

— CHRONICLE OF THE —
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
No. 39 July 22, 1979

CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA No. 39

A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 39
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

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COVER: Danutė Kelmienė after a beating by militia
in Soviet-occupied Lithuania July, 1979. See
page 46.

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On June 15, 1941, 34,260 Lithuanians were packed off in cattle-

cars to undisclosed points in the Soviet Union. After World War II, the mass deportations resumed and continued until 1953.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translation Editor

Read this and pass it on!
Issued since 1972.

Dedicated to the Friends of
the Eucharist on their 10th
anniversary.

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Lithuania.....July 22, 1979

THE HOLY FATHER'S VISIT TO POLAND

During June 2-10, 1979, the Holy Father John Paul II visited Poland. Although the Soviet government did not permit bishops, priests or believers from Lithuania to travel to Poland, nearly half of Lithuania was able to view the Pope's visit on television. The priests of Lithuania urged the faithful to at least follow the Holy Father's visit in Poland via television.

The Holy Father's visit to Poland left a deep impression not only on the faithful of Lithuania but also on atheists who had the opportunity to hear the Pope speak and witness how the authorities and millions of people of a communist state welcomed the head of the Catholic Church.

Lithuania's Soviet press printed only a few lines on the Pope's visit to Poland.

ANXIETY AMONG THE GODLESS

On June 16, 1978, a conference of Lithuanian Communist Party city and *rayon* committee secretaries and other ideological propaganda workers was held in Kaišiadorys on how further to "train workers in a communist manner." This time, attention was focused on civil ceremonies and traditions. The speeches and remarks of the participants were published as a separate brochure (Material, edited by P. Mišutis, Vilnius, 1979). The brochure is intended for ideological workers, is not available to the public and received a very limited printing—400 copies.

Of course, this brochure does not reflect all the subject matter discussed at the conference, it has been rather extensively edited, but nonetheless presents an overall view of what is of current concern to the Communist Party and what directives it issued to its propaganda workers.

In a speech on civil ceremonies, Deputy Chairman A. Česnavičius of the Council of Ministers stated: "An ever broader inculcation of the above-named should help solve more effectively the questions of reducing the influence of religion and the church on man, forming a materialistic outlook . . ." (page 3). Concerned over the fact that namesdays are still celebrated in Lithuania, Mišutis raises the question: "Therefore, should this "tradition" be retained?" And he of course suggests: "Perhaps birthdays would be enough, for their meaning is clear!" (page 41). Mišutis wants

to eliminate the namesday tradition supposedly because their "meaning is unclear." On the other hand, he stated just earlier: "... it (i.e. the namesday) used to have a religious nuance. And it is "holy" names with "patron saints" which were most commonly and widely celebrated. And now it is most frequently the names Antanas, Petras, Povilas, Juozapas, Kazimieras... which are celebrated..." (page 41).

For her part, (Miss) T. Bitinaitė, Secretary of the Lithuanian Communist Party Committee, of the City of Panevėžys was forced to note the fact which "... causes us uneasiness for we know from experience that many participate in two ceremonies. Among the youth there is an unhealthy custom to marry in church. It is considered a mark of fashion to marry in the evening in some church near the Sea of Kaunas. At times, even non-believers avail themselves of religious services, asserting that they thereby uphold national traditions" (page 44). Later, (Miss) Bitinaitė notes: "We are concerned over the growing number of people who are unduly fascinated by religious relics, collect them, and use them to adorn their apartments, considering them national treasures. Old cemeteries are almost completely vandalized, attempts are even made to rob churches. We should speak more firmly about such collectors. Perhaps then the number of newlyweds wearing crosses around their necks at marriage palaces would decrease" (page 45).

First, we should ask (Miss) Bitinaitė how she knows that the people who "avail themselves of religious services" are non-believers? Second, it is actually true that religion preserves our national traditions and that we are starting to become ever more deeply aware of this truth, although (Miss) Bitinaitė and other collaborators consider these religious traditions an "unhealthy fad." Likewise no "mark of fashion" is involved as Bitinaitė would have us believe, but simply increased caution on the part of the more timid and those who wish to avoid persecution. Let them just stop persecuting religion and harassing believers—and every Lithuanian church will be able to boast of such a "mark of fashion."

(Miss) Bitinaitė has reached the limits of the absurd when she asserts that old cemeteries are devastated by collectors. Today, ideological hooliganism is raging throughout Lithuania. It has the government's blessing and is encouraged by precisely such "ideological workers" as Bitinaitė, who dare blame the vile deeds of atheists on some sort of collectors and thus justify the brutal anti-religious activities which are ever accompanied by violence and

force.

What gall to voice the absurd charge that, when they come to the marriage palace, newlyweds adorn themselves with crosses stolen from graveyards and churches! And yet it is true that newlyweds (not just they) wear and, of course, will in the future continue to wear crosses and other religious symbols, regardless of whether it pleases or displeases Miss Bitinaitė. Not everyone who wears a cross around his neck believes deeply, but we can say without fear of error that such young people have nonetheless not yet completely sunk into atheist superstition and that they will certainly not smash or desecrate religious relics. We can fearlessly assure (Miss) Bitinaitė and her fellow-thinkers that even in the event that not a single collector existed in Lithuania, young people would still wear crosses and there would be no fewer religious pictures and national symbols in the apartments of believers or people who have not lost their national self-respect!

Someone at the conference suggested that "a strong material foundation be created" for "marriages with ceremony" and thus counterbalance "the religious influence." On this matter, it is interesting to note the remark made by P. Kurys: "Over the past two decades, the number of marriages recorded in the Republic has remained more or less stable: some 30,000 annually. On the other hand, the number of divorces is rising steadily, although nearly 90% of marriages are solemnized. If the People's Courts granted 9,428 divorces and civil marriage bureaus 940 divorces in 1977 (it is quite true, no longer solemnly), then in 1957 the Republic recorded a total of 1,678 divorces" (page 50). Z. Barkauskienė, Secretary of the Anykščiai *Rayon* Committee, stated at the conference: "Several years ago some 60% of *rayon* inhabitants repeated their marriage ceremony in church, the same held true with newborn infants. Now, the number marrying in church has fallen to 48% (page 56).

And yet Party Secretary Barkauskienė, so "well aware" that the number of people marrying in the church is decreasing, could have given the conference statistics on divorces, abortions and increased alcoholism in the *Rayon*. Unfortunately, such statistics are not publicized for they would terrify every decent person. And above all, they would clearly show how, by proportionately increasing the number of atheists and those who are noncommitted, there is an increase in the evils which bring real perdition to our small nation.

A natural question: Were Conference participants probably seeking a way out of that morass of moral decay? Unfortunately, this is not what concerned the conference participants. Contradicting the reality which they themselves had noted, they continued to "deliberate" how religious traditions should be eradicated, how faith should be combatted in order to implement the orders of Moscow.

Let us examine here the article by J. Kuolelis, head of the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee Propaganda and Agitation Section, printed at the end of the brochure, as if summing up the conference's party line.

Kuolelis urges: ". . . we must demonstrate by all possible means what a person gains when he breaks with religion, what he gains from scientific atheist philosophy." (page 70). In fact, today, everyone understands what Lithuania gains from "scientific atheist philosophy" even without the above cited "statistics" and without the unexpected grains of truth which break through the words of Bitinaitė and Kūrys, although the authors of those words of truth were seeking completely different ends. But Kuolelis would not be such an ardent atheist propaganda worker if he did not in fact arrive at logical and well-founded conclusions. On the contrary, Kuolelis is most concerned with what the Kremlin will say. Here is what Kuolelis stresses: "Some time ago, a brigade of the Soviet Union Communist Party Central Committee visited the Republic to analyze the situation in this field of activity. These are questions dictated by the current ideological situation. Serious attention was directed at them by the Political Bureau of the Soviet Union Communist Party Central Committee. The first time such attention has been paid." (page 74).

After explaining to the conference participants what the brigade from the Soviet Union Communist Party Central Committee was interested in, and "reporting with satisfaction" that the real masters had noted "certain work in progress", he anxiously frightened the conference participants with remarks on the things which displeased Moscow. Kuolelis stated: ". . . we do not work hard enough to stop the influence of priests on children and young people . . . we must more strenuously combat the religious anachronism which can occasionally still be found among communist and Communist Youth League members: there are cases where ties are maintained with the church. This must not be ignored . . . We do not impede the activities of monastic individuals. The number of such persons is not shrinking, but growing. What is worse, they

work in the underground, and usually, comrades, no one praises the existence of an underground." (page 75).

Of course, Kuolelis has reason for concern when his real employers "have for the first time shown such attention," and moreover there exists that underground for which Moscow not only does not praise, but might possibly even dismiss from propaganda work . . . Kuolelis is therefore determined to point out what must be done. And according to this propagandist, what must be done first is control the clergy. Kuolelis stated: "The situation is being analyzed and examined, practical inferences are being drawn, attention is being directed to tactics, sermons and the methods of church influence are being studied. Work is also underway with the clergy . . . Commissions formed within *rayon* and district councils are having a positive effect on the clergy; they help to limit their detrimental activities. Cases involving religious organizations are before executive committees." (page 75).

Of course, these "positive effects" meet with the complete approval of Kuolelis' masters. But, of course, that is far from sufficient. He urges executive committees to restrict priests to such an extent that they feel they are mere servants of the executive organ and work for pay." (page 75). This is the opinion of the Central Committee brigade. And the said brigade probably has "experience" gained while annihilating religion in Russia . . . Because such "experience" has not yet been fully implemented in Lithuania, Kuolelis, with the blessing and at the urging of Moscow, offers conference participants suggestions: "It is necessary to know the number of registered and unregistered communities and groups, the number of believers, their composition, profiles of cult servants, who comprise the executive organs, the church's most active members, what consideration is given the national and denominational traits of believers, who the believers are—age, sex, profession, social status—what religious services—christenings, marriages, funerals, etc.—a profile of the most popular feasts—recollections—how many attend, who attends, why they attend.

The monastic—in other words, the parasitic—underground—how active it is — we must know, in order that it cease to exist! And if we know what it is, then, yes, we can say it no longer exists." (page 76).

In other words—follow, spy—and most importantly detect the underground. And detecting it, in Kuolelis' words, is tantamount to liquidating it! And we all know very well how things are liquidated.

Is this not why agents are recruited for the Kaunas Theological Seminary, why little spies are being bred in the schools, why places of employment are full of spies? Is this also not why new Regulations for Religious Associations are devised so that the most important roles in religious affairs may be played by KGB agents disguised as believers? From Kuolelis' entire speech, during which he stated Moscow's will, one thing stands out: the time has come to destroy the Church from within. Since Moscow has great experience in this area also, it is unforgivable that the desired results are not yet apparent in Lithuania, although as Kuolelis pointed out "Certain work is in progress with the clergy also" (page 74).

As might be expected, none of the conference participants mentioned the Constitution nor the Helsinki Final Act. The conference was attended by those who are to direct the suppression of believers.

The conference attacked the broadcasts of Vatican Radio. Facts illustrating the persecution of the Catholic Church in Lithuania were naturally labelled slander. Furthermore, any suggestions that the most basic rights of believers are violated, and that thereby the Helsinki agreements and the laws they themselves passed are most flagrantly violated, were treated as "interference in our internal affairs" (page 77).

In the words of Kuolelis, it is not the Soviet government, but the clergy which "violates cult laws." And as an example he points out that the clergy "conducts services in completely different parishes, repairs houses of worship without the knowledge of the *rayon* executive committee . . ." (page 78). And finally the following inference is reached: "Against this antisocial reactionary activity of the clergy and individual secterians, it is essential to use not only the force of the law, but preventive measures as well, to disclose their true intent to believers." (page 78).

Well, it has been clearly stated! A priest who administers the holy Sacraments to a dying person in another parish which perhaps no longer has a priest has already "violated the law;" a priest who urges his parishioners to repair a leaky roof is also a criminal! And therein precisely lies the "real intent" of priests, i.e., to protect the church building from collapse. Such activity by priests is considered "antisocial," for it is easy to understand that a church building in disrepair will quickly collapse. And see, the priest has forestalled this happening. This is why priests must be

punished, using "the full force of the law." It cannot be any clearer.

Moscow, Kuolelis and their fellow-thinkers are vexed by the courage of believers, their statements their demands of their rights. Though believers hardly ever receive replies to their complaints, they persist — they again write complaints to even higher offices. It frequently even happens that these statements reach the foreign press and spread throughout the world via radio broadcasts. This is when such complaints turn into "slander." Kuolelis urges that all means be used to prevent such complaints being believed, and, apparently, would like to silence all the complainants, but here we again have that vicious circle: The wide world also learns of such incidents.

In other words, the conference was conducted "on a high ideological level." Directives drafted in Moscow were properly handed down through trusted individuals—collaborators—and are now being "instilled in life." Religious persecution is growing, destruction from within is being stepped up. But there is another side to the coin: The faithful are not giving up their battle for their most basic rights, they more and more frequently transcend the barriers of fear and doubt; slowly perhaps, but Lithuania is experiencing a religious revival. The brutish behavior and persecution of the atheists is yielding unforeseen fruit: the faithful are becoming stronger in their truth and determination.

THE COMMISSIONER FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS MEETS WITH THE DEANS

On April 17, 1979 all the deans of the diocese were summoned to the Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee to meet with the Commissioner for Religious Affairs. The following attended on the part of the government: Commissioner P. Anilionis, Deputy Commissioner for Catholic Affairs Juozėnas, Vice-Chairman Jankus of the Telšiai Executive Committee and his Deputy for Religious Affairs Upermanas. (No one in Telšiai knows of such a "deputy.").

An incident took place before the start of the "talks." A large delegation (some 15 persons) of Klaipėda believers awaited the Commissioner's arrival from early morning, but they were continually deceived that the Commissioner had not yet arrived. Just be-

fore the start of the meeting, the diocesan administrator very politely reminded the Commissioner that people were waiting for him and that he could perhaps go out to meet with them for a minute.

The Commissioner ordered the aged diocesan chancellor, Canon Beinoris, to tell the Klaipeda residents that no one would speak with them because there was not enough time, and they should present their demands in writing. Some deans were visibly upset: How should this behavior of a representative of the peoples government toward workers be understood? People who had worked the night shift, had left their small children, were forced to wait until 5:00 P.M. without eating (they could not go anywhere for fear that the Commissioner might unexpectedly run away—leave). At 5:00 P.M. the Commissioner informed them that he could not help them in any way, for the matter was being debated by the council of Ministers. But could he not have said so from the start, could he not have informed the faithful in writing? It is sometimes inaccurately stated that only at the master's gate must a man wait like a dog; it apparently also holds true for Soviet officials.

Father J.(uozas) Kauneckas, member of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers, came to the meeting along with the deans. After everyone had filed into the meeting room and had sat down to a cup of coffee, the Commissioner ordered the diocesan administrator to expel Father Kauneckas. The administrator excitedly whispered something in Father Kauneckas' ear but the latter remained seated. The Commissioner then stood up and loudly demanded that Father Kauneckas leave . . .

These two incidents obviously had an impact on the attitude of the deans and the deans of the Diocese of Telšiai rather boldly defended the affairs of the Church in their comments.

"Currently the situation is such that people often do not know what is permitted and what is not; many devise ways to circumvent the law to suit themselves. But in the USSR laws and principles regulate everything. The clergy may follow religious principles only insofar as the law and state regulations permit. Even the bourgeois Constitution mandated a procedure to prevent denominations contradicting state laws.

The basic laws are as follows:

1. The Constitution of the USSR, which was actively debated by the clergy, perhaps because they were offended at not being included in the commissions.

2. The Criminal Code, arts. 143-145.
3. The Commentary on the Criminal Code.
4. The decree of the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR "On Administrative Responsibility for Violations by Religious Cults."

Furthermore, the Commissioner cited an entire list of decisions and orders without mentioning who had promulgated them:

Decision No. 361, dated May 10, 1966, under which the Religious Affairs Commissioner has the right to interpret the laws; No. 31, dated March 31, 1972; No. 639 dated December 28, 1977 on the participation of minors in choirs and processions.

"All Soviet employees follow these documents; even most priests observe them. There are some very abnormal things: foreign broadcasts, the *Chronicle*, other literature, even speeches at funerals not about the deceased, but on politics.

The main violations:

1. Priests are meddling in the conclusion of agreements: The clergy delayed, slandered, even forbade church committees to sign them. For instance, Father Paliukaitis, pastor of Žeimelis, disbanded the committee of twenty. Certain priests forbid executive organs to take an inventory of the church (Father Nykštas, pastor of Salos). Certain pastors in an attempt to relieve the committee from managing church finances, do not allow auditing committees to perform their work. The pastor of Pociūnėliai, A. Jokūbauskas, elected themselves chairperson. The pastor of Adutiškis, B. Laurinavičius, elected himself secretary. Why? Not enough work? Priests take matters into their own hands: Garjonis, Miškinis, Pudžemis, Budrikis, etc.

Article 19 of the July 28, 1975 Regulations for Religious Associations limits a priest's activity to his community area, neighboring priests may be invited for recollections after consulting with the local government. It happens that some refuse to ask out of principle. There are even some politicians who claim there is no such law. There is, and it must be observed.

Pastor Svarinskas goes everywhere and makes speeches, but it is the host who is held responsible. In the *rayon* of Šilalė, only pastor Miškinis does not clear his invitations. The pastor of Šiluva, Father Grauslys, forbade one priest to speak from the pulpit, but the latter spoke from the altar.

Article 143 of the Lithuanian SSR Criminal Code forbids instructing children in the truths of faith, forbids adorations, choirs,

serving at Mass, all types of honor guards (Father J. Zdebskis even organized camps with holy pictures in the tents). Why risk being prosecuted?

Only parents are allowed to teach, otherwise, under no guise even that of services, is it permitted. The following parishes instruct children: Šatės, Tverai, Alsėdžiai, Kuliai, Rietavas, Pajūralis, Teneniai, Lenkimai, Žem. Naumiestis, Švėkšna, Tauragė, Palanga.

Certain priests attempt to administer Confirmation themselves: in Adutiškis.

The Regulations permit religious articles to be made, but production is delayed intentionally in order to produce the situation that everything is forbidden here. But there is plenty of everything near Aušros Vartai (Gates of Dawn), does anyone disperse them or imprison them?

Kalėda (annual visit by priest to parishioners — Trans. Note) is forbidden; donations may be collected in church with the committee's assistance. Attempts are made to make "kalėda" visits in Pociūnėliai, Samogitia, etc.

Processions may be held outdoors only with the government's permission. It is permitted to pray at the cemetery on November 1st, but without processions. There were those who organized processions on November 1st. Trials were held, believers threw flowers. The patience of the authorities has certain limits. Let's not play games! When fines are imposed, they are announced from the pulpit, several times the sum is collected, but the fine is still not paid.

Some 10,000 sermons—most of them good—are preached in Lithuania every year. The ones preached at the funeral of Father Garuckas were very ugly. At the Cathedral of Telšiai there is talk of a dawn of freedom, of Lithuania's russification through the Russian Drama Theater in Vilnius, of the enemy's face, of the fact that writers are molded into a party framework. In addition, complaints are written, as are deceitful reports, so they can appear in the *Chronicles*.

A Group for the Defense of the Rights of Believers was formed in 1978. They lie that it is forbidden to help priests, while it is merely necessary to consult the government. So many churches have been repaired after the war: they charge that militant atheists are burning churches. They demand that the Regulations be repealed. Certain irresponsible or coerced priests sign the statements and then they try to justify their actions. The Central Committee has directed the Commissioner to make this reply: no changes will be made in the Regulations. Certain priests do

not participate in elections and even write letters: we will not vote! Yet even Vatican Decisions (page 212) direct priests to live on good terms with the civil government.

Sixty percent of Lithuania's priests have been trained under the Soviet government, but most of them are disobedient, defiant, hold their first Mass ceremonies all over Lithuania, especially at the parishes of priests who are contrarily disposed .. ."

Discussions:

The Rev. Dr. Puzaras: Laws are not kept with respect to believers. In Akmenė and Papilė, teachers lead children from church by the hand and justify their actions by claiming they were ordered to do so by the school principal.

Father Gaščiūnas stated:

1. Serving at the altar is purely a church matter and the government should not interfere.

2. The burglary of churches, with only the Blessed Sacrament taken, is purely an atheist phenomenon.

3. The utilities have agreed to install heat in the church of Mažeikiai, but the *rayon* executive committee has denied permission.

4. Believing children are discriminated in school. Atheist programs are insulting.

All this is material for the *Chronicles*. If believers were respected, Christmas could be celebrated by making up the work on other days.

In many instances the roaming bands of hoodlums consist of non-believing school-children, teenagers.

Chancellor Beinoris:

Dances are held at the Cultural Center on Good Friday. Do they consider what they are doing?

Canon Valaitis:

When a church is burglarized, the tabernacle is taken out through a window, the militia is notified, but the perpetrators have yet to be caught. Some 30 religious monuments were broken in Pajūralis. Dogs were used to catch ... a teenager.

Father Palšis:

The government permits the noisiest funeral processions with orchestras, but not religious processions! (The Commissioner stated that religious funerals disrupt traffic, upset the sick). In other words, civil processions are not noisy, even with drums!

The ringing of bells is forbidden in Skuodas, but it is not forbid-

den in the Regulations.

Four years ago Doctor Mažrimas forbade a dying child to be baptized at the Skuodas hospital. He claimed there were no facilities. But when will they be available.

Father Mileris:

The Regulations were passed without consulting the faithful. Now the government claims it is humane: the faithful should be consulted on this question.

Father Gedvila:

A threatening note had sounded in the Commissioner's voice regarding the signatures of priests: everyone has the right to write statements!

It would appear that one may not instruct children, may not preach sermons. Apparently we priests should reject children. I cannot drive children out: a priest's conscience will not allow this. Children up to the age of 18 are under their parents' jurisdiction, if the parents permit them to go to church, then that is the parents' right. The state cannot deny this right.

The Commissioner was unable to give any substantive reply to the remarks of the priests-deans.

Immediately after returning home to Klaipėda, Father Baikauskas, the dean of Klaipėda, wrote to all the deaconate priests outlining the conference's topics of discussion. His presentation was rather tendentious, he clearly declared himself against the priests who teach children and the like. He expressed his displeasure with young priests, writing that 60% of the priests trained during the Soviet era are disloyal to the government (although the Commissioner had not said this). However, he did not even allude in his letter to the fact that the priests had courageously raised various grievances.

The diocesan Chancery Office asked the dean to explain this misleading information.

Kaunas

At 12:00 noon on April 24, 1979 a meeting was held at the Kaunas city Executive Committee between Religious Affairs Commissioner Petras Anilionis and the deans of the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkaviškis. The Commissioner introduced his deputy for Catholic Affairs, Juozinas, who remained silent throughout the meeting.

The Commissioner feels that the majority of priests observe

Soviet laws; there are few violators.

The priests of Šlavantai and Kapčiamiestis prevented the renewal of contracts with the executive committees.

The pastors of Kybartai, Pajevonis, Vištytis meddle excessively in the work of the parish committee.

The Revs. Dobrovolskis, Tamkevičius, Zdebskis and Kunevičius travel to other parishes without permission.

Father Zdebskis organized a youth outing to the lake. This is forbidden. Consistently catechetical sermons are forbidden because this amounts to teaching religion.

The pastors of Pajevonis, Vištytis, Alvitas and Kybartai are guilty of instructing children.

Children are allowed to serve at Mass in Viduklė, Paberžė, Grinkiškis, Kybartai, Seirijai, Šlavantai and other parishes, and that is a blatant violation of Soviet Law.

"Kalėda" visits are forbidden, but such visits were nonetheless made in Pociūnėliai and near Kazlų Rūda.

On November 1st, the pastors of Viduklė, Tabariškės and Kybartai went to the cemetery without permission from the government.

The pastors of Viduklė, Paberžė and Pociūnėliai are playing with fire in their sermons. Only religion may be discussed in sermons.

There are priests who like to address various statements to the government.

The Commissioner mentioned in particu'ar Document No. 5 of the Catholic Committee and the statements written by priests to the highest government offices. In the Commissioner's view, priests should consider what they are signing. No changes will be made in the Regulations for Religious Associations.

Certain priests do not vote in elections.

There are priests who oppose the Soviet government.

It is undesirable for young priests to hold their First Mass ceremonies in several parishes.

The Commissioner's office is not an enemy of the Church. We will deal fairly with obedient priests, but mercilessly with violators.

During the meeting, two waiters served the deans coffee, mineral water and oranges.

Anilionis regretted that the bishops did not attend the meeting.

After Anilionis' speech, the Revs. Buožius and Fabijanskas stated their views.

As the meeting was drawing to a close, the Commissioner asked

whether anyone had anything to say. The deans replied: "The pastor of Jurbarkas has voiced all our thoughts."

Statement Made at the Meeting of Deans
by the Rev. M. Buožius, Pastor of Jurbarkas

It has been stated and is still being stated everywhere and written in the press that some of us are so-called reactionaries, as though any reaction is already a crime against the government. Every living being, and especially the intelligent human being, reacts in one way or another according to his nature: he responds to the stimulus and influence to which someone subjects him, especially if that influence is disadvantageous or even detrimental to him. This is the natural instinct of self-preservation. And there is no way this reaction may be considered a crime. We are all alive, we all react, we are all reactors, according to our vitality and awareness. When the godless affect us with words or actions or by other means and measures, we all or only some of us react in one way or another. We must react because we are still alive and want to live. We fully understand the meaning and intent of the words and actions. Only the dead do not react. We are not yet dead.

We are rebuked that young priests hold their solemn first Mass ceremonies in several places. Perhaps this displeases some, but it is very good for us. We no longer have anything to rejoice over or take pride in. There are very few new young priests, it is a rarity. For instance, the Archdiocese of Kaunas does not have a single new priest this year. It's a hardship for the parishes, it's a hardship for the bishop. So at least let the new priests conduct such propaganda. Perhaps they will thereby touch someone's heart and will arouse the desire to be a priest. And we very badly need a new generation of young priests. We are all very concerned with having heirs to take our places. You can see that we are all gray, old and will soon begin dropping like flies. Even now there is a great shortage of priests, and what will happen later! Very few students—around 60—are studying at the seminary. (Here the Commissioner interrupted Father Buožius and corrected him: "not 60, but 72, and in two years there can be 100 or more because the renovated facilities will be able to accommodate this many.").

Thus the first Mass ceremonies of new priests are essential to us. For obvious reasons, a new priest here is already a rarity.

We priests are forbidden to teach children catechism and the truths of the faith even in church. We are told: let their parents teach them. But that is impossible. First of all, when can they teach when they are busy with all types of work, especially in the country on state farms, or with worries over daily existence? And second, how will they teach their children when they themselves have nothing to learn from? Atheist organizations are allowed to conduct their propaganda widely on radio, television and in the press, but we believers are not allowed anything: everything has been taken away or even forbidden. Thirty-five years have passed since the end of the war, but we believers still have nothing: no books, no newspapers, no magazines, except for the Ritual Book printed on ordinary paper, prayerbooks printed in extremely low numbers, and the Bible and the Second Vatican Council Decisions which are inaccessible to the people. Catechisms are printed only illegally. Our thanks for that to unknown printers. And so the poem written by Bishop A. Barauskas during the Czarist era comes to mind: "Neither written nor printed word are we allowed. Let Lithuania, they say, become backward and dark." Thus, we live in times of starvation.

I saw today an illustrated magazine published by the Patriarchate of Moscow on the desk of Chancellor Butkus. But we are forbidden to have not merely a magazine or newspaper, but even a bulletin or calendar. While shops, book stores and libraries overflow with all types of atheist literature. We are thus very obviously deprived.

Atheists have all sorts of organizations, courses, camps, schools. Believing children who attend church are scolded by their teachers, threatened, rebuked, and given lower department grades. Teachers even dare visit their homes, trying to persuade parents to keep their children from going to church. The disparity is therefore vast and very obvious. And yet this should and could be avoided.

Regarding the relationship between the pastor and the church committee, it should be noted that every priest, when he is named pastor, is appointed not only for liturgical matters but as administrator of all church property. He even takes an oath to carry out all these duties to the best of his abilities. Church canons, which we observe, provide for and require this. The church committee merely serves as an advisory body to the pastor.

In conclusion, I would also like to point out the following.

We have heard that you, Mr. Commissioner, were very sensitive to the needs of all your people in your former position. We are your

people now. We therefore dare to expect that as Commissioner for Religious Affairs you will also be sensitive to us in eliminating mistakes, injuries and injustices.

Similar meetings of Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis and deans were held in April throughout the dioceses of Lithuania. The Commissioner also spoke on a similar theme to the students of the Theological Seminary, but was very displeased with this last meeting, because the seminarians stated their disagreement with Anilionis' instructions.

THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT REPLIES

Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis replied in writing to the statements sent by priests (see *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 38).

Reply to the Priests of the Archdiocese of Kaunas

Council for Religious Affairs of the
Council of Ministers of the USSR
Commissioner for the Lithuanian Soviet
Socialist Republic
232600, Vilnius, Lenino pr. 39, Tel: 22228
May 16, 1979 No. 140

To: Rev. G. Gudanavičius
Rayon of Joniškis, Žagarė

At the direction of the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR, we inform you, in reply to your statement of January 25, 1979, that we do not foresee changing or abolishing the Regulations for Religious Associations.

Commissioner,
P. Anilionis

Council for Religious Affairs of the
Council of Ministers of the USSR
Commissioner for the Lithuanian Soviet
Socialist Republic
May 21, 1979 No. 141

To: Rev. G. Dovidaitis
Višakio Rūda, *rayon* of Kapsukas

At the direction of the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR, we inform you, in reply to the group statement of the priests of the Diocese of Vilkaviškis dated January 10, 1979, that we do not foresee abolishing or changing the Regulations for Religious Associations.

Commissioner,
P. Anilionis

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Council for Religious Affairs of the
Council of Ministers of the USSR
Commissioner for the Lithuanian Soviet
Socialist Republic
June 5, 1979 No. 177

To: Rev. Vaclovas Stirbis
Rayon of Plungė, Alsėdžiai

In reply to the group statement of the priests of the Diocese of Telšiai and the Prelature of Klaipėda, we inform you that we do not foresee changing or abolishing the Regulations for Religious Associations.

Commissioner,
P. Anilionis

PETRAS ANILIONIS INSTRUCTS THE ORDINARIES

Religious Affairs Commissioner Petras Anilionis summoned all the Ordinaries of Lithuania to his office on July 13, 1979.

First, Anilionis suggested that tribute be paid the memory of Bishop J. Labukas by standing up. Everyone stood up.

The Commissioner congratulated Bishop L. Povilonis and announced that he was granted permission to assume his post beginning July 9th. The Commissioner further stated that extremist priests have stepped up their activity; new attacks are expected. The extremists are few in number, and the majority of priests is loyal. Some priests are undecided: they do not know whom to follow.

The extremists even teach the Ordinaries. The Ordinaries must be more active so as to maintain the bishop's authority built up over many years.

The extremists formally refuse to observe Soviet laws.

Extremist priests have banded into two groups: the Helsinki Group and the Group of Five (The Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers — Trans. note). The late Father Garuckas has been replaced by Father Br. Laurinavičius.

The Group of Five was formed during the second half of 1978 and its activity is growing daily. They do not represent anyone, no one has elected them, but they still act. What is their role among the clergy?

They write documents, lie and do not state any facts. They want the bishops and administrators to listen to them.

Certain activists are even blackmailing certain bishops and administrators. Good upright persons might suffer because of them. The Ordinaries must not allow themselves to be slandered and trampled. Certain administrators are challenging them, while others are waiting to see what the government will do. And this results in disunity. The priests do not know whom to follow. The situation is very abnormal.

The extremists have chosen various forms of action and refuse to obey the directives of the government.

Document No. 5 of the Five received the support of the following:

- 60% of the priests of the Diocese of Kaišiadorys;
- 63% of the priests of the Diocese of Kaunas;
- 78% of the priests of the Diocese of Vilkaviškis;
- three statements from the priests of the Diocese of Vilnius (64% of priests regarding the bishop's reinstatement);
- 84% of the Diocese of Panevėžys (the letter rather vague, unfounded);
- 76% of the priests of the Diocese of Telšiai.

As signatures were being collected, priests were ridiculed and threatened. The content of all the statements is similar—the desire "to defend the oppressed"—but unfounded in facts. Upon close examination, it is difficult to find the oppressed. It is mere slander. They write about violations of the Helsinki agreements. They quote the articles they find useful. They are concerned with protecting churches, while they themselves ravage churches.

No one is making priests and believers second-class citizens as stated in the documents.

They use threats to attract the youth to church, for example Father Tamkevičius. Later, innocent people will also suffer.

The priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius declared the Regulations null and void. What ignorance! Did the laws vanish because of it?

The priests used the July 2, 1962 Convention "On Discrimination in the Field of Education" for their own ends. We have no private schools here. That is why they are forbidden to teach. State schools have their own regulations. In this case there can only be a question of the law's interpretation.

The priests of the Diocese of Panevėžys raise a question about doing away with the agreements. Bishop Krikščiūnas (Transl. Note: Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Panevėžys) has sent the document to priests for their signature. Is it right to raise the question when 95% have already signed? Only 36 associations have not yet signed. This amounts to seeking a quarrel.

Only 16 communities have not yet signed in the Archdiocese of Kaunas; only 2 in the Diocese of Vilkauskis, 4 in Kaišiadorys, 14 in Panevėžys and only a handful in the Dioceses of Telšiai and Vilnius.

Signing the agreement is a routine matter, but we can wait. Certain pastors go as far as to disband the committees which want to sign the agreements. Certain priests are manifesting a strong desire to lead. They claim that "committees of twenty" are formed comprising atheists and active church members. If this is true in certain cases, it must be corrected.

The pastor of Kirdeikiai, Father P. Kražauskas has formed his own committee. The situation is no longer normal. People do not attend church. (At this point, Msgr. Andrikonis interjected: "Father Kražauskas has been relieved of his duties.")

The Commissioner continued: "Twenty-one candidates have been allowed to enter the Seminary. Some students at the Seminary are diversifying. The mood prevailing at the state schools is improving. (Apparently Anilionis did not like the questions the seminarians raised during his lecture. — Ed. note) If seminarians diversify, some will drop out. If someone's brother priest diversifies, then how will it be possible to talk things over with a candidate?"

We received requests to admit seminarians from other Republics, but you Ordinaries think only of yourselves; you say that spies will be sent over. No more than one hundred will be allowed at the Seminary."

Bishop Povilonis (Bishop Liudas Povilonis, Apostolic Administra-

tor of the Dioceses of Kaunas and Telšiai) suggested that at least thirty candidates be admitted to the first-year class.

Father Vaičius requested that candidates to the seminary be admitted without first fulfilling their military obligation, because even during the war seminarians were exempt from military service. Anilionis nearly concurred with this view, but claimed it is difficult to convince the military.

Bishop Povilonis suggested that the academic year be shortened. (Priests must be trained properly! There can thus be no talk of shortening the school year. — Ed. note).

"Priests ask that they not be forbidden to prepare children for First Communion," Anilionis continued, "But nothing can be done. Article 163 of the Criminal Code will be very strictly enforced."

To the complaint from the priests of the Diocese of Telšiai that the government prevents pastors from administering their parishes, the Commissioner replied: "Everything is possible, if a good relationship exists between the church committee and the *rayon* committee."

"There are complaints that priests cannot go to recollections, but everything is possible, if we behave normally. Let's take the recollections at Žemaičių Kalvarija as an example. Father Svarinskas came, took over from the pastor and ran things himself. Father Svarinskas is reported to have said that anyone who has not served in a labor camp is a bad priest, while Father Tamkevičius asserted: "We will fight to the blood and through blood will attain complete victory. It is better to die than to compromise!"

"They did not respect the holy places," lectured Anilionis, "but merely conducted anti-Soviet meetings."

Extremists are not guided by the Bible. If any of them had suffered for the Church then perhaps they could call themselves martyrs. But now?

Father Našlėnas comes to Krinčinas and Father Babrauskas, the pastor, allows him to speak. During the Sts. Peter and Paul devotions Father Našlėnas reviled Soviet youth for an entire hour. Did he speak as dictated by the decisions of Vatican II?

Telšiai complains that devotions are being controlled. They are controlled only insofar as to maintain order.

They are also unhappy that believers cannot hold positions of leadership.

Why are priests defending others? Let believers defend them-

selves. In bourgeois Lithuania members of poor families were not admitted into the police. Why did priests not defend them then? This is not a matter of faith.

The priests of Telšiai complained that believers are prevented from enrolling in schools of higher education and are subjected to various forms of ridicule, but several of those named were visited; they spread out their hands and know nothing about it. In writing, one must name facts.

Anilionis angrily remarked about the underground: "The underground is for the enemy. Those who work have no time to think about the underground.

It has been noted that certain priests associate with persons sentenced to 25 years for murder.

Certain priests seek confrontation; the pastor of Sudervė for example hung a cross on the outside of his door. But that building also contains other offices. How would it look if we all began to hang crosses, stars or Jewish Stars of David on walls? Priests are now doing what young troublemakers once used to do: they untied their shoelaces to have an excuse to fight when someone stepped on them. Father Babrauskas is making repairs without consulting anyone. Why does the seminary consult. Is Father Babrauskas more clever than the seminary?"

Bishop Krikščiūnas spoke from his seat:

"What is allowed a Jesuit, is forbidden others."

"You have requested a religious calendar," continued Anilionis, "but you delay preparing it so that others can complain. Aliulis claims he did not have sufficient time to prepare it. Confrontations are sought everywhere.

"Everyone, regardless of the position he holds, will be obliged to observe the Regulations. If anyone fails to observe them, he will be punished according to the law."

The Commissioner voiced his displeasure at the remarks the deans had made: "The Revs. Pukėnas, Buožius and Gaščiūnas made the most vehement comments. Buožius even quoted the Czarist verse "Neither printed nor written word . . ." But Pukėnas and Buožius understood their error and apologized." (A lie. The priests did not apologize. — Ed. note). "Rev. Pūzaras stated: "That Commissioner should have been given a good going over." why is all this necessary? Kuzmickas from Pakruojis is always hostile and scowling. Still others did not want a lecture on the international

situation. This merely shows a lack of culture. But criticism is essentially a good thing. We should therefore get together more often.

"Others say that there was an attempt to buy the deans with coffee. What should the deans be served then?"

The bishops held a meeting in Panevėžys on May 5, 1979. The extremists scorned everything in their document. You don't want a newspaper: fine. They say that only profiles of bishops attending peace conferences will be printed.

A trip for liturgical scholars is being planned to Rome in the fall. It is possible that a bishop will accompany them.

It is quite impossible to secure the return of the Klaipėda church. The old church can be expanded for an additional 100-120 people. For this is how many people now stand outside during services.

A prayerbook will be published in the spring. But it must be small in format, similar to *Visada su Dievu (Always With God)*.

The extremists have written off all the Ordinaries.

They claim that weak priests are given the large parishes. Father Kauneckas was even offered two parishes (In order to draw him away from working in the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers — Ed. note). Svarinskas claims the atheists are refusing to name an assistant pastor for Viduklė in order to speed his demise.

What is the need for sermon material, if the extremists will nonetheless refuse to preach them?

At this time, it is important to publish a Missal.

Secrets are being leaked from chancery offices: From Telšiai a letter about the Klaipėda church; from Kaunas a telegram about calling the deans together. Bishop Povilonis did not yet hold office then. We therefore do not blame him.

We can give city parishes only to loyal priests with whom we can discuss things as they are. Sooner or later priests will have to keep the laws. One thoughtless step can endanger the whole Church."

Anilionis appealed to the Ordinaries, urging them: 'Do not be passive! You cannot allow them to ruin everything. If anyone would

make a suitable bishop they turn him into a red. Show that there are chanceries and that there are leaders."

Bishop R. Krikščiūnas: 'Give me the names of the priests who signed from the Diocese of Panevėžys, for I want to know who signed. They sent me a text of the letter without any signatures.'

Anilionis gave him a photocopy of the text with signatures and added: "No need to return it."

The Deputy for Catholic Affairs, Juozėnas, also spoke vehemently against the extremists. He claims to have worked in Italy for eight years and to be well acquainted with the life of the Church. In his opinion: "Priests lack discipline! In Italy priests are forbidden to engage in any kind of politics."

Why does Svarinskas hold services wherever he pleases? How can the actions of individual hotheads be justified? Our government is not weak because it does not seize them, though all the activities of the Five come under the articles of the Criminal Code, but the process of democratization is taking place here. Educate them! Provocations in Kalvarija amount to discord, anti-Soviet actions not only against the bishops and administrators, but also against the majority of priests. Perhaps they want to become Cardinals? They will not overthrow the Soviet government. Perhaps they like labor camps. If they do not desist, something will have to be done. One must live and act peaceably. The activities of the Five are destructive."

The Commissioner questioned the administrator of Vilnius about priests from Poland who come and work in parishes. The administrator explained that they do not ask the chancery and act in the name of Cardinal Stefan Wysinski.

"Svarinskas is raising the question of commemorating the 20th anniversary of Bishop Ramanauskas' death," the Commissioner was incensed.

Someone mentions that Father Svarinskas was ordained by Bishop Ramanauskas.

"Who knows who ordained him!" remarked the Commissioner. "He told some people that it was Bishop Ramanauskas and others that it was Cardinal Slipij."

"The Ordinaries must not attend these commemorative meetings," explained Anilionis.

"They will decide to also commemorate the anniversary of Bishop Matulionis," added Bishop Krikščiūnas.

The Commissioner announced that Rev. S. Lidys will photograph outside and inside churches, especially when First Communion or Confirmation are administered.

"I think," the Commissioner stated, "that the Church is also interested in having such photographs for its archives."

Anilionis stated that the bishops may travel wherever they wish.

"Why was I forbidden to go to Kybartai?" asked Bishop Povilonis. But he was not given a reply.

The Commissioner demanded that he be informed when and where administrators and chancellors take their vacations.

Juozėnas is in charge of trips abroad.

In concluding, Anilionis threatened:

"Remember that even you can be replaced by others!"

LETTERS FROM THE GULAG

Petras Paulaitis writes:

My dear brother,

Just a few words to you from hell.

I'm afraid to write anyone officially or in greater length because such letters are confiscated, our letters just disappear. Besides, I feel that those who receive my letters are followed more closely and persecuted. And yet we would like to be less completely isolated, less separated from our Homeland and her Sons and Daughters. But our opportunities to correspond are quite markedly decreasing and disappearing. As long as my heart beats in my breast I categorically refuse to cede any position to the enemy. The fact that our ranks are thinning out makes matters more difficult. There are no more people about whom we could still say:

I am truly a vortex,

I am truly fire,

I am truly heaven's spark

Amid greediness.

People have grown old, are worn out. And only those remain who concerned themselves with little else before. We are only 12 Lithuanians, and in all only 130 remain in our yard today. Political

prisoner labor camps are being liquidated (imperceptibly): every week a small group is taken north to the Perma labor camps and a place is being prepared for the rest in Barashevo 3-5 from where we were moved last year.

I've missed Leonas for a long time now, and Vincas and many others. Could something bad have happened to them? The regime is becoming ever more strict. And those little steps toward more strictness are taken according to plan, slowly. They try to affect everyone from inside, to have us fear and avoid one another. All internal rules, laws, regulations are vague, ambiguous, contradictory: regardless of how seriously a prisoner is wronged and in the right, he is always at the administration's mercy. It is with pity and anger that we hear and see those poor souls who still believe in their humanity. Everything and everywhere, even down to the smallest detail, is consistent and deliberate lying and deceit. And they can no longer do otherwise.

But we solemnly and sincerely believe and dedicate ourselves to God's will. Only He knows the need for a road of suffering and I thank Him for allowing and granting people the strength to tread that road.

My love to you, my dear brother, and through you to my dear Homeland and all her good sons and daughters!

Petras Paulaitis

This year, Petras Paulaitis is celebrating his 75th birthday in the Gulag.

We take this occasion to congratulate this noble son of Lithuania who has withstood the nightmare of the labor camps, radiates heroic love of God and Country and summons everyone to join the battle for Truth. The bloody sacrifice he offers on the altar of the Homeland's freedom will tell future generations how a Lithuanian knew how to keep the faith, cherish freedom and sacrifice everything for her.

We pray the Lord to grant Petras Paulaitis countless blessings!

Nijolė Sadūnaitė writes:

"Today I broke my letter writing record: I'm writing my 37th letter. My debts are getting smaller. I write briefly, just a few words. Everyone is in the best of spirits. It is evening, 10:00 P.M. here. I will take a 15 minute walk around the yard. I will pray and then to bed! And tomorrow back to my post."

Nijole tries to answer all the letters she receives. On her days off

she writes an average of 20-30 letters. She works every other day. After a brief rest, she devotes all her free time to writing letters. If you do not receive a letter from Nijolė, you should know that Nijolė has either not received your letter or the letter she wrote you was confiscated by the security police censor. The censors very infrequently allow Nijolė to have letters from Ireland, England, Australia, Spain, Holland, Portugal or France. Nijolė received one, two or several letters from each of the above-named countries. Nearly half of the letters she receives from abroad are from West Germany, although even most of them are confiscated.

Michaela Baumann, who lives in the German Federal Republic, wrote Nijolė in an April 15, 1978 letter: "Haven't you received letters from Josef Stimpfle, bishop of Augsburg? The bishop has written you many times! He is very concerned about you. A letter from you would give the bishop much joy." Exactly a year passed after Michaela Baumann's letter to Nijolė, but not a single of His Excellency Bishop J. Stimpfle's letters to Nijolė was given her. "I have not received a single letter from Poland, though I know that many Poles have written me. Neither have I received the letters Polish tourists sent me from Vilnius. I received two letters from Washington, but those were more than enough for me to understand their concern and desire to help me. I am very grateful to everyone!"

"I had begun to worry when for a long time I received no letters from my family living in Vilnius. But today I am celebrating! The mail came, and among other letters there were five letters from my brother Jonas Sadūnas. Apparently a letter finds it sad "to travel" by itself, so it "waits" for companions: it's more fun when there are five!

"Many of my notes of only a few sentences do not reach many labor camp inmates, prisoners, exiles, inhabitants of Moscow . . . Many of my letters disappear during the long journey to my homeland Lithuania . . ."

From a June 15, 1978 letter:

"The customs duties imposed on gifts received from abroad are very high. Chocolate is the most expensive food item: 1.20 rubles per bar. A package of cocoa is 3 rubles. Fees for claiming clothing are very high. (It doesn't matter whether the clothes are new or used.) An ordinary, synthetic sweater is 25 rubles, a chiffon scarf 20 rubles, stockings 5 rubles. Prices are the same as in the stores or even higher. And my basic pay is 75 rubles per month. I pay 20 ruble* for a small six square meter room . . .

"I received a parcel from M. Iseried in West Germany with two identical sweaters. One sweater, based on tariff 108, was valued at 25 rubles, even though it was used and darned. They were supposed to deduct 50 rubles from me, but the Tallin customs appraised the first sweater at 25 rubles and the second at the same rate of 25 rubles, right there totalled the cost of both and wrote down 50 rubles. At the bottom, the total sum came to 75 rubles; in other words, 25 rubles more than they had assessed. I wrote a statement today to the Tallin customs demanding that they return the 25 rubles that do not belong to them . . . It would seem improper for our "humanists" to engage in robbery for used articles! ..

The July 5th reply from the Tallin customs reads as follows: "The customs duties on the parcel were calculated accurately. According to customs regulations, duties on identical articles sent above the quota are calculated double." It is signed by Customs Chief V. Arusaar.

For a ring costing \$10.00 which she received from Jerusalem Nijolė had to pay 70 rubles, and for a chiffon scarf from West Germany, customs relieved her of 20 rubles. Furthermore, many of the articles sent disappear from packages, and to make it harder to verify, the itemized list is also stolen from the package."

All criminal and political exiles who are granted regular vacations are allowed to return home. According to the latest news received from Nijolė, we know she was granted a vacation in August but will not be able to come to Lithuania: the security police will not allow it. Many people are concerned whether Nijolė will be permitted to return to Lithuania even when she completes her term of banishment?

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRIENDS OF THE EUCHARIST

1979 marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Friends of the Eucharist movement in Lithuania, listing among its ranks the finest sons and daughters of the Lithuanian Catholic Church. They include persons of varied ages and professions. However, their love of God and Country unites them. They are determined, with the help of Christ in the Eucharist, to revive the Nation and Church currently being stifled by godlessness.

The Friends of the Eucharist commemorated their tenth anniversary on July 7th during the recollections of the Blessed Vir-

gin Mary in Žemaičių Kalvarija. (Calvary of the Samogitians) The Friends of the Eucharist gathered at the famous Samogitian shrine from all corners of Lithuania to thank God for ten years of blessings and draw strength for new future tasks. On the occasion, Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius addressed the Friends of the Eucharist in church and all the members of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers celebrated the Holy Mass offered for the Friends of the Eucharist. The people of Samogitia say it has been long since they have seen so many people, especially young people, at Žemaičių Kalvarija. After the solemn High Mass, the Friends of the Eucharist made the outdoor Way of the Cross. Several sermons were preached by Father Kauneckas.

On July 22nd, hundreds of Friends of the Eucharist gathered in the church of Meškuičiai for a procession of reparation to the Hill of Crosses. Everyone received Holy Communion at Holy Mass and afterward began to line up for the procession. Twelve men used traditional Lithuanian sashes to lift a large wayside shrine which they intended to erect on the Hill of Crosses on this tenth anniversary. The militia, security police and other government officials attempted to prevent the procession, but were unsuccessful in detaining or dispersing the crowd. Father Algirdas Mocius joined the procession. He placed a large cross on his back and carried it barefoot 8 km (5 miles) to the Hill of Crosses.

The procession was followed the entire distance by militia and security police vehicles. The pilgrims were photographed and filmed from every angle by security agents. Several men were arrested, but were quickly released. An exposed film was confiscated from one man.

On the way to the Hill of Crosses, the Friends of the Eucharist said the Rosary and sang hymns. The people they passed removed their hats; tears rolled down the cheeks of many: the sight was awesome. At the head of the huge procession, bent under the weight of the cross, staggering, a priest who left his health in the hell of the Gulag carried a cross, followed by the wayside shrine carried by men, mostly young men, and following them hundreds of youths from godless schools, singing holy hymns.

At the Hill of Crosses, after the cross and wayside shrine had been erected, Father Mocius preached an appropriate sermon.

After praying at the Hill of Crosses, the Friends of the Eucharist departed for home, carrying in their hearts a great

love and determination never to be intimidated, never to hesitate and to rely completely on Divine Providence and the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* congratulates the Friends of the Eucharist on behalf of the Church and the Nation and wishes them to stand courageously under the banner of Christ in the Eucharist.

Be Lithuania's flower and light!

THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE
OF THE RIGHTS OF BELIEVERS

May 5, 1979

No. 15

To: The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of Lithuania

For a long time, we priests of Lithuania have waited for the Ordinaries to speak out on the current problems of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, we were therefore rather surprised to see the first public statement written on April 6th and addressed to the Office of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs. We thank Lithuania's Ordinaries for this public statement but also feel obliged to express our concern on most of the questions raised or excluded.

The priests of Lithuania are very concerned and doubt whether the Liturgical Commission will be capable of preparing a suitable final Lithuanian text for a Missal. For example, Father Č. Kavaliauskas' translation of the New Testament has met no little well-founded criticism. Would it not be worth making greater efforts to have our Liturgical Commission maintain contact with specialists in the field—emigrant Lithuanian priests — and adopt what they have accomplished and not start from the very beginning?

The Ordinaries are requesting 500,000 catechisms, but do not even mention prayerbooks which both children and adults find in such short supply. What will the 40,000 children who receive First Communion this year use to pray? In our opinion, it is high time continually to remind the Soviet government that we Catholics of Lithuania need not only religious primers and prayerbooks, but religious literature as well, because we must have the opportunity to breathe and nourish ourselves spiritually.

It is very good that the Ordinaries ask the quota of seminarians to be increased, but it is unfortunate that they do not demand that the Ordinaries be given the right to choose candidates to the seminary. It is no secret that during the entire postwar period, and especially over the past two decades, atheists have so interfered in the selection of candidates that the best ones were prevented from entering the theological seminary. Actually, we should not plead that the quota of entrants to the Seminary be increased, but clearly demand that government officials observe their own laws and stop interfering in the seminary's internal affairs. The atheists are constantly claiming that the seminary is supposedly administered by church authorities; the Ordinaries must therefore administer the seminary and not gloss over the blatant interference of government officials in seminary life.

The Ordinaries ask that, for tax purposes, the Church of the Holy Trinity in Kaunas be considered a cult building and not a warehouse; i.e. the taxes lowered. Must such a request be decided by the College of Ordinaries? The burdensome tax load is especially enormous for country churches: their insurance rates are three times as high as those of city churches. During the initial postwar years, when the countryside had no fire prevention stations, the higher rates were justified, but now that every state farm has a fire brigade, three-fold insurance rates are just plain arbitrariness on the part of state agencies. Or how can one justify the fact that churches up to now pay 25 kopeks per kWh of electricity, while the highest rate charged private individuals is just 4 kopeks per kWh? Lithuania's Ordinaries should raise these questions publicly.

Lithuania's Ordinaries ask the Religious Affairs Commissioner to intercede in securing permission to rebuild the steeple of the church of Kretinga.

Whether the church of Kretinga does or does not have a steeple will not change the pastoral ministry which has been crushed in this parish through the fault of the priests. First of all, we must ask not for permission to rebuild the steeple, but that Ordinaries be allowed to independently appoint priests to parishes. But what happens currently? At the instigation of atheist government officials, the largest parishes are served by negligent, old, infirm priests and often by priests who live scandalous lives, and the Ordinaries cannot appoint the most zealous and able priests to pastorally important parishes. For instance, the faithful of Klaipeda have long requested the Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai to transfer their pastor and

appoint a new one, but the Administrator is powerless to do this.

Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis demands that the associate pastor of the Cathedral of Telšiai, Father J. Kauneckas, be transferred to some remote parish of the diocese, off the beaten path, so that he will have nothing to do there.

That some Commissioner prevented the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Kaunas from appointing an assistant pastor to the huge parish of Viduklė: Let the pastor whom the government dislikes meet an early demise because he must work alone!

We do not deny that churches need steeples, but declare that the main concern of us all—Ordinaries and priests—must at this time be to rebuild the living Church. The time has come for the Ordinaries to speak out loudly: Give us the freedom to administer the affairs of the Church and priests!

The Ordinaries ask permission to expand the church at Ignalina and review the problem of the church in Klaipėda. We must not expand the above-named churches, but demand that the illegally plundered churches in Ignalina and Klaipėda be returned. The faithful of these parishes have for many years demanded that the confiscated churches be returned, the Ordinaries should therefore do their utmost to support this initiative. It is also essential that the Vilnius Cathedral and St. Casimir's Church which has been turned into an atheist museum be returned. For, the 500th anniversary of the death of St. Casimir is approaching (1984).

The priests of Lithuania certainly cannot understand what the Ordinaries' request to expand the liturgical calendar to include "sermon matter and other material" means. If the liturgical calendars intended for the use of priests were to include two or three sentences on the day's religious feast or saint, priests would certainly not use them for their sermons, while the godless would declare to the whole world that sermon material is allowed in Lithuania. If you ask, then ask in earnest: Allow sermon material to be made available to Lithuania's priests, allow at least one sermon book to be published annually, allow our brethren abroad to send us religious literature. Meanwhile, religious literature from abroad is merely amassed in special funds to which only important atheists—i.e. J. Aničas, P. Mišutis and others—have access with special permission.

We cannot verify the accuracy of rumors that this statement by the Ordinaries was supposedly inspired by government officials, but it is clear to every Lithuanian priest that the ninth item

of the statement: "The Ordinaries feel it would be appropriate for the predominant Catholic Church of Lithuania to have an illustrated publication depicting the life and work of our Church" is certainly not inspired by the Divine Spirit. Will such a publication depict how the Church is stifled in Lithuania, how the hands of the Ordinaries are tied, how believing intellectuals are suffering? No, such a publication would not touch on such matters. Or perhaps it will contain photographs of how the faithful faint during services in the overcrowded church of Klaipėda, how the ruins of demolished churches stand in many Lithuanian towns—i.e. in Sintautai, Pilviškiai, Bartininkai, Alvitas and elsewhere—and no one will grant permission to rebuild them, how teachers rip medals and crosses from around the necks of children? Then what will such an "illustrated publications" print? The photographs of Ordinaries attending peace conferences? Yes, but such photographs can only outrage the faithful. The priests of Lithuania are convinced that such an "illustrated publication" would simply be a propaganda bubble for the world, especially as the time draws near for the Olympics in Moscow. We therefore ask the Ordinaries to withdraw their request for an "illustrated publication," for such a publication would serve not the Church, but the godless.

Immediately after Easter, Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis tried to persuade the deans of all the dioceses to observe the Regulations for Religious Associations. According to the Commissioner, the deans must help see to it that all the priests of Lithuania observe these Regulations.

The following inferences can be drawn from the meetings which were held:

a. The Council for Religious Affairs wishes to frighten the deans, and through them the priests; it is for this purpose that the deans were summoned not to the Chanceries but to the Executive Committees;

b. An attempt is under way to stifle the Catholic Church through the deans;

c. Priests are being ordered to become partners in the crime of the godless in violating the rights of believing children: not instruct them, drive them away from the altar, from processions, etc.;

d. The deans were humiliated at these meetings, for, while the Commissioner was demanding that they betray the interests of the Church, they were served coffee;

e. The diocesan chanceries degraded themselves, because the deans were summoned to the Executive Committees not by government officials, but by the chanceries. For example, Council for Affairs Aide Kožukauskas sent the following telegram to His Excellency Bishop Labukas: "On April 24, 1979 a meeting will be held at the Kaunas City Executive Committee for the deans of your diocese. The meeting is scheduled for 2:00 PM. Please see to it that all deans attend. You are also requested to attend this meeting." Upon receiving the order, all the chanceries immediately hastened to carry it out.

At the beginning of this year, 522 Lithuanian priests and two bishops—Their Excellencies Julijonas Steponavičius and Vincentas Sladkevičius—spoke out on a matter of vital importance to the Church: that they will not be able to observe the Regulations for Religious Associations imposed on the Church, and demanded that they be repealed. It would be very appropriate for the Ordinaries of Lithuania now in office to speak out on this matter as well.

We especially urge the Ordinaries to concern themselves with violations of children's rights in Lithuania, and to constantly raise during the Year of the Child this painful, but very important, question. We are convinced that we clergymen are not without blame regarding the children. The Ordinaries could at least in private urge priests to show more concern for children and young people, to suggest that those who, through fear or negligence, neglect their pastoral work with children move to the country and cede their places to more courageous and zealous priests.

Your Excellencies, Divine Providence permits us to live and work at a very important and critical time in the life of the Church; let us therefore carry out with honor the mission entrusted us by God.

Members of the Catholic Committee for the
Defense of the Rights of Believers:

The Revs. Jonas Kauneckas
Alfonsas Svarinskas
Sigitas Tamkevičius
Vincas Vėlavičius
Juozas Zdebskis

The Catholic Committee for the
Defense of the Rights of Believers
May 25, 1979 No. 16

To: The Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR:
The Education Ministry of the Lithuanian SSR

We are extremely concerned that students continue being terrorized in the schools of the Lithuanian SSR. On May 15th, (Mrs) Irena Želvienė appealed to the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers. It is apparent from her statement that her son Egidius, a student at Middle School No. 4 in Telšiai, is being subjected to very painful persecution. Teacher (Mrs) Pilipavičienė forcibly tied the scarf of the Pioneers on Egidius Želvius who is a believer and does not belong to any organization, and when he objected, struck him in the face and together with teacher (Miss) Petraitytė insulted him, calling him a religious fanatic and even using obscene words. A large group of children witnessed this "pedagogy."

Mr. Andrijauskas, Vice Principal of Middle School No. 4 in Telšiai and chairman of the *Rayon* Council for Coordinating Atheist Work, voiced his outrage in the *rayon* newspaper *Komunizmo Švyturys (Communist Beacon)* (April 17, 1979) that Vatican Radio reports the persecution of students at the schools of Telšiai. He even dares to claim he knows of no instance of "students being given lower grades because of their religious beliefs, being given lower conduct marks or being ridiculed or insulted by teachers."

Many instances of students being insulted and ridiculed can be named.

Physical education teacher Valenčius of Middle School No. 4 in Telšiai exerted physical force on April 17, 1979 when he removed crosses from fourth-grade students Saulius Stonkus and Mažeika.

At that same school, history teacher Karnishova questioned ninth-grader Rita Bubliauskaitė about religion during the entire class, mocked her, insulted her, ordered her to talk about the priests she knows, etc.

On April 20th of this year we alerted you that believing student Vitalijus Semenauskas is persecuted by Communist Youth League members at Middle School No. 1 in Plungė, that teachers are not coming to his defense, but we received no reply, although Soviet agencies are obliged to reply within one month.

Please see to it that similar crimes by educators not recur in the future. Such educators do not belong in the Soviet school.

Members of the Catholic Committee for
the Defense of the Rights of Believers:

The Revs. Jonas Kauneckas
Alfonsas Svarinskas
Sigitas Tamkevicius
Vincas Velavicius
Juozas Zdebskis

REGARDING LETTERS TO OUR BISHOPS AND ADMINISTRATORS

In the spring of this year, there appeared two letters addressed to the Bishops and Administrators of Lithuania: One was anonymous, signed "Group of priests from the Archdiocese of Kaunas", the other signed by a priest from Vilnius. Both dealt with approximately the same matters affecting the situation of the Church in Lithuania and hold similar viewpoints. I wish to share here certain thoughts which arose after I read these letters.

The question of bishops. In my opinion, at present this is not the most important question.

Would the bishops, if every diocese had them, be able to change the situation of the Church which is the result of state laws?

A more important question is the *person* of the bishop. It distresses the faithful when a bishop or administrator is a blind tool in the hands of the atheists, rarely seen in his church and even more rarely in the pulpit, while meantime his articles appear in atheist newspapers. Such a bishop has no authority with the faithful. We need bishops like St. Paul and not like old-time nobles busy with parties and hunting.

A more painful question: the training of new priests and the seminary's requisite quality. The letters state grievances, but prescribe no solution. The situation will apparently not change as long as the seminary is administered not by the bishops but by the civil government.

The authors of the letter are opposed to "catacomb" priests. But they have nothing to do with the situation. Catacombs appear

where there is repression.

They bemoan the fact that someone publicly lamented the unsuitability of certain seminarians. It would seem that silence in this instance would be most useful to those who seek to render the seminary useless to the Church. Society must be apprised of the outside forces which are currently reaching their tentacles into the Seminary.

The question of unity is addressed with pathos.

This is an eternal human problem, which is especially pronounced in the Church. There was no unity among the Apostles: Judas followed the path of betrayal.

Unity: on what basis and on what points? Some are interested in cognac, others in catechization and altar boys, some dream of Volgas, others are interested in liturgy . . .

Obedience: to whom and in what matters? When around 1870 the Czarist government sent chancery offices Russian Ritual Books—"Trebniks"—Bishop M. Valančius returned them to the governor without even unpacking them, while the administrator of Vilnius, Msgr. P. Žilinskas, sent them out to priests, most of whom did not accept this "gift" (only one sixth of them did). Do we have similar cases now?

The anonymous letter writes that "certain colleagues are overly anxious to teach and instruct everyone and always and under any circumstances, hold themselves up as examples to others." It seems that this time the anonymous writers also want "to teach and instruct" and "hold themselves up as examples to others." In fact, it is commendable that priests as well are showing some initiative; for the Church should concern everyone, since we are all responsible for her fate.

The anonymous letter asserts that the actions of these priests lack "noble goals", and that they "are not concerned about the Church and the good of souls." Who can look into another's heart? Was such an assertion dictated by "noble sentiments," is it not an unfounded assumption which an honorable person would not allow himself to make?!

The anonymous letter claims that these colleagues "want to wear the halo of "hero" or "martyr". . . I feel they simply want to be faithful to the Church. In the final analysis, even the anonymous writers can be "heroes" and martyrs", no one is stopping them.

Issue No. 12 of this year's *Truth of the Communist Youth* reported that 33 Catholic missionaries were murdered over six years

of civil war in Southern Rhodesia, and on New Year's Eve two more missionaries vanished without a trace. Did these people want to gain fame, sport the halo of hero? They did not leave their posts, though the situation was very hostile, they did not seek death and did not risk their lives thoughtlessly: they were faithful to their calling, steadfast in their obligations and courageous. A high Southern Rhodesia. Clergymen affirmed this at this year's Conference of Bishops in Switzerland when he mentioned that to date unrest in that country had claimed the lives of 47 missionaries of various Christian denominations. One would think that a similar description would also fit the people who are being attacked by the anonymous letter.

The letters write about "artificially seeking confrontations with the government and atheists", about "lack of tact", about "cheap and dangerous popularity."

When evangelization is undertaken, conflicts are unavoidable: "If you were of the world, it would love you as its own" (John 15:16). It is not always honorable to live without confrontation: "If I wished to please everyone, I would not be a servant of Christ" (St. Paul). To live without conflict often means "to hide under a tree." Christ was not like that. He entered into conflict with the leaders of his nation.

Our letter writers would, no doubt, even accuse the Apostles of this same vice—seeking the halo of "hero" or "martyr"—they who replied when they were forbidden to act: "We cannot remain silent." (Acts 4:20). The anonymous letter writers, would also find fault with St. Paul who, after being stoned, recovers and again seeks a new "Martyrdom" (Acts 14:20).

It appears that the anonymous writers would also accuse the martyr St. Stanislaus of "lack of tact and seeking cheap popularity" when he raised his voice against King Boleslaw II . . . But the people of that time did not support the King who was forced to flee the country and died in a foreign land, but supported the bishop who stood up against the cruel and immoral king who oppressed the people with huge taxes, conducted a plundering war in the Ukraine and trampled the rights of the Church. As we know, John Paul II honored St. Stanislaus, whom Boleslaw II murdered, as a defender of human rights . . .

The anonymous letter condemns the *Chronicle* as doing a disservice to the cause of the Church. It may be that not all the material it publishes is of equal importance, but we should remember that it is the cry of an oppressed people. Soviet laws

allow occasional use of more force than necessary in defending oneself. This instinct of self-preservation is reflected in the *Chronicle's* tone. It would really be too cynical to forbid the oppressed to cry out. A robber who attacks someone in the street or the woods wants him to keep silent... In truth, there are forces which would find it more pleasant had the *Chronicle* not been born. Apparently, our anonymous letter sides with them.

The letters bemoan the division into left and right. Unfortunately, such a division does exist. The people have labeled these groups as follows: the priests are either "freezers" or "heaters."

Mankind has never been united. Philosophers write about the bourgeois and the idealist in society. When they rate 19th-century Lithuanian clergy, historians (P. Vėbra) find three groups: 1. the passivists, adaptors, wheedlers; 2. activists, fighters; and 3. those holding the middle ground. There is yet another division when people, in their yearning to do good for the Church, seek new ways and methods. The "conservatives" should not condemn them for this. Perhaps more good will should be attributed to those who follow uncharted paths, their creative initiative should be lauded and it should be remembered that there are no easy roads for the Church. Germany could serve us as an example here. Those who followed the easier path, regretted it only later, as did Ludwig Muller whom Hitler named in 1935 to lead the Protestant Church. Neither the clergy nor the people liked this bishop. In 1945 he committed suicide. In truth, even those who survived the hell of the concentration camps had regrets: "We fought, directed by our faith . . . We do not regret this fight. We only regret we did not do so with sufficient earnestness in public."

DESTRUCTION OF A CROSS

To: The Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Lithuanian SSSR, P. Griškevičius

A S t a t e m e n t

In our first statement to P. Griškevičius, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party we noted that failing to receive restitution for the material loss we suffered, we would erect the cross ourselves. We held the silence of the Panemunė *Rayon*

Executive Committee to be consent. After a wait of four months, the parish rebuilt the cross. But we enjoyed this beautiful sight for but a brief time.

Four days passed after the cross was erected. On May 15th we found a hole dug in the churchyard, similar to a human grave. We unexpectedly learned that this hole was not for the purpose of burying a man, but our parish cross. We therefore rushed to the cross after the services. As we prayed the rosary, two trucks drove up at 11:30 P.M. In one of them sat six workers with shovels. When they saw the cross being guarded, they ordered the people to disperse and threatened trouble for the young people. The youths were not intimidated by the threats, but continued to ask why and with whose permission the cross was being stolen in the middle of the night. A character sitting in the cab explained that everything has been cleared with the parish pastor Father R. Liukas. The youths replied that the pastor has no right to help the atheists destroy the cross because he himself helped erect it. Aware that the people guarding the cross would not leave, they threatened to bring more officials and left. After they drove off, the youth at the cross finished saying the rosary. Militia vehicles kept driving by. Shortly a car marked LLŽ 10-07 arrived, from which emerged a man who asked: "Aren't there more of us." When we replied: "When the need arises, there will be more," he drove off.

At 1:30 A.M. the same two trucks re-appeared escorted by three UAZ vans carrying the militia and several passenger cars. The vehicles disgorged security agents, Head of Security Samajuskas of the *rayon* of Panemunė, Deputy Chief Vanagas, Chief Svedaravičius of the Road-Bridges Maintenance Department of the Petrašiūnai District, Assistant Chief Baubllys of the Maintenance Department and Project Director Rasiukevičius. They were followed by drunken workers carrying shovels. Everyone guarding the cross blocked their way and stated they would not allow them to demolish the cross. Everyone spoke in defense of the cross, explaining that to demolish the cross is inhuman, demanding to see a written order to remove the cross, asking why this black deed was being committed at night, for it amounted to vandalism, assault. Svedaravičius was reminded of his base conduct when he broke the cross the first time, while he was now again attempting the same in the middle of the night. He justified his actions by claiming he was merely following the orders of the executive committee. The parish youth assured the assailants that they were real

criminals, destroyers of the nation's cultural and moral life and that drunks have no right to lay a hand on the cross. The attackers used foul language and continually hurled various threats. The confrontation lasted about 30 minutes. All the while, an old woman loudly wailed at the cross. Convinced that the parishioners would not leave the cross, they gave the order to the militia. When the "keepers of the peace" approached the cross, we notice **they were drunk**. They immediately resorted to violence, children were savagely pushed around, girls had their hair pulled, their arms twisted. It has been a whole week since that terrible night and the children still have bruises. People were seized and forcibly dragged to the militia vehicles. While being dragged by militia officials, Eugenija Mikulevičienė was kicked and punched. Women and children began to scream. Two teenage boys were seized and the others, seeing they could not resist so many militiamen, dispersed. Cursing all the while, the militia followed the scattering people. The defenders of the cross numbered some 30 people, while there were several times that many security agents and militia employees. The attack was conducted not only by the militia of Panemunė, but also by the militia of the City of Kaunas, *Rayons* of Požėla and Lenin, there were even two militia vehicles from the *Rayon* of Kaunas. Militia cadets stood by at the Amaliai railroad crossing. During the assault on the cross, the stretch of road between the Amaliai railroad crossing and the exit to Palemonas was closed.

The workers brought by Chief Drasiukevičius of the Road-Bridges Maintenance Department refused to dig the cross out. The digging was done by Chief Svedaravičius himself, Baublys, Rasiukevičius and a couple of security agents. Svedaravičius threatened to fire the workers who refused to dig the cross. He partly kept his promise. Workers Kulikauskas and Rasimavičius were docked thirty percent of their bonus pay.

The gates of the churchyard were opened to the destroyers of the cross and the cross was erected in the graveyard in the mysteriously dug hole.

The mother of the arrested Ričardas Petrauskas kept going to the security police in search of her son, for his farewell party into the military was to be held that same evening. That evening, relatives and friends gathered to say farewell to Ričardas but he did not return home. **Ričardas was charged with hooliganism and sentenced to ten days in jail.**

The handicapped mother of Antanas Žilinskas inquired after her son by telephone. She was mocked that her son would return with a wife. Two days after the arrest, a militiaman came and demanded 10 rubles from (Mrs) Janina Žilinskienė, but did not say why her son had been arrested.

No one came to look for (Mrs) Eugenija Mikulevičienė, since her husband was on a tour of duty and only her seven- and fifteen-year old children and an old helpless grandmother were at home. A militiaman came, consoled the children and told them to go visit their mother, but when they came they were not admitted, only threatened with being locked up.

On May 18th, Angelė Grebliauskienė was summoned to the Panemunė Executive Committee regarding her statement on the first time the cross was demolished. She was asked whether she had participated in defending the cross and when she admitted she had, she was threatened "Your children are branded." They explained that people who erect crosses along the road will be punished with one year in jail. The following information was learned about the arrested teenagers: Ričardas Petrauskas would have fulfilled his military obligation somewhere nearby, but will now serve on the Chinese border. Antanas Žilinskas should say good-bye to the Kaunas Politechnical School. (He only needed to defend his thesis to graduate.)

Discrimination and terror continue against the innocent people who were assaulted that night. Ričardas Petrauskas' sister, a student at Middle School No. 25, was interrogated by homeroom teacher (Mrs) Bandoravičienė and was later summoned to see the school inspector. Ričardas' mother is continually summoned to her children's schools where she is ordered to re-educate her children.

The militia often visits the Grebliauskas family in search of the homemaker. Once finding the children home, they intimidated them and when the fifteen-year-old daughter refused to speak Russian, they threatened to fine her ten rubles. It is very distressing that the arrested friends are charged with hooliganism merely for defending the cross which was attacked in the middle of the night.

The faithful of Petrašiūnai

N.B. Grebliauskas was sentenced to twelve days in jail, and Antanas Žilinskas was not allowed to defend his thesis. Žilinskas was very savagely kicked and punched by militiamen.

The cross was dug up, taken away and set up in the Petrašiūnai churchyard.

TRIAL IN VARÉNA

Issue No. 37 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* reported that the KGB is building a case against Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, pastor of Kybartai, in connection with a traffic accident which took place on June 1, 1978.

Father Tamkevičius appealed to the State Security Committee of the Lithuanian SSR on January 31, 1979, protesting that the Committee is used to eliminate a priest (See *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 37).

On February 6th, on the basis of the statement made by Aleksandras Razviničius, the prosecutor's office of the *Rayon* of Varėna issued an indictment in the accident. Razviničius went to the Varėna prosecutor's office at the instigation of security police officials.

On February 13th, the head of the KGB Secretariat, A. Grauskas, sent Father Tamkevičius the following reply:

"In reply to your statement of January 31, 1979, we inform you that investigating the circumstances surrounding traffic accidents is not within the jurisdiction of state security organs."

On February 19th, Father Tamkevičius was summoned to the Varėna militia for interrogation.

On March 4th, the Moscow Christian Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers protested to the Security Committee of the Lithuanian SSR concerning the persecution of Father Tamkevičius.

On April 18th, Father Tamkevičius was again summoned to the Varėna militia to verify testimony at the site of the accident.

On May 21st, the interrogator allows Father Tamkevičius to examine the case documents. The plaintiff is listed as Aleksandras Razviničius.

On June 28th, a trial session was scheduled to be held at the Varėna People's Court. About eighty believers, mostly young people, came to the trial. After everyone had assembled in the courtroom, the judge announced that the plaintiff Razviničius was ill and the trial was therefore being postponed. There was no doubt in anyone's mind that this was a lie. The KGB probably did not want many people to attend the trial.

After leaving the courtroom near the court building (the militia and security police are housed in the same building) the young people presented the persecuted priest with a bouquet of

flowers as a sign of their solidarity and empathy. While the young people presented the flowers, someone in the crowd began to sing "Marija, Marija . . ." (Mary, Mary). The sight was unparalleled and indescribable: the singing crowd encircling the priest who held a huge bouquet of carnations, roses and other flowers, the fearless faces of the youth, and standing behind them like a wall, militiamen and grim, stone-faced security agents. But the sight did not last long: A commotion began the militia began to disperse the people. The crowd withdrew slowly and calmly, despite the strong steam of water directed at them. Some of the people headed for the church.

Immediately after the trial session, Father Tamkevičius went to see Razvinaičius at home and learned that he was in good health and had been summoned the night before to the Šalčininkai *Rayon* State Security Committee. The trial was therefore deliberately postponed by the militia or security police officials!

After praying, everyone prepared to go home, but the Varėna militia and security police began to detain people at the railroad station and take them to the militia. This time, the militiamen were especially cruel: they mercilessly beat and kicked the young people and women when arresting them. Some 13 persons were arrested. Among them, (Mrs) Dana Kelmelienė was severely beaten on the head. The militiamen mocked the arrested woman calling her a tramp. One of them stated: "We'll see to it that you no longer attend trials!" After the severe beating to the head, an ambulance had to be summoned for (Mrs) Kelmelienė. After several days of interrogation, (Mrs) Kelmelienė was released in a critical condition, all the other prisoners were released that same day.

After bringing Dana Kelmelienė home to Vilkaviškis, her family took her to the hospital, but the physician on duty, Yelisejev, refused to admit the seriously injured woman. Everyone is convinced that the Varėna KGB ordered the Vilkaviškis Hospital not to admit the injured woman.

(Mrs) Kelmelienė was given no medical assistance for three days after suffering a severe brain concussion. Currently, she is convalescing in the hospital.

A second trial session was scheduled for July 13th. From early morning all roads leading to Varėna were patrolled by motor vehicle agents who noted the people going to Varėna: They recorded the driver's name, residence, place of employment and the number of passengers.

That day, a large number of militiamen, security agents and auxiliary policemen was summoned to Varėna. Only fifty people were admitted into the courtroom, while the remaining seats were taken by government officials. Those who failed to gain admittance into the courtroom stood in the corridor. In all, some 150 believers had come for the trial.

KGB officials photographed everyone who entered and left the trial.

The court questioned five witnesses: (Miss) Buzaitė, Mickėvičius, Čiurlionis, Gražėvičius and Tamkevičius who all testified that Father Tamkevičius was not responsible for the traffic accident and could not avoid the collision.

The court found Razvėničius guilty and gave him a suspended sentence of one and a half years.

After the trial, the faithful went to the church and found the doors locked. It was later learned that as Father Tamkevičius' trial drew near, Chairman Baublys of the Varėna City Executive Committee paid a visit to the local pastor Bronius Jauras and demanded that the church be closed until 3:00 PM on July 13th.

Why was this trial necessary? Why did the KGB urge Razvėničius to go to court and then fail to support him?

First. The intrigues of the KGB leaked out.

Second. Unable to conceal its activity, the KGB allowed the court to show its objectivity: Let the whole world know that the Soviet court does not persecute either priests or believers without cause and the information reported in the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* is pure slander.

Third. By exploiting this accident, the KGB blackmailed Father Tamkevičius for more than a year, taking much of his time in the hope of drawing him away from active work in his ministry and the defense of believers' rights.

ATHEISTS ELECT THE PARISH COMMITTEE

On May 30, 1979, the pastor of the Kirdeikiai parish, Father P. Kražauskas, sent a statement signed by 267 believers of the Kirdeikiai parish to His Excellency Bishop Sladkevičius, Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Kaišiadorys, regarding the especially blatant interference of the atheist government in the parish's internal affairs. The statement reads as follows:

On May 13, 1979, the new executive committee of the Kirdeikiai

church was elected under the direction of Vice Chairman Labanauskas of the Utena *Rayon* Executive Committee and Chairman Šapranaukas of the Saldutiškis district. This is how it happened:

On May 6, 1979, Chairman Šapranaukas of the Saldutiškis District posted the following notice on the doors of the church: "Attention, believers of the Kirdeikiai Parish! Immediately following services at 2:15 P.M. on May 13th, a meeting of the believing community will be held in the middle school auditorium. On the agenda: election of a new church committee. Chairman of the Saldutiškis District Council of People's Deputies, A. Šapranaukas."

Since I had the resignation of the church committee chairman (he is elderly and ailing) and was aware of the existing situation and the atheists' aims as well, I called a meeting of the Kirdeikiai church committee members on May 9th.

On the basis of Canon 1183 and the regulations of the Lithuanian Synod of Bishops, I assumed the position of church committee chairman. All the church committee members were present when I assumed this position. The minutes concerning the formation of the church committee were sent to Vice Chairman Labanauskas of the Utena *Rayon* Executive Committee Council of People's Deputies.

Announcements (of the upcoming meeting — Ed. note) appeared on May 11, 1979 at the store, the school and all farm sections.

At 2:15 P.M. on May 13th the said meeting was held in the middle school auditorium, chaired by Vice Chairman Labanauskas. He explained the Constitution to the audience, he stated that everyone is guaranteed freedom of conscience and that the state does not interfere in Church affairs. Afterwards, he read anonymous letters about the pastor. He then announced that a new church committee would be elected. The people attending the meeting stated that a church committee had already been elected on May 9th and it was headed by the local pastor. The people of Kirdeikiai refused to have the godless interfere in internal Church affairs and left the auditorium.

Despite the opposition of the faithful, a Soviet committee was appointed under Labanauskas' direction.

We declare that we will never consent to have atheist-appointed committees rule the Church and destroy her from within.

(The statement has been abridged — Ed. note).

FATHER ŠEŠKEVIČIUS WRITES

To: The Editor of the *Banga (Wave)* newspaper
A statement from: The Rev. Antanas Šeškevičius,
Assistant Pastor of the Gargždai Parish,
Residing in Gargždai, Tilto g . 1-2.

On March 31st of this year your newspaper *Banga*, an organ of the Lithuanian Communist Party *rayon* of Klaipėda committee and of the *rayon* Council of People's Deputies, printed an article "Who Is Muddying the Water" by V. Savičius in which I am variously reviled, slandered and denigrated. I therefore ask the opportunity to present my remarks and protest.

More than two thousand years ago the Romans guarded a man's honor and had the rule: "Let the other side also be heard." The accused had the right to express his opinion and defend himself. Since then, the civilization of mankind has improved markedly, and I therefore think that, in the 20th century, the Soviet press will be civilized enough to permit me, a reviled priest, to publicly express my opinion. Assuming this illusion, I respond to the charges made by V. Savičius.

Incident No. 1 — The Patient J. Karnauskas

Savičius charges that I arbitrarily entered the hospital and spoke oppressing words to the patient J. Karnauskas.

My response:

It is not true, things were completely different.

I go to the hospital only when I am summoned by a patient's relatives who clear everything with the hospital administration. I have visited the hospital for nearly four years and have never had any conflict because the administration arranges everything in a civilized manner. Please verify this.

And in this case, I was summoned last November to see a weak old man to whom I brought the sacraments. Another man lay next to the patient and I spoke to him out of courtesy. I asked both of them whether they knew a Mr. Karnauskas. The second patient replied that he was Karnauskas. I told him that one of his good friends had asked me to visit him. And I offered: "Perhaps you would also like to receive the sacraments? I could come another time. I offer not because you are weak but in order that you might gain strength and your suffering be blessed." He calmly explained: 'I will not receive the sacraments in the hospital because

I cannot properly collect my thoughts here. When I return home, I will go to church myself." I replied: "As you wish" and after conversing amicably, we parted amicably.

Savičius **betrays himself** when he attributes the following words to me: "You will soon die; I will save you . . ."

Can a priest speak so foolishly? We priests have a 2000-year-old experience and know quite well how carefully an ailing person must be approached so as to encourage and not oppress him. The godless should learn this also, for only they are capable of behaving so crudely with a patient.

Only someone unversed in religious matters could possibly say "I will save you . . ." For this is a statement against faith; this is heresy. A priest would never say this, but only: "Christ will save you . . ." So with this phrase Savičius proves not only that he invented the lie, but also that he knows nothing about religion.

The article's author wanted to illustrate that I **crudely** attempted to force Kamauskas to receive the sacraments. Priests cannot force, for the sacraments are then invalid, desecrated. Priests can only invite; if they are refused, they do not have the right to force. Savičius thinks that the sacraments can be treated like certain atheist teachers treat students: they forcibly enroll students in the Little Octobrists, Pioneers or Communist Youth League just to meet the plan. It is unimportant whether they wish or do not wish to join. The Catholic Church respectfully bows to man's free will: 'If you wish, I will minister to you, if not, I will not.'

Savičius claims that I guaranteed **in a sermon** that Karnauskas will die and that he had rejected the priest. And (Mrs) A. Kvekštienė nearly fainted . . . "Then where is that love of neighbor that the church so propagates, where is common humanity?" writes Savičius.

My response:

1. On November 12th of this year, I explained the Gospels, urging that concern be shown the sick, that they not die without the sacraments, for many expect to recover and come to church themselves, but come only in a casket without having received the sacraments. I then said (I quote from a tape): "We see death as some kind of spectre approaching with a scythe. A terrible thing! We quake, we do not want to die. I know one patient. He has cancer. But the doctors will not tell him in order to keep up his spirit. His

family reminds him to make his confession, but he replies he will go make his confession himself." How foolish people sometimes are? Of course, it is good to recover, to want to live, but one must be reasonable, realistic. Some day we will nevertheless certainly die. And we will die just one time. If one's life is ruined, it will not be possible to correct it. . .

I would not be a priest if I were indifferent to people dying without the sacraments, for I would display doubts about their eternal future. That would be not love of neighbor but a crime. If the chairman of a state farm has the duty to care for state farm workers, it is all the more the priest's duty to care for his parishioners.

At the time, there were several **cancer patients** at the hospital and I also knew of some who were at home. If I mentioned one, was he necessarily Kaniauskas? All cancer patients have similar symptoms. I did not even mention that he was in the hospital. Kaniauskas was buried on March 19th of this year while others are still ailing in the hospital or at home. Did I dishonor either Karnauskas or anyone else by saying this? What disgrace is it to have cancer? Should (Mrs) Kvekšienė have fainted because of this? Why be incensed at the sermon? Everyone naturally thought of his own ailing loved one. If strangers know that the doctors felt he would not recover, did she not also know? What news did I reveal? I merely did my duty as a priest: I encouraged the reception of the sacraments. Should that offend a good Catholic? On the contrary, a good Catholic would be grateful that a priest shows concern for the sick, wishing them a happy death. Should a Catholic fear death, as does an atheist for whom everything ends with death? A Catholic's real life begins after death.

If anyone had a negative influence on the ailing Karnauskas, it was only his mother-in-law Kvekšienė with her foolish behavior and talk.

Despite this, before her son-in-law died in the hospital, she personally tried to persuade him to see a priest. He **consented and** was buried with the Church. I rejoice that my efforts were not in vain, even though I was slandered in various ways. It was worth it.

Incident No. 2 — The Laugaliai Nursing Home

Savičius reports that I "come at all hours, go from room to room and nose around."

My response:

As with the hospital, so with the nursing home, I go only when

the patients summon me and visit only those who have requested a priest. A double permission had been issued when I ministered to St. Milašius who died 30 minutes later and when director A. Strauka chased me out with the Blessed Sacrament.

Savičius writes that many of the home's residents do not want a priest to come nosing around.

My response:

Ofcourse, there are non-believers at the nursing home, as well as people who along with director Stauka find a priest unwelcome. Savičius included such people in his list of objectors: Buzis, Selvenis, (Mrs) Enzėnienė, who is Lutheran . . . However, they do not represent believers, but atheists. The believers were precisely very outraged at such representatives and wrote a protest to the Banga editors. The faithful rejoice when a priests visits them: the faith remains their only comfort, and the atheists want to deprive them of that also.

Savičius claims that St. Milašius died in December 1977, that I did not meet the director at that time but only later did he drover me walking around . . .

My response:

Savičius deliberately distorts the facts: he has Milašius die before he actually did in order to cover up the director's shameful conduct toward me. I enclose a photocopy of Milašius' death certificate issued by the Gargždai Executive Committee clearly stating that he died not in December 1977, but on March 24, 1978. His sister (Mrs) Karkienė, residing at Klaipėdos g. 62 also testifies to this fact, as do all the residents of the Laugaliai Nursing Home present at that time.

This fallacy alone proves that his entire article is based on lies. No one believes anyone who has ever lied! Savičius even ignores Soviet documents. For him, the goal justifies the means. Such is anti-religious propaganda!

When I ministered to St. Milašius, other bedridden patients wanted to avail themselves of the opportunity; I ministered to them also. Still others wanted my services, but the director chased me out. He proved that the constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of conscience is mere oratory. Even executioners fulfill their victim's last request—summon a priest—and he did not even do this much.

4. Savičius writes that (Miss) J. Riaukaitė provides the priest with most of the information on how things are. He even gives her money to distribute.

My response:

Fortunate are the old people whom their relatives still visit, summon a priest for them, hand out a ruble for their old-age expenses. But what about those whom no one any longer visits, for whom no one summons a priest or hands out a ruble? They then turn to their friends in common need who can still manage to go see the priest and summon him. Not everyone accepts this role for he knows that the director will persecute him. Those who summon the priest risk incurring the director's displeasure. And yet such kind-hearted people do exist. (Mrs) Liutkienė, who could barely walk and has since died, used to do this often. There are also others besides (Miss) Riaukaitė.

It is unimportant who does the summoning; what is important is that I am summoned to minister to the dying. And the director assails those who call me in order to completely isolate the old disabled people from the church and have those who believed all their lives at least die an atheist death. Isn't it cruel? And this is freedom of conscience! Yet they should provide the disabled with the opportunity to summon a priest by telephone, provide them with every possibility of receiving religious services.

They also attempt to slander (Miss) Riaukaitė because she defends the residents against the wrongs they are made to suffer. To hold her past against her is tantamount to blaming Sniečkus because his parents were large landowners.

He asks why the old people must be given money? They are under the state's care, a new nursing home has been built. . .

My response:

Savičius contradicts himself, for he claims that the nursing home residents so grasped at those rubles that a dispute nearly erupted. If that money were not needed, would there have been a dispute?

I fully agree that they are provided food. But can a common pot satisfy everyone's desires? Is that nursing home so well provisioned that it only lacks swan's milk? Suppose a patient wants an orange or an apple . . . That is why a store is even provided them. What will you use to buy things if you have nothing? When some eat tasty things, others will drool. The faithful understand this and send them an occasional ruble, ask them to pray for them, to say the litanies.

But Savičius would like to deprive these poor people of even this. Is this humane?

Incident No. 3 — The Thief Stasys Mažutavičius

Savičius accuses me of acting improperly when I gave aid to the petty thief, Stasys Mažutavičius who had burglarized the church of Gargždai.

My response:

Mažutavičius, a resident of the Kaltinėnai district, successfully robbed district churches: After the church of Endriejavas, that of Gargždai.

After his trial, I did take him something to smoke and eat, because he had apologized to the people for his crimes and had asked me for something to smoke through his defense attorney.

I served with him at the strict regime Alytai labor camp: he for robbery and I for teaching children catechism. At the time, we shared our last morsel. Aware of what the future held in store for him, I could not be so cruel as to refuse his request, as Savičius would wish, when he had helped me in time of need. I condemn his evil deeds, but love the man.

Soviet laws severely punish crimes, especially repeat crimes. But this severity usually does not reform them, only hardens them even more, for they feel rejected and condemned by society.

At times, even the Soviet government used good promises and freedom to encourage them to reform, and this is very beneficial. In fact even those condemned persons still have much good in them and can be good people. I personally saw this in labor camps. When I gave Mažutavičius food, I in fact addressed this vein of humanity which could shame him for this evil deeds and turn him toward good. St. John Bosco educated the city's hoodlums into exemplary young men. World famous educators—Ferster, Pestalozzi and others—advise such upbringing. When elected Pope, John XXIII visited the Regina Celi prison in Rome: "Because you could not come to me, I have come to you." One prisoner asked: "Are the words of hope you spoke meant for me also? I have gravely sinned." The Pope did not say anything, only embraced him. It is human to condemn, divine to forgive. Of course, the atheist Savičius cannot even comprehend this, for atheists spread hatred and vengeance against the enemy..

Are not they more guilty who raised such as Mažutavičius with their godlessness?

Incident No. 4 — Teacher T. Papievienė

I am alleged to have assailed a teacher at the Gargždai Middle School because she actively works with her students.

My response:

1. On February 18th of this year, in a sermon on the obligations of parents toward their children, I mentioned teacher Teresė Papievienė not for her active work, but for terrorizing and slandering students. I stated that on February 14th of this year, Middle School No. 2 grade 2C teacher Papievienė gave six students D's for not wearing their Little Octobrist pins. Those children did not want to be Little Octobrists, but she enrolled all the children without consulting anyone and sent them to the official room to get their pins. Some children refused to wear the pins: L. Vainius, Dauskantas, Geraitė, Dumbraitė and others. She ordered them to bring their parents. However, they apparently did not come out of protest. On February 15th, she again gave D's to Kuprelis, Geraitė and others. She also threatened: "I will hand you over to the children's room," in other words, had them over to the militia. Isn't this terror?

And the parents had to come and protest: "Why are you forcing my child? Why do you enroll him without first asking? Why those "educational" D's?"

Furthermore, this teacher also attacks priests. She has stated: "Let them stop ordering children not to wear the pin" and threatened them. This is slander in front of the entire class. There is no need for us to order and direct: good Catholics know how they should view godless organizations whose aim is to eradicate the faith from children. They personally understand this.

Moreover, teacher Papievienė stated in front of all the children: "Pious religious fanatics leave spittle on the cross after kissing it, and then you go to church, also kiss the same cross and contract disease. Why do you go to church. There is no God there. You contract disease from the incense. Religious bigots donate filthy bedraggled money to God, then hand it to you; you will contract disease."

Why not ask that teacher when the faithful spit on the cross, when they spread disease, when incense spread disease. That is slander. Who allows her to slander the Church and the faithful? Are we believers slaves, do we have no rights? Do the godless have the right to sling mud at us whenever they please? Is this a teacher? Is this an intellectual?

The teacher reprimands and gives D's to girls because they keep vigil, she demands all sorts of questionnaires from little ones: "Do you go to church? Who takes you? Why do you go? Don't go to church!"

Why doesn't (Mrs) Papievienė warn the government which demands that the church make huge payments in those same bedraggled rubles, for instance, at 25 kopeks per kWh of electricity when others only pay 4 kopeks?

2. In April (Mrs) Papievienė read that slanderous article to the entire Grade 2C and then added her own slanderous comments about priests: "They stuck knives into people . . ." Who, when? It is astonishing that she was named to educate children when she herself is uneducated! Why does she violate the Constitution which forbids "fomenting discord and hatred in connection with religious beliefs?"

Incident No. 5 — Other charges made by Savičius

He reports that Šeškevičius is attempting to gain fame through slanderous Vatican Radio broadcasts.

My response:

Every Lithuanian knows that to have secret contacts with the Vatican or foreign nations means to renounce one's freedom: to wind up behind bars. Who could possibly year for such "honor?"

Nonetheless, on November 13, 1978 the Vatican aired an accurate report on the Laugaliai Nursing Home and Savičius shamefully falsified this fact in order to camouflage the atheist's disgraceful actions. But is this not why the Banga editors reported the falsified date of S. Milašius' death in order to compromise Vatican Radio? In other words, the Vatican is broadcasting slander because the director of the Laugaliai Nursing Home, A. Strauka, confronted the priests at a later time and not on the date the Vatican reported?

I think that Vatican Radio will manage even in the future to report all the atheists' shameful attacks.

Not only the Vatican, but all foreign countries are outraged that the honorable country of Lithuania still has such as Savičius who disgrace Lithuania. How can good Lithuanians and the rest of the world keep silent!

Savičius remarks: "It is doubtful that the priest will manage to remedy Church matters, regardless of how he strains to draw more people to his side."

My response:

It must be considered a veritable miracle that the Lithuanian nation still believes as strongly as it does. For presently nine powers are directed against the faith, believers and priests: the press and television, radio and movies, atheist organizations, the real oppression of school children, young people and workers for the faith, onerous church taxes, trials and prison terms for defending rights, fines for religious processions honoring the dead, persecution for instructing children, restriction of the theological seminary and repression of the entire Catholic Church in Lithuania, refusal to grant either a religious press or any public religious instruction, as is done in other socialist states . . . And yet the Lithuanian Catholic Church survives, even grows stronger, while not a trace of atheism would remain after such repression. Such disgraceful atheist repression precisely shows the Lithuanian nation the true face of godlessness and compels it to value religion. Thus even after such efforts, only a mere handful of atheists exists in Lithuania.

Father A.(ntanas) Šeškevičius

Gargždai

April 12, 1979

SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

In an attempt to justify the legality of repressing religious and civil rights in Lithuania, the government is venturing to establish this legality through various sociological "research."

At the beginning of 1978, a questionnaire was circulated in certain Lithuanian agencies whose employees were compelled to reply to a series of questions on their attitudes toward religion. Among other questions, were the following: "What is your attitude toward religion? Do you attend church for the purpose of prayer? Do you celebrate religious holidays? How would you evaluate religion?" These questions and possible replies to them (for example, the question "How would you evaluate religion" offers the following possible replies: "1. Religion is harmful; 2. Religion contradicts science; 3. Religion is useless but not harmful; 4. Religion comforts man; 5. No opinion.") are already anti-religion by their very nature.

Despite this, questionnaires could be accepted if they were conducted honestly and the results later made public and, on their basis, the condition of believers improved. However, the results of these questionnaires are contrived beforehand, for questionnaires

are handed out, checked and compiled by party organization offices which destroy questionnaires favorable to religion and send the sociological research center only those questionnaires which present a negative attitude toward religion.

In this way, the party secretary rather adroitly "makes" it appear that atheist education is excellent at his office and all employees are atheists. (An occasional questionnaire filled out by an uncommitted individual is included.) The secretary then avoids difficulties "from above" and the results of the sociological "research" is of course falsified.

Through such juggling, in certain agencies where over 50% of the employees were for religion (deeply religious, attending church only on major feasts, etc.) such "research" so distorts the actual situation that it appears 95% of the employees are fierce atheists.

We are delighted to add that according to earlier, as yet unfalsified, questionnaire results, believers are more numerous than the uncommitted.

Such a poll is also misleading because, by virtue of the fact that it is conducted in offices, it takes no account of our parents' beliefs. For it is no secret that there are considerably more believers among the older generation. They also are full citizens who must be considered.

The 1978 questionnaires included certain provocative questions dictated by the security police, for example: "What is your attitude toward the Russian nation and the brother USSR nations? Do you speak Russian voluntarily? Do you think the alliance of socialist states has been formed under duress? What do you think of the 1956 events in Hungary? Was it intervention by the USSR? How do you feel about the introduction of Warsaw Pact forces into Czechoslovakia in 1968?" and so forth.

Furthermore, these questionnaires were submitted only to selected employees: manager and party members. Thereby, by their very nature, the replies to the questions could not accurately reflect the opinion of society. More importantly, the secrecy of the questionnaire was violated (deliberately of course): All the respondents were seated in a room next to each other. Even were one to wish it, it was therefore impossible to honestly express one's opinion. For no one could be sure about the persons sitting to one's left or right, especially if they were party members. And so the results of this sociological "research" once again concealed the true situation.

IT IS WORSE THAN MURDER

On June 23, 1979—midsummer's eve—a group of young people gathered at the tiny church of Paveisninkai which had been vandalized at the hands of the godless. At sunset, the group of youngsters, carrying a cross on their backs, singing hymns and saying the rosary aloud, headed for the spot where it had once been planned to build a church. Prayer rang out with hope on that quiet night, like a call to awaken the nation.

Several minutes later a beautiful cross bearing the inscription "Lord, renew the face of our Nation!" was erected.

Shortly, the security police and militia of Lazdijai stirred into action, searching for the youths who had erected the cross. The militia never displays such zeal in catching hoodlums.

On July 2nd, Vice Chairman VI. Kavaliukas took 10th-grader Antanas Tamanauskas from his home to the Kapčiamiestis militia department. The student was interrogated, threatened with dire consequences if he remains silent. At the militia, the Vice Chairman asked who organized the evening, who made, who blessed and who erected the cross, from where so much youth had come. The boy claimed he knew nothing.

"You won't graduate middle school and will be taken to a children's colony," threatened Inspector Kavaliukas. When he released him to go home, the agent ordered the boy to tell no one, not even his parents, about the interrogation.

At 2:00 P.M. on July 5th, security agent J. Zinkevičius came drunk in a security police vehicle to the home of the Žibūda family (village of Menciškė) along with the same militiaman Kavaliukas. They first assailed the mother for improperly raising her children because they attend church and erected a cross on the 23rd. Zinkevičius demanded that her son Romas and daughter be called. When the mother asked whether it was such a great crime to erect a cross that even the militia searches for the offenders, Zinkevičius retorted:

"It is worse than murder!"

Romas was locked in a room and the threats began:

"You wrote the inscription on the cross!" shouted the enraged security agent and swinging his briefcase threatened:

"When I smack your mouth, I'll renew your face!"

The interrogators used their worst threats: to expel him from school, prevent him seeking higher education, send him to the

reformatory, imprison him, beat him up. When they failed to achieve anything with their threats, they shoved the boy into their car and took him to Kapčiamiestis. As they drove through the woods, they threatened to beat him up and leave him in the woods, but Romas prayed and completely ignored them.

The interrogation at the Kapčiamiestis militia department lasted a few hours. Upon releasing him, they warned him not to tell anyone of the interrogation.

The following day, Romas Žibūda was also summoned to the Lazdijai security police. There, he was ridiculed for serving at Mass, asked what school he plans to attend upon graduating from middle school, ordered him to tell the names of other boys who serve at Mass. As they released him, they said they would meet again many more times.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CHRONICLE?

On June 28, 1978 Tiesa (Truth) published an article by correspondent Vytautas Žeimantas entitled "Slander from the Pulpit" in which the author brutally attacked the pastor of Viduklė, Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, with various fabrications. The faithful of Viduklė wrote a letter of protest to First Secretary Griškevičius of the Lithuanian SSR Communist Party. The letter was signed by over 1,000 believers.

The faithful also wrote to Žeimantas, but of course received no reply. In lieu of a reply, Security Police Interrogator Major Matulevičius came to the Blinstrubiškis Nursing Home on March 28, 1979 and interrogated patient Stasė Navardauskaitė who had dared to defend the pastor.

When he arrived, the Major stated he would conduct the interrogation without any outsiders. Assistant Director Danutė Lipeikaitė left the room. Major Matulevičius then locked the door, took out a sheaf of papers and said:

"Let's begin ..."

After a series of meaningless questions, the interrogator suddenly asked:

"What can you tell me about pastor Svarinskas of Viduklė?"

"What can I tell you other than that he is a good man, a good priest, eloquent. His sermons draw people, are inspiring and rouse people from moral stagnation."

"Why do you like him?"

"Because he fights drunkenness and moral licentiousness. He tries to urge families to live morally, raise their children decently."

"What else does he say?" continued the interrogator.

"If you want to know so much, go listen to his sermons yourselves and then you will know everything."

"And what do others think of him?"

"Others also think well of him and love him because the church is nearly always full of people. Therefore it is often difficult for us disabled people to find a place for our wheelchairs. And there are many children."

"What do you know about such publications as the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church, God and Country, and Suffering Christ*?"

"And what can I know about them? I know nothing. But I've heard on the radio that they exist."

The security agent approached the patient, shoved a handful of papers under her nose:

"Take a look!"

"And what is this" (Miss) Navardauskaitė asked in surprise.

"You see, look, issue No. 34!" and he again sat down at the table, leafing through that issue's pages. He then asked derisively:

"And maybe you will tell me on what page?"

The woman did not reply.

Then Matulevičius lifted up a handwritten page and again asked with great sarcasm:

"And perhaps you know nothing about this?"

"It's a letter I wrote," calmly replied the patient.

"Whom did you consult when you wrote the letter?"

"No one! I wrote it by myself. I read the article in the newspaper, was incensed and wrote."

"If you wrote the letter by yourself, then tell me how it found its way into the *Chronicle*? You know, don't you, that it was in the *Chronicle*?"

"I heard it read on the radio, but do not know how it got there."

"And how was it read?" the security agent kept harassing her.

"It was read as I wrote it; without subtracting or adding anything."

"You wrote that letter at Svarinskas' urging," the security agent continued to badger her. After a brief pause, he continued:

"Explain for me this sentence: 'It is extremely painful that today after such suffering, our nation's body is being invaded, figuratively speaking, by cancer cells which, in attempting to extend the life of the

malignant growth, destroy the healthy cells."

"And how else can you call the people," stated (Miss) Neverdauskaitė, "who make up a mess of slander and pour it over the head of a decent man?"

At the end of the interrogation, the security agent ordered (Miss) Neverdauskaitė to sign the minutes of the interrogation, but she refused. The interrogator gathered up all his papers and gnashed out through clenched teeth:

"Fanatic! I will go tell the director how you've behaving, how you repay the state."

N.B. Certain people conceal their talks with the security police out of fear and thereby, though indirectly, give them a helping hand for they help villany, for which publicity is fatal, to exist.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Kaunas

On May 29, 1979, Liudas Simutis was informed at the militia department of the *Rayon* of Panemunė of the City of Kaunas that he must leave Lithuania within 24 hours.

After serving 22 years in the Gulag for participating in the opposition movement against the occupant, Liudas Simutis returned to Lithuania and formed a family. Unfortunately, a Lithuanian does not have the right to live in his homeland. He must be replaced by a foreign occupant.

Simutis refused to leave. Lithuania. The militia has thus far remained silent.

Vilkaviškis

While making a speech at the Vilkaviškis Sewing Factory on July 12, 1979, Secretary Tėvelis of the *rayon* party committee stated that crosses are being erected here and there in the *rayon* of Vilkaviškis. Although the laws do not forbid the erection of crosses, they must be removed when they are erected in "prohibited" places. This has happened in our *rayon*: A cross was erected on the grave of a "bandit" (pure fabrication — Ed. note); it therefore had to be removed as a monument to the enemy. A second cross was erected on an ancient mound located halfway between Vilkaviškis and Kapsukas. Secretary Tėvelis called this mound a "historical landmark" where all excavation is forbidden, this cross therefore also had to be

removed.

Both of these crosses were removed at the order of Vice Chairman Urbonas of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee, implementing a long-standing program of the Communist Party: to destroy the nation's Christian face.

Prienai

On June 7, 1979, the faithful erected a 5-meter (15-foot) white cross on the Hill of Brides with the inscription: "Lord, protect our nation's youth against godlessness!"

The following day, Secretary Šlepetys of the Janonis state farm party organization, together with worker Šyvokas tore down the cross, cut it into pieces and carted it off to the state farm lumber yard where they dumped it. This is the second cross to date desecrated on the Hill of Brides.

Saločiai

Father Antanas Balaišis, pastor of the Saločiai parish, wrote the Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR on December 8, 1978. We reprint below an abbreviated text of his statement:

"On July 13, 1978 I was summoned to the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* to see Vice Chairman Dėmenis. There, I was ordered to sign a tendentious transcript and was charged, without any foundation, with organizing, and I quote, "a special meeting of children for the purpose of teaching religion" on July 12, 1978 at the church of Saločiai.

I was lectured that people can only listen and not reply during sermons, that sermons can be preached only during Mass and that candles must be lit during sermons.

The Vice Chairman declared that children under eighteen years of age cannot attend church.

The Administrative Fine Commission of the *rayon* of Pasvalys fined me fifty rubles on July 20, 1978.

I would like to direct your attention, Mr. Prosecutor, to the conduct of the individuals who have accused me unjustly and who truly violate Soviet laws.

They burst into the church during services and interrupted the services. The individuals were Pasvalys militiaman V. Norkus, Executive Committee Vice Chairman V. Dėmenis, Chairwoman D. Poškevičienė of the Saločiai District and V. Moteikienė of the Religious Cult Administration of the *Rayon* of Pasvalys. They strolled

through the church during services, photographed the priests, the children, thereby disturbing the faithful. They left the church only when a commotion arose. Their conduct was very reminiscent of Nazi behavior in churches.

Mr. Prosecutor, I ask you to overrule the July 20, 1978 decision of the Administrative Fine Commission of the *Rayon* of Pasvalys, to reprimand the individuals who abused their authority on July 12, 1978 and discriminated against the faithful and to protect the constitutional rights of the faithful.

Father Antanas Balaišis."

Višakio Rūda

An old wayside shrine with statues carved by folk artisans stands in the woods near Višakio Rūda. A spring flows at the foot of the shrine. Beneath the shrine, a statue of the Virgin Mary holding the Child Jesus used to stand under an artistic dome. People from a wide surrounding area paid homage to and visited this spot; at times they even came from far away to entreat Mary for certain favors.

On May 5, 1979 the shrine was desecrated: The statue of Mary was broken, the benches turned over and the flowers trampled.

Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis has demanded that the pastor of Višakio Rūda, Father Gvidonas Dovydaitis, not serve the parish of Nemirai because he fears the energetic priest might revive this spiritually stagnating corner of Suvalkija.

Telšiai

On June 3, 1979, Father Jonas Kauneckas, Assistant Pastor of the Telšiai Cathedral, announced from the pulpit that Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis is demanding his transfer from the Cathedral. This proves how the Soviet government 'does not interfere' in internal Church affairs. On June 12th the faithful of Telšiai took a statement bearing 1,580 signatures to Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis. The statement demands that Father Kauneckas not be ordered to transfer from Telšiai. The Religious Affairs Commissioner replied in writing that he had made inquiries at the Telšiai Chancery and learned that it was decided to elevate Father Kauneckas by appointing him pastor of some parish. On June 26th, a large group of faithful appealed to the administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai regarding this matter and learned that no inquiry had been made by the Commissioner's office and that, at present,

there are no plans to name Father Kauneckas pastor. In other words, the priest's "elevation" is merely the Commissioner's fantasy and goal. The faithful of Telšiai sent Anilionis the following statement:

"We attentively read your reply and would like to state the following.

Your reply is insincere and untrue. You only ridiculed the faithful of the parish of Telšiai. And the reason is that you are attempting to compel the Diocesan Administrator to transfer our assistant pastor Father Jonas Kauneckas while you write about his elevation. There is currently a great shortage of assistant pastors in Lithuania and it is unprecedented to appoint a young priest pastor after only a few years.

We therefore return to our original demand: Stop interfering in the appointment of priests and stop harassing our assistant pastor Father Jonas Kauneckas.

Telšiai, July 7, 1979

The Faithful of Telšiai
(37 signatures)

On June 5, 1979, two security agents came to see (Miss) Teresė Sudaviciūtė who works at the Telšiai infectious disease center and bemoaned the fact that Teresė has a poor apartment: She could get a better one. And then they began to interrogate her about whether she listens to Vatican Radio, whether she knows who publishes the *Chronicle*, etc. The interrogation lasted two hours.

Kaunas

On March 11, 1979, Arčulis, Head of the Patent Department of the Kaunas Radio Surveying Technical Research Institute, came to the department's document copying office (Era machines are used to make copies) and began to examine the books brought to be copied. After picking up one book, he began to shout: "Who is planning to copy this? This is an anti-Soviet book, a prayerbook!" He immediately summoned the head of the first (security — Trans note) department, Pronichev, and informed him that the prayerbook in question was published abroad and is an anti-Soviet publication. Pronichev began an investigation into who had brought this book to be duplicated, but no one betrayed anything.

Salos (Rayon of Rokiškis)

The faithful of the Salos parish wanted to elect as chairman of the parish committee an individual suitable for the office, but the Religious Affairs Commissioner and the Salos District Committee are preventing this. (Government officials demand that the worst Catholics work on Church committees: it is important that they carry out all the demands of the Soviet government — Ed. note).

Kybartai

On March 14, 1979, representatives of the Kybartai parish appealed to Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis with the request that Bishop Povilonis be permitted to come to Kybartai on July 22nd during recollections and administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to the youth of Kybartai. The Commissioner denied permission.

July 22nd marked the 50th anniversary of the church of Kybartai. The exiled Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius came to the celebration without permission from the government. The people of Kybartai greeted the persecuted bishop with great enthusiasm. In his sermon, Bishop Steponavičius urged the faithful to remain faithful to God and courageously defend their faith.

Kapsukas

On April 5, 1979, the pastor of Sasnava, Father Albinas Deltuva, was warned because he had invited priests to devotions without permission and thereby violated article 19 of the Regulations for Religious Associations.

In his statement to the *rayon* government, Father* Deltuva points out that article 19 contradicts the USSR Constitution and international USSR commitments and therefore has no legal force.

Varputėnai (Rayon of Šiauliai)

During the night of June 18, 1979, culprits broke into the church of Varputėnai and ravaged it: They smashed the altars, crosses and candlesticks.

Pociūnėliai

In 1978, Vaišutis, JHead of the Finance Department of the *Rayon* of Radviliškis, carried out his pledge to "take care of the pastor and tripled the taxes Father Antanas Jokubauskas has to pay. While complying with the unjust demand, the priest paid 400 rubles too much. The Radviliškis *Rayon* People's Court upheld the Finance

Department and rejected the priest's demand that the overpayment be refunded.

At the beginning of 1979, Father Jokubauskas' taxes were again doubled. With the help of the Finance Department, the *rayon* government is blackmailing the zealous priest.

Vilnius

Vilnius has a beautiful funeral home. People can purchase wreaths, artisans write inscriptions on the ribbons right there on the spot. However, the artists are forbidden to write "A.A." (rest in peace) on the ribbons. How all-encompassing is the party's concern not only for the living but also for the dead!

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

Pasvalys

On January 29, 1979, a Week of Atheism was declared at the Pasvalys Middle School. A display of student artwork on atheist subjects was held. As in all such programs, the students were unwilling to participate. There were barely several drawings from the upper grades, all others (some 40) were from grades 5 and 6 where the students had to draw them during art class. Teacher Slanciauskiene went into classrooms and demanded that the drawings be finished more quickly.

During the night of February 1 to 2, all the drawings and the atheist school newspaper disappeared, and a poster with excerpts from the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR (art. 50) was hung on the bulletin board: "Citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are guaranteed the freedom of conscience; that is, the right to profess any religion whatsoever, or not profess any, practice religious cults or conduct atheist propaganda. Fomenting discord and hatred in connection with religious beliefs is forbidden. The church in the Lithuanian SSR is separate from the state and the school from the church."

In the morning, the teachers quickly set up a new display in order to conceal the "theft."

A meeting of middle school and university students, attended by some 300 persons, was held on February 3rd. Proclamations were pasted to unoccupied seats, the Lithuanian tricolor flag was conspicuous, as well as slogans: "Russian occupants go home!", "Freedom for Lithuania!" and others. Short four line poems:

"Red, green and yellow,
Our tricolor flag.
Let's fight for freedom, brothers,
And Lithuania will once again be free, etc.

The proclamation aroused everyone's curiosity. Six extra teachers were called out to help catch the instigators.

Similar proclamations also appeared in the school dormitory, where a thorough search was conducted on February 5th.

On February 5, 6, and 7, eleventh-grade students were summoned (during classtime) to the principal's office for talks with security police agents.

On February 7th, 11th-grader Rima Juzytė was summoned to the principal's office, for such questioning and one and a half hours later was taken to the Soviet Building. Security agents pleasantly and threateningly ordered her to tell who had organized and directed that the proclamations be distributed. The interrogation lasted until 6:30 P.M. (without a break for lunch). She returned home accompanied by Chief Ivaškevičius of the Pasvalys subdivision of the State Security Police and subdivision employee Roginov. The parents had not been informed of their daughter's interrogation. The interrogation continued at home with Middle School Principal Vytautas Kanapeckas in attendance. A cursory search was made of Juzytė's room, although they had no permission to search. Ivaškevičius confiscated master plates, poster paints, pictures of saints. The uninvited guests left the apartment at 10:30 P.M.

On February 8th, Juzytė was again summoned to the principal's office. Security Agent Roginov ordered her to write certain articles from the Constitution of the USSR. Juzytė refused to write anything.

On February 9th, classmate Rima Varžinskaitė was summoned for interrogation to the principal's office. After their failure with Juzytė, the security agents adopted more effective measures. They thoroughly frightened the girl and she confessed to distributing the proclamations. The girl became ill after the interrogation.

After being subjected to threats that she would be barred admittance to all schools and that her parents would suffer dire consequences (both party members, the mother a history teacher, the father a lawyer), a third "criminal" also confessed: Rasa Pulkauninkaitė.

The girls were summoned many more times for talks with School Principal Vytautas Kanapeckas, Assistant Principal Janina Miežans-

kienė, the Secretary of the Communist Youth League, and always during classtime!

On March 13th, speeches were written at the direction of Security Agent Roginov and the school principal for R. Varžinskaitė, R. Pulkauninkaitė, the class Communist Youth secretary and several students. Other students were strictly forbidden to speak. After such preparations, a meeting of the school's graduating class was held. All eleventh-grade students attended, as did the class parents' committees, teachers, security agents Ivaškevičius and Roginov, the parents of Juzytė and Pulkauninkaitė—there were over 200 people in the auditorium.

R. Varžinskaitė read the prepared speech and repented; she tearfully promised not to transgress again. She was merely given a strict reprimand. Apparently the tears helped?!

R. Pulkauninkaitė also repented very deeply (only did not cry). Her mother spoke. Pulkauninkaitė's deportment grade was lowered to satisfactory, with a strict reprimand in her personal file.

Juzytė was punished more severely: She was expelled from the Communist Youth League, her deportment grade was lowered to unsatisfactory with the promise of such references that no school would admit her.

She was told that she belongs not in a Soviet school but a psychiatric hospital. Her parents were not allowed to speak.

Žemaičių Kalvarija (Rayon of Plungė, Varduva)

On April 11, 1979 A "hunt" for students who attend church was launched and is still taking place. Boys who serve at Mass and girls who sing in the choir are summoned from class to the principal's office and are interrogated there by teacher Neniškienė and security police employees from Plungė. The following students were questioned: 10th-grader Vida Vilniutė, 7th-grader Valė Gintvainytė, 11th-grader Bimtė Šlimaitė, 7th-grader Lina Mažrimaitė, 10th-grader Laima Brazdeikytė, 9th-grader Martynas Jurgutis and others. They are asked questions such as: Do you get anti-Soviet newspapers, where did you get pins and booklets of the Friends of the Eucharist, who organizes various trips, what do priests say during sermons, who sings in the choir, who belongs to the Friends of the Eucharist organization? A search was conducted twice at the home of Vida Vilniutė. They were seeking underground literature, and perused a photograph album. Vilniutė was warned she would be imprisoned for distributing underground literature. A search was also conducted at the home of

Valé Gintvainytė. Anti-Soviet and religious poems she wrote herself were found in her possession, and as a consequence she was threatened with internment in a delinquent children's colony as a minor.

Friends of the Eucharist booklets, temperance booklets, Stations of the Cross booklets, various poems and holy pictures were confiscated from students. During the questioning, Teacher Neniškienė behaved in a particularly insolent and brutal manner, like a secret policeman with prisoners.

Gedrimai Rayon of Telšiai), The Gedrimai Grammar School

On March 21, 1979 eighth-grade student Stefa Račkauskaitė handed principal Limantas a statement because her department grade had been lowered. The principal assailed the girl: "I'd slap your face for this, but you'd immediately run to the pastor and Vatican Radio would report it two days later." We reprint the text of the statement:

Dear Principal:

I am an eighth grade student. I am a believing, devout girl. You probably already know this.

Nowadays we hear everywhere talk about the freedom of conscience. The Constitution of the USSR also affirms this. All civil rights are guaranteed there. It states that one can profess any belief.

But is that how things really are?

No, things are not like that. Everywhere believers are called ignorant, backward, uneducated. Devout persons are considered second-class citizens. This also holds true here, in the eighth grade of the Gedrimai Grammar School.

A consultation was held before preparing for a Russian language contest. I was assigned to tell a story. But I refused, because I already knew that my conduct was unsatisfactory. And I informed the class leader of this: "I will not learn the story. Let the exemplary students prepare." The classroom teacher suggested that we step outside the room for a brief talk. I agreed and even asked: Do I need to take my notebook. He replied no. When we stepped outside, the class leader told me that my department grade had been lowered because I was absent from school on December 25, 1978 and attended religious services.

I replied that all this doesn't make sense: 'Don't you know that conduct marks are not lowered for such things?'

This is how our talk ended and we returned to the classroom.

The following day I took the story.

Mr. Principal, my deportment grade was lowered the first trimester because of that "offense", but why the second trimester? You will perhaps say that I do not take part in activities? How can I, a believer, participate in atheist programs?

If my deportment grade was lowered for some other reason, please let me know. And if only for the faith . . . For I commit no crime by going to church, I violate no law. For this is all allowed by the Constitution. I think that unbelieving teenage boys and girls cause a great deal of damage. While "sober" they break the windows of the bus station, commit thefts. And is their deportment grade lowered? No, this youth is exemplary.

Such is the equality of all citizens and students. We can fearlessly say that there is no equality here.

March 21, 1979

Rayon of Telšiai, Pasruojis
Post Office, Village of Brėvikiai
Račkauskaitė, Stefa.

Vabalninkas

The funeral of a woman whose son, Petras Klinga, is the director of the Education Department of the *Rayon* of Panevėžys was held this spring.

After his mother's burial, Petras Klinga began having severe difficulties. Someone reported that during the Catholic funeral he followed his mother's coffin into the church and remained there during the entire funeral service.

Because of this "crime", Petras Klinga was terrorized at his place of employment. His case was even investigated by the *rayon* Communist Party, for the "criminal" is a member of the Lithuanian Communist Party. The question of expelling him from the party, as well as dismissing him from work, was debated.

Finally, after lengthy interrogations and investigations, he had to go to Vilnius and justify his actions there. When asked in Vilnius "What did you do in church?" Klinga replied "I stood."

"If you only stood, you can return and continue working at your job." And so, this time, the outcome of this incident was more than unexpected.

This is how petty atheist bureaucrats think up "work" for them-

selves and waste other people's time over things that normal people would not even give a second thought.

Skapiškis (Rayon of Kupiškis)

Jonas Kaušakys, the principal of the Skapiškis Middle School, brutally discriminates against believing students. For instance, when a theft occurred at the school, he blatantly searched only believing students: Stasė Raudonytė, Vaida Belickaitė and Petrašonytė. When the parents objected to the suspicion and degradation to which their children were subjected, the principal retorted: "We fight and will continue to fight religious superstition!"

On the feast of St. Joseph, the namesday of pastor Juozapas Giedraitis, the children who attended church congratulated their pastor with poems and flowers. An outcry was heard at the school. Teacher Markevičiūtė so intimidated the children that they were afraid to go to school. Parents had to personally take their weeping children to school. When the parents demanded that the teacher stop frightening the children, she assured the parents that congratulating the pastor was a political act.

Luokė (Rayon of Telšiai)

On May 31, 1979, Principal Vaišvila of the Luokė Middle School, Teacher Andriusevičius, Editor Vaseris of the Telšiai *Rayon* newspaper *Beacon of Communism* and two persons from the Telšiai party committee interrogated the following students of the Luokė Middle School: 6th-grader Gintaras Jankauskas, 5th-grader Valius Ambrožas, 5th-grader Saulius Leščianskas. The students were berated because they go to church and serve at Holy Mass. The above named students, as well as 5th-grader Romas Želvys, had also been interrogated on the same subject two weeks earlier. At the time, the students were ordered to fill out questionnaires about their faith. At the end of the school year, all these students received lower department grades. Although they earlier earned exemplary department marks, their behavior is now considered only "satisfactory."

But even by using such methods, the atheists cannot defeat ordinary school children. Saulius Leščianskas fearlessly told the interrogators: "I will go to church. I will only obey my parents and the pastor."

But the atheists are adopting ever new means of compulsion.

On June 4th, all the above named students and their parents

were summoned to the Telšiai militia. The militia had received a complaint from Luokė Middle School teacher Andriusevičius. He charged that parish pastor Šapokas was luring children to church, with alcoholic beverages. But the facts did not corroborate this, nothing similar had ever happened, the pastor's only "sin" was that he invited school children to church. The militiamen ridiculed the teacher's charge within earshot of the students and their parents:

"That's not a crime! Go to church as much as you want. The law does not forbid it. Doesn't the teacher know the law? And it's better for us when people go to church, for they do not break windows and we have less work to do."

Sidabravas (Rayon of Radviliškis)

Atheist work has been stepped up at the Sidabravas Middle School. Despite the example of V. Starkus "who became a full human being," the youth participated in great numbers in Holy Week services and the Easter procession.

On April 10th, tenth-grade homeroom teacher J. Bajorūnienė forced Sigitas Kalnius as well as four schoolgirls to justify in writing why they visited the sacristan several days earlier. Sigitas Kalnius explained that he is not a Communist Youth member and therefore can visit the sacristan.

Somewhat earlier, physical education teacher Barzdonis searched the pockets of Grade 7B students and confiscated a rosary from Arvydas Lotužas. He asked the student whether he attends church. Receiving an affirmative reply, the teacher stated it is "an old wives' tale" and he would therefore return the rosary to the parents.

On April 12th, Lithuanian language teacher V. Pranculienė explained to Grade 8B students during class: 'The church was built only for old women . . . Easter and other religious feasts are approaching; you are eighth graders, so please don't wander around the churchyard — act your age.'

Teacher Motiekaitis was especially vehement. During half of the art class on April 14th, he spoke to his homeroom, Grade 6A, on an atheist topic. According to him, only old people should go to church and there is no need for the young to go there. Gesturing with his hands, he explained: "I'm showing you here 100 rubles; you see them, but you don't see God, then why go to that church?!" Pointing to student Vilma Petraitytė he shouted: "So you go to church." The schoolgirl replied: "I go because I want to."

The homeroom teacher threatened to relieve her of her position as

leader of the class Pioneers and give her a lower deportment grade. The student retorted that she was voluntarily withdrawing from the position and that the teacher had no right to give her a lower conduct mark because even teachers go to church. The teacher ordered her to be silent and added that the teachers know which students are believers and will therefore give them lower deportment grades and expel them from school.

That same day, School Principal M. Razma took the sisters Zita and Laima Stanelytė to Teacher Motiekaitienė's office. In front of the principal, Motiekaitienė asked the girls who orders them to go to church, where they get white dresses, does someone give them candy in church, which other students attend church, will they strew flowers during Easter? The students replied that they go to church of their own will, no one gives them anything; the teachers should come themselves and take a look. The teacher warned the girls that if they do not stop going to church, their conduct marks will be lowered.

On April 16th, the principal took Grade 6A student Vida Balčiūnaitė to his office. In the presence of the head of curriculum, (Mrs) Motiekaitienė, he asked how long she had been going to church, who told her to go, was she given anything in church, which other students attend church, would she continue going? The student replied that she would go to church in the future. The principal threatened that her conduct grade would be lowered for attending church, and if she still persisted she would even be expelled from school.

On April 18th, the atheists put up an atheist display at the school.

At a school Communist Youth League meeting, one teacher and one student were assigned to observe which students attended church. They are Russian language teacher Z. Vaškevičienė and 11th-grade student Sabaliauskaitė.

On April 19th, grade 7B homeroom teacher Vaškevičienė lectured her class that God does not exist and that fasting was invented by landlords to force the peasants to starve. She asked the students which ones attend church. The students replied that the church is separate from the school, they therefore have the right to go to church. The homeroom teacher then explained that only old women go pray and kneel every day. She also added that persons had come from the *rayon* during Easter, had made a list of all the students who were in church and the priest would be punished for his sermon.

It is no secret that some teachers are believers and practice their religion. One teacher stated that she would not scold believing students on her own, but that she "is pressured from above." Since the law does not forbid students to attend cult services, those teachers who terrorize believing students on their own initiative as well as those who do so "pressured from above" can only be called, in the words of the parish pastor's Easter sermon, "undertakers of the nation."

THE CHURCH IN SOVIET REPUBLICS

BELORUSSIA

Gervėčiai

The pastor of Gervėčiai, Father Stanislov Chodygo, died in September 1978. Although Polish, he respected the Lithuanians and during services also read the gospel in Lithuanian.

The inhabitants of Gervėčiai, Rimdžiūnai, Giriai and other villages endeavored to get a new priest from Lithuania. Father Petravičius came, but it soon became apparent that the district refused to register him.

The priest of Rodunė also died at the end of 1978. And so, not only Rodunė, but the inhabitants of the Lithuanian island of Pelesa were left without a priest.

At the beginning of 1979, the priest of Barunai, Father Kozlovskij who served several parishes, died at the age of 85. Thus, the last remaining priests are beginning to die out in Belorussia.

Novego Dvor

On April 23, 1979, the pastor of Novego Dvor and Vosiliškiai, Father Antonij Chanko, was issued a warning at the *rayon* because children serve at Mass.

Several weeks later, the *rayon* government imposed a 20-ruble fine on Father Chanko and the chairman of the N. Dvor church committee because children participated in the Easter procession.

MOLDAVIA

Sloboda-Rashkovo

Since 1977 the Catholics of Sloboda-Rashkovo have been praying under the open sky, not only in summer but in autumn and winter as well, because the government razed the small church the faithful

had built. People send telegrams, bet the priest to come to dying patients or bury the dead, but most telegrams disappear somewhere.

In Ribnitsa, Ivanovko and elsewhere the government replies as follows to requests from Catholics for permission to have the priest visit them: "You will sooner see polar bears than the priest." Government representatives refuse to register parishes in Bel'tsy, Andriyashevko, Petropavlovko, Tiraspol and elsewhere. The faithful are mocked: "Each of you can pray in his own home; there is no need for a house of worship."

On May 25, 1979, the Kamenka government allowed the priest to come bury a dead man and promised that the priest would now be able to come to Rashkovo with no restrictions. However, the priest was ordered to forbid the people to assemble for prayer when there is no priest and never allow children and young people to attend services.

On July 6th, the Commissioner from Kishinev berated Father Zavalniuk for not carrying out the government's demands and forbade him to visit Rashkovo. That same day government officials brought two carloads of workers and destroyed the altar the people had built in Rashkovo and the tent where the old and children took refuge from the rain in bad weather.

The Catholics of Rashkovo went to the Vinitsa district in the Ukraine for the purpose of getting a priest. Father Kazimieras Žilys who works there agreed to minister to the Catholics of Rashkovo, but the Moldavian Religious Affairs Commissioner would not give his consent. On another occasion, this commissioner called the faithful of Rashkovo criminals and told them to stop dreaming of getting help from Vinitsa where Father Žilys works. "He is a Lithuanian," the Commissioner was incensed. "And Lithuanians are all enemies of the Soviet government. The Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers was founded in Lithuania and it is dangerous to have anything to do with Lithuania!"

After the faithful continually badgered the Religious Affairs Council with requests to grant the priest permission to visit them, the commissioner allowed Father Zavalniuk to go minister to the people (except Rashkovo) two weeks before Easter, in response to their telegrams, on the condition the local government is notified where the faithful will gather to pray. It is impossible to comply with such a condition in Moldavia. After the priest's visit, a campaign to ridicule and persecute the faithful is launched.

Many people came to Kishinev the week before Easter. The priest heard confessions day and night. He became completely exhausted and contracted meningitis after catching a chill on Easter morning.

The schoolchildren of Rashkovo also came to Kishinev for Easter. Because the trip is long and involves transfers, they were absent from school on Monday. The school principal scolded the students and mocked them. Furthermore, he summoned their parents. The parents courageously defended their children: "It is impossible to make the roundtrip to Kishinev in one day. And it is our sacred duty to make the Easter confession."

In their latest statement to the Religious Affairs Council in Moscow, the Catholics of Rashkovo write:

"It is likely that in no other Soviet Union republic are Catholics ridiculed as much as in Moldavia. Officials deride and offend our religious feelings. *Rayon* Executive Committee chairman Kozuchar and Secretary Vorona sarcastically reassure the faithful: "Keep quiet, or we will send you off to BAM where the polar bears are." District Chairman Bogorazh taunts the faithful: "Your mother's corpse may rot, but I won't allow the priest to come for the funeral!"

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

August 16, 1951

Marijampole *Rayon* Council of Workers Deputies
Executive Committee

To: The Executive Committee of the Liudvinas
Catholic Parish

In reply to your statement regarding permission to hold services on August 26, 1951 and hold a procession around the church, I inform you, as directed by the chairman of the *Rayon* Executive Committee, that priests are not allowed to come from outside the parish.

The procession is not permitted in the churchyard, because the churchyard is not completely screened from the outside.

Chief of the General Department
Andriusaitis

August 1, 1963

Liudvinavas District Council of Workers Deputies

To: The Pastor of the Liudvinavas Church

The Executive Committee of the Liudvinavas District Council of workers Deputies informs you, on the basis of a telegram received from the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Kapsukas, that permission is not granted to hold any devotions in August of this year in connection with spreading livestock disease.

Chairman of the Liudvinavas District
Vaida

FELLOW LITHUANIAN, DON'T FORGET!

Petras Plumpa, Nijole Sadunaite, Sergei Kovalev, Vladas Lapienis, Balys Gajauskas, Viktoras Petkus, Petras Paulaitis and others who bear the shackles of prison so that you may freely live and believe.

Liudas Simutis who served 22 years in Soviet labor camps for the freedom of the Nation and Church is being driven out of Lithuania!

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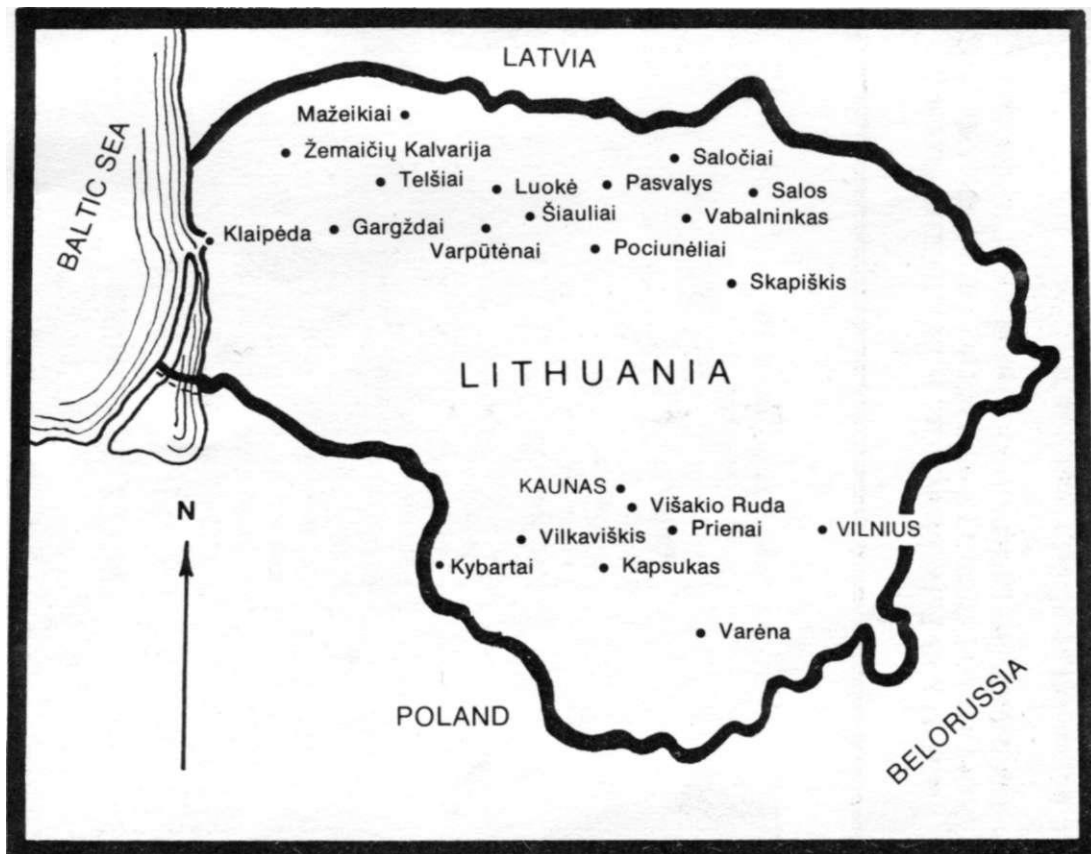
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