

CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
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CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
NO. 35

A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA NO. 35
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

Read it and pass it on!
Appearing since 1972.

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Lithuania.....November 16, 1978

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO POPE JOHN PAUL II

Your Holiness:

We, the priests and faithful of Lithuania, offer our congratulations on your election as the Church's Supreme Shepherd and on the occasion of your installation ceremonies, we wish you the light of the Holy Spirit and the fire of His love in leading the Church during these times of moral decline and militant atheism.

We hope that in you, Lithuania, as well as other countries where the faith is persecuted, will find strong support and a zealous defender of human and religious rights and freedoms, so that Christ's Gospel might freely reach every heart thirsting for truth and love. This hope is bolstered in particular by the knowledge that you are well acquainted with our conditions and that you acquired much experience while fighting for the rights of the faithful.

We especially hope that under your leadership the new Vatican diplomatic direction will inspire in us deep respect and confidence in the Apostles' Throne and will not force the faithful and clergy of the Eastern countries into pessimism as well as passivity regarding the diplomatic concessions made to the atheists. You inspired us at the 41st Eucharistic Congress by officiating at services for countries where the faith is persecuted. You defended their rights with your courageous words, uplifting the courage of Lithuania's faithful in their fight for Christ and the Church.

In your first talk to the cardinals you remembered individuals suffering in prisons for the faith. A whole list of our country's sons and daughters—Petras Plumpa, Nijolė Sadunaitė, Ona Pranskunaitė, Vladas Lapienis and others—are suffering in labor camps or in exile for Christ.

News have reached us that already in your very first statements you said that half your heart belongs to Lithuania. You expressed the desire to visit your Motherland Poland and the Soviet Union. We would very much want you to also visit Catholic Lithuania on that occasion. You will have the opportunity to see the devoutness and loyalty of Lithuanians to the church as well as to her supreme Shepherd.

We welcome the greetings you spoke in Lithuanian as a recognition of our sacrifices for Christ. By receiving our bishops in audience you again showed your fatherly good will for Lithuania's faithful.

God certainly heard our prayers and today we feel less forgotten than ever before. In the future also, we will accompany the footsteps of your life and work with sincere prayer and will look forward to effective support.

The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania
on behalf of Lithuania's priests and faithful.

TO THE GENERAL OF THE JESUIT ORDER,
FATHER PEDRO ARRUPE

For the past four hundred years this country's oldest school of higher learning—the University of Vilnius—has been shining brightly and generously beaming the light of knowledge into the hearts and minds of people on the amber shores of the Baltic, in Lithuania's capital Vilnius. This center of knowledge was founded for Lithuania by the Jesuit Order and through the concern, dedication and work of its members it provided Lithuania with scholars, the spiritual and material founders of the nation's culture.

On the occasion of this venerable anniversary (1579-1979), the believing people of Lithuania thank through you, the Jesuit Order for that precious gift to our Motherland, remember in their prayers the known and unknown members of the Jesuit Order who ever worked at the University of Vilnius and regret that today this temple of learning, which, as conceived by its founders, had the duty to recognize the truth, defend it and propagate it, is today used to falsify the truth, to reject it or completely deny it.

What a mockery of the founders' concept: at the school founded by the Jesuit Order, today not a single believing individual has the right to study, not a single priest has the right to set foot there, nor does any member of the Order from either Lithuania or abroad.

Today, atheism—which has never been and never will be learning—is being spread from this temple of learning, atheism which fiercely attempts to deny, conceal or distort the primary source of all truth: the eternal Truth, God.

Please remember in your prayers our suffering Motherland Lithuania.

INTERROGATIONS

(Miss) Marytė Vitkūnaitė, a resident of Kaunas, received a summons on October 4, 1978 to go to the Vilnius security police to see interrogator Urbonas. Vitkūnaitė arrived in Vilnius on October 5th. The interrogations lasted five hours.

Security agent Urbonas told Vitkūnaitė that he has considerable evidence against her. At first, the interrogator began to ask about Angelė Sabaliauskaitė: when she had met her, what kind of

literature she had given her, how many times she had visited her, etc. Marytė stated she knew no Angelė.

Then, there began questions about Monika Didžiokaitė. The security agent familiarized Miss Vitkūnaitė with Monika's testimony: when they had met, when she had come with Angelė, when she had brought a typewriter, how many times she had come and when. Miss Vitkūnaitė again denied everything, stating she did not know Miss Didžiokaitė at all.

Interrogator Urbonas demanded that she explain how she met Romas Blažukas, who others call Petras; how many times she went to the seminary, what seminarians she knows, what names she knows? The interrogator boasted that he knew she had taken from the seminary a typewriter in a suitcase. She supposedly took the typewriter to Monika's, and brought the suitcase home. Marytė admitted being at the seminary five or six years ago, only could not recall why she had gone there. She had not been to the seminary since then. Urbonas insisted that Marytė was guilty and could be punished for denying the facts.

He then took out the items confiscated during the search and demanded that she explain where she had obtained them. There was issue No. 9 of *Aušra (Dawn)*, the book *Problems of a Lithuanian Character*, the essay "Man and Nature" and a recorded tape. The security agent demanded that she repent and admit everything, for it would then go easier on her. Vitkūnaitė explained that she had done nothing wrong and did not know what she should repent.

At the end of the interrogation, the recorded tape was returned to her, but the typewriter and the notebook and other items were kept. The security agent showed her the names and addresses of Monika, Angelė and Blažukas, whom she had denied knowing, written in her own hand in the notebook. Interrogator Urbonas was unhappy with Vitkūnaitė's replies and threatened her with future punishment. He then took a sample of Marytė's handwriting for analysis.

At 12:00 on July 14, 1978 Miss Regina Teresiutė, a resident of Kelmė, was detained by a uniformed militiaman in Vilnius near the central market. Grabbing the girl by the arm, the militiaman tried to lead her to his car, but she resisted his advances and continued toward the market gate. The militiaman strolled beside her trying to persuade her to go to his vehicle. When the girl refused to comply, he tried to drag her by force. Regina then began to scream

and explain that she was completely innocent.

There was an uproar. A large crowd of people came running. Wishing to avoid the people and the resulting uproar, the militiaman stated he had made a mistake and left after dispersing the crowd. But Teresiute's every step in the market was followed by another uniformed man. When Regina left the market, that same militiaman and another security agent in civilian clothes approached her. The militiaman stopped a passing "Volga" and tried to force the girl into it. Both men grabbed the prisoner by the arm, shoved her into the vehicle and sat on either side of her.

In the car, they first demanded to see Teresiute's identification. Because she had not taken her identification with her when going shopping, the agents demanded that she go home and get it. The young girl refused to go home and was taken to the railway station militia department. They had the prisoner get out and gave the driver a half-liter bottle for driving them. At the militia, the interrogator did not state his name, spoke Russian and ordered Regina to speak Russian. The girl spoke only Lithuanian. When she asked why she had been brought here, the interrogator explained that a woman's purse had vanished and she was suspected of having stolen it. Teresiute protested: "Since you are lying, I will not answer at all." The interrogator left without accomplishing anything. The militiaman who had brought her stayed with the young woman. He threatened to have her shot and punished in other ways. To his threats Regina replied: "You are worse offenders, you should therefore be shot first."

"We will hang you!" shouted the militiaman. "You would hang me, but you have no good reason," calmly replied the prisoner. He then ordered the girl to sit in an electric chair. After Regina had sat down, the top of the chair was closed so that only her head and hands could be seen. But this chair did not give her any electric shocks—it was obviously used only to intimidate her.

When he returned, the interrogator was pleased to see the girl enclosed there, but she laughed: "I'm not getting any shocks here. It is very comfortable sitting here and if need be one can even sleep." Because she felt very well, the prisoner decided not to waste her time, took out her rosary and stated her intention: "I will now pray for all of you."

After collecting her thoughts, she prayed for an entire half hour. The interrogator came in and tried to interrupt her prayer, asking in Russian: "So, you believe in God? Maybe you have changed your

mind?" Regina asked him not to interrupt her prayer. Afterward, she was taken to another room where another interrogator who also spoke Russian waited for her: "If you don't want to talk, write," the security agent urged her. Teresiutė picked up paper and pencil and said: "All right, tell me your name and I will write it down. I may need it some day." "When you tell me your name, I will tell you mine," the security agent shouted. After taking away the paper and pencil, he again demanded to see her identification. To his demands, the young woman merely replied: "I did not commit any offense; I crossed the street at the crosswalk, with the green light; I did not bother anyone walking down the street, I did not kick or bite anyone. So why did you bring me here?"

"We suspect you of dealing in the black market, so we brought you here for an investigation." Teresiutė denied this accusation also. After this exchange, she was again left alone.

Several minutes later, a security agent entered and offered her a Lithuanian interrogator. "Your efforts are in vain. I still won't tell you anything." After coming in, the interrogator showed his identification, but the young woman did not have time to either read the name or look at the photograph. After demanding to see her papers, they began to lecture her: "You are so young, so pretty and so stubborn. Tell us and you can go free."

"Don't flatter me, it is useless. You will not move me. If I left guilty, I might be afraid. I don't think that the Soviet militia will incarcerate or hang a completely innocent person, as one of the militiamen here already mentioned. If I am guilty, tell me of what?"

Unable to offer a reply, the security agents agreed with the young woman that she is right. To the question "what am I guilty of?" they replied: "We want to investigate all those who have no papers."

"How did you know I had no papers?"

"You looked suspicious to us . . ." To this day she does not know of what she was suspected. They threatened to take her to security police headquarters. The girl was not intimidated. They then asked where she works: "Perhaps you give concerts or are a conductor?" Miss Teresiutė laughed at their questions: "The militia does not need musicians, so don't expect me to come work for you." The agents then began to intimidate her by saying there are three or four music schools in Vilnius and they will have time to find out and report everything about her. Even then the girl was not afraid.

The interrogator then asked the militiaman who was in

the same room, "Is a car ready. She must be taken to Lenino 40 (security police building)". The militiaman replied that a car was ready. Teresiutė asked where she should now go. The interrogator angrily mumbled: "Get out!" Surprised at being free, she asked in astonishment: "So you will no longer need my name and papers?" "We already know your name!" The time was around 3:00 P.M. With this, the interrogation came to an end.

LETTERS FROM THE GULAG

(Miss) Ona Pranskūnaitė writes

November 2, 1977

My dear, today I visit that garden of the dead in my thoughts. This year, I will not have an opportunity to light a candle on a neglected grave; my heart will not rejoice at thousands of flickering candles; I will not hear any mournful organ prelude, I will not have the good fortune to send to the other shore the graces that flow from Holy Mass. But, in my view, that is not the most important thing. Most important is how one spends the allotted time. I want to find my happiness in doing what I can do

December 24, 1977

Thank you for your Christmas gifts. They did not give them to me. They attached the card and wafer to my personal file. The star on the card baffles them: it does not have five points. They wondered among themselves whether something had not been baked into the wafer (. . .). If possible, could you please send me a package? Its contents should be: .5 kg. (1 lb.) smoked cheese, .5 kg. (1 lb.) butter, and the remaining weight in smoked bacon. The weight of the package not to exceed 5 kgs. (10 lbs). Please do not include sausage, head cheese or other products in the package, because they will not give them to me. The package will reach me in about a month.

. . . A note of longing for the Motherland echoes throughout my letters. Please don't misunderstand me. If God were to wish it and it were useful, I would agree never to see her with my mortal eyes. But the Motherland is very precious and dear to me. And if I were not to tell her of my longing love in words, it would mean I do not love her.

We work hard. Sometimes even 14-15 hours a day, but I feel no particular fatigue. I sleep poorly at night. Songs are heard in the

colony zone at 2:00 A.M.: it is the second shift returning from work. I would not say that those songs ring from a glad heart, they most frequently ring from an inside void . . .

I thank you, children of Mary's Land, for your prayers, concern and longing for good! Day after day, I send to you my countrymen, through God's gracious hands, those gifts which abound in my life. God go with you!

January 8, 1978

I am forbidden to write in Lithuanian, or to receive letters written in Lithuanian. I am fighting this with the local government. They do not believe that Vilnius censors my letters. I will not renounce writing or speaking my native tongue so long as a single drop of warm blood remains in my veins. If in the future you do not receive any letters from me, know that they are forbidden. I would like to continue corresponding, for every contact with people, regardless of the method, brings people together just as a long silence makes them strangers. I've become very stubborn: this is an unfortunate character trait.

The clothing you sent was placed in the personal effects store-room. After I complete my sentence, they will be returned. I was issued a prison-type uniform. We are not supposed to be cold in it, because our "solicitous" officials have so determined. I was given new high top shoes, size 13. Both feet fit into one shoe. If they did not have holes, I could swim across "mother" Volga but because of bad "seams" I sank in the colony yard last fall.

In one letter you wrote that God will perhaps lead me back to the Motherland. My dear, the time to return may come. But I wonder if the specter of death will not meet me on the way home . . .

January 23, 1978

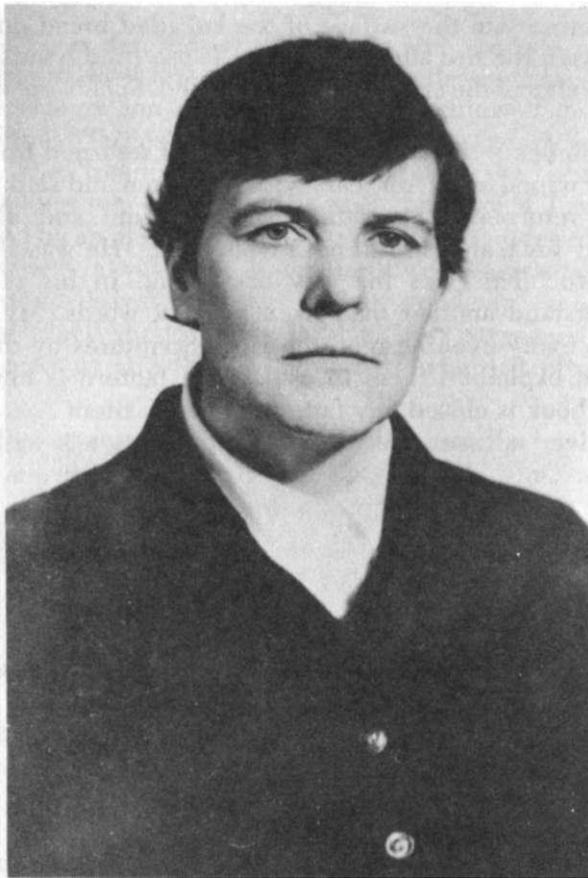
. . . We work very long hours. We only have one free Sunday per month. My health is a little better, but for how long? (. . .)

February 20, 1978

. . . Children of Mary's Land! May God's grace rain dew upon you. Do not be fearfully worried; be wise and strong . . .
Always with you in prayer and suffering and dreams!

March 9, 1978

I wait for your letters. One finally arrived but... it is so heavy,



Ona Pranckūnaitė, referred to as a "nun" by her interrogators. The date of the photo is unknown.

as though made of lead. I wanted to destroy it. But the date: died the 18th, buried the 22nd . . . Buried . . . Someone buried my mother. . .

I did not receive the telegram . . .

Children of Mary's Land! Be devoted to God, be obedient to his every gesture.

March 20, 1978

. . . Before my eyes I see the hands of my mother forever folded in prayer: those hands which led my fragile little hand from brow to breast, teaching me to make the sign of the cross. Those hands which

pressed a cross into the surface of the kneaded bread dough, hands which blessed the fire after lighting it. Those tired hands every time making the sign of the cross over the little bed. Such were my mother's hands.

I remember. . . Many years ago, when I returned from the East, my mother wiped away her tears with her apron and said: "My child, you have returned!" My father gazed at me and also silently wiped away his tears. He did not say anything. He was always silent and watchful. This was his way of rearing. In his view, a man must understand another man even without words. My father, the father who every evening read the Holy Scriptures by the kerosene lantern and explained them to us . . . The lantern is out, the Holy Scriptures book is closed, my father is forever silent. . .

I received all your letters. After this letter I will not write again soon. Only about a half hour is left us between rising and repose. We get enough sleep. We sleep eight hours.

March 26, 1978

This year I did not have the good fortune to take part in the days of assembly—the Palm Sunday ceremonies, the happy Resurrection feast; neither were my eyes gladdened by the Monstrance glittering in the sun's rays, flags fluttering in the spring breeze, the undulating sea of praying souls. But together with you I immersed myself in the solemnity of Lent, with you I walked the Way of the Cross, with you I followed Christ on his way to Jerusalem, spread the palms of my life under His feet, with you I sang "Come, Almighty King," with you escorted Christ to the Repository Altar and thanked Him for remaining in our midst, with you adored Christ's cross and knelt at Christ's grave, singing, "Weep, Angels"; with you, the Christian world, I sang the solemn *Gloria* and, after receiving Christ into my heart and thanking Him for the determined road of life, I wrote:

"You rose, Christ, on the altars,
You rose in my Christian nation,
Rise also in my heart!"

April 23, 1978

Today, the believer must suffer many difficult calvaries for his beliefs: he is slowly killed in deadly security police cellars, at terrifying transfer points, stifled in rail car cells, and, in the end,

he and his love for Christ cooled in the snows of Siberia. And some take fright at this calvary, this slow death. It is very painful when an occasional son of our nation allows himself to be wooed by unscrupulous "fairies" who promise freedom, guarantee life and silver coins. The "freedom" once promised me by the security police does not gladden me. What good is such freedom if I will always be persecuted by an angry, suspicious eye, will be under surveillance everywhere, will always be under scrutiny. Such would be my future freedom. Silver coins . . . What good are they? Today we no longer need the potter's field to bury strangers. Strangers have conquered us and they will bury us where it pleases them.



Ona Pranckūnaitė

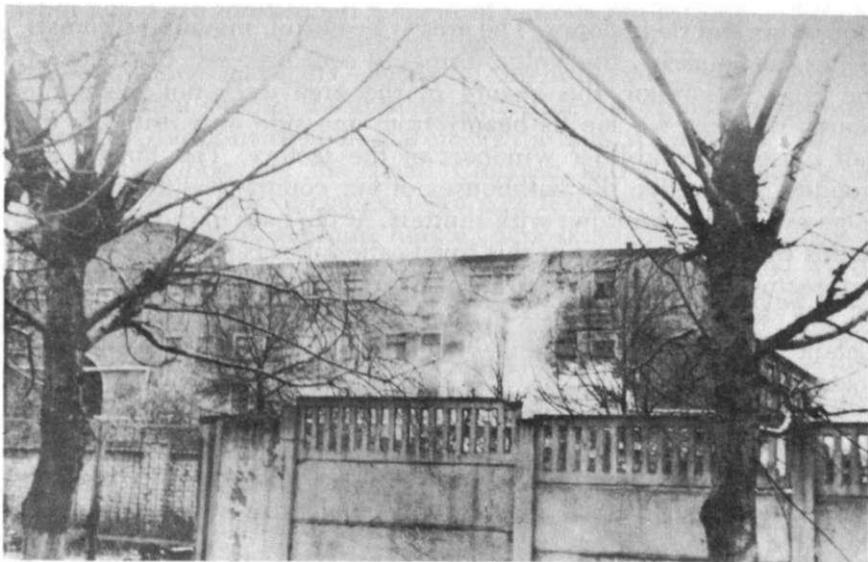
For us, who have the hope of eternal life, it is not so important under what conditions the days of our life end, where the mounds of our graves will be located. It is important for us that our fellow countrymen, carrying Christ's teachings and light and standing on the mounds of their ancestors, feel nobler, stronger and bolder. For we will be held responsible for not preserving and not handing down the light of the Redeemer's teachings

May 1, 1978

. . . In a letter he wrote me, a son of my nation whom I do not know—Aloyzas—included me among the ranks of political prisoners. He is not wrong. Security agents have turned me into one. Though before I did not consider myself a politician and was not involved in politics. As a believer, I was interested in religious literature, I duplicated it, because I understood its usefulness and my Motherland's grave starvation. I also made copies of issues of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, for which I was accused of political activity. I do not and will never consider this publication to be political . . . , because it contains indisputable truth.

The following day my sister sent a telegram about my mother's death. I was not given this telegram. It is as if it never existed. Later, my sister obtained a certificate from the physician, with which she appealed to the Biržai militia chief (where notice had been given of my mother's death), requesting his signature, so that on the strength of this document she could send me a telegram guaranteeing my return. The militia chief refused to sign. He did not confirm that my mother had died. Even though it is common knowledge that without a notice of death a death certificate cannot be issued. I know very well that under the regulations of the Internal Affairs Ministry, a prisoner is released for two weeks from labor camp not only upon the death of the prisoner's parents, but also if the parents' health is in a critical state. But, of course, this does not apply to me

I am often searched here. And I alone! During one search, they confiscated my rosary, which I had managed to safeguard for nine months. They also did not return the picture of Christ's Nativity and the wafer. Someone enclosed two Easter pictures in Easter greeting letters. I was not given them. The camp warden sternly asked: "Well, should we again attach these pictures to your personal file?"



Leather factory where O. Pranckūnaitė worked.

"Only to the file! I want my file to be adorned with religious articles!" I would like to ask about the freedom of belief proclaimed by Rev. C.(eslovas) Krivaitis? I suggest that such people follow the example of V. (ladas) Lapienis, whom I met on this painful road. He does not know what lying and hypocrisy are. What a perfect man!

Brothers and sisters in Christ, do not fear the crosswinds of this time period! God gives misfortune, He also gives the strength to bear it. The brothers who have sold their conscience for a bowl of soup need to repent, the persecutors need to repent, we also need to repent ourselves.

May 1, 1978

... I spent last spring in the gloomy security police building. There the prisoners' days pass slowly. The city full of hot spring sun, but it never peered through the cellar windows. The cell was cold and damp. Only when we went out into the "pens" to walk around, did we feel the reviving warmth of spring. . . .

May 1978

You are probably wondering what kind of city Kozlovka is. It consists of three villages joined together, spread out over the

mountains and their slopes. The area is beautiful: mountains, forests, slopes, and nearby, the Volga, bringing cool breezes. But because the land is foreign, the beauty of the area does not move our hearts. Besides, we see its beauty from one side only, through the half closed second-floor windows of the factory. The houses are wooden, small (like the bathhouses of our country), with one, two, some even three windows with shutters. At the base of the mountains stands the bread-winner of this town—the labor camp. The vegetating creatures of the labor camp are also included among the inhabitants of the town of Kozlovka. I have heard that in the not so distant past these three villages were famous for their numbers of goats.

As we approached the town of Kozlovka by train, we were met by a labor camp vehicle and guards. After another 300 meters we plunged into a fortress of two stone walls and two barbed-wire fences. We walked unabashedly about this fortress because we felt at home

We were housed on the second floor of a stone building. It is here that our days slip by. They slip by slowly and uniformly. In this



This is the special dormitory where, together with criminal prisoners resided Ona Prancūnaitė.

labor camp are imprisoned women of various professions and those who once held various positions: engineers, teachers, doctors, book-keepers, store managers, heads of identification papers offices, students from various institutions, petty thieves, drunks, prostitutes, murderers, black-marketeers and one for the faith, whom you know.

Not so long ago the small Chuvash nation was considered half-wild. Although, of course, even now it is not very far from wild. The people are of medium height, dark-skinned and dark-haired. They wear strange hairy coverings. Many wear on their backs words written in large white letters which we cannot understand. The Chuvash women imprisoned here have nearly all without exception been convicted of murder, for the people of this small nation are very fierce Otherwise, all without exception scrupulously keep the laws because their god is the Soviet Union.

Consequently, the labor camp is very strict. Camp living conditions are particularly harsh. Because the camp warden does not have anyone to translate my letters, she has for a long time been sending them to be censored to the Panevėžys militia. At the urging of Vilnius, she has surrounded me with spies. Spies are as plentiful as snakes in the forest! Some of them have visited and know Kaunas well, others visited Vilnius, others still know Moscow well, etc. But Ona has not been anywhere and does not know anything. If the camp warden does not receive any supplementary information, she sometimes runs up to me, places her arms around me and asks a question like, "Tell me, what is your schooling?" "It's in my file!" I reply.

"It's not true!" she shouts back, running from me. I'm truly sorry for those who suffer needlessly. I cannot help.

About myself I can write the following: In this framework, in this atmosphere which shackles me, I feel at peace. Almost normal. I am neither a slave nor a queen, only a person. For myself, I yearn for nothing and choose nothing. I rest like a child in God's protecting arms. I wanted to write you, but did not have an opportunity to do so, that the camp authorities have for a long time been concerned about my health. In January of this year they wanted to send me to the Kemera District, in other words, into exile, but the camp assistant warden objected, stating I would not be able to tolerate the climate and work in that region. Exiles there work on farms and in fields. Presently they are still deliberating what to do with me. You know, the camp authorities try to change the "departure" station for those who are preparing for eternity. Three

weeks ago a 22-year old girl died in our camp. They leave . . .

Children of Mary's land, remember us when your weary knees
bend at Mary's altar!

May 14, 1978

On May 4th there dawned unexpectedly a morning bringing us freedom. Really! That morning's dawn dispelled the shadows of night from our lives. On May 4th, sixteen of us were paroled from our camp. That day a militia official and the assistant director of the factory which intended to employ us arrived from the city of Ulyanovsk. Kozlovka is about 300 km. (185 miles) from Ulyanovsk. We left Kozlovka about 4:00 P.M. and arrived in Ulyanovsk at about 9:00 A.M. the following day. We were tired and cold from the trip. Despite the cold, by morning we had nonetheless plunged into the realm of dreams. When we opened our sleepy eyes, a sun-dappled forest beckoned us at a distance. After passing the forest, we saw the factory chimneys of Ulyanovsk. We were housed in a two story dormitory. The room is clean, about 18 sq. m. (190 sq. ft.) in size. With me live three women who have murdered their husbands. The room's two windows are decorated with bars. When we were given physicals, the doctors expressed doubts about my health. The management of the leather tanning factory had already assigned us work, but the doctors would not consent to the work assigned me without any steady work for two days, sending me from one job to another and felling me to choose my own work. I did not choose. There was nothing to choose. The smell of emulsifiers and dyes, and the heat is pervasive. They assigned a job at their own discretion. The first days were hard. The work does not seem too bad.

Four militiamen live in our dormitory with their families. They take turns standing guard day and night. There is an inspection at 10:00 P.M. We must also register every Sunday at this dormitory. Before work, after work and on Sundays we can freely walk around the city, go to the mountains and for a swim in the Volga, etc. But we must return to the dormitory by 10:00 P.M. It is much better here than in the labor camp. Though the first months were hard. We have started our lives from scratch with needle, match and spoon

June 4, 1978

We are allowed to receive an unlimited number of letters,

packages and money orders and everything they contain. No one checks anything here and there are no restrictions. Do not send anything, because I want to accept the present moment as God ordained it from eternity. For it is beneficial for a person to experience the taste of cold and hunger and other privations.

Today is Sunday. I went to the small Orthodox church to offer up the cherry blossom you sent. As you know, Orthodox churches do not have altars on which flowers may be offered. I approached almost stealthily the painting of the Crucified Christ which depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary lost in sorrow on one side, and St. John on the other, and secretly offered up as a gift to Mary from all the children of her beloved land a blossom from my Motherland's orchards.

. . . When you write a letter, please enclose a large needle. There are none in Ulyanovsk..If we work twenty days per month we are paid sixty rubles. In this place, one can only feed oneself for that much money. This city has no butter, meat or sausages at all; bacon is sold in special stores. It costs 5.47 rubles per kg. (2.2 lbs.). We do not buy meat products and do not worry about them. We eat milk, bread and potatoes. Milk is like whitened water: after a bottle of milk is consumed, there is no need to wash the bottle, it is clean . . . In packages could you please include, of course, if they are available in the stores, the following food products: a few kilograms of fruit gelatin and some cheap coffee or cocoa. These food products are unavailable in Ulyanovsk. . .

My dear, please don't be upset over the fact that your mail box is broken into and my letters read . . . I know very well that those who are interested in my letters are security agents and I hide nothing from them.

. . . I went to this city's sole small Orthodox church . . . When I left, I could not stop being amazed at the size of the crowd. I am astonished that, though God's name has for so long been and still is being erased from the hearts of this nation's people, it cannot be completely erased. I once visited the dormitory supervisor. In his nicely furnished apartment my astonished eyes saw religious pictures hanging in places of honor. My heart was glad . . .

July 3, 1978

I still do the same work, i.e., tan leather. When I glance at those million-ruble hills of hides, a baffling question forces itself into my mind: into what country did the live-stock flee after shedding its hide?

Or perhaps it is now fashionable to walk around with no hide? If they had been slaughtered, there would be meat in the stores. The stores are empty: there are no heads, no hooves, no tails. There really are none!

. . . My nation, walk with a firm step on the paths consecrated by the blood and sweat of heroes and feel your hand in the Lord's palm. In the nation's churches, remember us and all who are suffering misfortune!

Ona Pranskūnaitė

Vladas Lapienis writes

(. . .) Ofcourse, it would be more pleasant for you if I told only of good news from the labor camp. But why deceive myself and others? Reality intrudes on its own (. . .). Due to negligence, I received *Tiesa (Truth)* only beginning August 2nd, but still do not get the magazine *Nauka i iizn (Science and Life)* and the newspaper *Neuer Leben (New Life)*. I do not know where two months worth of *Komjaunimo tiesa (Truth of the Communist Youth)* disappeared, as well as certain other newspapers and magazines.

The authorities of the third colony know quite well where I am because several of the letters you sent to Barashev were forwarded to me here at Camp 19. However, other letters from you as well as other people, sent to the old address, were returned to the senders, more than a thousand kilometers away, instead of being forwarded to the neighboring 19th camp . . .

September 10, 1978

Vladas Lapienis

Petras Paulaitis writes

May 19, 1978

. . . I remember and carry in my heart nearly all the people with whom I suffered common misfortunes during 1958-1961. Only God knows how many of them still remember me. But that is not so important. What is important is that they be good persons and live good, happy lives. From January 30, 1961 to April 1, 1974 I lived in the "zebra" kingdom. I do not know whether because of my weaker health (my legs began to swell in the damp and cramped cells) I was transferred to a less strict regime camp. From there to another, and again to another, but always to where there were fewer people and less living space. And the benefit is merely that we are in unlocked cells, with barless windows and have a different uniform

—one without stripes. In other words—nothing good. One can feel everywhere the trend toward worse conditions. But so far we get enough of that daily bread. And there were days when we feasted on bread only in our dreams. You ask if you can send money and whether one can buy anything. Money can be sent, but we don't see it and can spend no more than 7-9 rubles per month in the camp store. And those who have transgressed against the authorities in some way or have not filled their work quotas are deprived partially or completely of the right to use the store.

Everyone is forced to work. The infirm are assigned a special number of hours they can work. For instance, I am assigned to work six hours, but in fact I work much longer. Of course, the work is not in the fields or forests, but there is enough strain. The most important thing is that you keep constantly busy. So I still earn enough money to buy things. It is difficult to say how this work and pay will go in the future, because I've already been pulling the yoke under Russia's domination since April 12, 1947 with no vacation, with no "repairs", with no quiet moment. And furthermore what food do we get for this work? What maintenance?

Moses directed the Jews not to muzzle working oxen (for the hungry animals picked up in passing mouthfuls of hay or a corn cob). But here the disseminators of a new civilization and humanitarianism are doing the complete opposite: they promulgate all kinds of "new constitutions," and they supplement them with secret instructions, not publicized anywhere except in the corridors of our barracks which muzzle us so we will stay hungry, will not talk, will not moan. But people who are split up, divided, scattered into small groups and shut in inaccessible "wells," suffer and remain silent. I am silent also, but I believe in Divine Providence. Without It not a single hair falls to the ground. And "fiat voluntas Tua!" (Your will be done!) "Good comes from every evil." Freedom is precious.

No parcels of books, magazines or newspapers are allowed. Nothing can be sent or received, except two 1-kg (2.2 lbs) parcels and one 1.5-kg (3.3 lbs) package per year. Newspapers and magazines can be subscribed with one's own money through the camp administration. But the press we subscribe to quite often disappears, and is nearly always late. It is frightening: we haven't seen a good book for a long time now—they give us neither printed nor written language. "Let Lithuania (the prisoners)," they

say, "be ignorant and dark (backward and downtrodden)".

Living conditions are also very poor. It is impossible to list all the hardships and shortages. Medical care is poor, the pharmacy has almost nothing for us. I have long been bothered by corns on my feet. It is "sweet" to remember shoes, but there is nothing here to heal them with . . .

But I have no wife or mother. It is fortunate that the world is not without good people. Each in his own way, through the support and prayer of good people, I am into the 31st year of my sentence. And only four and a half years remain. On October 20, 1982 I will complete giving the conqueror the terrible tribute of the innocent.

But I must finish. Because the fences of our "well" are high, the letter may not be able to climb them. (He asks for plasters to heal his corns, envelopes, cookies, fudge candy, postal stamps . . .).

Please believe that I write all this and blush like a lobster. . . Above all I ask that you remember me in your prayers at the Lord's altar.

Please convey my greetings to our common friends when you see them.

Petras Paulaitis

WEDDING IN THE GULAG

On June 28, 1978 Miss Irena Dumbrytė received a notice addressed from Mordovskaya ASSR, Zubovo — Polianski r-on, pos. Sosnovka uc. ZX 385/1. The notice was signed by Camp Warden A.A. Satayev and Bureau Chief V.S. Davydov. She was being notified that her marriage to Balys Gajauskas will be registered on July 27, 1978. If unable to arrive at the appointed time, she is asked to write in advance.

On the appointed day, I. Dumbrytė arrived at Sosnovka accompanied by Rev. J. Zdebskis and her sister L. Šulskienė. Because Dumbrytė is a Catholic, she wanted the civil marriage ceremony to be strengthened by a church ceremony for which two witnesses are necessary. She was also carrying out Balys' request that a priest be present at this ceremony.

Upon arriving, she proceeded to the special bureau to inform them that she was prepared for the marriage. She was told that the

time of the ceremony would be relayed by telephone to the dormitory where she was staying. She waited for the call all day, but it never came. The morning of the 27th, Miss Dumbryté again went to the special bureau. There she was told that they have no telephone contact with Yovas, and cannot make the call. She was again told to go back to the dormitory and wait. At 3:00 P.M. they were notified to come to the labor camp gate and wait. Dumbryté with her sister Laima and the Rev. Juozas Zdebskis waited a half hour at the gate.

When Irena Dumbryté brought the documents for the marriage to the special bureau on June 5, 1978, she had been told that two witnesses may come with her and will be permitted to attend the marriage registration ceremony. But now the witnesses were not admitted into the marriage ceremony room.

The entire process of registering the marriage took 10-15 minutes. All the documents had already been prepared, they only needed to be signed. Dumbryté was led into the room first, then Balys Gajauskas. He came dressed in striped camp clothes, high-top boots, head shaved and stated that this was his "best suit." His finance came dressed in a white wedding gown . . .

When the documents were being handled at the special bureau, it had been promised that a three-day private visit would be granted the newlyweds after the marriage ceremony, but when Dumbryté came to the marriage registration, the camp warden notified her that she would not be granted a private visit because Balys had already had a two-day private visit with his mother (although he is entitled to three) on June 6th and would not be granted another. They would still consider granting a regular visit and would let them know the following day.

The morning of the following day Dumbryté-Gajauskienė travelled to Yavas to see assistant camp warden Novikov. He sharply told Gajauskienė that she would not be granted a visit, and moreover the visit is granted to Balys and not her. Trying to hide her tears, Gajauskienė ran from the office.

Upon returning to Sosnovka, Gajauskienė again went to see camp warden Nekrasov about a regular visit. She wrote a statement and waited two hours at the camp gate until a camp guard condescended to come out and take her statement. Gajauskienė was notified several hours later that a two-hour regular visit had been granted. She was told to be at the special office gate at 3:30 P:M.

Gajauskienė was let into the visit room first and was told to sit

behind the table which stood near the window and a guard sat down next to the table. Approximately 2-2 1/2 meters (6 1/2-8 feet) away stood another table near the door. Shortly, Gajauskas was led into the room and told to sit behind the other table and another camp guard sat down next to him. The doors to the room were kept open to the hallway and people kept coming in and out for the purpose of disturbing and interrupting the conversation. On her way to the visit, Irena took with her a handbag which was confiscated from her during the visit and returned at its end. Gajauskienė had hoped to be granted a private visit and had brought food products with her, but it was clear there was no chance of handing them to Balys. She told her husband she had food products but is not allowed to give them to him. The camp guard offered to act as go-between because such products are scarce here, but Balys warned his wife that if she were to hand these products to the guards, she would be charged with black-marketeering and imprisoned for several years.

During the visit, the Gajauskases were forced to speak Russian although both are Lithuanian. The guards assured them that a Lithuanian-speaking censor could only come to the camp in one or even several weeks. And so they were forced to speak Russian. The camp guards continually broke into the conversation. Neither at the beginning nor at the end of the visit could the newlyweds at least touch hands in greeting.

They will be granted a second private visit only in a year. The camp warden stated that Balys could receive demerits and not be granted a private visit even after a year. Such a spirit of humaness dominates the jungles of the present-day Gulag.

A civil marriage is not recognized by the Church. Due to the existing complicated circumstances, Father Juozas Zdebskis received permission from the bishop for the couple to exchange vows and themselves receive Holy Communion. They were able to exchange vows, but when Gajauskienė wanted her husband to receive the Blessed Sacrament, the camp guards ridiculed them and did not allow them to receive.

The long-awaited and dreamed-of "visit" came to an end. The guards shut the camp gate. Through a crack in the still partially open gate, she saw in the middle of the yard Balys' raised waving hand, and further behind him waved a group of his friends, proving the unbreakable spirit of political prisoners . . .

The newspaper *Begegnung* (1978—7), published in East Berlin by leftist Catholics, reported on the life of Catholics in Kishinev (Moldovian SSR) and mentioned something more; that is, "the illegal underground press" being published in Lithuania. According to *Begegnung* no one guarantees the accuracy of the information reported by this press and responsible publishers should not rely on anonymous information, as does *Petrusblatt* published in West Berlin when it presents a distorted picture of the situation of seminarians in the Soviet Union.

It quotes from the April 30, 1978 issue of *Petrusblatt*: "Young Catholic men of the Ukraine, Belorussia and other countries are not allowed to study at the Kaunas and Riga Seminaries." As a rebuttal to this so-called deceitful statement, the pastor of Kishinev the Rev. Vladislav Zavalniuk, is held up as an example: he is a 26-year old Ukrainian who trained at the Riga Seminary . . .

It is true that young men from other republics can train in Riga or Kaunas—if they receive permission. But such good fortune rarely smiles on anyone. Most often, they enroll in the seminary as citizens of the republic of Lithuania or Latvia, after establishing residence here and registering and finding some kind of work. There is reason to believe that Zavalniuk also reached the seminary by this road.

After accusing others of spreading false information *Begegnung* should know that not even every citizen of these republics is granted permission to enter the seminary, and citizens of other republics all the more face obstacles to enrollment.

Begegnung writes that according to the Western press "seminarians and priests are security police agents" in the Soviet Union, while the pastor of Kishinev is known as a zealous and pious priest, which clearly unmask the assertions of *Petrusblatt* and other like newspapers.

Perhaps *Begegnung* sees it differently, but anyone who has studied at the seminary knows how zealously the security police seeks agents there . . .

C U L T U R A L G E N O C I D E C O N T I N U E S I N L I T H U A N I A

From the very first year of Soviet occupation, diverse measures have been used in Lithuania to tear, shred, burn and otherwise destroy Lithuanian and other language books, which in their

contents, through various thoughts and ideas, hinder the occupant and local collaborators from implementing their fatal plans for Lithuania—break the Lithuanians morally and then deprive them all of their national identity.

This persecution of the Lithuanian printed word and its physical destruction is still being implemented today. It is true that this printed word does not always "offend" the occupant. It sometimes passes through three censorship filters (author, editor, state censor). However, even then it can be destroyed. It is destroyed through special directives if the author later somehow transgresses against the government or is simply not pleasing. This time, this fate befell author and poet T.(omas) Venclova, a courageous defender of human rights in Lithuania who was forced by KGB persecution to emigrate to the United States.

We reprint below the shameful documents, sent to library directors and book store managers, which disclose the lack of logic and the "culture" and morals of those at whose initiative such directives and orders are issued.

We omit the date of issue, number, copy number of the directive and address of the person to whom the following documents were sent.

For internal use.

Copy No.

Chief Administration in Charge of Monitoring State Secrets in the Press under the Lithuanian SSR Council of Ministers (LSSR Glavlit).

(Addressee of letter and directive)

Re: The withdrawal of T. Venclova's books from libraries and the book sales network.

Enclosed please find directive No. 1-nt dated May 10, 1978 of the Chief Administration in Charge of Monitoring State Secrets in the Press under the Lithuanian SSR Council of Ministers, regarding the withdrawal of T. Venclova's books from libraries and the book sales network.

Please issue the appropriate instructions so that the libraries within your jurisdiction will withdraw from their stock without further delay and use the necessary procedure to delete the books named in the directive.

Enclosed — Directive No. 1-nt, copy No

B. Gurvičius
Assistant Director of the
Chief Administration

Chief Administration in Charge of Monitoring State Secrets in
the Press under the LSSR Council of Ministers.

Directive

No. 1-nt May 10, 1978

Re: The withdrawal of T. Venclova's books from libraries and the
book sales network.

Withdraw from libraries and the book sales network the following
books by T. Venclova:

*Golemas, arba dirbtinis žmogus (Golemas, or the Artificial
Man)*. Vilnius, Vaga publishers, 1965, 272 p. 12 ill. p., 8,000
copies.

Kalbos ženklas (Symbol of Speech). Poetry. Vilnius, Vaga
publishers, 1972. 64 p. 8,000 copies.

Raketos, planetos ir mes (Rockets, Planets and We). Vilnius,
State Belles-Lettres pub. 1962. 167 p. Illustrated. 10,000 copies.

M. Slizevičius
Director of the Chief Administration

AT THE KAUNAS SEMINARY

It was reported in the middle of September that the Soviet govern-
ment has granted permission to twenty seminarians to study at the
Kaunas Seminary. The following seminarians were admitted to the
first-year class: Stanislovas Anužis, Gediminas Bulevičius, Pranas
Čivilis, Kazimieras Daugla, Romualdas Dulskis, Algirdas Gave-
nauskas, Algis Genutis, Jonas Ivanauskas, Donatas Jasiulaitis,
Remigijus Jonkus, Stanislovas Kazėnas, Algirdas Kildušis, Simutis
Marciukevičius, Petras Matukevič, Petras Purlys, Gvidas Pušinaitis,
Vidas Saukaitis, Jonas Šutkevič, Virginijus Veilentas, Juozas Kli-
mavičius.

Seminarian Juozas Klimavičius was granted a one-year leave of
absence from the Seminary to work for the government in payment
for tuition (he is a film technician).

Seminarian Rimas Dalgėda from the Vilnius diocese has perma-
nently withdrawn from the second-year class.

Seminarian Algis Kazlauskas from the Vilnius archdiocese was

expelled from the senior class.

This year those who entered the Seminary were, like before, recruited to work as KGB agents.

Certain seminarians—Kazimieras Meilus, Vladas Petraitis, Antanas Gylys and others—were summoned to the Kaunas KGB department for interrogation at the beginning of the academic year. The interrogations centered around Petras Plažukas who is currently expelled from the Seminary by the civil government.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESE

Congratulatory Telegram

Kaunas

Holy Father,

Immediately upon hearing the news "Habemus Papam" and seized by a strong impulse of joy, we hurry to Rome with prayer, heart and telegram and express our pleasure, love and respect on behalf of the Lithuanian clergy (though for technical reasons we could not reach everyone), the faithful and all who hold the faith and the Church more dear than personal life. Moreover, we solemnly declare: Lithuania is ever loyal to the Apostles' Throne.

You, Holy Father, more than anyone else, fully understands our problems, hopes and expectations. May the affairs of the Catholic Church in Lithuania also find an appropriate place in your noble heart. And we will incessantly pray the Almighty, through the honorable servant of God Archbishop Jurgis Matulevičius, to grant you His countless blessings and assistance in fulfilling the vital expectations of millions of believers and people of good will.

Lithuania — Kaunas

Priests: Mykolas Buožius, Pranciškus Gaižauskas, Liudvikas Siemaška, Jonas Rakauskas, Jonas Kazlauskas, Jonas Augustauskas, Juozas Vaičeliūnas, Romas Macevičius, Juozas Čepėnas, Alfonsas Svarinskas.

Atheists Are Concerned About Church Discipline

Our bishops and administrators go to the countryside to administer the sacrament of Confirmation only a few times per year. This means that the sacrament is administered in only two places in the diocese, not counting the center. It is therefore not surprising that an extraordinarily large crowd of people results, the necessary solemnity is not maintained, and people are exhausted. Church law (canons) require a bishop to visit a parish at least every five years, but bishops are not allowed to meet this requirement. There are many parishes where the sacrament of confirmation has not been administered for twenty or more years.

The situation in the Vilnius diocese is even more distressing. The diocesan administrator Č.(eslovas) Krivaitis has withdrawn from pastoral work for several years: he has withdrawn from the altar, the pulpit and the confessional. He approaches the altar only in the churches of Vilnius during important feasts. Moreover, he has become notorious as a zealous party-goer. The people are outraged and priests are ashamed to allow him into their churches to administer the sacrament of Confirmation. In accordance with canon law, the pastors began this summer (1978) to administer themselves this sacrament to their parishioners (in Adučiškis, Dubinčiai, Klesnikai, Eišišké, Butrimonys, Valkininkai). It was very convenient for the people: everything was conducted in their native language, there were no crowds (the Sacrament was administered only to older teenagers).

The atheists became very disturbed at this. Nearly all these priests and certain deans (in Švenčionėliai) had to explain to *Rayon* authorities why they are disrupting discipline, why they do not make arrangements with administrator Č. Krivaitis. They are warned to renounce this idea or suffer the consequences.

How should we view this concern by atheist organs that priests obey this administrator?

Viduklė

To: Religious Affairs Commissioner P. Anilionis.

I received your letter directing me to come to Vilnius at 10:00 A.M. on October 3rd of this year.

I will not be able to come for the following reasons:

At present, my colleague is ailing and I am working alone. It is

quite impossible for me to leave my duties for a longer length of time.

The letter does not state the purpose of the visit. We priests are accustomed to the Commissioner's diverse attacks and scoldings. Over the long years it has become customary that the accuser is right and the priest is always considered guilty. It is therefore necessary to prepare for such visits beforehand: review various codes and USSR international agreements.

The Council for Religious Affairs does not fulfill its assigned role—be a mediator between the state and the Church—but is the official whip of the godless to punish priests, scold them and transfer them from place to place. It does not mediate, but helps destroy the Church.

I feel it is senseless to drive 400 km (250 miles) by car to and from Vilnius in 8 hours for a routine scolding. Besides, Raseiniai or Viduklė is just as suitable a place for a scolding.

Last time, I was summoned to Vilnius on January 19th of this year. I therefore have neither the desire nor the energy to travel to Vilnius so frequently.

In the future, it would be more appropriate to act through the Chancery Office.

Viduklė

10/2/1978

Pastor of Viduklė

Rev. A. Svarinskas

Raseiniai

The *Rayon* newspapers of Raseiniai, Jurbarkas and Šakiai wrote about the Rev. A. Lazdauskas who works as a priest while married and dupes the faithful. The Jurbarkas *Rayon* newspaper *Šviesa (Light)* writes: "We must also question the sincerity of the pastors of Paluobiai, Skirsnemunė and other parishes. It is with good reason that, in a letter to the editor, the faithful were outraged at P. Račiūnas who often uses the services of A. Lazdauskas . . ."

A number of pastors—Rev. P. Račiūnas, Rev. M. Buožius, Rev. V. Požėla—responded to this rebuke in their sermons. Rev. A. Lazdauskas is an Eastern rite Catholic priest and has the right to perform the duties of a priest. It is not the atheists' business to interfere in internal Church affairs.

The atheist government became concerned about Rev. A. Lazdauskas as well as other underground priests because they perform their duties without the government's permission. The government is

very much opposed to having new priests appear without its blessing.

Ignalina

To: Secretary General of the Soviet Union Communist Party
Central Committee, Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet
Presidium, L. Brezhnev.

Copies to: USSR Commissioner for Religious Affairs,
LSSR Supreme Soviet Presidium,
LSSR Commissioner for Religious Affairs,
Chancery of the Vilnius Archdiocese.

A Statement from: The Church of Ignalina
Ignalina, Lithuanian SSR.

In 1975, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was signed by 35 nations in Helsinki. Since you, Mr. Secretary General, personally signed the said document, it should follow that the rights and freedoms it enumerates are also guaranteed to Soviet Union citizens. It contains the statement: "The participating nations will respect fundamental human rights and freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief for all, regardless of differences of race, sex, language or religion." In other words, the document affirms complete freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief. And both the USSR Constitution (article 52) and the Lithuanian SSR Constitution (article 50)—though more narrowly—also guarantee the freedom of conscience to USSR citizens, that is, the right "to profess any religion whatsoever or not profess any, practice religious cults."

In practical life, we, the faithful of Ignalina, cannot fully enjoy the right to practice religious cults, because we do not have the necessary facilities. Our present church is an ordinary dilapidated house which cannot accommodate all the faithful. Currently (according to January 1978 statistics) 4,800 people live in Ignalina. Most are believers. Ignalina is the *Rayon* center, to which many people come on Sundays on various business. Most try to fulfill their religious obligations, i.e. they wish to attend Holy Mass. In addition to the faithful, tourists come here in large numbers from all the republics, especially from Leningrad, Moscow . . . Our so-called church cannot accommodate everyone: People are forced to stand in the street in the cold and rain.

The still unfinished church of the Ignalina Parish was appropriated in post-war years by the local government and converted into a cultural center. For the purpose of having it returned to us, we have written many statements to various offices. Among them:

1) March 14, 1971 1,026 persons signed a statement to the Chairman of the LSSR Council of Ministers;

2) April 7, 1971 a statement from the church committee to the same body;

3) April 13, 1971 our pastor I. Jakutis was summoned to see LSSR Religious Affairs Commissioner Rugienis on this matter;

4) May 24, 1974, the church committee wrote a statement to the LSSR Religious Affairs Commissioner;

5) June 14, 1974 a statement to the Chairman of the Ignalina *Rayon* Executive Committee;

6) 1974 The church committee and delegations of believers, as well as individuals, made many appeals to the Ignalina *Rayon* Executive Committee;

7) Sept. 9, 1975, upon the completion of the new cultural center in Ignalina, a delegation of church committee members went to see the Religious Affairs Commissioner, but the Commissioner refused to meet with it;

8) September 10, 1975 a statement written to you, Mr. Secretary General;

9) September 13, 1975 the church committee again went to see the LSSR Religious Affairs Commissioner;

10) January 19, 1976 statement to the Chairman of the Ignalina *Rayon* Executive Committee;

11) February 4, 1976 statement written to the LSSR Council of Ministers;

12) February 19, 1976 another statement to you, Mr. Secretary General;

13) April 24, 1976 statement to the LSSR Religious Affairs Commissioner;

14) 1977 Religious Affairs Commissioner K. Tumėnas orally pledged to allow the present church to be rebuilt-expanded. At our request, our pastor I. Jakutis made many trips to Vilnius to see the Religious Affairs Commissioner, as did we the members of the church committee, but the promises were not kept.

It is strange that we received not a single reply from a single office, not even from you, Mr. Secretary General, except for an occasional notification that our statement had been forwarded

to a lower office. Why was it necessary to forward it and then to a lower office, when the appropriate agencies were sent copies of the statement? Is this not a way to avoid considering our statements and giving them concrete replies?

Today, the people of Ignalina enjoy their new cultural center, but do not yet enjoy a church. But we hope that this time you will grant our request and will return our church.

Signed by 19 members of the church committee

Ignalina 10/10/1978

We await a reply:

LSSR Ignalina

Laisvės 8

M. Juodagalvis

Šiauliai

After Easter 1978, a group of believers from Šiauliai went to see their pastor, the Rev. Mažonavičius, to learn why the pastor does not allow children to serve at Holy Mass, why the church bells are not rung, why the pastor removes Eucharistic Society pins from children and why teenagers who serve at Mass are not allowed to make the Stations of the Cross. (At the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Šiauliai, school children make the Stations of the Cross before evening services).

The pastor Rev. Mažonavičius replied that he has enough altar boys and that the church is not a home for children [? — Ed. note.] As for the bells, the pastor explained that they are rung during important holy days. [Two times a year — Ed. note.].

The pastor denied removing Eucharistic Society pins but has simply forbidden the children to wear them.

The pastor also confirmed that he forbids altar boys to make the Stations of the Cross.

New priests ordained during the previous year were planning to concelebrate Holy Mass together at the Sts. Peter and Paul Church in Šiauliai on May 18, 1978, at which time the sermon was to have been preached by their classmate Rev. J. Kauneckas. Catering to the wishes of the government, Rev. Mažonavičius did not allow Rev. Kauneckas to preach. The newly-ordained priests then invited Rev. K.(arolis) Garuckas from Ceikiniai. At the last minute, when the church was full of people, the pastor also forbade Father Garuckas

to preach the sermon, giving the excuse that the civil government might be displeased, etc.

It is very unfortunate that there is so much fear in the pastor's work. The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* advises Father Mažonavičius to change his course of action or cedd his position of pastor to a more courageous priest.

Klaipeda

On December 10, 1977 the faithful of Klaipeda appealed to the Religious Affairs Commissioner's office in Vilnius, asking that at the very least permission be granted to enlarge the present church and do repair work. Among other things, the statement affirms: "The present church is too small. On ordinary Sundays people must stand outside even in the cold and rain; the church's floor is cement. . . There are no facilities to store church articles . . ."

In fact, the situation of the faithful of Klaipeda is truly lamentable. People faint during services. The faithful ask the Administrator of the Telšiai Diocese and the pastor of the Klaipeda church to take a more active interest in the affairs of their church.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* supports the faithful of Klaipeda and notes that Catholics themselves do not sufficiently rattle the doors of government agencies about their difficult situation.

Telšiai

On July 14, 1978, the pastor of the Cathedral Rev. J. Pačinskas and assistant pastor Rev. J. Kauneckas were summoned to the Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee. Chairman Rasimavičius of the Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee spoke with them, in the presence of Education Department Director Savickis.

Chairman Rasimavičius asked what complaints Rev. Kauneckas had before the Executive Committee. The latter replied that, in connection with the destruction of the wayside shrine, his telephone had been disconnected illegally. He had written the Executive Committee on the matter. Chairman Rasimavičius accusingly stated: "It is known that the Rev. Kauneckas, along with other believers, signed a letter of protest to Brezhnev about the destruction of the wayside shrine and other matters." The assistant pastor explained: "The criticism and demands voiced in the protest are accurate; therefore I signed it." Rasimavičius yielded: "And we do not consider

it slander. We have taken the protest under advisement and will take appropriate action."

The chairman then expressed his displeasure at the fact that the truths of the faith are expounded during services at the Cathedral. In his view, those are meetings which are not related to the practice of religion. If Father Kauneckas does not cease organizing such meetings, the Executive Committee will dismiss the church committee. If even this is not effective, the Telšiai religious community will be closed down. Moreover, the priest who now works in Telšiai could find himself in Upyna (the smallest parish in the Telšiai *Rayon* without a priest).

On July 17th, the Telšiai Cathedral church committee and the pastor, Father Pačinskas were summoned to the Telšiai *Rayon* executive Committee. They were charged, under the 7/28/1976 decree of the LSSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, with holding meetings in the Cathedral not related to religious practice.

Church committee member Jalinskas demanded to see the said decree, but was given a sharp reply and the document was nonetheless not shown.

In like manner, the *Rayon* Executive Committee harassed the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Telšiai. Choir practice was forbidden there because children sing in the choir, although choirs are not forbidden by the 7/18/1976 decree. Is it possible that the chairman of the *Rayon* Executive Committee himself does not know the law?! Where must the people of the *Rayon* turn if the highest *Rayon* government tramples their rights? When the faithful appeal to the highest USSR government agencies, all complaints are returned to the *Rayons*. Complaints in the Soviet Union are thus investigated by the very ones who break the law.

It is even worse when priests yield to the illegal demands of officials and themselves suppress the religious life of the faithful. For example, intimidated by the *Rayon* Executive Committee, the pastor of the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Telšiai, the Rev. Bagdonas, himself forbade the organist to hold choir practice.

On August 6, 1978, during the Porciuncula Devotions, Inspector Vendzinskis of the Telšiai Finance department arrived at the Cathedral during services and demanded that the priest forbid the sale of religious articles. When the priests stated that no laws forbid the sale of religious articles, he personally, with the help of city

hoodlums, assailed the religious article vendors, chased them from the churchyard, confiscated their religious articles. How democratic of the Soviet government—its officials work together with hoodlums!

Pandėlys

The faithful of Pandėlys and the surrounding area were expecting the arrival of His Excellency the Bishop of Panevėžys on July 30th. The local Soviet activists were not dozing either. During the night of July 28th to 29th, their henchmen removed the iron churchyard gate and placed a bottle of cheap wine on the head of Christ's statue. It seems to have been a reward to those who worked in implementing the plans and projects of the higher government.

Kybartai

To: Secretary of the LSSR Communist Party, P. Griškevičius.

A Statement from: The faithful of Kybartai.

At 6:00 P.M. on November 1st of this year, we the faithful of Kybartai went in procession to the cemetery to pray for the dead. As we approached the cemetery where our parents, brothers and sisters are buried, we were met by loudspeakers broadcasting poems and speeches. Although it had been announced in the *Rayon* newspaper and on the city bulletin board that the civil ceremony for the dead would be held at 7:00 P.M., the atheists of Kybartai intentionally moved the ceremony up one hour to interfere with our prayers. When we arrived at the cemetery, poems were loudly broadcast throughout the entire services. We are deeply outraged at such behavior by the Kybartai atheists and ask you to take action to see to it that our religious beliefs are not ridiculed.

Moreover, two days later, the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Administrative Commission fined our pastor fifty rubles because he went with us in procession to the cemetery. Our faith requires us to pray for the dead in the cemetery on All Souls Day. Where is freedom of belief if atheists can freely go to the cemetery and recite godless poems over the graves of our believers; but when we believers go pray, then various permits are required which no one usually grants.

Please review the directives which discriminate against the faithful and eliminate them as soon as possible.

Kybartai
11/5/1978

Signed by 740 believers of Kybartai

Slabadai (R a y o n of Vilkaviškis)

The faithful of the parish of Slabadai have again sent statements (7/16/1978) to Religious Affairs Commissioner Tumėnas and Vice-Chairman Urbonas of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee demanding that the Slabadai religious community be registered, and her elected committee confirmed. In the statements the faithful brought up the government's pledge to confirm the church committee after one year. This was promised on June 30, 1977 when an inspection was made of the newly repaired Slabadai chapel.

After the statements were sent, Vice-Chairman Urbonas of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee summoned Chairman Jonas Bašauskas of the Slabadai religious community on August 7, 1978. Other committee members also went to see the vice-chairman. They requested that the committee be confirmed and the church registered. Urbonas assured them that the committee would not be confirmed or the church registered. The people of Slabadai can elect three persons to the Didvyžiai committee and everything would be in order. Besides, the parishes will be consolidated. Committee member (Mrs.) O. Bušauskienė pointed out that many believers assemble in Slabadai, it is therefore essential that the church be registered. The delegation also asked that the priest who comes to Slabadai be given the use of a room where he can change and at least wash his hands after his trip. Urbonas refused the grant the committee's request, although he could have—the paramedical station had moved—using the excuse that the Rev. A. Lukošaitis is sufficiently vigorous and does not require such comforts.

The delegation from Slabadai did not yield and intended to go to Vilnius to see the Religious Affairs Commissioner and demand that the promises be kept.

Žalioji (R a y o n of Vilkaviškis)

To: The Central Committee of the Lithuanian SSR Communist Party

A Statement from: The believing community of the Žalioji Catholic parish.

Once again we remind you that we, the believers of the Žalioji Catholic parish, have long been knocking at the door of various Soviet government agencies. We have written many times to the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee and personally went there in groups, demanding the return of our church. Several times we sent state-

merits to the Religious Affairs Commissioner and continually travelled to Vilnius to ask that the church which belongs to us be returned. We were given an oral reply that it would be easier to reopen a church in Vilnius, than in our *Rayon*. So, everything has been in vain. We also wrote joint statements to Chairman J. Maniušis of the LSSR Council of Ministers, and to Secretary P. Griškevičius of the Central Committee of the LSSR Communist party. Finally, we appealed to Moscow, to the Council for Religious Affairs and the Secretary General of the USSR Communist Party and Chairman of the Supreme Soviet L. Brezhnev. But all our requests ended up in the wastebasket of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee, and we were told in reply by the *Rayon* vice-chairman that our church would not be reopened.

With this letter, we once again appeal to the Central Committee of the Communist Party to redress this wrong—to return the Žalioji church. The new USSR Constitution (art. 58) gives us the right to make demands. Is it possible that we believers will again remain citizens with no rights, while the atheists have unlimited opportunity to mock us? If this request also goes unheard, we reserve the right to appeal to the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

Members of the believing community of the
Žalioji Catholic parish.
Signed by 51 believers.

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

Kaunas

The administration of the 29th Middle School was called on the carpet for having neglected its atheist work: One of the school's alumni, Jonas Ivanauskas, enrolled in the seminary.

Class 6F homeroom teacher (Mrs.) Dana Mikaliūnienė is very zealous. Whether the students are willing or not, homeroom teacher Mikaliūnienė ties a red scarf and you are a Pioneer. Student Laima Sutkutė dared to remove the scarf which had been imposed on her in this way and consequently suffered much unpleasantness. Finally, the student's mother was summoned:

"Your daughter is the only white crow in her class," the homeroom teacher reproached the mother.

Gargždai (R a y o n of Klaipėda)

Justinas Stanijauskas was being buried on September 9th of this year. His daughter is a student in class 4C of the 2nd Middle School. Wishing to show her sympathy to the student who had lost her father, Homeroom Teacher Petrauskienė brought her students to the funeral, but upon seeing a priest waiting at the grave site, she ordered the children to place the flowers under the coffin supports next to the refuse pile and leave the cemetery.

It is unfortunate that such vulgar teachers work in our Soviet school system and cause so much pain for the family instead of offering sympathy at a very sad time. It is better not to attend the funeral at all, than to behave in a coarse manner.

Molėtai

Students of the Molėtai Middle School—Virginijus Kisielius of Grade 8B, Julius Bareikis of Grade 8C, and Romualdas Gudonis of Grade 7A burglarized the Molėtai church on March 26th of this year. They took the tabernacle key, a cross from the side altar and two beautiful candles, one of which they found in the sacristy attic. The visit of the uninvited guests was detected when the priest could not open the tabernacle door and distribute Holy Communion during services.

After coming to school, the students began to show off the things stolen from the church and the theft quickly became evident. The boys began to feel uneasy, but the teachers encouraged them.

In every class, as soon as the teachers came in, the children began to talk of the church theft as an extraordinary event. Only a small fraction of teachers reproved the students' bad behavior, but others—Kazlas, Gaidienė and others—pretended they did not hear. Even sadder, grade 8B Homeroom Teacher (Mrs.) Vitalija Sabuckienė placed the blame on Grade 8B student Vida Žiegždrytė, accusing her of reporting the students' theft because she is a faithful church-goer. The teacher turned the petty thieves into heroes. During a class program, the homeroom teacher, Mrs. Sabuckienė reviled Vida and allowed the students to ridicule her as much as they pleased. The poor children became confused in such an atmosphere: Vida felt actually guilty, the thieves triumphed, and the rest made fun of Vida. The girl returned home in tears and was thoroughly confused.

Vida was persecuted throughout the school year.

The behavior of the student Kisielius was not investigated any

further although he was known as an accomplished thief who had often robbed students and the school itself.

The church theft was an excuse to further intensify atheist upbringing in the school. By the end of the year atheist questionnaires had to be filled out three times. In class, teachers pointedly excluded and shunned Vida, who suffered deeply from the rejection.

Šiauliai

The funeral of Gintaras Skorubskas, a graduate of the 8th Middle School in Šiauliai, was held on October 1, 1978. The school administration had already pleaded with his parents beforehand not to invite a priest to the funeral, and students were warned not to attend church.

When the funeral procession stopped at the church, principals (Mrs.) Jonaitienė and (Mrs.) Lukšienė did not even allow the students into the churchyard. Those who nevertheless succeeded in entering the churchyard were chased out by the head of the atheist club, teacher Grebeničenkaitė. The younger students obeyed the teachers, but the upper-grade students drew Teacher Lukšienė away from the churchyard gate and boldly assembled in the churchyard. Seeing that people were milling about, the priest urged everyone to enter the church. Teacher (Miss) Grebeničenkaitė stood at the church door, took from the students their flowers and threatened the students who entered the church. The students crowded inside even without flowers. Principal (Mrs.) Jonaitienė ran up to help. She pulled students aside, asking which school they were from. The principal told students from the 8th Middle School: "You cannot go into the church!"

One courageous girl laughed when she heard this order: "I'm not afraid of church . . ." and went inside. Seeing that all her efforts were in vain, teacher Grebeničenkaitė threatened: "Wait, you'll get it tomorrow!" Then she stealthily entered the church to observe how the students were behaving inside—were they praying or not, were they kneeling or standing fearfully glancing around. Everyone knelt at the start of the services, only teacher Grebeničenkaitė remained standing.

After the funeral, the teachers showered the students with reprimands, ridicule and threats. History teacher Vaičiugienė ridiculed and criticized the priest, accusing him of lack of humanness.

CATHOLICS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Sloboda-Rashkovo, Moldavia

The Catholics of this village are outside the law—they are condemned to die without religious ministrations. Here are some examples:

The children of ailing Teofile Oleinik appealed to the Red Cross organization in Moscow asking whether the Soviet government has the right to forbid the dying woman to summon a priest. On September 6, 1978 the Red Cross forwarded the Oleinik statement to the Moldavian Religious Affairs Commissioner, with the request that the Oleinik matter be resolved. The letter was signed by A.L. Samoilov, head of the chancery.

Oleinik received the following reply on September 13, 1978: "In reply to your letter addressed to the Red Cross, we inform you that the *Rayon* of Kamenka does not have a registered Catholic religious community nor any priest registered to minister to them; the question of summoning a priest from another *Rayon* is to be resolved by the local government" (in this case, the *Rayon* of Kamenka). It was signed by Assistant Commissioner for Religious Affairs, A.I. Reneta. The Kamenka *Rayon* government does not even want to hear that the only Catholic priest in all of Moldavia has not only the right but also the obligation to minister to all Catholics, especially those in danger of death.

The Rev. V. Zavalniuk received a telegram from Rashkovo, asking him to come to the dying Domininka Pogrebnaya. The priest took the telegram to the Commissioner, who strictly forbade him to go to the ailing woman. With great sorrow, the priest reported in his sermon that he had strictly been forbidden by the government to visit sick persons. Two days later another urgent telegram—asking that he come give a Catholic burial to the above-named patient.

How long can such mockery of the most sacred feelings of believers continue?!

Moreover, Secretary Kozhukar of the Kamenka *Rayon* Executive Committee often comes to believers' services in Rashkovo and has frequently imposed monetary fines on the more zealous Catholics because they attend the communal village services with their children.

On the other hand, that same Secretary Kozhukar holds the Catholics up as examples to others. A club has been under con-

struction in Rashkovo for several years, now, but there is little to show for it. Kozhukar imposed a monetary fine on the builders, berating them for not being able to build a club though they have access to the best, while a group of women built a church in a few months (which was so barbarically demolished last year).

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

The Security Police Needs High Caliber Traitors On a Large Scale

His Excellency Bishop K(azimieras) Paltarokas had chosen as his chancellor and heir to the bishopric Msgr. Jonas Kriščiūnas, the pastor and Dean of Utena.

The monsignor had barely moved to Vilnius, when he very quickly and unexpectedly ran off to the countryside as a retired pastor. He was later appointed pastor of Vyžuonai where he died.

Asking that I keep it in confidence, he recounted to me what happened to him in Vilnius.

Just after he moved there, the security police subjected him to harsh interrogation for five days. They tempted him with childish promises: "You will have a car. You will go where you want, even abroad . . ." They threatened him with horrors. One of the direst: "You will return and rot on a collective farm! . . ."

But the most indicative words were: "We have enough small-time scoundrels. We need high caliber helpers to represent us (help us) at international conferences, peace conferences abroad . . ."

Monsignor Kriščiūnas did not consent and was suddenly driven out of Vilnius to retirement.

Thunder From a Clear Sky

On July 14, 1960 I suddenly received a summons to go to the Kazlų Ruda documents office; I was to bring my papers and military card.

Not thinking anything bad, I went.

I presented myself to a young sergeant. He looked at me and looked again and said:

"But we didn't summon you."

What! I said in astonishment:

"Well, but here is the summons!"

The sergeant took the summons, mumbled something, again glanced at me rather oddly and rumbled off somewhere with my papers.

When he returned, I asked:

"Tell me, why was I summoned here?"

"You will find out yourself," he smiled and still stared at me rather curiously. "Come with me," he added.

He took me to the second floor. He opened sound-proof doors. I went in.

An elderly man sat behind a table. A uniform hung on the wall, a security police hat lay on the chair. He invited me to sit down. I sat down. On the July 14th page of his daily calendar I noticed my name, birthdate and several other illegible words written in Russian. In other words, this day had been set aside for me . . .

He began to question me . . . Very carefully, tactfully he began to point out that by working as an organist I, a young man, was yielding to fanaticism . . . I replied, but mostly I remained silent. He then asked whether I had made a final decision to enter the seminary. I replied in the affirmative.

Then he returned my papers, my military card, in passing told me that the documents office had taken care of everything, and dismissed me.

On my way home, I still could not figure out what the security agent had wanted from me.

Several days later I was suddenly summoned to the Višakio Rūda District. There, I was taken into a separate room where the security agent I already knew sat behind a table. He greeted me cordially and began without any preface:

"Well, have you reconsidered yet? Do you still want to enter that seminary?"

"Yes, I do! And I've even passed the entrance exams," I could not resist boasting.

"Exams are nothing!" he deflated my ego. "Something else is important..."

And after pausing to think for a minute, the security agent continued:

"Of course, the Soviet Constitution accords citizens full freedom. It therefore allows those who so wish to enter that seminary. But it is no secret that many priests are reactionaries who harm the Soviet government in one way or another. And there are such priests in the seminary . . ."

"I don't know," I sincerely admitted.

"That's why we know," he enlightened me and continued after a moment of silence:

"Well, all right! Let us say you enter that seminary and suddenly during some lecture some professor begins to agitate against the Soviet government. What would you do?"

I reflected. It was a very ugly question. How should I answer? Finally I resolved: "Well, if he were to openly agitate against the Soviet government I would notify you!"

"Yes, that is very good! Well then, sign here," he pushed a sheet of paper toward me.

"Sign what? Why," I was thoroughly surprised.

"Well that you agree to work with us . . ."

"What??? You want to make me a spy?" I even rose to my feet.

"What spy? What spy?" he also stood up. "No one here is planning to make you any kind of spy! We only want you to perform your duty as a Soviet person!"

"And I have to sign for that?" I was actually furious now. "And am I not a Soviet person? The school and the army trusted me. And you do not trust me? If you demand a signature, then don't you believe I'm a Soviet person?" I was totally enraged now.

"Of course, we know full well that both the school and the army trusted you," he spoke more calmly now.

"Then you want to turn me into a spy? A spy?" I raged.

"Not a spy! the security agent again became furious. And every time I mentioned that word he grew very angry. "We don't need spies! Only sign that you promise to perform your duty as a Soviet citizen."

"And I must sign just for that?" I could not check my anger. "Why didn't anyone require this before? They always trusted me and without a signature!"

"And we do not trust you!" he firmly retorted. "And I will also tell you this. If you refuse to sign, well, you will not be admitted . . . We do not admit untrustworthy people . . ."

"Then does everyone have to sign?" I was very surprised.

"Well, that is our business. And I will tell you this: I'm giving you three days to think it over. You will then come see me in Kazlų Rūda. And now, you are free to go!"

I felt like I had dropped from the moon. No one had told me, and I personally had never suspected, that such a conversation was even possible in our system. I was completely unprepared

for it. I answered that security agent sincerely, without any deception or fraud. I said what I thought. Be a spy? Betray God? My Motherland? No, never, never, never! And what can there possibly be in common between the priesthood and spying?

At that time, I was completely baffled by it all . . . I still believed in the reality of the Soviet Constitution, I believed in Soviet humanism. I was only 23 years old

And if I have now completely lost faith in the Soviet system, even detest it—it is thanks to the security agents, who are the true protectors of the Soviet order. Thanks to them!

And I was not and will never be a spy!

And it was only after I told everything to my priests—teachers Kačergis and Žemaitis—that they began to upbraid me, saying I should not have argued so vehemently, I should have yielded, remained silent.

I began to rage at them also. And where were you before?! Why didn't you even mention to me—a lamb—that such a conversation could take place? Perhaps I would have held my tongue and not argued so heatedly, but sign, no! Never!

And when I went to Kazlų Rūda on that third day, the conversation was very brief.

"Well, if you won't sign, then do as you like," the security agent said nothing more and dismissed me.

. . . That day, I visited Algutis at the Braziūkases. Braziūkas' father returned from Kaunas and said that both Algutis and I had been crossed of the list by the government.

This news no longer surprised me. I even consider it an honor that such a powerful nation—Sputniks circle the moon, rockets can reach around the entire world—is afraid of me, such an insignificant person! They fear that I might destroy the system . . . It's funny.

But something had snapped in my heart. Something went dark . . . I somehow managed to even offer this sacrifice up to Mary . . . Well, I did not deserve this grace . . . Perhaps next year, perhaps in several years, or perhaps I will never be a priest. . . Perhaps I am not worthy . . .

I walked my bicycle from the Braziūkases. I could not ride it. I wept and wept. . .

All my hopes were dashed. How to continue living, what to do, hope for what?

However, neither in 1961, 1962 nor 1963 was my name on the list. The government issued an order not to list anyone who had ever been listed before. In other words, we did not pass the security police inspection, so go, boys, to the devil!

And Again the Security Police

Imagine, they even found me in Pabradė!

One day, a man dressed in civilian clothes comes to the rectory and invites me to the City Executive Committee. I, of course, go with him, and below in the road stands a passenger car with two men waiting. They greet me by name, while I have never seen them before in my life!

They invited me into the car. I got in. They sat on either side of me. The car started off.

Well, that car drove around aimlessly on all kinds of roads, and we talked and talked . . .

They asked how I was. Fine! Of course, good. Am I happy with this kind of life? Very much!

"Well, and have you stopped thinking about the priesthood?" I was suddenly asked.

"I do think about it and will continue to think, only you do not permit it" I replied rather angrily.

"Well, all that depends on you. . . You should not be so stubborn. We are not opposed to it," they pleasantly informed me.

I was silent. Then another spoke up:

"Don't you live with a Marian Father in Višakio Rūda? Then you probably know quite a bit about the Marian monastery . . ."

"You know, I really do know a great deal!" I boasted brazenly. But in fact the internal affairs of the monastery held no interest for me and I knew nothing in particular. But it gave me the greatest pleasure to boast in this way.

"I think we could find things to discuss," the first one spoke again. "By the way, haven't you received a letter from the Vilnius Chancery?" he unexpectedly asked.

"From the Chancery?" I was very surprised. "I know no one there!"

"Well, forget it, forget it," he reassured me.

They brought me home, told me to think about it and asked me to come a few days later to the City Executive Committee. They would expect me there.

I, of course, immediately told Vytukas and Nikodemus every-

thing. They warned me:

"Oh, Jonas, Jonas, don't play with fire!"

But I was pleased! How intriguing! I had decided to definitely go to that meeting.

Suddenly, that same day I received a letter. The handwriting was unfamiliar. It was written by the Rev. S. Mažeika, Chancellor of the Vilnius Diocese. He asked me to come see him.

I was astonished. I didn't even know him! And I felt uncomfortable, for the diocesan chancellors direct the lives of priests, and not organists!

But I couldn't stand the curiosity.

I went to the Chancery Office. A tall, gray-gaired priest greeted me. It was Father Mažeika.

He asked many questions about the seminary. He claimed he would do everything in his power to have me admitted. And always, as if in passing, he stressed that I should not be so stubborn.

When I returned home, I still could not understand why that chancellor had summoned me. It looked as though he wanted to get me into the seminary. Now that would be something!

I went to that meeting with the security agents. Strange—they knew everything: that I had been to see Father Mažeika. They asked how I liked him, what he had suggested, what he had said . . . And then one of them blurted out:

"You see, he also advises you not to be so stubborn . . ."

Outsiders kept interrupting our conversation in the room. The security agents deplored this very much. Suddenly one of them suggested:

"Couldn't you come to Vilnius? We'll cover the expenses of the trip!"

"Why not? Only I don't know where to find you," I said.

"Now then, go on Wednesday, exactly at one o'clock, to the *Pergalė* movie theater. Hold a folded newspaper in your left hand and stand by the advertisements . . ."

"All right! I'll come for sure!" I promised.

A sense of intrigue awakened in me. Imagine, Jonas like a movie hero! Paces back and forth with a newspaper in his hand, someone sees him, takes him somewhere! . . . That's real adventure! How wonderful!

But Vytukas and Nikodemus began to scold me again:

"Oh, Jonas, Jonas, you are placing your head in a noose . . ."

And yet on the appointed day and hour I passed back

and forth at the *Vergali* movie theater holding a newspaper in my left hand. There were very few people around. I kept glancing around, trying to guess from where that character I was waiting for would appear, what he would look like. But I saw nothing to draw my attention. And when for just a second I gazed at the movie ads, a man suddenly passed me and said in a half-whisper: "Follow me at a little distance!" and continued on his way without even glancing at me. I followed his lead. And how intriguing it all was, very intriguing!

We passed the Dzerzhinski club and turned into the yard of a multistory building. Here, he suddenly turned to me, smiled, extended his hand and cordially said:

"Hello, Jonas! Congratulations for coming!"

I had never seen this pleasant man before. He was not one of the persons with whom I had spoken in Pabradė.

He took me to the second floor. He introduced himself and me to another stocky man sitting in the room. I do not remember his name, only that he was a Major. My escort's name was Sprindis, but I do not know his rank.

We introduced ourselves and sat down.

And again we had a familiar conversation. The Major spoke the most.

"And why are you trying to push yourself into this priesthood? You had pretty good grades in middle school, you could enroll in some school of higher learning," said the Major.

"Well, I want to be a priest and that's all!" I replied.

"Why don't you enroll in the university, for instance. Many fields are available there."

"Because I might no longer be able to pass the entrance exams, I've forgotten everything . . . Besides, this is not the time to think about it, because all the applicants have already taken the exam long ago."

"Don't worry about that. We'll help you," he smiled even more broadly.

"But why are you being so good to me?"

"It's not right for you to work for the Church. I'm sorry for you, and besides, it's not right for a young person to be so close to the Church," he explained to me.

"But I only want to be a priest. All my life I've thought of nothing else," I sincerely confided in him.

"Well, a priest is all right," the Major sighed. "But then we must

know whether we can trust you."

"So far everyone has trusted me as a Soviet person," I boasted.

"That's not enough for us," my escort interrupted. "You probably understand what we have in mind?"

"I don't plan to be a spy," I told him outright.

"No one is urging you to be a spy," the Major explained. "You will merely cooperate with us . . . We will occasionally give you a task, then you will leave us your report in a pre-arranged place and that is all! No one will ever suspect that we're working together. And you won't even sign your own name, but for instance Bijūnas (Peony) . . ."

"And why not Jurginas (Dahlia)?" I naively asked.

"We already have a Dahlia" he calmly replied.

And there you are! They only needed a Peony in that amazing security police bouquet of flowers! They already had a Dahlia and probably a Narcizas (Daffodil) as well. They only needed a Peony! Of course, a bright red peony!

At this point I hesitated . . . I suddenly remembered something a priest had said to me very recently: "It is not a sin to sign for them. No one will condemn a prisoner of war if he dons the enemy's uniform in order to flee to his own side . . . For he remains true to himself. . ."

And I thought: "Maybe it is true that no one will condemn me for this and maybe this is not a sin? For I yearn so much for the priesthood and will not be a traitor in my soul! I am only temporarily donning the enemy uniform . . ."

"Here is some paper, write," the Major urged me.

"What should I write?" I asked.

"Well, that so and so, I pledge to cooperate . . ."

. . . And I picked up the pen. I began to write: "I, Rakas, Jonas, son of Jonas, in order to enter the seminary . . ."

"Oh, no, no! You shouldn't write that," the Major told me, for he was looking over my shoulder at what I was writing. "You should not mention the seminary at all! It's not necessary!"

"What do you men, it's not necessary?! But that's why I'm writing this statement." I said in surprise.

"So what if that's the only reason! You can't write that!" The pledge I had begun to write landed in the wastebasket. My escort immediately pushed a clean sheet of paper toward me.

But I suddenly came to my senses: "Jonas, Jonas, what are you doing?"

I was frightened at my own self. Was I really going to sell myself? Had they really lulled me? Had they?"

I was sick at myself.

"Here, write from the beginning," a fresh sheet of paper was thrust toward me.

"I won't write anything!" I firmly stated.

"But we're not forcing you," the Major assured me rather pleasantly. "We're only talking with you for you for your own

"The priesthood bought at such a price will not bring me any joy«.

"Well, why don't you think it over . . ."

They offered me money for the trip. I refused. They set up another appointment. I remained silent. And only as I was about to leave did the Major again tell me:

"Go see Father Mažeika now at the Chancery Office. He wants to talk with you. You know one another!" he smiled.

I left, furious at myself for my momentary weakness of will.

I went to the Chancery, where Father Mažeika was already waiting for me.

Here I was again greatly astonished. Father Mažeika told me exactly what the security agents had. Only he continually stressed one thing: "We need priests badly, good priests. We must, we must at all cost try to have as many priests as possible. And you are so anxious to be a priest, you would make a good priest. . . And you must bend your pride, your conviction for the good of society . . ."

I was thunderstruck. I understood perfectly what this pillar of the church wanted to say. I understood, I was terrified and I was so silent. . .

I no longer went to any more meetings with either the security agents or Father Mažeika. I received one more letter from him, he again invited me to come see him, but I did not go anywhere . . .

I was ashamed of myself.

I went one more time to the seminary. I was told that my name had not even been placed on the list.

So, despite the efforts of the security police and the Vilnius diocesan chancellor, the doors of the seminary again slammed shut.

(— From the autobiographical book *Why I Didn't Become a Priest* by Jonas Kudulaitis-Rakas).

NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

Aušra (The Dawn) No. 12 (52). The issue, which appeared in August, is devoted to Lithuanian Helsinki Group member Viktoras Petkus.

Tiesos kelias (The Way of Truth) No. 10. This issue was published at the end of September of this year (1978).

Rūpintojėlis (The Suffering Christ) No. 6. Published in October.

Perspektyvos (Perspectives) Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4. The first issue of this publication appeared around August. Each issue covers only one subject, for example, No. 1—"Socialism, Communism and Democracy", No. 2—"My Country and World" by A. Sacharov, No. 3—"The Rubicon" by M. Baskas, No. 4—"Thank you, Party!"

The publishers write in the foreword: *Perspektyvos* will raise problems of daily life, will point out possible ways of solving them, will offer readers the opportunity to express their views and opinions. It will present the views of those in the Soviet Union who are persecuted and even imprisoned for their opinions and beliefs.

"Perspektyvos wants to help find roads that will lead from the present impasse to renewal, based on the principles of true democracy and the foundations of international commitments.

"Perspektyvos will publish not only original articles but also broader essays which cannot now be published in the official Lithuanian SSR press. It will also publish translations, but only of authors who now live or have lived in the Soviet Union but who, for their convictions, are persecuted until they either leave or are exiled abroad.

"Perspektyvos will not avoid printing harsher critical articles in its pages, but only those in keeping with article 49 of the USSR Constitution and article 47 of the Lithuanian SSR Constitution, which permit presenting suggestions in any form whatsoever to government organs (including the highest ones) for the purpose of improving work and criticizing shortcomings.

"All Perspektyvos articles, without exception, will be printed according to the rules of debate, in keeping with the following principle: Respect the other individual's opinion even when you do not agree with it.

Perspektyvos hopes to gain the support of fellow Lithuanians in spreading and strengthening independent thought and does not wish to remain solely within the haven of those who admire the underground press."

Information

When sending news to the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, always include, if known, the full name and clear surname, and if not, the first name initial.

We also ask readers to send information to the *Chronicle* on all known prisoners (excluding criminals) indicating: When convicted? For what? Place of imprisonment? When the sentence ends?

Fellow Lithuanian, Don't Forget!

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

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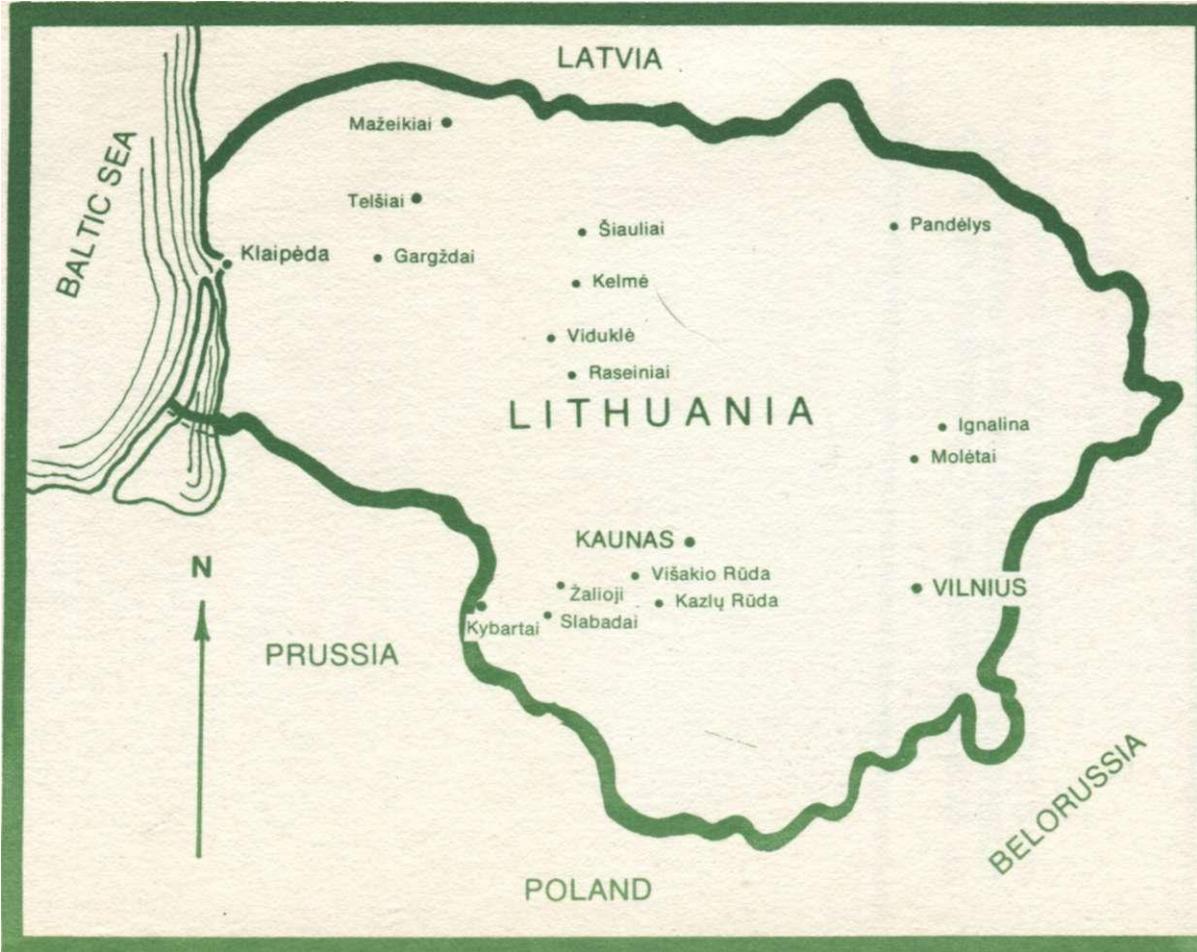
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