

**CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA**
No.61, January 6, 1984

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CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA, No. 61

A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 61
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

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COVER: Jonas Sadūnas, brother of Nijolė Sadūnaitė. He is serving an eighteen month term under fabricated "slander" charges.

CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

to a Siberian labor camp. Archbishop Reinys perished in prison at Vladimir, November 8, 1953. By 1947, Lithuania was left with a single bishop, Kazimieras Paltarokas, of Panevėžys. He died in 1958.

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

After Stalin's death in 1953, there was a slight improvement in the religious situation. 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
Translator

Read this and pass it on!
Appearing since 1972

CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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Lithuania.....

January 6, 1984

TO OUR DEAR BRETHREN, THE IRISH

It was especially good and pleasant to hear over Vatican Radio that the faithful of faraway Ireland are praying for our nation.

We believe in the power of common prayer. Many of the faithful, hearing about the days of prayer for Lithuania which had been proclaimed, immediately joined in the common prayer in Lithuania, as well.

Gathering in spirit at the feet of our Good Mother, we felt comforted and strengthened.

The Lithuanians will never forget your nation's gift, the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. From the time that the statue arrived at our shrine in Šiluva, on the thirteenth of every month, the devotees of Mary gather here, and their numbers are constantly growing.

On that day, Mass is solemnly concelebrated, sermons are preached and many people go to the sacraments.

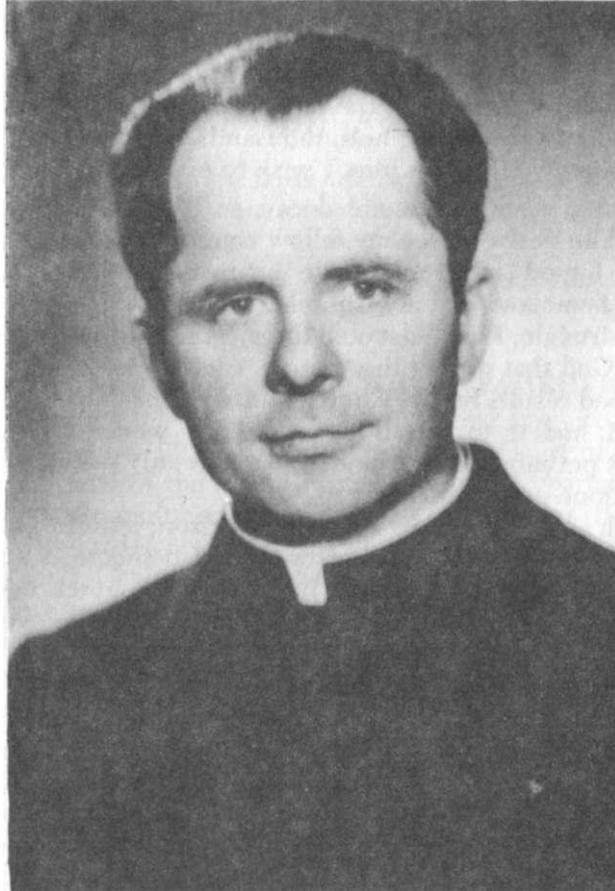
If our priests and faithful are going bravely to prison, risking the loss of good positions, and little schoolchildren are resisting the derision of their fellow pupils, obvious discrimination by teachers and KGB treachery, it is only because someone is sacrificing the praying for our nation. So we sincerely thank you for the prayers and for the love which you show us!

May God reward you!

THE SPIRITUAL TESTAMENT OF FATHER SIGITAS TAMKEVIČIUS

After the official warning by the prosecutor in 1979 to Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius, the stream of unofficial threats and rumors increased. It was said that the KGB had secretly decided to kill them by setting up an accident, or in some similar fashion. Throughout Lithuania, rumors flew that Fathers Svarinskas and Tamkevičius had already been injured in an accident, arrested and that searches had been made of their residences.

People hearing those rumors often warned the priests not to drive about at night alone, and to avoid all sorts of traps. KGB agents did not hesitate to telephone the priests and to threaten them with violence. Those rumors were probably spread by the KGB especially to intimidate the fearful.



Father Sigitas Tamkevičius

The situation became such that more zealous priests could expect all sorts of unforeseen incidents at any moment.

The KGB constantly bragged that it had all sorts of means of affecting even a person's mind. This was confirmed in part by "fixing" the Orthodox priest, Dmitri Dudko, and other prisoners.

Therefore, on February 6, 1982, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius wrote his spiritual testament:

My Credo

More and more often, I hear threats that I am to be arrested. I believe that the KGB threats can become a reality.

Perhaps the security organs will try to force me, as they did the Orthodox priest, Dmitri Dudko, to recant my activities as a crime against the state and the people. Who can guarantee in advance that he will be able to resist all of the means available to the KGB, and will not break? In the Gulag hell, thousands have caved in! Therefore, at this time, while I am free, I wish to express my *credo*.

I saw lying, deceit and moral decay, so I could not remain uncommitted. The desire to see my fellow countrymen happy here and in eternity forced me to struggle against all that evil which burdens my homeland and my Church.

To this struggle, I have devoted the most fruitful years of my life.

I thank God that during the past decade, He has allowed me to work with good results for the Church and, by the same token, for my country. If I had it to do all over again, I would do the same thing, except perhaps, more zealously. I regret only that most likely, I could have done even more.

It is with a peaceful heart that I go to prison; let it be the crowning of my work. My years of imprisonment, I dedicate as a penance for my own mistakes, and for the future of the Church and of our homeland. Everything that I shall suffer, I offer for my beloved fellow countrymen, that they would remain faithful to God and country, that not one of them would go the way of Judas.

I desire, especially, that the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Lithuania which is pressured by the KGB more than anyone, would preserve this loyalty. For my brother priests, I will pray God for the grace of Unity: Unity with Christ, with the Church, with the Pope, but not with the KGB and not with the Council for Religious Affairs.

In prison, I will always pray the Lord for the sisters of Lithuania who have dedicated their lives to God and to the loving service of People, that they would devote great attention to the struggle for the freedom of the Church, and for basic human rights. Do not believe it when propagandists for government atheism say that such activity is Political. It is not politics, but a matter of life and death for all of us. And if it is politics, then it is Church politics, it is papal politics.

I will carry in my heart all those dear faithful of Lithuania with whom I came into contact during my twenty years as a priest. Remain faithful to Christ and the homeland! Bring up children who will not bow to lies and coercion. Let them create a more rational and healthy society than the one in which you must live.

I believe that others will continue our work and struggle, only

perhaps more zealously and fruitfully than I or my friends were able. If anyone says, "You cannot knock a hole in the wall with your head", do not believe such pessimism. The wall of lying and coercion is rotten, and with the help of Christ, it is possible to overcome all things.

If you ever hear me speaking otherwise, do not believe it, because it will be not I speaking, but a poor man broken by the KGB.

February 6, 1982

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius

THE TRIAL OF FATHER SIGITAS TAMKEVIČIUS

On November 29, 1983, in the Supreme Court of the LSSR in Vilnius, the trial of the Pastor of the parish of Kybartai, member of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius began. For this judicial doing-in of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, the KGB prepared very carefully, in advance. During the summer, diocesan chanceries received written instructions forbidding the collection outside churches of signatures to protest and petitions.

The Chief Judge of the Supreme Court, speaking over Lithuanian television, threatened penalties for those collecting signatures and even for those signing. The KGB, in more than one place, took direct brutal action against those collecting signatures. Several times, disinformation was spread among the people to the effect that the trial had taken place outside Vilnius, and Father Tamkevičius had been sentenced to twelve years. Hence, many people, hearing about the correct date for the trial, thought they were being misled and they arrived late for the trial, or never came.

With the approach of the trial date, most organizations were warned that at the end of November and the beginning of December, they should not let their employees off from work. Some students, and pupils of special schools, were warned by the school administration that if they wished to avoid unpleasantness, and wanted to continue their studies, they should not attend the trial, but should postpone even personal business in the area of Vilnius.

In health care facilities, strict monitoring of written excuses from work was introduced. Priests and lay people sympathetic to Father Sigitas Tamkevičius were warned in advance not to attend the trial,

or else during the trial, they were summoned to various agencies under one pretext or another (some of them for interrogation).

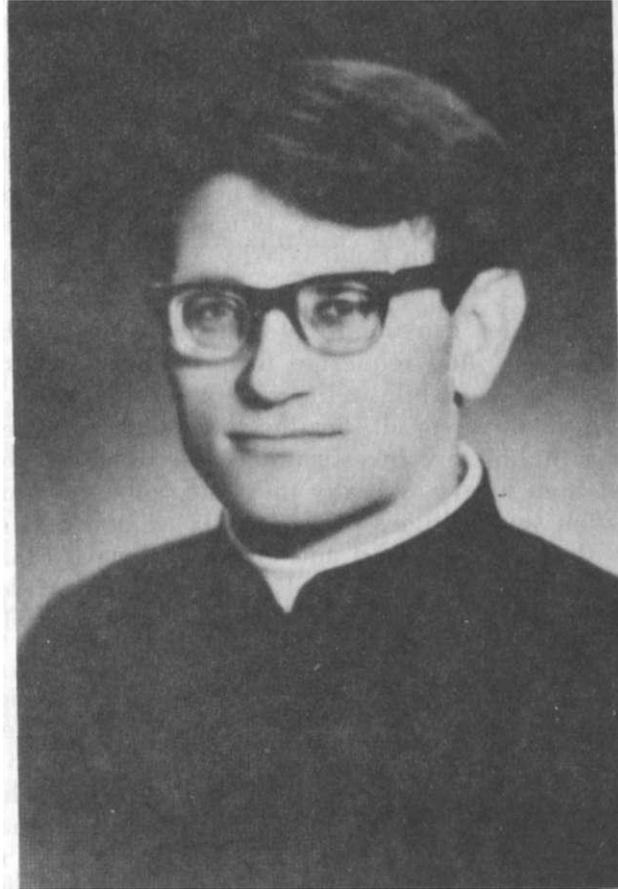
Even Father Tamkevičius' brothers were not informed about the "public" trial. During the trial, only three brothers of Father Tamkevičius were admitted into the courtroom. The chekists would not admit to the courtroom his sister-in-law, who had raised Sigitas Tamkevičius, orphaned from childhood; in their opinion, a brother's wife is not a relative.

During the trial, all the churches of Vilnius and the surrounding area were kept under surveillance by the KGB. In order not to attract attention, the sidewalk in front of the courthouse, contrary to procedure during the trial of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, was clear. Almost everyone who came was allowed into the courthouse vestibule, where officials would politely announce to them that they should not bother, but should go home, because they would not be allowed into the courtroom ("There is no room"!).

If they came back, the militia and KGB would place them in vehicles like people under arrest, and take them for interrogation to the Militia Department, where they sentenced them to jail, or having detained them until closing time and warning them not to show their faces in Vilnius during the trial, they would take them to bus terminals or railroad stations. In just this way, Father Antanas Jokubauskas, Pastor of Pociunėlė, was detained.

The priests: Pastor of Griškabūdis, Father Vytautas Užkuraitis, and the Associate Pastor of Alytus, Father Antanas Gražulis, were warned that if they did not leave the vestibule they would be detained. Father Jonas Boruta was detained on the street by officials, and then driven to the *Rayon* of Lenin Militia Station, where he was interrogated for several hours by militia functionaries. Similarly detained was Father Jonas Kauneckas.

The priests and faithful who came for the trial each day used to gather at the shrine of Aušros Vartai (Our Lady of the Dawn Gate), and in the Church of Saint Theresa nearby, where they would pray almost the whole day: They would assist at Holy Mass, make the Way of the Cross, recite the rosary and sing hymns. During the trial, the faithful were joined in prayer at Aušros Vartai and Saint Theresa's by the priests: Canon Bronius Antanaitis, Algimantas Keina, Vaclovas Stakėnas, Rokas Puzonas, Vytautas Užkuraitis, Gvidonas Dovidaitis, Jonas Kauneckas, Vincas Vėlavičius, Antanas Gražulis, Jonas Boruta, Antanas Jokubauskas, Leonas Kalinauskas, Juozas Zdebskis,



Father Jonas Kauneckas

Petras Našlėnas, Mykolas Petravičius, Edmundas Paulionis and others.

While praying, the little group of faithful which sometimes totalled about one hundred people, was under constant surveillance by the KGB, or agents they sent. On November 1, 1983, the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis, telephoned Father Algirdas Gutauskas, the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, demanding that he "straighten things out" at Aušros Vartai, and Saint Theresa's Church.

All those attempting to approach the Supreme Court cham-

bers were treated exactly as people had been during the trial of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas.

On November 29, the first day of the trial, the following were detained in front of the Supreme Court chambers: the Misses Aldona Šukytė, Bronė Valaitytė, Genovaitė Navickaitė, Janina Judikevičiūtė, Giedrė Striokaitė and Romutė Tamašauskaitė. Before they even had a chance to find out whether Father Sigitas Tamkevičius was really being tried, officials flooded them with questions: "Where are you from?" "Why are you here?" "Do you have permission?" "Your name?", etc.

When the women explained that they had come for the trial of Father Tamkevičius, and requested to be allowed into the courtroom, or at least stay a while in the vestibule to warm up, an order was given to detain them all. Seating them in a bus, the officials carried out a preliminary investigation: They checked their passports, asked from where and why they had come, and took down the information several times over. The six women detained were guarded by thirteen uniformed and civilian officials. Finally, they took them to the "Training School for Junior and Middle-Level Worker-Leaders" in Valakampiai, where they spent the whole time interrogating and lecturing them

The chekists were interested in the following questions: "Do you know the priest on trial?" "Where do your parents and other members of your family live and work?" "With whom do you live yourself?" "How much do you earn?", etc. After they had questioned the women, one of the KGB agents threatened that if they were seen once more outside the courthouse, stricter measures would be taken. At 5:00 PM, they were brought to the bus station; only after lengthy discussion were the women allowed to go to Aušros Vartai. That day, everyone approaching the courthouse was stopped and turned back.

On November 30, the following again were detained on the street, even before they had a chance to approach the courthouse: Bronė Valaitytė, Aldona Šukytė, Algimantas Patackas and Janina Judikevičiūtė.

Aldona Šukytė was segregated, taken to the Militia Station and sentenced to five days in jail. The others were taken outside the city limits and kept in militia facilities until 5:00 PM. They were all warned before two witnesses, that if they showed up once more in front of the courthouse, sterner measures would be taken.

Those detained refused to acknowledge the warning in writing; the witnesses signed in their stead.

The morning of December 1, Kaunas resident, Miss Joana Bukaveckaitė, was detained and interrogated by the KGB. About noon, a larger group of people was detained. They were all interrogated by the KGB. Officials took Bronė Valaitytė, resident of Sasnava, and Janina Judikevičiūtė, a resident of Kapsukas, to the *Rayon* of Lenin Militia Department, and sentenced them to ten days in jail.

Those who received jail sentences were kept in unsanitary conditions . . . The color of the floor could not be seen in places on account of the dirt, and in spots, it was completely black. Those under sentence had to sleep on that floor. No one gave them anything to spread under them, or to cover themselves. They did not get a towel or a piece of paper. They were allowed to go to the toilet twice a day. In the corner of the cell the whole time stood a malodorous pot with an ill-fitting lid. Not only the air, but even the walls of the cell were permeated with the peculiar stench. The cell doors were opened only twice a day, for a few minutes at a time. The ventilator was turned on once a day, for just a few minutes, and sometimes, not even that much.

Presiding over the trial was Assistant Chief Justice of the LSSR Supreme Court, Ignotas. The Prosecutor was Jurgis Bakučionis. At the beginning of the proceedings, a secretary spent about two and a half hours reading the indictment against Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, including: organizing the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights; drafting its documents and sending them abroad, and to the underground publication, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*; sermons of an incriminating nature, delivered on various occasions, in about fifteen separate places; group instruction of children; organizing an All Souls' procession to the cemetery; assistance to prisoners; organizing a Christmas party for children, etc.

After the indictment had been read, the judge turned to Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, asking whether he pleaded guilty. The accused did not plead guilty, and spoke in detail and with logical arguments for almost two hours, rebutting all of the court's accusations. In his speech, Father Tamkevičius emphasized: "For six months, seven well-qualified interrogators questioned me, and not one of them could prove that I was involved in anti-Soviet

activity, nor was I involved in such, but only defended the rights of believers."

To the accusation that he had assisted prisoners, the defendant answered, "To me, those who have been sentenced for religious beliefs are not convicts, but brothers and sisters!" He also recalled that during the preliminary investigation, he had constant headaches. (A regular phenomenon with those who have spent time in the KGB cellars. — Ed. Note)

After the lunch break, the judge, unable to contain himself, noted, "After listening to all this, Defendant Tamkevičius, it appears that we arrested you on a whim, accidentally, and not as a criminal."

Twenty-eight witnesses were called to testify, three of whom did not show up for the trial. Most of them, except for Fathers Algimantas Keina and Vaclovas Stakėnas, two witnesses from Kybartai, and one other, were KGB agents or their collaborators. Witnesses for the accused were questioned at the end of the session on the 30th, so to all intents and purposes, they hardly spent any time in the courtroom. Some of the witnesses for Father Sigitas Tamkevičius refused to swear in writing that they would tell the truth. One woman from Kybartai stated, "I will not sign, because I am convinced that the signatures of believers have no meaning. About seventy thousand of the faithful signed on behalf of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, but no one paid attention to that." To the admonition of the court that the same laws applied to believers as to others, and she had to sign, the witness replied that here in this court, her conscience did not allow her to sign.

The witnesses spoke mostly about Father Tamkevičius' sermons. Almost all of them "just happened" to drop into church and, having their tape recorders with them, taped the sermons. They all spoke quietly, so that it was difficult for those sitting in the courtroom to hear anything, all the more, to find out the witnesses' names.

At the end of the session on the 30th, the chief judge announced that "Witnesses will not be allowed into court tomorrow", even though the law provides that witnesses after testifying have the right to remain in the courtroom, and if any of them wish to leave, they must ask the prosecutor and the defense attorney whether they would be needed.

After the questioning of witnesses, the documents of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights and other

evidence, twenty-three volumes in all, were considered. To the question how the documents of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights came into Yakunin's possession in Moscow, and who had translated them, the priest replied, "I won't answer. First, I don't consider that the translator committed a crime, and secondly, I'm going back. I'll have to resume my work. How will people come to me to confession and what will they think of me if I betray those who are innocent?"

The court, in disclosing and considering evidence against the accused, (e.g. the documents of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights) did not read a single document, or excerpts, but satisfied itself with announcing the number of the document and indicating where they were located in the file. Constantly repeated were generalities, "The speaker had a tendentious idea", or, "He asked people to fight the Soviet system".

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius' Defense Speech

"I will not burden you with a long speech, even though it would be possible to say much more," spoke Father Tamkevičius. "Prosecutor Bakučionis told you that my file consists of twenty-three volumes of incriminating material, and it would have been possible to fill up twenty-three more volumes. So whether, I speak much or little will not make any difference. I feel not guilty' (Father Tamkevičius would always come into court in a positive mood, smiling, calm and resolute. — Ed. Note). I did everything required of me as a priest. In the Gospel it says that when they were trying Christ, He did not defend Himself. I am a mere priest, and I wish to follow His example. Today my hands are tied, do with me what you will!" (Oral report of the defense speech.)

Prosecutor Bakučionis demanded six years of strict regime camp and four years of exile, under Par. 68, Id.

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius' Final Statement

"... While I was studying at the seminary, my health deteriorated. I thought that I would be unable to continue studies. After two years, they called me up for the army. During the three years of military service, I got well, and succeeded in finishing the seminary. I worked as much as I could, and tried to perform my duties as a priest well. In 1969, they took away my certification

as a priest. Many thought that would obstruct me, but on the contrary, everything turned out for the good.

"Lately, my health has seriously deteriorated . . . and on May 6, they arrested me . . . Once, while talking with a Soviet official, I asked, 'What do you personally think of me?' He replied, 'No offense, but I see you as a very shrewd operator, for whom everything succeeded well for a very long time.'

"No, I am not a 'shrewd operator', I am a disciple of Christ, a priest. I love God and people: the elderly and the little ones, the youth — for whom I have given my whole life, and if necessary, later, I will sacrifice my life. I worked wherever God sent me, and now He is sending me where I am most needed. Today, too, He is transferring me from one place to another. I try to accept all the crosses of life from the hand of God, so I accept this cross also, embrace it and kiss it. Praise to Jesus Christ and Mary!" (The final statement orally reported.)

At 3:00 PM on December 2, the decision was handed down, according to which Father Sigitas Tamkevičius was sentenced to six years strict regime camp and four years exile.

To: The Prosecutor General of the USSR
Copy to: The Chief Prosecutor of the LSSR
From: Aldona Šukytė, daughter of Povilas,
residing at Biržiai, Vytauto 15-8
Bronislava Valaitytė, daughter of Jeronimas,
residing at Kapsuko *Raj.*, Sasnava
Janina Judikevičiūtė, daughter of Jurgis,
residing at Kapsukas, Sporto 14-6

A P e t i t i o n

In Vilnius, during the trial of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, before we could even approach the LSSR Supreme Court building, just because we wanted to attend the trial of the accused priest, we were detained and given:

November 30, 1983 — Aldona Šukytė, five days in jail

December 1, 1983 — Bronislava Valaitytė and Janina Judikevičiūtė, ten days in jail.

Such behavior on the part of the KGB is clear proof that an innocent man was being tried, for justice does not fear publicity.

Locked in a cell, although innocent, like the priests who had been sentenced, we have decided to substitute for Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, taking their places in labor camp. Each of us agrees to serve the sentence of both priests together, that is, thirteen years of strict regime camp and seven years of exile.

Prosecutor General, return to Lithuania these priests who have not committed any crime. If you need Christian blood, let us substitute for these priests, so necessary to our nation, and let us serve their entire sentence.

December 15, 1983

On December 15, 1983, Aldona Šukytė, Bronislava Valaitytė and Janina Judikevičiūtė sent one more petition to the Prosecutor General, in which they protested against the fabrication of the KGB agents. In their petition, they write: "During the trial of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, November 29, 1983 — December 2, 1983, we were detained before we even reached the Supreme Court, and were taken to the Militia Station where the court sentenced us to jail. We have not committed any crime. As we were leaving, we asked what we had served sentence for. It was explained that we had pushed militiamen and had tried to force our way into the courtroom. Since nothing of the sort happened, we express our strongest protest against such a shameless lie."

THOUGHTS ON READING THE ARTICLE,
"A ROSARY IN ONE HAND AND A STICK IN THE OTHER"

In the notes of the Servant of God, Archbishop Matulaitis, we read, "Our Church suffered so much under the Czar, and now, there are new sufferings, and those, in the name of freedom of conscience. Oh God, how strange this world is . . . Those same people who, not of the press, now allow no newspapers with different point of view . . . those people who so fervently demanded freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of speech, now refuse to allow a person with different opinions even to open his mouth . . . They once demanded equal rights, and now, they recognize them only for their side. How often the wild outlaws' rule of justice is applied here." (*Notes*, 174-175).

Perhaps nowhere in the world is there so much talk about all sorts of freedoms as in the Soviet Union, and nowhere are they so crudely violated as in that same Soviet Union. L. Boerne has said, "There is not a man who would not love freedom, but the just man demands it for everyone, and the unjust man, only for himself." The whole world understands freedom of religion as follows, "If you want to — believe; if you don't want to — don't believe." By the same token, you are not constrained to do everything which is associated with the practice of religion, or its disuse.

Among us, freedom of conscience is explained as follows: "According to the proletarian Marxist understanding of freedom of conscience, freedom of atheism is the freedom for every citizen to escape from religious illusions, to develop a scientific Marxist worldview, and to lead one's life by it, without interference ... as long as the believer has not shaken off religious illusions, there cannot be complete freedom of conscience. In conditions of the socialist system, by the concept, 'complete freedom of conscience', one wishes only to signify the greatest achievement in the war for man's escape from superstition. Complete freedom of conscience will be attained in Communist society." (*Soviet Laws Regarding Religious Cults and Freedom of Conscience*).

After reading all that, it is not difficult to understand how the atheists demand and, in practice, recognize freedom only for themselves. Their "justice" can be seen and encountered everywhere, beginning with routine persecution of believers, and ending with shameful judicial disposals. After the trial of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, a long article appeared in the press. In it, Father Svarinskas was called a bandit, or most benignly speaking, an accessory or messenger.

In the first place, we would like to suggest that the author of the article pick up the *Dictionary of International Terms*, and take a good look at the difference between the words, "bandit", "banditry", and "partisan". However, this is not the point. The question is why it was so important to call Father Svarinskas a bandit in the press. It is not so difficult to understand. The KGB had its purpose! To denigrate, in the eyes of believers as well as unbelievers, a priest especially respected and loved by the people, as if to say, "We do not try innocent people!"

It would be naive to think that after such an article, the authority and popularity of Father Svarinskas diminished. And even if it had, then it was only in the eyes of those brothers and sisters to

whom neither God nor country is important, since their thoughts can only center around a narrow, personal, material world.

With the arrest of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, speculation could be heard among the people: "What will they try him for, and what will the press dare to write about Father Sigitas? After all, during the unquiet post-War years, he was still a child." While some affirmed that even the most inventive writers would be unable to think up enough material to accuse Father Tamkevičius, others, more experienced, asserted that the Soviet propagandists would think of something to denigrate even this priest, who in everyone's opinion is just decent and zealous.

The latter were not mistaken. No sooner was the trial over, than the next day, *Tiesa (Truth)* immediately came out with Reporter (Mrs.) S. Mockuvienė's article ominously entitled: "A Rosary in One Hand and a Stick in the Other".

The "truth" of the article is witnessed by its opening sentences: "True, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius in the past did not associate with the bourgeois nationalist gangs. He did not bless their bloody 'escapades', he did not conceal bandits' weapons in church basements, as did, for instance, Alfonsas Svarinskas himself."

We would like to ask Reporter Mockuvienė to specify in which church basements Father Svarinskas hid bandits' (partisans' — Ed. Note) weapons, and what escapades of theirs he blessed, if he was in prison from 1946 - 1956, and was ordained a priest only on October 3, 1954, in the special camp in Abez.

To give the article weight, crude libel is employed. Thus, after reading the first few sentences, it is not difficult to see in what style the whole article is written.

One reading the article notices that the writer does not mention the makeup of the court and she conceals the names of practically all the witnesses. Just from the official report in the press, it is clear how bombastic and juridically unfounded is the accusation against Father Tamkevičius of anti-social and anti-Soviet activity. Here is what the author of the article, S. Mockuvienė, mentions: He is accused "of performing religious ceremonies outside the house of prayer". As such ceremonies in practice can be considered the following: ministry to the sick (at home and in the hospital), All Souls' processions and funeral processions to the cemetery, the blessing of a cross, a home or apartment, etc.

But all these activities are just the day-to-day embodiment of religious freedom, which is guaranteed by the International Declara-

tion of Human Rights and the Constitution of the land. The author further explains that Father Tamkevičius "regularly incited believers to disobey" such restrictions, and affirms that religious ceremonies may be carried out only in the house of prayer, when even the Regulations for Religious Associations say that religious ceremonies may be carried out in churches (houses of prayer), the churchyard or the cemetery.

Understanding human nature correctly — because the rights which every state regardless of its ideology must guarantee, this priest sought that the believing segment of society might realistically make use of their constitutional rights as citizens, and their natural religious rights as humans, without transgressing ecclesiastical or national traditions, (sic) Besides, the Church itself obliges priests and faithful to go to cemeteries on All Souls', and to pray there. But on what basis can the accusation of "anti-social" and "anti-Soviet" activity be levelled here, when we are speaking of blessing apartments and visiting hospitals?

By its very essence, this is a private matter. Further, Reporter S. Mockuvienė brings up in her article as a crime, "the group teaching of children". What is the difference whether it is group or individual? After all, they are all being taught the same religion. If the right to teach children their parents' religion is left as such in the Constitution, and if parents teaching their children do not essentially break the law, then they also do not transgress it when they wish to teach their children religion in the best way possible. So what does the priest do wrong when in making use of that same constitutional freedom, he helps parents to do so?

AFTER ALL, THAT IS THE FIRST DUTY OF THE PRIEST. Perhaps the essence of this accusation lies in the words, "RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN". The atheists often call that a crime, and offer as an argument the constitutional law that the Church is separated from the school. But what does this have in common with transgression of the law, e.g., with the establishing of religious schools or the introduction of compulsory religious education? Can every lesson be called a school?

In the article, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius is accused of urging the faithful in the church of Šlavantai not to let their children be signed up for atheistic organizations designated for unbelievers. As a matter of fact, the teachers themselves should be in favor of this, if they are truly concerned that their pupils not grow up as hypocrites. Mrs. Mockuvienė, in her article, clearly admits that in

Soviet Lithuania, it is considered a crime to write petitions, or to gather signatures for them.

The writer finds yet another crime: "At the end of last year, he announced in a sermon that he was organizing a children's Christmas party in the churchyard, invited the parishioners to bring their children, and, in addition, obtained the help of a couple of priests." Has it ever been heard anywhere in the world, except in such a "free" country as Lithuania, that the organizing of a children's Christmas party and asking the help of priest friends be considered a crime against the state . . . to be specifically included when talking about a penalty of strict regime labor camp and four years of exile?

Reporter Mockuvienė very often mentions that Father Sigitas Tamkevičius engaged in libel and denigrated Soviet reality, while at the same time, admitting that the convict never uttered and never wrote a word directly against the Soviet government: "Father Sigitas Tamkevičius knew well that speaking openly against the Soviet government, he would gain nothing. . . his sermons are full of veiled references to the damage caused by atheism." Thus, it is interesting that there is no need to denigrate Soviet reality — it is enough merely to know and tell the truth about it in order to be called a state criminal.

It would be interesting to know what Mrs. Mockuvienė has in mind when she writes, "Respect for other people, the right to an education . . . and other social privileges always were and are accessible to all, equally." What does she consider those readers of her article to be, who know many instances of discrimination and have themselves experienced many injustices, just because they dare to show that they are practicing believers? The writer will perhaps try to rest her arguments on one or the other witness who is said to have denied some of the examples of persecution brought up in the *Chronicle*. It is not difficult for one living in Soviet Lithuania to understand how the witnesses were "found" and "made". Not all of the victims are able to withstand the pressure of the KGB. When threatened with with expulsion from work or school, some may even recant earlier true testimony.

After all, everyone knows well how the KGB chooses its witnesses. It was in this fashion that the witnesses were chosen prior to the trial of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas: Government officials would summon an employee and tell him what he would have to say in giving testimony during the priest's trial. Witnesses were



On June 6, 1983, following the arrest of their pastor, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, the parishioners of Kybartai went in kneeling procession around their church.

chosen in the same way for the trial of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius. When Father Tamkevičius was arrested, scores of witnesses were summoned, but not one of them got to watch the trial, even though they wanted to, and tried. Why were they not allowed into the courtroom?

About 70,000 of the faithful signed protests and petitions saying that the disposal of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius was a crude crime, but no one paid any attention to that. If we are speaking, not of a criminal offense, but of social, religious and political activity, then surely, the protest of almost 70,000 signatories against the accusations aimed at Father Sigitas Tamkevičius are witness enough to judge the criminal nature of the priest's activity.

To defend one who owes support, a thief or a hooligan from criminal liability, a petition or guarantee from a score or so of members of a collective often suffices. But to help an innocent priest on trial, whose "Christmas party", "organizing of processions" or "collective teaching of children" displeased the

KGB, the witness of tens of thousands of people is not enough.

Father Tamkevičius' ties with the underground publication, the *Chronicle*, "proven by facts", remain unclear to the reader, since Reporter Mockuvienė did not deign to reveal a single one of those "facts", and testimony about the lack of basis for information disseminated in the *Chronicle* is more than ridiculous, if one knows the whole system. For example, one can cite the incident in the article on the Šaukėnai Middle School: Summoned to testify at the trial was not the offended pupil, but the teacher who lowered his conduct mark.

So when Father Tamkevičius failed to give the address of UNESCO as reported in *Tiesa*, it sounds like an accusation, not against the priest, but against those who do not leave us even the possibility of appealing for help, by hiding from people many international organizations for the fostering and defense of human rights and by setting up obstacles to contacting or appealing to them.

After reading the article, one is haunted by the conclusion: Every priest in Lithuania can be found guilty in this way. It remains unclear to the believer, as well as to the thinking unbeliever, why Father Sigitas Tamkevičius was sentenced. For collective teaching of children? For defending the Faith? But those are the duties of a priest. For drafting petitions? All citizens are guaranteed freedom of speech and of the press. For criticizing atheism? Persecution for criticism is forbidden by the law.

If the priest were really guilty, it would not be necessary to prepare so carefully for the trial: to conceal the date of the trial; to take such great care that people not leave work (switch working hours); to chase those who came to Vilnius away from the courthouse; to put them in jail — and the trial would undoubtedly be witnessed by the greatest number possible.

Reporter Mockuvienė, witnessing the trial for four days, could not find even one seriously convincing accusation. A high Party official said to one priest, "Why are you so angry at the reporters? They wrote the articles about Father Svarinskas and Father Tamkevičius in such a way that their innocence is obvious!" The article of Mrs. Mockuvienė, entitled, "The Rosary in One Hand, A Stick in the Other", the public understands as "The Rosary in One Hand, The Truth in the Other". In other words, the truth is the most terrifying weapon against Soviet atheism.

Long before the trial of Father Tamkevičius, shortly after his

arrest, an expression circulated among the people, overheard from those who were preparing to dispose of the zealous priest, "We've caught a big bull, but we just can't find the chain to bind him." In other words, we have captured a great man, but we just can't come up with an accusation that will stick. Hence, it is no mystery why Father Tamkevičius was kept for seven whole months in the KGB dungeon. The very lightening speed with which the article appeared in the press (the day after the trial), tells us that everything had been decided in advance, and rehearsed, and the trial itself was a peculiar farce.

Almost two thousand years ago, in the name of the law, Christ was condemned to death: "We have a law, and according to it, He must die" ... In his day Hitler killed Jews in the name of the law, and Stalin sentenced millions of innocent people to Siberia... In our day, also in the name of the law, the Supreme Court in Vilnius sentenced two of the most zealous priests in Lithuania, Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius.

History has condemned the crimes of the past. There is no doubt that history in the future will similarly judge current events; and if history sometimes errs, God does not err!

SUCH IS SOVIET FREEDOM OF RELIGION!

With the sentencing of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and the arrest of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, the faithful of Lithuania began collecting signatures to petitions and protests addressed to Yuri Andropov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party, and to the Prosecutor General, demanding the release of the unjustly arrested priests. In order that the expressions of protest with their signatures would reach the addressees, and not be held up back in Lithuania at KGB headquarters, the faithful would take them in sections to Moscow, and leave them registered at the reception desk.

The expressions of protest in behalf of freedom for the priests were signed by one hundred twenty-three thousand (123,000) of the faithful, of whom twenty-two signed in blood. More of the faithful would have signed, if the atheists had not taken repressive measures just to disrupt the collecting of signatures. The atheists of Lithuania tried with threats to tell even priests to forbid the faithful to sign texts of the declaration. KGB agents, using physical



Father Alfonsas Svarinskas

force, hunted down people gathering signatures, stuffed them into vehicles, and took them to militia stations. There they intimidated and threatened them, confiscated texts and signatures, and dealt out 50-ruble fines.

The public was warned in Lithuanian television programs that those collecting signatures could be sentenced to prison. In more than one *rayon*, KGB agents interrogated individuals who had signed the petitions, and pressured them to sign vague texts presented by them.

With the expressions of protest which were taken to Moscow

were declarations to the Prosecutor General and to the the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, which were signed in the name of the faithful of Lithuania by Aldona Šukytė, Albina Žemaitytė, Alfonsas Bumbulis and Juozas Kazalupskas.

To: The Prosecutor General of the USSR
From: The Catholic Faithful of Lithuania

A P e t i t i o n

Prosecutor General, we Catholic Faithful of Lithuania come to you with a request that you review the cases of our priests, Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius, and release them, because they were unjustly dealt with by the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR in May, 1983, under Par. 68 of the Criminal Code: Alfonsas Svarinskas was sentenced to seven years of imprisonment and three years of exile, and Sigitas Tamkevičius was arrested in the courtroom, also under Par. 68.

1. We have often heard their sermons, and we can honestly testify that they never carried on any anti-Soviet propaganda, but just explained religious truth, defended the rights of the faithful, and sometimes, criticized the atheists' attacks on religion and believers, all of which is allowed under Par. 49 and Par. 52 of the Soviet Constitution.

2. The atheists in Lithuania quite mistakenly and unjustly conduct propaganda against religion, the Church and the faithful, and force believers to accept atheism. Following is a whole list of real-life examples:

a. Newspapers, magazines and pamphlets, often libelously attack religion, the Church and priests. Please read their articles against religion, and you will see what we mean.

Even irrational creatures defend themselves; surely the clergy and faithful have the right to defend themselves. Priests are supposed to defend the faithful, but how can they do so? For forty years now, we have no religious newspaper. The only possibility for self-defense consists of sermons in church. But this displeases the atheists greatly, because the priests demonstrate their untruthful and libelous attacks and calumnies.

b. In school, the atheists often force the children of the faithful,

against the wishes of their parents, to join atheistic organizations forbid them to go to church, and punish those who refuse to join. All children who are religious believers are obliged to attend atheistic meetings. Surely the priests and faithful do not have to keep silent about this, when Par. 50 of the Soviet Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and religion.

c. For forty years now, the faithful of Lithuania have no religious publications: no books, no newspapers and no prayerbooks. It is true that in those forty years, some books have been published in small numbers, but these are only for the priests; there are so few prayerbooks that there was only one copy for each ten thousand of the faithful. Even beggars in the old days used to get more support from the people than the faithful receive religious publications from the government atheists. In other democratic countries, such as Poland, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary and others, it is a completely different world: There the children are taught religion in church, the faithful have religious newspapers and books. We envy the Negroes of Africa their religious freedom.

Prosecutor, you understand well that our people who are religious believers cannot and will not remain silent in such a situation, even though more priests go to prison.

d. While in other Communist countries, the faithful freely carry out religious processions to the cemetery and to other churches, in our country, people are taken to court for that, even though such processions have been going on in our land for six hundred years, and Par. 50 of the Constitution permits them.

e. White-collar workers and teachers do not have the right to go to church freely. The faithful have neither radio nor television programs. Everything is devoted exclusively to the atheists.

f. Moreover, the frequent attacks of the atheists are completely incompatible with the Constitution. In this way, not only the Party is demeaned, but the entire Communist system: The atheists prevent young men from enrolling in the seminary, they forbid the preparation of children for First Confession and Communion; they forbid serving Mass, and they interfere in the assignment of priests and bishops.

3. Soviet newspapers often criticize the bad conduct of blue collar and white collar workers, and their negligence. Even fraternal trials sternly admonish those who disrupt good order.

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius also objected to the transgression against the Constitution and human rights guaranteed by international agreements. We should have been glad that people turned up who were concerned that good order be maintained, who criticized the unjust activity of the atheists with regard to believers (this is useful for the Party and the government), but for this, they were sternly punished. Is this intelligent, or just? This is how Stalin acted. For that, he was condemned by the Party and the entire world. Why repeat the same mistakes?

4. All of us, almost our entire public, also condemn the attacks of the atheists, like the aforesaid priests. Hence, we should also be arrested and thrown into prison. That will not help matters. Stalin tried to crush people's belief in God by force, but people cannot live without their rights, no more than without bread.

5. It is no wonder that the believing public was deeply disturbed by the trial of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, and sympathized with him as though it were on trial itself. The militia chased people away from the courthouse by force, drove them forty kilometers into the woods, shut them up for ten days or fined them 50 rubles. In this way they aroused the people's ire all the more. Has the situation improved since the arrest of Father Svarinskas?

6. The believing public also supports the Soviet state: It works in the offices, factories and fields . . . often better and more conscientiously than the atheists. We, the same working people, ask you to review the cases of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, and to release them.

NOTE: On your advice, we appealed to the Prosecutor of the Republic, but he responded only verbally: "Svarinskas is a criminal and will not be released, and the case of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius will not be set aside. Therefore, we appeal to you and trust that you will review the cases and release the aforesaid priests, and in order that they would not have to be tried in the future, we ask you to see that the unjust attacks of the atheists not be repeated.

July 16, 1983

To: The Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet
USSR
From: Believers of Lithuania

A P e t i t i o n

Honorable Chairman, we turn to you on some vitally important questions in the belief that you will decide them intelligently.

According to Par. 52 of the Soviet Constitution, we have freedom of religion and of conscience, but in Lithuania, this paragraph is regularly breached.

1. For forty years now, we have had NO RELIGIOUS NEWS-PAPER OR MAGAZINE; some religious books were received by the priests only; only one out of ten thousand faithful received a prayerbook. We envy our ancestors who lived in czarist times, and the Negroes of Africa, who have enough religious literature. In other democratic countries, the picture is quite different. We are the only ones cheated.

2. Schoolteachers force pupils who are religious believers to join atheistic organizations. Often they sign up the entire class by force; anyone objecting is permanently punished and persecuted; all are forbidden to go to church. Teachers who are religious believers do not have the right to go to church; for that they are discharged from work. This is how other white-collar workers are treated also.

3. The faithful have NO RADIO OR TELEVISION PROGRAMS.

4. The atheistic government INTERFERES IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE SEMINARY — by obstructing the enrollment of all candidates who wish to try for the priesthood. They impose their will on the appointment of bishops and priests. Why are we so humiliated as not to have any of the rights conferred by the Constitution of the land? One clear example: Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius has been exiled for more than twenty years from Vilnius, for conscientiously doing his duty.

5. While the faithful in other democratic countries freely hold RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS to cemeteries and other churches, in our country that is subject to penalty, even though the Soviet Constitution in Par. 50 allows it. Why so? For six hundred years in our country, such processions have been taking place.

6. Why must we PAY SIX TIMES MORE THAN OTHERS FOR ELECTRICITY? It is said that THE CHURCHES ARE

GIVEN TO US WITHOUT CHARGE, BUT IN REALITY, WE HAVE TO PAY HUGE SUMS, even though we ourselves built them. Where will you find another such state?

7. They have unjustly SEIZED THE CHURCH OF KLAIPĖDA, built by our own hands and money, and to this day, they have not returned it, but only keep promising to erect another. Where is the justice in this?

8. The atheistic administration in many places, AT THE INTERMENT OF A BELIEVER, FORBIDS HIM TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY A CROSS AND MOURNING BANNERS, as our ritual requires. Also, they DO NOT ALLOW ERECTION OF A CROSS ON THE GRAVES OF BELIEVERS, OR BEFORE ONE'S OWN HOME, as has been the custom among us from of old, so even the deceased do not have religious freedom.

9. In new cities like Akmenė, Elektrėnai and Sniečkus, HOUSES OF PRAYER MAY NOT BE OPENED, even though most of the residents desire it.

10. The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR, on July 28, 1976, decreed: "Religious associations have the right to obtain MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION", but in practice, the faithful are not allowed even to rent a bus or to buy an old one.

11. According to Leninist principle, the phrase "the Church is separated from the school" means that religion may not be taught. But in our country, the atheists FORBID THE TEACHING OF RELIGION TO CHILDREN, EVEN IN CHURCH. In democratic countries, that is done freely.

12. The atheistic leadership FORCES THE FAITHFUL TO work on Sundays and holy days, even though they are the majority. In Poland, Catholics can freely celebrate, and they get the work done anyhow.

13. The results of atheistic oppression clearly manifested themselves in the arrest of Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius, who tried to defend the rights of believers.

These and other painful facts seriously oppress and annoy the entire believing public; we can no more do without freedom of religion, than we can without bread. We ask you to do away with such anti-Constitutional oppression by the atheists.

July 25, 1983

Lietuva, Kaunas
Mažoji g-vė 1-10
Juozas Kazalupskas

To: Yuri Andropov, General Secretary of the Central
Committee of the Communist Party, USSR

Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

From: Believers of Lithuania:

Aldona Šukytė
Albina Žemaitytė
Alfonsas Bumbulis
Juozas Kazalupskas

A P e t i t i o n

In May, 1983, we came to Moscow to see the Prosecutor General with the request to review the cases of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, and to release them as unjustly sentenced. We were received by Prosecutor Utkin, who told us that first, it was necessary to appeal to the Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR, and with his reply in writing, return to see him.

On June 24, 1983, we went to the Office of the Prosecutor of the LSSR with a petition from the faithful of Lithuania, regarding the release of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and Father Sigitas Tamkevičius. We were received by his assistant, Prosecutor Bakučionis, who promised us that he would give us an answer within a month. We received only a verbal response, that Father Alfonsas Svarinskas was a criminal and would not be released. The case against Father Sigitas Tamkevičius would not be set aside.

On August 25, 1983, at 9:20 AM, we arrived at Moscow with the purpose of going to the offices of the highest levels of government in the Soviet Union, asking them to release as unjustly sentenced, Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius.

We came armed with the following documents:

1. The petition by the faithful of Lithuania to the Prosecutor General of the USSR, in which was indicated a general total of 123,000, twenty-two of them having signed in blood. The people of Lithuania who are religious believers testified that Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius have been unjustly sentenced and request you to release them like all innocent people.

2. Eight bundles of signatures, with texts on behalf of the release of the aforesaid priests.

3. The petition by the faithful of Lithuania to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR regarding the persecution of the faithful in Lithuania, requesting rights and freedoms for them.

4. A bundle of texts and signatures (more than five thousand), addressed to Secretary General Y. Andropov of the Central Committee, USSR, requesting the release of Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius.

5. Two letters with petitions to the Commissioner for Religious Affairs of the USSR.

When we arrived at the station in Moscow, a group of militia officers and persons in civilian dress approached us. The officials took our things, and using force, hauled us off to the militia station. They searched our personal belongings, and demanded our passports. Then we demanded to see their personal papers and the Prosecutor's order. At first, the officials would not show us their documents, but threatened us. Later, Ruslov and Tichonov presented their documents, but the others and two from Lithuania did not present their documents and did not show us any order from the prosecutor.

Officer Tichonov made a written record of our passports and listed confiscated documents. Ruslov, in consultation with the other officials, returned and demanded that we sign acknowledgement of the illegal decision, that we had no rights to visit Moscow, and the region of Moscow. If we would sign, they promised to let us go home scott-free; otherwise, they would push us out of Moscow by force of arms. We refused to sign. They then demanded our passports again. It became obvious to us that they would not return the documentation (the petitions with signatures and texts), and that they would not allow us to see the organs of the highest government of the USSR.

We kept quiet, and did not react to the unjust demands of militia functionaries. The officials took away our passports by force, they drew up a summons, saying that we had interfered with travellers and porters. They called over two porters who signed the complaint, even though we did not interfere with anyone, and no one objected. . .

The militia officials demanded in a threatening manner that we sign the abovementioned unjust judgement, they ridiculed us, and acted rudely. The captain of the militia, who did not give his name, threatened to beat us up. Then the officials dragged us before the commandant of the militia department, Colonel Alexei Filimonov.

With him were many militia officials and persons in civilian dress. He demanded that we sign the unjust decision denying us the right to visit Moscow or its environs, and threatened to put us in jail, to turn us over to special services, called us fanatics, and accused us of some sort of agitation. After all this, Colonel Alexei Filimonov approached each one of us personally, and threatening us, required that we sign the abovementioned illegal document.

We insisted that he return the documents confiscated from us, and allow us to appeal to the highest government organs of the USSR. Instead of consenting to our request, on orders from Colonel Filimonov, and with Militia Major Chumiak in charge, they kept us eleven hours in the Militia Station. A group of militia officers and civilians hauled us at 9:00 PM from the Militia Station to the Moscow-Kaliningrad train, and forced us into a railroad car.

As far as Kaunas, we were accompanied by two armed militia officers. About 3:00 PM, August 26, we were put out of the car in Kaunas. On the platform was an unusual number of militia officers, and with them, civilians. They returned our passports.

On September 7, 1983, we appealed to the Prosecutor General of the USSR over the unjustified detention. August 25 of this year, in Moscow, Prosecutor V.B. Golov, directed us to go to the Moscow Transport Procurator's office with this problem. We went to the address indicated. The Chief Prosecutor (of the Moscow Transport Prosecutor's Office) Trusov, said that he already knew about this incident and was not able to help us. Militia officials were acting on orders from the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

On September 15, 1983, we returned to the Prosecutor General's Office in Moscow with the following documents:

1. A petition from the faithful of Lithuania, which indicated that 123,000 of the faithful have signed, twenty-two of them in blood, declaring that Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and Father Sigitas Tamkevičius had been unjustly sentenced and asking that their cases be reviewed and they be released as completely innocent.

2. The statement of the faithful of Lithuania about the persecution of believers in Lithuania, requesting rights and freedoms due religious believers of Lithuania in accordance with the Constitution of the USSR.

3. A petition concerning the unjust arrest in Moscow, August 25, 1983.

We were received by Prosecutor V.B. Golov, who said in a loud voice dripping with hatred, "Father Svarinskas is an enemy;

you and all believers are enemies of the Soviet government."

On September 16, 1983, we appealed to the editors of Pravda in Moscow, with the following petitions:

1. Concerning our unjust arrest, August 25, 1983.
2. Concerning the conduct of V.B. Golov, September 15,
3. The Editors refused to publish these items.

November 20, 1983

Replied may be addressed to:
Lietuvos TSR Kaunas — 16
Mažoji 1-10
J. Kazalupskas

The more active faithful of the parish of Kybartai, trying to defend their arrested pastor, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, are being terrorized and threatened by government officials, and called extremists. These activities accelerated particularly after the parish committee wrote government representatives a petition, and when in August, a group of members of the Kybartai Parish Committee went to see Commissioner for Religious Affairs Peter Anilionis, with a request to release their pastor Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, or at least not to act as cruelly as during the trial of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, when they did not admit a single believer, and out on the street, seized relatives, friends and acquaintances of Father Svarinskas who had come for the trial, drove them off into the woods and gave them jail sentences and fines.

Anilionis would not engage in serious discussion, and did not deign to hear out the requests of the faithful. He shouted at those who had come, blaming them for not electing a new chairman for the parish committee (the president of the parish committee is S. Tamkevičius). Ending the discussion, he stated that even if he wanted to very much, he could not help them, since everything is under the control of the KGB. The people of Kybartai asked how to get to the offices of the KGB. Anilionis replied that he really did not know.

On September 1, Director Baltutis of the Store Furnishings Factory, on government orders, lectured Miss Birutė Siaurusaitytė, a member of the parish committee. After checking to see whether she had really signed the committee's petition, he affirmed that

believers are allowed to pray for their pastor, but there is no need to go about government agencies looking for the truth, because for such activity, they could be penalized.

That same day, another worker in the same agency, Mrs. Ona Griškaitienė, was summoned to see the Factory Director. The Director called her an extremist, just like Father Tamkevičius, and said that criminal proceedings had already been instituted against her, that she was raising her children badly (they go to church), that she was embarrassing the factory since she goes to church and even defends priests.

September 1, Director Baltutis of the Store Furnishings factory warned yet another member of the committee, Alfonsas Bielicka, who had signed the petition defending Father Tamkevičius.

On September 2, Mrs. Nastutė Mačulaitienė, treasurer of the parish committee, was summoned to see the Vice Chairman of the *Rayon* Executive Committee, Juozas Urbonas. Vice Chairman Urbonas officially warned her that no one else should sign the petitions since they were liable to punishment. He did not give Mrs. Mačulaitienė any written warning. The Vice Chairman explained that she must understand that Father Tamkevičius is a criminal. Mrs. Mačulaitienė replied that she, better than he, knew Father Sigitas Tamkevičius because as a member of the parish committee she had occasion to meet him, and could describe him as a zealous and good priest. As long as the court had not promulgated its decision, they had the full right of seeking justice, of petitioning and demanding his release.

Because they went to the Commissioner for Religious Affairs Anilionis seeking justice, the Chief of the Vilkaviškis Roads Commission, Kybartai Division, publicly reprimanded at work parish committee member Tutlis, saying that for such activities, he could be made criminally liable.

RAIDS AND INTEROGATIONS

Kriokialaukis (Rayon of Alytus)

On July 13 and 15, 1983, the Pastor of Kriokialaukis, a member of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights, Father Vaclovas Stakėnas, was interrogated at the Vilnius KGB. Interrogator Pilelis was interested in such questions as: "When did you become acquainted with Father Sigitas Tamkevičius? How many

of his sermons have you heard and on what occasions? What sort of problems did Father Sigitas Tamkevičius touch on in his sermons? For what purpose did you join the Committee? Do you still consider the Committee active? Why do you refuse to write a statement saying that you will not participate in Committee activity?"

When Father Stakėnas refused to resign in writing from the Committee, after a few hours, the interrogator tried to show that the Committee's activity is anti-state and he tried to say that the purpose of the Committee was to serve the Vatican, Radio Liberty and other foreign radio stations.

Pilelis ended the interrogation with the threat, "If you continue this meaningless struggle, we'll see who wins!"

On September 19, 1983, Father Vaclovas Stakėnas was again summoned to the Vilnius KGB. The priest did not go for the interrogation until the 21st, and for this, he was reprimanded. This time, Interrogator Liniauskas was very interested to know if during the Christmas holidays, the subject had not participated in a Christmas party for the children in Kybartai. The interrogator saw in this holiday a "terrible" detail, for which Father Sigitas Tamkevičius could be seriously accused. It seems that while the candy was being distributed, a woman in the gathering asked, "Santa, did you bring us ladies a voucher for a comforter, or a towel?" All this, the interrogator considered as the "activists' grist to the imperialists' mill, and finally said, "We won't stand for it!"

After the interrogation, Father Stakėnas was lectured for three additional hours.

During the trial of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, the KGB planned to summon all members of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights.

On December 9, the Pastor of Josvainiai, Father Leonas Kalinauskas, was called in for interrogation.

On December 20, the Pastor of Skaudvilė, Father Vincas Vėlavičius, was presented with a summons to see Prosecutor Bakučionis in Vilnius. Since Father Vėlavičius' health is quite frail, he refused to go.

On December 20, Father Jonas Kauneckas received a summons to see Commissioner for Religious Affairs Petras Anilionis. The Commissioner treated the priest very cordially, avoiding any sensitive topics.

Kybartai

On September 12, 1983, Miss Ona Šarakauskaitė, worker at the parish church of Kybartai, was ordered to see Interrogator Vidmantas Baumila. During questioning, she was presented with the usual questions regarding the case of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius: "What can you tell us about the person of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius? Did he not libel the Soviet system in his sermons? Who organized the children's Christmas party and distributed gifts? Did the children recite verses in return? What do you know about the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania?*, etc.

In the course of the interrogation, an attempt was made to determine whether during August, 1981, Miss Šarakauskaitė and her companion, Bernadeta Mališkaitė, together with a group of young people, vacationed at Šlavantai Lake; whether they were detained by militia officers and taken under custody to the militia station in Lazdijai, and whether the aforesaid incident was correctly described in a petition regarding discrimination against youth who are religious believers. Both of them confirmed that the incident was described in the petition accurately. Interrogator Baumila was interested in finding out what Miss Šarakauskaitė knew about the late Father Virgilijus Jaugelis, who is interred in the church tower of Kybartai.

The interrogation lasted six hours.

On September 11, during interrogation, Baumila asked the same of Bernadeta Mališkaitė.

Kybartai

On September 15, 1983, the Kybartai Church charwoman, Miss Ona Kavaliauskaitė, was summoned to see Interrogator V. Baumila at the Vilnius KGB. Under interrogation, she was repeatedly asked about articles seized in a raid April 17, 1980. Miss Kavaliauskaitė refused to answer questions regarding the raid, or articles taken in the course of it, arguing that she had already been interrogated on these questions, the interrogation record is in the KGB safe, and she had no additional information.

KGB agent Baumila tried to show that Miss Kavaliauskaitė had taken things which were not hers; that all these articles belonged to Father Sigitas Tamkevičius. Miss Kavaliauskaitė declared that now, as earlier, she could affirm that all the articles found in her room during the raid belonged to her.

During the interrogation, Miss Kavaliauskaitė was presented with five notebooks full of copies of letters written by Nijolė Sadūnaitė from camp and from exile. The interrogator wanted to know whether Miss Kavaliauskaitė had not read them. She explained that she was seeing these notebooks for the first time. Miss Kavaliauskaitė was further asked whether she knew Nijolė Sadūnaitė and her brother, Jonas Sadūnas. The interrogation lasted seven hours.

Kaunas

At about 8:00 PM on August 29, 1983, a group of militia and civilians burst into an apartment at Jaunosios Gvardijos g. Nr. 1, Bt. 3. Here they found more than thirty of the faithful gathered in prayer. Among them was the Pastor of Skaisgiris, Father Leonardas Jagminas, who had come to visit Miss Zofija Kilaitė, who was ill. The officials introduced themselves as being from the executive committee, the education department and the militia. Asked what they were gathered for, the believers explained that they had come together to pray for a lately deceased resident of the apartment, Miss Veronika Paukštytė.

The newcomers demanded the papers of those in the group. Most of them were pensioners, and mothers of families, who never carry their papers around with them. After lengthy questioning, they took down the names of all participants, and warned them not to gather anymore. Asked about the anniversary of the deceased, the officials hesitated, saying that probably no permission would be given to arrange a memorial service in that apartment.

The next day, the officials returned to check the documents of the apartment's owners.

After that came the interrogations: Summoned were Miss Zita Kinčiūtė, Mis Zita Kupčiūnaitė and others. Father Jagminas was summoned to the *rayon* to explain himself.

Raseiniai.

On September 16, 1983, Mrs. Genovaitė Butkuvienė was interrogated at Raseiniai KGB Headquarters. A KGB agent who would not give his name first assailed the subject for coming to KGB Headquarters wearing a little cross. Some time later, a chekist ordered Mrs. Butkuvienė to write an explanation telling why she had been in Kaunas the evening of August 29, 1983, where a little group of people had gathered to pray. He demanded that she tell whom of those present she was acquainted with, and

whom she had ridden with. They said they had information that there were two "such miscreants" from Raseiniai. Mrs. Butkuvienė was also accused of participating in processions at the church in Viduklė.

Viduklė

On September 16, 1983, Mrs. M. Šaukienė, a resident of Viduklė, was summoned to the KGB in Raseiniai. The chekist was interested in knowing what kind of meeting took place August 29 in Kaunas, in which she had participated. She said that was her personal affair, and asked him to mind his own business, and not to shame himself. When Mrs. Šaukienė stated that she would not answer the questions posed to her, the KGB agent summoned Chief Gardauskas. Chekist Gardauskas ridiculed and calumniated the Pastor of Viduklė, Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and accused Mrs. Šaukienė of "zealously running around" in behalf of the arrested priest. A third chekist, who showed up at the interrogation stated, "In 1947, we hung people like that, and we'll hang you, too!" He spoke like this repeatedly, threatening arrest, imprisonment and exile to Siberia.

Kybartai

On October 11, 1983, the Associate Pastor of the parish of Kybartai, Father Jonas Matulionis, was again summoned to the Vilnius KGB for interrogation. (He had been summoned on September 8, but had not gone.) Interrogator Liniauskas was interested in information touching on the case of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius: Since when had Father Matulionis known him? What had Father Tamkevičius spoken about during his sermons? He asked about the petition regarding discrimination against young people, written in 1982, for Christmas party in Kybartai, activities of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights, etc.

In the course of the interrogation, KGB agent Liniauskas showed Father Matulionis the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 52, asking how Father Matulionis' petition written to Petras Griškevičius, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania had gotten in, and he accused the subject of insulting Soviet officials in the petition, specifically, Juozas Urbonas, Vice Chairman of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee, calling him an imposter.

Father Matulionis explained that this is not in the petition; on



Father Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis, a graduate of the underground seminary and Associate Pastor of the parish in Kybartai, Lithuania, stands by the confessional of Father Tamkevičius in the parish church.

the contrary, it was Executive Committee Vice Chairman Urbonas who, as soon as Father Matulionis came to work in Kybartai, began calling him an imposter: a false priest without orders. Father Matulionis reminded Interrogator Liniauskas that the KGB agents in Vilnius, interrogating an acquaintance of his in August, had asked about him, and losing their temper, vilified him, calling him an

anti-Soviet bastard.

When Father Matulionis refused to sign the interrogation report the interrogator, angered stated that people who refused to sign were sitting in the KGB cellars. When he was asked whether it would be possible to see Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, Interrogator Liniauskas replied, "You'll see him in camp!"

the interrogator, angered, stated that people who refused to sign were sitting in the KGB cellar. When he was asked whether it would be possible to see Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, Interrogator Liniauskas replied, "You'll see him in camp!"

The interrogation lasted four hours.

Vilnius

On September 20, 1983, Jonas Sadūnas wrote petitions to the Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR and to the Chief Judge of the LSSR Supreme Court. In them, he described his interrogation which had taken place at the offices of the Vilnius KGB. Interrogator Senior Lieutenant Vidmantas Baumila grilled Jonas Sadūnas as a witness in the case of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius. Sadūnas received no response to the petitions, however, the KGB agents immediately reacted. On October 17, Jonas Sadūnas was signed out of the hospital in Jonava.

On October 20, while Jonas Sadūnas was working at a construction site, a clandestine search was made of Room 24 of the Jonava Special Command Center, where Sadūnas lived. After the search, Jonas Sadūnas was missing copies of the petitions written September 20, 1983, to the Prosecutor of the LSSR, and to the Supreme Court of the LSSR; addresses of friends abroad; a radio receiver and his passport.

Garliava (Rayon of Kaunas)

On November 28, 1983, on a street in Kaunas, the militia stopped Miss Aldona Raizyte, took her to the Militia Department, and from there they took her home, saying that they were going to carry out a search of her apartment.

Since there are three apartments in the building, the searchers brought three search orders, in which it was noted that they would be looking for some leather jackets missing from the store in Garliava. The search was carried out by about ten people. Although the searchers represented themselves as being from the militia, the KGB also took an active part in the search, among them, Matulevi-

čius. The strange thing was that they carefully looked for the leather jackets in notebooks, in the smallest boxes, in books and behind picture frames.

At the time of the search, they discovered in the house Miss Gemma-Jadvyga Stanelytė, Miss Elena Šuliauskaitė and Miss Julija Kuodytė, the KGB agents searched their handbags, and also carried out a body search of A. Teresius, who happened by, all but stripping him. In spite of the fact that the owners of two of the apartments, Vincas Biekša and Mrs. Petronė Nausėdienė were not at home, the KGB agents searched their apartments, also.

Siezed during the search were: a typewriter, Aleksandr Solshenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, *Lietuvos ateitis (Lithuania's Future)* Nos. 2 and 5, many notebooks and various printed matter.

After the search, summonses for interrogation on November 29 were written, not only to the residents of the building: Mrs. Alma Mikličienė and Miss Aldona Raižytė, but also to Miss Julija Kuodytė, Gemma-Jadvyga Stanelytė, Miss Elena Šuliauskaitė and A. Teresius.

The next day, with the trial of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius already in progress in Vilnius, those summoned were kept for a long time at militia headquarters, without calling them for interrogation. Some of them had their passes taken away so that they would not escape. Regardless of that, however, Aldona Raižytė and Teresius, after waiting in vain for half a day to be interrogated, left the militia offices and drove off toward Vilnius in a private automobile. At Vieviai, they were stopped by militia, who took over the wheel of their car and returned them to the Miliati Department in Kaunas.

After interrogation, they were presented with summonses to report to agent Matulevičius at the KGB on November 30 for interrogation, to prevent them from leaving for the trial in Vilnius.

Kaunas

Simultaneously, Vytautas Vaičiūnas, who had just returned from labor camp, was being interrogated at KGB Headquarters. The chekist assailed him especially for being in Viduklė November 7, and participating in a reception for him at the apartment of Miss Monika Gavėnaitė. The chekist raged especially because the people of Viduklė had profaned the November 7 holiday by organizing services for Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, and arranging the reception for the returned prisoner.

Kaunas

Just before the trial of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, former prisoner Mrs. Elena Kryževičienė, a pensioner, was summoned to KGB headquarters for interrogation. The KGB tried to frighten her so that she would have no desire to go to Vilnius where the priest's trial was to take place.

OUR PRISONERS

At the present time, the KGB is holding up en masse, letters addressed to prisoners and to exiles.

Letters from the camps are also received infrequently; Only a few letters have been received from Father Svarinskas.

Julius Sasnauskas and others in exile are not receiving letters. Their letters to Lithuania are also not reaching the addressees.

KGB agents once mentioned to a young woman under interrogation that letters to the camps supposedly interfere with the rehabilitation of the prisoners.

Following is an excerpt from a letter of Viktoras Petkus, which has reached us:

"It is true that man has harnessed nature, conquered the planet and opened a window to space, but has this made him happier? Man himself has evoked forces which he cannot control. Hence, have those proponents of progress not made a great detour? Have they not degraded true spiritual values? They have not realized where the basic wisdom of mankind is concentrated, they have not plumbed the depths, but merely given themselves over to technology.

"The result: In technology, great strides have been made, but what about mankind? After all, one man differs from another, first of all, in his scale of values, ambitions and ideals, and not in how he manipulates this or that technology.

"Could the rationalist believe that the stormy Twentieth Century would break upon us, bringing with it not only flights of the scientific mind, with fantastic progress in technology transposing from the mundane to the eternal dimension the tragedy of the human condition, the paradox of life and death would become more and more manifest?

"Looking from the viewpoint of eternity at our earthly concerns, joys and sorrows, we encounter layer upon layer of all sorts of nonsense, and it turns out that all of the things which we



Julius Sasnauskas, in exile in Parabel, Tomsk. He suffers from inflammation of the bone and cartilage, and curvature of the spine.

thought were so terribly important, for which the living at all times are so concerned and struggle so much, pale in the face of eternity, and all that is left is the constant succession of generations recalling the monotony of the sea, an eternal cycle.

"Does this give us the right to downgrade human life? Not at all. For the value of a human being is immeasurable. Nor can we in any way be ambivalent about our homeland or the fate of mankind. Hence

the question arises: What awaits us? How must we live in this alternative situation? Where should we look for essential values?

"More and more often I think to myself: Of which are there more in the world — fools or flunkies? And how deeply are the roots of absurdity embedded in people? What is a human being's potential for becoming oneself? Where has bold and logical human behavior gone? Surely man is able to overcome his limits! Man, more and more often becomes a flunky, forgetting such things as duty, devotion to others and struggle against oppression and injustice.

"He tries not to notice the drama of life, to turn away from problems. He is more attracted by the banality of everyday life, by vague depersonalized uncreative activity. What is it — lack of will-power; ignorance; inability to distinguish truth from lies, not knowing how to distinguish one's self from others?"

1983

PRIESTS IN DEFENSE OF BELIEVERS' RIGHTS

To: The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Copy to: The First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania

From: The Priests of the Lithuanian SSR

A P e t i t i o n

Thirty years ago, or earlier, during the era of personality cult, some leading personages in the Soviet Union thought that Communism could not be brought about without force or fear. The XX Plenary Session of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union put an end to those shameful tactics. Many camps were emptied and closed. Exiles returned home, sundered families were reunited and cultural and economic life did not suffer at all as a result, but on the contrary, improved.

It is most unfortunate that not all the anomalies of the era of the personality cult were done away with. Some of them survive to this day. One of those anomalies is the restriction of the freedom of conscience and religion, the demeaning of religion, and atheization by force. That all this is truly an anomaly is clearly

demonstrated from life. In Europe today, there is a whole array of socialist states, in which those anomalies are almost unknown; where believers are not discriminated against either in school or at work, where a voluminous religious press is published and where cultural and economic life nevertheless advances no more slowly than among us.

Thus it is, for example, in the German Democratic Republic. There they have about as many Catholics as in Lithuania, and the Sankt Beno Publishing House in twenty years has published more than 2000 (two thousand!) titles, for an average of two books a week. Meantime in Lithuania, as reported in the *Valstiečių laikraštis* (*Peasants' Newspaper*), 1983, Nr. 56, in the past twenty-eight years, permission has been given to publish barely twenty three publications, and the greater part of those was published in a very small quantity, just for the priests.

There, religious instruction is not forbidden in church or in buildings adjoining the church; there, in the schools, no one ridicules children on account of their religious convictions, forces them to write anti-religious compositions, or to recite anti-religious propaganda or to speak against their own convictions. There, convents and monasteries exist, and the number of seminarians is not limited by the government. There, religious pilgrimages are not forbidden. And this is the Germany which was crushed the worst during the last war; economically it holds one of the highest places among socialist countries today. Religious freedom has not hurt it nor interfered with its economic or cultural development.

From the human and legal point of view, neither discrimination against the faithful or repression of religion can be justified in any way. Atheization by force has not justified itself: When the atheists say the influence of religion on the people is constantly decreasing and the facts of life demonstrate how drunkenness is constantly spreading, the breakup of families is increasing, moral corruption in public life is growing and believers are turned against the atheists themselves.

The Constitution of the Soviet Union guarantees freedom of conscience and religion for all: Everyone has the right to profess any religion, or to be an atheist. Hence atheists do not have the right to force others to be atheists by coercion or threats. They do not have the right to take advantage of believers, to deny them the most elementary right to profess and practice religion, to teach and educate their children according to their own religious con-

victions and to obtain literature necessary for that. The government, mindful of its commitments resulting from international declarations, MUST HELP PARENTS to enjoy their rights, and not interfere with them.

Meantime, in our country the school forces children to become atheists, contradicting the wishes of parents who practice their religion, and decreasing their authority. We would all consider it abnormal if the children of atheists were signed up for some sort of religious organization, without the knowledge or consent of the parents. The greatest furor would arise! But in our country, that is just how the teachers act with the believing children of believing parents, signing them up by force in the Little Octobrists and Pioneers. Similarly, school children and students who are religious believers are forced to join the Communist Youth League.

The Soviet press reports that Soviet law is the same for everyone. However, certain laws or instructions (some of them secret), are aimed especially against believers and with their help, the atheists want to run religious life. It would be interesting to know what the atheists would say if believers began by the same means to run the public and private life of the atheists.

The Soviet press affirms that Soviet government organs do not interfere in the internal affairs of the church. But in truth, it is precisely they who finally decide who may study at the seminary and work as a priest, they decide on the quota for seminarians, they do not allow bishops to act independently, and they interfere with papal appointments of suitable new bishops for the Church. It is against such abnormalities that clergy and faithful have raised their voice, as well as the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights, to which Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and Father Sigita Tamkevičius belong. They demanded such freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as spoken of by the international declarations, signed by the Soviet Union and other states.

How much we read in the Soviet press about the abuse of position and about lack of conscientiousness among workers. This is standard and necessary criticism of evils. In this respect, the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights said nothing of morality and honesty, and in Church-state relations. However, this criticism the Soviet press called denigration and libel, and termed it a crime. We write this petition based exclusively on information provided by the press regarding the case of Father Alfonsas Sva-

rinskas and with practical experience, since during the trial, not one fellow priest or interested believer was allowed into the courtroom.

Those wishing to get into the courtroom used to be kept back outside the courthouse, or even on Lenin Prospect, and driven as much as several score kilometers from Vilnius out into the woods, and there, forced to get out one-by-one. Some of them were given 50-ruble fines, others, ten days in jail. In one case, over a dozen priests were detained several hours at the militia department without any reason.

One conclusion suggests itself from all that: It is necessary not to imprison people for criticism, but to put into effect those international rights which the entire civilized world observes, and which the Soviet Union also agreed to observe. In accordance with the deepest convictions of priests and faithful, the sentencing of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and the arrest of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius is a serious mistake. (This is confirmed by over 70000 signatures under the petition to you and to other agencies, saying that they are not guilty.), so we ask you to set aside the decision of the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR, and to release both these priests without delay. Signed by the priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Fathers:

1. Vaclovas Aliulis, 2. Antanas Andriuškevičius. 3. Tūlius Baltušis, 4. Danielius Baužys, 5. Romualdas Blažys, 6. Janas Charukevič, 7. Aldas Čėponis, 8. Vladas Čėrniasukas, 9. Petras Daunoras, 10. Antanas Dilys, 11. Antonis Dziekan, 12. Kazimieras Gailius, 13. Konstantinas Gajauskas, 14. Ignas Jakutis, 15. Pijus Jankus, 16. Bronius Jaura.

17. Stanislovas Kakarieka, 18. Aleksandras Kaškevičius, 19. Algis Kazlauskas, 20. Algimantas Keina, 21. Kazimieras Kinduryš, 22. Tadeušas Kondrusevičius, 23. Jonas Kukta, 24. Jonas Lauriūnas, 25. Stasys Lidys, 26. Silvestras Malachovski, 27. Stasys Markevičius, 28. Alfonsas Merkys, 29. Konstantinas Molis.

30. Juzefas Obremski, 31. Nikodemas Pakalka, 32. Zenonas Patiejūnas, 33. Edmundas Paulionis, 34. Mykolas Petravičius, 35. Alfonsas Petronis, 36. Juozas Puidokas, 37. Stanislovas Puidokas, 38. Kazimieras Pukėnas, 39. Vytautas Pūkas, 40. Bronius Sakavičius, 41. Justinas Saulius, 42. Leonas Savickas, 43. Marijonas Savickas, 44. Antanas Simonaitis, 45. Martynas Stonys, 46. Jordanas Slėnys.

47. Alfonsas Tamulaitis, 48. Česlovas Taraškevičius, 49. Petras Tarvydas, 50. Adolfas Trusevič, 51. Juozas Tunaitis, 52. Steponas Tunaitis, 53. Albertas Ulickas, 54. Jonas Vaitonis, 55. Domas Valančiauskas, 56. Kazimieras Valeikis, 57. Stanislovas Valiukėnas, 58. Donatas Valiukonis, 59. Kazimieras Vasiliauskas, 60. Vaclovas Verikas, 61. Antonis Zaman, 62. Kazimieras Žemėnas, 63. Leonidas Nestiukas, 64. Anton Pilipčik, 65. Mykolas Žemaitis, 66. Petras Purlys, 67. Kazys Meilus, 68. Jonas Boruta, 69. Kazimieras Žilyš (Diocese of Kaišiadorys).

The following refused to sign:

1. Henrikas Blaževič, 2. Ričardas Černiauskas, 3. Vytautas Jeskelevičius, 4. Jonas Kardelis, 5. Napoleonas Norkūnas, 6. Juozas Norkūnas, 7. Ignas Baberžis, 8. Juozas Poškus, 9. Vytautas Rūkas, 10. Juozas Urbonas, 11. Kazimieras Vaičionis, 12. Vladislavas Velymanski, 13. Edmundas Kulvietis, 14. Jonas Grigaitis.

The others were not approached.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Vilnius

In the confidential *Information Bulletin*, Nr. 1, for this year (1983), Secretary Petras Griškevičius of the Communist Party of Lithuania speaks about practical problems in the struggle against "clerical extremism" and about Party organization tasks in educating the people of the republic in atheism.

The Party leader first gives a general overview of the Church in Lithuania. He rejoices over the fact that many of the clergy are loyal to the government. However, there are a number who are extremist in their attitudes, who try to draw other priests to their side, especially the young ones. The general tone for these ideological diversions is set by the Vatican.

The Party Secretary especially attacked Pope John Paul II for his constant sympathy for the Church in Lithuania. He mentioned that many priests come from abroad and try to bring unfriendly literature into Lithuania. They have even bought Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius and other priests small automobiles.

He did not spare angry words for the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights, either. They allegedly promote the writing of all sorts of petitions and disobedience to the Regulations for Religious Associations.

"The priests of the Diocese of Telšiai have declared that they cannot keep Soviet laws regarding cult, since these are contrary to the Gospel and to the spirit of Vatican Decrees. We have enough means to guarantee law and order! There would be no compromise or concessions here! We need only to unmask in time the organizers of collective letters."

The Party leader had much to say about religious festivals, processions to Šiluva, the Hill of Crosses and other shrines, and demanded that any new traditions be immediately abolished.

"You are not to make any compromise with the training of secret priests who have no permission to work, but get involved in 'pastoral activity'. They are to be considered vagrants!"

He urged the dissolving of diocesan priests' committees (Priests' Councils — Ed. Note), declaring them illegal.

"The monitoring of sermons must be stepped up, and measures must be taken against priests propagating anti-Communism. When priests who are warned do not come to a proper conclusion, sterner measures are to be taken. Their registration card must be taken from them.

"In every work collective, an atmosphere of hatred must be fostered toward extremist-oriented priests. OUR AIM MUST BE TO HAVE EVEN BELIEVERS BE SCANDALIZED BY THE SERMONS OF ANTI-SOVIET PRIESTS."

The lecturer further complained, "It is downright embarrassing to say that about three thousand children are involved in religious activities. This is a serious offense!" The Party leader gave instructions to fight the harder in an effort to attract children away from religious ceremonies.

Griškevičius gave much attention to the problem of convents and monasteries. In his opinion, there are in Lithuania 1.5 thousand religious women, who must be neutralized so that they would not have any influence on their social setting.

Vilnius

On November 5, 1983, the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis, presented Stanislovas Puidokas, associate pastor of the church in Naujoji Vilnija, a warning as follows:

"On October 30, 1983, the Vilnius Associate Pastor Father Stanislovas Puidokas held services at Aušros Vartai (Shrine of Our Lady of the Dawn Gate), delivered a non-religious sermon, disformed believers and thus violated Par. 19 of the Regulations for Religious Associations: 'Activities of ministers of cult are restricted to the area where the members of the religious association reside, and by the location of the house of prayer.' He is therefore warned that in the future, for violations of the Regulations, he will be suitably punished." The warning was signed by Religious Affairs Commissioner Petras Anilionis.

Father Puidokas did not acknowledge the warning in writing, since Aušros Vartai is a national Lithuanian Shrine, everyone may offer Mass there, and the sermon is an integral part of the Mass. In the sermon, some thoughts concerning the trial of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas were quoted from an article in the newspaper *Tiesa* (May 7) entitled, "Nuteistas už įstatymų pažeidimus" ("Sentenced for breaking the law").

The Commissioner considers that a great crime.

Plateliai (Rayon of Plungė)

During the night of October 7, 1983, unknown culprits broke into the church in Plateliai and tore out the tabernacles from the two side altars. They tried also to tear out the tabernacle from the main altar, but were unable to, since it is sheathed in steel. The burglars took from the side altar an old, artistically gold-plated reliquary.

Švenčionėliai (Rayon of Švenčioniai)

On November 26, 1983, at 7:00 PM, in the church of Švenčionėliai, services were being held for the deceased of the parish, and for Father Bronius Laurinavičius (the second anniversary of his death). The *rayon* government requested in advance that there be no mention of the anniversary of Father Laurinavičius death. Priests and faithful came to the church in Švenčionėliai that day, unbidden. Holy Mass was concelebrated by the Pastor of Švenčioniai, Father Kazimieras Gailius, Father Kazimieras Žemėnas and Father Aldas Čeponis. The sermon was delivered by Father Jonas Lauriūnas.

Immediately after the services, the pastor, Father Gailius, was summoned to the *rayon* offices. Here, they accused him of not carrying out the "contract". They accused him of inviting the priests, asked him where the girls in folk costume came from, and why he allowed

Father Jonas Boruta, who had completed the seminary illegally, to celebrate Mass. (Father Boruta offered Mass after all the services, when the faithful had almost finished dispersing.)

Garliava (Rayon) of Kaunas)

On Sunday, October 30, 1983, during the principal Mass, prayers were recited for Garliava resident Mrs. Jadvyga Bieliauskienė who had been arrested a year ago, and is now in prison. The evening before, some people introduced themselves to Monsignor Andrius Gustaitis by telephone as militia officers, and declared that they knew that a gathering was being organized, and at the same time, expressed great surprise that Mass could be offered for a living person. During the Mass, the sermon was delivered by Monsignor Gustaitis. After services, the entire congregation, together with Father Jonas Boruta, recited the rosary for the prisoners.

Pagamantis (Rayon of Tauragė)

On August 15, 1983, in the church of Pagamantis, for the second year, services of reparation took place for the desecration of the Blessed Sacrament. Well before the ceremonies, the Vice Chairwoman of the Tauragė Executive Committee had summoned the Chairman of the Pagamantis parish committee to sign a promise that Father Antanas Beniušis, Associate Pastor of Tauragė, would not be allowed to deliver the sermon.

During the reparation service, the rosary was recited twice for the priest-prisoners Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius. The third rosary, the believers recited while going in procession on their knees from the churchyard gates to the main altar. The procession took about forty-five minutes, with many youth and children participating. Afterwards, at 5:00 PM, Mass was offered. During the sermon, the Dean of Tauragė, Father Puzaras, urged the faithful to carry out their duties conscientiously, to defend their rights, parents to educate their children in their religion and to pray more for one another. After Mass in the churchyard, a reparation procession of the Blessed Sacrament took place. The services ended with the hymn, *Marija, Marija*.

Meškuičiai (Rayon of Šiauliai)

In October, 1983, a statue of the *Rūpintojėlis*, five meters tall, was brought to the Hill of Crosses, bearing the inscription:

*"Return, Rūpintojėlis, to brood by the wayside,
The withering rue will bloom beneath the cross.
The Lithuanian's tearstained cheeks will shine again,
And Mary's Holy Land will rise once more.*

Kaunas

1983

A Group of Hymn-lovers.

For lack of time and manpower (the erection of the statue requires eight men), work on the *Rūpintojėlis* remained unfinished that night.

On October 19, 1983, people coming to the Hill of Crosses could not find the statue. It had been cut up and hauled away somewhere. In its place the sponsors placed flowers and a small cross, tied with a bow inscribed, "On this spot, evil hands cut up the *Rūpintojėlis*. Lord forgive them."

Utena

On August 14, 1983, the Sacrament of Confirmation was being administered in the church of Utena. Since morning, the church was full of people; there were almost two thousand confirmands alone. The only ones disturbing the solemnity were various officials sent to the church from the *Rayon* Executive Committee to look around. In the churchyard, a disturbance arose when the officials fell upon those selling religious articles, seized religious pictures, rosaries and crosses from them, twisted their arms and dragged them off to the militia station.

CATHOLICS IN THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

Zhitomir

The thirty-five year old organist at the church of Zhitomir, Sofija Bieliak, was sentenced to five years in prison and five years of exile for disseminating information about the apparition of the Mother of God at Fatima.

Riga

On September 10, two bus-loads of pilgrims (about sixty persons) were on their way from Riga to the religious festival at Šiluva, but they did not reach their destination. Not far from Šiluva, they were stopped by traffic police. The officers asked who had organized the pilgrims, and why they came to Lithuania to pray. Konstan-

cija Cimanovskaya admitted being the organizer of the pilgrimage. Everyone was told to turn back. Since the people did not agree, they were taken off the bus and reached Šiluva by scheduled buses, while the militia escorted their rented buses to the border between Lithuania and Latvia and told the drivers never to return to Lithuania on such an errand.

The Plight of German Catholics in the USSR

At the invitation of Catherine the Great, many Germans settled along the Volga, and in certain regions of southern Ukraine. Before the deportations, there were about three million of them. A large number of them were Catholics. They had organized into parishes, had their own churches, priests and even a seminary. Even before World War II (about 1930), the government began closing the Germans' Catholic churches, and deporting them to Kazakh.

When Hitler attacked Russia, all the Germans were deported from Ukraine and scattered throughout the broad reaches of Kazakh. During the war, they took men and often women for the so-called "labor army", where many died from malnutrition. After the war, some of the Germans returned to the Volga basin, while others settled in the cities and villages of Kirghiz, Tadzhik and Uzbek, or remained in Kazakh where as the *Lietuvos tarybinė encyklopedia* (*Lithuanian Soviet Encyclopedia*) mentions, about one million Germans live.

During the war and immediately afterwards, the German Catholics did not have a single church, nor any priest. Only when priests were rehabilitated from the camps, some of them, including some Lithuanians, began ministering to the faithful, at first, visiting them unofficially and later, with permission. In some cases, the permissions were revoked, e.g., Father Antanas Šeškevičius, after working officially for two years in Slavgorod, the Region of Altay, was required to leave for work in Kanta, not far from Frunze.

Setding near Frunze, he began with oral permission to erect a house of prayer. After some time, the house of prayer was closed, and Father Šeškevičius was arrested and sentenced in 1967. The government had promised the faithful of Kustanay that it would certify a priest for official work. Coming from Lithuania, Father Albinas Dumbliauskas obtained a house of prayer, and after working there almost half a year, again lost the right to work legally.

Only five years later was another priest allowed to work officially

among the faithful of Kustanay. Similarly, the faithful were "allowed" to obtain a house of prayer and to have their own priest in Frunze, Alma-Ata Aktyubinsk and elsewhere. Only when the Germans began demanding the right to have a church with a priest was this granted to the faithful of German nationality in Karaganda and Tadzhik.

In Karaganda, Father Dumbliauskas began to work in Tadzhik (Dushanbe), Kurgan-Tyube and Vakhsh. Three parishes were established with Father J. Svidnickis began to minister. In Kurgan-Tyube, in 1982, a house of prayer was erected where Father J. Bieleckis (sic) began to minister. In 1980, in Celinograd, Father B. Babrauskas began ministering to the faithful.

Presently in Kazakh, ten priests are working three in Karaganda, and one each in: Alma-Ata, Aktyubinsk, Celinograd, Dzhambul, Kustanay, Krasnoarmeysk and Prokopyevsk; in Kirghiz there are two. Some of them have to minister to the faithful, not only where they live, but throughout the region. This year, the German Catholics lost five priests: the pastor of Pavlodar; Bishop Alexander, who had worked in Karaganda; and the pastor of Frunze, Father Keller. In Tadzhik, Father J. Bielickis (sic) resigned because the climate was bad for his health, and Father P. Krikščiukaitis left Dushanbe.

Hence at the present time, all of Tadzhik (where there were three communities) has been left without a priest, and the entire region of Pavlodar (where three communities also were operating) has been left without a priest.

There are some faithful in Tashkent and next to it, in Uzbek, but these are not organized as a parish, and have no priest. Many German Catholics have left the wide expanses of the Russian republic: In the Regions of Prokhlodnoy, Saratov, Volgograd, Chelyabinsk, Omsk, Tomsk and Novosibirsk, and in the land of Altay. Currently, there is a priest only in Novosibirsk (since 1982); in the region of Saratov, Tomsk and the region of Altay — communities of faithful are organized in Volchikha — the committees of twenty are registered; hence they have the right to a house of prayer and a priest. There are especially many Germans in the region of Omsk (according to the Soviet Lithuanian Encyclopedia, about 120,000 residents) many of whom are Catholics.

The faithful who have no priest often gather in the house of prayer, and if they do not have one of these, in the homes, for Sunday prayer, for holy days, Lenten, June and May devotions.

Currently, the following places are looking for priests: Marx (Region of Saratov), Prokhlodnoy (Northern Caucasia), the Region of Petropavlovsk, the Region of Pavlodar, Tomsk, Volchikha (Region of Altay), Dushanbe and Kurgan-Tyube. There are enough candidates for the priesthood from among Germans themselves, but so far, only a few are studying at the seminary in Riga.

NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

Lietuvos ateitis (Lithuania's Future) Nr. 6, a periodical publication for youth, appeared at the end of May, this year, discussing national problems and problems of interest to Lithuanian youth.

Lietuvos ateitis Nr. 7, dedicated to the convicted Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, appeared at the end of September. In the publication, the trial of Father Svarinskas and the arrest of Father Tamkevičius are widely discussed, and a message from the believing youth of Lithuania to Lithuanian youth living abroad appears.

Aušra (The Dawn) No. 35/75. In February, 1983, the thirty-fifth issue of the underground publication, *Aušra*, appeared. In the publication, the article entitled "One Hundred Years for *Aušra*" received particular notice, in which the climate nineteen years after the press ban when the first issue of the first Lithuanian newspaper, *Aušra*, appeared is thoroughly described. It was the beginning of the Lithuanian renaissance, the first conscious step of Lithuanians into their future. According to Professor Biržiška, "This was the greatest revolution in the world, known to history: The rising up of a small nation, barely beginning to be conscious of itself against the great Russian-German-Polish alliance," the publication writes.

Aušra Nr. 35 expresses protest against the arrest of Father Svarinskas; it tells its readers about the Lithuanian convicts in Zone 385/3-5 of Mordovia. In the publication, much space is devoted to the article, "Forty Years (1904 - 1944)", in which the economic life of Lithuania and the country's cultural activity is surveyed.

Aušra Nr. 36/76. In its introductory article of the April, 1983 issue of *Aušra*, entitled, *Aušra*, an example for Today, the historical significance of the publication for the Lithuanian nation is discussed: "... In the dawn of the ages, it found basis for national self-respect, and from there, it evoked an ideal for the future."

It demonstrates that today, also, there is a striving for the same values, but with greater force, on a broader scale, and with more refinement, "Therefore, the urging to learn from the past, not to give up values defended back then, and to be defended today."

The article, "Jėga ir teisė" ("Force and the Law"), comes out for true democracy, in which an important role is played by Christianity, with its view of mankind as an incomparable value. Quite a bit of space is devoted in the publication to prisoners and exiles from our nation going the way of the Gulag; questions dealing with morality — strong family structure — are considered, and the article "Keturiasdešimt metų (1904 - 1944)" ("Forty Years"), is continued.

Lithuanian, don't forget!

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas
Father Sigitas Tamkevičius
Jadvyga Bieliauskienė
Sergei Kovalev
Antanas Terleckas
Julius Sasnauskas
Povilas Pečeliūnas
Docent Vytautas Skuodis
Mečislovas Jurevičius
Balys Gajauskas
Gintautas Iešmantas
Viktoras Petkus
Algirdas Statkevičius

and others bear the chains of captivity, so that you might live and believe freely!

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