging religious information or spiritual values, while the atheists can freely quote in their brochures or propaganda from Vatican publications (often in a biased manner, using quotes out of context), the works of Catholics throughout the world and those of Lithuanian emigrants.

5) It is forbidden to teach children religion even in private. For doing so, priests are punished by imprisonment and monetary fines. The principles of Lenin are stressed everywhere; therefore why are Lenin's decree on religion and the first constitution—which permitted the private learning and teaching of religion—not adhered to. Up to now, the children of believing parents are forcibly rendered Godless in schools, are given only fair deportment grades for attending church, are constantly ridiculed and debased in front of the entire class. *Akiratis (Horizon)* and other atheist

programs mock believers, hold them in contempt and distort historical and scientific truth.

6) Believers are discriminated against in matters of daily existence. For instance the church, pays 25 kopecks per kilowatt of electricity, citizens only 4 kopecks and state farms even less. The faithful therefore cannot always afford to light their churches adequately. And yet believers are workers and state farm workers, who daily toil conscientiously for the state.

Under decree N III of the USSR LKT (People's Council of Commissars) dated February 3, 1938, extremely high insurance premiums are imposed on country churches. The reasoning was that there were no fire companies in the countryside. Life has changed over the past forty years. Now, every state farm, therefore every village, has fire companies and firemen. It should be time to review outdated laws and lighten the heavy premium burden that workers and state farm workers pay for churches.

To date, talk about the equality of atheists and believers has been viewed as a nasty joke.

We therefore ask that, if the new Constitution is to be acceptable to all, the words "practice religious cults or conduct anti-religious propaganda" be replaced by the words "conduct religious and anti-religious propaganda." And replace "it is forbidden to stir up discord and hatred in connection with religious beliefs," which the atheists will again use as a whip against believers, with the words "any religious or philosophical discrimination whatsoever is forbidden by law."

Art. 51: "The family is protected by the state . . ."

Our families, established on Godless foundations, are in serious difficulty. Nearly one third of all marriages entered into every year break up. Unofficial statistics show (for some reason this is not officially publicized) that more unborn infants are murdered every year than are born. During recent years, not only are individual classrooms being closed in villages, not only are middle schools, but even grammar schools—there are no more children!

We therefore ask that all means possible be used to rescue the family. We are convinced that this cannot be achieved without a religious upbringing. The atheist experiment, to use polite terms, has not proved justified. We also ask that the Constitution forbid abortion. Abortion is forbidden in West Germany, Rumania, Israel. Why can't we do likewise? Shame on the society or the state that cannot protect its still unborn citizens. As long as unborn infants are

being murdered, talk about culture will be mere soap bubbles.

Article 56: "Citizens of the Lithuanian SSR have the right to bring charges against the actions of officials, state or community bodies. Charges must be considered on the basis of the procedure and terms set by law."

Unfortunately, the complaints of believers are nearly never acknowledged or are given an oral reply by the Religious Affairs Commissioner: "Slander." In the event of a conflict, all government bodies uphold the atheist side. According to a prevailing unwritten law, a priest or believer cannot win against government officials or atheists. This article must therefore be worded precisely and any customs on this matter eliminated.

Article 108 is not sufficiently clear. Paragraph 4 states that the Supreme Soviet Presidium supervises enforcement of the Lithuanian SSR Constitution. A separate body is needed authoritatively to interpret the Constitution itself. The Supreme Soviet Presidium cannot do this because it promulgates laws which contradict the letter and the spirit of the Constitution (for instance, the August 28, 1976 Decree of the Lithuanian SSR Supreme Soviet Presidium).

We ask you to consider our remarks and make the indicated changes in the new Draft Constitution.

Kaunas, Chancery Office 4/10/78.

Signed by the following priests (some, because of technical difficulties, were not apprised of this draft):

A. Svarinskas, L. Kalinauskas, K. Daknevičius, L. Jagminas, A. Jokūbauskas, S. Dobrovolskis, A. Imbras, V. Brusokas, J. Birbilas, S. Pilka, J. Užsienis, V. Pešliakas, E. Semaška, J. Vaičeliūnas, P. Liubonas, A. Perminas, J. Voveris, K. Valančius, P. Meilus, G. Dunda, A. Danyla, P. Matulaitis, J. Vaicekauskas, J. Babonas, J. Dobilaitis, G. Gudanavičius, Bishop J. Steponavičius, P. Lažinskas, L. Vaičiulionis, Z. Grinevičius, V. Ramanauskas, J. Povilaitis, P. Ščepavičius, V. Polikaitis, J. Survila, R. Mizaras, J. Augustauskas, P. Bubnys, A. Kazlauskas, M. Buožius, V. Šauklys, A. Močius, P. Bastys, P. Tuminas, J. Fabijanskas, V. Grinevičius, J. Indriūnas, A. Graužinis, I. Butkus, Canon J. Želvys, A. Zaikauskas, R. Liukas, A. Lapė, K. Statkevičius, J. Račaitis, L. Čechavičius.

We, the priests of the Telšiai diocese, having read the statement

of the priest of the Kaunas Archdiocese on changes to the new Draft Constitution, fully concur:

(There follows the text signed by the priests of the Kaunas archdiocese).

Signed by the following priests:

V. Stirbys, J. Budrikis, J. Miškinis, J. Alšauskas, P. Stukas, P. Jasa, L. Serapinas, F. Žilys, A. Baškys, J. Maželis, J. Petrauskas, J. Bačinskas, A. Alminas, B. Racevičius, K. Viršila, J. Širvaitis, D. Bivainis, V. Šlevas, V. Pošėla, V. Vėlavičius.

Due to lack of time, not all priests were apprised of this text.

STATEMENT BY THE BELIEVERS OF LITHUANIA

After studying the draft of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR submitted to public debate, we, the undersigned religious believers of Lithuania, propose the following:

1) That equal rights be specifically guaranteed for believers and non-believers. To date, such equality is not yet practiced in Lithuania: Believers are not allowed to work as teachers, in management positions or other responsible positions. The new Constitution must guarantee absolute equality—the law must forbid dismissal from work for religious beliefs.

2) To guarantee the equality of believers and non-believers, freedom of religious press is necessary. When only freedom of atheist propaganda exists, the rights of believers are often violated, slandered and insulted in the press; the believers are called ignorant. Without a religious press, there is no possibility of replying to unjust slanders and insults. The Soviet press has never yet criticized the violation of laws as they apply to believers. As a result, Soviet citizens—believers—are forced to turn to international organizations, human rights defense committees and the like.

3) The Declaration of Human Rights stresses the rights of parents to raise their children according to their own philosophy, and to teach them in schools according to their religious beliefs. It is therefore necessary to recognize freedom of religious education in the new Constitution.

4) Guarantee the right to life for unborn children. Forbid abortion, for it is a crime against humanity.

Strengthen the durability of families. Allow divorce only in special cases as decided by the Supreme Court. Lithuania's Catholic families endure only because the Church does not allow divorce.

In our view, such measures will enhance the prestige of the USSR in the international arena. It will be a clear proof that the Soviet government is concerned with the equality of rights of all strata of peoples. Complete equality is the foundation for democracy. Granting 'press, work and educational rights to believers will in particular strengthen the democratic prestige of the Soviet state. Because such laws were not adopted in the joint USSR Constitution, their inclusion in the Lithuanian SSR Constitution would be proof to the whole world that the Lithuanian SSR is sovereign in promulgating its laws.

Diocese of Telšiai

April 1978

N.B. Signed by 780 persons, about 1/3 of the signatures legible. Mailed from Plungė 4/11/78 by registered mail, receipt No. 456.

To: The Secretary of the Lithuanian SSR Communist Party and
Chairman of the Constitutional Commission, P.
Griškevičius.

A Statement from: The believers of the Kybartai Parish.

Believers constitute the majority of the Lithuanian nation, therefore, their rights in the new LSSR Constitution cannot be less than those of atheists. Article 50 of the LSSR Draft Constitution makes us, believers, unequal in rights with the atheists and it is, therefore, essential that it be amended. The Catholics of Lithuania would find the following wording of article 50 acceptable:

"Citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, i.e., the right to profess any religion whatsoever or not profess any, practice religious cults or not practice any, conduct religious or atheist propaganda. It is forbidden to stir up discord and hatred in connection with religious beliefs.

"The church and atheist propaganda in the Lithuanian SSR are separate from the state and the school is separate from the church and atheist propaganda. It is forbidden for schools to educate children contrary to their parents' beliefs."

March-April 1978

Signed by 975 believers of Kybartai

The statement was presented to the LSST Central Committee on the morning of April 17.

A similar statement was submitted to the Central Committee by the parishioners of Vištytis.

To: The USSR Supreme Soviet Praesidium

At this time, when the Draft Constitution is being subjected to a nationwide debate and we, the bishops and diocesan administrators of the Lithuanian SSR, receive comments on the Draft Constitution from ordinary believers and priests, the question has been raised that the bishops and administrators present their comments and requests on the Draft. We, the undersigned, are voicing here some thoughts on the matter.

We are intrigued by and optimistic about the USSR Draft Constitution, which guarantees the free development and fulfillment of citizens' personalities, their equality before the law, the expansion of their rights and freedoms, the freedom of conscience, the right to submit suggestions to government bodies, etc. We respect the fact that the draft has been submitted to the nation for deliberation, so that all might voice their views and suggestions to the Constitutional Commission on the desired amendments or additions.

We wish to focus the Constitutional Commission's attention on articles 36, 50 and 52 of the Draft Constitution which, in our opinion, need to be given more concrete stress, which would then ensure fuller freedom and citizen rights to believers.

Regarding article 36:

Religious and philosophical differences are no less essential and deep than racial and national differences; therefore, in order to ensure all citizens conditions of freedom, complete development and equal rights, the wording of the article should include after the words "nations and races" the words "religious and philosophical outlooks." As proven by experience, believers have up to now felt in some places not completely equal in rights, although the freedom of conscience and equal rights of all citizens were guaranteed by the Constitution now in effect.

Once the suggested corrections are made, article 36 would read as follows:

"Soviet citizens of various nations, races, religions and philosophical

outlooks have equal rights.

"The fulfillment of these rights is ensured by the freedoms of nationality, religion and philosophical outlook for all USSR nations, by the policy of complete development and rapprochement, the education of citizens in the spirit of patriotism and socialist internationalism, the possibility to use one's native tongue and the tongues of other USSR nations, the possibility to maintain contact with one's fellow countrymen and those who hold similar views in religion and beliefs throughout the world, the possibility to exchange with them information and spiritual values.

" Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of or direct or indirect privileges for citizens based on their racial, national or philosophical traits, as well as any advocacy of racial, national, religious or philosophical exclusiveness, discord or contempt is punishable by law."

Regarding article 52:

This article, we are convinced, does not sufficiently ensure equality of rights to believers and non-believers. It appears that it reduces religious profession to the practice of religious rites. It writes about the right of non-believers to conduct atheist propaganda, but does not write anything about the right of believers to teach and learn religion. The right of non-believers to atheist propaganda as well as the right of believers to teach and learn religion are in essence the right to information on one's beliefs. It is vital for both believers and non-believers. It must be clearly defined in the Constitution. By professing his religion, every conscientious member of a religious community is also interested in religious learning, in more simple terms, he is interested in acquiring at least basic religious information. But how and where will he be able to acquire such information, if no citizen has the right to provide religious information, to teach religion? Earlier, the decree issued at Lenin's initiative on the separation of Church from state and of school from Church, clearly enunciated this right of believers: "Citizens can teach and learn religion in private." And Lenin's 1918 Constitution clearly defined the equality of believers and non-believers with respect to information on their beliefs: "The freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda is assured all citizens." Such equality of believers and non-believers must be also clearly stated in the new Constitution.

When the 1936 Constitution recognized the freedom of religious

practice for believers and the freedom of atheist propaganda for non-believers, the freedom of atheist propaganda began to dominate our nation's public life, using state means (school, press, radio, etc.); the freedom of religious information, and even then on a limited basis, was allowed only in cult buildings. The situation then developed that religion and professing it became something that citizens needed to be ashamed of in public. This deeply offends the moral feelings of believers and shows the deep discrimination against believers as compared to non-believers.

When the Constitution does not define the right to religious teaching and learning concretely, then, as shown by past experience, this right can be interpreted in various ways: some officials adhere to Lenin's decree and do not interfere with private religious teaching in church, while others consider even private religious instruction a basic violation of the law and impose sanctions. Because of this situation, conscientious believers are distressed because they cannot "teach him who does not know," priests hear on the one hand Christ's command: "Go and teach . . ." and on the other hand, the ban on teaching. And there is a constant conflict of conscience: the scrupulous man agonizes, not knowing how to act in order to keep both God's and the state's law. It is unthinkable that people at the state's helm do not wish to bring everything to bear to find a solution which would help believers avoid a conflict of conscience and officials—misunderstanding. Such a solution would benefit both sides.

In our view, article 52 should be reworded as follows:

"USSR citizens are accorded freedom of conscience; that is the equal right of all citizens to profess any religion whatsoever, to act according to its dictates, to teach and learn one's religion, to seek information on one's religion and that of others, as well as the parallel right not to profess any religion, to inform and gain information on one's atheist beliefs."

This right of information of beliefs must be defined in the Constitution by a clear article, without vague and undefined conditions as "in accordance with the interests of workers and in order to strengthen the socialist order." Such generalized conditions can hide discrimination against rights and legal exclusiveness or privileges for individual groups of citizens.

Article 50:

It speaks of citizens' freedom of speech, press, assembly, mass

meetings, street processions and demonstrations, and could, in our opinion, be amended as follows:

"To gain information on their beliefs and satisfy their individual or community aspirations, all USSR citizens are guaranteed the freedom of speech, press, assembly, mass meetings, street processions and demonstrations. Citizens can be prosecuted for abusing this freedom and directing it against the state interests of all citizens. State officials can be charged for limiting such legal freedom.

"These civil rights are ensured by placing at the disposal of citizens and their organizations community buildings, streets and squares, widespread distribution of information, access to the press, television and radio—without any prejudice and in proportion to the membership of the organization involved."

Bishop J. Matulaitis-Labukas
Apostolic Administrator of the Kaunas Archdiocese and the Vilkaviškis Diocese.

Bishop R. Krikščiūnas,
Apostolic Administrator of the Panevėžys Diocese

Bishop L. Povilonis,
Coadjutor to the Apostolic Administrator of the Kaunas Archdiocese and Vilkaviškis Diocese.

Msgr. Č. Krivaitis,
Administrator of the Vilnius Archdiocese.

Very Rev. J. Andrikonis,
Administrator of the Kaišiadorys Diocese.

Rev. A. Vaičius,
Administrator of the Telšiai Diocese and Klaipėda Prelature.

The Soviet government completely ignored the suggestions of the faithful and adopted the new LSSR Constitution which clearly discriminates against the faithful of Lithuania.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* recalls on this occasion a statement submitted six years ago to Soviet authorities by a Catholic:

"Since the Soviet authorities cannot manage to grant Lithuania's believers full freedom of religion, we therefore ask them to grant Lithuania freedom. Once free, Lithuania will ensure all her citizens the necessary rights."

Is Religious Propaganda Permitted?

"It (religious propaganda — *Chronicle* note) is practiced in our country and this fact cannot be seen only by people who are in advance set against or opposed to our society. Can the religious needs of believers possibly be fulfilled without religious propaganda, can religious rites be practiced? Doesn't the Soviet state, for these very reasons, give religious communities the free use of churches and cult articles, which are the property of all the people? What takes place during services, if not religious propaganda? What in fact are sermons? Why are religious centers in our country given the possibility to publish religious literature, from holy books and periodicals to theological works?

"It is natural and fitting that religious propaganda be practiced within the framework of religious rites. . . because the majority of our nation's inhabitants—non-believing persons—do not feel the need for such propaganda."

— (From "Nauka i religija" 1978, No. 4, p. 13.)

The majority of Lithuania's inhabitants are Catholics and do not feel the need for atheist propaganda; therefore, why is it disseminated by all means possible, even forcibly? Is this, then, equality of believers and atheists before Soviet law?

Where is religious propaganda, if Lithuania's believers do not have even the most rudimentary catechisms, needed to familiarize children with the truths of faith?

TO THE WORLD'S CONSCIENCE

During April 12-14, 1978, a decent Lithuanian and Catholic, Balys Gajauskas, was sentenced in Vilnius to ten years in strict regime labor camps and five years in exile; he was convicted without any foundation, merely for collecting material for the archives on

post-war battles against the occupant; he was in fact sentenced for life, because he had already served 25 years in Soviet labor camps; he was convicted because he loved his Motherland . . .

Tens, maybe hundreds, of thousands of this nation's sons and daughters have already sacrificed their lives or freedom on the altar of the Motherland's freedom. This victim is also not the last and, most likely, only one of a series. The trial of Viktoras Petkus will soon be held in Vilnius! Today, the world knows of every new victim but, before, thousands died in the unequal battle in the forest or were deported in cattle cars to Siberia and no one in the world knew of their sacrifice. Only the enslaved nation remembered them in her songs...

On the occasion of this shameful treatment, we wish to state to our enslavers as well as to the free world that prisons and labor camps will not force the Lithuanian nation, which loves freedom more than life, to capitulate. On the contrary, these sacrifices by our countrymen evoke an even greater determination to fight until Lithuania is free and independent. But, we cannot understand this world's powers, which allow small African nations to achieve self-determination, but us Lithuanians, who have a long and illustrious history, to be enslaved. Why is there such a terrible national discrimination? Why are the Red Brigades permitted to prevail for such a length of time?

We sincerely thank Mr. and Mrs. Liubarskis for engaging a defense lawyer for Balys Gajauskas and Belgian lawyer Van Der Bosh, who was prepared to defend the accused; we thank the great Belgian press which publicized Lithuania's difficult plight as well as all people of good will, who voiced their concern for both the prisoner and Lithuania. May God reward you all. We can only pray for you and we do pray.

We ask all the friends of Balys Gajauskas and Mr. Van Der Bosh, not to spare any efforts in the future to see to it that this case is not forgotten, but constantly and continually to remind the world by all possible means until Balys Gajauskas is freed or is allowed to leave for the West. The more publicity, the greater the possibility that others will remain free.

Bring Lithuania's case before world public opinions!

Suffering and Struggling Lithuania.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE GULAG?

To: The Chief of the USSR Supreme Council on Correctional Agencies (GUIT)

A Statement from: Elena Lapienienė, residing in Vilnius, Dauguviečio 5-11.

My husband Vldas Lapienis, born in 1906, is serving his sentence in Mordovia (Tengushev *Rayon*, Barashev, U4R 385/3-5).

Labor camp authorities have already punished him twice by confining him to a punishment call, and now are threatening to punish him with PKT (prison-type facility) because he supposedly refused to work.

In fact, my husband retired in 1966 and was often sick. One and a half years of imprisonment have completely broken his health. After speaking with my husband for barely several minutes, the camp physician wrote that a "physicians' commission" determined that my husband is capable of performing hard physical work. The camp authorities are forcing him to carry coal, stoke furnaces and perform strenuous work which only a healthy person can handle. Moreover, my husband is being forced to sew gloves, although camp authorities know that he cannot perform such work because of his weak eyesight. When my husband refused to perform work which his health will not permit, the camp authorities began to impose various penalties on him.

Please direct the camp administration to refrain from persecuting my husband with strenuous work and rescind the other penalties: punishment cell, ban on receiving packages this year, on having visitors and on purchasing food products from the camp store.

April 10, 1978

E. Lapienė

A similar statement was addressed to the head of the Medical Administration of the USSR Domestic Affairs Ministry.

At the end of April, (Mrs) Lapienienė travelled to Mordovia to visit her husband. She was allowed a brief visit and permitted to give him some food products. Lapienis related that on March 24th two camp physicians, in the presence of Major Aleksandrov, examined his health, certified him as second group disabled and assigned him to work six hours a day in the sewing factory.

Prisoners complain about Major Aleksandrov's cruelty.

WHICH PRIESTS ARE SHIELDING THE SECURITY AGENT?

Fourth-year seminarian Ričardas Jakutis, already suspected earlier of being a security agent, was expelled from the Kaunas Seminary before Christmas 1977. The seminarian was ousted for drunkenness and immoral behavior. His offenses and loose morals are widely known in Šiauliai, Kaunas, Šilalė, Klaipėda, Riga, Mažeikiai and Telšiai. He often spent his nights drinking while a Šiauliai taxi used to wait for him. In Telšiai, the seminarian was caught naked in the company of women. A commission headed by the Rector travelled to Telšiai to investigate his offenses. Upon being expelled from the seminary, Jakutis admitted his guilt to the rector and dean and also publicly admitted his guilt to the seminarians. However, upon returning to Šiauliai, he immediately began to gather "evidence" that he had been unjustly expelled. He attempted to obtain affidavits from all witnesses to his offenses stating that he did not commit such offenses. He even begged (Mrs) Šorienė—who found him naked in a Telšiai apartment—on his knees, weeping, promising the earth and the sky, to withdraw or at least deny her testimony. After he visited her three times, (Mrs.) Šorienė denied her testimony, out of pity, but later, following the dictates of her conscience, wrote a letter to the seminary rector describing the whole situation.

During a meeting at the seminary on January 11, 1978, the Administrator of the Vilnius Archdiocese, Č.(eslovas) Krivaitis, demanded that Jakutis be readmitted to the seminary as one who had been wrongfully slandered (after a public admission).

The pastor of Aušros Vartai (Gates of Dawn) in Vilnius, Dean Gutauskas, and the pastor of St. Peter's Church, A. Dilys, went to Telšiai at the end of January to look into the "innocence" of Jakutis. They visited all the witnesses to his offenses (in secret, without the knowledge of the Telšiai diocesan chancery office or the Seminary administration). They did not attempt to investigate Jakutis' offenses, but merely asked who had made the whole matter public. These two Vilnius priests even asked the Šoris family whether they needed material assistance!!! Running into the Chancellor of Telšiai, Canon Beinoris, they stated they were convinced of Jakutis' innocence.

Why are Krivaitis, Dilys; and Gutauskas trying so hard to have security agent Jakutis readmitted to the seminary? Why are these

clergymen working not for the Church of Lithuania but for the Soviet government? Afterward, in issue No. 5 of *Literature and Art* (*Literatūra ir Menas*) dated February 4, there appeared an item on page 13 that Rev. A. Gutauskas had expounded on the situation of Lithuanian believers to American reporters—publishers of the book *Journey Across Russia: Soviet Union Today*." Here is what *Literature and Art* writes: "The book's authors were interested in the situation of religion in Lithuania—for this subject is sometimes gladly trumpeted by the Western propaganda apparatus—they spoke with Rev. Gutauskas who is in fact currently preparing to visit the Vatican...., printed his comments on the situation of believers in the Republic."

In a word, Rev. A. Gutauskas is attempting on all fronts to harm those who fight for the freedom of the Lithuanian Church.

Msgr. Krivaitis makes frequent statements to the foreign press on the "freedom" of believers in Lithuania. It is clear why such priests defend the security agent and public sinner: they want to have another priest of their own ilk—a destroyer of the Church.

After the visit of Revs. Gutauskas and Dilys, the outraged (Mrs) Šorienė wrote a statement to the principal of the Boarding School for the Deaf in Telšiai, demanding that Jakutis' partners in immorality—his bedmate teacher Liutkevičiūtė and his friend in loose morals, teacher Stulgys—admit their guilt because, in her words, her life has become unbearable: she is constantly visited by priests, Jakutis and even security agents, all of whom make demands.

Another witness to Jakutis' transgressions, (Miss) Činskytė, tormented by her conscience, wrote a letter to the bishops and diocesan administrators of Lithuania (the Letter is reprinted below) after she was visited by Revs. Dilys and Gutauskas.

Despite the above-mentioned facts, Jakutis is currently "working" at the Nemenčinė church. In Šiauliai, he boasts to everyone that the Vilnius Chancery has diverted him "for liturgical training to the Nemenčinė parish", and he is planning to return to the seminary in the fall.

When will this affair come to an end, when will this public sinner and security agent be completely driven out of the seminary?

A Statement to: The Diocesan Administrators of
Lithuania.

I am involved in a very distasteful affair. I am one of the

witnesses to seminarian Jakutis' gay life. One night he was carousing with women at his friend's, who lives in my home. There was drinking.

Later, after he was expelled from the Seminary, he came to see me asking for an affidavit, asking that I forgive him, he begged and tried to weep. At first he claimed he was innocent, but seeing that it was useless, he admitted his guilt and claimed he had gone to confession. I spoke with him at length. My advice to him was as follows: You know yourself that you are weak and completely unfit to be a priest, so don't act uselessly. When I reproached him for wanting to be a priest without believing, he replied: "Everyone has doubts." At the end of our talk he stated: "Your reasoning is sound, but I will be a priest." And when I suggested that he reconsider and himself renounce the priesthood, he replied: "Perhaps I will reconsider, but not now." But when?

He is still taking steps to be readmitted to the seminary. Several days ago two men came to see me. They stated they were priests from Vilnius and wanted to inquire about Seminarian Jakutis. I recounted the main points of my conversation with Jakutis and the fact that this is not slander since he himself had admitted it. But they were not interested in this, but mainly wanted to know who had brought the whole matter to light. I blurted out: "It's strange that you are concerned not with the truth, but with who unveiled this truth!" I had the impression that these were priests who did not like the truth. The Redeemer said: "Whoever does not love the truth, is not from God."

I am therefore turning to those who still love the truth. Show more concern with eliminating the godless and seminarians of unsuitable morality from the seminary. As I see it, one godless priest will cause more joy in hell than a hundred atheist speakers. If by some reckoning we do not do everything to protect the Church from wolves in sheep's clothing, then on the day of the last judgment we will stand before the world as the Church's shame!

Telšiai, 2/2/78

(Miss) Činskytė

Some details from an account of Seminarian Ričardas Jakutis' conduct... (as related by the rector of the seminary).

During the summer of 1976 (August) seminarian Jakutis came in the company of two women to Mažeikiai from Šiauliai by city taxi

to see Rev. F. Žilis who served refreshments to Ričardas and his companions. The seminarian consumed a large quantity of cognac. Both women acted very improperly. The Šiauliai taxi waited for them. Jakutis left late at night with the girls.

That same summer, seminarian Jakutis used to go drinking with similar companions in the restaurants of Klaipėda and Riga.

Such excursions were also conducted during Easter vacation, April 10-18, 1977.

Jakutis justifies his behavior as follows: the "more cool" the priest, the more he will accomplish; if he makes out well with women, he will then make out well in his ministry. As far as sins are concerned, they are forgiven in confession. Besides, celibacy applies only to priests and not to seminarians.

During Christmas 1976, Ričardas Jakutis arrived at 1:00 A.M. with a friend and two girls at Draugystės, No. 13. The friend vanished somewhere, and the seminarian became so carried away that his neighbor (Mrs) Šorienė who had a small infant, could no longer stand the noise and barged into the room to warn him. She found Jakutis completely naked with a girl in a position she is ashamed even to describe. A bottle of cognac stood on the table (there was drinking).

In January 1977, Jakutis spent the night with a friend and two women at the apartment of Jurkus at Tarybų, 17-4.

At the end of June 1977, he came at night by taxi from Šiauliai to Šermukšnių g. No. 4. There was heavy drinking. The party included two more friends and three women. The taxi waited and left at 3:00 A.M. Jakutis left with the girls.

Jakutis' constant companion is (Miss) Liutkevičiūtė who is employed as a teacher at the Telšiai Boarding School for the Deaf and Dumb. She also teaches German at other schools.

Jakutis himself did not deny the facts, but admitted his guilt. The local pastor paid for the taxi.

7/29/77

Rector of the Seminary

KGB—HANDS OFF THE SEMINARY

To: The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of Lithuania;
Dr. V. Butkus, Rector of the Theological Seminary.
A Statement from: The Priests of the Vilkaviškis Diocese.

Religious Affairs Commissioner K. Tumėnas came to the Kaunas Seminary on Holy Saturday, 1978, and demanded that two seminarians be expelled from the seminary: P. Blažukas from the Vilkaviškis Diocese and V. Pūkas from the Vilnius Archdiocese.

We, the priests of the Vilkaviškis diocese, take this opportunity to state the following:

1) Only the Ordinaries of Lithuania and the seminary administration have the right to handle seminary matters, as dictated by church law. According to this law, there was no basis for expelling seminarians Blažukas and Pūkas from the seminary. The Religious Affairs Commissioner has no right to interfere in the admission and expulsion of seminarians.

2) The seminarians ousted from the Seminary are charged with duplicating illegal literature. We, the priests of Lithuania, have no other literatūra. All our literature—most prayebooks, all catechisms, sermon material, religious books—is "illegal," without permission from the Religious Affairs Commissioner. Seminarians cannot be ousted from the Seminary because of such literature.

3) The unfounded expulsion of the seminarians from the Seminary calls for the urgent need to see to it that young men seek the priesthood underground.

Please see that the seminarians unjustly expelled from the seminary are readmitted during this academic year.

April 12, 1978

Priests of the Vilkaviškis Diocese:

P. Dumbliauskas, J. Maskvytis, B. Ražukas, J. Zdebskis, J. Žemaitis, K. Montvila, G. Dovydaitis, A. Gustaitis, A. Lukošaitis, V. Stakėnas, L. Kunevičius, J. Matulevičius, V. Urbonas, P. Orlickas, V. Degutis, A. Deltuva, P. Račiūnas, S. Tamkevičius, V. Jalinskas, L. Kavaliūnas, G. Steponaitis, S. Mikalajūnas.

To: The Apostolic Administrator of the Vilkaviškis Diocese;
The Rector of the Seminary.

A P e t i t i o n

We, the faithful of the Prienai parish, learned during Easter the sad news that our seminarian P. Blažukas was expelled from the seminary at the government's order. We have seen him serving at the altar for many years and are convinced that he did not break either church or civil law.

We urgently ask you to repeatedly address the appropriate agencies with this request, so that Seminarian Blažukas is allowed to continue preparing for the priesthood.

April 14, 1978

Signed by 301 parishioners
of Prienai.

Another petition was sent the Apostolic Administrator of the Vilkaviškis Diocese by 316 believers of the Prienai parish.

It appears that the petitions of the Prienai believers will be in vain. The KGB would quickly forgive seminarian Blažukas the "offense" he did not commit, if he agreed to become a KGB informer. It is expected that the KGB will not miss the opportunity to recruit the expelled seminarian as its agent.

IN TELŠIAI—THE MURDERER RASLANAS

Believing youth actively participate in services at the Telšiai Cathedral and the little church: young boys serve at the altar, while girls sing or adore the Blessed Sacrament. The young people's enthusiasm and courage greatly disturb the atheists: Telšiai teachers have tried to "fight" the youth using the most brutal methods—they searched their pockets, confiscated prayerbooks, gave lower deportment grades, forbade attendance at the funerals of believers, publicly ridiculed students, forced them to fill out questionnaires, etc. When the secret police tactics used by the teachers did not produce any results, help arrived from Vilnius . . .

Raslanas, an aide to the Religious Affairs Commissioner, arrived in Telšiai on Dec. 12, 1977.

The Little Lithuanian Soviet Encyclopedia (MLTĖ) (Vol. III, p. 39) states that Raslanas worked in Telšiai as an administrative employee from 1940. What kind of work did he perform in Telšiai at that time?

The people of Telšiai recognize him as the former NKVD employee who participated in the so-called "Case of the Samogitian martyrs" the night of June 24-25, 1941. He is mentioned several times in the book *Martyrs of Samogitia (Žemaičių Kankiniai)* (see p. 13, 14, 15 and 20). *The Little Lithuanian Soviet Encyclopedia* (Vol. III, p. 657) also writes that Antanas Vaitkus, former Telšiai Prison warden at that time, was, like Raslanas, an "administrative employee in Telšiai, 1940-1941" although after he

finished torturing political prisoners, even his pants and shoes used to be spattered with blood (see *Martyrs of Samogitia*, p. 17). Is Raslanas not a criminal of the same order?

It would appear that now they again think he is the only person capable of handling the believing youth of Telšiai. For he is experienced—in June 1941, he and other security agents directed the brutal murder of the 73 martyrs of Samogitia.

The unspeakable sadism—which it would be very mild to call bestial—was vented that night to the extreme (see *Martyrs of Samogitia*, p. 4). An international commission examined and described the corpses of the political prisoners tortured the night of June 24-25, 1941. Here are some of the marks which characterized all 73 martyrs: . . . skin peeled . . . brains smashed . . . brains splattered . . . skull crushed . . . scalded and scraped extremities (cabbage used for scalding was also found) . . . broken jaws . . . an eye gouged out, from which brains oozed . . . scraped skin . . . sex organs badly mutilated, beaten, crushed . . . bones broken, crushed, chopped up . . . ears pulled off, cut off . . . hole at the base of the skull . . . eyes inverted . . . tongue cut off . . . no skull or brains . . . harnessed with horse reins . . . chopped with an ax . . . all skull bones broken into small pieces . . . disemboweled . . . protruding lungs . . . face lacerated . . . tongue torn . . . tongue missing . . . chest bones torn out . . . skin scraped off . . . throat slashed . . . eyes missing . . . etc. etc. (from the book *Martyrs of Samogitia*. Telšiai, 1942).

All 73 political prisoners were tortured in this way without any trial. One of the culprits and organizers of these tortures was Raslanas. But today he still handles the affairs of believers at the Religious Affairs Commission Office. All the torturers should be tried as were German criminals at Nuremberg. But the Soviet government did not try and is not planning to try a single such criminal. Is not the situation of Lithuanian believers so difficult because their affairs are handled by such criminals? Incidentally, Commissioner K. Tumėnas is only second in command; it is Raslanas who is in charge.

Because such bloody measures against the believers of Telšiai are currently impossible, the executioner Raslanas has devised other means. There is a campaign to prove that there exists in Telšiai some kind of underground organization of believers—Heroes of the Eucharist. The security police is not working alone. Security agents also receive active assistance from teachers. Instead of instructing children, teachers have changed their profession . . . they have

become interrogators, they drag children from classes, they even forbid them to attend class, they shorten class time, threaten, claim that they know all, demand that students confirm the "information" the teachers confront them with.

Principal Jankauskas is especially active in this endeavor at the Third Middle School. He personally interrogated, tried to persuade and threatened 11th-grade pupil Uksaitė and 10th-grade student Mėmis. He was assisted by his wife, Grade 8-C homeroom teacher (Mrs) Jankauskienė. She interrogated students Rudavičius and Sarutis.

In addition, the students were given questionnaires to fill out: "Do you go to church? Why do you go? Why don't you go? Do you believe there is a God? Do you celebrate religious holidays at home?" etc.

At the Fourth Middle School, Teacher (Mrs.) Raudienė interrogated 3rd-grade student Baškis, while upper grade students were interrogated by principal (Mrs) Adomaitienė as well as by the *Rayon* atheist leader, Teacher Andrijauskas. Classes were cut short, certain classes were not held at all, etc. The following students were interrogated: Meiženytė, Umblauskaitė, Riškutė in grade 8; Meiženis, Bružas in grade 9; Jurkutė, Misevičiūtė in grade 10; Stonkutė and others in grade 11.

At the Fifth Middle School, 9th-grade homeroom teacher (Mrs.) Juškienė intimidated (Mrs) Remėzienė because her son serves at the altar.

Fourth Middle school student Bružas was cruelly ridiculed in public.

On that occasion, the assistant pastor of Telšiai, Father Kaucneckas, preached the following in a sermon: "During the 60th anniversary of October, the song "I know no other country where man can breathe so freely" resounded everywhere, but can the believing students of Telšiai breathe freely when they are ridiculed here and brought to tears? . . ."

Children are forbidden to wear pins depicting a wayside shrine which can be bought at newsstands. They are immediately asked where they obtained the pin, why they are wearing it, are they members of the Friends of the Eucharist (*Eucharistijos Bičiuliai*)? Interrogators assure them that the Friends of the Eucharist is a political organization which transmits information abroad smearing the Soviet government, etc. The youth is asked to identify the leader of the Friends of the Eucharist and attempts are made to prove to them

that it is the Cathedral organist, who is known to be a dangerous criminal who has served time.

Members of the Cathedral choir are also harassed; (Mrs) Remėzienė as well as students Mėmis and Juškaitė were summoned by the security police.

- All students are threatened that their letters of reference will include mention of their faith and they will not be admitted to any school. It is unimportant that Lenin's decrees forbid any mention of a citizen's belief in documents in the USSR. It is useless to expect justice from an agency with which Raslanas is involved: that experienced security agent is above the law.

As recently as December 9th, the Vice-Chairman of the Telšiai Executive Committee summoned the diocesan administrator and warned that if young people continued to attend church, they would be charged with responsibility for the anti-Soviet signs which cropped up in Telšiai during the celebration of the October holidays.

The pastors of both churches were also summoned for talks.

In other words, charges have been planned beforehand and they must now be proven. That, it would appear, is the purpose of Raslanas' arrival in Telšiai: the Žemaičiai martyrs were once even tortured to death without any trial . . . And now, it is irrelevant that the youth has no knowledge of this, but charges must be brought, "proven" and punishment imposed.

The atheists are astonished at the fortitude of the believing youth. Their most frequent reply is: "I believe and will continue to believe! If you do not allow me to enroll in schools of higher education, I will go to work." At the Fifth Middle School, 4th-grade homeroom teacher Ramanauskienė read to the entire class the names of the students who attend church. Then, student Latvinskaitė stood up and corrected her: "Teacher, you did not name everyone; I also go to church!"

On that occasion, the assistant pastor of the Telšiai Cathedral spoke as follows at Christmas: "Look around and see whether the number of youth has dropped in the churches of Telšiai after the rampage of the Godless? It has increased. Have their hymns become softer, have the responses of young voices at Holy Mass become sorter? They ring even louder! The youth of Samogitia is courageous, strong—like oaks. I would even go so far as to say that such an atheist sifting was needed: the weak have fallen by the way-side, the judases have gone over to the atheists, perhaps even joined the Communist Youth League, while the strong oak saplings

and the straight young pines remain with us.

That is why the atheists are so weak, (at the atheist meeting held on October 18th in Telšiai, Jeselskis said: "There are many atheists in Lithuania, perhaps several tens of thousands, but real atheists can be counted on one's fingers.")

Atheists are weak because people join them forcibly or by selling their consciences.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Vilnius

The Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs of the Lithuanian SSR of the Council of Ministers of the USSR

November 11, 1977.

To the Chairman of the.....*Rayon* People's Council of Deputies Executive Committee.

Please submit by January 15, 1978 data on the state of religiousness in religious groups of all denominations in the *Rayon* during 1977.

The following questions must be covered in the data submitted:

1) The state of religion in the *Rayon* or city, describing the activity of religious groups, the methods the clergy uses to stimulate religious life, the content of sermons (including the texts of sermons recorded), attendance at churches and other houses of worship; the number of believers who attend and the staff (based on the enclosed form); the number of births, marriages and deaths in the *rayon* or city.

2) The overall financial status of religious communities (according to the enclosed form).

3) How religious laws are enforced; the activity of commissions set up to monitor enforcement of these laws; breakdown of violations of cult laws and steps taken against violators.

4) Complaints and statements received on religious matters; their subject matter and results of their investigation.

The data can also cover other matters which in your view need attention, as well as suggestions to improve this work.

Religious Affairs Commissioner
K. Tumėnas.

Kaunas

On March 27, 1978 (Easter Monday), Kaunas KGB Chief Bagdonas called a "news conference" for reporters, press and propaganda workers, party member and activists of special sections. The security police chief complained to his audience that more people attended the archdiocesan basilica and other churches this year than in previous years. Bagdonas then related how priests are attempting to draw more people to church by raising in sermons the question of national-religious awareness, and requested advice on what should be done to stop the growing trend of this national awareness.

Kaunas

At the beginning of May 1978, Bishop J. Labukas, the apostolic administrator of the Kaunas Archdiocese and the Vilkaviškis Diocese, left for the Vatican.

The clergy are uneasily awaiting his return, because they fear that for Vatican Curia—on the basis of false information—might appoint KGB collaborators as Bishops.

Kaunas

On April 28, 1978, seminarian E. Paulionis was summoned from the Kaunas Seminary to the Vilnius security police in connection with the V. Petkus case.

Seminarian R. Dalgėla was interrogated on May 5th in that same connection.

Kaunas

On April 14, 1978, at the conclusion of the Marxist-Leninist study year held at the Structural Architecture Institute, lectures were given by H. Zimanas (subject *Man Above God*) and Religious Affairs Commissioner K. Tumėnas (subject *The State of Religion in Lithuania*). Individuals who had not attended the courses—various workers and teachers—were invited to these lectures.

Tumėnas stressed that conflicts with believers should be avoided, the situation not aggravated and their religious feelings not offended.

Among other statistics, Tumėnas stated that believers in Lithuania yearly donate approximately one million rubles for the support of cult buildings and employees, of which "not many, but some crumbs drop off to the government—about 23,000 rubles."

In fact, the crumbs that "drop off" to the government are not as

"modest" as claimed by Tumėnas. In a small parish with a small wooden church, the "crumbs" amount to 500 rubles, in parishes with brick churches, "crumbs" amount on the average to about 2,000-3,000 rubles, in cities even more. There are over 700 priests; it is therefore not difficult to calculate the approximate revenues the government receives from the faithful.

Questions were requested after the speech. Shortly, the chairman was heard to shout: "Please do not submit anonymous letters! Sign your names!"

A murmur was heard in the hall: "They're afraid!"

Not only are they afraid, but they forget that a question is not yet an anonymous letter, and that in this case it is the point needing clarification which should be important, and not who raised it. But, in the "land of freedom" things are different. . .

Kaunas

On November 11, 1977, at the Kaunas Medical Institute, Doctor A. Tytmonas invited A. Guigas, First secretary of the Kaunas City Požėla *ration* committee, to conduct the last lecture of the atheist course. He was introduced to the students as a practicing atheist who would acquaint them with current developments in atheist activity. In his lecture, Guigas pointed out that there still exist reactionary priests. He kept dwelling on Father Laurinavičius, pastor of the Adutiškis parish. According to Guigas, this priest tries to draw as many children as possible into serving at Mass. Another priest, already of the Soviet era, Valančiauskas (*Rayon* of Švenčionys) does not limit his activity to the church. He actually sneaks into farms, factories, etc. Certain priests have decided to erect various structures. This happened in Alytus, *Rayon* of Prienai. When the students inquired what these structures were, the speaker exclaimed that they were on the order of farm additions or stables, (in the Simnas churchyard, *Rayon* of Alytus, it was not "an addition" or "stable" which was erected, but a statue of the Mother of God. The secretary probably "erred" on purpose — Ed. note).

The audience was listless during the lecture. Docent Tytmonas sent a note to the students suggesting that they ask the secretary the following questions: "I'm a member of the Communist Youth League. How should I act if my relative plans to marry in church? How should I behave if a relative is being buried from the church?" The speaker replied: "Do everything you can to keep this from happening. But you must be tactful, so as not to offend their

feelings." The secretary noted that most believers marry and baptize their children not in their own church. For instance, during 1977, 36 baptisms were recorded in the Labanoras church, while during that time only seven births occurred in that parish. Most believers are hypocrites. They are afraid to show their true face. Well, if they also fear to tumble from a higher position because of this, they go and hide.

After the lecture, Guigas received many notes. Most of them "educated" the secretary. At the conclusion, he admitted in a sad voice that he received notes in which the students voiced their discontent with both the content and the form of the lecture. Docent Tytmonas stood up then to smooth over things. "It seems that we talked and talked, we discussed for half a year, and in the end it looks as though I had explained in Persian and you only understand Serbian," Tytmonas remarked.

Telšiai

On December 30, 1977, Vice-Chairman Tamašauskas of the Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee demanded that Msgr. K. Gaščiūnas be transferred from Telšiai. Commissioner K.(azimieras) Tumėnas also telephoned administrator Father A. Vaičius on the same matter.

The Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee has refused to confirm the church committee of the Telšiai parish which has already been elected a third time; it demanded that Jonaitis, the former chairman prior to these three elections, be reinstated as chairman of the church committee. Jonaitis has told Msgr. Gaščiūnas that he will have to leave his position as pastor.

Tauragė

The faithful of Tauragė are pleased that their pastor, Father Bagdonas, spent all summer preparing children for First Communion, but are distressed over the fact that the pastor does not allow children to serve at Holy Mass or participate in processions. Once, when asked why he acts as he does, Father Bagdonas admitted that he does not want to damage relations with the government. The people of Tauragė consider that too high a price to pay for good relations with the atheist government.

Gargždai

During the night of January 14-15, 1978, the church of Gargždai was burglarized. The thieves vandalized the tabernacle and scattered the Blessed Sacrament.

Gargždai

Father Antanas Šeškevičius of Gargždai was summoned to the Gargždai old people's convalescence home on March 24, 1978 to see Stanislovas Milašius who was very seriously ill. The patient's sister, (Mrs) Katkienė, had made arrangements with the convalescent home paramedic, (Mrs) Juškevičienė, who agreed to allow the priest to visit the patient. Because there were many other ill patients at the convalescent home, they also asked the priest to hear their confessions and wished to receive Holy Communion. Father Šeškevičius barely had time to hear the confessions of several old men when the home's director Striauka appeared.

"How did you get in here?" the director assailed the priest. "Don't you know that a priest cannot enter a public institution?"

"Yes, he can," calmly replied Father Šeškevičius. "Soviet law allows the Sacraments to be administered to the sick. Read the magazine *Soviet Labor* (1975, No. 5). It contains Tumėnas' article "The Law and the Religious Community", which states that a priest has the right to administer the Sacraments in hospitals, penal establishments and other places, if patients so request it."

The elderly (Mr.) Milašius died a half hour after the priest had left. Father Šeškevičius went to see Gargždai *Rayon* Vice-Chairman Leilas about this incident and the latter agreed that Striauka had acted wrongly and promised to reprimand him and give Father Šeškevičius a reply. Not receiving a reply, Father Šeškevičius again went to see Leilas, but the latter claimed he was busy and had not yet met with the director.

Zarasai

Bishop R.(omualdas) Krikščiūnas dismissed Dean G. Šukys, the pastor of Zarasai, from his post and appointed in his place the Rev. Vytautas Tvarijonas, pastor of the Spitrėnai parish; however, the Religious Affairs Commissioner lodged a protest and suggested the Rev. S. Pelesynas, pastor of Pabiržė.

Salos

Salos District Secretary Danutė Česonienė baptized her daughter Vida at the Kamajai parish and as a consequence was dismissed from her position as secretary at the end of 1977. She had been employed at the Salos nursery school, but at the beginning of this year was dismissed from here also.

Salos

Janė Butkevičienė, a state farm group leader and party member, buried her grandmother with religious ceremonies and personally attended the funeral. Later, at the decision of the party meeting, she was dismissed from work.

Skuodas

Eighty-one year old Kazimiera Aklienė died at the Skuodas hospital on February 8, 1977. An operation had been performed on the deceased in Klaipėda and she was sent to the Skuodas hospital to complete her recuperation under "assured qualified medical attention" (Art. 42 of the Constitution). The patient grew worse the morning of February 7th and asked that a priest be called with the Sacraments. Upon hearing this, Skuodas Hospital Chief-of-Staff Mažrimas stated:

"So long as I'm in charge here, no priest will set foot in my hospital!"

The patient then asked that she be taken for an hour to friends in Skuodas to receive the Sacraments and then returned to the hospital. Doctor Mažrimas immediately ordered that the patient be moved from the ward and placed in the corridor, and told the patient's husband that he would not readmit this woman to the hospital. While the elderly man looked for a car to transport the patient to the Village of Palauké, Mrs. Aklienė lay in the drafty hospital corridor without any care and died on February 8th. This happened last year, while the old USSR Constitution was in effect.

Eighty-eight year old Magdalena Sėlenienė was a patient at the Skuodas hospital. When the patient requested that a priest be summoned, Chief-of-Staff Mažrimas shouted

"Even though the Vatican damns me, so long as I live I will not allow a priest into the hospital!"

That same day, on January 8th, (Mrs) Sėlenienė died without receiving the last sacraments. All of her life she had been a very devout, diligent and exemplary woman. A decent person tries to help even a dog in trouble, but Chief-of-Staff Mažrimas of the Skuodas Hospital has a different outlook on believing persons. When people complain to Skuodas *Rayon* Communist Party First Secretary Sabanskis about such behavior, they receive a curt reply,

"He suits us!"

Who will remind Skuodas Hospital Chief-of-Staff Mažrimas and

Skuodas *Rayon* Communist Party First Secretary Sabanskis of the need to observe the new USSR and LSSR Constitutions? According to art. 164 of the USSR Constitution, "The highest responsibility to see to it that... all agencies and officials . . . accurately and equally enforce the laws, is entrusted to the prosecutors."

Notėnai (Rayon of Skuodas)

On January 27, 1978, Antanas Tyla, the pastor of the Notėnai parish, who served as pastor in Notėnai for 32 years, was buried. The faithful respected and loved their spiritual leader. While Vatican Radio was broadcasting an obituary of the late Rev. A. Tyla, a conflict arose between the faithful and the Skuodas *Rayon* government over where the deceased pastor should be buried. In his will, the deceased had requested to be buried next to his mother, who had been buried eight years earlier in the Notėnai churchyard cemetery. It would seem that nothing could be easier than carrying out the request of the deceased. For according to an old tradition, priests are buried not only within the churchyard, but those who have labored long in the parish are even buried in the crypt of the church. When the faithful of Notėnai prepared to dig a hole next to Father Tyla's mother's grave, Notėnai District Chairman Šetkauskas protested, stating that it was necessary to submit the matter to the Skuodas *Rayon* government. The faithful went to see Skuodas *Rayon* Vice-Chairperson Luožienė, but she demanded that they first receive the consent of Communist Party Secretary Sabanskis. The secretary categorically objected:

"It will be good enough if you bury him in the common cemetery across the stream. There is no need to bury him in the churchyard."

The faithful travelled to the Telšiai diocesan chancery office, but learned there that the chancery is powerless to do anything. When the chancery office addressed the Religious Affairs Commissioner's office, it was told that funeral matters are handled by the local government.

The third day dawned and it was still unclear where the priest would be buried. The faithful then went to see Notėnai District Chairman Šetkauskas and stated:

"Mr. Chairman, if you wish, bury the pastor yourself, but we will not go against the pastor's will. If you will not allow him to be buried in the churchyard cemetery, we refuse to bury him let him remain unburied."

District Chairman Šetkauskas again addressed Communist Party Secretary Sabanskis and explained that the people were incensed, that the entire matter might appear in the *Chronicle*, etc. Finally, Party Secretary Sabanskis relented:

"Let them bury him where they want.. ."

Where is the USSR Constitution's separation of Church and state, when even a priest's burial place must be determined by the Party Secretary?

Žvirgždaičiai (Rayon of Šakiai)

Several state farm workers retired during a general meeting of the Jaunoji Gvardija (New Guard) state farm held on February 8, 1978. State farm chairman P. Lisauskas presented them with transistor radios. Only (Mrs.) E. Daniliauskienė, a diligent state farm worker who had helped reopen the Žvirgždaičiai chapel, did not receive a gift. Chairman Lisauskas told many people that Daniliauskienė should get a gift from the church.

Žalioji (Rayon of Vilkaviškis)

Issue No. 32 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* printed a statement by the believers of the town of Klaušučiai on reopening the Žalioji parish church. The statement was sent to Moscow. The Council for Religious Affairs forwarded the believers' statement to Religious Affairs Commissioner K. Tumėnas, who in turn sent it to the Vilkaviškis Rayon Executive Committee. Vice-Chairman J. Urbonas urgently summoned worker Bronius Mickevičius from work.

"Did you write some statements?" the vice-chairman assailed him.

"I did," confirmed the worker.

Urbonas then proceeded to explain that the Žalioji church would never be reopened, because this was decided by the Vilkaviškis Rayon Executive Committee which has the right to rule on the fate of the Žalioji church. When Mickevičius demanded a written reply, Urbonas explained that replies are not made in writing and that he, the chairman of the Žalioji parish council, should explain orally to the faithful who had signed the statement that the Žalioji church cannot be reopened.

This is how, following the adoption of the new Constitution, Moscow deals with statements from believers—they are forwarded to those who are charged with improper behavior.

Twenty-two members of the Žalioji parish council sent a statement to the LSSR Council of Ministers Chairman J. Maniušis on May 10th, stating: "We now clearly see that Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Vice-Chairman J. Urbonas scorns not only the faithful, but higher officials as well . . . The authorities of our *Rayon* can promulgate their own decrees and regulations without any regard to the Council of Ministers, nor the requirements of the USSR Constitution . . ."

Chairman Stasys Kundrotas of the Klausučiai District has stated that the faithful will set foot in the Žalioji church only over his dead body. What heroic loyalty to the occupant!

J. Urbonas summoned agronomist Stanaitienė of the Rumokai experimental farm and berated her for signing statements for the purpose of reopening the Žalioji church.

Vepriai (Rayon of Ukmergė)

On May 14, 1978, a religious article vendor was approached by a man who presented police credentials, loaded all the religious articles into a bag and took them to his car. This is not the first such incident in Vepriai. Militiamen and security agents came to Pentecost Sunday devotions, forbade the selling of religious articles, recorded the license number of private cars and noted the believers who walked the Stations of the Cross. The *Rayon* government allowed only one priest to come to the ceremonies. Despite this, several priests were present and the people came in droves and walked the Stations of the Cross.

Druskininkai

Secretary Aldona Balevičiūtė of the Druskininkai City Executive Committee was making plans for her wedding which was to be held on April 15, 1978. Religious marriage ceremonies were also planned at the church. Discovering this, her superiors (Committee Vice-Chairman V. Marinionokas and Director of the General Services Department Navickienė) assailed her for observing "religious superstitions." She was threatened with dismissal from work if she refuses to renounce the church. She was also told that she would not obtain an apartment and a report would be sent to the university in Vilnius and she would be forced to drop her studies. Miss Balevičiūtė explained that this was a tradition in her family and that she considered her parents' will sacred. Then, her father was summoned and

was accused of forcing his views on his daughter—forcing her to perform religious practices . . .

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

Telšiai

Grade 10-B homeroom teacher (Mrs.) Rumbutienė of the Fifth Middle School did not allow her students to attend the funeral of their classmate's mother on November 21, 1977. The students carried their wreaths only to the grave.

Šiauliai

Principal Snieškus of the Šiauliai Middle School summoned the father of 9th-grade student Dalia Jadikavičiutė on April 1, 1978, and attempted to persuade him that the faith was blocking Dalia's road to higher education. In the principal's view, Dalia belongs to some kind of "sect" and can "get into all kinds of trouble." The father was reminded that security organs have shown an interest in Dalia and that she has to justify her actions, and moreover that she should not belong to any "sects" or communities which often violate Soviet laws.

Šiauliai

On October 18, 1977, Principal Jonaitienė of the Eighth Middle School in Šiauliai summoned to her office Grade 11B student Irena Dapkutė.

"Why haven't you joined the Communist Youth League? Won't your mother let you?"

"No. I myself don't wish to join."

"Why? Do you go to church?"

"Yes."

Assistant Principals Lukšienė and Martinaitis were present at the student's "education." Disappointed at the outcome of the conversation, the principal mockingly said:

"I've worked for sixteen years, but till now I have not met such a fanatically believing girl. I cannot understand what kind of upbringing you have at home."

Upon learning that Irena has a brother, the principal asked, "Do you also take him to church?"

"No. He goes on his own."

The interrogation in the principal's office lasted an entire hour.

Other eleventh grade students who do not belong to the Communist Youth were also summoned to the principal's office. Those who promised to join the Communist Youth League were left alone.

Reference letters for eleventh-grade students were under consideration somewhat later. The following was written about Dapkutė: "The girl is religious and stubbornly, almost fanatically, defends her beliefs. She was raised in a religious family, helped conduct religious services in church, perhaps that is why the inducements of neither her teachers nor her friends have had any effect on her, nor did the scientific education gained in school. She is stubborn and obstinate when it comes to defending her opinion and beliefs."

Šiauliai

Just before Christmas, 1977, atheist leader Grebeničenkaitė of the Eight Middle School in Šiauliai made plans for an atheist program on Christmas Eve. She forced students to play the roles of religious persons, etc. The teacher scorned in particular those students who attend church. She threatened that students who do not attend the atheist program would receive failing grades in mathematics or lower department grades.

Kretinga

Beginning in October 1977, students of the Kretinga Second Middle School began to serve in church at Holy Masses. The school administration assailed 8th-grade student Saulius Katkus:

"Why do you serve at Mass?"

"Because I want to."

"We will expel you from school."

"I will enroll in another."

"Maybe you will decide to enter the seminary?"

"I still have time to think about it," Saulius persisted.

Shortly thereafter, the homeroom teacher came to see Saulius' mother and asked that she forbid her son to serve at Mass. The mother refused.

Principal Kecorius, communist youth league secretary Aleksandravičiūtė and homeroom teacher Raguckas used intimidation in attempting to secure a promise from students Eugenijus Drungila and Antanas Puškorius to stop serving at Mass.

Kybartai

Lithuanian language teacher (Mrs.) Sukackienė ordered Grade

8A students to memorize an atheist poem or read something on an atheist subject. Most students did not do the assignment. The teacher then threatened to give failing grades the next time. Several girls protested stating they were believers and would not recite atheist poems against their beliefs. One of the girls brought in the poem "Hymn to Honor" by B.(ernardas) Brazdžionis to read, but the teacher did not allow her to do so, saying that this was not a poem but a religious hymn. Teacher Sukackienė forced the believing girls to memorize something from *Tales of a Rabbit*, which she had brought.

Kybartai

An old man was being buried at the Kybartai church on May 5, 1978. Grade 6B homeroom teacher (Miss) Strakauskaitė ordered her students to leave after they placed their wreaths near the coffin in church. That is a typical trait of atheist fanaticism in Lithuania. Teachers are forced to act this way by the school administration, and the latter by the *rayon* education department.

Stebuliai (R a y o n of Lazdijai)

Grammar school students are forced to join the Pioneers and the Communist Youth League. The students who are forcibly enrolled in the Pioneers are compelled to wear the red Pioneer neckerchief. Teachers often hear the following reply: "I would rather spend 75 kopecks on candy than on a pioneer scarf."

On April 4, 1978, 7th-Grade students were ordered to join the Communist Youth League. All students were kept after school and were called by two's to the teachers' room. Teacher (Mrs.) Eugenija Smaidžiūnienė assured them of the benefits of the Communist Youth League as follows: "Those who join the Communist Youth will be given good recommendations, those who do not will be black-listed. . . Those who join the youth league will go to Zarasai, but those who refuse to join will stay home."

Teacher Smaidžiūnienė assigns atheist compositions to believing children, thus clearly discriminating against religious students.

During December 1977, an atheist program was held at the school, during which poems were read and stories were told, ridiculing priests and the faith.

Leipalingis

Middle School Biology Teacher Vytautas Česnulis is a very avid disciple of atheism. He often turns his classes into lectures on

atheism, ridiculing the faithful and religion. One eleventh-grade student described Česnulis' propaganda as "typical of Lithuania's atheists in its foolishness, cynicism and lack of understanding about religion."

Užuguostis (R a y o n of Prienai)

This year during Easter, the church was full of not only adult believers, but also school-age children. Spies and representatives of the local government were in church from the very start of the services. These individuals came to the sacristy to make a list of the children attending the services and berated the pastor for organizing school children to participate actively at services. The pastor, the Rev. Zenonas Navickas, explained that he would not sign the report and will continue to organize children. "I do not meddle with Communist children, you can therefore rear your children as you like, but from believing parents I require and will continue to require that their children attend church," the pastor asserted.

Prienai

Immediately after Easter 1978, class 7A homeroom teacher Žemaitienė of the Prienai Second Middle School scolded students Kazlauskaitė, Sinkevičiūtė and Krikščiūnaitė for participating in the Easter Procession. Student Sinkevičiūtė explained that her grandmother and her mother went to church, she therefore would also go.

Prienai

The pastors of Pakuonis, Skriaudžiai and Užuguostis were summoned on April 17, 1978 to the Prienai *Rayon* Executive Committee. *Rayon* Vice-Chairman Morkvėnas berated the pastors for allowing children to participate in religious ceremonies during Easter. The pastor of Pakuonis, Rev. Tėvelis, retorted that a priest is not a militiaman and will not chase children from the altar. The other priest explained: "You adopted a beautiful Constitution, so be kind enough to observe it."

Aukštadvaris (R a y o n of Trakai)

At the Aukštadvaris Middle School, Fifth-grade pupil Saulius Sekonas and eighth-grade student Piliukas were ridiculed in the school's satirical newspaper for taking advantage of the laws of the freedom of conscience. Their offense: going to church to pray.

Seventh-grade students Baranauskaitė and Kalinkevičius were sternly warned to stop attending Church on Sundays.

Seventh-grade student Špiliauskaitė was threatened by the school party secretary with lower department grades and mockery in the school newspaper if she continues going to church.

The faithful of Aukštadvaris take their children to other churches.

Palanga

On March 30, 1978, Teacher (Mrs.) Jovaišienė of the Second Middle School came to see grade 4A student Stonkutė at home and explained to her parents that children cannot be taken to church. In school, this teacher tells students to draw pictures of God and scorns the faith. This year, she has already four times ordered her students to fill out questionnaires on the faith. Teacher Jovaišienė and her husband visited grade 4A student Senavaitis and forcibly enrolled him in the Pioneers.

Ignalina

Ten-year-old Rimas Stukėnas died in a tragic accident and was buried in Ignalina on June 27, 1977. Many people attended the funeral, especially young people and children. People surged to the Lord's Table during Holy Mass. About 200 people received Holy Communion. Only Rimas' classmates could not do so. They were led from the church by Teacher (Mr.) E. Juodagalvienė who kept them in her apartment until the coffin was carried from the church. Rimas' classmates were again allowed to join the funeral procession in the street.

Zuikai (R a y o n of Ignalina)

Zuikai Grammar School teachers persuaded fourth-grade student Rimutė Balčiūnaitė to join the Pioneers. The girl agreed. The teachers gave the girl a pen, a booklet and a scarf as gifts. When she returned home (Village of Didžiasalis) the girl told her parents. The parents ordered the girl to withdraw from the Pioneers. When she returned to school the following day, she asked the teachers to cross her off the Pioneers. At first they refused, but when the girl began to cry they crossed her off. Later, Party Secretary Sidorov and State Farm Chairman A. Balčiūnas went to see the girl's parents and intimidated them in various ways.

Zuikai

In November 1977. Zuikai Grammar School Teacher (Mrs.) A. Garlienė searched the pockets of seventh-grade student Balčiūnas and confiscated the rosary she found there. The teacher returned the rosary a month later.

CATHOLICS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Moldavia

The persecution of believing Catholics is continuing in Moldavia, especially in Rashkovo. Since the house of worship—a tiny church—was demolished, people assemble every evening to pray at a small apartment in the former church's yard. Local government officials often come and disperse the praying people, especially children and young people.

Village Council Chairman Zan Matvejavič Bogorašh has summoned Valentina Oleinik many times to explain why she allows people to pray in her home, but she was never home. Finally, the opportunity arose. On March 21, 1978 Valentina Oleinik, on her return from Rybnitsa, was detained by Chairman Bogorašh in front of the village council office and was berated in unprintable language. He demanded that, in his words, the "brothel house of worship" be closed down. Oleinik replied that she would bring charges against him for defamation and insult. The government official berated the woman in the street simply because she is a believer. The insults hurled at (Mrs.) Oleinik were heard by Pranė Sajevska.

Chairman Bogorašh summoned Petr Pogrienoj and Alksandr Prosianoy and threatened to level monetary fines against them if they continued to pray.

Rashkov had no Christmas or Easter confession because the priest was strictly forbidden to travel there.

The Assistant Commissioner for Religious Affairs forbade (Mrs) Oleinik to even show her face in Kishinev and threatened the people with exile to Siberia if they listen to Oleinik and travel with her to see the Commissioner in Kishinev.

During Easter holidays this year, a larger number of Catholics attended services in the small Kishinev chapel than the previous year. There were quite a few children and youths. This could not go unnoticed by government officials, who with extraordinary patience

"zealously" attend services not only on Sundays but on weekdays also.

Immediately after Easter, Secretary Trofimova of the Kishinev City Lenin *Rayon* Executive Committee, summoned the Rev. Vladislav Zavalniuk and demanded that he forbid children to approach the altar and that he not urge in his sermons the youth and children to attend church. He also forbade him to urge parents to raise their children in a Catholic spirit.

Now, Trofimova comes to services almost daily and notes who serves at the altar, interrogates them, asking where they are from and why they come. She will not even allow elderly persons to serve the priest without harassing them. The documents of boys under 18 years of age are checked to keep them from appearing at the altar.

Religious Affairs Commissioner Vikonskis has complained that although there are 150 Orthodox churches in Moldavia and about 200 Orthodox priests, atheists have less trouble and problems with them than they do with that one small Catholic chapel and with the only Catholic priest in all of Moldavia, Rev. V. Zavalniuk. Atheist cannot accept the fact that the spring of faith is dawning in Moldavia, that not only old people—who are already called to eternity — but also children and the youth are seeking God and His consolation.

The Catholics of Moldavia have already won the right for the priest, when he is called and after proper notification of the Religious Affairs Commissioner's Office, to minister to the sick and those who have assembled there, as many as fit in a patient's room. However, this victory was short-lived. On April 26, 1978, Commissioner Vikonskis (accompanied by Security Police employees) summoned Father Zavalniuk and retracted his words, claiming he never told anyone—not the church committee chairman nor the faithful who came so often to see him on this matter—that it is permitted to minister not only to the patient, but also to those who have gathered at the patient's home. "It is permitted to hear the confession of only the person for whom the priest was summoned by telegram, and if more people have assembled there, all are required to go and ask the local authorities for permission even to attend the patient's rites, to say nothing of confessing. If this is ignored, the priest is liable to arrest."

During April 24-26, 1978, a Peace Conference was held in Kishinev. Delegations from abroad attended this conference. Among them were three priests—theology professors—from Austria,

Germany and Czechoslovakia, a nun professor from the U.S. and a group of believers from various countries. They visited the Kishinev chapel, spoke with the faithful, the priests celebrated Mass. How astonished and outraged they were when they learned from the faithful that there is only that one small chapel and only one priest in all of Moldavia! They did not want to believe what they saw with their own eyes, nor believe what the parishioners told them. How can we speak about peace, about people leading tranquil lives, when the most holy and inalienable rights are being trampled: to put one's conscience in order, to make one's confession, to have a priest come administer the last rites for the sick!?

NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

1) *Rūpintojėlis (Suffering Christ)*. Issue No. 5 was published in May. The article "The February 16th Declaration" writes: "The period after February 16th when the Lithuanian state was established is the brightest era in the history of the Lithuanian nation. Nothing will dim it—neither attempts to erase it from Lithuanian history nor the efforts of those who serve foreign gods to debase and disdain it." The article's author fears that currently the morality of Lithuanians has been seriously undermined in occupied Lithuania and that this is leading the nation to perdition. ". . .arresting and reversing the decline of the nation's morality . . . is a matter of life and death which will determine whether the nation will live or die." The article stresses that religion is the most important buttress of morality.

In the article "What is the Root of Evil", K. Aušrys relates the sad statistics of moral decay. In 1940, the per capita consumption of alcohol in Lithuania was 0.8 liters (4/5 quart), while now it is up to 17 liters (4 1/2 gals.).. . About 22,000 chronic alcoholics are receiving treatment. In the opinion of Lithuania's psychiatrists, only one third of all alcoholics is being treated. Prior to 1940, between 107 and 250 murders were committed in Lithuania; now, 4,000-5,000 people are murdered every year in Soviet Lithuania. The crime rate among the youth is rising steadily. Before Soviet times, about 15,000 abortions were performed annually in Lithuania, now they number around 60,000. Every year between 9,000 and 10,000 marriages break up, prisons are overcrowded, as are venereal disease clinics. "Excessive drunkenness shows that,

under the Soviet system, man experiences a difficult spiritual crisis." The author suggests that we turn to religion and fight to our utmost against alcoholism in order to save the fatherland.

Issue No. 5 shows that the publication's articles are markedly more current, for which readers will certainly be grateful to the publishers of *Rūpintojėlis*.

2) *Tiesos Kelias (Way of Truth)*. Issue No. 8 of *Tiesos Kelias* was published at the end of April and is devoted for the most part to the religious instruction of children.

3) *Dievas ir Tėvynė (God and Country)*. Issue No. 7 contains many important articles which show that the root of all of Lithuania's misfortunes is atheist Marxism. Many distressing, but accurate remarks are aimed at the bishops of Lithuania.

4) *Aušrelė (Little Dawn)*. Issue No. 1 of *Aušrelė* made its appearance on February 16, 1978. The first page contains the following dedication: "To *Laisvės Šauklys (Herald of Freedom)*, smothered by the security police." The publication's articles are national in theme, current, urging all to join forces in fighting against the nation's common enemy.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* wishes the publishers of *Aušrelė*, with God's blessing, a long and fruitful existence in awakening the Lithuanian's national and religious awareness.

5) *Aušra (Dawn)*. Issue No. 10 of *Aušra* was published at the beginning of April.

CORRECTIONS

The editors of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* have received a letter from a reader stating "Issue No. 28 of the *Chronicle* contains an article entitled "Problems of Religious Life in Lithuania and the Soviet Union." It gives a thorough picture of the difficult Calvary travelled by the Catholic Church in countries governed by the Soviet Union. The article contains many bright, uplifting and optimistic ideas which point out how the Catholic Church can act, even under the direst circumstances. However, the sentence "The newly appointed bishops are currently devoting all their energies to their ministry" is inconsistent with reality. I respect the bishops and want to speak only good things about them, but certain historical facts with which I am well acquainted, atheist

responses to their diocesan activity, and their own statements to the Soviet and foreign press will not permit my conscience to agree with the concept expressed in the abovementioned sentence in the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

The publishers of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* agree that there is sufficient foundation for the above remarks.

Fellow Lithuanians, Don't Forget!

P.(etras) Plumpa, N.(ijolė) Sadūnaitė, S.(ergei) Kovalev, O.(na) Pranskūnaitė, V.(ladas) Lapienis, B.(alys) Gajauskas, V.(iktoras) Petkus and others who bear the shackles of prison so that you may freely live and believe!

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