

**CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA**

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**CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA No. 52**

**A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 52
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today**

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On the Cover: Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, appointed as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Panevėžys and the Archdiocese of Vilnius by the Vatican in 1958. In 1961, he was arrested by Soviet authorities and exiled to Žagarė, located outside his two dioceses, thus preventing him from exercising his duties to this day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vincentas Borisevičius, Bishop of Telšiai, was arrested on February 3, 1946, and condemned to death after a secret trial. Before year's end, his auxiliary, Bishop Pranas Ramanauskas, was also arrested and deported to Siberia. Bishop Teofilius Matulionis of Kaišiadorys and Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys of Vilnius were deported

io a Siberian labor camp. Archbishop Reinsys 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. Bishops 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, was kept under severe government restrictions until 1982. In 1965, Monsignor Juozas Labukas-Matulaitis was consecrated in Rome to head the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkaviškis. Two new bishops were consecrated in 1969: Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas was appointed apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Panevėžys, and Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis was appointed auxiliary to Bishop Labukas, and succeeded him after his death in 1979.

In 1982, Bishop Sladkevičius was permitted to return to his diocese as Apostolic Administrator of Kaišiadorys. Father Antanas Vaičius was named bishop and Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai and the Prelature of Klaipėda.

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!
Appearing since March 19, 1972

**CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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In this Issue:

1. Blackmail of Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius.....	4
2. The Trial of Father Leonas Mažeika's Killers.....	7
3. The Persecution of Father Kastytis Jonas Matulionis.....	10
4. The trial of Father Antanas Gražulis.....	14
5. KGB Rampage in Marijampolė.....	17
6. Letters from the Clergy and Faithful of Lithuania.....	19
7. The End Justifies the Means.....	30
8. The Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights.....	36
9. Religious Feasts in Lithuania.....	37
10. News from the Dioceses.....	38
11. In the Soviet School.....	49
12. New Publications.....	57

Lithuania.....

March 25, 1982

BLACKMAIL OF BISHOP JULIJONAS STEPONAVIČIUS

With the collapse of the civil government's plan to have its candidates for bishop confirmed, it became necessary to find someone to blame. An anonymous writer proposed to achieve this during the Christmas 1981 holidays by sending out a vile and slanderous letter to various individuals, the purpose of which was to sow further confusion in the homeland and the West. It is very peculiar that one Ordinary called this anonymous letter a "strong document". Since the anonymous letter parrots the views of the KGB toward Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius and active priests, we would like to make some comments.

The anonymous author explains that during the period when the dioceses of Lithuania were governed not by bishops but by administrators, "there appeared various cliques of snobs-careerists... which hampered the work of the Ordinaries."

Careerist priests behaved quite the opposite of what the anonymous letter claims. While a third of the priests faithful to the Church suffered in the Soviet Gulag, careerist priests allowed themselves to be drawn into the KGB web, signed documents even against Pope Pius XII and thus climbed the ladder of success. The priests who attempted to fight against the KGB's efforts to subjugate the Catholic Church in Lithuania to the interests of the Communist state did not seek a career. Their career consisted of continual lectures, threats, remote parishes, labor camps, etc.

"Procrastination in solving the problem of the hierarchy is totally rending our unity," the anonymous author writes.

When the Communist Party and the state security draw up and submit plans for candidates for bishop and attempt to quickly "dispose" of the question of the hierarchy of Lithuania's Catholic Church only under conditions acceptable to the civil government, can it possibly serve the unity of the Church? Can the anonymous writer be so naive as to be unaware who shattered the unity of the priests in Lithuania? The atheists and fear of labor camp. Now it is being shattered by careerism and the fear that the road back can cost one's life. How to explain the fact that some priests ignored the exiled bishops for ten years? How to explain that priests whom the government detested and persecuted not only failed to receive the Chancery's moral support, but were also ignored or even berated? To the destroyers of the unity of Lithuania's priests we also add the anonymous writer whose ideas are quite

consistent with those of militant atheists.

The anonymous writer charges that exiled Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius did not keep the Holy See's secret regarding the nomination of new bishops.

In fact, the secret was revealed not by Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, but by the episcopal candidates, who, without having the Pope's bull of appointment but only the Holy See's secret announcement of their nomination, began to prepare publicly for their consecration: they set the date of their consecration, invited guests and began retreats. Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius even wrote a letter to Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis, based not on the Holy See's secret announcement, but on the statements of Bishop Povilonis, Father Algirdas Gutauskas and Religious Affairs Commissar Petras Anilionis about the prospective return of the exiled bishops (Steponavičius and Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius. — Transí, note) and the appointment of the new bishops. It is even difficult to judge whether those who failed to keep confidential the bishops' appointment committed an offense, since priests who do not receive the new theology literature published in the West do not know the rules of Canon Law and commentaries on this question.

The anonymous author claims that priests instigated by Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius spoke disrespectfully of the Holy Father, Cardinal Casaroli and other high Vatican officials. This is an obvious attempt on the part of the anonymous writer to discredit Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius and dispose the Holy See against him. Who can possibly believe that a bishop who has been living in exile for over twenty years because of his loyalty to the Church would speak disrespectfully of the Church's Supreme Shepherd. Furthermore, we would like to ask how the anonymous writer could know that Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius is supposed to have spoken disrespectfully of the Holy Father? If the anonymous author truly cherishes the Catholic Church in Lithuania then rather than slander the exiled bishops, he should write the Holy Father the truth about the Ordinary of the Diocese of Panevėžys (Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas) the priests and believers of that diocese would truly be indebted to him.

The anonymous writer becomes so carried away that he has the audacity to state that had the exiled Bishops Julijonas Steponavičius and Vincentas Sladkevičius demonstrated their good will, they would have been restored to their positions several years ago.

The priests of Lithuania know what type of "good will" the Soviet

government required from the exiled bishops: to betray the interests of the Church, confess when innocent and speak lies about the situation of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. This claim alone more than explains who actually lurks behind the mask of this anonymous writer - "defender" of the Church.

The anonymous writer faults Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius for not going to the Philadelphia Eucharistic Congress, because from there he would have had the opportunity to make contact with the Vatican.

It is common knowledge in Lithuania that the excursion to the Philadelphia Eucharistic Congress was organized not by Lithuania's bishops but by Religious Affairs Commissar Kazimieras Tumėnas. Urgent efforts to convince the exiled bishop to go to the Eucharistic Congress with the delegation of Lithuanian clergy organized by the godless government merely confirmed the assumption that some kind of civil government deception lurked behind them, and Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius therefore refused to go.

The anonymous author further claims that during the religious festival at Šiluva, hotheads from the Catholic Committee vilely denigrated the candidates for bishop.

In fact, during the devotions, after the official Sunday Mass at 3:00 P.M., many young people assembled in the church and Father Alfonsas Svarinskas gave a homily on the current situation of the Church. The preacher explained that the Holy Father wants to appoint shepherds for every Lithuanian diocese, that negotiations between the Vatican and Moscow are being conducted on the matter and that much prayer was needed to prevent the appointment of candidates useful only to the government. The priest did not say a single word about the candidates themselves, but merely mentioned that in the Church's difficult situation, bishops should have the courage to tell the truth and suffer for the truth. Following the homily, Father Svarinskas and the young people went from the main altar on their knees around the Šiluva church, entreating Mary that Lithuania be granted only good bishops. The young people's bloody knees displeased the government representatives who witnessed this unprecedented procession of atonement; however, it appears that these bloody knees also displeased the "defender" of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, the anonymous author.

It only remains to explain to the believing community why exiled bishop Julijonas Steponavičius has recently been subjected to so many attacks. Actually, government atheists detested him even

before this for his adherence to principle and loyalty to the Church. But this hatred became even more pronounced when the Pope named one cardinal *in pectore* (Transl. note — secretly) and the world press began to speculate that the cardinal was Bishop Julijonas navičius. Can the exiled bishop be held accountable if, through suffering and sacrifice, Lithuania has earned the recognition of the Church? Can Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius be held accountable if Lithuania's believers hold him in such high esteem for his long-term loyalty to the Church and would truly rejoice to see the cardinal's hat on the exiled bishop's head.

THE TRIAL OF FATHER LEONAS MAŽEIKAS KILLERS

The trial of Father Leonas Mažeika's killers took place in Pakruojis during January 26-28, 1982. The trial was held in the cultural center hall which accommodated some three hundred people while the rest followed the trial proceedings via loudspeakers in an adjoining room.

The circuit session of the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR was presided over by M. Ignatas. The people's court members were (Mrs.) Kasiulienė and Smičius. The state prosecutors were Lithuanian SSR Assistant Prosecutor B. Žeberskis; Šiauliai attorney (Miss) Kručaitė defended the accused Kazlauskas, Pakruojis attorney Mesonis defended (Mrs.) Baltramiejūnienė.

The defendants — Ona Baltramiejūnienė and Adolfas Kazlauskas — were accused at once of three offenses:

- Wounding Pamerneckas;
- Murdering Father Leonas Mažeika and Sister Teklė Martinaitytė on August 8, 1981;
- Robbing the Vilūnaitis store.

Defendant Adolfas Kazlauskas is 40 years of age, completed eight grades of school, has been on trial five times. Ona Baltramiejūnienė was born in 1947, taught at the Stačiūnai and Gačioniai Grammar Schools and took correspondence courses at the Šiauliai Pedagogical Institute, but was removed from the student roster for negligence. For a time, she worked as a Pioneer leader and director of a cultural center. She met Kazlauskas in 1978. She is charged with failing to notify the authorities of any of Kazlauskas' crimes.

During the preliminary interrogation, Kazlauskas confessed to murdering Father Mažeika and related the circumstances surrounding

the crime. During the second half of December 1981, Kazlauskas recanted the confession he had made during the preliminary investigation into lather Leonas Mažeika's murder. At the trial, he stated he had confessed to killing the priest during the interrogation because he was severely beaten by the militia; in order to obtain the necessary testimony the militia chief had allegedly even plied him with cognac and apples.

At the trial, Kazlauskas related that a Latvian named Ilmars had joined them. At the time Pamūšis Pastor Father Mažeika was killed, Ilmars and Baltramiejūnienė had gone somewhere. When Ilmars refused to leave them alone, Kazlauskas killed him and buried him in a drainage ditch; he asked permission to point out the spot. To convince the court of his statements, Kazlauskas confessed to two more crimes which were not included in the case. "I know that I will probably receive the death penalty. I killed Ilmars. I did not kill the pastor or his housekeeper," stated Adolfas Kazlauskas at the trial.

On the video tape shown at the trial (regarding the time and circumstances of the crime) Kazlauskas spoke with great animation as if drunk.

Several Pakruojis physicians who operated on Teklė Martinaitytė testified at the trial, but they had already managed to "forget" certain details. Several witnesses saw a man and a woman near the stream prior to Father Mažeika's murder, others saw them running. All of them recognized the woman from a photograph and in person, but not the man because they had seen him only from the back. Only witness Zenonas Markauskas maintained he met Kazlauskas and Baltramiejūnienė and learned a half hour later that the Pastor of Pamūšis had been killed. Ona Baltramiejūnienė confirmed that Kazlauskas had accompanied her; at the trial she placed the entire blame on Kazlauskas.

(Mrs.) Stanislova Motiejūnienė, Baltramiejūnienė's mother, stated that she was visited by Kazlauskas and another man who wore a black suit, but she became frightened and refused to let them stay the night and they both left.

The tendency to turn the case in the necessary direction was most palpable at the trial. When interrogating the witnesses, the judge phrased the questions in such a manner that they simply needed to confirm them. Some of the witnesses had already managed to "forget" certain details. The court ignored the Ilmars version, did not react to Motiejūnienė's story of Kazlauskas' visit along with another person, did not even ask who that man

wearing a black suit had been. It completely ignored the question of why two people — Mažeika and Martinaitytė — had been killed . . .

Prosecutor Žaberskis began his indictment speech with the following words: "All the evils of the past have not yet been eliminated here . . .", although both defendants were products of Soviet upbringing. He placed the most severe blame on Kazlauskas and spoke somewhat more leniently about Baltramiejūnienė. The prosecutor admitted that were it not for Baltramiejūnienė's testimony, his position as prosecutor at this trial would have been somewhat more difficult, but he could now base his case on her testimony.

Prosecutor Žaberskis demanded the severest sentence — death by firing squad — for Kazlauskas. For Ona Baltramiejūnienė he demanded four years in labor camp and compulsory treatment for alcoholism.

In view of the prosecutor's favorable words regarding Baltramiejūnienė, her attorney Mesonis placed the entire guilt on Kazlauskas. Kazlauskas' attorney Kručaitė attempted to refute the prosecutor's charges. She stated: "The prosecutor has demanded the severest sentence for my client. The evidence is insufficient in Father Mažeika's murder . . . All the circumstances in the case have not been investigated. It is dangerous to sentence him to death when doubts exist in the case. The fact that he confessed during the preliminary interrogation is not sufficient proof. We must explain why he gave such testimony. He was given cognac..His version— about Ilmars demands an investigation. His alibi was not verified. A man cannot be identified by the way he walks."

At the trial, Kazlauskas asked to show that he does not limp, but the court refused.

In his last statement, Kazlauskas reiterated that he did not kill Father Leonas Mažeika, the Pastor of Pamūšis, or his housekeeper Teklė Martinaitytė. He blamed the government for the fact he was now a criminal. And he concluded with these words: "The decision is yours, Your Honor. Shoot me if you want, but I did not kill the priest!"

In her brief statement, Baltramiejūnienė promised to mend her ways. The people are convinced that someone used the criminals and committed this terrible crime. The physical evidence of the crime has already been destroyed. Thus, the trial did not reveal the truth about the killers of Father Leonas Mažeika and Teklė Martinaitytė. . . . and will not reveal it in the future.

In her article "*Šunkeliais į bedugnę*" ("Byways to the Abyss")

printed in the February 20, 1982 issue of *Valstiečių laikraštis* (*Farmers' Newspaper*), correspondent (Mrs.) S. Mockuvienė attempted to inform the people about the murder and the sentences imposed on the killers. Unfortunately the correspondent used her article to sling mud at Western radio stations and especially Vatican Radio. This is the Soviet method of speaking and saying nothing. The Republic's newspaper *Tiesa* (*Truth*) maintained total silence on this tragic event.

THE PERSECUTION OF FATHER KASTYTIS JONAS MATULIONIS

To: First Secretary Petras Griškevičius of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania.
A Statement from: Father Kastytis Jonas Matulionis, son of Leonas, res. in Vilnius, Gorkio 17-6.

On February 17th of this year, Vice Chairman Urbonas of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee came to Kybartai and demanded that Vice Chairman Kostas Abraitis of the Kybartai Church Committee sign a document demanding that I be forbidden to perform my priestly duties in the Kybartai church, allegedly because I am not a priest, have not graduated from the theological seminary, the bishop knows of no such priest, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, the pastor, simply invited me, etc. The Kybartai Church Committee Vice Chairman did not sign this document because decisions about the priesthood are not made by church committee members or government officials but by spiritual authorities.

While the Kybartai, Vice Chairman Urbonas lectured at several organizations and made references to me, slandering me and calling me an imposter.

What is an imposter? The Current Lithuanian Language Dictionary (*Mintis*, Vilnius, 1972, p. 34) defines "impostor" as follows: 1. One who pretends to be another, illegally claims a title or another's name. 2. One who makes claims, boasts, publicizes himself.

The definition does not apply me: I claim no title nor another's name; I did not boast or publicize myself. This task is performed by Executive Committee Vice Chairman Urbonas himself.

Following his speeches, Vice Chairman Urbonas left the Kybartai Executive Committee Chairman a letter, of which I was later apprised in his office.



Activists for religious freedom and human rights in Lithuania: (left to right, standing) Father Kastytis Matulionis, unknown woman, Mečislovas Jurevičius, Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius, Antanas Terleckas, Algis Statkevičius, Liutauras Kazakevičius, Eleonora Sasnauskaitė, Gediminas Rickevičius. (Sitting left to right) Algimantas Andreika, Robertas Grigas, Jonas Volungevičius, Kęstutis Subačius.

It states that I, not being a graduate of the theological seminary, do not have a work certificate, do not have the right to work as a priest, do not perform any work useful to society, and will therefore be punished under current laws.

I respond to such an unjust attack as follows:

1. I am a priest; an alumnus of the correspondence school seminary. I have been ordained; therefore, I have the right to perform all the duties incumbent upon a priest.

2. In the Soviet Union, the Church is separate from the state and, therefore, questions dealing with religion must be handled and decided by Lithuanian church authorities. This is what happened in my case.

I have been a priest for some time; I perform all the duties incumbent upon a priest and those who have the power to allow or forbid me to perform them did not forbid or recall me.

Lithuania has a Church province governed by bishops and, as a lawful priest, I belong to them. Neither Urbonas nor anyone else other than the Church, can decide about my priesthood.

As regards the certificate, I wish to state the following: Not a single Lithuanian priest had a certificate after the war. When the government decided it needed certificates, government agencies issued them. My case is similar: if I need a work certificate, let the agencies in charge of the matter issue one, and the question will be solved. Why are slander, threats and provocation of believers necessary and useful?

I am charged with performing no useful work! I do not work among the atheists, but among believers. As you know, Comrade Secretary, believers are in the majority in Lithuania. I perform very useful work.

I am a priest! No one will deprive me of the priesthood, and wherever I am, I will perform the work incumbent upon a priest.

Lithuania has a correspondence school seminary. The current times have given it a stimulus for existence. Not everyone who applies is admitted to the Kaunas Theological Seminary. Therefore, as long as the security police decides on the suitability of candidates to the seminary and sifts them out, the correspondence school seminary will exist. Where must the young men who wish to become priests go study when they are rejected by the Kaunas Theological Seminary?

The only answer and realistic path is the correspondence school seminary.

Our Pope John Paul II attended just such a seminary. I am a priest! Whether Urbonas and those like him wish it or not, it is an accomplished fact. Please don't discriminate against me. I have experienced sufficient discrimination in the past: in 1959 I was expelled from the conservatory for singing in the Vabalninkas church, in 1974 I was ordered dismissed as Director of the Art Gallery, and in 1977 from the Vilnius University Science Library where I worked as an artist.

I then worked as a sacristan, studied and became a priest.

Mr. Secretary, please advise the appropriate agencies to refrain from discriminating against me, and if it is necessary that government agencies register me as a priest, let them do so: let them register me and forward the registration certificate to the following address:

232001 Vilnius, Gorkio 17-6
Rev. K. Matulionis.

February 28, 1982

Father Matulionis

**To: First Secretary P. Griškevičius of the Central
Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party
A Protest from: The believers of the Kybartai Parish.**

We, the believers of the Kybartai Parish, were shocked and stunned at the news that the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee wishes to drive from our church Father Kastytis Jonas Matulionis who serves us so well. *Rayon* officials are attempting to convince people that the priest who ministers to us is not a genuine priest and does not have the government's permission to work as a priest.

We take this occasion to affirm: since the Church is separate from the state in the Soviet Union, it is inappropriate for government officials to decide which priest is valid and which is not. Second, if despite the separation of Church and state, government permission is still required for a priest to perform his duties, we ask you, as head of the party, to order the appropriate government agencies to issue Father Kastytis Jonas Matulionis the necessary permit. This priest is very necessary for our parish and we will not allow him to be driven from Kybartai.

February 28, 1982

Signed by L033 residents of
Kybartai.

On March 30, 1981, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, residing in Vilnius, at Gorkio 17-6, was urgently summoned several times to the Republican Prosecutor's Office to see Assistant Prosecutor Bakučionis.

At the beginning of July 1981, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis was visited by a militia official who brought a document from the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* militia, requesting an investigation into whether the named priest is registered and lives at the indicated address, where he works, whether he believes in God, etc. When he failed to find the priest at home, the militiaman questioned a visiting relative. On his way out, he left a summons for Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis to appear at the militia department on Dzerzinski Street at 8:30 A.M. on July 16th and 17th.

On March 18, 1982, Father Jonas Kastytis Matulionis found in his mail box in Vilnius at Gorkio 17-6 a reminder to appear at 10:00 A.M. on March 18th at the office of the Vilkaviškis Assistant Prosecutor P. Bogušauskas.

In none of the above instances did Father Matulionis appear at the aforementioned government agencies because he had committed no offense. All the summonses had but one purpose: to blackmail the priest who was ordained without government permission.

THE TRIAL OF FATHER ANTANAS GRAŽULIS

On February 2, 1982, the Prienai *Rayon* newspaper *Naujas gyvenimas* (*New Life*) reprinted an article entitled "Melas iš sakyklos" ("Lies from the Pulpit") from *Tiesa* (*Truth*) (January 26, 1982), directed against Šilalė Assistant Pastor Father Vytautas Skiparis and added the following comment: "Assistant Pastor Antanas Gražulis of the Prienai church and pastor Zenonas Navickas of the Užuguostis church (brother of the woman imprisoned for duplicating the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* — Ed. Note), in attempting to discredit teachers, Communists, and in general, all atheists in the eyes of the believers, are employing the methods used by Šilalė Assistant Pastor Vytautas Skiparis named in the newspaper."

The faithful of the Prienai parish sent government agencies a strong letter of protest bearing 1,500 signatures. The letter states that the newspaper has made false charges against their assistant Pastor, Father Antanas Gražulis.

On February 3, 1982, Father Antanas Gražulis was punished for visiting the homes of believers while fulfilling his priestly duties.

A letter of protest signed by 1,483 Prienai believers was sent to First Secretary Griškevičius of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party. We reprint an abbreviated version of the protest:

"On February 3, 1982, the Prienai *Rayon* Administrative Commission imposed a 50-ruble fine on our assistant pastor, Father Antanas Gražulis, for visiting our families in the Town of Prienai during the month of January 1982. He allegedly thereby violated the May 12, 1966 Decree of the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR which we never saw published in newspapers. We did not even know that such a ban is based on law and not some kind of atheist prohibition.

Father Antanas Gražulis considered the Administrative Commission fine unjust and filed a complaint with the Prienai *Rayon* People's Court. Unfortunately, the court reviewed this matter in a perfunctory manner. Of course, a priest could not possibly win

against the Executive Committee in a Soviet atheist court.

Therefore, having heard the ruling of the Prienai Rayon People's Court, we state that Father Antanas Gražulis did not violate Soviet Laws, but merely fulfilled his direct duties as a priest:

Canon Law and the decisions of the Vilkaviškis Diocesan Synod require a priest to make an annual visit to his parishioners.

Responsible Soviet government officials have often stated in the press and on television that the Soviet government does not interfere in internal Church affairs.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. (Article 18)

The Helsinki Final Act stresses that "the participating states will recognize and respect the right of the individual to profess either alone or in community with others religion or belief, according to his own conscience . . ." (Section 7)

The same idea is confirmed by the Declaration of Religious Freedom which the Soviet Union also signed during last year's session of the General Assembly.

We have heard on the radio that the Soviet Union defends the rights of Irish Catholics. Why then have the atheists of the *Rayon* of Prienai not learned from their higher officials?

The domestic judicial codes of states which have signed international documents cannot contradict the abovenamed international commitments. The Decrees (May 12, 1966 and July 28, 1976) of the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR cannot be contrary to international agreements and art. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR.

From our personal experience, we see that Lithuania's atheists, who are in the minority, have not yet learned to fight against religion with ideological weapons as Lenin taught. They only manage to fight by means of crude force.

We wish to affirm that such methods of atheistic warfare on religion will not eradicate God from the hearts of Lithuanians but will merely show the atheists' true face.

Punishment imposed on Father Antanas Gražulis is also punish-

ment against us. Or, perhaps this is our recompense for diligent work in industry and agriculture?

We have invited in the past and will continue to invite our parish priests to bless our homes and visit our families for we love and respect priests, we support them and pray for them.

We voice the strongest protest against this crude incident."

The trial of Father Antanas Gražulis was held not in the courtroom, but in a small office which accommodated a mere handful of people. The remaining Prienai believers stood in the corridor of the court building.

The judge attempted to prove that a priest is not forbidden to visit believers, however Soviet laws consider such visits by a priest from home to home and immediately after the Christmas season to be *kalėdojimas* (annual traditional Christmas-time visits by priests to bless the homes of parishioners — Trans. Note). The judge did not deign to explain what these Soviet laws are which define home visitation in this way, for as a matter of fact such laws do not exist.

At the trial, Father Gražulis explained that the Prienai City Administrative Commission punished him unjustly because during the visits he accepted no donations from believers. Furthermore, he only visited the believers who invited him. Father Gražulis asked the court: "Since when is a Soviet citizen forbidden to visit another Soviet citizen when invited?"

It must be noted that both the Administrative Commission of the Prienai City Executive Committee and the People's Court showed great ignorance, for Father Antanas Gražulis was punished under the May 12, 1966 Decree of the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR which makes no reference whatsoever to *kalėdojimas*.

A prohibition against "*kalėdojimas*" is mentioned only in the Regulations for Religious Associations which the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR confirmed on July 28, 1976. However, even these regulations do not explain how "*kalėdojimas*" is to be interpreted. In Lithuania, everyone understands the word "*kalėdojimas*" as defined in the *Current Lithuanian Language Dictionary*, i.e., "to collect an assessment." But Father Gražulis did not collect donations while visiting believers. Thus, the court's decision to uphold the Administrative Commission's ruling greatly incensed the faithful. "Some government," say the people of Prienai, "to impose a 50-ruble fine on a priest for visiting us!"

KGB RAMPAGE IN MARIJAMPOLĖ

On December 5, 1981, security agents and militiamen surrounded and forced their way their way into the home of Magdalena Kuncevičiūtė (at Alyvų g. No. 4), where Father Pranciškus Šulskis was celebrating Holy Mass and a group of believers was praying. Father Pranciškus Šulskis was shot by chekists in 1946 and has been unable to use his legs for the past thirty-six years and therefore always offers Holy Mass in his room.

The intruders began to photograph the praying people. The chekists went through all the rooms, photographed the rosaries and books they found, searched the attic and confiscated issue No. 49 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* they found on a table. The security agents insisted that the praying immediately cease and documents be produced. Despite the din the intruders caused, the assembled people sang hymns and recited part of the rosary. When the women requested that the intruders identify themselves, only Housing Authority Chief Granickas gave his name. One security agent stated that a complaint had been received that young people are lured into this house. After the documents were checked, Father Šulskis was carried back to his home under security agent escort. The officials drafted a report but the homeowner refused to sign it.

Those who did not have their papers with them were forcibly placed in vehicles and taken to the militia department "for identity verification." Three security agents who did not dare give their names questioned the women. When one woman refused to talk to an unidentified interrogator, Major Arbačiauskas gave his name. Some of the detained women were repeatedly interrogated, others were taken home to check their documents or were forced to write explanations. At 11:00 P.M., after four hours of interrogation, the women were allowed to go home, but their troubles did not end there. New interrogations were immediately launched.

Several days later, Marytė Aleksaitė was questioned at the Alytus militia about how she happened to be at the services, whether she knows Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, whether she is a nun, etc. The interrogator suggested that Aleksaitė become a spy: inform them what nuns are doing, where they go, what they discuss, etc. Later, Aleksaitė was interrogated two more times. In February 1982, the parents of Marytė Aleksaitė were summoned to the security police for interrogation.

On December 9, 1981, a female chekist interrogated Vilnius resident Regina Liukinevičiūtė about the December 5th services in Marijampolė. During the questioning, the chekist maintained that Liukinevičiūtė was a nun and promised to meet with her again in the future.

On December 11, 1981, Stasė Jakubonytė, a resident of Vilnius, was also interrogated. The female security agent charged the woman with attending a meeting of nuns. The interrogator maintained that under the cloak of praying, nuns spread anti-Soviet propaganda. "We know," shouted the agent, "that you are well acquainted with Father Sigitas Tamkevičius!" The security agent was incensed that after the march to Šiluva was prevented, believers attempted to march at other times.

On December 11, 1981, Magdalena Kuncevičiūtė was interrogated in Marijampolė. The security agent charged the owner of the house with hiding the young people who attended the December 5th services. The interrogator asked about Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Genė Navickaitė and Ona Vitkauskaitė, whether she reads the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, etc. The security agent attempted convince her that, by engaging in such activities, she and her friends will land in prison.

On December 11, 1981, Stasė Burkutė, a resident of Kapsukas, was summoned for interrogation. The chekist was interested in convents, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Genė Navickaitė, Ona Vitkauskaitė, etc. Following the interrogation, the security agents took Gene Burkutė home where they took a sample of her typewriter type and promised to meet again in the future.

During an interrogation on December 11, 1981, a security agent told Eugenija Kalvaitytė: "You older people can pray, but you must not corrupt young people." After threatening that she would suffer serious consequences for organizing religious meetings, the chekist ordered Kalvaitytė to warn all nuns that organizing marches and religious meetings is forbidden.

At the beginning of December 1981, a search was conducted at the home of Marytė Navickienė. The woman was charged with duplicating religious literature. Following the search, she was interrogated several times.

On December 19, 1981, Father Pranciškus Šulskis, residing in Marijampolė at Laukaitytės g. 19, described in his statement to Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis how militiamen and security agents inter-

rupted services on December 5th and took twenty-four persons to the militia department.

On January 26, 1982, Stase Burkutė was interrogated a second time. The security agent again put up a smokescreen, stating that praying is permitted but engaging in politics is not, as if Burkutė and the others were not praying but overthrowing the Soviet government on December 5th.

On January 28, 1982, Zina Kuzmickaitė was interrogated. According to the security agent, Kuzmickaitė is a member of the underground.

On January 29, 1982, Stasys Kuzmickas was interrogated. The security agent gave him the address of Stasė Burkutė and ordered him to go there and tell the nuns not to drag his daughter to prison.

On February 1, 1982, Ona Reklaitytė was interrogated. Chekist Jakovlev threatened that Reklaityte could end up in prison for working with children and young people.

LETTERS FROM THE CLERGY AND FAITHFUL OF LITHUANIA

Viduklė

To: First Secretary P. Griškevičius of the
Communist Party of Lithuania
A Letter of Protest from: The faithful of the
Viduklė parish

We, the believers of the Viduklė Roman Catholic parish, who toil every day in Soviet agriculture and industry, often enduring shortages of the most basic needs, would wish but one thing: allow us to practice our faith freely and raise our children as good people. We can accomplish this only by raising our children in the spirit of the Gospel. We see forcibly imposed atheism in Lithuania leading our nation into a mire of sin; our nation is striding toward physical and spiritual destruction.

We would like to have the freedom guaranteed by the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR, the international agreements signed by the USSR, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act. We, simple people and ordinary citizens,

understand the laws as follows: if the Soviet government signed them, it is obligated to observe them!

Unfortunately, in actual practice this basic minimum is still far out of reach. We will mention but a few instances of religious discrimination which we, the people of Viduklė, have had to suffer.

Our religion requires that all those dead in Christ and buried in the parish cemeteries be paid respect on the eve of All Souls' Day. We therefore go to the cemetery in a church procession. Every year our parish pastor, Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, petitions the Executive Committee for permission to use the town street for a distance



Fr. Alfonsas Svarinskas, Member of Catholic Committee

of some 900 meters (about half a mile) to the cemetery. The officials of the *Rayon* of Raseiniai, enraptured with special stores and special saunas, discriminate against believers and obviously expect in doing so to atone most easily for mistakes and negligences and therefore reply only: "Impossible," "We won't allow it," etc. And thus in fulfilling his obligations, the pastor is forced to pay a 50-ruble fine every year for "organizing a religious procession to the cemetery without obtaining a permit". For last year's All Souls' Day, the pastor refused to pay the 50-ruble fine as a sign of protest and lost his refrigerator. Last year, five residents of Viduklė were also punished for participating, as Catholics, in the religious procession: Klimas received a verbal reprimand, and Antanas Česnas, Petras Urbutis, Alfonsas Staškevičius and Juozas Norvilā were each imposed a 30-ruble fine. The logical question is: for what?

Article 32 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR proclaims: The citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are equal before the law regardless of... relationship with religion...place of residence and other circumstances. The atheists of Viduklė go to the military cemetery on May 9th and to the Catholic cemetery on November 1st. No one forbids them, drafts reports or confiscates their refrigerators... Surely the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR is not just a little red book whose lastpageis marked "ten kopeks"? We have already become accustomed to continual instances of discrimination. We see that *rayon* leaders do not observe other Soviet laws either. The case of State Farm Chairman Narušis revealed many offenses committed by First Secretary Zigmas Grimaila of the *rayon* Communist Party: he was removed from his position and transferred to Vilnius. Chairman A. Skeiveris of the *rayon* executive committee has been terrorizing our pastor for many years now. Last year, he ordered the director of the Gas Authority to withhold liquid gas from the pastor, although as a subscriber, he was entitled to it. As a result, not only the pastor, but we also were cold. During the winter we used the auxiliary church building to baptize our children, old people came to get warm because *rayon* leaders have twice refused permission to install heat in the Viduklė church. Animals are kept in heated barns, but Catholics are forbidden this comfort! We see that Soviet identity papers do not protect a citizen against the arbitrariness of Soviet officials, but only serve to keep the militia up-to-date. We are consoled by rumors that this leader also will soon be removed. On August 14th of last year, while organizing the "pig plague" in Žaiginys, he killed a man with his car.

Following evening services on February 20th of this year, at around 9:00 P.M., a group of believers and their children went from the church to the rectory to share pre-Lenten festivities with the pastor. Suddenly and quite unexpectedly, Viduklė District Chairman Edmundas Kringelis entered the room, along with militia official First Lieut. Butkus and two witnesses, Jonas Remeikis and Edvardas Lybikis (who was quite drunk!) and drafted a report against the pastor, charging that some 30 children recited poems in the rectory. They did not choose to notice the adults! The festive mood was broken. But things did not end there. As soon as the guests exited into the street, several cars in which people recognized Vidukle school Principal Skuodis, school party organization head Mockus, state farm party functionary V. Mačiulaitis and others, zoomed from one end of town to the other attempting to recognize the parents and children by the glare of their headlights. The people were amazed and outraged. When young people scream and yell, fight and drink at the cultural center until 4:00 A.M. on Sunday, although all programs must be concluded by midnight Saturday, there is no trace of either the district chairman or the militia. The people have given this incident the popular name "Chile," We feel that such incidents bring dishonor on the Soviet government!

A couple of days later, in the presence of two uniformed militiamen, in a smoke-filled room of the Viduklė Middle School, Principal Skuodis began to interrogate children he had recognized and demanded that they betray their friends in writing. It would be interesting to know how Soviet pedagogy views such educational methods.

We wish to ask, Mr. Secretary: Who are we, South African Blacks or Lithuanians living in our own homeland? Why is a believing person, child or adult, forbidden to visit his spiritual leader, the parish pastor, and visit with him, talk, sing or recite poetry? Where is the crime here? We did not utter anything against the Soviet government. Then why are our children being intimidated and interrogated? Is it only because they have not yet been spoiled? The abovenamed officials should pay more attention to their own children.

Unwillingly, the words burst from our hearts: Lord, when will all this end?

In view of these and many other instances of discrimination, we the believers of the Viduklė Roman Catholic parish condemn such behavior on the part of Soviet officials, as incompatible either with

the Soviet Constitution or with the norms of international law or, finally with the elementary norms of decency, and we wish to express our most emphatic protest.

Viduklė, February 28, 1982

(The statement is abridged — Ed. Note)

Signed by 528 believers.

Kelmė

To: First Secretary P. Griškevičius of the
Communist Party of Lithuania

A Letter of Protest from:

Father Jonas Bučinskas, Pastor of the Stulgiai Parish, and
Father Juozapas Razmantas, Pastor of the Žalpiei parish.

On November 30, 1981, the *Rayon* of Kelmė Executive Committee surprised us with the startling news that the *Rayon* of Kelmė Administrative Commission (Chairwoman (Mrs.) Pliuščiauskienė, Secretary (Miss) Dainauskaitė, members Kleivinis (Mrs.) Ščepo-
navičienė, Sadauskas, Žikaris) imposed a 50-ruble monetary fine on us because "without clearing it with the *rayon* executive committee, on November 1, 1981, they organized a demonstration to the cemetery and thereby violated article 50 of the Regulations for Religious Associations confirmed on July 28, 1976, by the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR."

Since the charges against us are virtually identical, we are jointly drafting this protest. The wording of the charges is standard and shows the writer's ignorance. Can religious rites be considered a demonstration? If a demonstration had in fact been held, it would have been investigated by organs other than the administrative commission and that same day, not a month later.

Since the year 835, the Catholic Church has been celebrating the feast of All Saints Day on November 1st and since the year 998, the feast of All Souls' Day on November 2nd when respect is paid to all the dead in the Lord. Therefore, people go to the cemetery on the eve of All Souls' Day to pay respect to their deceased relatives and all the dead (See *Apeigynas, Ritual*) Part II, p. 368, Vilnius-Kaunas, 1966).

Father Jonas Bučinskas, the Pastor of Stulgiai went to the cemetery privately and prayed there with all the people who had assembled.

After making a procession around the churchyard, Father Juozapas Razmantas and his parishioners carried candles to the cemetery to place on family graves. The cemetery is located on the other side of the village road. Therefore, can these collective prayers be considered a demonstration? Of course not. This is an outgrowth of atheist fantasy and fear, an extension of the "pig plague" psychosis.

On what basis do the godless forbid us to observe a thousand-year-old tradition and liturgical regulations? They themselves, without believing in an afterlife and a spiritually immortal soul, have been going to the cemetery since 1966 on the eve of All Souls' Day (!) and in their own way pay respect to the dead. Furthermore, they could have chosen another day.

Almost exclusively, only believers — Catholics — are buried in the Stulgiai and Žalpiei cemeteries. How can the following phenomenon be explained in legal or humane terms: the godless are allowed to go to a Catholic cemetery without incurring punishment, while it is a demonstration and an offense for Catholics to do so. The Church — our spiritual mother — tells us how, when and by what means we are to pay respect to the dead. The supervision of the godless is therefore completely unnecessary for us.

The Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR states: "The citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are equal before the laws regardless of their origin, relationship with religion, type or nature of employment" (Article 32) Why do the godless ignore such a clear article of the Constitution?

"In the interest of the people... the citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are guaranteed the freedom of speech, press, assembly, street processions . . ." (Article 48) Our parishioners are collective farm workers. Therefore, they are the people to whom the said article refers. Thus, why do the godless usurp the rights of the people?

"The citizens of the Lithuanian SSR are guaranteed the freedom of conscience" (Article 50) Therefore, where is that constitutionally-guaranteed freedom, if priests are considered criminals and punished for holding collective prayers? What is the worth of statements by high Soviet officials that the Soviet government does not interfere in internal Church affairs and canon law? What is the worth of a constitutional article if it does not guarantee the minimum of religious freedom it proclaims? Why do the godless act arbitrarily and discriminate against believers if the Constitution is the fundamental law? Over the course of several postwar decades

Lithuania's Catholics have learned to bear all injuries and, with God's help, will bear them in the future!

We feel the time has come to understand that continual discrimination against the faithful brings dishonor upon the Soviet government and compromises atheism. But it will certainly not conquer the Church or the Faith.

We also take this opportunity to state that we view the Regulations for Religious Associations confirmed on July 28, 1976, by the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR exactly as expressed in Document No. 5 of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Right which won the support of two bishops and 520 priests. They are contrary to Church(Canon)Law, the Soviet Constitution and international USSR agreements. We will therefore not observe them, regardless of the sacrifice the godless exact from Lithuania. "You decide whether God wants us to obey you instead of Him!" (Acts 4:19).

December 10, 1981

Universal Declaration of Human Rights Day
(The statement is abridged — Ed. Note)

Father Jonas Bučinskas
Father Juozapas Razmantas

Žagarė

To: The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the *Rayon*
of Joniškis Council of Workers' Deputies

A Statement from: Father Gustavas Gudanavičius,
Pastor of Žagarė

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to lodge a complaint regarding the uncivil behavior of City of Žagarė Executive Committee Chairwoman (Mrs.) Jasienė, employed under your jurisdiction.

1. Jasienė incites believers against the pastor, in other words against me, debasing my authority, urging them to ignore me. Upon summoning Chairman Labauskas of the Žagarė Church Committee, she ordered him to ignore the pastor because he is merely a hired minister of cult.

I wish to stress that neither Jasienė, the Žagarė Church Com-

mittee, nor anyone else hired me to perform religious rites in the Žagarė church. A hierarchy, operating under Canon Law, exists in the Roman Catholic Church. Under this structure, the Pope appoints bishops and the bishops name pastors. I was named to Žagarė by the bishop. I was appointed not only to perform cult rites but also to lead the parish's religious life: teach believers the truths of the faith, celebrate the sacrifice of Holy Mass, administer the sacraments, manage the church. The pastor is thus not a servant of the believers but their leader. Just as you, Mr. Chairman, are not a servant of the *rayon* but its leader. For in fact servants no longer exist under the Soviet system. There are workers, farmers, civil servants, labor, intellectuals, office leaders. Why did Jasienė feel the need to debase the pastor before his parishioners and call him a servant?

2. Jasienė also slandered me. Voicing her hatred for priests in general, she told that same citizen: "Your pastor has already served a 25-year sentence and wants to serve more."

It is one's personal business whom he wishes to love or hate and I do not claim Jasienė's love. But to vent one's hatred publicly to an individual who has been summoned and is even an ideological foe, is uncivil to say the least. My Christian philosophy commands me to hate vice but love people, even enemies.

According to Jasienė, if I've already "served" 25 years, I must be a bandit disguised in a priest's cassock. But this is real, one-hundred-per-cent slander. Never in my life have I been on trial. It is true that immediately after the war, during that unfortunate "period of personality cult" I was detained, but was quickly released without a trial. Who gave Jasienė the right to treat people in this manner, without knowing all the facts?

3. To bandy words about, to debase a person's dignity seems to be Jasienė's method of operation. She tongue-lashed Chairman Labauskas of the Žagarė Church Committee, calling him "degenerate." If a man works diligently on a farm and holds a responsible position, if the believers of Žagarė have elected him chairman of the church committee, then obviously he is honorable and not degenerate.

Mr. Chairman, please admonish Jasienė to retract the slander against me. Otherwise, I reserve the right to seek satisfaction via the courts.

Žagarė, December 29, 1981 Father G. Gudavičius,
Pastor of Žagarė.

When the complaint was investigated, Chairwoman Jasiėnė denied her words.

Kupiškis

To: The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR.

**A Letter of Complaint from: Father Krumpliauskas, Stanislovas,
Assistant Pastor of the
Kupiškis Roman Catholic Church,
res. in Kupiškis, Komjaunimo 5**

Headlines, posters, holiday slogans proclaim that the Constitution of the USSR is the most humane in the world.

Therefore I, a priest, a graduate of a Lithuanian Soviet Middle School, having fulfilled my military obligation and graduated from the Theological Seminary in Kaunas, am a full-fledged USSR citizen and should minister freely to the faithful. I must therefore perform my duties as required by Canon Law and perform rites as indicated in the Ritual.

Despite the above, the Administrative Commission of the Executive Committee of the Kupiškis *Rayon* Council of People's Deputies (Chairman B. Paldauskas, Secretary (Miss) I. Skardžiūtė, members V. Semėnas, K. Lunius, (Mrs.) V. Barzdžiūkienė) imposed on me a 40-ruble administrative fine because, in the performance of my duties, I went to pray in the cemetery on November 1, 1981, All Saints Day.

Article 39 of the Constitution of the USSR proclaims that citizens rights and freedoms are guaranteed. Then why am I prevented from performing rites? The Commission reached its decision on the basis of the decree "Regarding the Regulations for Religious Associations" promulgated on July 28, 1976, by the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR, which is inherently contrary to the USSR Constitution and discriminates against believers. But article 51 of those very regulations permits religious processions which are an integral part of services. On November 1st, All Saints Day, all believers go from the church to the cemetery to pray for the dead: it is an integral part of the services. Canon Law and p. 368 of the Ritual published in 1966 by a Soviet printing firm, require the performance of these services. The Commission's ruling noted that "I organized" a religious procession, but it is clear to everyone that since time immemorial it is traditional to go collectively to the cemetery on that day and pray there with the priest. Is it not

paradoxical: praying in the cemetery is permitted, but going there with the faithful is not. Is this not derision of believers? Furthermore, non-believers also held a procession that day, but no one punished them.

Article 52 of the Constitution of the USSR guarantees freedom of conscience and forbids inciting discord and hatred in connection with religious beliefs. How can the conduct of communist Bočiulis, assistant principal of the *Rayon* of Kupiškis V. Rekašius Middle School be interpreted? He keeps the children of believing parents after school for two or three hours, terrorizing and badgering them in varied ways because they go to church and participate in rites. Every child and his parents can testify to this. He sends teachers to the church to follow pupils, forces pupils to write compositions on their beliefs, as for instance "What is your opinion of religion," etc. Is this not a violation of the consciences of believing parents and children? Does this not instigate hatred against believers? Is not everyone equal before the law? Then why does such a commission not punish him? He is given the freedom to debase, ridicule and denigrate the children of believing parents.

Mr. Chairman, please direct your attention to the injuries inflicted upon me and other believers and see to it that articles dealing with the freedom of faith and conscience in the USSR Constitution and the Helsinki Final Act signed on August 1, 1975, be observed.

December 12, 1981
Kupiškis

Father St. Krumpliauskas

The Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium responded in the following manner:

On February 13, 1982, the Kupiškis *Rayon* newspaper *Komunizmo keliu (On the Road of Communism)* printed a slanderous article "*Ko siekia vikaras St. Krumpliauskas?*" ("*What is Assistant Pastor Stanislovas Krumpliauskas Seeking?*").

On February 18, 1982, Father Krumpliauskas was issued a written admonition at the Kupiškis prosecutor's office for slandering Assistant Principal A. Bočiulis and violating the Regulations for Religious Associations.

To: Father Antanas Vaičius, Administrator of the Diocese of
Telšiai and the Prelature of Klaipėda

A statement

On January 26, 1982, *Tiesa (Truth)* printed an article entitled "*Melas iš sakyklos*" ("Lies from the Pulpit").

Upon reading this article, we, the believers of Šilalė, are incensed at this additional attack by the godless against our assistant pastor, Father Vytautas Skiparis.

The entire article clearly shows the true face of the godless: vile lies, deceit and hatred. No other organization in the entire world could possibly compare with the godless in barbarism and hooliganism in the press and in life.

In his sermons, Father Skiparis never slanders or lies as the article claims, but tells the truth; he points out the injuries the godless inflict upon believers, he defends our children by forbidding teachers to ridicule them.

The article quotes the words of the Šilalė Church Committee treasurer: "I have never heard of anyone being persecuted for his religious views."

Only the godless and their collaborators could speak in this manner. Believers would never say this, for they personally experience and suffer the injuries of the godless, their slanders and ridicule.

Further in the article, treasurer Juozas Štombergas states: "We, believers, are happy with the Regulations for Religious Associations."

Two Lithuanian bishops and 522 priests have spoken out against these regulations. The entire believing Lithuanian nation has spoken out against them. And we, believers of Šilalė, also speak out against them: We do not need any regulations formulated by the godless for the sole purpose of destroying the Church.

Štombergas states that "the believers of Šilalė have often warned V. Skiparis, have asked him not to insult non-religious people, teachers."

Štombergas cannot speak in the name of the faithful. We believers rejoice that Father Skiparis responds to raving atheists and teachers. We have never had occasion to hear the priest insult anyone. On the contrary, he urges all believers to pray for the godless, to do penance on their behalf.

When reading the *Truth* article, we find the words of Church

Committee Chairman Julius Aužbikavičius: "The believers of our community have petitioned church authorities to assign another priest in V. Skiparis' place, because he is disseminating falsehoods."

Obviously, Aužbikavičius can no longer distinguish between the faithful and the godless. The faithful will never petition Church authorities to transfer their defender. Only the godless and collaborators like Štombergas and Aužbikavičius can make such a request.

We, the undersigned believers, ask Your Excellency to remove Julijonas Aužbikavičius and Juozas Štombergas from the Šilalė Church Committee. We do not need hired atheists, we do not need attackers of the Church. We eagerly await fighters for Christ, fighters for the Church and believers.

February 3, 1982

Signed by several hundred
believers of Šilalė

THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS

Bijutiškis

To: The Central Committee of the Communist Party of
Lithuania.

The *Vaga* Publishers in Vilnius.

My conscience compels me to speak out one more time and condemn moral hooliganism and its propagators in the Soviet press.

In September of last year, I wrote you regarding Bronius Jau-
niškis' booklet *Be iliuzijų (With No Illusions)* published by Vaga,
which is full of the crudest lies, distorted facts, falsifications and
degradation of those who hold different views. Rather than cor-
rect the error, the Vaga publishers evaded the issue, claimed that "the
said book is carefully prepared for the press and accurately de-
picts individuals."

I will briefly review here the main events. In the fall of 1926
Juozas Misiūnas enrolled in the fifth year of the Jesuit high
school in Kaunas and took up residence in the students' dorm-
itory located near the high school. He graduated in 1930 and
entered the Pagryžuvis Jesuit Novitiate near Tytuvėnai. He spent
one year in Mittelstein in Silesia, returned to Kaunas in the summer
of 1933 and was prefect for a group of students at the Jesuit

high school dormitory during the 1933–34 academic year. He left the Jesuits in the summer of 1934. He was healthy; doctors could detect no illness. His eyes were also healthy: he did not wear glasses. After studying for a time, he taught in high schools. In 1939 he married Sofija Katkevičiūtė and raised four daughters. During the German occupation, he worked as a translator at the Panevėžys railway station. After the war, from 1946 to 1949, he taught at the Ramygala, the Užpaliai and from 1951 at the Antalieptė Middle Schools. His eyes were healthy; he did not wear glasses. And only in 1955, as his wife Sofija Misiūnienė testifies, did her husband's eyes begin to fail: his vision at times became cloudy, especially when he was upset. The disease progressed and in the last two or three years before his death (he died in October, 1971) Juozas Misiūnas became half-blind, an invalid.

What did Bronius Jauniškis make of all this? Jauniškis took Misiūnas' blindness during his last year of life and moved it 36 years back to 1933, supposedly "as a result of great physical and spiritual suffering at the monastery, the light dimmed in his eyes. This happened in his youth." (*With No Illusions*, p. 55). He therefore accuses the monastery in the most crude way, invents some kind of "rendikontas" about which no one at the monastery even knows. Misiūnas was supposedly harassed and tortured there in varied ways. He is alleged to have been tied to a post, stripped half naked, whipped until he lost consciousness and went blind. Afterward, he suffered a long and serious illness; the doctor prescribed for him glasses with even thicker lenses (p. 72) and such a half-blind Misiūnas, barely able to see the light of day, was sent back to Kaunas. "Kipas did not welcome Misiūnas in a friendly fashion" (p. 73), ordered him to petition for permission to leave the monastery. Misiūnas objected: "You're driving me out. You sucked my health dry, you made me blind." Kipas supposedly threatened him with a punishment cell. Finally "Juozas wrote the petition". After returning to his cell, he changed into civilian clothes and, barely able to see the light of day, left the monastery." (p. 74).

All this is the most blatant lie. No one tortures people in a monastery, nor ties them to a post and whips them. No one whipped Misiūnas either, nor caused him to go blind. Jauniškis demonstrates here his low character: unable to deny the positive role of the monastery (especially Jesuit) in bringing education and

morality to the nation, Jauniškis resorts to lies and slander. Ignoring the facts, he gives free reign to his far-fetched imagination and fanaticism. We recently commemorated the 400th anniversary of the University of Vilnius. Could that school of higher learning, on a plane with the best scholars and cultural leaders of the day, have been founded and maintained by the Jesuits if they were as sadistic and backward as Jauniškis attempts to portray them?

There is a saying: "A lie has short legs." And in lying, Jauniškis loses his footing. At the beginning of the section entitled *Užgesinta šviesa* ("The Extinguished Light") (p. 54) he writes that in Antalieptė, Misiūnas "used to go step by step, brushing the edge of the sidewalk with the end of his cane"—in other words, he was very handicapped. But it must be noted here that there were no sidewalks in Antalieptė when Misiūnas lived there. There are few sidewalks even today, some ten years after Misiūnas' death, and these only along two or three buildings.

Furthermore, if Misiūnas was such a half-blind invalid that could not see the wide sidewalk under his feet, how could he have been a teacher and even an assistant principal—positions which require good eyesight? How could he have seen what goes on in the classroom during lessons, especially during written assignments? How could he have seen the small letters, read and corrected written work, given lectures to the community? Jauniškis sins against the basic principles of logic: he is totally incapable of logical thought and writes whatever comes into his head, and fails to notice that the right hand does not know what the left is doing.

The following documents prove that Juozas Misiūnas did not lose his eyesight during his youth (at the monastery) and that Kipas did not immediately expel him after he returned from Silesia in 1933:

1. States where the Catholic Church is permitted to act freely, annually publish a catalog called *Elenchus* which lists all the clergy (bishops, priests, seminarians, nuns, monks) of that church province, their addresses and positions. This catalog is drawn up at the end of the year and bears the following year's date. The 1933 *Elenchus* of the Lithuanian church province (drawn up at the end of 1932) shows that Juozas Misiūnas lived in Mittelstein, Silesia, at St. Joseph's Novitiate. The 1934 *Elenchus* shows that Misiūnas lived in Kaunas, at Rotušės aikštė 12, at the St. Stanislaus College dormitory and was prefect of the second group of students. But we no longer find Misiūnas name in the 1935 *Elenchus*. So Misiūnas upon his return

from Silesia was not immediately dismissed, but continued as prefect of a dormitory for a whole year.

2. Another very important document shows that Misiūnas had healthy eyes during the 1933-34 academic year. During the summer of 1934, a copiously illustrated book, *Kauno jėsuitų gimnazija, pirmasis dešimtmetis 1924-1934 metai (The Kaunas Jesuit High School, the First Decade 1924-1934)* was published. Pages 89 and 90 show two photographs of Prefect Juozas Misiūnas, taken in the spring of that year. In one photograph Juozas Misiūnas is standing in the study hall next to students preparing their homework. In the other photograph, Misiūnas is seated with First Group Prefect Jonas Kukta and their superior Juozas Rytmeisteris, surrounded by boarding students. In neither photograph is Misiūnas wearing glasses, while Kukta and Rytmeisteris both are.

3. Students of the Ramygala Middle School testify that they never saw their teacher Juozas Misiūnas wear glasses. (Father Petras Baltuška, pastor of Daugailiai).

4. Finally, Sofija Misiūnienė, the wife of Juozas Misiūnas, also maintains that both at their wedding and for a long time later her husband had healthy eyes, and only, as stated above, in 1955 — some 21 years after he left the monastery — did the first signs of disease, cloudiness, appear.

Misiūnas was dismissed not because of ill-health or blindness, but because he himself admitted in 1934 that he had not wanted to enter the monastery, but did so only on the erroneous assumption that it was his obligation to do so because he had received free room, board and education for four years (it is therefore not surprising that he trembled when he made his vows). Then, i.e., in 1934, he was told that he was in the wrong place, that only those who wish it are accepted into the monastery. No one is forcibly driven into the monastery and vows made under duress are invalid: this is Canon Law. For this reason, both he who is making his vows as well as the candidate is asked whether he freely wishes to enter, being forced by no one, and whether he wishes to obligate himself by the vows. Misiūnas apparently was not honest and spoke one way while feeling and wishing otherwise.

Here Jauniškis makes a totally unfounded charge that Misiūnas had been forced to enter the monastery: "Otherwise, for his tuition and board at the high school, he would have received such a bill that his parents would have ended up in court in short order and later behind bars. How could they have paid the adjudged debt?" (p. 57)

This is a patently false assumption; he proves here his total ignorance and misconception of the situation. Throughout the entire existence of the Jesuit high school, no one was ever taken to court or jailed, although a number of students who received free tuition and board for several years graduated from the high school annually.

Upon graduating, Misiūnas spent four more years in the monastery, he therefore spent eight years with the Jesuits, seven of them studying and one working and when he left in 1934, he was not presented with a bill, and moreover was given secular clothing and a more than modest sum as a start for his new life. This is the reality: diametrically opposed to Jauniškis' slanderous fantasy.

At Rudzevičius' trial, Professor Griška pointed out the requisites for educators: "We educate young people . . . we teach them responsibility, integrity, conscientiousness. The teacher himself must be as pure as crystal, otherwise he will not perform the task with which the collective, the community, entrusted him . . . The teacher is always an authority for the student. His behavior, his moral stance, properly teaches young people... High moral standards are everywhere and always essential, especially at work and in the behavior of those whose duty it is to educate young people." (*Tiesa (Truth)*, July 14, 1981).

Is it not also essential to demand the same of newspaper writers and the Ministry of Education? Can they be uninterested in the truth? For nothing so offends a person as a blatant lie, distortion of facts, slander. Then how could the *Vaga* publishers print such trash from Jauniškis? How could the Ministry of Education have entrusted the education of young people to such spiritual paupers as Jauniškis, Stankaitis, Stikleris and others?

Nearly two decades ago, Mišutis, the head of the Propaganda Division of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, laid down the principles of the Soviet press. "The most important principle of the Soviet press is to write only the truth. Distorting the facts, sensationalism, is foreign to our press. Yet in some of our newspapers and magazines, because of the negligence of individual employees in preparing material, articles appear which are inconsistent with the facts or distort them. The Party severely condemns those journalists who follow the once-prevalent rule: 5% truth and you can print it in a newspaper. There is no such thing as 5% truth, only 100% truth and this is especially important when dealing with a person. If the editors made a mistake in printing material which is inconsistent with the facts, they are obligated to cor-

rect that mistake." (*Tiesa (Truth)*, February 16, 1963).

Respected employees of the *Vaga* publishers and the Ministry of Education, not only we believers but the Party itself demands that this error be rectified. We are not requesting a favor, but the most basic justice. By printing material inconsistent with the facts, you committed an offense, you slandered decent people by portraying them as sadists, hypocrites and moral degenerates. Misiūnas left the monastery with healthy eyes and for many years afterward did not even wear glasses, while Jauniškis depicted him as half-blind, barely able to see the light of day; he invented some kind of "rendikontas" about which no one at the monastery was aware. I encountered this word for the first and only time in Jauniškis' "Illusions"; and because I did not know what it meant, I perused two dictionaries of international words but was unable to find it and only by reading further, was I able to understand its meaning from the context. I asked my friends, but they also had never heard of a "vendetta". Therefore that entire story about the "vendetta" and Misiūnas' blindness, just as about St. Sebastian's veneration, is merely a creation of Jauniškis' imagination, with no basis in reality.

The description of mendicant religious in prewar Lithuania falls into the same category — everything has been fabricated, invented — thus the question arises: by what right do the *Vaga* publishers and the Ministry of Education publish and disseminate vile fabrications and sling mud at innocent people? For this is tantamount to the worst hooliganism and how do they reconcile such hooliganism with Communist morality? Can't you see that such attacks by atheist fanaticism bring shame upon the Soviet press, deceive and mislead people, especially inexperienced young people who, deprived of moral foundations, so quickly take the path of crime? Let us simply recall the accurate words of Academician Skazhkin, whom I cited in my first letter, on the contemporary Soviet press: "... Superficiality in considering fundamental religious problems and intellectual bankruptcy in 'proving' them ignorance of life and believers are typical characteristics of that (atheist — J.D.) literature ..."

It is high time to reach a radical conclusion: remove the slander-sheets of Jauniškis and other atheist so-called writers, from book stores and libraries, stop insulting the feelings of believers, stop damaging and corrupting young people. People do not work so hard to have their hard-earned money used to produce and impose filth

on young people. It is now our duty and right to demand that the press and other means of communication stop being abused, that books and newspapers write only the truth, 100% truth, and shun 5% truth, fabrication and lies which, unfortunately, still often appear.

In conclusion, if even after this letter, Bronius Jauniškis' slanderous little pot-boiler *With No Illusions* is not recalled and removed from the libraries, it will provide undisputed proof that the Soviet press is totally and absolutely uninterested in objective truth, but only in ruthless and blind anti-religious propaganda, and that atheists, in fighting against religion, ignore all facts and reasonable demands, only following the principle "the end justifies the means."

Where objective truth goes unrecognized, there can be no talk of scholarship, and so-called "scientific atheism" is pure fiction.

Bijutiškis, December 15, 1981

Father Jonas Danyla, S.J.

THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF BELIEVERS' RIGHTS

On December 25, 1981, the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights wrote Document No. 50 to Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev regarding the crude campaign against believing youth in Lithuania, which Soviet officials launched in 1981. The document refers to the mistreatment of a group of young people in Molėtai, the arrest of Father Ričardas Černiauskas, the detention in Šlavantai of young people from Kybartai, the forced entrance by the militia and detention of young people in Vilkaviškis, the forced entrance in Kapsukas (formerly Marijampolė) into the apartment of (Miss) Kuncėvičiūtė.

"Although considerable time has elapsed since these events, the terrorization of believing young people still continues: they are interrogated, threatened and told that such meetings amount to activity against the Soviet government. . . With the adoption of the new Constitution of the USSR and the declaration that we are striding into a period of mature socialism, is it still necessary to employ such inhuman and disgraceful methods to fight against believing young people?" asks the document.

On December 25, 1981, the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights sent document No. 51 to Secretary P. Griškevičius of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, in defense of Father Jonas Bučinskas, pastor of Stulgiai, and Father Juozapas Razmantas, pastor of Žalpiai, who were charged with organizing "a demonstration to the cemetery" on November 1, 1981.

RELIGIOUS FEASTS IN LITHUANIA

Large crowds of people — a thorn in the side of Lithuania's militant atheists — attend the devotions at Šiluva, Aušros Vartai (Gate of Dawn in Vilnius and Žemaičių Kalvarija (Calvary of the Samogitians). In 1981, only the Žemaičių Kalvarija devotions at the beginning of July passed without incident.

In August, prior to the Feast of Our Lady of Šiluva, a "pig plague" quarantine, which is still in force was organized in the vicinity of Šiluva. Right up to the beginning of the festival, the faithful did not know whether it would be possible to go to Šiluva, therefore, fewer people attended than in earlier years. The atmosphere at the devotions was also depressing. Militia vehicles patrolled the yards of Šiluva inhabitants and recorded car license numbers. At the church, the people were puzzled to hear certain sermons about suicide, murder, etc. The believers wondered, "Why are such problems raised during the major Šiluva devotions, when the best people come to Mary's shrine from all corners of Lithuania? They have no intention to commit either murder or suicide . . ."

Devotions to the Merciful Mother of God at Aušros Vartai (Gate of Dawn) in Vilnius are much more difficult to disrupt: how can a pig plague be declared in Vilnius? Here the major devotions are suppressed in a different way: even the people of Vilnius have a difficult time learning of these devotions because only St. Teresa's church announces them. At other churches, only an occasional priest makes the announcement.'

The homilists usually avoid concrete problems of current life or deal with them in a distorted fashion. At the 1980 devotions, a theological seminary instructor stated that Catholics must worry not about human rights, but duties, especially stressing duties to the state.

During the 1980 devotions to the Merciful Mother of God, Wed-

nesday was proclaimed a day of temperance, which apparently displeased the civil government; therefore the following year, though planned, it did not take place. Several sermons on the subject of temperance were actually directed against those who fight for temperance. It was stated that Catholics are responsible for the increase in alcoholism, there is no need to fight to limit the sale of alcohol, there is no need for any external means (probably directed at a temperance society and a day of temperance), Catholics need only receive the sacraments more frequently and everything will solve itself. Another homilist explained that it is unnecessary to fight for Church rights, it is only necessary to love one's fellow men.

In this way, the spirit of the faithful is undermined and the enthusiasm of the people is extinguished. What the godless government fails to accomplish, the clergy helps to achieve.

Participants in the festival, especially those who travel longer distances, rightfully demand that festival organizers and preachers be seriously prepared to serve God and not mollify the Religious Affairs Commissar.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

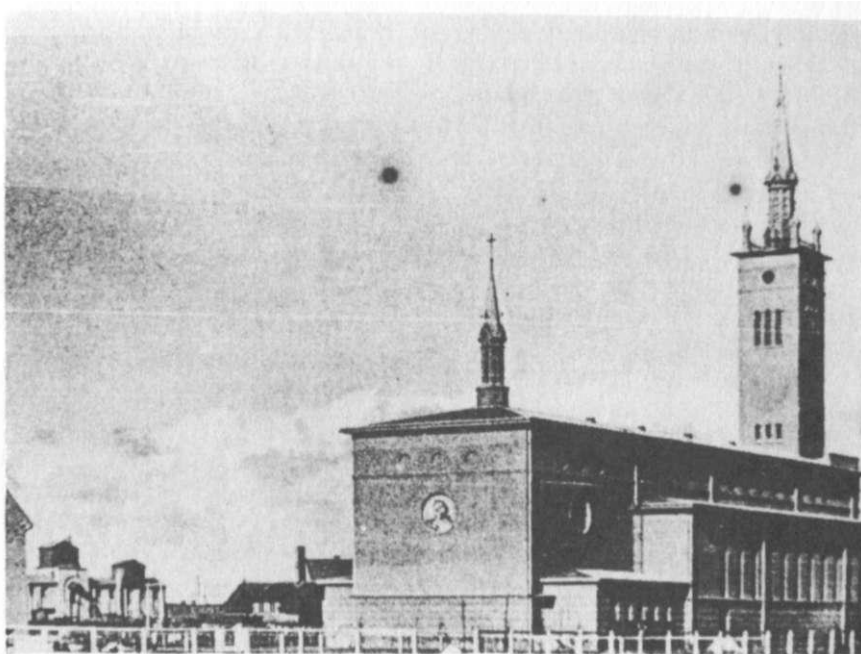
Klaipeda

In June and August of 1981, delegations of Klaipeda Church Committee members and believers went to Moscow to see the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Chairman Kuroyedov of the Council for Religious Affairs, bearing petitions from believers requesting the return of the Catholic church in Klaipeda, illegally confiscated by the government. The text of the petition:

"We, the faithful of the City of Klaipeda and the entire Catholic Church in Lithuania appeal to you, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet, asking you to return the Catholic church in Klaipeda built with our funds and work.

"The construction of this church was begun in 1956, upon receipt of permits from the Supreme Soviet Presidium, the USSR Council of Ministers and the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR. When the church was completed in 1961, but before it began to function, it was confiscated from the faithful at the order of then-Chairman Khrushchev of the Supreme Soviet Presidium.

"Currently, the church built our funds and labor has been converted into a philharmonic hall, while we faithful, having built such



Our Lady Queen of Peace Church in Klaipeda, shortly after completion in 1962.

a spacious church, must suffer heat and overcrowding in a small (220 m. — 2,350 sq. ft.), church or freeze outside. The city of Klaipeda and its suburbs have some 100,000 believers.

"Feeling unjustly wronged, we appealed to the Religious Affairs Commissar in Moscow, in 1974 with some 3,500 believers' signatures. In March, 1979, with 10,241 signatures and in October, 1979, with 149,149 signatures, we appealed to you, Chairman Brezhnev of the Supreme Soviet Presidium, and to Religious Affairs Commissar Kuroyedov requesting that our church be returned.

"We, the believers of all Lithuania, await a just decision. Otherwise, we will petition and write until the church which belongs to us is returned . . ."

The petition was signed by 1,0008 believers.

USSR Religious Affairs Commissar Kuroyedov confirmed to the ten person delegation, in the presence of Lithuanian Religious Affairs Commissar Petras Anilionis that the Klaipeda church had been confiscated illegally, offered, serious or not, permission to build



A photo of the church after being confiscated in 1962. It was converted into a philharmonic concert hall.

a new church and promised the faithful to give a final reply through the City of Klaipėda Executive Committee.

On December 5, 1981, with no reply forthcoming, the Klaipėda Catholic Committee and believers sent a petition signed by 250 persons to the City of Klaipėda Executive Committee Chairman A. Žalčius, demanding that the confiscated church be returned.

Žilėnai

In June, 1981, the children of the Žilėnai parish were being prepared for First Communion. For this, a government commission filed three reports against the pastor. At the beginning of July, Prosecutor Kontrimas of the *Rayon* of Varėna interrogated the children and forced them to sign some kind of papers.

On July 16, 1981, Prosecutor Kontrimas issued the following warning to Kastytis Krikščiukaitis:

"Upon reviewing the evidence, it has been established that Pastor Kastytis Krikščiukaitis of the Žilėnai Roman Catholic Church parish in the *Rayon* of Varėna, organized religious education pro-

grams for minors in June and July, 1981 in the Žilėnai church, and systematically carried them out. He thereby violated the laws of the separation of Church and state and the school and Church (art. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR and art. 143 of the Criminal Code of the Lithuanian SSR).

"On the basis of the warning . . . tendered about breaking the aforesaid laws and the explanation that if he continues in the future to violate these laws, he would be indicted under art. 143 of the Criminal Code of the Lithuanian SSR."

Žilėnai

On June 7, 1981, following the feast of St. Anthony, the pastor, Father Kastytis Krikščiukaitis invited the people to enjoy themselves. The people sang folk songs and played the accordion, while the women served refreshments. Everyone's happy mood was spoiled by Collective Farm Chairman Antanas Uždavinsys, Party Secretary (Mrs.) Biekšienė and Teacher Biekša, who ran up three times demanding that they leave, since this was a school yard. The people ignored them and continued with the pastor to enjoy themselves. *Rayon* officials were summoned, but they also were unable to rout the people. The following day security agents arrived from as far away as Vilnius and questioned whether the national anthem "Lithuania, Our Homeland", had been sung.

Chairman Uždavinsys is telling everyone: "Either I or that gimpy Petras has to go" (That is what he calls the local pastor.) Upon learning on February 19, 1982, that the collective farm chairman was planning a party for the farm workers during Lent, Father Krikščiukaitis went to the collective farm office to advise that believing farm workers would be unable to attend the planned party during Lent. The collective farm chairman called the pastor an ass, a super-idiot with several screws missing, and idler, ignorant, narrow-minded and promised to inform the appropriate organs.

The *Rayon* of Varėna newspaper printed a vile slanderous article against Father Kastytis Krikščiukaitis.

Why is this priest so hated? The answer must be sought during his studies at the seminary. During the Easter, 1975, vacation, two security agents attempted to recruit seminarian Krikščiukaitis as their spy. "We desperately need your help . . . we must know what the people are thinking," pressured the security agents. "No, I refuse!" the seminarian replied. "We'll expel you from the seminary," they threatened, but still gained nothing.

Vilnius

Basing itself on the classical Marxist writers, Soviet propaganda maintains that no official document in the Soviet Union makes any mention of a person's religious beliefs. The "Inquiry Form" for recruits into the Soviet armed forces contains the following question:

"Where do you stand with regard to religion?"

The "Inquiry Form" is printed by permit No. 3927850000 of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania. It must be completed by an officer of the Soviet armed forces, after he has interviewed the draftee.

Tauragnai (Rayon of Utena)

On December 22, 1981, the trial of Rakauskas, Strazdas and Nemunas, who robbed the Tauragnai church and desecrated the Blessed Sacrament, was held in Utena. They had also committed many other crimes.

Many parishioners and believers from other cities came to the trial proceedings, but only some of the arrivals were able to gain admittance into the small courtroom.

Tauragnai Pastor Bronius Šlapelis was forced to leave the courtroom and, as a witness, wait until the evening in the court corridor, unable to observe the trial proceedings. During the noon recess, Father Bronius Šlapelis asked the presiding judge why no mention was being made at the trial of the desecration of the Blessed Sacrament which is considered a serious offense by believers. The judge retorted that "Church property belongs to the state and only the state suffered in the burglary."

In his testimony, Father Šlapelis greatly stressed the desecration of the Blessed Sacrament. As far back as on August 27th, when the offenders were brought back to Tauragnai, the pastor had asked them where they had put the Sacred Hosts, but they replied they did not know. During the trial, the pastor repeatedly asked the court for permission to ask the offenders where they had put the Blessed Sacrament. He was not permitted to pose the question but the judge himself explained that they had eaten the Hosts in the sauna, washing it down with the wine taken from the church. When the priest explained that the desecration of the Blessed Sacrament is an offense more serious than the desecration of the state flag, the judge interrupted him, implying that this was irrelevant.

Kapčiamiestis (Rayon of Lazdijai)

Rayon officials came several times to the Kapčiamiestis District to conduct a church inventory. Church committee members were sent summonses to appear at the district at the indicated time: none of the committee members went. On January 20, 1982, *rayon* Executive Committee Vice Chairman Vanagas came to Kapčiamiestis. He was surprised to find that the inventory reports had not yet been completed, and demanded that district employee (Mrs.) Janina Margelienė go with parish Pastor Plioraitis and committee members to complete the inventory reports.

"I won't go!" protested Janina Margelienė.

On February 9th, Vice Chairman Vanagas again came to the Kapčiamiestis District. School Principal Z. Sabalius was also summoned to the district. But the church committee again failed to appear. Father Ignas Plioraitis was also summoned but did not go either.

Krosna (Rayon of Lazdijai)

On April 25, 1981, two drunken youths stole a plaster angel, later valued at 75 rubles by the art council, from the Krosna church. The culprits were apprehended and taken to the militia. One of them was immediately released by the militia because no stolen articles were found in his possession. The second, Arūnas Micka, was tried in Lazdijai on July 13, 1981. The court ruled the offense not dangerous to society because the robbery was from a church; the defendant Micka was therefore sentenced only to one year of rehabilitative work at his place of employment, with 20% of his monthly salary deducted for the state.

A church was robbed, but as a result the state gets some 500-600 rubles. In the meantime, the thieves are again free and one of them was not even charged.

During the trial, the pastor's remark that the motive for the robbery must be examined was totally ignored. After stealing the statue, the thieves boasted they would take it to the atheist museum and sell it for a minimum of 200 rubles. It is common knowledge that atheist museums purchase articles of a religious nature even from teenagers and children, without asking where they obtained them, thus encouraging the burglary of churches which has increased markedly in recent times.

Mažeikiai

On October 14, 1981, Religious Affairs Commissar Anilionis sent the Mažeikiai Catholic Church Committee a warning to reprove Father Antanas Beniušis who "in his sermons spreads lies and slander about the soviet way of life, attacks Soviet agencies and government officials..." The commissar ends his letter with the threat: "...I warn you, we will be forced to rescind the registration of the religious community and close the house of worship."

The Mažeikiai Church Committee responded to Anilionis' threat as follows: "Since Father Antanas Beniušis is directly responsible to the Chancery and to you, we have no legal power over Father Beniušis in this matter."

Židikai (R a y o n of Mažeikiai)

The funeral of (Mrs) Kleopatra Rapalienė was held in Židikai on August 24, 1981. The pastor of Židikai, Father Domininkas Giedra, and Father Klemensas Arlauskas, a retired priest at Ylakiai participated in the burial services.

On September 12th, Father Domininkas Giedra was summoned to see Vice Chairman Songaila of the *Rayon* of Mažeikiai Executive Committee. Two witnesses were present in the office. The vice chairman berated the priest for inviting a guest priest to the funeral and for escorting the decedant to the cemetery without a permit. The pastor replied: "I am an experienced priest and I know how to bury Catholics, so please don't instruct me."

At the conclusion of the talk, Vice Chairman Songaila warned Father Giedra that he would send a full report to Commissar Anilionis.

Ariogala

On January 20, 1982, Assistant Prosecutor Barauskas of the Lithuanian SSR gave a lecture on political questions at the Ariogala Land Improvement hall. Someone asked why such disorder now reigns in Poland. The prosecutor replied that one of "Poland's brood", the Pope, is responsible for everything, for he incited and continues to incite the Poles. A murmur of outrage rose in the hall and one of the participants protested: "How dare you speak so disrespectfully of the Pope who has the respect of the entire world?"

Šiauliai

On October 20 and 21, 1981, Assistant Pastor Father Feliksas

Baliūnas of St. George's Church in Šiauliai was summoned for interrogation to the Vilnius KGB. Interrogator Kazys inquired about the articles confiscated in a search and attempted for two days to re-educate the priest.

Molėtai

On February 17, 1982, a character from Vilnius again visited the Molėtai rectory. He voiced his outrage that signatures are collected at the church, because that amounts to inciting people. This individual was concerned that young priests continue to associate with Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and this "disrupts" the unity of priests. He was also displeased that Father Jonas Zubrus does not stay put in remote Vytautava, but travels all over the place.

Tauragė

Tauragė physician Mečislovas Laužeckas, who courageously professed his faith all his life, died on December 28, 1981. Throughout his life, the physician never missed Holy Mass on Sundays and, as a result suffered much unpleasantness at work.

Doctors had stated previously that if the decedant is given a church burial, they would not act as pallbearers. Doctor (Mrs.) Butkienė added that an executive committee official had strictly forbidden all doctors to attend the funeral.

At the gravesite, Father Puzaras invited the doctors to say a word of farewell, but none of them dared to speak.

A new grave has sprouted in the Tauragė cemetery, it is adorned with a simple wooden cross, which will recall for a long time the good doctor, a Lithuanian patriot and exemplary Catholic, the late Mečislovas Laužeskas.

Leipalingis

In his December 12, 1981, statement to the Prosecutor of Lithuania, Robertas Grigas complained that during a search of his home, militiamen and security agents confiscated religious books, photographs of Pleterytė (a member of the 1831 uprising) and even atheist books with underlined passages. Some of the books were not listed in the search report.

"In the lecture halls of the Vilnius State Pedagogical Institute where I am studying," Grigas writes, "the most perfect and humane Soviet legal system is continually lauded. However, none of the political science instructors has stated that, under this legal

system, a personal library can be censored and religious literature, notes and even atheist books confiscated, if they contain underlined passages and remarks. What a blatant attempt to ban thought, investigations and discussion even with a book lying in one's desk drawer. Can the giant web of atheist propaganda feel its inner inadequacy so deeply that it considers the comments we believers make in the margins a danger to them? How hypocritical is the tribute to 1831 uprising member Emilija Pleterytė in the *rayon* newspaper, when in the meantime copies of her picture are confiscated.

Vilnius

On January 26, 1982, Genė Šakalienė was summoned for interrogation to the Vilnius KGB. Chekist Kalakauskas was interested in knowing whether the woman had spoken by telephone with her husband, Vladas Šakalys, who lives in the U.S.A. Furthermore, he berated her for signing various petitions. The interrogator implied that if Šakalienė mends her ways and fulfills certain security police demands, she may be allowed in several years to join her husband in the U.S.A.

Vištytis

A cross was erected near Vištytis during the night of August 25, 1981. On August 26th, District Chairman Žarskis and Brigade Leader Žukauskas dug up the cross and, after removing the corpus, hid it in the bushes. The people found the cross and erected it again. That same day, Žarskis and Cultural Center Director Paškauskas again uprooted the cross. Chairman Žarskis threatened the people with punishment for erecting the cross.

Following the desecration of the cross, Vištytis Parish Pastor Father Kazimieras Montvila organized services in the church to atone for the desecration.

In 1981, tractor driver Petras Bertašius who works at the Pajevonis state Farm was summoned to the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee and scolded for attending church, leading the recitation of the rosary at funerals, etc. "You are giving the youth a bad example," the officials scolded.

"Take my tractor if you wish! I will continue attending church as I have in the past," retorted the vigorous man.

Prienai

On February 11, 1982, Father Antanas Gražulis, Assistant Pastor

of Prienai, sent a letter to Religious Affairs Commissar Anilionis, in which he responds to the executive committee's warning. He writes: "In my sermon I attacked neither the Soviet system, the Party nor Soviet foreign policy. I spread no anti-Soviet propaganda, but merely condemned the great criminals from various centuries against humanity and the Church... I condemned hypocrites who say one thing and do another . . . therefore your charges against me are unfounded."

Šilalė

On January 7, 1982, a group of chekists came to Šilalė from Vilnius. They summoned people, questioned them about Father Vytautas Skiparis and how information about Šilalė finds its way into the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. According to the chekists, the Šilalė assistant pastor wants to rot in Soviet labor camps, but they are still delaying granting him a "martyr's crown."

The chekists asked the people about Nijolė Sadūnaitė, wondering what she had said in Šilalė and who permitted her to speak in the church.

On November 30, 1981, Religious Affairs Commissar Anilionis, former priest Starkus and other propagandists came to Šilalė to promote atheism. In one lecture, Feliksas Laurinčiukas, Chief Instructor of Atheism at the Kaunas Polytechnic Institute derided Father Vytautas Skiparis in particular. According to the speaker, the priest should have been arrested a long time ago, he is unbalanced . . .

Other speakers also preached "scientific atheism" with similar arguments.

Viešvėnai

On November 8, 1981, 110 Viešvėnai faithful sent the Prosecutor of Lithuania a letter protesting the fact that on November 1st, Soviet officials prevented priests from reaching Viešvėnai on time and consequently many people were unable to make their confessions. The letter states: "When we believers travel to holy places, to major devotions, our cars are checked just to annoy us. In the meantime, cars travelling to non-religious affairs such as song festivals are not checked even though some of the drivers are drunk. . ." The letter also mentions that churches must pay 25 kopeks per kilowatt hour of electricity, while others pay only 4 kopeks.

Papilė

On October 9, 1981, vandals broke down the doors and entered the Papilė church. Inside the church, they tore open the tabernacles but did not desecrate the Blessed Sacrament, for it was kept in a safe place. In the sacristy, the culprits threw liturgical vestments around.

Vėžaičiai

During the night of November 3, 1981, evildoers broke into the Vėžaičiai church. The thieves were apprehended and it was learned that they had earlier robbed the Gargždai, Endriejavas and Medin-gėnai churches.

Akmenė

In November, 1981, criminals broke into the Akmenė church and dented the metal tabernacle, but were unable to break it open.

Alsėdžiai

During social affairs organized by the Cultural Center, the churchyard of the Alsėdžiai church is turned into a toilet. The faithful have often informed the *rayon* authorities of this matter, but they have yet to take any measures.

Telšiai

At the end of 1981 and later, chekist Norkūnas, attempted to recruit the believing youth of Telšiai to spy for the security police. Rainiai Nursery School employee (Miss) Vilhelmina Stulpinaitė and a laborer Antanas Ruvelis were harassed for a long time. For refusing to talk to the chekists, (Miss) Genovaitė Šalkauskaitė was discharged and barred from working in the educational field. For a long period, Chekist Norkūnas summoned students (Miss) Alina Stankutė, (Miss) Judita Bružaitė and others for talks.

During religious feasts, upper-grade Communist Youth League members are obliged to go to an assigned church and take notes on the services, sermons, participants, etc. Prior to Christmas 1981, instruction classes were given at the Telšiai Party headquarters for students sent on this mission.

Šiluva

On September 13, 1981, (a Sunday) while believers were on their way to church in Šiluva, chekists and militiamen hunted down young people, stuffed them into cars and took them to the Raseiniai

militia. Žagarė sacristan Rubinas was held at the militia an entire day, while Tauragė resident Sigitas Jucikas was detained for 24 hours. Some of the young people managed to escape capture. Kairiškiai (Rayon of Akmenė)

In October, 1981, (Mrs.) Šeržentienė, Chief Investigator for the Preservation of Monuments in the *Rayon* of Akmenė, listed all the artistic crosses and shrines standing at homesteads for the purpose of siezingthem for the Papilė museum.

The faithful believe that this "listing" is none other than an attempt by the atheists to remove all Christian symbols from public places.

Meškuičiai

On September 13, 1981, Petras Mikulis, a resident of Šiauliai, and his family were driving near the Hill of the Crosses. When they approached Domantai, they stopped because the road leading to the Hill of Crosses was marked with a sign forbidding entry. When the militiamen and some sort of character learned that the travelers intended to continue the trip on foot, they issued a summons "for stopping in the wrong place."

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

To: The Minister of Education of the Lithuanian SSR

On September 9, 1981, the funeral of Mrs. Vanda Misiūnienė was held in Švenčionys. Her son Petras Misiūnas was an 8th-grader at the Švenčionys Middle School; therefore, twenty-six of his classmates attended the funeral. When the deceased was brought to the church, Homeroom Teacher (Mrs.) Nijolė Bieliauskienė chased all the students from the church, at the order of school Principal (Mrs.) Stuikienė.

The Church is separate from the school, therefore the teachers had no right to give orders in church, disrupting the solemnity of the services. The majority of the students who attended the funeral are believers and regularly attend church. The forcible expulsion of such students from the church is a crude violation of the right to practice religious cult.

Educators continually violate Soviet laws and are never punished Through such conduct, the educators debased both the dead and their

families, and this is inconsistent with either pedagogy or humaneness. If the beliefs of older people are ridiculed, the young learn not to respect their elders, their parents, and become coarse. This leads them to humiliate people who hold different beliefs. It was probably under the influence of such unhealthy pedagogy that religious tombstones were destroyed in the Dūkštas, Rimšė, Plungė and other cemeteries.

When they prevent students from attending the funerals of believing persons, educators destroy their own authority. No one can respect an educator who does not practice the respect he preaches toward people who hold other beliefs.

What do teachers fear? That the students will hear the sermon? In such cases, priests will be forced to speak at the cemetery. Such teacher conduct is mere atheist fanaticism.

October 4, 1981

Father Edmundas Paulionis,
Assistant Pastor of the
Švenčionys parish.

On October 27, 1981, the Švenčionys Education Department sent the following reply:

"Students of grade 8A and Homeroom Teacher Nijolė Bieliauskienė attended the funeral services of Vanda Misiūnienė. However, after laying down their flowers, the students left the church voluntarily and were not chased out by the homeroom teacher at the principal's order, as you stated in your letter. Homeroom Teacher Nijolė Bieliauskienė was not present in the church. The students left the church before the services began and therefore no disruption took place.

"The educators did not violate Soviet law by forbidding students to attend church services, for the school is separate from the Church.

Čereškevičius

Head of the Education Department

As seen from the response, the head of the Education Department is not even capable of telling a consistent lie. In one place he maintains that the students left voluntarily, in another that the educators forbade them to attend the services.

Šakiai

Prior to the 1981 Christmas holidays, atheists at the Z. Anga-

rietis Middle school in Šakiai went into action to terrorize students. On December 23rd and 24th, Teachers (Mrs.) Liubinienė and (Mrs.) Būdvytienė took some students to the principal's office. There, they intimidated the students in various ways to keep them from going to church, ordering them to reveal which students sing in the church choir and attend church. It seems there were no traitors.

On December 24th, at 10:00 P.M., in the Church of Šakiai, Midnight Mass was going on. The city streets were full of teachers trying to catch students. KGB vehicles buzzed around the church. School Principal Matusevičienė, Teachers Malskis, (Mrs.) Malskienė, (Mrs.) Liubinienė, Zotovas, (Mrs.)Zotovienė, (Mrs.) Valaitienė, (Mrs.) Vaitkevičienė, (Mrs.) Bliūdžiuvienė, (Mrs.) Vyšniauskienė, Paušinis, Pečiukaitis, (Mrs.) Pečiukaitienė, (Miss) Gabartaitė and others accosted students who were on their way to church with their parents and ordered them to return home. Teacher Malskis and several other teachers even barged into the church. Many schoolchildren attended the services and the sanctuary was full of acolytes and worshippers. On the way home, the schoolchildren were hunted down even more vigorously. The teachers scolded them and took down their names; those children who were going home without their parents were accosted with special ferocity.

Skaudivilė

On December 17, 1981, Teacher (Mrs.) Songailienė ordered sixth grade students at the Skaudivilė Middle School to write a composition entitled "The Greedy Pastor". Believing students Arvydas Šturna, Algis Kairys and others refused to write the composition. Unable to intimidate Arvydas Šturna, Teacher Songailienė chased him from the classroom. Algis Kairys followed him out. Out of 28 students, only five wrote the composition as the teacher had ordered. The rest either did not write anything or wrote the opposite. Students (Miss) Rima Mačiulytė and (Miss) Reda Liutvinaitė entitled their composition "The Good Pastor."

On December 22nd, Teacher (Mrs.) Baniienė scolded the girls in the teachers' room and ordered them to explain in writing why they wrote such compositions.

Incensed by such teacher conduct, the students' mothers, (Mrs.) Šturmienė, (Mrs.) Mačiulienė and (Mrs.) Kairienė went to see the principal to defend their children against such coercion. Teacher (Mrs.) Baniienė excoriated the mothers who had come.

Kapčiamiestis

On November 22, 1981, the pastor of Kapčiamiestis, Father Ignas Plioraitis, announced that a commemoration would be held in church on November 28th, to honor the 150th anniversary of the death of Emilija Pleterytė, a member of the 1831 uprising.

On November 25th, Chekist Gyls questioned Sadeckas, sacristan at the Kapčiamiestis church, as to whether the pastor speaks against the Soviet government, what type of commemoration he planned, whether guests from Poland would be present at the commemoration, etc.

Security agents warned employees not to participate in the Pleterytė commemoration or face prosecution.

On November 28th, soldiers patrolled the roads from early morning, checking the documents of travellers.

The commemoration was held in the church and at Pleterytė's grave. The following day, students Vitas Sakavičius, Gintas Sakavičius, (Miss) Laima Ramanauskaitė and Andrius Sukackas who attended the commemoration, were interrogated at school.

Kapsukas

On February 1, 1981, (Miss) Zita Šarakauskaitė, a third-year student at the Pedagogical School, was summoned to the principal's office. The chekist who awaited the girl in the office took her to the KGB department. The interrogator asked whether the girl was a believer, who her friends were, where her sister, (Miss) Ona Šarakauskaitė, works, etc.

Šilutė

On November 6, 1981 (Mrs.) Kazė Maksvytienė (residing in Šilutė at Kolūkiečių g. 14-7), sent a repeat petition to First Secretary Petras Griškevičius of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania, stating that Principal Dobranskienė of Šilutė Middle School No. 1 continually slanders her children, charging them with nonexistent offenses.

(Mrs) Maksvytienė relates how she was "educated" at the juvenile department of the Šilutė militia because her children wear a cross on their jacket lapels.

On October 26, 1981, Kazė Maksvytienė was charged at the Rayon Executive Committee with slandering teachers and setting her children against them.

Garliava

On January 19, 1982, grade 11B student Vytautas Gluosnys was summoned to the principal's office of Garliava Middle School No. 1. At the office, the schoolboy found a waiting chekist who was primarily interested in the believers' march to Šiluva. The chekist maintained that the security police is well aware that Vytautas Gluosnys was among those who attempted to reach Šiluva, furthermore, he violated the quarantine zone and must therefore now write an explanation. The schoolboy categorically refused to write any kind of explanation. The chekist accused Vytautas Gluosnys with transmitting "slanderous" information to the Vatican. The chekist threatened that, under current law, Gluosnys could be thrown into the security police cellars without being arrested and would then learn what happens to those who ignore and disobey. As he released him, the chekist warned Gluosnys to tell no one about their talk.

Kybartai (Rayon of Vilkaviškis)

On December 10, 1981, (Miss) A. Strakauskaitė, a teacher at the Kristijonas Donelaitis Middle School in Kybartai, interrogated one of her students, 10th-grader (Miss) Vida Merkevičiūtė, during recess.

"What did your parents say about your lower department grade? Don't think everything is finished. Because of some tramp, I have to make explanations to the principal and the security police. Things will not end well for you," Homeroom Teacher Strakauskaitė insulted and threatened the girl. (During a birthday party in Vilkaviškis on November 14, 1981, Vida Merkevičiūtė was taken with other youngsters to the militia and interrogated; as a consequence, her first trimester department grade was lowered to unsatisfactory.)

During their meeting, the homeroom teacher expressed interest in Vida's friends, and attempted to learn whether the girl spent her summer vacation with the same group of youngsters in the *Rayon* of Lazdijai near the Šlavantai lake.

On December 11, 1981, Vida Merkevičiūtė was interrogated by school Principal J. Dirvonskis. The principal commanded her to admit she spent her vacation in the *Rayon* of Lazdijai and ordered her to betray all the youngsters who were with her. The principal promised to tell no one of her betrayal and not even interrogate those students.

"We won't consider you a traitor and they won't know you betrayed them. Moreover, this isn't betrayal," explained teacher Strakauskaitė.

When he failed to learn anything, Principal Dirvonskis threatened Vida Merkevičiūtė "you'll eventually tell someone," and released her.

On December 18, 1981, Homeroom Teacher Strakauskaitė took Vida Merkevičiūtė to principal Dirvonskis' office where the girl was again "educated."

"Just once, sit down and think about everything, weigh it all," said the principal. "How will you raise children. It's time to think about this as well. What kind of family will you have? Think about it seriously! Finally, if you believe so fanatically, go ahead and believe, but don't organize others, don't stick your nose where it doesn't belong. If you want to graduate, think about this seriously."

On January 20, 1982, the parents of Vida Merkevičiūtė wrote a complaint to the Education Minister of the Lithuanian SSR protesting their daughter's persecution at the Kybartai Middle School. During the first trimester, Vida Merkevičiūtė's deportment grade was lowered to unsatisfactory "for disrespectful conduct toward teachers, lying and refusal to participate in competitions". Vida's parents wrote: "We did not allow our daughter to participate in the competition for it was held on Sunday and the distance to be run was 3 km. (1.9 miles). We feel that no programs or competitions should be held on Sundays. Sunday must be free from school and work because we, parents, wish to spend that time with our children.

"We protest our daughter's lower deportment grade. By what right did the school principal and homeroom teacher call the girl a tramp and a slut if she was neither drunk nor loitering?

"Please order the administration of the Kybartai Middle School to amend our daughter's deportment grade and cease terrorizing her."

The deportment grade was not amended, but the student's terrorization did cease.

Vilkaviškis

On October 25, 1981, the Sunday when the second march to Šiluva was to take place, all *rayon* schools proclaimed a "health day" at the order of *rayon* Executive Committee Vice Chairman L'rbonas. All students were required to attend. Despite cold and rainy weather, competitions were to be held that day in the school stadiums. School administrators were warned "to ensure the participation of all students".

At first, some people did not understand why a "health day" was

being planned at such an adverse time. However the real reason quickly became clear. Vilkaviškis Grammar School 8th-grader Juška took the bus to Šiluva that day. Documents were checked along the way. Several days later, the Education Ministry notified the school of Juška's trip. School Principal Lisauskas immediately summoned Juška and jeering him in a vulgar fashion, berated him, saying that the pupul had gone to Šiluva to overthrow the government. The homeroom teacher devoted an entire lesson to explaining what a terrible offense Juška had committed. Later, the student's father was summoned. He stated that their entire family is religious, listens to Vatican Radio and he is very pleased that his son attends church.

Čiulėnai (R a y o n of Molėtai)

The funeral of (Miss) Roma Tutinaitė, a 7th-grade student at the Čiulėnai Grammar School, was held on December 7, 1981. Her classmates and teachers escorted the casket to the church. Once the church steps were reached, the teachers began to chase the children away to keep them from entering the church, and ordered them to hand their flowers to adults. The adults refused to take them. Noise and confusion resulted. The people wanted to side with the schoolchildren. Some of the parents took their children and let them into the church. During the Mass, the other students sat in a bus where the teachers had herded them. During a zoology class on December 16th, Assistant Principal (Mrs.) Virginija Lukšienė ridiculed the parents of believing children who had taken their children into the church for the funeral services. The teacher called them stupid.

Rokiškis

A fanatical campaign is waged against the religious-convictions of believing students at the E. Tiekus Middle School in Rokiškis. Teacher (Mrs.) Milda Dilienė is the school's most active atheist. With great fury, she persecutes students, organizes teacher "excursions" to churches to record the names of students who attend church, and afterward terrorizes them.

During an algebra class on November 24, 1981, Teacher (Mrs.) Aldona Jurkonienė crudely ridiculed believing student (Miss) Dan-guolė Belickaitė.

Every month, atheist programs are held for the ninth grade. Believing students are forcibly driven to these programs. Teacher

Dilienė continually threatens the students: "Those who do not attend the atheist programs will receive lower department grades."

Other teachers, (Miss) Bitinaitė, (Mrs.) Mikolojūnienė and (Mrs.) Paškevičienė and do not lag behind teacher Dilienė in using every opportunity to demean believing students.

Josvainiai (Rayon of Kėdainiai)

In 1981 Homeroom Teacher (Mrs.) Eitutienė of grade 5A at the Josvainiai Middle School ordered the students who attend church to raise their hands. Out of thirty children, twenty-five raised their hands. The schoolchildren were then interrogated: when did they receive First Communion, who sings in church, etc. When homeroom teacher Eitutienė noticed that majority of youngsters go to church, she began to ridicule God, believers and the Church. At this point, pupil (Miss) Onutė Tunaitytė (who made her First Communion this summer) boldly asked the teacher: "Why are you interfering in Church affairs?" Although the enraged Soviet educator heaped the vilest names on the girl, nearly the entire class was proud and happy that Onutė had had the courage to speak the truth.

Kapsukas

On February 26, 1982, (Miss) Irena Baranauskaitė, a 9th-grader at the Jablonskis Middle School in Kapsukas (Principal Verbyla, Homeroom Teacher (Mrs.) Plečkaitienė) was expelled from school and ordered to transfer immediately to the Vilkaviškis Middle School. (Her mother (Mrs.) Albina Baranauskienė, a widow with 8 children, lives on the Keturvalakiai Collective Farm in the *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis.)

The reason for Irena Baranauskaitė's expulsion was because on December 5, 1981, she together with a relative, Teresė Kojutytė, attended a Mass offered in the neighborhood by the ailing Father P. Šulskis.

This order was later rescinded.

Vištytis (Rayon of Vilkaviškis)

At the beginning of the 1981 academic year, the persecution of believing children at the Vištytis Middle School became more pronounced. Students (Miss) Želvytė, Šeškauskas and (Miss) Keidošytė were interrogated to find whether they had taken part in the march to Šiluva during vacation. The teachers forbade the schoolchildren to go to the cemetery in procession on the eve of All Souls'

Day, to serve at Holy Mass, etc. Teacher (Miss) Mordosaitė scolded student Juozas Saukaitis for helping believers obtain Christmas wafers before Christmas.

As the Christmas holidays approached, Teachers (Mrs.) Daugėlienė, Zdanavičius and others ordered the students who believe in God, attend church and received invitations to come to church to see Santa Claus on Christmas Day, to raise their hands. Teacher (Mrs.) Zdanavičienė ordered first- and second-grade students to confirm in writing and sign that they believe.

During class, Teacher Zdanavičius explained to the fifth-graders that God does not exist and ridiculed the Faith in various ways. Not knowing how to protest, the youngsters covered their ears with their hands and began to talk loudly. Although the Soviet educator repeatedly asked the class to quiet down, the schoolchildren continued their protest to the end of the class. Thus, fifth-graders defended their faith.

Lukšiai (Rayon of Šakiai)

In 1981, 9th-grade Homeroom Teacher (Mrs.) Adomaitienė at the Lukšiai Middle School summoned her pupil Konstantinas Krištokaitis and ordered him to join the Communist Youth League. When the pupil explained that he is a believer and besides his parents would not allow him to join and that he himself did not want to, the teacher tried to convince him: "You'll harm your future; Explain to your parents the bad things that await you if you don't join the Communist Youth." The student remained steadfast.

New Publications

Aušra (The Dawn), No. 29. The issue reports about the late Father Bronius Laurinavičius and his death, Lithuania's russification, etc. The publication appeared at the end of 1981.

Tautos kelias (The Nation's Road), No. 2, appeared at the end of 1980 and is dedicated to the 550th anniversary of the death of Vytautas the Great.

Tautos kelias (The Nation's Road), No. 3, appeared in November, 1981. It contains articles on the Servant of God Archbishop Jurgis Matulevičius, the damage of the atheist campaign, etc.

Correction: Issue No. 51 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* stated that Jadvyga Stanelytė was sentenced in 1979. It was actually in 1980.



Sergei Kovalev in exile, Magadan region, March 1982, with wife and daughter.

Fellow Lithuanian, Don't Forget

**Sergei Kovalev
Balys Gajauskas
Viktoras Petkus
Mečislovas Jurevičius
Vytautas Vaičiūnas
Povilas Pečeliūnas
Gintautas Iešmantas**

**Julius Sasnauskas
Anastazas Janulis
Vytautas Skuodis
Petras Paulaitis
Algis Statkevičius
Antanas Terleckas
Gene Navickaitė and others**

who bear the shackles of prison, so you might freely live and believe.

INDEX OF PERSONS

- Abraitis, Kostas, 10**
Adomaitienė, (Mrs.), 57
Alekaitė, Marytė, 17
Andreika, Algimantas, U
Angarietis, Z., 50, 51
Anilionis, Petras, 5, 39, 44, 47
Arbačiauskas, 17
Arlauskas, Father Klemensas, 44
Aužbikavičius, Julius (Julijonas), 30
Bakučionis, 13
Balionas, Father Feliksas, 45
Baltramiejūnienė, (Mrs.), 7, 8, 9
Baltuška, Father Petras, 33
Banienė, (Mrs.), 51
Baranauskaitė, Irena, 56
Baranauskienė, Albina, 56
Barauskas, 44
Barzdžiūkienė, V. (Mrs.), 27
Belickaitė, Danguolė, 55
Beniušis, Father Antanas, 44
Bertašius, Petras, 46
Biekša, 41
Biekšienė, (Mrs.), 41
Bieliauskienė, Nijolė, 49, 50
Bitinaitė, (Miss), 56
Bliūdžiuvienė, (Mrs.), 51
Bočiulis, 28
Bogušauskas, P.
Borisevičius, Bishop Vincentas, 1
Brezhnev, Leonid, 36, 39
Bružaitė, Judita, 48
Bučinskas, Father Jonas, 23, 24, 37
Būdvytienė, (Mrs.), 51
Burkutė, Genė, 18
Burkutė, Stasė, 18, 19
Butkienė, (Mrs.), 45
Butkus, 22
Casaroli, Cardinal, 5
Čereškevičius, 50
Černiauskas, Father Bičardas, 36
Česnas, Antanas, 21
Dainauskaitė, (Miss), 23
Danyla, Father Jonas, S.J., 36
Daugėlienė, (Mrs.), 57
Dilienė, Milda, 55, 56
Dirvonskis, J., 53, 54
Dobrauskienė, (Mrs.), 52
Donelaitis, Kristijonas, 53
Eitutienė, (Mrs.) 56
Gabartaitė, (Miss), 51
Gajauskas, Balys, 58
Giedra, Father Domininkas, 44
Gluosnys, Vytautas, 53
Granickas, 17
Gražulis, Father Antanas, 3, 14-16, 46
Grigas, Bobertas, 11, 45
Grimaila, Zigmantas, 21
Griška, 34
Griškevičius, Petras, 10, 13, 14, 19, 37, 52
Gudanavičius, Father Gustavas, 25, 26
Gutauskas, Father Algirdas, 5
Gyls, 52
Iešmantas, Gintautas, 58
Ignotas, M., 7
Ilinars. 8, 9
Jablonskis, 56
Jakovlev, 19
Jakubonytė, Stasė, 18
Janulis, Anastazas, 58
Jasienė, (Mrs.) 25, 26, 27
Jauniškis, Bronius, 30-36
Katkevičiūtė, Sofija, 31
Jucikas, Sigitas, 49
Jurevičius, Mečislovas, 11, 58
Jurkonienė, Aldona. 55

Juška, 55
 Kairienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Kairys, Algis, 51
 Kalakauskas, 46
 Kalvaitytė, Eugenija, 18
 Kasiulienė, (Mrs.), 7
 Kazakevičius, Liutauras, 11
 Kazlauskas, Adolfas, 7, 8, 9
 Kazys, 45
 Keidošytė (Miss) 56
 Khrushchev, 38
 Kipas, 31, 32
 Klimas, 21
 Kojutytė, Teresė, 56
 Kontrimas, 40
 Kovalev, Sergei, 58
 Kleivinis, 23
 Krikščiukaitis, Father
 Kastytis, 40, 41
 Krikščiūnas, Romualdas,
 2, 5
 Krištokaitis, Konstantinas,
 57
 Kringelis, Edmundas, 22
 Kručaitė, (Miss), 7, 9
 Krumpiiauskas,
 Father Stanislovas,
 17, 28
 Kukta, Jonas, 33
 Kuncėvičiūtė, Magdalena,
 17, 18, 36
 Kuroyedov, 38, 39
 Kuzmickaitė, Zina, 19
 Kuzmickas, Stasys, 19
 Labanauskas, 25, 26
 Labukas-Matulaitis,
 Bishop Juozas, 2
 Laurinavičius, Father
 Bronius, 57
 Laurinčiukas, Feliksas, 47
 Laužeckas, Mečislovas, 45
 Lenin, 15
 Lisauskas, 55
 Liubinienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Liukinevičiūtė, Regina, 18
 Liutvinaitė, Reda, 51
 Lukšienė, Virginija, 55
 Lunius, K., 27
 Lybikis, Edvardas, 22

Mačiulaitis, V., 22
 Mačiulienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Mačiulytė, Rima, 51
 Maksvytienė, Kazė, 52
 Malskienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Malskis, 51
 Margelienė, Janina, 43
 Markauskas, Zenonas, 8
 Martinaitytė, Teklė, 7, 8, 9
 Matulevičius, Jurgis, 57
 Matulionis, Father
 Kastytis Jonas, 3, 10-14
 Matulionis, Bishop
 Teofilius, 1, 2
 Matusevičienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Mažeika, Father Leonas, 3,
 7-10
 Maželis, Bishop Petras, 2
 Merkevičiūtė, Vida, 53, 54
 Mesonis, 7, 9
 Micka, Arūnas, 43
 Mikolajūnienė, (Mrs.), 56
 Mikulis, Petras, 49
 Misiūnas, Juozas, 30-35
 Misiūnienė, Sofija, 31, 33
 Misiūnienė, Vanda, 49, 50
 Misiūnas, Petras, 49
 Mišutis, 34
 Mockus, 22
 Mockuvienė, S., (Mrs.), 10
 Montvila, Father
 Kazimieras, 46
 Mordosaitė, (Miss) 57
 Motiejūnienė, Stanislova,
 8
 Narušis, 21
 Navickaitė, Genė, 18, 58
 Navickas, Father,
 Zenonas, 14
 Navickienė, Marytė, 18
 Nemunas, 42
 Norkūnas, 48
 Norvilą, Juozas, 21
 Paldauskas, B., 27
 Paltarokas, Bishop
 Kazimieras, 2
 Pamemeckas, 7
 Paškauskas, 46
 Paškevičienė, (Mrs.), 56

Paulaitis, Petras, 58
 Paulionis, Father
 Edmundas, 50
 Paušinas, 51
 Pečeliūnas, Povilas, 58
 Pečiukaitienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Pečiukaitis, 51
 Petkus, Viktoras, 58
 Plečkaitienė, (Mrs.) 56
 Pleterytė, Emilija, 45, 46,
 52
 Plioraitis, Father Ignas,
 43, 52
 Pliuščiauskienė, (Mrs.), 23
 Pope John Paul II, 12
 Pope Pius XII, 4
 Povilonis, Bishop
 Liudvikas, 2, 5, 18
 Puzaras, Father, 45
 Rakauskas, 42
 Ramanauskaitė, Laima, 52
 Ramanauskas, Bishop
 Pranas, 1, 2
 Rapalienė, Kleopatra, 44
 Razmantas, Father
 Juozapas, 23, 24, 37
 Rekašius, V., 28
 Reinys, Bishop
 Mečislovas, 1
 Rėklairytė, Ona, 19
 Remeikis, Jonas, 22
 Rickevičius,
 Gediminas, 11
 Rubinas, 49
 Rudzevičius, 34
 Ruvelis, Antanas, 48
 Rytmeisteris, Juozas, 33
 Sabalius, 43
 Sadauskas, 23
 Sadeckas, 52
 Sadūnaitė, Nijolė, 18, 47
 Šakalienė, Genė, 46
 Šakalys, Vladas, 46
 Sakavičius, Gintas, 52
 Sakavičius, Vitas, 52
 Šalkauskaitė, Genovaitė,
 48
 Šarakauskaitė, Ona, 52
 Šarakauskaitė, Zita, 52
 Sasnauskaitė, Eleonora, 11
 Sasnauskas, Julius, 58
 Saukaitis, Juozas, 57
 St. Sebastian, 35
 Ščeponavičienė, (Mrs.), 23
 Semėnas, V., 27
 Šeržentienė, (Mrs.) 49
 Šeškauskas, 56
 Skardžiutė, I. (Miss), 27
 Skazhkin, 35
 Skeiveris, A. 21
 Skiparis, Father Vytautas,
 14, 29, 30, 47
 Skuodis, 22
 Skuodis, Vytautas, 58
 Sladkevičius, Bishop
 Vincentas, 2, 5, 6
 Šlapelis, Father
 Bronius, 42
 Smičius, 7
 Songaila, 44
 Songailienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Stalin, 2
 Stankaitis, 34
 Stanelytė, Jadvyga, 57
 Stankaitis, 34
 Stankutė, Alina, 48
 Starkus, 47
 Staškevičius, Alfonsas, 21
 Statkevičius, Algis, 11, 58
 Steponavičius, Bishop
 Julijonas, 2, 3, 4-7
 Stikleris, 34
 Štombergas, 29, 30
 Strakauskaitė, A., (Miss),
 53, 54
 Strazdas, 42
 Subačius, Kęstutis, 11
 Stuikienė, (Mrs.), 49
 Stulpinaitė, Vilhelmina, 48
 Šturna, Arvydas, 51
 Šturnienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Sukackas, Andrius, 52
 Šulskis, Father P. 17, 18,
 56
 Svarinskas, Father
 Alfonsas, 6, 20, 45
 Tamkevičius, Father
 Sigitas. 10. 11, 17, 18

Terleckas, 11, 58
 Tičkus, E., 55
 Tumėnas, Kazimieras, 6
 Tunairytė, Onutė, 56
 Tutinaitė, Roma, 55
 Urbonas, 10, 11, 12, 54
 Urbutis, Petras, 21
 Uždavynys, Antanas, 41
 Vaičiūnas, Vytautas, 58
 Vainius, Father Antanas, 2,
 29
 Vaitkevičienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Valaitienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Vanagas, 43
 Verbyla, 56
 Viliūnaitis, 7

Vitkauskaitė, Ona, 18
 Volungevičius, Jonas, 11
 Vyšniauskienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Vytautas the Great, 57
 Žalius, A. 40
 Žarskis, 46
 Zdanavičienė, (Mrs.), 57
 Zdanavičius, 57
 Žeberskis, B., 7, 9
 Želvytė, (Miss), 56
 Žikaris, 23
 Zotovas, 51
 Zotovienė, (Mrs.), 51
 Zubrus, Father Jonas, 45
 Žukauskas, 46

INDEX OF PLACES

Akmenė, 48, 49
 Alsėdžiai, 48
 Alytus, 17
 Antalieptė, 31, 32
 Ariogala, 44
 Bijutiškis, 30, 36
 Čiulėnai, 55
 Daugailiai, 33
 Domantai, 49
 Dūkštas, 50
 Endriejavas, 48
 Gačioniai, 7
 Gargždai, 48
 Garliava, 53
 Hill of Crosses, 49
 Joniškis, 25
 Josvainiai, 56
 Kairiškiai, 49
 Kaišiadorys, 1, 2
 Kapčiamiestis, 43, 52
 Kapsukas, 17, 36, 52, 56
 Kaunas, 1, 2, 12, 23, 27, 30,
 31, 32, 33, 47
 Kėdainiai, 56
 Kelmė, 23

Keturvalakiai, 56
 Klaipėda, 2, 29, 38-40
 Krosna, 43
 Kybartai, 10, 13, 36, 53, 54
 Lazdijai, 43, 53
 Leipalingis, 45
 Lukšiai, 57
 Marijampolė, 3, 17, 18, 36
 Mažeikiai, 44
 Medingėnai, 48
 Meškuičiai, 49
 Mittlestein, 30, 32
 Molėtai, 36, 45, 55
 Moscow, 6, 38, 39
 Pagryžvis, 30
 Pajevonis, 46
 Pakruojis, 7, 8
 Pamūšis, 8, 9
 Papilė, 48, 49
 Panevėžys, 2, 5, 30
 Philadelphia, 6
 Plungė, 50
 Poland, 44, 52
 Prienai, 14, 15, 16, 46, 47
 Rainiai, 48

Ramygala, 31, 33
Raseiniai, 21, 48
Rimšė, 50
Rokiškis, 55
Rome, 2
Šakiai, 50, 51, 57
Šiauliai, 7, 44, 45, 49
Siberia, 1
Šilalė, 14, 29, 30, 47
Silesia, 30, 32, 33
Šilutė, 52
Šiluva, 6, 18, 37, 48, 53, 54,
55, 56
Skautvilė, 51
Šlavantai, 36
Stačiūnai, 7
Stulgiai, 23, 24, 37
Švenčionys, 49, 50
Tauragė, 45, 49
Tauragnai, 42
Telšiai, 1, 2, 29, 48
Tytuvėnai, 30
U.S.A., 46

Utena, 42
Užpaliai, 31
Užuguostis, 14
Vabalninkas, 12
Varėna, 40, 41
Vėžaičiai, 48
Viduklė, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23
Viešvėnai, 47
Vilkaviškis, 1, 2, 13, 15,
36, 46, 53, 54, 55, 56
Vilnius, 1, 10, 12, 13, 18,
21, 23, 30, 32, 37, 41,
42, 45, 46, 47
Vištytis, 46, 56
Vladimir, 1
Vytautava, 45
Ylakiai, 44
Žagarė, 25, 26, 49
Žaigynys, 21
Žalpiei, 23, 24, 37
Žemaičių Kalvarija, 37
Žilėnai, 40, 41
Židikai, 44

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