

CHRONICLE OF THE  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IN LITHUANIA  
No. 25

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A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,  
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA No. 25  
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights  
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

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INTRODUCTION

The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, No. 25, dated Christmas, 1976, opens with a brief word of thanks to a group of Catholics in Ireland, who had unsuccessfully tried to obtain permission from the Soviet government necessary to bring to Lithuania a statue of Our Lady of Fatima. "The Soviet government was able only to prevent delivery of the gift, but it was powerless to prevent your love and solidarity with the suffering from reaching us."

A new series of raids and arrests is documented, including those of Ona Pranckūnaitė and Vladas Lapienis. A formal complaint by Father Antanas Jokubauskas against harassment by the KGB follows.

This issue of the *Chronicle* describes in detail the frustrating history of negotiations between the Catholics of Slabadaï and the government, over the right of the faithful to worship in their local church, which has been turned into a grain mill.

This is followed by the personal history of Algimantas Šaltis, who since youth has suffered persecution for his religious beliefs.

The latest developments in the case of Mečislovas Jurevičius, suffering job discrimination because of his religious convictions, are also described.

Father Juozas Zdebskis is reported to have been falsely accused of driving under the influence of alcohol; hundreds of religious believers come to his defence.

Since 1972, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* has scrupulously documented the struggle for human rights in that Soviet-occupied country, on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea.

Laborously typed in carbon copies, and passed secretly from hand to hand, the *Chronicle* is ultimately smuggled out to the western world, where it has caused a sensation.

The *Chronicle* describes the heroic efforts of some 3 million Lithuanians, 85.5% Roman Catholics of the western rite when the country was forcibly annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940, to preserve the faith of their forebears.

It is a story of six dioceses with no resident bishop and no normal contacts with the outside world, trying to maintain traditional

ecclesiastical forms of administration. In reality, all decisions are made by the state-appointed Deputy for Religious Affairs—an atheist.

It is the story of the struggle between clergy who have decided for one reason or another to cooperate with the regime, and stubborn dissident priests and faithful insisting on their rights under the Soviet Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Natural Law.

It is the record of heroic parents of children, who insist on rearing their offspring in the Catholic Faith, against all efforts by teachers and government youth leaders to dragoon youngsters into various Communist youth organizations.

The *Chronicle* is the record of mere school children risking the wrath of atheistic teachers and even of Security police, to go to church or sing in a choir.

Constantly harassed in one way or another, the religious believers of Lithuania find themselves in the position of second-class citizens.

Denied access to mass media to tell their story, or to religious literature to nourish their faith, the Catholics of Lithuania find it necessary to photo-copy such religious literature as they can lay their hands on.

Ironically, the Soviet constitution, under which the people of Lithuania are forced to live, contains glowing guarantees of freedom of conscience, of assembly, of press, and of speech.

In practice, such constitutional guarantees are over-ridden by unwritten administrative decrees, verbal interpretations, and galling bureaucratic high-handedness, giving atheism the position of the established religion of the Soviet Union and its subject territories.

The message of the *Chronicle*, loud and clear, is that the atheistic government is slowly strangling the Church in Lithuania, while doing its best to make it look like the Church is dying a natural death. The people of Lithuania are risking imprisonment, labor camp, and torture to make sure that we are not deceived.

In this translation, done in part by Dalia Bulvičius, every effort has been made to remain faithful to the original in every respect, even at the expense of style in some instances. When absolutely necessary, a brief Translator's Note provides background within the text itself.

*Rev. Casimir Pugevičius*  
*Translation Editor*

THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
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Lithuania

December 25, 1976

WE THANK THE CATHOLICS OF IRELAND

On November 29, Vatican Radio announced the surprising and very good news that you Catholics of Ireland had prepared a beautiful gift for us—a statue of the Holy Mother of God—and were preparing to bring it to Vilnius. The Soviet government was able to prevent the delivery of the gift, but it was powerless to prevent your love and your solidarity with those who suffer, from reaching us. These latter gifts are the most precious to us persecuted Catholics of Lithuania.

Accept, therefore, our Irish brethren, the heartfelt thanks of the Catholics of Lithuania for the gift, the love and the defense of our rights. May God reward you, who yourselves have experienced so many trials, for remaining sensitive to the fate of your far-away brethren!

The Catholics of Lithuania

## SEARCHES AND ARRESTS

(Case No. 345)

On the evening of October 19, 1976, four security agents broke into the apartment of Jonas Matulionis, at Gorkio g. No. 17 b.6.

Two security officers, hidden in the apartment of Matulionis' neighbor, waited for the auspicious moment to break into his apartment without interruption, or causing a disturbance. It seems that another two were waiting in the yard. When Matulionis returned home, and V. Lapienis came to see him, the Security agents forced their way in.

During the search they seized an "Optima" typewriter, *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania No. 24*, Solzhenytsin's *Gulag Archipelago* (the Lithuanian translation), and other literature. After the search, Matulionis and Lapienis were arrested.

Matulionis, forty-five years old, is a graduate in Lithuanian studies, and later enrolled at the Conservatory, but was expelled for singing in church. He worked in the Library of the Republic, and was later Director of the Art Museum.

Lapienis, born in 1906, an economist, is a graduate of the University of Vilnius Department of Economics.

Three days later, Matulionis' apartment was repeatedly searched, especially those areas which were not covered during the first search: the basement and the garret.

On October 26, 1976, a search was carried out at the home of Matulionis' sister (Mrs.) Albina Kibildienė, residing in Kupiškio Rayon, Pelyčių Kaimas (Šimonių Paštas). The search took from 1 P.M. until 2 A.M. the next morning. Matulionis' sister Albina was not home that day, having gone to Vilnius Security to take her brother some food.

She had taken with her the keys to the cupboard. The security agents forced open the doors of the cupboard. During the search they seized J. Petrutis' book, *How They Shot Us*, a typewriter and some carbon paper, writing paper, and packaging material.

The search was carried out by Prosecutor Matulevičius, and taking part in the search were Party Secretary Žilevičius, of Šimoniai, M. Karnishev and J. Gramkov.

On October 20, 1976, the Security people came to the apartment of Vldas Lapienis, at Dauguviečio g. 5, b.11. Overseeing

the search was Major Pilelis, Prosecutor of Very Special Cases, assisted by two other security agents. The search began at noon and ended at 8:30 P.M. Searched were two rooms, the kitchen, the second floor and a utility closet.

During the search they confiscated: *Aušra No. 3 (The Dawn)*, *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania No. 23*, Solzhenytsin's *Gulag Archipelago*, *Cultural Repression in Lithuania*, Solzhenytsin's *The First Circle*, Gliauda's Simas, *The Chronicle of Current Events No. 40*, a manuscript, "Michael Suslov, the Hangman of Lithuania", *Advice on How to Act During Interrogation*, various typed texts, addresses, a tourist's map of Leningrad, and three typewriters. Most of the articles were found in the bottom of the piano.

Upon completion of the search, the security people placed everything in a bag, which they stamped "No. 203". Vladas Lapienis' wife Elena, did not sign the record of the search. At the beginning of the search, Mrs. Lapienienė demanded that among the official witnesses of the raid there should be no Russians or drunken neighbors. Pilelis agreed, and summoned people by chance. After the search, Mrs. Lapienienė was interrogated.

On October 23, 1976, Mrs. Lapienienė went to the Security Committee to pick up the keys to her apartment. At that point, Major Pilelis, Major Urbonas and one other Security officer put Mrs. Lapienienė in a car and drove to her apartment once more, to pick up some things of concern to them. The search began at 11:30 A.M. and ended at 2:30 P.M.

The Security agents declared that Vladas Lapienis had asked for a folder with some documents. During the search they took a folder with documents, 269 polyethylene folders, 3 cartons of typewriter ribbons, 20 kilos of thin paper, carbon paper, etc.

Vilnius

To: Leonid Brezhnev,  
General Secretary, Communist Party of the Soviet Union

On October 19, 1976, State Security officials in Vilnius arrested two Catholics: Vladas Lapienis and Jonas Matulionis, having first searched their apartments. In the course of the searches, they found the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

We, priests of Lithuania, feel a moral obligation to declare:

1. Paragraph No. 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of belief and the right to express that belief freely; this right includes the freedom to hold one's convictions without interference and the freedom to seek, to obtain and to distribute information and ideas by whatever means, regardless of national boundaries." This declaration was signed by the government of the Soviet Union.

We do not know whether the persons arrested merely read the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, or whether they also disseminated it; nevertheless, in either case they were guilty of no offense, since they had the right to do so. The KGB agents arresting Lapienis and Matulionis were in the wrong, since it is known to everyone in Lithuania that the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* gives objective information, even though it might be unpleasant for some.

2. The persons arrested, V. Lapienis and J. Matulionis, are known to the faithful not only in Vilnius, but throughout Lithuania. They are both deeply believing Catholics and persons of rare moral rectitude, who could not by their nature engage in the dissemination of so-called calumnious inventions. Hence, the efforts of government officials to convict and to sentence these prisoners who are believers will evoke considerable anger from the believing public, and will greatly compromise the Soviet government.

Since both of those arrested are in very poor health, we request you, Mr. Secretary General, to take action as soon as possible to have Lapienis and Matulionis released.

E. Honeker, Chairman of the State Council of the Democratic Republic of (East) Germany, in conferring an award upon you, said that the citizens of the Democratic Republic of Germany were well acquainted with your tireless activities on behalf of the happiness of the Soviet people. Mr. Secretary General, in ordering the release of these innocent prisoners, you will communicate to us also, that of which Communists abroad are convinced!

December 16, 1976

A Group of Lithuanian Priests

N.B. This appeal was sent to the editors of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* by the group of Lithuanian priests, who request their brother Lithuanians in the free world to acquaint



the leaders in the Kremlin with the contents of the appeal. Appeals sent by mail always end up in the vaults of the KGB.

Panevėžys. On October 20, 1976, at 3 P.M., a group of Security agents, led by Lt. Col. Petruškevičius, arrived at the offices of the "Linas" agency, where (Miss) Ona Pranckūnaitė was working, and presented an order sanctioned by the Prosecutor, to search the place where she worked, her apartment and storage area.

Taking part in the search as public witnesses were: Virgilijus Dilba, residing in Panevėžys, Respubliko g. 46, bt. 80, Petras Matuzevičius, residing at Angariečio g. 1, bt. 416, Panevėžys, and (Mrs.) Regina Misevičienė, chief of the cadre section of the "Linas"-association, who did not try to disguise her glee over the search taking place, and over the possible arrest.

The search at work took five hours. In the course of it they confiscated: a "Consul" typewriter, sixteen mimeographed copies of the book by A. Griauslys, *Šviesa Tamsoje (Light in the Darkness)*, sixteen copies of *Gyvenimo Šaltiniai (Sources of Life)*, by S. Žilys, and a few pages typed from the book *Pamokslai Šiandien (Sermons Today)*.

Afterwards, Miss Pranckūnaitė was taken to her apartment at Gogolio g. 59, b. 70, where the security agents continued their search, which took until 9:30 P.M. After the search, Miss Pranckūnaitė was driven to Security headquarters for the night, and the door to her apartment was sealed. At the door and outside Security agents stood guard all night.

At 8:30 A.M., the Security people brought Miss Pranckūnaitė back and continued their search. In the course of the search, when they found an electric mimeograph machine, a large group of security people was called out as reinforcements, and three more automobiles arrived.

Seized during the search were: an electrographic copying machine, set up in the bathroom, and operated on the principle of the "Era" machine; about eighty packs of writing paper, a high tension block for the "Era", spare parts for the copying machine, (rulonas dermatino, two spaustuvai), book-binders, knives, a "Consul" typewriter and, two savings account pass-books in the amount of 3400 rubles.

Also confiscated were many books of a religious nature: *Gyvoji liturgija (The Living Liturgy)*, *Amžinosios būties problemos (Problems of Eternal Existence)*, *Jobo drama (The Drama of Job)*, *Sak-*

*ramantai ir malda (Sacraments and Prayer), Žodžiai broliams (Words for the Brethren), Dievas šiandien (God Today), Viešpatie, kad regėčiau (Lord, That I May See), Didieji dabarties klausimai (The Great Questions Today), Saulės giesmė (Hymn of the Sun), Milžinas, didvyris, šventasis (Giant, Hero, Saint), Šiluvos Marijos šventovės istorija (History of the Shrine of Our Lady of Šiluva), Katalikų katekizmas (Catholic Catechism, pages reproduced by "Era" process), Didysis Inkvizitorius (The Great Inquisitor), Šviesa tamsoje (Light in the Darkness, fourteen copies reproduced on the "Era"), Dievas sutemoose (God in Twilight), Ieškau tavo veido (I Seek Your Face), Tikybos pirmamokslis (A Primer of Faith — ten copies) and many other books.*

The search ended at 7:30 P.M. During the search, photographs were made. Invited to witness the search were: Petras Matuzevičius, Liudas Daukas, of Algirdo g. 53, b.1, and Specialist Jurgis Kisielius, of Klaipėdos g. 108, b. 22.

After the search, Miss Pranckūnaitė was taken away for interrogation. She was asked who brought her the copying machine and the materials. Miss Pranckūnaitė explained that around the middle of June two unknown men asked her to rent them the room, because they wanted to set up an "Era" reproduction machine, with which they were going to reproduce prayer-books, catechisms and religious literature.

She agreed to their repeated requests. The men would come at night and work, and she would just straighten out the room after work.

The interrogators demanded that she tell who had written her the letters confiscated during the search, but Miss Pranckūnaitė refused to reveal the names, since she did not want innocent people pushed around by Security.

The interrogator explained to Miss Pranckūnaitė that at the time, many people had been caught, including Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, author of the *Chronicle*, who had already admitted that in the middle of July he had turned over the latest issues of the *Chronicle* and of *The Dawn*, and asked that twenty copies of each be made.

Miss Pranckūnaitė asserted that she knew no author of the *Chronicle*. Then the interrogator let Miss Pranckūnaitė read a spurious confession allegedly made by Father Tamkevičius. The prisoner asserted, "Such things could be admitted only by a person shut up in a psychiatric hospital for half-a-year."



**Ona Pranckūnaitė**

The interrogator remarked that Miss Pranckūnaitė was a nun and that they knew of other nuns, who used to supply her with paper.

The interrogator spared no effort to convince Miss Pranckūnaitė that she was innocent. The real culprits were those men, and she had to tell their names, because otherwise she would lose her furniture and apartment; and she would get eight years in prison, where her health would be wrecked, while those men went on driving around in their Volgas.

"You don't know what Siberia means," the interrogator threatened. The young woman shot back that she knew perfectly well, because twenty-two years earlier, at the age of fifteen, she had written a poem against the Soviet government and had received ten years.

Unable to get anything out of her by gentle means, the interrogators called her a prostitute, and threatened to knock her teeth out.

The woman said that it made no difference whether they knocked them out, or whether they fell out in Siberia.

Miss Pranckūnaitė was interrogated October 22 and 23. Interrogator Petruškevičius reminded her that they would meet more than once in Vilnius.

At the present time, Miss Pranckūnaitė is being held under house

arrest. She is allowed to go to work each day, as well as to church and shopping. Everywhere she is carefully followed. Undoubtedly, Security wants to know who her close contacts are.

Miss Pranckūnaite was not paid for the month of October, on the grounds that she engaged in outside work. The chief of the cadre section has been heard to say, "It would have been better if she had stolen half the factory, rather than to have done what she did!"

Miss Pranckūnaite's first encounter with interrogators was on May 15, 1951. She was fifteen at the time. She was handed ten years for an "anti-Soviet" ditty:

*Dunduli, Zalecki*

(Names of agronomists)

*God will show you no pity.*

*You forced us into communes;*

*Our children will starve.*

*In the commune we suffer,*

*Tattered and barefoot.*

*Help us, Mary,*

*For you still live.*

For her "care-free youth" Onute can thank Stalin's "sun". She returned to her homeland from labor camp in 1957.

In December, 1976, Miss Pranckūnaite received a summons to come to the Vilnius KGB for interrogation, which lasted three days, (October 7, 8, 9). The Security men reserved a hotel room for her every evening. During the interrogation, the Security agents asked about the books in typescript, about Father Buliauskas, Father Babrauskas, and others. The interrogator threatened to confiscate her cooperative apartment and her money.

"If you take me in, why should I need an apartment?" asked Miss Pranckūnaite. They further threatened that she would have to spend time in the prison at Panevėžys with prostitutes.

THE TRIAL OF FATHER ANTANAS JOKUBAUSKAS

To the People's Court of the *Rayon* of Radviliškis

A Complaint

By The Rev. Antanas Jokūbauskas, Son of Jonas,  
Administrator of the Parish of Pociūnėliai,  
Residing at Pociūnėliai, *Rayon* of Radviliškis

On September 30 of this year, the Commission for Applying Administrative Fines, attached to the Executive Committee of the Working People's Soviet, consisting of Chairman A. Mikelis, Secretary R. Diršienė, and members Vaičiūnas, Vaišutis and Vasiliauskas, fined me 50 (fifty) rubles, accusing me of transgressing the Instructions of the Praesidium of the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic "On Responsibility for Transgression of Laws Concerning Religious Cults".

However, that instruction does not indicate what transgression I, as a priest, was guilty of: Perhaps it was because I did not hold services, or because I failed to administer the Sacraments to someone. I tested children to see whether they were properly prepared to receive Holy Communion. As a priest, I have the right and the duty to do so, and I have transgressed no law.

According to the Soviet Constitution, the principles of Lenin and international obligations, the private teaching of religion is allowed. Therefore, even if I had taught children catechism in the full sense, I would have transgressed neither against the Constitution nor against the law.

1. As a priest, I have the obligation imposed on me by God and the Church, to teach everyone the truths of the Faith proclaimed by Christ, and also teach children catechism.

2. Paragraph 96 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic guarantees: "The freedom to carry out religious cult is acknowledged for all citizens." The essence of religious cult for the Catholic Church consists of announcing the teachings of Christ, the celebration of Holy Mass and the administration of the sacraments.

In other words, the Constitution acknowledges freedom to do these three things. Hence the priest has the full right to proclaim the teaching of Christ to adults and to children, and to prepare children for the reception of the sacraments.

3. The teaching of Lenin on this matter is clear: "Everyone must have the full right not only to hold some sort of faith, but also to spread that faith." (Vol. VI, p. 365.)

4. In the Decree Concerning the Separation of Church from State, and of School from Church, promulgated January 23, 1918, in Paragraph No. 9, we read:

"The school is separated from the Church. Religious education in any state or public school, or in private schools, where subjects of general education are taught, is no longer allowed. Citizens may teach and study religion privately."

5. The United Nations Organization on December 10, 1948, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the Soviet Union also signed. Paragraph 18 of that declaration says:

"Each person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right allows one freely to profess his or her religion individually as well as collectively, freely to study religion, to conduct services and to carry out religious ceremonies."

Hence, according to the Declaration, one is allowed to study not only the catechism, but all religious doctrine. If learning is allowed, then it is self-evident that teaching is also allowed. The priest, too, is allowed to teach, for he is a specially trained teacher of religion, and no special prohibition is made in his regard.

6. Everyone has the right to profess his or her religion and convictions individually as well as publicly, publicly or privately to perform ceremonies and religious services (International Pact on Civil and Political Rights, UNO, 12/16/1966).

7. July 30 to August 1, 1975, in the Conferences on European Security and Cooperation at Helsinki, it was decided:

"The participating states will respect human rights and basic freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, without regard to race, sex or religion." (Final Act, VII). This Final Act was signed by representatives of thirty-five states including Secretary General Leonid Brezhnev, of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Therefore in the Soviet Union, and by the same token in Lithuania, no one should be restricted with regard to his or her beliefs, or punished for teaching catechism.

8. The Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR and international agreements do not contradict Paragraph 143 of the Criminal Code, since the latter, like Lenin, forbids the teaching of religion in school, but it says nothing forbidding the teaching of religion in church.

Moreover, according to the general norms of the law, there may be no regulation contrary to the Constitution.

Therefore, bearing in mind all that has been said above, it can be clearly seen that the decision of the commission on Applying Administrative Fines was contrary to the Constitution, to the principles of Lenin, and to international obligations. Hence that decision is unlawful.

I request the People's Court to consider this question and to cancel the fine, which has been assessed unjustly.

Pociūnėliai

The Rev. A. Jokubauskas

October 6, 1976

On October 20, 1976, the People's Court of the *Rayon* of Radviliškis considered the complaint of Father Jokubauskas, in which he requested that the 50-ruble fine assessed by the Commission on Applying Administrative Fines for teaching children catechism, be annulled. In his complaint, Father Jokubauskas showed that he merely quizzed the children, to see whether they were properly prepared for first Confession.

Chairman J. Surblys of the People's Court of the *Rayon* of Radviliškis, with Prosecutor Vaišnorienė participating, denying freedom of conscience, the rights of believing parents and the Constitution, decided that Father Jokubauskas had to pay the fine assessed for teaching children catechism, and added <sup>1</sup> the notation that the decision was final and non-appealable.

Thus the atheists demonstrated once more that the Church in Lithuania is persecuted in the most impudent way, that priests are prevented from going about their direct duties and that the Constitution and international treaties are ignored.

Slabadai

#### THE STRUGGLE OVER THE CHAPEL AT SLABADAI

Slabadai is a large and expanding community on the bank of the Šešupė River. Here is a communications center, a school, a house of culture, a store and trade center. At Slabadai there is also a chapel, which was formerly part of the parish of Kudirkos Naujamiestis.

There a priest had always lived, to serve the faithful of the area. During the post-war years, because of a shortage of priests, Slabadai was served by priests from Kudirkos Naujamiestis.

Still later, because of interference from the Soviet government, the priest used to come to Slabadai only for funerals. When Slabadai became part of the *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis, the residents were served by the pastor of the parish of Didvyžiai. Father P. Perlaitis occasionally held services for the deceased, but upon being warned by the vice-dean of Šakiai that by doing so he could make matters worse and the government might not allow him even to bury the faithful, he stopped holding services.

When the new pastor, Father Antanas Lukošaitis, came to Didvyžiai, J. Urbonas, Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis last October (1976) forbade the celebration of Mass in the church of Slabadai even at funerals. In the opinion of the vice-chairman, services could not be held because the faithful of Slabadai had not even chosen a parish council. Hearing of this, the faithful of Slabadai immediately organized the requisite committee of twenty, elected a parish executive committee, and submitted the names to the Council on Religious Affairs for confirmation.

The faithful waited a month for a reply. Vice Chairman Urbonas of the Executive Committee of the *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis took steps to dissolve the parish council of Slabadai. In a closed meeting of the local Party organization, collectivist Girdauskas was forced to resign from the parish council.

On October 27, Jonas Bušauskas, chairman of the parish council of Slabadai, was summoned by Vice Chairman Urbonas. The vice chairman inquired about Bušauskas's daughter Julija, whom they had listed with the militia juvenile authorities, just because the girl, at the request of her parents, had taken around to some individuals one of the parish documents for signature.

The girl was intimidated at school, and only the energetic intervention of her mother forced Urbonas and the administration of the Arminai school to rescind its decision, and remove the girl's name from the juvenile delinquents' list.

Vice Chairman Urbonas demanded that Bušauskas sign a statement that the parish executive committee had been formed without calling a public meeting. If Bušauskas had signed such a document, the *rayon* government would have announced that the election of the parish executive committee was not valid.

Bušauskas, sensing the trick, refused to sign the document



drawn up by Urbonas. Parish Council Chairman Bušauskas was brow-beaten for sending directly to Vilnius the parish council records of the meeting, the creation of the executive committee and the petition to allow the parish at Slabadai to function. In the opinion of Vice Chairman Urbonas, he should have first been consulted on all these matters. It appears that Urbonas was reprimanded by officials of the Council on Religious Affairs for evoking, by his tactless behavior with the faithful, a desire to form a legal religious group.

On November 1, Mrs. Bušauskienė and Anele Bacevičienė went to Vice Chairman Urbonas to request permission for the pastor of Didvyžiai to hold memorial services on All Souls Day. The women submitted a request from the faithful, which had been signed by twenty-nine persons.

The vice chairman refused to allow services without agreement from Vilnius. The vice chairman took the occasion to pull the file on the pastor of Didvyžiai, and started reading about the priest to the women. The latter, however, interrupted the reading, saying that they had come not to hear about the priest, but to gain permission for services. Then the vice chairman tried to convince the women that it was not the people who needed the services, but the priest.

On November 9, it was announced that government officials were coming to Slabadai, and many people gathered at the chapel. They waited from morning till night in vain. The officials doubtlessly wanted fewer people present, so they came the next afternoon.

The afternoon of November 10, Vice Chairman Urbonas came to Slabadai with Representative Raslanas of the Council on Religious Affairs. They found the faithful gathered at the church, demanding permission for services to be held. Collective farm-woman (Mrs.) Julė Morkevičienė said that people working day after day become bone-tired, and on Sunday they have to go ten kilometers to reach church, and so they wanted services to be held at Slabadai. All present unanimously defended their right to pray nowhere else but in their own chapel.

The government officials went to inspect the chapel itself, which was beautifully decorated. They wanted to know why the faithful never needed a church earlier, but needed one now. As they were leaving, the officials said that they were going to visit the pastor of Didvyžiai, and if he entertained them well, he would be allowed to hold services.

Soon the government officials were knocking on the rectory door

in Didvyžiai. Vice Chairman Urbonas and Representative Raslanas of the Council on Religious Affairs tried to put the blame on the pastor for agitating the people to demand services and the creation of an executive committee.

The pastor calmly explained that it was not he who had aroused the public, but Urbonas himself, by forbidding funeral services in Slabadai, had aroused the dissatisfaction of the people and their desire to set up an official religious community.

The government officials tried to convince the pastor that Slabadai did not need any council, that the executive organ of the parish at Didvyžiai could take care of their affairs. Finally they allowed services to be held at Slabadai, the celebration of religious feasts, and promised to send written permission two weeks later.

The faithful of Slabadai waited impatiently for a reply from the government. Discovering that permission to hold services had been granted, they were very happy.

The pastor decided to begin holding services beginning with the First Sunday of Advent. On November 23, 1976, Vice Chairman Urbonas gave permission for services to be held on all Sundays of Advent, but forbade calling on priests from other *rayons* for assistance, even from the neighboring parish of Kudirka Naujamiestis.

The vice chairman of the *rayon* promised to visit Slabadai to inspect the chapel with Chairman Gerardas Holbach of the District of Juodpėnai, and to allot the material necessary for the renovation.

Not long afterwards, the wind shifted. On November 24, Vice Chairman Urbonas summoned Chairman Jonas Bučas and forbade regularly scheduled services. Each time the people of Slabadai wanted to have services in their chapel, they had to bring their request to the vice chairman of the *rayon*. The vice chairman based the new regulation on the fact that someone deputized by the *rayon* government would have to see how many people participate in the services, would have to check out the priest's activities, and would have to hear the sermon. For all services in the chapel, the chairman of the Juodupėnai District, G. Holbach, would have to be present and check up on the pastor.

The people of Slabai are joking that the District Chairman—a Communist—would be able without hesitation to go to church and to pray.

The parish council of Slabadai tried by telephone to inform the vice chairman of services coming up, but he demanded that the

faithful come in person. The chairman of the *Rayon* Executive Committee tried to talk Chairman Bušauskas, of the parish executive committee, out of his position as chairman, and offered to include him in the parish council of the church at Didvyžiai. This is how he "implements" the separation of Church and state.

On November 27, 1976, Parish Council Chairman Bučinskas and Mrs. Anelė Bacevičienė went to see *Rayon* Vice Chairman Urbonas, and presented a written request to allow a priest to hold services. The vice chairman rejected the request, on the grounds that the application was not in proper form.

The parish chairman offered to re-write it; whereupon, Vice Chairman Urbonas, raising his voice, said that the request must be submitted two weeks in advance, and should indicate the day and the hour of the planned services, and the name of the priest conducting them.

Urbonas told the people to spare their trips, since there was no religious group in Slabadai, there was not even a church, and no religious group could be registered.

Chairman Bušauskas courageously asked, "Why do you keep fooling us and frustrating us? Vilnius and you allowed us to hold services, but now you are interfering again. We're going to Vilnius. The vice chairman then reminded the emissaries of the Faithful that this was not America. In other words, "Don't strain, because you'll never get what you want, anyhow."

The atheists of Slabadai simply laugh at the efforts of the faithful to achieve services in their chapel. They say that they will not allow a priest to hold services here.

It is believed, with some foundation, that such a sudden revocation of permission given to hold services is no mere coincidence. Most likely, the vice chairman of the Council on Religious Affairs informed the Council on Religious Affairs in Moscow, and is carrying out instructions he received to interfere in every way possible, so that services would not begin to be held. Where has it been heard that the Soviet government would allow a church and a chapel to open? It is able only to close them down.

## THE PERSECUTION OF ALGIS ŠALTIS

It is four years since the complaint of 17,000 of Lithuania's faithful echoed around the world. Later, other events demanded the attention of the people of the free world, and the petition of the Catholics of Lithuania was forgotten.

The only ones who did not forget it were the KGB—the State Security Committee. They are still looking for the organizers of the petition, for those who collected signatures for it, and those who signed, in order fittingly to punish them.

At the end of September, 1975, Antanas Guginis, Director of the Kaunas Trade School of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind; Vaclovas Smalakys, Director of the Kaunas Inter-Rayon Building of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind and Teodoras Ignatavičius, Secretary of the Party organization of the Kaunas Trade School of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind, were secretly summoned before the Party Committee of Kaunas.

The executive director of the Party Committee indicated that in the Society for the Blind, there was considerable abuse:—little attention was being paid to the ideological training of the workers, and there was too little action against religion: Orchestra members from the Society for the Blind go to church, playing at funerals in connection with religious services. Smalakys, Director of the Kaunas Inter-Rayon Building of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind, was ordered to put an end to the orchestra members' "offenses". Director Ruginis, of the Kaunas Trade School of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind was told to discharge Juozas Menkevičius, superintendent of the plastics shop, and Pranas Inokaitis, superintendent of the brush shop. Both are practicing Catholics, highly respected by the workers.

During the Stalin era, Menkevičius and Inokaitis were both exiled to Siberia. In the days of Lithuanian independence, Inokaitis was an army officer, but now he is completely blind. An official of the Party Committee indicated persons who signed the petition of the 17,000 Catholics: Mrs. J. Bogušienė, Mrs. M. Misevičienė, Mrs. A. Krušinskienė, and others. He said that things must be made uncomfortable for those who had signed.

The Party Committee staff member said that a document received from Moscow indicated that Algimantas Šaltis, Inspector of the Kaunas Inter-Rayon Administration of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind, had signed the petition and had organized the gathering

of signatures. He was to be discharged from his position without specifying the real reason.

Director A. Ruginis at the end of October summoned Chief J. Menkevičius, of the plastics shop of the Workshop for the Blind, and demanded that he voluntarily resign from his duties. He stated no reason, but only indicated that it was so ordered from the top.

Menkevičius, not wishing to make trouble, wrote his resignation. On October 28, 1975, the workers, having discovered the incident, wrote the secretary of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of the City of Kaunas, a petition in which they set forth many of Menkevičius' merits and gifts, and asked that he be allowed to stay on as chief.

Even though two hundred workers signed the petition, it was nevertheless not heeded. The secretary of the Party organization of the combine and all the petty spies had their work cut out for them, to find out who had written the petition, who had gathered signatures, and to see to it that the text of the petition did not "show up where it shouldn't".

They took care of Inokaitis, the chief of the brush shop, somewhat more quietly: At the director's orders, Inokaitis was made a home worker. Ordinarily only those members of the combine work at home, who live far from the shop.

Kostas Bankauskas, Chairman of the Kaunas Inter-Rayon Executive Committee of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind, upon hearing that he would have to discharge Šaltis from work, became upset, saying, "Here's a man who has worked at the job for so long, who knows the job well; and now, out of the blue, I'm suppose to discharge him." However, Bankauskas, (a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) became the most servile errand-boy to the Party.

On October 30, 1975, Chairman M. Poznanskas, of the Executive Committee of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind, arrived from Vilnius, and sternly rebuked Chairman Bankauskas, of the Inter-Rayon Executive Committee of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind, for procrastinating in the matter of Šalčius' discharge.

Poznanskas told Bankauskas to have Šaltis write a statement that very day, to the effect that he was voluntarily leaving his job. That same day, Bankauskas summoned Šalčius and in the presence of Bookkeeper Petronėlė Kaupienė (a spy for the Executive Committee) declared that Šaltis could no longer work on the Executive Committee, and would have to leave his position within twelve days.

Šalčius asked why and on whose orders he was being discharged from his job. When Bankauskas refused to give any explanation, Šalčius asked what criticisms the Superintendent had concerning his work as inspector.

Bankauskas replied that he had no criticism concerning his work.

Šaltis then declared that he would not submit his resignation, nor would he give up his position, because that would be a transgression of every code of rights.

"Well, think it over until Monday. You won't be able to work here any longer, anyway," said Bankauskas.

The news of Šaltis' discharge from work spread immediately throughout the combine. The blind workers expressed their shock at such injustice.

On November 3, Bankauskas again pressured Šalčius to write a statement that he was resigning voluntarily; otherwise his work card would be marked so that he could find work nowhere. If he resigned, Bankauskas promised to intercede in getting him work at the radio factory.

Šaltis firmly protested that he would not allow himself to become an object of ridicule, in the way that prisoners under fascism were ridiculed: They would throw down a potato and make the prisoner push it along with his nose, snorting all the while. If they wanted to discharge him from his job, let them make an entry in his working papers, saying that he had been discharged on account of his faith.

Bankauskas said that he was being discharged in connection with a cut-back in personnel.

On November 8, Šaltis went to Vilnius to see Chahman Poznanskas, of the Executive Committee of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind.

"Chairman, I would like to know why I am being discharged from work? Bankauskas ordered me to submit a written resignation, and to leave my position," said Šaltis

"Don't you even have an inkling why? It would be well for you to recall what occurred during the sociological experiments. (In 1969, a group of students from the Association of the Blind, traveled throughout Lithuania testing the visually impaired. During his free time, Šaltis used to go to church to pray, while the others got drunk. A participant in the sociological experiments, the correspondent V. Dubinkas, arrived at the administration and announced the

fact that Šaltis goes to church and organizes other to pray.—  
Editor)

"To go to church on my own time and to pray are personal matters," answered Šaltis.

"I am an atheist and I want everybody else to be one. And you are a believer, therefore . . .", Poznanskas motioned with his arms, "our opinions do not coincide. You are impeding the atheistic work".

"Show me just one instance when I have impeded the atheistic work."

"You impede it by your example. The official ideology of the country is atheism. Presently, great requirements are set. You are unable to do supervisory work with the public. We attempted to re-educate you but we did not succeed. You must choose a different kind of occupation. When you are no longer in our employ, you will be able to go to church, admire the architecture there, to pray, or do whatever you desire."

"It looks as if a believer must run for the woods or take to the desert, since there is no work which is not collective".

"I am not telling you that you must go into the desert or into the woods. If you wish you may go to the combine and punch out snaps."

(The Soviet government tries to see that believers are employed at the most menial jobs, that there should not be any intellectuals among the believers, so that the government could scoff: "Only the uneducated and the ignorant believe in God."—Editors of the original).

"Since, as a believer, I may not work as an inspector, this means that the faithful are being discriminated against in the Soviet Union."

"Please do not use this overseas propaganda on us," Poznanskas mumbled, not knowing what else to say. Šaltis asked that since his occupation was not in education, why then did they have to discharge him from his position.

"We waited as long as we could. We have our orders. The battle over ideology is being intensified," Poznanskas attempted to defend himself.

"We are not at fault here," the chairman of the Association for the Blind, K. Martusevičius, (a security agent—Editors of the original) agreed with the chairman of personnel. "Our orders are to eat the mess. There is nothing we can do about it."

Poznanskas ended the discussion, by demanding that Šaltis write an explanation as soon as possible, and leave his position.

At the combine, Bankauskas started a rumor that Šaltis was dis-

missed from work, not because of his religious beliefs, but because he had signed the petition of the 17,000 Catholics; that Šaltis was involved with the underground and that he must be avoided. On November 10, Bankauskas again demanded that Šaltis write a statement and when the latter refused, Bankauskas threatened: "Very well! We wanted to deal with you as with a human being, but since you are unwilling, things will be different. You did not cooperate the easy way, now we will do it the hard way."

Suddenly the mood of Bankauskas and his cohorts changed—everyone became most pleasant, and it seemed that everything would end well. In reality, only the tactics were changed. It was decided to contrive all kinds of pretexts at Šaltis' place of employment—like writing reprimands—in order to have Šaltis dismissed as an unconscientious worker. Presently, systematic harassment of Šaltis began at his job and on December 10, 1975, the first reprimand, accusing him of "irresponsibility on the job", appeared. This censure was written in secret, without adhering to any judicial norms. The second reprimand Bankauskas wrote on December 17th, accusing Šaltis of "not following orders," even though Šaltis was *innocent of these charges*. The Supervisor of the Staff at the Association of the Lithuanian Blind, Martusevičius, advised Bankauskas not to issue these reprimands too often, since such pressure would be too noticeable.

The various harassments continued for three months. Šaltis was hampered in the performance of his tasks, scolded and even screamed at for nonexistent transgressions, his bonuses were reduced, his subsidy was not awarded, and gossip was spread that Šaltis was a very inferior worker, even though in seven years of work, he had received only commendations; attempts were made to keep Šaltis from socializing with his fellow combine workers, an impression was given that instead of working, Šaltis was wasting time. In this persecution of Šaltis, Supervisor Bankauskas was most zealously assisted by the bookkeeper (Mrs.) Kaupienė, and Communist Youth members (Miss) Kamorūnaitė and (Miss) Bankauskaitė. The Communist Youth members fawning on Bankauskas, slandered and made fun of Šaltis.

On February 2nd, Šaltis had a discussion with the staff supervisor of the Association for the Blind, Martusevičius, who let it slip that *the directive to discharge Šaltis came from the house to which all must submit*. What kind of a house could this be, which wields so much power in the Soviet Union, while at the same time being so timid? All obey its orders, therefore it is powerful;



timid, because it masks itself with the likes of Bankauskas, Martusevičius and others. This house is the KGB.

On March 29th, Bankauskas summoned Šaltis to his office and said:

"All deadlines for your resignation have expired. The final one was March 15th., and now it is March 29th."

"This is the very first time that I have heard of any kind of deadlines!" exclaimed Šaltis with amazement.

"The fact that they do not tell you does not mean that they do not tell me," remarked Bankauskas. "Write your resignation. If not, it will go badly for you, because we will discharge you as an unsatisfactory employee."

On March 30th, the Lithuanian Society for the Blind Central Committee Chairman said to Bankauskas, "You know, if you don't discharge Šaltis, you will be unemployed yourself."

On April 12th, Šaltis was issued a third reprimand "for negligence on the job." After this reprimand, Šaltis wrote that since "It is my belief that this reprimand is a premeditated provocation, a conscious attempt to dismiss me from my job." In reality, Šaltis was completely innocent of the charge that he had misplaced the claim of the invalid (Miss) Balčiūnaitė. This was done by Bankauskas.

After three reprimands, Šaltis was still at his job. But Bankauskas never lost an opportunity to scold and embarrass Šaltis. The superior was furious, that he was unable to deal with a subordinate in the manner that the KGB desires—to discharge Šaltis as soon as possible, and while he was still on the job, to isolate and embarrass him with his co-workers. By devious means, Bankauskas attempted to foster an impression among fellow-workers at the combine that Šaltis was undutiful and undisciplined. Within earshot of others, Bankauskas would start scolding Šaltis, as if the latter had done something wrong. On May 14, because during the Easter holiday Šaltis failed to appear at work, he was issued a fourth reprimand.

Šaltis' persecution is continuing. His health is rapidly deteriorating.

The persecution of Šaltis began in 1974, when a member of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind, the invalid Krusinskas, reported his lawful wife to Security. On this occasion, the accuser let it be known that Petras Pluira, A. Jaugelis, A. Šaltis and others used to visit them to discuss and gather the 17,000 signatures on the petition. After this betrayal, the Security forces followed Šaltis for a year, and after that

ordered the superior of the Lithuanian Society for the Blind to deal with him.

For the second year, an individual is being terrorized, whose only crime is—he is a believer. To break him morally and physically, the KGB organizes a mass of individuals, from presidents of societies down to Communist Youth members, and forces them to maul one another like beasts in the jungle, fighting for their contemptible existence. To all these who are thoughtlessly executing the malicious intentions of the KGB, we wish to cite the words of the wife of Kostas Bankauskas: "Kostai, Kostai, remember that you will not succeed in life persecuting innocent people. Do you understand what you are doing? You are supporting various drunkards and libertines, while persecuting the innocent for their nobility. Remember, God won't bless you. Submit your resignation and leave your job, and then your conscience will be at peace. Aren't you ashamed, you careerist. You are afraid of losing your position . . . ready to do anything out of fear."

Šaltis once attempted to enroll in the Seminary. The rector of the seminary, Viktoras Butkus, discovering that in 1963, Šaltis was tried for teaching religion to school children, told him that he should not even think about entering the seminary. Monsignor Telksnys let it slip that: "In all truth, you should be among the very first to enter, but since the enrollment of seminarians is in the hands of the Deputy for Cult, we are powerless to act in this matter."

The persecution of Šaltis began when he was still a schoolboy. The principal of the Kėdainiai Middle School No I (Mrs.) S. Laurinaitienė, on numerous occasions berated Šaltis in the teachers' room, threatening him with expulsion, and ordering him to write statements that he would not attend church. Algis was criticized in wall newspapers, and discussed at specially convened teachers' meetings. Šaltis was told to write statements as to why he is a believer in God, on the orders of the principal at one of these meetings. Later he was referred to as an ignoramus in the wall newspapers. The principal ordered the other teachers to persecute Šaltis. Many of the teachers failed to adhere to these orders, but there were also fanatics, such as teachers Aleknavičius, Gumbrevičius and Tvarionavičius, who persecuted the student by any means they were able to devise: insults, lowering of grades etc.

Principal (Mrs) S. Laurinaitienė, ordered the parents of Šaltis, not to allow their son to go to church. "Let him erect a large cross in

his home like those in the cemetery and pray all he wants, but he must not go to church."

The youth, terrorized by his intimidated father and the principal, left Middle School No. 1 and entered the Kėdainiai Evening School. Šaltis' father intimidated by the security police, threw his son out of his home. For explaining religious truths to students, Šaltis' grades were reduced to a "2" and he was expelled from evening school. *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* had previously written about Šaltis' sentence to one year of prison for instructing children in religious beliefs. The court decided to have Šaltis, as an "unreformable criminal" locked up with robbers, murderers and moral perverts, and to destroy the literature (144 books and various manuscripts) which was seized during the searches. Šaltis was tried in the auditorium of Kėdainiai Middle School No. II, into which the pupils were herded, in order to observe the fate which awaited them, if they failed to bow to the atheistic dictatorship. But when the pupils in the auditorium began to show loudly their displeasure at the proceedings, they were quickly escorted out and were not even allowed to remain around the school building.

When he returned from his incarceration at camp, Šaltis worked as a sacristan at the parish of Skaruliai, but not even here did he have peace. Government officials by means of their cohorts continuously slandered Šaltis, and the Deputy for Religious Affairs Rugienis ordered the pastor of the Skaruliai parish to discharge Šaltis from his job as sacristan. This the pastor refused to do. Then, arriving at Jonavė, Rugienis forbade Father Jokūbauskas to perform his priesdy duties, and instructed the president of the Skarulis Parish Council to lock up the church and not to allow either the pastor or the sacristan to enter it. Government officials roamed the villages gathering information on Šaltis' activities, but they were unable to fabricate a new trial.

## M. JUREVIČIUS – OUT OF WORK

Šiauliai

To: LTSR Procurator  
LKP Secretary Griškevičius

From: Citizen Mečislovas Jurevičius  
residing at Šiauliai  
Žemaitės gatvė, Nr. 102-12

### C o m p l a i n t

By decision of the People's Court of Šiauliai, of February 19, 1975, my appeal for reinstatement to my job was rejected. This decision was allowed by the LTSR Supreme Court on March 18, 1975 to stand. It is my belief that the above mentioned verdict and the subsequent decision of the appeal should be nullified, and that the case should be reopened for the following reasons:

I was dismissed from my job for negligence, which in my opinion is unfounded. Negligence can be considered as not coming in to word without sufficient reason. I reported my absences ahead of time. I have worked for the respondent since October 2, 1965. In all the time I was employed I did not receive a single reprimand regarding my job. I have received more than one commendation. I was held up as an exemplary employee. When I informed them of my unavailability to work, I always stated the reason for this action. I am a religious person. During the religious holy days I could not work and asked to be excused from my job. I was willing to make up this time on other days.

The Soviet Constitution provides for religious freedom, which I practice. I am not employed in educational work and my beliefs do not do harm to anyone. I am a simple worker—a painter. I do not see any hindrance to my getting my job back. Without even seeming to notice these reasons of mine, the Peoples' Court in all formality ruled on this case. The Supreme Court of the LTSR agreed with this decision. This is not fair. I am not a negligent worker, but a conscientious one; but I do have beliefs which I want to practice.

Please protest the above-mentioned February 19, 1975 decision of the Šiauliai peoples' Court and the subsequent verdict of the

LSSR Supreme Court of March 18, 1975, and present this case for reinvestigation.

April 16, 1975

M. Jurevičius

The Prosecutor of the LSSR answered that the appeal of Jurevičius was refused because he failed to obtain the approval of his superiors to take time off from his job.

On September 8, 1975, Jurevičius inquired about his case at the office of the General Procurator of the USSR but he received the answer that his dismissal from his job was lawful.

On December 19, 1975, Jurevičius appealed to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to be allowed to return to work and for an answer to the question: whether "I can receive compensatory free time during religious holidays for overtime I put in, or not?"

On January 29, 1976, the Supreme Court replied that Jurevičius had been dismissed from his job lawfully. To Jurevičius' question there was no answer.

On February 10, 1976, Jurevičius wrote an appeal to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and to the Supreme Court of the USSR. The appeal follows:

"I am a worker. I am a self-supporting individual. I must work and I want to work, but nobody wants to agree with me that even a religious person is also a human being and has the right to exist... Is there really no possibility to enforce the requirements of the Constitution of the USSR, which gives everyone the right to believe... You can direct that individuals have a right not to work on religious holidays, and to make up this work on other days. Am I allowed to take my religious holidays off and to make up this work some other time?"

On March 2, 1976 the Procurator of the LSSR responded that any protest against the verdict of the Peoples' Court of the City of Šiauliai is without grounds.

Once again Jurevičius appealed to the Supreme Court of the USSR, but the Office of the Procurator of the USSR replied that the case had been settled legally and no more answers would be forthcoming to further appeals of Jurevičius.

On April 5, 1976, Jurevičius was visited by a magistrate of the City of Šiauliai, Ramanauskas, who inquired why Jurevičius was unemployed and what was the means of his livelihood. Jurevičius replied that the reason for his unemployment was very well known

to them. As he was leaving, Ramanauskas left a warrant for Jurevičius to appear on April 6 before Magistrate Ramanauskas at militia headquarters.

There, Jurevičius was shown par. 240 of the Penal Code and was threatened that if he failed to find employment he would be punished. Jurevičius explained to the interrogator that these paragraphs did not apply in his case, since he is not a freeloader nor a bum, but a conscientious, a hard-working individual. Interrogator Ramanauskas shot back that Jurevičius and his "philosophy" could go somewhere in the Pedagogical Institute, but if he did not find a job, the militia would find him a job by force.

On April 28, 1976, Jurevičius was again summoned to the militia and Examining Magistrate Milašauskas. The conversation concerned the same facts: Why was the former unemployed, was he planning to appeal, and other matters. Ramanauskas also took part. Jurevičius was again threatened with punishment, trial, etc. When Jurevičius failed to sign the report of the interrogation, he was taken to the head of the militia department, to whom Milašauskas complained that he had never in his life met such an individual and did not know how to deal with him. The head of the militia again inquired why Jurevičius was unemployed, and again threatened him with punishment. Jurevičius gave the same reply: He was neither a freeloader nor a bum and was unemployed perforce.

On May 10, 1976, Jurevičius was again summoned to the militia department. Interrogator Ramanauskas wrote out a formal notice that if Jurevičius failed to find employment within a month, he would be punished as a vagrant according to Par. 240 of the Criminal Code. When Jurevičius did not sign the document, two witnesses were summoned, who signed it.

In May of 1976, Jurevičius' wife was also summoned to the militia, and she was questioned about her relationship with her husband, the means of their livelihood, etc.

It will soon be two years since this believing individual is made fun of. It appears as if the Soviet Union had never signed the Helsinki agreements. \_\_\_\_\_

On July 10, 1976, Deputy Jurgelevičius of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania arrived at Šiauliai for a meeting with the electorate. A reception was arranged with interested parties. When Jurevičius explained his situation, the deputy stated that Jurevičius had been dealt with justly, that he could be punished. In Jurevičius' opinion, similar cases do not arise in the other socialist

countries, for example in Poland, where the faithful have the right of not working on religious holidays.

Deputy Jurgelevičius was asked why and at whose order the crosses on the Hill of Crosses near Šiauliai were being destroyed. The deputy explained that the erection of crosses on the hill was "unhygienic" and besides, the hill was not a historical site.

Asked why for almost twenty years, it was forbidden to ring the church bells in Šiauliai, Jurgelevičius answered that the situation had been dealt with correctly.

## THE DEFENSE OF THE REV. J. ZDEBSKIS

To: Communist Party Central Committee of the Lithuanian, SSR.  
First Secretary Comrade Griškevičius  
Minister of Public Health, Comrade Kleiza

From: The Faithful of Lithuania

### D e c l a r a t i o n

On March 10 of this year, the pastor of the parish of Šlavan-tai, in the *Rayon* of Lazdijai, the Rev. J. Zdebskis was detained while driving a car in Vilnius. The individuals who stopped him were from the Department of Motor Vehicles. They said that he was drunk, and demanded that he should go to the Psychoneurological Hospital, in order to establish the degree of drunkenness. In the hospital, without even a blood analysis, although the priest demanded one, a degree of drunkenness was established. The Department of Motor Vehicles revoked his license for a year and a half and imposed a thirty-ruble fine.

Since Father Zdebskis is well-known to the faithful of Lithuania as a priest and as a person—he is a complete abstainer from alcoholic beverages—therefore we believe that his punishment is a systematic and deliberate effort to discredit and persecute the priest.

In our opinion, the doctor and the auto inspector who, forced by the KGB, agreed to sign false documents accusing Father Zdebskis of unfounded charges, acted unjustly and unscrupulously. Such individuals should not be allowed to hold public office. How can one place the life of an individual into the hands of people who lack a conscience?

On April 13, the Lazdijū *Rayon* newspaper *The Banner of Work*,

published a news item that a resident of the Village of Gegutė, Juozas Zdebskis, is unable to resist a glass of alcohol and on March 23 was detained while at the wheel of a private car in Vilnius.

We ask the Central Committee to see that this slander, published in the Lazdijai *rayon* newspaper, to the effect that Father Zdebskis was detained while driving in a drunken state be recalled, that as soon as possible his driver's license and monetary fine be returned to him, and to see that the employees of the Soviet Union do not make similar accusations. We would appreciate being told what means will be used to reprimand these unscrupulous employees.

We ask that the reply to this declaration be forwarded to the Rev. J. Zdebskis directly.

July 8, 1976

Signed by Faithful of Lithuania

(212 signatures)

To: Procurator of Lithuania TSR

#### A D e c l a r a t i o n

We, the faithful have received the distressing news, that on February 10, 1976, in the City of Vilnius, an employee of the Department of Motor Vehicles Jurevich, stopped the pastor of the parish of Slavantai, the Rev. J. Zdebskis, and accused him of drunk driving. Jurevich took Father Zdebskis to a psychiatric hospital, where, without even a blood analysis, a degree of intoxication was established. Based on these accusations, the employees of the Department of Motor Vehicles revoked the priest's driver's license for eighteen months, and the *Rayon* newspaper published a slanderous article to the effect that Father Zdebskis is unable to resist a glass of alcohol.

On May 3, 1976, government officials detained Father Zdebskis in Ukmerge, revoked his motorcycle license and subjected him to a minute body search.

We, the faithful, have known Father Zdebskis, who for more than twenty years, has been ministering in many parishes, faithfully executing his priestly duties, and enjoying the high regard of clergy and faithful alike. We can also attest that we have never yet seen Father Zdebskis intoxicated because he is a firm abstainer and by word and example among the faithful battles against the evil of alcoholism. This fact can be verified by the faithful of all the parishes



where Father Zdebskis had served.

It is unclear to us why the government officials persecute and slander the Rev. J. Zdebskis. Why was his driver's license revoked? Could it be possible that the atheists believe that by such methods they will incite us, the faithful, against the priest? We the faithful, respect our priests and will intercede for those who are unjustly being persecuted and slandered. Protesting against these unfounded actions by the government officials against Father J. Zdebskis, we demand that his driver's license be returned to him.

Please send the reply to our statement directly to the Rev. J. Zdebskis in Šlavantai, located in the *Rayon* of Lazdijai.

Klaipėda, July 16, 1976

(Signed by many of the faithful)

Similar statements were sent to various government offices by the faithful of Kaunas, Panevėžys and other sections of the country. They were answered by Security in the following manner: An anonymous letter was sent to the Chancery of the Kaunas Archdiocese and to the Dioceses of Vilnius, by the faithful of Šlavantai. This letter complains that Father J. Zdebskis is not performing his duties and is amoral. It is unclear why, His Excellency Bishop Povilionis referred this anonymous complaint to the Dean of Lazdijai, the Rev. Strimaitis, who especially hates those priests who are being persecuted by the KGB. The Rev. Strimaitis acquainted Father Zdebskis with the content of this complaint. The priests are amazed that the chancery pays attention to anonymous complaints fabricated by the KGB.

## NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

### Kaunas

In September of 1976, (Mrs.) Pluirienė visited her husband, Peter Plumpa-Pluira, at the hard labor camp in Permė. Serving their sentences together with Pluira are Sergei Kovalev and Šarūnas Žukauskas. Because (Mrs.) Pluirienė was accompanied on her long journey by the Rev. J. Zdebskis, the camp administrator showed great displeasure and allowed the wife to see her husband for less than 24 hours. Before being able to see her husband, (Mrs.) Pluirienė had to submit to a thorough search, during which *she was completely*

*stripped*. One is not allowed to bring either paper or pen into the visiting room. There is also no paper in the toilet.

It is the belief of the prisoners at the Perm camp, that the government of the Soviet Union will grant them amnesty and that they will not have to complete their sentence, because throughout the whole world, political prisoners are being granted amnesty.

For making statements of various kinds Kovalev is often being sent to solitary confinement.

On the occasion of the Easter holiday (Mrs.) Pluirien<sup>6</sup> sent her husband a greeting on a religious card, but the administration of the camp refused to give it to the prisoner. When Plumpa-Pluira demanded that the religious picture be given to him, he was placed by the administration in solitary confinement. In the regulations of the camp, dealing with articles mailed to the inmates, nowhere is there mentioned that the mailing of religious pictures is forbidden.

Perm\*

Excerpt from a letter of Peter Plumpa-Pluira

Praised be Jesus Christ!

. . . No matter where one lives, the same anxieties and worries arise—the salvation of humanity. It is not always easy to find out the area in which we can do the most good. Only the King of Souls knows this and it is left for us to bloom wherever we are planted. If He sowed us in the field of sorrow—let us blossom in sorrow, if in solitude . . . so too in solitude. And it is because our Creator sows the most beautiful flowers in the most unreachable crevices of the mountains' byways and even though they are unseen by the eye of man, they have their worth. It is impossible for us today to live in anonymity. Only the sorrows of a soul are unseen, and like blossoms they can be constantly plucked and offered to the Redeemer. This is the most beautiful adornment of the altar of Jesus. Without this kind of decorations the most beautiful of shrines are dismal and without such sacrifices the greatest of nations exist in misery.

It appears that our nation was successful, because not everywhere have the flowers of sorrow wilted and so the fountain of living water is still available to us.

My wish for you is that you keep watch by this fountain always.

August 23, 1976

One from the Urals

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* urges all the Catholics of the world, especially the Lithuanians abroad, constantly to remind the government of the Soviet Union about the prisoners of conscience and of faith: Petras Plumpa, Juozas Gražys, Povilas Petronis, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Vladas Lapienis, Jonas Matulionis and others.

Kaunas

On September 2, 1976, the Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR send Virgilijus Jaugelis a copy of the following document:

We are mailing the statement of June 26, 1976, by the citizen V. Jaugelis, in reference to an investigation concerning the return of a book taken from him.

Please notify the Prosecutor of the Republic of the verdict.

Chief Assistant to the Prosecutor of the LSSR  
J. Bakučionis

It was not only about the confiscation of a book that Virgilijus Jaugelis was complaining, but also about the criminal behavior of the Raseiniai militia and the employees of the Security (see the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania No. 23*).

The Office of the Prosecutor instructed the defendants in this case to investigate the appeal of the citizen. Can it be possible to ridicule an individual more than this?

Kaunas

After the death of J. Maironis, his sister Marcelė, in about the year 1934, erected a large statue of Christ near the Maironis' Museum (presently the Museum of Literature). On October 21, 1976, by order of the Directress of the Museum, this statue was removed on the pretext that it would be erected in the vicinity of the Museum of Art. The marble memorial plaque, with the date and Marcelė's dedication to her brother, was ripped off. Of what possible use can this scrap of a statue be to the Museum of Art?

Almost all of the employees at the Museum of Literature were against the removal of the statue and asked the directress to let the

statue remain, but the directress, (Mrs.) Macijauskienė explained that she was unable to do anything about it Apparently, orders had come from the KGB.

### Šventybrastis

On October 21, 1976, the assistant procurator of the *Rayon* of Kėdainiai, A. Januškevičius, arrived at the Šventybrastis grammar school wishing to meet the student (Miss) Kačinskaitė. The Assistant procurator questioned the girl who prepared her for her First Communion, how often she visited the pastor, and what the names were of the other children who had also made their first confession this year.

That same day, Associate Procurator Januškevičius also visited the Middle School of Surviliškis and questioned another five children who made their first confession and receive Holy Communion in the church at Šventybraščiai.

On October 25, 1976, the parents of the children were summoned to the office of the Prosecutor of the *Rayon* of Kėdainiai. Here, they had to write statements about the preparation of their children for their first Holy Communion. The parents stated that they themselves had prepared the children and the pastor only examined them.

On the following day, the pastor of the parish of Šventybraščiai, the Rev. Leonardas Jagminas, was summoned to appear at the prosecutor's office. He too had to write out a statement dealing with the preparation of the children for First Communion.

Even though on September 9, 1976, the pastor of Šventybrastis was warned by the Administrative Commission of the *Rayon* of Kėdainiai, a month later the case was reopened.

N.B. On July 16, 1976 the Rev. Jagminas was summoned to appear before the Chairman of the County of Tiškūnai, Šmigelska, who wrote out a report that the Rev. L. Jagminas had examined children from July 15, 1976 to August 7 of the same year. After writing the report, he had to hurry to make a bus, since his working day was over and he had to get home in Kėdainiai. The chairman said he needed two more copies of the document and asked Father Jagminas to sign two blank pieces of paper. The priest signed. The chairman promised that these reports were to be copied exactly as written without any changes. But on September 9, Father Jagminas was summoned by Associate Chairman of the *Rayon* of Kėdainiai Juškevičius and heard a protocol read to him which was

completely changed in its text. For example in the new version it was stated that Father Jagminas did not examine the children but taught them in his apartment. Besides this, the names of the five children appeared, which were not even mentioned in the original text.

At present, the Chairman of the District of Tiškūnai is P. Jasiulevičius.

### Telšiai

In the month of November, 1975, a petition went around to gather signatures in order to place in nomination for bishop the name of the Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai, Vaičius. This petition is to be sent to the Curia in Rome. The KGB is not interfering in this gathering of signatures. The above-mentioned work evokes nothing but sadness for many of the priests and believers.

### Skuodas

At the end of August, 1976, the critically ill patient Kazimieras Jablonskis was admitted to the Skuodas hospital.

Before his death, the patient asked for a priest. His sister (Mrs.) Paulauskienė asked the Chief of Staff, Dr. Mažrima, to permit a priest to visit the hospital. The patient himself, in a trembling hand, wrote the doctor: "Please allow them to bring me a priest?". But the physician Mažrima refused. The next day, a cousin of the patient (Mrs.) E. Malukienė appealed to the physician on duty (Mrs.) Baltuonienė, who refused, even though the patient was getting weaker. Some kind of blind fanaticism masked the tears of the lonely old man from their eyes. Finally the old man requested that he be taken out of the hospital in order to make last confession before death and to receive Holy Communion. Since the old man was paralyzed, he was left in the hospital to spend the last minutes of his life with heartless physicians.

The author of this news item writes: "This is the behavior of individuals who have taken the Hippocratic Oath, people who according to the atheistic propaganda represent the "most humane profession". How long will Doctor Mažrimas and the likes of him trample the laws and human feelings? Whatever happened to the promises of Deputy K. Tumėnas? Whatever happened to conscience, to truth?"

### Salos (Region of Rokiškiai)

In the churchyard of the Church of Salos, a member of the parish

(Mrs.) Ona Kisielienė, erected a statue of Mary. Immediately local officials reacted and decided to get rid of the statue, no matter what.

On November 23, the President of the Salos Church Council and Ona Kisielienė wrote to Bishop R. Krikščiūnas and to the Deputy for Religious Affairs asking their help in saving Mary's statue. The one who erected the statue explained that she had put up the statue in the memory of her son who had been a prisoner of the Nazis and who had given his life for his country.

On November 24, the Assistant to the Deputy for Religious Affairs, the architect of the *Rayon* and the Chairman of the District arrived. During the interrogation, Mrs. Kisielienė was asked who made the statue, who erected it and who made the plaque on which was written: "Those who have heroically died on their native soil and far away from it are awaiting one *Hail Mary* from you".

The Deputy threatened the Chairman of the Church Committee and Mrs. Kisielienė that if she herself did not remove the statue by December 29, it would be torn down. A government official demanded that the statue should be taken to the cemetery. He also accused the pastor of the parish, the Rev. Petras Nykštas, of contributing also toward the erection of the statue.

The people gathered in the churchyard loudly protesting the events, when the atheists destroyed crosses, and broke the gate into the churchyard. "If there is no God," the believers were remarking, then why are the atheists of Salos afraid of Mary? They are not afraid of the devil, of which the stores are full."

Mrs. Kisielienė resolved that she would not allow the destruction of the statue for any reason. She remarked: "The Germans took my only son away and now they want to take away my most precious possession — my faith!"

## Biržai

Medical Nurse (Miss) Aldona Šukytė, on her first day of work in 1976, had to report to Chief of Staff Dr. Antanas Dauguvietis, who instead of wishing her a happy new year, started by scolding her, "So, did you bring a priest?" Miss Šukytė explained that she had not. Then Dr. Dauguvietis started to scold her: that in the hospital there were many as dumb as she, but she was the only one who was dangerous.

"You take children to church, you pray, sing and teach the children." the Chief of Staff berrated the medical nurse.

"I don't sing at work, but only in church. Nor do I pray while on duty."

Then the Chief of Staff shoved a piece of paper towards her and told her to write out a statement that she was leaving her job. He did not forget to warn her that if she did not quit by February 1, he would make sure that the same thing would happen to her as in the Biržai *Rayon*. She would be unable to get a job even as a cleaning woman.

Šukytė refused to quit her job. She had worked here for 21 years and here she had lost her good health.

The Chief of Staff, Dauguvietis, aware that the nursery would soon be in the control of the Department of Education, transferred Miss Šukytė to the nursery. The other nurses asked Šukytė: "What did you do? Why did you agree to work here? From February 1st on, the nursery will be under the control of the Board of Education and on September 1st the staff will be reduced."

Therefore, Physician Dauguvietis was correct when he stated that: "We are able to deal with all kinds, therefore we will be also able to deal with this girlie. We will fix it so that no procurator will be able to help."

Long before this, the Chief of Staff had harassed Šukytė. On June 12, 1973 when she appeared before the Chief of Staff, Dr. Dauguvietis, he assailed her for attending church, singing there and most important, driving the 16-year old invalid (Miss) Liudvika Mulevičiūtė, residing in Biržai, to church. The girl is unable to walk, to stand or to make any kind of movement. Aware of her great desire to attend Church, (Miss) Šukytė used to take her to church every day.

Dr. Dauguvietis demanded that if (Miss) Šukytė continued taking the girl to church, she would be discharged. With an aching heart, the nurse told the weeping girl that she could no longer take her to church.

In 1974, there was an opportunity for (Miss) Šukytė to get a part time position at Likėnai. She had to get permission from the Chief of Staff. Party Secretary Miško replied that Šukytė should ask the priests for work. Dr. Dauguvietis stated:

"Stop going to church and singing there, and I will get you a part-time position.

(Miss) Šukytė remarked that the physician wanted to pay very cheaply for her conscience.

After this, (Miss) Šukytė was scolded many times for her beliefs.

On September 1, 1976 due to a reduction of staff, Aldona Šukytė

was discharged from her job. Presently she is employed on collective farms. Even though the work is hard and her health is bad, at least she is no longer being harassed.

#### Utena

Before the Utena Deanery retreat, which was held September 25-30, the Dean, the Rev. Niurka, approached the Deputy Chairman of the *Rayon* of Utena, Labanauskas, and informed him of the retreat and the visit by the Bishop of Panevėžys. Deputy Labanauskas hastened to inform the Deputy for Religious Affairs K. Tumėnas. On September 27, Tumėnas came to see the Rev. Niurka and had a long talk with him. That same day, Tumėnas also visited the pastors of the Tauragiai and Salų parishes in the *Rayon* of Rokiškis. The night from the 27 to 28, Tumėnas spent at Fr. Niurka's.

Visits by the Deputy of Religious Affairs do not aid the suffering church in Lithuania, nor the priests or the faithful who are being discriminated against.

After K. Tumėnas' visit and night respite at the apartment of the Dean, Father Niurka, the latter's health worsened considerably. On the last day of the retreat, he suffered a heart attack and died immediately.

The deceased was an exemplary priest. He had never complained about his health and he died in the full bloom of health at age 63.

Previously, priests were summoned to the War Commissioner where for long hours they were interrogated and attempts were made to break them physically and mentally. Now it seems that the Security tactics have eased: The priests do not always have to report to Security headquarters, because the Security or one of their authorized individuals comes to see the priests.

Among the priests of Lithuania there is a notion, that K. Tumėnas is no friend of the Church, but an enemy, and such conditions must prevail that his desire to visit ordinations and funerals would disappear.

#### Lazdijai

On October 12, 40 Hour' devotions in honor of the Name of Mary, were held at Sasnava. In Lazdijai, Security agent Gylys boarded the Druskininkai-Kaunas bus, whose route was by way of Kapsukas. Showing his credentials, he proceeded to inspect the route of the



bus, and asked how many tickets were sold from Veisėjai to Sasnava and Kapsukas. In reality, there were a few pupils aboard the bus who wanted to visit their former pastor.

### Veisėjai

Recently the church at Veisėjai procured a new banner: on one side of it was depicted St. Sebastian with the motto: "St. Sebastian, protect our youth", and on the other a girl embracing a cross, with the words: The cross is the strength of martyrs, the hope of a drowning nation. The banner was red, the ribbons red and yellow and the dress of the girl, red and green. Toward the end of September, Deputy K. Tumėnas arrived from Vilnius together with the Assistant Chairman of the Lazdijai *Rayon* Vanagas and the Dean, the Rev. Strimaitis. At Veisėjai they inspected the banner. After this they demanded that the pastor should change the ribbons and the motto. Instead of yellow ribbons, white would be permissible, and instead of the word "drowning" the word "believing" would be allowed. The pastor agreed, but the parishioners wondered if in reality the nation is not drowning in a sea of alcohol and the blood of the unborn infants and that the colors of free Lithuania can be seen in every traffic signal. Must they be erased?

### Kybartai

On October 6, 1976, the pastor of the parish at Kybartai, the Rev. S. Tamkevičius, not far from Virbalis, passed a truck, which accidentally swerving to the left struck the priest's automobile. In the accident only the priest's car incurred any damage. Because there were no witnesses, the autoinspector upon arrival stated that he would fix it so that documentation of the accident showed no one at fault.

A week later, the KGB Lieutenant Colonel Kolgov told the pastor of Viduklė, the Rev. A. Svarinskas, that the pastor of Kybartai, the Rev. Tamkevičius, by attempting a double passing was the cause of the accident.

On October 11, the Assistant Chairman of the Executive Committee in the *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis, J. Urbonas, told Father Tamkevičius that he would be questioned by the autoinspection, how they should deal with the accident of the pastor of Kybartai parish.

On October 28, Father Tamkevičius, was summoned to the Department of Interior in Vilkaviškis where the assistant chairman of the militia, Paltanavičius, stated that it was decided to revoke

Father Tamkevičius' drivers license for three months. . . Why this sanction? This riddle was solved by an official of the militia who let it slip that the Chairman of Security at Vilkaviškis, Chairman Vaišvila, demanded that the license be revoked from Rev. S. Tamkevičius for a period of 3 months.

There are those who believe that not only the license was revoked by the Security but that the accident was also caused by them.

## Prienai

The newspaper of the *Rayon* of Prienai published the article, "When a Pastor is Angry". The editor of the paper, Vytautas Masikonis, accused the pastor of Skriaudžiai, the Rev. Vincas Česna, of abusing the former sacristan, Petras Kuliečius, of demolishing, without permission a small storage shack near the fence of the church and of not allowing the Chairwoman of the *Rayon* (Mrs.) Janina Ališauskienė to enter the church.

On June, 1975, the Executive Committee, on the advice of Bishop Krikščiūnas, decided to move the potato storage space of the hospital to a farm building and to demolish the remaining buildings which were crumbling and interfering with cleanliness. The architect of Prienai, (Miss) Bečėsaitė gave a verbal agreement to the demolition. The Chairman of the District of Skriaudžiai (Mrs.) Ališauskienė and the Co-Chairman of the collective farm Viktoras Rinkauskas, illegally wrote out an injunction forbidding the demolition of the shack. The Interrogator of Prienai, Dobilas, terrorized the Chairman of the Parish Council, Vitas Orintas, Albinas Serbenta and others, who had participated in the demolition of the shack. The principal of the Eight Year School (Mrs.) Rinkauskienė, the wife of the Chairman of the collective farm, made fun during class of the daughter of one of the demolitioners, Kostas Lapinskas, referring to the father as the worst of all individuals.

In reality, the Chairwoman (Mrs.) Ališauskienė was not permitted by the pastor to enter the church because during the filming of the movie *Velnio Nuotaka (Bride of the Devil)* she had defiled the church. The Church Committee discharged from her job as cleaning lady the wife of Kieliešius on grounds that she was not conscientious in the performance of her duties and not on the whim of the pastor, as V. Masikonis wants everyone to believe.

The author of the article "When the Pastor is Angry" acted very dishonorably in distorting the facts. Up to now the Soviet press has been allowed to pour slop on the heads of the "ignorant".

Varėna

On September 7, 1976, the Assistant to the Chairman of the Varena, *Rayon* Jakavonis, ordered the pastor of Varėna, the Rev. Bronius Jaura as follows:

He is not allowed to participate in a funeral procession accompanying the body of the deceased from the Church to the cemetery. This disrupts the traffic. "You are allowed to remain in your car."

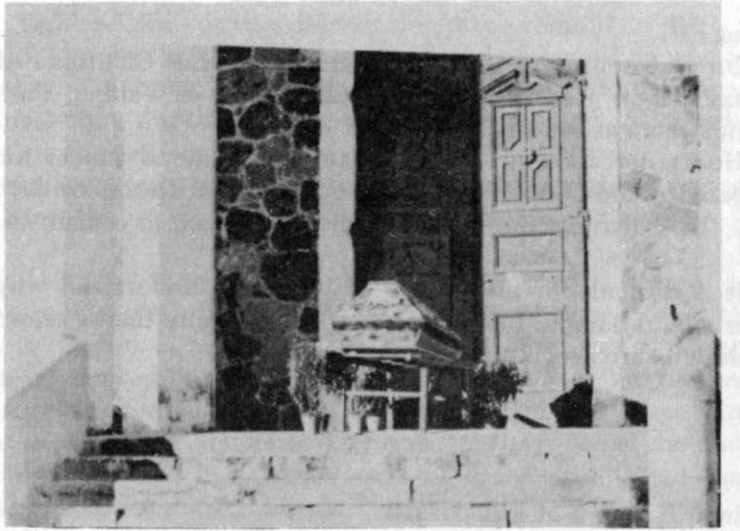
It is difficult for the people of Varena to understand why the pastor would hamper traffic by going on foot more than a crowd of people who are accompanying the deceased.

## IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

Arminai (R a y o n of Vilkaviškis)

The principal of the Arminai Middle School, (Mrs.) Irena Berentienė, does not cease in her persecution of the believing students, because they attend Church. On November 10, 1976, she called together the parents and the students of the 11th grade. During the meeting, the principal ordered the pupil (Miss) Julia Bušauskaitė to discuss a religious topic. The principal reproached (Miss) Bušauskaitė, that she was the only one brave enough to stand up and to state that: "I go to church and will continue to go to church. I believe and will continue to believe." Even now Bušauskaitė reaffirmed that she attends church. The principal explained that the Soviet schools are separated from the church and Bušauskaitė should keep in mind that she was studying in a Soviet school, and threatened moreover that she would be remembered at examination time. Upon ending her speech, the principal recalled the fact that the girl did not belong to the Communist Youth Organization. The mother of J. Bašauskaitė remarked that because of the Communist Youth, the principal, on more than one occasion was being embarrassed. What possible good example can Communist Youth members give who at night harass passersby?

On November 30, 1976 a funeral procession was passing the Middle School at Arminas, and at the head of the procession a crucifix and banners were visible. Noticing the crucifix, the principal, (Mrs.)



**Some local authorities in Lithuania forbid the deceased to be brought into church for funeral services. Here a casket rests outside the church door in Lazdijai, in 1965, while friends and relatives pray inside.**

Berentieè glanced around to see if there were any pupils in the procession. At the same time the principal started to explain to the pupils, that if a crucifix is being carried in a funeral procession, they are not allowed to participate in such a funeral. When the 11th grade pupil, A. Bagdonas, wanted to take a picture of the procession, he was forbidden to do so by the principal.

### Kybartai

On October 12, 1976 two security agents arrived at the Middle School. One by one pupils who had served at Mass in the Kybartai church were interrogated. The altar boys were asked who invited them to serve Mass and whether the pastor gives them candy, money or books to read. The boys explained that they came voluntarily and that the pastor does not give them anything for serving at Mass. The KGB tried to get some of the altar boys to become agents for them to supply the KGB with various kinds of information.

At the same time the security agents instructed the faculty of the school how to deal with believing students.

On October 19, the Pedagogic Union of Kybartai Middle

School held a meeting. The principal of the school, Dirvonskis instructed the home room teachers to make a list of all the believing students and those who served at Mass. The principal stated that on Sundays the teachers themselves must go to church to find out which of these students are attending Mass.

Assistant Principal Sinkevičius told the home room teachers that that they should not give good grades to pupils who attend church, but not to explain the grades on church attendance but on a "lack of social participation".

Immediately after this meeting a campaign started to investigate the religious beliefs of the students. The home room teacher of Class 5-A asked all those who had attended church to rise. Almost the whole class stood up. The teacher took down all the names of the standing pupils.

5-D Home Room Teacher Mickevičius explained to his pupils that the pastor himself made a list of all those serving Mass and brought it to him. Nobody in the class believed these words of the teacher, because the pastor of Kybartai does not fit the role of an informer, but the teacher Mickevičius fits this title perfectly.

5-B Class Teacher (Mrs) Palionienė also asked those who had attended church or knelt at the altar to rise. She questioned the pupils, whether they go on their own free will or did somebody else force them to go?

The teacher of grade 8 (Mrs.) Zeizienė also asked those pupils to rise who had gone to Church.

6-E and 6-A class teachers Zakas and (Miss) Kazlauskaitė asked their pupils to answer the questions on a questionnaire: Do you go to church, believe in God, etc.

In some of the classrooms the job of taking down the names of the believers was given to the Secretaries of the Communist Youth Organization.

## Šiauliai

On September 16, 1976, in Class 5 of the Šiauliai Middle School, a teacher, (Miss) Jasiūtė found a prayerbook on one of the pupils and started to make fun of her in various ways: that she is like an old lady carrying a prayerbook. The teacher said she would go down to the church and see if this pupil came.

A little later the teacher Jasiūtė called together a conference of parents. The parents were invited to this conference in writing.

They had to state that they would attend, and those who could not had to state the reason. The speaker at this conference was the moderator of the atheistic club of the school, (Mrs) Šiupienė. Here are some "highlights" from the lecture: "Children who attend church grow up to be two-faced . . . The government gave a large settlement to the Šiauliai church which was razed by fire . . . There are no candidates for the seminary, except one or two freeloaders etc. . . ." The moderator complained that the parents were still taking the children to church with them, and that one atheistic youth upon completing the 11th grade entered the seminary, and that old grandmothers were teaching the children their prayers . . .

On October 26, 1976 Miss Jasiūtė organized an atheistic hour in her class. The invited Pioneer members from the upper grades told the class that in church being sprinkled with holy water resulted in various diseases.

Jasiūtė inquired of the class at whose homes holy pictures can be found, told them not to go to church, and that if their parents told them to, they should lie that they had a headache or something.

The teacher asked all those to rise who did not have the Little Octobrist's star. More than half the class rose. Miss Jasiūtė threatened that if anyone showed up the next day without the star, they would get a "2" in conduct. "I do not know what I will do to you if you do not wear the star," threatened the fanatical teacher, ending the discussion.

## Obeliai

In the beginning of September 1976 at the Obeliai Middle School, Communist Youth members Fleita and Vanagas, angry because they were being constantly persecuted for their religion, tore out of the history textbook the picture of Lenin and, pasting it on a piece of paper, wrote this caption: "Lenin, the greatest enemy of the 20th century."

The KGB charged that most at fault was Fleita and he was dismissed from the Communist Youth, but Vanagas got off with a reprimand.

A teacher at the Middle School at Obeliai, Jakštas, is known for his great fanaticism in fighting religion. On a Sunday in July of 1976, two boys of Obeliai took a bus to Rokiškiai in order to attend church. The teacher pulled them out of the bus by the scruff of the neck.

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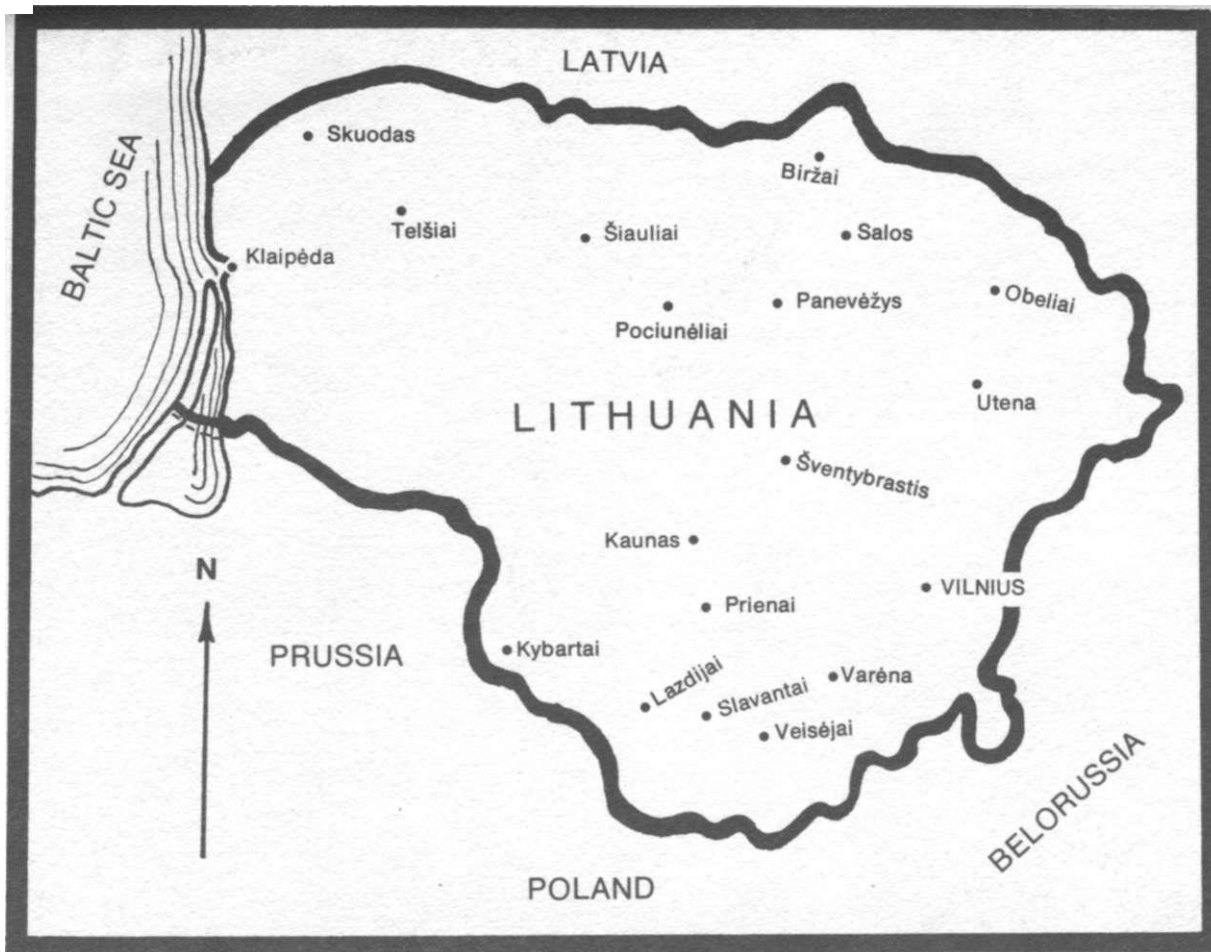
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TO HELP THE CHURCH IN COMMUNIST-OCCUPIED  
LITHUANIA OR TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION,  
SEND YOUR TAX-EXEMPT DONATION, OR WRITE TO:

Lithuanian Catholic Religious Aid, Inc.  
351 Highland Boulevard  
Brooklyn, NY 11207



Places mentioned in the **CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA NO. 25**