



CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
No. 18

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**A Translation of Authentic Reports
from Soviet-Occupied Lithuania**

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Introduction

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, (*Lietuvos Katalikų Bažnyčios Kronika*) No. 18, dated August 31, 1975, opens with a brief commentary on the Helsinki Conference on European Peace and Security, which had ended on August 1:

"What good will the reknowned Helsinki Conference do us Lithuanians, when we are not even given the full text of the Final Act of Helsinki in Lithuanian—when we are not even acquainted with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents?"

Since May, 1975, marked the thirtieth anniversary of the end of World War II, the *Chronicle* takes this occasion to inform its readers of the suppression of religion which the resulting Soviet annexation brought.

This issue lists twenty-three Catholic churches in Vilnius and fourteen churches and eight chapels in Kaunas secularized. It reports that all Protestant churches in the two cities were closed by the government. Only the Orthodox churches were left open, even though they serve only a few score people.

In rebuttal to the government propaganda pamphlet on the *Catholic Church in Lithuania*, published for tourist and overseas consumption, the writers remind us of the government desecration of churches going on for over thirty years.

For the Russians, the History of Lithuania, which traces its place among European states to 1253, begins only with the end of Czarist Russia in 1917, the *Chronicle* complains. While legitimate Lithuanian historical personages such as the poet Mykolaitis-Putinas are ignored by the Soviet Authorities, vast sums of money are spent on monuments to Communist "heroes". Lithuanian toponyms in East Prussia are being deleted.

The latest issue reports on Petras Plumpa-Pluiras, Povilas Petronis, Juozas Gražys and Nijolė Sadūnaitė, sentenced to labor camp or prison in connection with the dissemination of the *Chronicle* and religious literature.

A new series of interrogations, searches and trials is reported, along with the fact that Mindaugas Tamonis has been confined to a psychiatric hospital for protesting in a letter to the Communist Party that neo-Stalinism was enjoying a resurgence in Lithuania.

Individuals attempting to visit relatives abroad, and religious symbols such as wayside shrines become objects of Atheistic venom.

In a letter to the editor of a local Communist paper, Father Sigitas Tamkevičius takes issue with accusations against Catholic clergy and with the dragooning of youth into Communist organizations.

In a protest addressed to the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Father Antanas Ylius defends himself against efforts to discredit him.

Atheistic zealotry and bureaucratic interference with the ministry of the Church are documented in detail.

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translation Editor

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Lithuania.....August 31, 1975

AFTER THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE

August 1st saw the end of the Conference of European nations in Helsinki called at the initiative of the Soviet Union. This game played by the world's powerful evoked bitterness and disappointment in the hearts of millions. In dealing with oil, wheat, business and personal contacts, the suffering of peoples and nations has been overlooked.

What can we, the Catholics of Lithuania, expect from the famous Helsinki conference, if we are not even given the full text of the *Final Act* in Lithuanian, if we have not yet been informed of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other international documents?

We thank the Almighty that, in these deceitful times, He has called such men as Nobel Prize winner A. Solzhenitsyn, Academician Sakharov and others to relay our laments, sufferings and yearnings to the world and arouse this earth's powerful from slumber and doubt.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, as long as the

Lord will allow it to survive, will continue to present facts about how the Soviet Union is observing the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, both in the spirit and letter of Helsinki decisions.

"The Participating nations will respect fundamental human rights and freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief for all, regardless of differences of race, sex, language or religion.

"They will encourage and promote the effective fulfillment of citizenship, political, economic, social, cultural and other rights and freedoms, which are results of man's inborn dignity and are essential to his free and complete development.

"In this context, the participating nations will acknowledge and respect the individual's right to profess, individually or in a group with others, religious beliefs of faith, according to the dictates of his own conscience.

"In the field of fundamental human rights and freedoms, the participating nations will act in accordance with the goals and principles of U.N. Statutes and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They will also fulfill their obligations, as they are outlined in international declarations and agreements in this field, including international pacts on human rights, if they apply."

— Excerpts from the *Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*" dated August 1, 1975.

The Final Act was signed on behalf of the USSR by Communist Party Secretary General L. Brezhnev.

WHAT FOREIGN TOURISTS DO NOT SEE IN VILNIUS AND KAUNAS

May 1975 marked the 30th anniversary of the end of World War II, which required much suffering and sacrifice. That anniversary, considered a victorious holiday by the Soviet Union, was solemnly commemorated in Lithuania as well. But for Lithuania's Catholics, this anniversary coincided with another, though painful and sad, anniversary: Thirty years ago the atheistic government in Lithuania

began an open, vicious and determined war against religious groups, especially against the Catholic Church in Lithuania. This war, considered dreadful by all decent people, is still going on. In order to escape unpleasant persecution, many Lithuanians are forced to hide their faith, as did Christians in the early centuries.

In the years 1945-46 nearly all churches in Lithuania still considered it normal to have children's choirs, services for school children (also attended by teachers), student retreats, and religious instructions of children in church, class by class. However, even then, this "toleration" of religious groups and the Church was considered by many as the calm before the great storm. This storm came all too soon.

Presently, all bishops in Lithuania were arrested. One of them, Bishop Borisevičius, was quickly sentenced to be shot to death. Mass arrests of priests began, with their interrogation, torture and trial, with sentences of up to 25 years. Simultaneously, churches were closed, and holy places beloved by all the faithful were destroyed and desecrated. In a very short time, by 1950, (That year the tenth anniversary of Lithuania's annexation into the Soviet Union was celebrated.) in Vilnius and Kaunas alone, about 50 Catholic churches and semi-public chapels were closed, the use of cemetery chapels was forbidden, (Later some of them were demolished when the cemeteries were desecrated.), the Three Crosses in Vilnius were blown up, crosses and wayside shrines were torn down in streets and squares. On the eve of the 25th anniversary of Lithuania's annexation into the Soviet Union, 35 shrines at Kalvarija in Vilnius were blown up simultaneously and the rubble immediately removed, so that there would be no trace of the existence of these shrines. The following is a list of churches and chapels closed in the cities of Vilnius and Kaunas alone, along with brief notes (albeit incomplete) on how they were used after being closed.

VILNIUS

1. The Cathedral (an art gallery)
2. Church of the Augustinians (converted into an electrical supply warehouse.)
3. St. Bartholomew's Church (warehouse; now an art guild sculpture studio. In the summer of 1975, a huge sculpture of Lenin was

- being completed in the church.)
4. Church of the Basilian Fathers (warehouse; now a materials testing laboratory for the construction engineering institute.)
 5. Church of the Bernardines (art institute warehouse, sculpture studio.)
 6. St. Ignatius' Church has been converted into storage for movie studio props; the chapel is now the "Bočiai" restaurant.
 7. Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (converted into a club for builders.)
 8. Church of SS James and Philip (storage for opera and Ballet props.)
 9. St. John's Church (newsprint warehouse for the newspaper *Tiesa (Truth)*. Now it is being restored and will house a museum of "progressive" thought and a meeting hall and concert hall run by the university.)
 10. St. George's Church (book warehouse for the Book Institute.)
 11. St. Catherine's Church (foodstuffs warehouse. Now empty, but restoration is contemplated to house an art museum.)
 12. St. Casimir's Church (a warehouse; since 1961 an atheistic museum after being restored.)
 13. Church of the Holy Cross, also called Church of the *Bonifratrai* (a warehouse; now being restored and designated for use as a concert hall.)
 14. Chapel of the Welfare Society (converted into a warehouse for the publishing industry.)
 15. Church of the Assumption or Franciscan Church (converted to house the Central Government Archives.)
 16. St. Michael's Church (warehouse, later burned; after restoration a permanent construction exhibit.)
 17. Church of the Missionaries (warehouse of furnishings and miscellaneous inventory for medical facilities.)
 18. St. Stephen's Church (warehouse for cement and other construction materials.)
 19. Church of the Holy Trinity (sports arena; The facade was in ruins; now it houses a workshop of the History and Ethnography Museum; in 1975 a scale model of the Kaunas Fort IX was built there.)
 20. Church of the Trinitarian Order (military warehouse.)

21. Church of Trinapolis (hospital warehouse; over the sacristy a driver has set up an apartment for himself.)
22. All Saints Church (footstuffs warehouse, it burned down; after partial restoration, the permanent folk art exhibit of the Art Museum was opened in the summer of 1975.)
23. Church of the Visitation Fathers (warehouse; now a prison facility for minors.)

KAUNAS

1. Church of Our Lady, Gate of Dawn (*Aušros Vartai*) in Upper Šančiai (converted into barracks to house Russian families. Later it was a cultural club and a salt warehouse. Now a wholesale food warehouse.)
2. Church of Freda (sports hall for agricultural students in Kaunas named after Mičiurinas. Now abandoned. In the summer of 1975, a homeless family took up residence in its vestibule.)
3. St. Gertrude's Church (pharmaceutical warehouse.)
4. Garrison Church (a sculpture and stained glass museum.)
5. St. George's Church (Military warehouse. Now a warehouse of the Medical Technology Commission for structural supplies and furnishings of medical facilities for the Kaunas region, as well as an inventory warehouse.)
6. Church of the Exaltation of the Cross (demolished and a small sports field constructed on the site.)
7. Church of the Visitation, in Pažaislis (now being restored as an annex to the art museum.)
8. Church of the Benedictine Order (warehouse for old books of the Kaunas Public Library. Residents of nearby houses claim that "yellow publications", namely anti-government publications, are stored there.)
9. St. Francis Xavier Church (book warehouse; now a sports hall.)
10. Church of the Resurrection (converted to a radio factory.)
11. Church of the Blessed Sacrament (movie theater.)
12. Holy Trinity Church (book warehouse of the Republic No. 10)
13. Chapel of the Seven Sorrows of Mary in Žaliakalnis (demolished.)
14. Immaculate Conception Church "Šančiai" (warehouse of special medical supplies.)

In Kaunas, the following semi-public chapels have also been closed, (Some were part of other institutions): 1. Chapel of the Guardian Angels, 2. St. Anthony's Chapel. 3. Chapel of St. Luke (Christian Charity), 4. Mary Help of Christians Chapel, 5. Franciscan Chapel, 6. St. Stanislaus Kostka Chapel, 7. St. Zita's Chapel, 8. Prison Chapel.

In Vilnius there is only one functioning chapel: *Aušros Vartai*. All others, of which there were many, have been destroyed.

All Protestant churches in both cities have been closed. In Vilnius, one of them is now a movie theater, the other a sports arena. In Kaunas, the oldest church was a food warehouse, later burned, and now stands empty. The other is a sports arena. The newest church has been converted into a club for security police cadets, a sports arena and messhall.

It is interesting that authorities in Vilnius and Kaunas have not closed a single Russian Orthodox church, (There are especially many of them in Vilnius.), although only handfuls of faithful attend them.

After 30 years of vicious destruction to the Catholic Church in Lithuania, both internally and externally, inestimable damage has been done to the art treasures of the Lithuanian nation. In all the above-mentioned churches closed in Vilnius and Kaunas, as well as in unnamed chapels, countless paintings, sculptures, old frescoes, memorial plaques, stained-glass windows, organs, miscellaneous church objects, liturgical vestments and utensils were destroyed, all possessing great artistic value. In countless old churches (dating from the 15th to 18th centuries) valuable architectural features were greatly damaged or completely destroyed as a consequence of utilitarian use. What countless generations had lovingly preserved over long years, was irretrievably lost in three decades of "peaceful building of Socialism and Communism in Soviet Lithuania."

Even the remains of the dead buried under the closed churches and in crypts did not remain untouched. For instance, to this date, the remains of the famous Grand Duke of Lithuania and national leader Leonas Sapiega and his family are still scattered. In St. Michael's Church (now a construction exhibit hall) construction material has been dumped on the underground grave of the famous Lithuanian architect L. Stuoka-Gucevičius (near St. Stephen's

Church). This list of historically famous persons could be just as long as the list of now-desecrated churches which shelter their remains.

In the summer of 1975, in commemoration of the 35th anniversary of the annexation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union, a brochure authored by Rimaitis was published, entitled *The Catholic Church in Lithuania* (second edition).

It will be published in deluxe editions only in English, German and Italian. The inhabitants of Lithuania will not be able to buy any of these three brochures, just as they were not able to buy the first edition. It will be distributed only to guests from abroad and disseminated abroad. Let the readers of these brochures be aware that the true situation of the Catholic Church in Lithuania cannot be judged from these propaganda publications, nor from the Church of SS. Peter and Paul, nor St. Ann's Church in Vilnius, nor the Kaunas Basilica, to which foreign tourists are led by government guides on an exclusive and mandatory basis. This is confirmed by the churches and chapels mentioned in this article whose desecration and demolition was deeply felt in each case by their former priests, religious and faithful—this is a drama which continues to this day.

LITHUANIA'S PAST IS BEING IGNORED

In recent years, even more zealous efforts are being made to decrease the influence of Lithuania's past culture, to push the legacy of her most outstanding and famous founders into oblivion, by holding up and glorifying only Communist notables of the Soviet era. An attempt is made to condense the nation's history into the framework of several decades, from 1917 on. This summer, during the Baltic Historians' Conference in Vilnius, historians were explicitly directed to turn all their attention to the Soviet period. No doubt, this is a long-planned and carefully executed policy of ignoring the nation's cultural past.

Last year, the 30th anniversary of the "liberation" was noisily celebrated in Lithuania. Many "liberators" were invited and feted, many of whom did not even participate in military operations in Lithuanian territory. New monuments were erected to persons who

did not benefit Lithuania in any way; commemorative stones were erected in every rat/em to commemorate the "liberation," and vast sums of money were lavished to decorate the graves of Soviet soldiers.

This summer, the 35th anniversary of the restoration of Soviet rule in Lithuania was celebrated even more noisily. Russian guests were showered with expensive gifts, regaled in Lithuanian resorts, new "commemorative" stones were erected, new monuments to persons unknown in Lithuania.

Now what happens to the true founders of Lithuania's culture?

In 1973, the Lithuanian Writers Association wanted to honor the memory of V. Mykolaitis-Putinas and to erect a tombstone in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of his birth. Funds were solicited from the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR. The Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, (Mrs.) L. Diržinskaitė-Pliušenko, made the notation "Standard Procedure" on the short letter of request. This means that no more than 400 rubles can be used for the monument. In order to appropriate more funds, a separate resolution must be adopted. It seems that, in the opinion of Diržinskaitė, V. Mykolaitis-Putinas was not worthy of such a resolution. In fact, only 300 rubles were set aside for this project. It was decided to order a memorial plaque in bas-relief and to fasten it to the house on Liepos 21-sios g., where V. Mykolaitis-Putinas lived for many years. This plaque was made and fastened to the house. Unfortunately, when the sculptor presented his bill to the Vilnius Executive Committee, it became clear that even this plaque cost over 300 rubles. The sculptor's fee was quite reasonable, for nowadays even craftsmen charge 1,000 or more rubles for the simplest tombstone. The Executive Committee began to rack its brains where to get the additional money to pay the sculptor for his work. Finally, the latter became tired of asking, shrugged his shoulders and said: "The heck with the money, I did it for Putinas, not for you."

Behold, in July, an expensive tombstone by the sculptor Petrulis was erected in the Antakalnis Cemetery, though only several months have elapsed since the death of Sniečkus. Money was found, and all resolutions were passed with no problem.

This year, in Mikytai (*Rayon* of Šilutė) a commemorative stone to the "liberators" was erected to the tune of 8,000 rubles. The excavator alone was paid 300 rubles to erect this

In Šilalė, 48,000 rubles were spent to spruce up the military cemetery and even more in Ramygala. And how much throughout Lithuania! In the Rasai Cemetery, the country's most important men lie under leaning little headstones and no one is preparing to repair their graves: while plans have already been drawn up to improve the already well-kept cemetery for Soviet soldiers and partisans in Antakalnis.

The residents of Sintauta have asked that their school be named after Pranas Vaičiaitis but have not yet received an affirmative answer, while there is no difficulty in naming the streets of Lithuanian cities after still-living marshals.

How many Lithuanian mothers do not know where their sons or daughters were buried in post-war years! How many unmarked graves are there on the tundra and taiga! Who will erect at least one symbolic monument to the victims of Stalin's rage and when will this happen?

In only one year all place-names in East Prussia disappeared. Not a single name remains to honor the memory of the nation which perished in the war for freedom. Who had the right to erase all of this nation's past and to date her history from 1945?

Isn't the same goal sought now, by consistently ignoring and disregarding Lithuania's glorious past?

[This letter from a reader of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* reflects the anguish of many Lithuanians over the fact that Lithuania's past is being ignored—Ed. note.]

LITHUANIAN FAITHFUL IN LABOR CAMPS

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* has already written about the trials of the faithful: P. Plumpa, P. Petronis, J. Stašaitis, V. Jaugelis, J. Gražys and (Miss) Nijolė Sadūnaitė. These persons were brought to trial because they multiplied religious literature, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and similar publications.

In mid-July, well-documented facts about the sentencing of Petras Plumpa-Pluiras to the Permė labor camp reached the

Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. Povilas Petronis, Juozas Gražys and Nijolė Sadūnaitė are currently in similar positions.

PETRAS PLUMPA-PLUIRAS

Before being transported to Russia, Plumpa was held all week in solitary confinement. When leaving Vilnius, he was placed in a wagon with criminals, although political prisoners should be kept separately. For all of two months Plumpa was thrown in with murderers and thieves, who displayed their bestial talents in every way possible. Some of them took away the warm imported shoes given him by his wife in Vilnius, others divested him of his quilted jacket, others took his hat, gloves, etc. There were some who forced Plumpa into a corner and tried to learn the details of his trial, and failing to do so, stripped him to his underwear and threatened to disembowel him. Plumpa did not take any food with him to the camp—everything was taken away in the wagons, and, to top it all off, he was kicked around. All this was done with the knowledge of the authorities, for Plumpa kept telling them that he was tried under political articles and should be transported separately.

In Minsk, the guards showed greater hatred than even the criminal prisoners. After learning that Plumpa was tried because of his religion, they viciously shouted that religious writings and articles are forbidden. They even took away his little pictures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They pushed him around in a rage; even the criminals were astonished, since they were being treated somewhat better.

With the intention of physically and morally breaking him, the Soviet guards degraded him for two months in cells with murderers. Not once during the year he spent in the Vilnius security prison was his health examined, although he suffered the entire time from high blood pressure and chronic eye infections. During his trial a certificate from the Security Police was read aloud stating that Plumpa was healthy. On what basis had that certificate been written if Plumpa was not once examined by a doctor? It seems that on the basis of a need to fabricate as harsh a sentence as possible. When Plumpa was brought to the labor camp, his blood pressure was 90/165. He told the camp authorities that he suffered from hypertension, an eye infection and chronic coughing which started after he contracted

pneumonia three times. Regardless of this, the head of the camp's work detail assigned Plumpa to work dangerous to his health. Because the work dust was very harmful to his lungs, Plumpa had to wear a face mask while working; because of insufficient air, veins burst in his eyes; and because of persistent eyelid infections and dust, his trachoma flared up again. Plumpa began to see things in a blur and in the morning could see nothing at all. The infection was so acute that his entire face was affected.

After the trial, until July, Plumpa did not receive the slightest news from home. On May 25th of this year, he sent a statement to the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the USSR, in which he officially renounced his USSR citizenship, and requested permission for himself and his family to emigrate to Argentina. The reason Plumpa gave for renouncing his USSR citizenship was the fact that the faithful are denied their basic rights and he is being treated like an animal. On July 2nd, Plumpa received a letter from Moscow that his statement was being forwarded to the Attorney General of Lithuania. There is a danger that he might be given an additional sentence. With Plumpa is a prisoner who received a five-year sentence for renouncing his USSR citizenship and asking permission to emigrate.

After not receiving any news from her husband's place of detention in half a year, Aldona Pluiriene, Plumpa's wife, sent a letter of inquiry. She was answered that that her husband was in good health and that since no record was kept on letters coming into the camp, camp authorities could not explain why Plumpa had not received her letters. After her inquiry, Plumpa immediately received three of his wife's letters, written over a period of several months.

Nijolė Sadūnaite, sentenced in June for attempting to reproduce copies of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church, in Lithuania* (see *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 17) was taken to her place of detention on July 18th.

Nijolė Sadūnaitė will be sewing gloves. She is allowed to write two letters a month.¹

'In November of 1977, Nijolė Sadūnaitė was released from labor camp and sent to do three years of banishment. As of February 23, 1978, her mailing address was unknown.

INTERROGATIONS AND SEARCHES

Kaunas. On August 14, 1975, near Babtai, Security Committee officials stopped the "Zhiguli" automobile driven by (Miss) Marytė Vitkūnaitė with four passengers, and stated that they had to search the car.

One official, dressed in militia uniform, drove the car to the Kaunas Security Headquarters yard. The passengers were taken away for questioning and the car was thoroughly searched, under the direction of Captain Marcinkevičius, an interrogator of the Vilnius Security Committee. The following individuals were present at the search:

Charževisky, Raimondas, son of Jurgis, residing in Kaunas, Suomių g. 32-2, and

Bertašius, Algirdas, son of Juozas, residing in Kaunas, Lam-pėdžių g. 10-405.

The car was dismantled by the following specialists:

Carion, Ivan, residing in Kaunas, Lenino g. 57-30 and Adomavičius, Kęstutis, residing in Kaunas, Gedimino g. 39-1. For two hours they searched for "anti-Soviet literature" in the car's tires, radiator, gas tank, and in every recess of the car, but they found only a copy of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Solzhenitsyn, published in Vilnius in 1963.

Afterwards, the owner of the car, Marytė Vitkūnaitė, was taken into Security headquarters for a body search. The search was conducted by interrogator (Mrs) Paliušienė with the following women in attendance:

Audronė Petružytė, residing in Kaunas, LTSR 25-čio g. 130-4, and Kazimiera Juškytė, residing at Alyvų g. 1-9.

Miss Vitkūnaitė was stripped and carefully searched and yet no "anti-Soviet literature" was found on her person.

Finally, Major Markevičius and Captain Marcinkevičius searched M. Vitkūnaitė's apartment and basement at LTSR 25-čio g. 86-53. The Security officers worked for an hour and a half, but the find was very modest: the prayerbook *Mary, Help Us*, and "Prayer for the Homeland" on a small scrap of paper.

Prior to the search, security cars for a long time kept track of where Miss Vitkūnaitė went. They were especially bothered

that Miss Vitkūnaitė's car was often seen in Nemunėlio Radviliškis, where the exiled Bishop V. Sladkevičius lives.

Upon releasing Miss Vitkūnaitė late in the evening, Security officials stated that they would have to meet again at Vilnius Security Headquarters.

Vilnius. In October 1974, five priests from the Vilkaviškis Diocese—Lionginas Kunevičius, Petras Dumbliauskas, Pranas Domaitis, Juozas Zdebskis and Sigitas Tamkevičius—appealed to the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in Moscow asking it to go to the defense of the arrested Catholics: Petras Plumpa, Povilas Petronis, Jurgis Stašaitis, Virgilijus Jaugelis, Juozas Gražys and Nijolė Sadūnaitė.

In announcing the petition's contents, Academician Sacharov did not disclose the names of the priests who signed it.

During searches in Moscow, security officials succeeded in finding the original copy of the petition with the signatures. During August 7 to 14, 1975, the priests who signed the above-mentioned petition were summoned to Vilnius Security Headquarters for questioning. Some of them were interrogated by Maslauskas, others by either Marcinkevičius or Lazarevičius.

The interrogators asked about the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, the Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in Moscow, and whether they had ever appealed to it. Security officials showed the original of the petition to those being interrogated and asked whether they had actually signed it. All confirmed that they had signed the petition in question, because they felt it their duty to stand up for the unjustly arrested individuals. They did not consider it a crime to appeal to the Human Rights Committee. The priests were also questioned about who organized the petition, who brought it for their signature and so on.

Some of the priests said they did not know the person who brought them the petition, while others refused to provide any details. Several of the priests being questioned even refused to sign the minutes of the interrogation, arguing that no crime had been committed and that they did not consider it their duty, as citizens, to provide any official testimony in this matter.

The interrogators were very polite, they pretended that the petition was an insignificant matter, but that they were simply interested in explaining how that petition had fallen into hands for which it had not been intended.

TRIALS AND PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Vilnius. In 1973, a student of the Tallat-Kelpša Music School in Vilnius, Rimas Čekelis, son of Juozas, was sentenced to three years imprisonment in strict regime camps for "the distribution of anti-Soviet leaflets."

Cekelis was born on January 7, 1955 in Skiemoniai. After completing nine grades of the Skiemoniai middle school, he enrolled in the Tallat-Kelpša Music School. While living in Vilnius, he organized a group of friends who printed and distributed national proclamations. On the eve of February 16, 1973, they distributed their proclamations in Vilnius, but later one of the group betrayed them. All five members of the group were expelled from school, and Cekelis, as leader of the "anti-Soviet group," was brought to trial. He was tried by the Supreme Court of the LSSR in closed court. Čekelis is now in the 19th Mordavian labor camp.

Kaunas. Former political prisoner Povilas Pečiulaitis, who had served 19 years in the Gulag, was arrested in the spring of 1975. He had been released from the labor camp in 1972, but had been denied the right to return to his native land. Ignoring the prohibition, Pečiulaitis settled in Kaunas, found a job and started a family. On the basis of secret instructions and not of laws, local authorities attempted to drive Pečiulaitis from Lithuania. However, he refused to leave his family and his native land. At first, he was punished by monetary fines and, finally, was arrested. He is accused of not having registered. The people's court of the Lenin *Rayon* of Kaunas sentenced Pečiulaitis to one year's imprisonment. The court disregarded the fact that there is no basis in law for prohibiting anyone from living in his native land. Such a disposal of Pe-

čiulaitis' case is consistent with the spirit of the Stalin era and is a means for the government to terrorize former political prisoners.

* * *

In June 1974 another former political prisoner, Leonas Laurinskas, was sentenced. On December 23, 1974 he had stopped in to see Algirdas Petruševičius where the Security police were conducting a search. Leonas was also searched and a "cold weapon," a piece of cable, taken away from hoodlums, was found in his possession.

Called as witness, Algirdas Petruševičius explained to the court that Leonas had stopped in to see him and that Security agents searched him after taking him into another room; therefore, he did not know what was found on Leonas' person.

The witness Antanaitis, who had been brought by Security agents to the apartment of Algirdas Petruševičius to act as witness, testified that during the search the cold weapon was found on Leonas Laurinskas, the weapon for which he was brought to trial.

Findings of the court:

The accused L. Laurinskas was arrested on December 23, 1948 and sentenced under article 58 to 25 years imprisonment. In 1955 the case was reviewed and the sentence reduced to 15 years imprisonment. On November 23, 1963 Laurinskas returned from the labor camp and began meeting with former "gang" members. On December 23, 1974 a cold weapon was found in his possession. There are no mitigating circumstances. The court sentences him to one year imprisonment to be served in strict regime camps.

* * *

MINDAUGAS TAMONIS

Vilnius. On June 25, 1975 Mindaugas Tamonis wrote a letter to the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party demanding that Christian culture be allowed to develop.

On June 27th, a Security agent came to Tamonis' place of work and demanded that Mindaugas enter the Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital. Tamonis did not obey. That same evening, a Security police captain came in a car with orderlies to Tamonis' residence and took him to the psychiatric hospital at Vasaros g. no. 5.

On June 29th. Tamonis' mother died suddenly. Only at the very last minute was he allowed to go to the funeral, after a telephone inquiry was received about him from a Western embassy. After the funeral, Tamonis had to return to the hospital. At first, Tamonis was held in the so-called observation ward, and later was transferred to the first ward. So far no therapy procedure has been assigned to him; therapy will be assigned later. His doctor is Radavičius.

Vilnius. In July 1975 Bronius Naudžiūnas, a resident of Vilnius, received permission to emigrate to Canada to be with his brother. He paid dearly for this permission—he was twice committed to psychiatric hospitals (from 6/2/72 to 7/29/72 at Moscow Psychiatric Hospital No. 15 and from 11/19/74 to 12/19/74 in the first ward of the Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital at Vasaros g. no. 5, and once to the Pravieniškiai Labor Camp (from 12/3/72 to 12/3/73) for defaming the Soviet government.

We are printing below his statement to the United Nations Secretary General.

Mr. Secretary General:

An insoluble situation has forced me to turn to you. My name is Naudžiūnas, I live in Vilnius. For a number of years I have been trying to get permission from the Soviet government to emigrate to Canada where my brother lives and from whom I was separated by the war. My brother has twice sent me an invitation to come to Canada, but all the Soviet government bureaus with which I have had to deal have given me the verbal reply "impossible" or simply labelled me a criminal.

The Soviet Union signed a declaration of fundamental human rights, which also deals with the question of moving. This declaration is not being carried out in my case. In one Soviet agency I was told that I must know why I am not allowed to leave.

Yes, I am well aware of my tragedy!

I was ten years old when our house was surrounded by soldiers with machine-guns, when, along with my twelve year-old brother, I was arrested and deported to Siberia. I experienced all kinds of nightmares in camps and psychiatric hospitals. My father

was tortured to death in prison in 1946. Our mother was not home that day when we children were taken away. She was arrested later and sent to another camp. She died in 1952 in Krasnoyarsk.

In 1974 I wrote the Canadian Embassy asking them to intercede with the Soviet government. I received an absurd reply, probably written on the basis of Soviet information supplied to the Canadian Embassy. The reply was unsigned and unstamped and stated that I could not be separated from my parents.

From what parents? I was separated from them by Soviet officials while still a child, and they perished in labor camps. How ironic! With one stroke of the pen, my parents were resurrected from their unmarked graves in 1974 in order to keep me from joining my real brother. I lived in complete poverty, in a shanty I built from planks when I returned from Siberia.

After crushing Fascism in 1948, the hand of our country's "liberating" soldier did not falter, the hand that threw us, children, into cattle cars and shipped us to Siberia. Where is the guarantee this will not happen again? I thus live in constant fear and poverty and I have no ties to the Soviet Union. My dream is to live in Canada with my brother who agrees to look after me.

I sincerely hope that you and the United Nations Committee for Human Rights will help me realize my dream. All men have yearnings which are part of mankind's yearning for freedom and peace. If my dream comes true, the earth will have one more happy man.

Respectfully yours,

Bronius Naudžiūnas, son of Zigmas
Lithuanian SSR
Vilnius 15
Vilkpėdės g. 8a-1

My brother's address:

Al. Nugent
1183 Rideau St.
Sudbury, Ont. Canada

December 26, 1974

DESTROYERS OF CROSSES

Meteliai

Statement from Ignas Klimavičius to the Attorney General regarding a cross that was destroyed

To: Attorney General of the Lithuanian SSR,
Copies to: Bishop of the Kaunas Archdiocese and Vilkaviškis
Diocese,
Soviet Commission for Religious Affairs

A Statement from:

Citizen Klimavičius, Ignas, son of Kazys
Residing in the Lazdijai *Rayon*, Village of Buckūnai.

One year ago I erected a wooden cross next to my front steps. This is an ancient tradition in Lithuania: out of respect for the cross, Catholics erect it in fields, near homes, hang it on the walls of their homes, wear it around their necks and so on. I was convinced that since I do not need the Government's permission to hang a cross around my neck or on my wall at home, I do not need it either to erect a cross next to my own front steps. However, the officials of the Lazdijai *Rayon* Executive Committee decided otherwise and ordered this cross removed. Of course, as a Catholic, I can only respect the Cross and not desecrate it; therefore, I did not remove the cross. I consider criminal the very order to a Catholic to remove a cross. How would it look if a Communist were ordered to tear down Lenin's portrait or demolish his statue?

On July 25th of this year, while I was at work, a representative of the Šeiriai Security Police, Alberov, came to my house along with the Secretary of the Žagariai District and administrator of the Meteliai Fishing Commission for the Buckūnai area, A. Gereltauskas; they looked around for a while and left. An hour later, car LIS 29-46 from the Lazdijai fire department arrived with two men who, according to the account of witnesses who had gathered around the house, were quite drunk: namely, Lazdijai Fire Chief Vincas Janušauskas and Markevičius, an employee of the Lazdijai Executive Committee. After frightening my wife and children, these men knocked the cross down into a flower bed and quickly left.

That same day, I asked the Lazdijai *Rayon* Security Office to investigate who had come to demolish the cross and whether they were really drunk, because the next day they would have recovered from their drunkenness and it would be impossible to establish the facts. I heard officials at Security headquarters say: "Look at the old boy. He came to complain to the Chief of Security. We should lock him up; that would teach him!"

Vice-Chairman Jurkevičius of the Executive Committee stated that the Soviet government had not given and would never give anyone permission to erect crosses. In addition, I would have to pay 50 rubles to those drunkards for destroying the cross. I stated that I could not believe there was a government in this world that would force its citizens to pay drunkards for their misdeeds. Even if forced, I would still refuse to pay. Let them take my coat, cow or other goods.

I am asking the Attorney General's Office to investigate this crime committed by officials of the Lazdijai *rayon* and act accordingly. I would also like to have the following explained:

1. Does the Soviet Government really forbid the erection of a cross near a house or next to the front steps of a private home? If it is forbidden, who can grant me permission?

2. Did the Lazdijai Executive Committee have the right to send two drunken men to demolish, without my knowledge, a cross which was erected not in the fields, but next to the front steps of a home? Or perhaps Catholics can be treated in any way and there are no laws to protect their rights?

Buckūnai, July 30, 1975

Ignas Klimavičius

The Attorney General's Office of the LSSR assigned the Lazdijai District Attorney to investigate Ignas Klimavičius' complaint. Agent Alberov of the Šeiriai Security Police came to Buckūnai and questioned the women who had seen the cross being demolished: (Mrs) Teofilė Abromaitienė, (Mrs) Marė Jusevičienė and (Mrs) Ona Buškevičienė. However, he intentionally neglected to mention in his report that the women testified that the men who had demolished the cross had been quite drunk. The women wrote statements to this effect and wanted to present them to the Lazdijai District

Attorney through Klimavičius, but the former would not accept these written statements.

On August 12th Lazdijai District Attorney Pigėnas sent Ig. Klimavicius the following reply:

"Your complaint regarding the demolition of the cross has been investigated.

"After examining the records of the Lazdijai Executive Committee and the legality of the decision and actions of various individuals, the following findings have been reached:

"In the Spring of 1974, you erected a wooden cross on your property without a permit from the area architect-inspector. You thus violated article 3 of the Individual Building Code, enacted by the LSSR Council of Ministers on April 12, 1974.

"According to the LSSR Civil Code, article 114, constructions, erected without the necessary permit, are to be torn down by the builder himself or at his expense, following a decision of the *rayon* Executive Committee.

"On July 1, 1975 the *rayon* architect signed an illegal construction complaint.

"The *rayon* Executive Committee deliberated the above-mentioned complaint the very same day and ruled that the illegally erected cross is to be demolished.

"Since you did not demolish the cross, this was done by the employees of the volunteer fire company. Expenses incurred during the necessary demolition of the cross have not yet been calculated.

"There are no facts to prove that the cross was torn down by drunken men.

"The ruling of the "*Rayon* Executive Committee and the actions of the persons who carried it out are legal.

"Permits for yard installations and constructions are issued by the "*rayon*" architect-inspector.

Lazdijai District Attorney Pigėnas."

Kučiūnai. In approximately 1901, Bishop Baranauskas, on his way from Veisiejai to Seinai, was met at the Briniai village crossroads by the faithful of three villages: Pazapsiai, Briniai and Kalėdiškiai. The Bishop spoke in Lithuanian, blessed the people and asked that a

cross be erected at the crossroads in remembrance of this meeting. Each village erected a cross, three in all.

In recent years the state built a fuel tank next to these crosses. In 1975 the faithful replaced the three rotting crosses with one wooden cross.

After Easter, Kučiūnai District Chairman Kočiūnas and the Lazdijai *Rayon* Architect asked the people why they had erected a cross in such an unsightly spot. They should have chosen a more becoming place for the cross, near a home...

In the middle of June, the cross was demolished by bulldozers, crushed and its pieces hidden under the fuel tank.

* * *

Simnas. On August 6, 1975 a statue of the Virgin Mary was erected in the Simnas churchyard. Local atheists quickly informed the Alytai authorities of this "offense."

On August 7, 1975 the *rayon* architect-inspector came from Alytai and wrote the following report:

"I, Engineer-Inspector Balsys, A.S., of the State Building Inspector's Office, in the presence of Chairman S. Šlenfuktas of the Simnas Executive Committee and Secretary D. Zurnandžian of the Simnas Executive Committee, found, after an investigation, that the Simnas Church Committee (presided over by Br. Mardosa) has illegally erected a religious sculpture in the Simnas churchyard.

"The following work was noted during the inspection: in the churchyard there stands a religious sculpture on a concrete pedestal, it has been painted, the area around the sculpture has been completely restored and landscaped.

"Construction was begun August 5, 1975. There are no documents.

Executive Order:

The Simnas Church Executive Committee is to demolish the illegally erected construction by August 8, 1975 and to restore the area to its original state.

A. Balsys
S. Šlenfuktas
D. Zurnandžian

The pastor of the Simnas parish, Father J. Matulevičius, explained that the statue had been erected without a permit, because

government offices will not issue one.

The following day, Chairman Mardosa of the Simnas Parish Council and the pastor, Father J. Matulevičius were summoned to the Alytai Executive Committee. The following individuals had come to the *Rayon*: Soviet Commissioner for Religious Affairs K. Tumėnas and Vice-Chairman E. Misiulis of the Commission for the Preservation of Museums and Cultural Monuments. Once again questions were raised about why the statue had been erected without a permit from the architect, as if the latter had the right to issue such permits. The Vilnius officials attempted at length to convince the Church Committee Chairman that an offense had been committed and that the statue should be eliminated.

In the afternoon, Soviet Commissioner for Religious Affairs Tumėnas, along with E. Misiulis, came to Simnas to inspect the statue. In the opinion of Tumėnas, the statue was erected in an overly visible spot. It should have been placed in a corner of the church vestibule or in the cemetery.

The faithful of Simnas were deeply scandalized by the "zeal" of the *Rayon* and Vilnius officials. Vigils were kept at night, so that hired hoodlums could not knock down the statue.

On August 17th, the statue of the Virgin Mary was blessed in the presence of a large crowd of faithful.

The Executive Committee of Simnas was issued a reprimand for not interfering with the erection of the statue.

* * *

Šaukėnai. On May 8, 1973 the pastor of Šaukėnai, Father T. Švambarys erected a wooden cross in his small yard. Šaukėnai area and Kelmė *Rayon* officials stirred into action and Secretary Daraška of the Agricultural Party Organization was heard to say: "You can bet on it, I will tear down that cross."

The Vice-Chairman of the Kelmė *Rayon* Executive Committee summoned the pastor and assailed him: "Did you erect a cross? Do you have a permit?" Then Father Švambarys asked: "Does the state farm have a permit when it half buries tires near workshops? Do forestry nurseries have a permit when they bury trees stripped of their bark?"

When the pastor refused to remove the cross, Grabauskas threatened to notify the Bishop of Vilnius and Telšiai that the

pastor was not obeying him, the Vice-Chairman.

Several days later, the pastor was visited by Šaukėnai Area Chairman Jankus and Secretary Gramatas of the Šaukėnai Communist Youth League. They demanded that the pastor remove the cross within three days. The pastor refused.

Soon Commissioner for Religious Affairs K. Tumėnas appeared in Šaukėnai.

"You will have to remove the cross," said the Commissioner.

After inspecting the cross and seeing that the pastor would certainly not remove it, Tumėnas requested that the cross be moved farther back from the street.

Zarasai. Nine years ago a shrine to the Virgin Mary in Zarasai, on M. Melninkaites g., was blown up during the night. The faithful loved this shrine and often prayed there.

S T A T E M E N T

Alytus.

To: The Editor of the Alytus *rayon* newspaper "Communist Tomorrow"

Copies to: Bishops L. Povilonis and Dr. J. Labukas of the Kaunas Archdiocese and the Vilkaviškis Diocese.

On July 26, 1975 the Alytus *rayon* newspaper "Communist Tomorrow" printed an article by S. Noreika, "Problems of Atheistic Work," in which the author calls the women of Simnas Parish "long-tongued religious fanatics" and the priests "narrow-minded churchmen." Would it not be fitting for the *rayon* Communist Party organ to maintain a more cultured style, even with regard to persons of other ideological persuasions? Especially now that the leaders of the Soviet nation have signed the Helsinki document which deals with humane behavior, respect for principles and so on.

Noreika writes that work is delayed in the Buktininkai area because of various religious holidays, and there are losses.

It is common knowledge that farms, shops and factories experience great losses not because of religious holidays, but because of insane drunkenness and unscrupulousness. As long as people in Lithuania seriously observed religious holidays, there was very little

drunkenness and unscrupulousness. These two vices began to flourish in Lithuania in post-war years when people were being pressured into atheism.

Noreika writes that the ministers of the Simnas church "are not ashamed to persistently offer their services." I have been working in the service of the Simnas parish for six years and during that time neither I, nor the pastor, have ever buried any atheists, nor have we christened their children, because, in religious matters, Catholic priests serve only religious persons. Let Noreika give at least one example of when and to which atheist we offered our services!

Only the atheists of Lithuania are not ashamed persistently to offer their services. They want Catholics to act against their conscience and be married and buried in civil ceremonies. Communists are severely criticized if they bury their religious parents with the rites of the Church. In the magazine *Time and Events* (1975, No. 6) Chairman E. Miškinis of the Kratiškiai District was criticized for having buried his devout mother with Catholic rites. The following advice is given in that same issue: "Efforts should be made to convince family members and relatives of the absurdity of religious rites and, if that should prove impossible, categorically to refuse to attend funerals and christenings."

The article "Problems of Atheistic Work" writes that the Simnas Agricultural Communist Youth Organization complains that "individual members participate in religious rites, and celebrate Christmas and Easter. They must be required to carry out conscientiously the statutes of the Lithuanian Communist Youth League.

Wisdom should dictate that the Communist Youth Organization accept only atheists into its ranks. At present, not only in Simnas but throughout Lithuania, efforts are made to enroll all religious young people into the Communist Youth Organization, and later they are forced "conscientiously to carry out the statutes of the Communist Youth Organization"; that is, act against their conscience. Thus, young people are taught to be hypocrites and all moral foundations are weakened.

Noreika is pleased that "atheistic work among school-age children has greatly improved."

The essence of atheistic work in the Simnas middle school, as

in all Lithuanian schools, amounts to the moral rape of religious school children. The Soviet press has often lamented that, before the war, non-believer children were forced to take religion courses. If that was wrong, why are *believing* children now being forced not only to learn about atheism but also to act against their conscience. Teacher Meškelevičius of the Simnas middle school gives failing grades to religious children who refuse to do the atheistic assignments he gives. How can all of this be reconciled with respect for the rights of believing children and their parents? Can this injury to the children be called discipline and considered good?

Simnas, August 7, 1975

Father S. Tamkevičius

Šiupyliai

To: Soviet Commissioner for Religious Affairs

From: Father A. Ylius, Pastor of Šiupyliai

A Statement

At the end of July or the beginning of August 1946, I was tried under paragraph 58, section 10, line 1A, USSR Criminal Code, for organizing an attempt to restore freedom, independence and a democratic republic to Lithuania. The interrogation lasted nearly ten months. In the records of the interrogation, as far as I remember, evidence of atrocity was not presented, terrorist or criminal acts were not proven and there was no evidence regarding weapons. At the time of my arrest, there were no weapons, no ammunition in my apartment.

Who gave S. Laurinaitis, a history student, the right to slander me publicly in the press (*Komjaunimo Tiesa — The Truth of the Communist Youth*, May 2, 1975) by accusing me of atrocity and other crimes?

When, on January 30, 1961, I was deprived of my registration certificate as a minister of cult, I went to the Commissioner for Religious Affairs Rugienis to ask why this was done.

"You have committed atrocities," said Rugienis.

"Please prove what atrocity I committed while pastor of Leščiai from 1956 to 1961."

Instead of proof, Rugienis took the magazine *Tiesos Kelias* (*The Way of Truth*) from his desk drawer and showed me the obituary

I had written on the late Father Štombergis, pastor of Saločiai, and he told me to read it.

"Would you please see when that article was written," I suggested to the Commissioner.

The article was written in 1939. In other words, by writing the article, I committed an atrocity against the Soviet government, which did not yet exist in Lithuania at that time. My worst crime in Leščiai was to repair and repaint the church and revive the stagnating Leščiai parish.

What kind of history student is Laurinaitis if he does not know whether he is distorting historical facts? Father Lelešius was never a member of the Marian order.

When dealing with the decline of monasteries in Lithuania, Laurinaitis should not have relied solely on the statements of J. Anyčas, but on objective sources. I personally clearly remember how, in 1940, on the order of Maurukas, chief of the Marijampolė District, the Marian monastery in Marijampolė was evacuated. The article "The Truth About Monasteries" (*Komjaunimo Tiesa — The Truth of the Communist Youth*, May 2, 1975) is a pure falsification of historical facts for anti-religious propaganda purposes. Aren't atheists ashamed to use such forgery? Does this conform with moral standards? History will not forget such forgers.

Šiupyliai

Father A. Ylius
Pastor of the Šiupyliai church

(The statement has been shortened. — Ed. note in the original Lithuanian text.)

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Kučiūnai

To: The Commissioner for Religious Affairs

Copy to: The Apostolic Administrator of the Kaunas
Archdiocese, Bishop Labukas

Statement from: Father Juozas Kriščiūnas, residing in Kučiūnai

On July 7th of this year, after morning services, the following local officials came to the Kučiūnai church: District Chairman Kočiūnas, Party Secretary Sakavičius and (Mrs.) Dimšienė, Secretary of the Communist Youth Organization. They found me sitting in the confessional asking the children their prayers one by one. Other children were sitting in the church waiting their turn.

On July 9th they again found me sitting in the confessional and the children standing in line on either side of the confessional. They were coming up to the confessional one by one and practicing their confession aloud.

The local officials drew up a complaint and the Lazdijai *Rayon* Administrative Committee fined me fifty rubles for teaching children catechism (Case No. 154, July 17, 1975), although I stated that I did not teach catechism because the parents themselves had been doing a good job of teaching it at home for the past several years.

I am asking you, Commissioner, to take the appropriate steps to overrule the decision of the *rayon* administrative committee, and to see to it that no obstacles are placed in the way of the performance of my priestly duties.

July 25, 1975

Father J. Kriščiūnas
Pastor of Kučiūnai

Zibalai. In the Kaišiadoriai Diocese, permission was granted in 1975 to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation only in Vievis and Zibalai. The Zibalai parish is small, out of the way, served by the Kiaukliai parish pastor Father A. Čarna.

It was announced that Confirmation would be administered in Zibalai on July 6th. As the announced date drew near, the administration of the sacrament was postponed to July 13th, and later for an unspecified period of time.

On Tuesday, July 29th, the administrator of the Kaišiadoriai Diocese, Canon Andrikonis, announced by telegram to the neighboring parishes that Confirmation would be administered in Zibalai on August 3rd. Because it was not possible to make this announcement from the pulpit, it was passed on in stores, dairy centers,

and by mailmen. The pastors themselves went from house to house, but little good was achieved. There was no time nor opportunity to examine the religious education of the recipients. The sacrament of Confirmation was granted not to thousands of children, but to barely several hundred. Moreover, the surrounding parishes were left without Masses because the pastors had to go to Zibalai without announcing their departure to the faithful.

This is how the government sometimes gives permission to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Alanta. In 1973 the government, using harvest time as an excuse, prevented Confirmation from being administered in Alanta.

On July 6, 1974, the Sacrament of Confirmation was to be administered in Alanta, but the government tried to prevent it in several ways: Children were driven to camps and on trips, state farms were forbidden to give the use of trucks, on the roads persistent motor vehicle inspectors checked private cars and looked for violations. The town of Alanta itself was surrounded by signs prohibiting entry. Entry into the pastor's yard was barred: A no-entry sign was posted. The pastor of Videniškiai, Canon Jonas Jonys, was taking liturgical vestments to the bishop when he had to trespass a no-entry sign. Chief Motor Vehicle Inspector Grigaliūnas of the Molėtai *Rayon* and Motor Vehicle Inspector Michniov stopped him, crossed out his registration and forced him to retake his driver's test. Holes were punched in the registrations of the pastor of Suginėčiai, Father Česlovas Zažeckas, and the pastor of Anykščiai, Father Petras Budriūnas. Truck drivers let their passengers out far from Alanta, because their driver's licenses were taken away if they were caught by motor vehicle inspectors.

Director Laurikėnas of the *Rayon* finance committee and Chief Inspector (Mrs.) Girskienė, accompanied by Security agents, tried to catch sellers of religious articles not only in the churchyard, but in the church itself. An uproar was heard as the officials dragged a fallen vendor of religious articles from the church. Then, the priests ejected the enraged officials from the church.

Valkininkai. In June 1975, the pastor of Valkininkai, Father Algi-

mantas Keina, was summoned to the Vilnius Security Committee to retrieve the things taken from him during a search. Of the books and prayerbooks he had in several copies, only one of each was returned. For instance, approximately fifty prayerbooks were not returned, nor were approximately forty religious booklets for children entitled *Sveika Marija (Hail Mary)*.

Interrogator Markevičius explained that they would be sent to the Grigiškiai paper factory. The following books were also not returned: *Deimančiukai (Little Diamonds)*, *Dievo ir Žmogaus Tarnyboje (In the Service of God and Man)* by Krupavičius, *Bažnyčia Dabarties Pasaulyje (The Church in Today's World)* by Maceina, *Reikia Duoti Pilną Religijos Laisvę. (Complete Religious Freedom Must be Granted)*, and others. He was promised the return of his typewriter at a later date.

* * *

Kaišiadorys. In 1975 the Kaišiadorys *Rayon* district chairmen were sent instructions on how investigations are to be conducted:

1. Date and time of visit.
2. Information about ministers of cult (last name, first name, how long in the service of the church, reports of local officials on their actions.)
3. Is there a list of the committee of twenty and of the trustees ?
4. Religious holidays or festivals which you witnessed, and their names.
5. Approximate number of men, women, young people and school-age children attending church.
6. Content of the sermon (main thoughts, political religion, double-meanings, suggestions), what was read (excerpts from the Bible, letter from the Bishop and so on.)
7. Assistance during the services. Who served at Mass, were there any under-age boys; who strewed flowers, were there any under-age girls?
8. Were non-religious flags carried in the processions, did persons wearing national costumes participate (how many were there)?
9. Makes and licenses of cars parked near the church.
10. Were literature, cult articles, souvenirs, candy and the like sold in the churchyard or the church?
11. Mass political work organized that same day at the library,

school and sports facilities.

Investigation conducted by:.....
name, place of employment) Date:

...(Last name, first
Signature.....

Kelmė. On March 10, 1975 Vice-Chairman Vytautas Grabauskas of the Kelmė Executive Committee summoned to the *Rayon* all the pastors and church committee chairmen within his jurisdiction.

First, they were addressed by an official from Vilnius. He reproached them for repairing churches without permits and threatened to punish them. Besides, workers who do the work must be paid. In the opinion of the Vilnius official, only educated men should be elected to church committees. The pastor of Vaiguva Father Šimkus, observed that all citizens are equal before the law and anyone can be elected.

Vice-Chairman Grabauskas berated them because churches are being repaired without permits and the deceased are escorted to the cemetery by priests with religious symbols: flags and crosses.

The pastor of Šaukėnai observed that this was forbidden only under the Czar.

"It is now also like under the Czar," exclaimed the excited Vice-Chairman.

Salos. On May 25, 1975, during solemn services in honor of Mary Help of Christians, the Salos state farm (Rokiškis *Rayon*) proclaimed a work day, even though it was Sunday. On the eve of the religious festival, group leaders warned workers, "If you don't come to work tomorrow, don't try to ask for either fodder or pastureland for your cow. You will be free to look wherever you please, but we won't give it to you."

A member of the Salos church committee, Izidorius Bagdonas, and his wife ignored the warning and came to church. Group leader (Mrs.) Matiukienė informed Assistant Director Steponavičius of the Salos state farm that Bagdonas and his wife had not obeyed her. Bagdonas was immediately deprived of a pasture close to his home and assigned one far from home.

Several of the farm's workers were absent on the day of the services, but they were not punished, because they were not in church.

In October 1974, a storm uprooted a huge poplar near the Salos church which in turn broke several trees, damaged the churchyard wall and, coming to rest against an oak, pushed it against the churchyard gate, which is an architectural monument. The whole Salos churchyard was covered with fallen trees.

The custodian of the Salos church (Miss) M. Šukytė and (Mrs.) Bartkevičienė went to see Salos State Farm Director Steponavičius and asked that the farm take away the fallen trees. Director Steponavičius only taunted them: "What, you want me to clean up the churchyard? You have a young pastor, let him clean it up."

After receiving oral permission from District Chairwoman (Mrs.) Raugalienė, Chairman Šukys of the Salos church committee cut up the fallen trees and gave them to (Miss) Šukytė, the church custodian. The leaning oak and five other trees, though posing a danger, were left as they were.

In 1975, at the request of the church committee, the Salos District appointed a commission which ruled that six trees in the churchyard and park posed a danger.

In February 1975 the Salos District received permission to cut down the oak and other trees from the Rokiškis *Rayon* Office for the Preservation of Nature. District Chairwoman (Mrs.) Raugalienė informed the Salos church committee of this permission.

"Cut down the trees; we are not issuing a written permit because it's not necessary."

The trees were cut down. The district chairwoman was invited to observe the work, but did not attend.

The Salos church committee took the oak and two maples to a sawmill because material was needed to repair the church. Then Assistant Director Steponavičius of the state farm confiscated this material.

On April 6, 1975 the Salos church committee wrote the Lithuanian SSR Attorney General and Soviet Commissioner for Religious Affairs Tumėnas. The latter made no reply, while the Attorney General sent the church committee's statement to the District Attorney of Rokiškis.

In May 1975 the Rokiškis District Attorney Cibulskis came to the Salos district and accused the pastor Father Nykštas, of having cut down the churchyard trees without permission. Moreover, the pastor was accused of cutting down seven, and not six, trees. A special permit should have been obtained to cut down an oak. The District Attorney ignored Father Nykštas' explanation that he cut down only six trees and that permission had been granted.

"Show me the written permit from the district and the forest warden. You need documents," said the District Attorney.

Assistant Director Steponavičius (former Director) of the Salos State Farm denied giving permission to remove the fallen trees from the churchyard. Salos District Chairwoman (Mrs.) Raugalienė also denied ever having said they had permission to cut down six trees. No one summoned or questioned the witnesses who were suggested.

Church Committee Chairman Šukys was questioned by the District Attorney about who wrote the statement to the Attorney General's Office of the Lithuanian SSR, who signed it, who organized the cutting down of the trees and so forth.

In the presence of the District Attorney, Assistant Director of the State Farm Steponavičius called Šukys a thief.

Soon afterward Šukys was subjected to as many as three counts of the number of farm animals he keeps. The law allows only two pigs, but Šukys was found to keep as many as three! What a "crime"! The assistant director of the state farm forced him to sell the pig to the state immediately.

There was also a check of how many farm animals were kept by the Salos Church Treasurer Mažeikis. Two cows were found, while only one cow is permitted. The treasurer was forced to sell the heifer, even though Mažeikis is the sole support of a family of six.

The Rokiškis District Attorney ordered Inspector Blažys of the Office of Environmental Protection to issue a summons to Church Committee Chairman Šukys for cutting down the oak. He had to pay a fine of 30 rubles.

An employee of the Salos District, (Mrs.) Baronienė, was discussed at a Party meeting and given a reprimand for giving a copy of the permit issued by the Office of Environmental Protection to the Salos church committee. If the church committee had not obtained a copy of the permit, it would probably have been punished for

cutting down all the trees. Regarding the Church Committee Chairman Šukys, the government officials stated: "If he complains or does not pay the fine, he will be punished for all the trees and will have to pay a fine of over 1,000 rubles."

The actions of the *Rayon* District Attorney and the Assistant Director of the state farm proved that the faithful have no rights and must keep quiet. If they try to complain they will get worse; a way will be found to punish them.

Krekenava. On September 3, 1975, Krekenava District Chairman P. Malinauskas wrote Father Kazys Dulksnis that, by attaching a memorial plaque honoring Maironis to a tree in the Krekenava churchyard, he had violated a law on environment protection, and ordered this plaque removed by September 10th.

The Krekenava church committee removed the nails from the tree, wired the plaque to the tree and informed the district chairman of their actions. A month later, the memorial plaque was stolen.

* * *

Viekšniai. A resident of Židikai village, (Mrs.) Jadvyga Grabienė, went to the U.S. in 1973 to visit her son, a priest. While in Rome, (Mrs.) Grabienė purchased rosaries for herself and for relatives. Soviet customs officials made a thorough search of the elderly (Mrs.) Grabienė and destroyed in her presence the rosaries they found. The officials wanted to seize the last rosary which (Mrs.) Grabienė held clutched in her hand.

"I will never give up this treasure," tearfully cried the old woman, "even if you twist my arms."

Several years ago, the author of this article witnessed a "pogrom" by Russian customs officials: how they stuffed into bags the rosaries, holy pictures and statues they had seized from people. "Why do you need such fetishes?" taunted the officials.

One woman asked, "What do you do with the holy articles you take away?"

"We throw them into the trash." answered the official.

All the travellers were stunned, and some brushed away tears.

Laugaliai. Director Striauka of the old people's convalescence

home forbade the priest from visiting the old people and administer the sacraments to them. In April, 1975 the old people wrote to the Klaipėda Executive Committee asking that the priest be allowed to administer the sacraments to them. Vice-Chairman Imbrasas of the Executive Committee visited the home and stated that he could not fulfill their request because suitable facilities were not available.

Upon seeing a religious picture near the bed of an old man, the vice-chairman ordered it removed. (Miss) Riaukaitė, an invalid, approached the secretary of the Gargždai Party Committee and asked that the priest be allowed to visit the old people's home.

(Miss) Riaukaitė was scolded: "Don't bother me with such nonsense!" stated the Party secretary.

Jurbarkas. In the beginning of 1975, the juvenile inspector of the Jurbarkas Security Police summoned the nurse (Mrs.) Kleinienė and warned her:

"If you allow your son to go to church and serve at Mass, you will be stripped of your rights as a mother."

"I do not and will not forbid my son to go to church," answered (Mrs.) Kleinienė. "When my sons began to serve at Mass, they became better, more obedient, more diligent in school. Take away the parental rights of those whose children are being brought up wrong. Not long ago, hoodlums broke the windows of our school, destroyed our school medical supplies and broke desks. Have the parents of these children already been stripped of parental rights? My son did not commit any crime, then why do you want to take away my rights as a mother?"

"That's not my affair," explained the inspector. "I was handed down the order to warn you and I have done my duty."

Klaipėda. During Holy Week of 1975, the small Klaipėda church was bursting at the seams with people. School children and young people kept vigil all Easter eve in front of the tomb of Christ. After Easter, Vice-Chairman Ruginis of the Klaipėda Executive Committee ordered Klaipėda pastor Father Jonas Baikauskas to eject the girls keeping vigil from the altar. The pastor, frightened by Ruginis, told the girls that he would allow them to keep vigil only if they brought a permission slip from Ruginis.

The mothers of the girls tried to get such permission, but were met with Ruginis' harsh, "It is not allowed!" The parents decided not to give in. The girls continue to keep vigil, ignoring all prohibitions.

* * *

Vilnius. A group of fifteen priests, under the leadership of Panevėžys Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas, left Vilnius on July 6, 1975 for Moscow. After receiving the necessary instructions, the group of priests and pilgrims went to Rome.

This excursion of priest-pilgrims to Rome was organized by Soviet Government officials for propaganda purposes: Let the world see what religious freedom exists in Lithuania.

At the same time that Lithuanian priests were visiting the churches of Rome, the LSSR Supreme Court was sentencing Nijolė Sadūnaitė to three years in a strict regime labor camp for having made typewritten copies of the 11th issue of *Lietuvos Katalikų Bažnyčios Kronika* (*Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*).

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