

**CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
No.76, February 14, 1988**

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CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN
LITHUANIA No. 76

A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 76
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

Translated by: Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translation Editor: Marian Skabeikis

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COVER: Demonstrators gathered at the Adomas Mickevičius monument near the Church of St. Anne in Vilnius, commemorating the memory of the victims of Hitler and Stalin during World War II. The August 23, 1987 demonstration called for the Soviet government to revoke the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which made the Baltic States a Soviet sphere of influence at the start of WWII.

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Introduction

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

In the two archdioceses and four dioceses were: 708 churches, 314 chapels, 37 monasteries, 85 convents, three archbishops, nine bishops, 1271 diocesan priests, 580 monks, of whom 168 were priests. Four seminaries had 470 students. There were 950 nuns.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lithuania was left with a single bishop, Kazimieras Paltarokas, of Panevėžys. He died in 1958.

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

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

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

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

Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, consecrated in 1957, was kept under severe government restrictions until 1982. In 1965, Monsignor Juozas Labukas-Matulaitis was consecrated in Rome to head the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkauskis. Two new bishops were consecrated in 1969: Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Panevėžys, and Bishop Liudas Povilonis was appointed auxiliary to Bishop Labukas, and succeeded him after his death in 1979.

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

Juozas Preikšas was consecrated bishop in 1984 and named Auxiliary to Bishop Povilonis, whom he succeeded as Apostolic Administrator upon the latter's retirement in 1988. Bishop Vladas Michelevičius, consecrated in 1986, remains as auxiliary Apostolic Administrator. In 1983, Bishop Krikščiūnas resigned as Apostolic Administrator of Panevėžys, replaced by Msgr. Kazimieras Dulksnys as Vicar Capitular. In 1988, Bishop Sladkevičius was named Cardinal.

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

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

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translator

Appearing since 1972
Read this and pass it on!

THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA, NO. 76

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Lithuania February 14, 1988

A LOOK AT THE PAST YEAR, 1987

The jubilee year is past, upon which so many hopes had been pinned, and for which preparations had gone on for so long. Have those hopes and longings been justified? From a surface look, it would seem not. Most of the hopes were shattered.

Our Holy Father, John Paul II, never did come for the jubilee celebration. The government atheists prevented the Holy Father from meeting with the Catholics of Lithuania.

Some placed great hope in the "restructuring and democratization" taking place in the Soviet empire. Such individuals argued that no petition-signing drive is necessary; the confiscated churches will be returned anyway and the imprisoned priests released. There was repeated postponement of the date for the return of Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, from exile in Žagare to Vilnius. It was hoped that paragraphs of the *Criminal Code*, aimed at dissidents and believers, would be amended; that "more lenient" *Regulations for Religious Associations* would be issued; that the teaching of religion would not be forbidden, and that believing youth in school would cease to be persecuted.

This year of "restructuring", 1987, has ended, and as a result, the plight of the Church has in fact not changed. One or the other "concession" or "gesture of good-will" by the atheistic government, regardless of the fact that they have been publicized by mass media even abroad, are still on paper, e.g., the question of the return of the Church of the Queen of Peace in Klaipėda is still open: they are promising to return it in two years. It all depends on who occupies the positions of power in the Soviet government in two years and what their policy toward the Church will be. Who knows how it will all end? So it is too early to rejoice over the return of the confiscated church of Klaipėda.

The question of the release of the priest-prisoners: In this area, the atheistic Soviet government has clearly demonstrated to the whole world whom it considers its worst enemy in contemporary Lithuania, namely, the Church and the clergy. In this era of restructuring and so-called democratization, they have left only the priests - Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius - in labor camp. The other Lithuanian dissidents are either free, or in exile.

The Church is not organizing overt demonstrations or other events in opposition to the Soviet government. But to the government atheists, it is more dangerous, since it undercuts the strength of atheism in the spiritual sphere, urging the nation to remain faithful to Catholic traditions and morals, preserved and valued by their forebears for six hundred years.

That is the only reason why government atheists tried so strenuously to suppress the resonance of jubilee events, especially those which were national in scope. Constant demands were made of the hierarchy and the pastors of



Father Svarinskas preaching in the Kybartai church.

more prestigious parishes that they guarantee that on the occasion of the jubilee, only the customary services be held. They succeeded, by threats and promises, in bending a number of the leaders and pastors of the Church in Lithuania to the way of compromise.

It was as if to say, let the Catholic public, stifled by the atheists, seek out for itself some more significant message concerning the 600-year-old history of Christianity in Lithuania. Oh, how our people, our youth - limited in school only to an atheistic education - need such events through which the Christian spirit could be imbibed, so that six hundred years of loyalty to the Catholic faith would become both the treasure and a characteristic of the new generation of the seventh century of Christianity in Lithuania, that the hopes of the nation and of the Church for the future would be based not on "concessions expected" from the atheistic government, but on the firm foundation of Christian morality and principles of faith in young hearts and souls.

The atheists this past year worked through all channels available to them to see that, in commemorating the jubilee of the baptism, the Bread of the Gospel would be offered to our hungry youth in unpalatable form, that is, in a way not understandable without special religious education and preparation - the services were held in the Latin language.

Is it not a paradox, that in Rome, the Holy Father, on the Feast of the Mother of Mercy of the Gates of Dawn, offers Mass for Lithuania in the

Lithuanian language, while in Lithuania, during the jubilee celebration, on that very Feast of the Mother of God of the Gates of Dawn, at the shrine in Vilnius, the administrator of the diocese forbids the priests assembled for concelebration to offer Mass in the Lithuanian language.

Let the public and the youth not understand what the priest is saying, or how he is praying! The Bread of Spiritual Life is wrapped in stone! For allegedly important but basically only promised concessions, hand over to the atheists the souls of the younger generation; don't struggle over them! This is the treachery of Satan!

Looking to the future, to the seventh century of Christianity, the first task for the Catholic Church in Lithuania which presents itself is the need to Christianize our nation's younger generation, which is being raised on atheism. A real war for the future of Lithuania is taking place in the young person's heart. How will he decide: For Christ, His Gospel, or for the "promises" made by the atheists but most often never kept, or perhaps for other trinkets tossed by the rulers of this world to their naive slaves.

The seventh century of Christianity in Lithuania must begin with an intense struggle for young hearts.

This year has been marked also by a bolder call by our fellow countrymen for "Freedom for Lithuania!" Every person, all the more the nation, has a natural desire for freedom. In this era of "restructuring" and "democratization", Lithuanians have publicly expressed to the leaders of the world and of the Soviet empire that freedom is precious to our nation.

1988 is a Marian Year. The traditions of the deep love for Mary instilled in the nation throughout 600 years invite everyone on this way of prayer and moral renewal - the way of freedom!

PETITIONS AND PROTESTS

To: The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist
Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev
Copies to: The Bishops of Lithuania and the Administrators of Dioceses
Editors of *Tiesa*
From: Priests of Lithuania

A Petition

On September 9, 1955, the incumbent pastor of Adutiškis and priest of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Julijonas Steponavičius, chosen by the Holy Father with the agreement of the Soviet government, was consecrated bishop, and since the end of 1957, has been administering the Archdiocese of Vilnius and the Diocese of Panevėžys.

On January 4, 1961, the incumbent Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs, attached to the L.S.S.R. Council of Ministers, Juozas Rugienis, revoked Bishop Steponavičius's certification as administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, and ordered him to move to Žagarė, stating that he was doing so by way of carrying out the decision of the Lithuanian S.S.R. Council of Ministers. Rugienis refused to show or read the decision of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian S.S.R. itself.

In the August 6, 1987 article by the current Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis, published in *Tiesa*, a falsified history of the exile of Bishop Steponavičius to Žagarė is presented. In reality, the bishop was calumniated in *Tiesa*.

In his article, Anilionis claims that the bishop was transferred to Žagarė by the leaders of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. As a matter of fact, then Commissioner Juozas Rugienis tried to obtain from the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Kaunas, Canon J. Stankevičius, a written appointment of Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius to Žagarė, but Canon Stankevičius refused to do so, saying he had no right to do so, since only the Holy Father can transfer bishops.

Then the militia, against the bishop's will, revoked his registration in the City of Vilnius, while state security agents told him to depart for Žagarė immediately, otherwise he would be hauled out by force. When the bishop asked what laws of the state he had broken, the security agents told him that he had not broken any laws, but simply had not carried out the government requirements which were presented to him by the Commissioner.

Specifically, he had refused to order priests in writing not to catechize children, to forbid children to participate in religious ceremonies, to stop arranging retreats for their parishioners, to stop making pastoral visitations, to stop helping out in other churches without government permission, and to stop gathering in large groups for priests' retreats.

Moreover, it was demanded of the bishop that he not allow those priests whose certificate of registration the Commissioner revoked, to do priestly work, and that he be sure to ordain to the priesthood all candidates proposed by the civil government.

The greater part of these requirements have already been revoked, as the highest leaders of the Lithuanian S.S.R. have proclaimed in their meeting of September 17, 1987, with the representatives of the Roman Catholic clergy.

At that time, however, for not complying with these demands, incompatible with *Canon Law* and his episcopal conscience, Bishop Steponavičius was removed from office and on January 18, 1961, came to Žagarė, where he was required to take up residence in a dilapidated apartment with 34 square meters of living space, without running water, without sewage, without a bath, without a toilet and without central heating. His housekeeper was supposed to take up residence in the apartment.



Bishop Steponavičius (left) and Father Tamkevičius.

In the article by Anilionis, it states that the Holy Father tried to transfer Bishop Steponavičius to the Diocese of Kaišiadorys as Apostolic Administrator, but allegedly, Bishop Steponavičius would not agree and decided unilaterally to remain in Žagarė. (See Bishop Steponavičius' own account of these events in *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 75. -- Trans. Note) This is not true! For that transfer to Kaišiadorys was only a proposal which the Holy Father himself later withdrew. That the Holy Father still considers Bishop Steponavičius the real administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius can be seen from the the annual registry of bishops of the world, published by the the Vatican, the *Annuario Pontificio*.

In these days of the proliferation of openness and democracy, when so much is being said and written about the correcting of mistakes and righting of wrongs, we request that the wrong committed against Bishop Steponavičius, his banishment to Žagarė by the unjust actions of officials, also be righted. In other words, we also request that Bishop Steponavičius be allowed to return to his post as Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius. Moreover, we demand that *Tiesa* retract the disinformation disseminated by the article of Commissioner Petras Anilionis regarding the question of Bishop Steponavičius' exile to Žagarė.

Signed by the following priests, Fathers:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Albinas Deltuva | 24. Pranas Adomaitis |
| 2. Jonas Matulaitis | 25. Juozapas Užupis |
| 3. Vaclovas Stakėnas | 26. Pranas Perlaitis |
| 4. Juozapas Pečiukonis | 27. Kazimieras Burba |
| 5. Vytautas Insoda | 28. Jonas Rusinas |
| 6. Petras Sitka | 29. Vincas Čėsna |
| 7. Antanas Gražulis | 30. Albinas Jaudegis |
| 8. Jonas Baranauskas | 31. Vytautas Montvila |
| 9. Lionginas Kunevičius | 32. Alfonsas Sadauskas |
| 10. Antanas Diškevičius | 33. Jonas Verkala |
| 11. Kazimeiras Skučas | 34. Pranas Šulskis |
| 12. Tadeušas Valainas | 35. Algirdas Pasiliauskas |
| 13. Vytautas Gustaitis | 36. Petras Dumbliauskas |
| 14. Raimundas Žukauskas | 37. Vytautas Užkuraitis |
| 15. Jonas Boruta | 38. Gvidonas Dovydaitis |
| 16. Deimantas Brogys | 39. Vincas Jalinskas |
| 17. Vladas Bobinas | 40. Jonas Grudzinskas |
| 18. Juozas Klimavičius | 41. Stasys Mikalajūnas |
| 19. Vytautas Prajara | 42. Antanas Liesis |
| 20. Albinas Lukošaitis | |
| 21. Leonardas Kavaliūnas | |
| 22. Vladas Bilius | |
| 23. Antanas Vitkus | |



From left: Virginija Bogušienė, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Robertas Grigas, Vytautas Bogušis, Antanas Terleckas, and KGB Agent Antanas Bimbyris at the August 23, 1987 demonstration in Vilnius, which was held in memory of the victims Stalin and Hitler during World War II.

To: General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party
of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev

From: Priests of Lithuania

A Petition

We are shocked by the new terrorist attacks against Catholic priests and laymen in Lithuania. On September 28, 1987, Father Rokas Puzonas, pastor of the parish of Kiaukliai, *Rayon* of Širvintai, Robertas Grigas, sacristan of that church and Nijolė Sadūnaitė, a devout Catholic woman, were kidnapped by terrorists in civilian garb and militia uniform, aided and abetted by traffic officers, without presenting any documents or warrant.

The victims were driven about Lithuania and Byelorussia: Nijolė Sadūnaitė for thirty hours, with several groups of terrorists relieving each other. Father Puzonas was released in a forest in Byelorussia, 100 km. from Vilnius. Sacristan Grigas escaped from the terrorists in the City of Joniškis, 300 km. from Vilnius. After the "ride" under duress, the terrorists warned that if they did not change their attitudes with regard to religious and national questions, it would be worse. The terrorists did not conceal the fact that they were KGB.

A similar act of terrorism was perpetrated the night of August 22, 1985, against a member of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights, the pastor of Krokialaukis, Father Vaclovas Stakėnas. The terrorists kidnapped him from home by night, under the pretext of a sick-call, drove him out into the woods, tortured him, and left him at midnight gagged and bound hand and foot in the depths of the forest. The perpetrators of this terrorist act have not been discovered to this day.

With such terrorist acts going on, the suspicion arises whether those same forces did not shove Father Bronislovas Laurinavičius under a truck, November 24, 1981, and contributed to events associated with the tragic death of Father Zdebskis, February 5, 1986.

We request that these crude offenses against justice, that is, terrorist attacks, be stopped and the culprits punished.

At the same time, we request that in the process of restructuring, the sentenced priests Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigita Tamkevičius, be released, and that Julijonas Steponavičius of the Archdiocese of Vilnius be restored to his post.

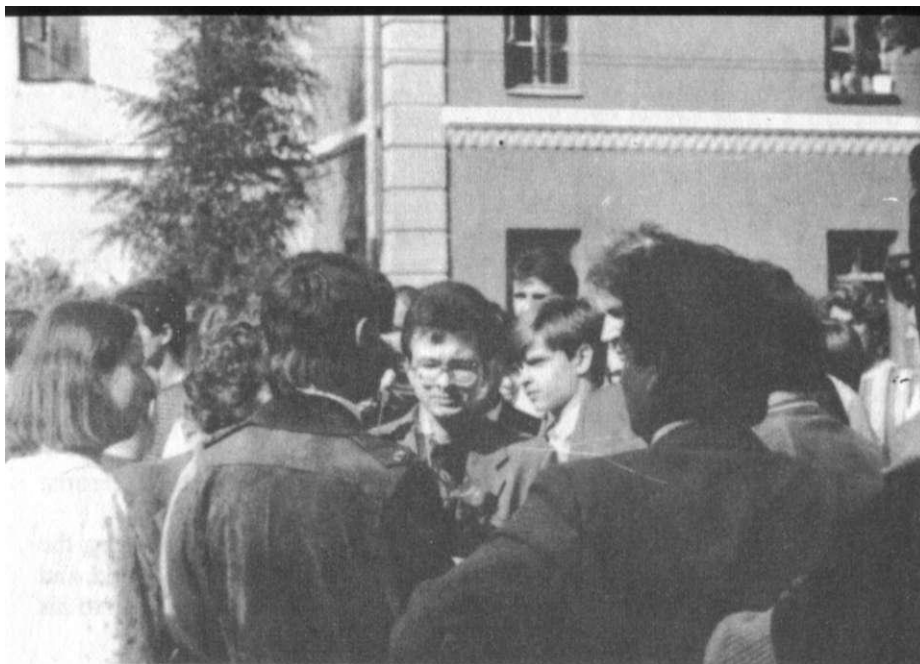
Signed by the following priests, Fathers:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Leonas Kalinauskas | 11. Gustavas Gudanavičius |
| 2. Pranciškus Matulaitis | 12. Antanas Jakubauskas |
| 3. Juozapas Vaičeliūnas | 13. Jonas Kazlauskas |
| 4. Eugenijus Bartulis | 14. Juozapas Razmantas |
| 5. Jonas Survila | 15. Jonas Tamonis |
| 6. Eugenijus Jakubauskas | 16. Kęstutis Daknevičius |
| 7. Viktoras Brusokas | 17. Kazimieras Pesliakas |
| 8. Antanas Danyla | 18. Vytautas Griganavičius |
| 9. Jonas Zubrus | 19. Vaclovas Ramanauskas |
| 10. Antanas Milašius | 20. Jonas Babonas |

To: General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party
of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev
From: Priests of the Diocese of Vilnius

A Petition

On August 28, 1987, the pastor of Kiaukliai, Father Rokas Puzonas, the sacristan of that church, Robertas Grigas, and a devout Catholic woman, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, were assaulted and kidnapped by unknown culprits. Terrorizing and threatening them in every way, the terrorists drove their victims about Lithuania and Byelorussia for a long time. It was ten hours before they released Father Puzonas, in the territory of Byelorussian, S.S.R., near the Town of



Robertas Grigas (glasses) at the Aug, 23, 1987 demonstration.

Svyriai, about 70 km. from Vilnius. Robertas Grigas escaped from the culprits in Joniškis, after having been driven almost 270 km. from Vilnius. Nijolė Sadūnaitė they drove around for thirty hours before they finally released her near her home.

The assailants did not present any documents, but they did not hide the fact that they were KGB agents. Some were wearing militia uniforms. Although their cars were without license plates, traffic police who stopped them would respectfully wave them on, even giving them assistance.

A similar act of terrorism was perpetrated August 22, 1985, against the pastor of Krokialaukis, Father Vaclovas Stakėnas. Treacherously summoning the priest on an unknown sick-call, they drove him from his home, tortured him and at midnight, left him in a strange forest, gagged and tied hand and foot. These criminals have not been found to this day.

Nor have those other criminals been found out, who, on September 10 of this year, wearing the uniform of militia officers, assaulted Father Juozas Čepėnas, pastor of Gruzdžiai. Breaking into the rectory about 9:00 P.M., they bound the pastor, for about two hours took over his apartment, and afterwards, drove off to points unknown, taking his automobile.

We apply to you, General Secretary, with the request that you direct the attention of the appropriate government organs to those events, and that

you require that such excesses be prevented in the future, and the culprits be found out and punished.

At the same time, we request that in the process of restructuring, when so much is being said about the correcting of past mistakes, the cases of the sentenced priests, Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius, be reviewed, and that they be released.

Signed by the following priests, Fathers:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Vladas Bobinas | 23. Vytautas Gustaitis |
| 2. Leonardas Kavaliūnas | 24. Deimantas Brogys |
| 3. Vladas Bilius | 25. Raimundas Žukauskas |
| 4. Pranas Adomaitis | 26. Juozas Klimavičius |
| 5. Antanas Vitkus | 27. Vytautas Prajara |
| 6. Albinas Jaudegis | 28. Jonas Varkala |
| 7. Antanas Lukošaitis | 29. Algirdas Pasilauskas |
| 8. Juozapas Matulevičius | 30. Petras Dumbliauskas |
| 9. Juozas Pečiukonis | 31. Vytautas Užkuraitis |
| 10. Petras Sitka | 32. Gvidonas Dovydaitis |
| 11. Tadeušas Valianis | 33. Vytautas Budas |
| 12. Pranas Šulskis | 34. Pranas Perlaitis |
| 13. Juozapas Užupis | 35. Kazimieras Burba |
| 14. Jonas Boruta | 36. Jonas Rusinas |
| 15. Antanas Liesis | 37. Jonas Matulaitis |
| 16. Lionginas Kunevičius | 38. Vincas Čėsna |
| 17. Albinas Deltuva | 39. Vitas Urbonas |
| 18. Antanas Gražulis | 40. Vincas Jalinskas |
| 19. Antanas Diškevičius | 41. Jonas Grudzinskas |
| 20. Vaclovas Stakėnas | 42. Stasys Mikalajūnas |
| 21. Vytautas Insoda | |
| 22. Jonas Baranauskas | |

To: The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist
Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev
Copies to: The Bishops of Lithuania
Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs, Petras
Anilionis
The Executive Committee of the Council of Peoples' Deputies of
the City of Alytus
From: Father Antanas Gražulis, Associate Pastor of the Alytus II Parish

A Petition

On October 6, 1987, A. Makštutis, Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Council of Peoples' Deputies of the City of Alytus, coming to the rectory of Alytus II, read me the September 20, 1987 warning from Commissioner Petras Anilionis of the Council for Religious Affairs. Makštutis refused to leave a copy of the warning or allow me to copy the text of the warning.

Such behavior by officials is evidence of the fact that they are not convinced of the grounds for the accusations raised, and therefore wish that the wider circle of citizenry not be apprised of the exact contents of the warning. Such a tactic of concealing from the public documents which are official and allegedly promulgated, formerly rampant, is not consistent with the present climate of restructuring and openness.

In the warning signed by Petras Anilionis, I am accused upon my arrival at the Basilica of Šiluva, September 13, 1987, of preaching a sermon anti-Soviet in nature.

Allegedly during the sermon, I urged people not to believe in Soviet propaganda, praised the imprisoned state criminals Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis, and invited the faithful to liberate "Lithuania from unbaptized hands".

After the sermon, I am supposed to have sung the bourgeois national anthem of Lithuania. In so doing, I allegedly violated Par. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian S.S.R., forbidding the sowing of discord in connection with religious cults and, the *Regulations for Religious Associations*, limiting the activities of clergy to that religious association for whose ministry the Office of the Council for Religious Affairs has registered them.

In response to these accusations, this is what I have to say:

September 13, 1987, I came to the shrine of all Lithuanian Catholics to pray as a private worshipper. That day, I did not carry out any specifically priestly ceremonies. After the principal Mass, I took part in a penitential procession of devout people: we went around the basilica on our knees reciting the rosary. In Šiluva, I delivered no sermon, but only announced aloud at the beginning of the rosary, as is customary, what intention we would be praying for: i.e.,

the intention of penance for sins committed by our fellow countrymen, joining our prayer with the sacrifice offered up for that same intention by priests in prison.

As far as I know, there is no law of Church or state forbidding the faithful in church or in the churchyard, to pray aloud. Nor is there any law against a rank-and-file lay believer announcing at the beginning of prayer in common what we are praying for. Thus, having done that which a lay believer is allowed to do, I am accused of performing the duties of a clergyman in a church other than the one to which I am registered.

If I am penalized for such a "crime", then to be consistent with the view of Petras Anilionis, all faithful who stop to pray in a church where they are not registered should be punished. Then it would be necessary to station at the church doors government officials who would not allow faithful from elsewhere into church. Does Petras Anilionis really have so little grasp of matters that he makes such absurd accusations?

I am accused in the warning of urging people not to believe Soviet propaganda while I announced the intention for the rosary. This is just the point, that Soviet propaganda is involved in atheistic, that is godless, propaganda. I urged the faithful to pray that we not succumb to atheistic propaganda, and value our faith. Surely, a priest or layman cannot pray for the intention that atheistic propaganda succeed in tearing the faith from peoples' hearts. Such an intention for prayer can be demanded of a believing person only by someone who is mentally ill. Surely there is no Soviet law forbidding believers to pray that faith would not be extinguished, but rather, grow in peoples' hearts?

Also incompatible with freedom of professing the Christian religion is the demand of Petras Anilionis that the faithful not pray for prisoners, especially priests, without even raising the question whether the prisoners are justly or unjustly sentenced. In the Gospel, kindness and love shown them is equated with kindness shown to Christ Himself. (See Mt 25,45)

In the First Century, during the persecution of the Christians when the apostles were arrested, the entire Church prayed publicly (See Acts, 12,5). Surely, the laws defended by Petras Anilionis are not meant to be harsher than the laws promulgated by the persecutors of the early Christians?

The phrase, "he invited" the faithful to liberate "Lithuania from unbaptized hands" was nowhere in the intention I announced for the rosary; it is the fruit of the imagination of the spies sent to the church by the atheistic government.

It is not true that after the penitential procession that I sang the national anthem of bourgeois Lithuania. It was intoned and sung by the believing public. In that anthem, the "national hymn" of the well-known Lithuanian writer, Vincas Kudirka, there is no anti-Soviet feeling, since it was composed at the end of the last century when there still was no Soviet government.

That it contains nothing anti-Soviet is also witnessed by the fact that from 1944 to 1950, this anthem was the official anthem of the Lithuanian S.S.R. At that time, Anilionis worked as Chairman of the Joniškėlis *Rayon* Executive Committee, and surely knew what the L.S.S.R. state anthem was. And if he forgot, then before writing the warning, he could have glanced at the *Lithuanian Soviet Encyclopedia (Lietuviškąją Tarybinę Enciklopediją*, Vol 12, Vilnius, p.44). That would have sufficed to avoid the unpleasant distortion, that the singing of the L.S.S.R. state hymn, dating from the days of Stalin, is considered an anti-Soviet crime.

In Petras Anilionis' warning, it states that I spoke in the church of Šiluva without the permission of the Raseiniai Executive Committee. Actually, the *Regulations for Religious Associations* require that we inform the Executive Committee, not that we obtain its permission.

Since, as has already been mentioned earlier, the announcing of a prayer intention is no priestly function, then all the less is permission of the *Rayon* government required for it.

As for the Raseiniai *Rayon* government, by its fanatic atheistic behavior, it has long ago turned the faithful against itself and the atheists protected by the government, e.g., in 1986, one week before the great religious festival in Šiluva, the preacher invited by pastor Msgr. Grauslys, the pastor of Eržvilkas, Father Petras Meilius, was forbidden to preach sermons during that festival. This year, another preacher invited for the festival, the Dean of Lazdijai, Father V. Jalinskas, was treated the same way.

The atheists can invite bright, interesting speakers to give atheistic lectures, while the faithful in Šiluva are allowed to hear only the sermons of priests from neighboring villages, with just a week's preparation. Is this compatible with the principle of equality of believers and atheists before the law written into the Constitutions of the U.S.S.R. and the L.S.S.R.?

Can such excesses of officials of the atheistic government strengthen the confidence of believers in the freedom of conscience guaranteed by the Soviet government? Commissioner Petras Anilionis of the Council for Religious Affairs, instead of trying to abolish excesses of this nature, encourages and sustains them by warnings such as those sent to me. Can it be that restructuring will not effect the style of operations of the Office of Commissioner Petras Anilionis of the Council for Religious Affairs?

I ask you, General Secretary, to direct Commissioner Petras Anilionis of the Council for Religious Affairs to retract his baseless warning and to continue to try to ease the tension which has arisen between the believing public of Lithuania and Soviet government officials propagating atheism.

October 10, 1987

To: The United Nations Human Rights Commission
Copies to: General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev
U.S.S.R. Ministry of Education
L.S.S.R. Ministry of Education
From: Marytė Gudaitytė Residing in the Village of Skersbalis, Prienai *Rayon*

A Petition

After some years of tiring and fruitless correspondence with Soviet agencies, and having lost all hope that my problem would be solved legally and set right, I have decided to set out my complaint to international organizations defending human rights.

In the fall of 1983, I enrolled in the Pranas Mažylis Nursing School in Kaunas. As I was completing my studies in 1985, the director of this school sent me to the offices of the Kaunas City KGB to see agent Jocas. In the interview, he told me that I would no longer be able to study, since I had written the priest-prisoners, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Alfonsas Svarinskas, Christmas greetings. I was interrogated and threatened.

School director Tamašauskienė said that she wouldn't dismiss me from school herself, but it was demanded by the KGB, and she had to carry out orders.

March 9, 1985, together with my father, I went to the Ministry of Higher and Special Intermediate Education. We were received by a staff member of the Ministry of Education, Stonys. He explained that I had been expelled justly, but that next year, I could finish school. After that, I was summoned by some official named Šnipas. He explained that writing letters to Fathers Tamkevičius and Svarinskas is a great crime; it is anti-Soviet activity; my father and I are extremists, so my expulsion is justified.

In May of that same year, I appealed to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, requesting that he allow me to finish school. The response was negative.

On April 4, 1986, I went to the Ministry of Higher and Specialized Intermediate Education. Stonys told me to go to the Pranas Mažylis Nursing School in Kaunas.

On April 5, 1986, I went there. Assistant Director Grigas said that I would not be able to study in that school, and advised me to go to some other nursing school.

On April 11, 1986, I went to the Utena Nursing School. The director of the school, having learned everything about me, was amazed that I was still working in a kindergarten, and would not accept my application. She told me to apply to the Pranas Mažylis Nursing School in Kaunas.

That same year, I appealed once more to the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to allow me to

finish nursing school. From the Ministry of Education, I received another negative response.

In the fall of 1987, I tried to enroll in the nursing school in Šiauliai. I could not take the entrance examination, because I was sick in the hospital at that time. I took my documents down after the entrance examination August 24, and was accepted for nursing school. The specific date for the entrance examination was not stated.

On October 5, I received certification as a student, so I was treated as a student at the Šiauliai nursing school. In the group, I was given the assignment of taking care of the groups' atheistic training.

On November 30, after a meeting of the group, I refused these duties on the basis that I am a religious believer.

That same day, after the meeting, the group leader came to the house where I live, together with three students from the group. He explained that he was visiting all students. He took down my personal information, and inquired whether any outsiders visited me. He wrote down the names of the girls in the group who visited me.

On December 1, I was summoned to see the director of the school. The director explained that I was being expelled from school and moreover, was not yet accepted for school, since I did not take the entrance examination. Hence, I had to take back my records.

The real reason for my expulsion is that I refused to do atheistic work. To me it is incomprehensible how a believing individual can be demeaned more than forcing him to do work contrary to his or her religious beliefs.

I would like to ask those who proclaim the well-advertised Soviet "democratization", who cry so loudly that every Soviet citizen regardless of beliefs, race or station in life has the right to education and work. What is this loud slogan worth? How can all this be reconciled with the Soviet Constitution and other international obligations with regard to human rights?

December 10, 1987

To: U.S.S.R. Minister of Defense, Yazov

Copies to: The Chief of the Military Commissariat of the City of Kapsukas

From: Petras Gražulis, Son of Antanas

Residing in the Village of Sasnava, *Rayon* of Kapsukas

An Open Letter

With the approach of the 70th anniversary of Lithuanian Independence, I, Petras Gražulis, son of Antanas, protest the occupation of Lithuania according to a secret protocol which Molotov and Ribbentrop, the repre-

sentatives of two dishonest governments, Russia and Germany, secretly signed in 1939; in 1940, the Baltic States were occupied.

This protest is amply set forth in a 1987 petition written and addressed to the leaders of these two states, and to the Secretary General of the U.N., which I also signed. In protest against the occupation, I withdraw and ask you to consider null and void the oath which I took when serving in the Soviet Army.

I leave for the training session to which I am being summoned November 27, 1987, as a *slave*, the son of a captive nation who does not have the right to a free decision.

I categorically refuse:

1. To go to Afghanistan, for I consider this war unjust.
2. To serve in Chernobyl, since by law, only volunteers go there.

I am a believer, so I demand that during my training period, the following conditions be provided which were not present during my two years of compulsory military training:

1. To be able to hear Mass on Sundays and holidays, and not to be forced to work.
2. To allow time for morning, evening and other prayers.
3. Not to be forbidden religious literature.

These are commandments of the Church which I am obliged to follow. I ask all people of good-will to solidarize with me and I ask them to support me with their prayers.

November 23, 1987

To: U.S.S.R. Minister of Defense Jazov

From: Romas Žemaitis, Son of Petras

Born 1966

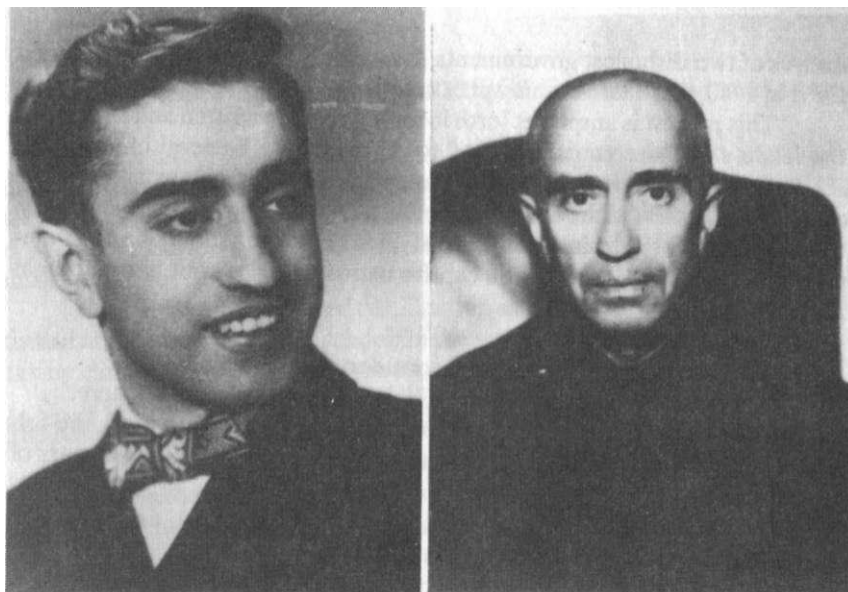
Residing in the *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis

Kybartai, Ostrovskio - 9

A Petition

On December 6, 1987, at the urging of the Military Commissariat of the City of Vilkaviškis, I am being summoned for compulsory military service in the Soviet Army.

On November 12, 1984, I was falsely arrested for my religious beliefs, and together with Father Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis, sentenced to two years of incarceration. I consider any restraint of religious freedom unjust, compatible neither with the Soviet Constitution nor with the *International Declaration of Human Rights*.



Father Matulionis in 1957 (left), and in 1987.

Since my case is not unique, therefore, protesting against the unjust confinement of Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius and other prisoners of conscience in Soviet camps, I refuse to take the military oath. For that same reason, I consider military service in the Soviet Army itself unjust, imposed on me by force.

December 5, 1987

(The following refers to the aftermath of a birthday party held for the Gražulis sisters in the Village of Makniūniai, Alytus Rayon. The party was interrupted by militia, teachers and others. These events are recounted in Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, No. 73 - Trans. Note)

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

Copies to: 1. The Bishops of Lithuania and the Administrators of Dioceses
2. General Chief Chebrikov of the Soviet KGB
3. Procurator General of the U.S.S.R.
4. The Editors of Youth Publications
5. Procurator of the L.S.S.R.

6. Editors of *Komjaunimo Tiesa*
7. Editors of *Valstiečių Laikraštis*
8. Editors of *Komunistiniu rytojus*
9. City and *Rayon* of Alytus Department of Education
10. Procurator of the City of Alytus

From: The Gražulis Family and other participants

A Petition

Honorable General Secretary, we have appealed to you and to other levels of government. Since we have not received any answer in writing, we are sending you the texts of these petitions. We wish to inform you how the local government and press reacted to our complaints.

On March 17, 1987, through Assistant Procurator J. Balčys of the *Rayon* and city of Alytus, Assistant Procurator Bakučionis summoned a few members of our family, youth representatives, and the parents of minors. We were surprised that the purpose of the meeting was not to reply honestly to our petitions, but in the sight of officials, to accuse and ridicule us.

Bakučionis explained that among the guests were some who had nothing in common with the Gražulis family, since some of them were as much as ten years younger than the girls celebrating their birthday.

The Assistant Procurator of the L.S.S.R. did not cite a single paragraph of the law which would indicate who can be invited, what degree of kinship they should be, and how old. Among the fifty people present at the birthday party, the intruding officials found only seven minors. The age difference between the youngest minor and the oldest of the girls whose birthday was being celebrated was nine years.

Bakučionis tried to maintain that the officials who broke in without a warrant broke no law. However, Par. 53 of the L.S.S.R. Constitution says, "No one has the right, without a legal basis, to enter a dwelling against the will of the persons living there."

District Chairman Rubliauskas told Mrs. Gražulienė, "We came to see who is using the premises", while other participants in the "raid", without waiting for the lady of the house, began to force their way into the room where the young people were enjoying themselves.

Bakučionis further tried to justify the officials: "The law obliges them to take all necessary measures in educating minors. In this connection, a raid on the Gražulis family is possible." He read the officials' explanation that driving by, they had heard music, saw an obvious light, and two minors.

Teacher Matonienė stated, "We found out, and came."

Who is speaking the truth, Teacher Matonienė or the officials? Is it possible to hear music while driving by at a distance of 200 meters, when it is playing in a closed area, over a 10 watt tape player? It is impossible to under-

stand how we can, in a poorly lit yard at night, determine from such a distance, a person's age. Surely, a light burning in a private yard, at 10:00 P.M., and two young people seen in the yard, could not constitute cause for a raid when the aforesaid "army" was not driving by, but came specifically to the yard?

And it was not just one car, but four of them at one time (among them & *Latvija*), full of officials, while five other automobiles and a bus remained on the road before the property. They even brought two German Shepherds.

On their arrival, the officials not only looked for minors, but immediately fell to listing the license plates of birthday party guests. It would be interesting to know what license plate numbers have to do with the affairs of minors!

That the participants in the "raid" did not "hear music" by accident and turn into the Gražulis' yard, but that it was a pre-planned action, is attested by the fact that the officials came, not only from the offices of the Alytus *Rayon* but also from the *Rayon* of Prienai.

It appears that someone had already informed the "appropriate organs", who had been invited to the birthday party and where they were from. One of the officials, asking not to be identified, later reported that it had all been organized in advance by the KGB.

Bakučionis complained that the officials had not been fittingly received: the young people had not given their names.

This is true. They did not give them, because they knew that on account of all this, they could be terrorized. Moreover, the young people looked upon the officials as transgressors against the law, that is, of Par. 53 of the Constitution, who, on private property, acted as though they were in the House of Culture.

"Minors were found!" exulted the procurator.

Were they found without adult supervision? What law would They have broken if they had not been driven home that evening (if the parents had given permission)? According to the way Bakučionis interprets the February 15, 1977 *Instruction of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.*, it would be necessary every evening to have the militia round up minor children taken by their parents to visit relatives and friends, and to bring them back home to their parents in town for the night.

Can a seriously-thinking official comment on the law so unwisely? The guests at the birthday party were gathered not in some public place, but on private property!

Teacher Matonienė alleged that the young people had acted provocatively: standing around demonstratively in the yard, they had sung hymns.

Yes, they sang hymns, because the officials requested it!

The procurator, wishing to justify the penalty meted out to Mrs. M. Gražulienė's son-in-law, Algis Baciūška, based his argument on his explanation.

In it, allegedly Baciūška regretted having lied and having acted inappropriately toward the officials. Forgetting to note that Baciūška's unsuitable behavior had manifested itself in that he had written down license numbers of the officials, in so doing he had broken no law, yet the officials demanded that he turn over the paper with the license numbers. Baciūška refused to do so, and the officials detained him.

The Assistant Procurator never mentioned Baciūška's statement, later written to the Procurator of the L.S.S.R., "Having brought me to KGB headquarters in Alytus, without presenting any warrant from the procurator, they searched my pockets and took me to a cell. There I remained about two hours. Later, two civilians took me to the third floor where two other vague characters were waiting, who, once again without a warrant from the procurator, carried out a personal search, checking my veins, probably thinking that I am a drug addict.

"Then they began asking why I had come to the Gražulis'. Some captain asked why I took down their license numbers. In a loud voice, he said, 'You didn't work long at the packing house; you won't be working long at the ATI. If you don't talk, we'll make you crazy! You know that we can do anything!'

"They threatened to sentence me to fifteen days, allegedly for cursing them. After yelling at me for a while, they told me to repent and sign the report."

Algis explained to his friends that the officials with their threats forced him to sign.

It is impossible to understand the officials' reasoning. In the yard, they demanded that the minors be immediately taken home to their parents. When Gintas Sakavičius, carrying out this directive from the officials, was taking children to Alytus, those same officials, driving out to the main road, detained him. In the opinion of Bakučionis, Sakavičius tried to avoid falling into the hands of officials, because in the luggage compartment of his automobile, was a typewriter. If Sakavičius had been trying to avoid another encounter with the officials, it would have been best for him to remain in the home after the officials' departure, and not drive the minors to Alytus.

Hence, Assistant Procurator Bakučionis' judgement that the typewriter which was found was evidence of an anti-Soviet plot hatched at the birthday party, is unfounded (all the more since the typewriter was broken).

To the report that the minor Dapkūnas was beaten by Major Verenius, Chief of the Division of Juvenile Affairs, Assistant Procurator Bakučionis responded, "This accusation arose from collective petitions. Why did the mother, Mrs. Dapkūnienė, not come to the procurator's office herself to file a complaint? Such a silence on the mother's part arouses suspicions. Hence, the *Rayon* Procurator refused to file criminal charges."

Surely, it is not only the mother who can report a transgression against the law?

Bakučionis, wishing to show that Mrs. Gražulienė's health was good, read from a document obtained from the Polyclinic. Here it was stated that she last visited the Polyclinic October 10, 1985. He added, "Perhaps she received treatment elsewhere, but her health has not deteriorated."

Is Bakučionis, besides being a procurator, also a physician? As a matter of fact, the Assistant Procurator, coming to look at the scene of the "raid", did not even inquire after Mrs. Gražulienė's health, and now he draws conclusions such as can be drawn only by a medical practitioner.

Even though it had been some time since Mrs. Gražulienė had visited the Polyclinic, nevertheless, she has suffered a heart attack, and she now suffers from hypertension and stenotic heart vessels. The attack with dogs and various threats have caused her health to deteriorate.

Mrs. Gražulienė was accused of bootleg construction; that was so. However, before beginning construction, she applied to a *rayon* official for permission. She received the following reply: "Mrs. Gražulienė, do not ask for permission, it will never be granted to you. If your sons were not priests, but Party members, you would get all the permits. Go ahead and build; everyone builds nowadays, most of them without permits."

Why did the Assistant Procurator suppress the incident which took place in the Miroslavl Middle School? The school director, Dabašinskienė, came to the XI Class, where Povilas Gražulis was a student, and asked the students, "Whoever heard teacher Ališkevičienė publicly compare the Gražulis Family, because they are believers, to a pile of manure, raise your hand!" All hands went up, except two.

The procurator did not explain why the local procurator's office requisitioned the profiles of some parents and children from offices and schools. Are they such terrible criminals? He did not tell why officials came and took down the license numbers of the parked automobiles three times. What is the connection between juveniles and automobiles? Why were cameras, dogs and pistols needed? It became unclear to us how a letter written to the editors of youth publications ended up with Procurator Bakučionis.

A good week after the interview with Procurator Bakučionis, in *Komjaunimo tiesa*, number 61, Aldona Svirbutavičiūtė's article, "Birthday Conflict," appeared. In the article, the author explains that the senior assistant procurator of the republic had responded broadly and in depth to the authors of the complaint.

The author herself, who heard the text of the complaint, could understand that Bakučionis responded superficially to arguments set forth in the petition, distorting the facts and leaving most questions unanswered.

Miss Svirbutavičiūtė states that in the complaint, some things were kept secret, some things were distorted, and in places, there were lies. But why does she not specify what is suppressed or distorted?

Why does the author herself distort the facts? After all, Renata herself states that the reporter never asked her who sent out the birthday invitations, and there was no young man named "Saulius" among the birthday celebrants.

Why did the reporter mention Miss Šimkūnaitė, and not Regina Gražulytė, who also had her conduct mark lowered?

The raid, according to the author, is one aspect of official work. But is there any law permitting a raid on a private home, rather than a House of Culture? Is there any law against juveniles enjoying themselves in a private home, rather than in public, under the supervision of adults and with parental permission?

What business is it of the author, whom a birthday girl can invite, and how old they should be?

The reporter's claim that the parents of the juveniles at the birthday party met three days later to discuss the event and to agree on what to say, what to suppress, and what to distort, is a fabrication. Another fabrication is the story of Daiva's brother jumping through a window in order to avoid going to church.

Miss Svirbutavičiūtė, the author of the article, also repeats the absurd interpretation of the 1977 *Directive of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.*, that after 10:00 P.M., minors cannot be in anyone else's home without their parents. There is a law forbidding them to be in public places without adult supervision, after 10:00 P.M. The juvenile participants in the birthday did not break this law, either.

We have never heard of any law forbidding anyone to invite someone to a birthday through an intermediary, just as we have never heard that it was forbidden to be friends with or to invite to one's birthday persons ten years younger than the one doing the inviting.

It is not the place of a journalist to decide whom we can invite for our birthdays, or how.

About a week later, on April 7, the *Peasants' Newspaper* published P. Matukas' article entitled, "A Wave of Unnecessary Passions", and on April 18, that same article was reprinted in the *Rayon* newspaper, *Communist Tomorrow*. This article repeats the fabrications in Miss Svirbutavičiūtė's article, adding new inventions.

Bakučionis, responding to the complaint of those at the birthday party and their parents, read an explanation to Alytus *Rayon* KGB Assistant Chief Grigaravičius, who led the raid, in which it stated that participants in the raid, driving at night, saw two juveniles walking about on the Gražulis property.

In Matukas' article, those two adolescents became a group of "children buzzing around in the yard". According to the officials' explanation, there is a comical situation: If, after 10:00 P.M., a minor tries, for instance, to use an outside toilet, the *Rayon* militia has a duty of "taking an interest in that event".

Matukas writes falsely that the juveniles asked by officials to give their names, were incited by Petras Gražulis who was there, to prevaricate. As a matter of fact, Gražulis tried to calm the young people who were annoyed at the officials.

In Matukas' article, the elder of the birthday girls, Janina Gražulytė, is portrayed two years older than she really is. How can it be otherwise, for it is necessary to bolster the basic thesis, that there is a ten-year age gap between the older birthday girl and the youngest teenager present.

This is the kind of nonsense and distortion of fact we come to in the Soviet press, in the effort to justify at all costs, the unjustifiable, the anti-Constitutional behavior of government officials.

We demand that the misstatements which have appeared in the press and the wrong information publicly disseminated by officials be retracted, so that in these times of openness and restructuring, such unjustifiable excesses by officials would not be repeated.

Signed by the following:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Mrs. Gražulienė | 16. S. Buzaitė |
| 2. V. Makrickaitė | 17. Janušauskas |
| 3. M. Gudaitytė | 18. J. Marcinkaitė |
| 4. D. Petraitytė | 19. J. Mikailionytė |
| 5. V. Gražulytė | 20. M. Kaškonaitė |
| 6. M. Baciūskienė | 21. Z. Ališauskaitė |
| 7. A. Gražulis | 22. V. Daunaravičius |
| 8. A. Baciūška | 23. V. Sinkevičiūtė |
| 9. V. Šimkūnas | 24. V. Dapkūnas |
| 10. Br. Kriščiūnaitė | 25. A. Gražulytė |
| 11. K. Gražulis | 26. R. Makrickaitė |
| 12. Petras Gražulis | 27. R. Gražulytė |
| 13. S. Gudaitis | 28. P. Gražulis |
| 14. R. Mikalauskaitė | 29. G. Kekmonaitė |
| 15. V. Kačergis | 30. R. Venecevičiūtė |

and thirteen others.

(The language of petitions is unedited - Ed. Note)



Father Juozas Zdebskis, killed in a 1986 auto accident.

FROM THE LETTERS OF THE LATE FATHER JUOZAS ZDEBSKIS

February 5 of this year (1988) marks two years since that zealous priest of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, who was once sentenced to Soviet labor camp for teaching children catechism, perished in an automobile accident. We print here an excerpt from a letter of Father Zdebskis, written in Soviet labor camp.

I wish to place my trust in the mercy of God, hoping that His grace will help me to collect my thoughts and to dwell on one point in your letter, regardless of the fact that they are talking and walking around me.

We have just returned from work. Today, we returned somewhat earlier. We did not accomplish too much, since it is raining. Everyone has crawled in wherever he can, and so to my great joy, I have been able to read a bit of the *Brothers Karamazov*, and now, I'm trying to reply to your letter.

The part of your letter about which I have thought much deals with something which is a great problem of all of us. The direction and dynamic of our lives depends, in one way or another, on how we solve it. You have probably thought about this idea many times. It is expressed by you in different words. Let me state it in mine.

We all know how great a power, what a source of life energy, is natural love, when one as the saying goes, falls in love ~ usually with a person of the opposite sex — or in the case of an aberration of nature, with someone of the same sex. This is clear to most of us - and part of our own experience.

But to many of us, that love about which Christ speaks and which He demands of all as the basic mark of His faithful followers, poses the greatest question. The question arises: Where, then, is love to draw its energy if it does not of itself blaze like a conflagration?

The basic reason, the basic source of energy for such wondrous love which the world admires even after many centuries, is an action of grace in the soul. There are not only scientific heroes and war heroes, but also heroes in the area of love. They are practical examples of how God can act in people, and how mankind can become like God, who is Love, just as on a fine morning, ordinary colorless drops of dew can blossom with the wonder of the sun.

One might ask whether that great Love on earth has any connection with God. Can it not manifest itself wondrously, even without God? Have there not been remarkable people on earth, moved by motives other than love? More precisely, not by motives of Christian, Divine Love?

First of all, in history, it is not so easy to enter into the depths of each great person's soul, and determine whether his actions exhibited only the desire for the good of others, and not common pride, or a feverish self-seeking. Is this important? It is very important. Pride, self-seeking, this is the clearest sign that this has nothing to do with the great Divine Love which is able to embrace many, not just one person.

It is very important, in order to orient oneself in this question, to pay attention to the voice of history. Every system which causes suffering is a historical proof that love is a monopoly which belongs only to Him who Himself is Love. And to the extent that it is missing in life, to that extent, man is not a brother to man, not a comrade, does not have equal rights.

Respect, more exactly subservience, in the naturalistic sense is ordinarily expressed according to physical, most often fiscal, power. There is just one conclusion from all this: for man to be able to love powerfully, he himself must be powerfully loved.

How to understand this? As an example of this, we have the experience of natural love. I am reminded of one man's ideas. He learned to enjoy flowers, and to notice them only when love entered his heart, when he felt it as a gift intended for him in another heart. Then, and only then, did he feel the powerful desire to do everyone good.

This is obvious to us. But how does this law express itself in that other great Love which the Master requires of us, toward others and in all circumstances? It is just here that the need arises for a man to have known God's love for us. Do you know that the only reason Christ had the right to give us His great law of love was because He Himself demonstrated it to us in a wonderful way?

Do you know when I would recall this thought somehow anew? It was during Holy Week when the prayer of meditation always turns to those events, especially Holy Thursday evening. The Master then gave everything he could give: "Love one another as I have loved you," "I give you a commandment, I give you a new commandment..."

"If your Lord and Master has done so (washed the feet of another - the highest expression of love and respect in Jewish custom), so you ought to do for one another."

"I no longer call you servants, but friends," - comrades.

Finally, the great gift of that evening of Love was His new form of being with us on earth, invented by His power - the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. Finally, He saw everything with the eyes of His soul on the Mount of Olives, and agreed to experience it, so that we might have the capability of avoiding those terrible results of Man's pride before God.

Lastly, there is the great miracle of His resurrection. This is an encouragement for us that our hopes might not be groundless, that we might be able to trust Him (Did you feel that on Easter morning?). And all this is not beautiful poetry, but historical fact, like all other historical events in the world. The mystery of Christ's Incarnation in the world, after all, was not a coincidence. It was God's love expressed for us in that way.

Can entering deeply into the mysteries of this feast really make the human heart so powerful? Meditating on it is an essential condition so that we might be granted the grace to love powerfully. Grace changes the heart's powers (If, for example, a beast were granted the gift of intellect, this would be an essential change in its nature.). It is possible to say that man becomes a Man of new capabilities, unrecognizeably unlike the man who manifests himself only by natural powers.

But in order for such a miracle of change to take place, everywhere (in the normal course of events), it is necessary to enter deeply into all those ways by which Divine Love manifests itself to us, since man can then no longer say that no one has loved him. And thanks to the action of grace, that power of love becomes capable of being perceived by the senses, similar to natural love.

And only when man is overcome by the wonder of the grace God has given him, does he feel himself indebted in love to everyone. Oh how much we lose because of the most common thoughtlessness. For whatever you take: physical strength, mental power, sight — all this is a gift!

For, coming into the world, we did not give ourselves anything. If people consciously understood this, if they remembered every morning, "Behold, Lord, I go to make use of your gifts (the mind, physical powers)," that would already be an expression of love and adoration, and at the same time, a sensing of His love. And if in the evening, he were to ask, "God, how did I use your gifts today?", if people would only remember this, this drop of love for the Creator would have reforming meaning for their lives.

Just thinking in such simple terms, man already experiences, senses, God's love for him. And this simple feeling of love already gives energy to love others, all the more thanks to meditative prayer. Deep is the feeling that everything that took place during Holy Week was real, and not just beautiful poetry. As real as a day I have experienced. A day ten years ago, etc.

So once again, let us pause before the thought: the events of life show that the rules of etiquette and friendship, love based only on words, is quickly choked by weeds, self-interest, unruly ambition, and pride. Only in the sight of God, as the source of all Love known and unknown to us, does every person we meet on the road of life attain a value.

Here is something of a parallel: If someone is dear to us, then of course that person's intimates are also dear to us. Take note -- even natural love activated by powerful forces of nature easily becomes distorted if one does not see his love in the view of Him who is the first cause of all Love. I think we all know examples of distorted love which hardly differs from the "love" of animals.

At the present time, Providence is letting me experience in a practical way that in truth, noble human love between two people, the kind all hearts long for, is really impossible solely on the basis of man's natural powers, without feeling God in one's own view and that of another, God Who is above me and above you.

Even in primitive religions which did not have the good fortune of knowing Divine Providence, a human being's feeling that he is in the sight of another being higher than man, has meaning. Not a single nation which has forgotten revelation becomes unbelieving. It is just that their religion becomes unnatural, since this understanding is inborn in man.

At the present time, I have the rare opportunity of comparing two dormitories: my schooldays are alive in my memory in detail, where also there were young men, and my present "dormitory". It would be very interesting to show in two films how infinite is the difference between two people who find themselves in the same life circumstances (e.g., eating and sleeping), but one of them

senses himself and his friends in the Sight of God, and the other senses only himself!

Know that here are concentrated mostly people who have become materialistic. And when such an individual is not alone, but among others of the same ilk, their basic traits become unusually clear. You know that this practical comparison is for me, myself, one of the strongest and most obvious proofs of man's material and spiritual sides. I wonder whether you can imagine how poverty stricken is man without a shred of decoration, without beauty, if in his behavior, only attention to self is manifested, to one's own pleasure, one's own convenience, one's own ambition; when there remains only one area of interest, only that which is connected with sexual feeling and this, too, caricatured in its very lowest meaning.

It seems that most of them are not themselves to blame, and yet, it is a sight... A few practical examples: How difficult it is to renounce useful work found for oneself, especially food, if only no one sees. How easy it is to blame another, just to curry favor with whomever it is necessary. There is a line for dinner. Right away, one or two show up ahead of the others, as though not seeing that behind him stand people whom he is pushing away. You see how obvious is interest in oneself alone. It is the wish to eat as soon as possible which he is unable to overcome, even though it is shameful in the sight of others to show that there is no will power.

Expressions used every other word (which there is no way of specifying), betray their area of interest. In detail, they brag about their "conquests" among women. And it is necessary to forget that a woman is a human being. They listen in amazement to talk about responsibility, consequences and comparison ~ if that were, for instance, your daughter, your sweetheart, your mother — and others acted so. They agree that this is impossible, but who thinks about that. They find a list of sophisms and nonsense to justify themselves. Truly, if he did not have the ability to think and speak, then how would man differ from the animals?

But do not think that there is not a shred of good in them. How much generosity and comradeship they are sometimes able to demonstrate. It is just that with them, everything is in disarray, neglected, like an untended garden. But if someone were to take care of it, tend it, this garden would also be fruitful. "Send workers to your harvest!"

Seeing them, one is prompted to say, "Lord, how much You have given me. Be merciful also to them."

Look what just came to my mind: This desire that they also should have what they do not have formulates itself only when you feel your own gift, in other words, when you feel loved.

I would like to tell you what contributed greatly to the evocation of these thoughts. The last time I received some Easter eggs, etc., it included an

informational slip telling to whom I should be grateful for what things... Then taking the gifts in my hands, there arose before my eyes, not abstractly but concretely, the facial characteristics and generosity of the person who had remembered me. And in the sight of all this, you feel obliged to do something good for everyone you meet. May God reward them!

Before the eyes of your soul, let God arise who has revealed Himself in human form. Let the heart hear His mysterious request, "I have shown you so much love... you have been given to understand more than others. Represent my love, so that from your behavior, from your great wish to make everyone happy, they might gradually but truly recognize Me."

May 2, 1965

SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS

K y b a r t a i (Vilkaviškis *Rayon*)

On November 17, 1987, AT 2:00 P.M., Birutė Briliūtė, a resident of Kybartai, was summoned to the Office of the Vilkaviškis City KGB. The interrogation was conducted by Chekist Stepučinskas from Vilnius. During the interrogation, Miss Briliūtė was presented with questions concerning articles taken in the course of a raid September 8, 1987. Since Investigator Stepučinskas tried in a tendentious fashion to present literature purely religious in content as vilifying the Soviet system, Briliūtė ignored the interrogation and the next day, through Investigator Stepučinskas, presented to the Chairman of the Vilnius KGB, a petition with the following contents:

"On November 17, 1987, I was summoned to the Vilkaviškis Sub-Section of the KGB for interrogation. Agent Stepučinskas, who conducted the interrogation, questioned me as a witness in a case 'concerning the production and dissemination of literature calumnious in content'.

"Most of the questions posed by Investigator Stepučinskas concerned literature which has nothing and had nothing to do with any kind of calumny (for example, Vikšvas' *God, the World, and Man*, Stasys Yla's *Jurgis Matulaitis*, a collection of poems by Bernardas Brazdžionis entitled *Man Travels Thlrough the World*).

"The very fact of the confiscation of this literature, I consider at best an oversight on the part of agents who conducted the search and a failure on their part to know their business, and the presentation of this literature as calumniating the Soviet system, I consider as tendentious ill-will on the part of the KGB agents. All the more, since even Investigator Stepučinskas was unable to explain where the Soviet system is calumniated in the collection of poems by Bernardas Brazdžionis or in the book *Jurgis Matulaitis*.

"To this he replied that he himself had never read these books, and when requested to read the conclusions of an expert concerning the contents of these books, he declared the books are not separately described in the expert's conclusion, but that a general conclusion is presented that they are 'libellous'.

"After such a reply, the thought naturally occurs that the KGB agents are trying, not to uncover persons libelling the Soviet system, but at any cost, to accuse her of libelling the Soviet system. I refuse to cooperate, in my estimation, in the unjust work of the KGB, and so I demand that my depositions, submitted to Investigator Stepučinskas November 17, 1987, be considered invalid. I also request again that the articles taken during the search, September 8, 1987, be returned and in the future, to assign persons more seriously prepared for a search (at least already acquainted with the material prepared for an investigation).

"I await your reply in writing within thirty days."

K y b a r t a i

On November 18, 1987, in the Offices of the Vilkaviškis KGB, Investigator Stepučinskas, who had come from Vilnius, interrogated Ona Kavaliauskaitė, a resident of Kybartai, Čepajevo sk. 19. The questions posed by the interrogator concerned articles seized during a raid on the apartment of Ona Kavaliauskaitė, September 8, 1987. The chekist was particularly interested whether Miss Kavaliauskaitė knew who was the author of the book, *77ie Flower of the Catacombs*, and where she had obtained other books seized during the raid. Ona Kavaliauskaitė refused to sign the report of the interrogation.

K y b a r t a i

On November 18, 1987, Ona Šarakauskaitė, a resident of Kybartai, Čepajevo sk. 19, was questioned. Interrogator Stepučinskas asked whether Šarakauskaitė had not read books seized from Birutė Briliūtė and Ona Kavaliauskaitė during the search, and what she knew about other articles seized during the search. Miss Šarakauskaitė said she knew nothing. After the interrogation, she did not sign the report.

V i l n i u s

On January 8, 1988, a raid was carried out at the home of Vilnius resident Petras Cidzikas, residing at Gvazdikų 2. The raid was headed by Counselor of Justice Brikauskas for Especially Important Cases of the L.S.S.R. Procurator's Office.

He read the January 5 decision to carry out the raid with the purpose of seizing papers having to do with the case, that is, in connection with the pub-

lication and dissemination of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, and other anti-social activity.

Assisting in the search was Commissioner J. Lauka and J. Topolev. Official witnesses: Vita Kirkilaitė and Irena Markauskaitė, residents of Vilnius. The searchers acted like householders in their own apartment. They knew where everything was. When Topolev asked to go to the basement, he was told, "Don't go, there's nothing there!"

Obviously, the KGB had made themselves at home in the apartment before the raid, without Petras Cidzikas. They seized an open letter to U.S. Congressmen, an open letter to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev about allowing the commemoration of February 16 (it was signed by 70 persons), an appeal to people of good-will throughout the world, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 13, and many other underground publications. The search lasted more than three hours.

For dissemination of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, No. 1, in 1972, giving it to others to read, Petras Cidzikas was shut up for years in the special psychiatric hospital in Chernikovsk, Kaliningrad Region.

K a u n a s

On January 23, 1988, KGB agent R. Savickas visited Kaunas resident Vytautas Vaičiūnas, to warn him not to participate in the February 16 commemoration. The KGB agent was interested in whether Vaičiūnas knows Vilnius resident Cidzikas, whether he knows that a raid had been carried out in Cidzikas's home, and what was taken, whether he had signed a petition concerning permission to celebrate February 16, whether he read the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, etc.

On the way out, he stated, "The less you weep, the less we will bother you."

Attempts are being made to invite the returned prisoners Povilas Pečeliūnas and Jadvyga Bieliauskienė to the State Security Committee for talks.

On January 21, 1988, Povilas Pečeliūnas categorically told the security agent who delivered the summons, "You'll get me to that palace only with manacles on my wrists; I will not go voluntarily. I have nothing to say there."

To the militia official demanding that Pečeliūnas quickly obtain employment, he explained that he has a thirty-year work record, so according to the law, it is not necessary to obtain employment, all the less, quickly.

On January 21, Mrs. Bieliauskienė was summoned by telephone to come to the KGB office. She refused to go. The next day, she refused an official summons, saying that she would not respond to an invitation from people who obstruct democratization, perpetrate crimes, and refuse to accept responsibility for millions of martyrs, and if she is arrested, she will not talk to them.



Viktoras Petkus as a student and Catholic activist.

OUR PRISONERS

On December 5, 1987, Viktoras Petkus appealed to the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., and the Procurator General. In his complaint, he writes, "On September 21, 1987, I was brought from Ulan-Ude to Bagdadin for three years exile. When I was being taken from the aforesaid prison, I did not receive my things from storage, such as books, a who's who of world writers in manuscript, an electric shaver, letters written to me by my friends,

etc., allegedly because they could not find the prisoner-in-charge who is confined in the same prison.

"After they had transported me to Bagdarin, a captain of the militia promised to bring those things the following week, since the Bagdarin militia drive to Ulan-Ude several times a week. For two and a half months, the Bagdarin militia have been feeding me promises that they will bring my things, but they never do.

"I request your help!"

The complaint was sent by registered mail, return receipt requested.

It was not until three months after his release from prison that his personal things were returned to Viktoras Petkus.

Gintautas Iešmantas writes from exile to Povilas Pečeliūnas, and his wife, Danutė Pečeliūnienė:

"Povilas, congratulations on your return to Vilnius!

"I delayed greeting you this way until I was sure that it was really true. The radio was the first to bring me the news. It's a great thing to return. It is tantamount to victory. No matter that no one wishes to acknowledge it. And most important of all, to return having hung on to the spirit of determination and purpose, without having bowed either to weakness or to lies. That is an example and a source of inspiration to others. How people need this!

"I am happy for you! I embrace you and wish you success and determination no less than you have had till now. Our journey is not ending, it is only beginning.

"Danutė, I am happy for you and I congratulate you. It seems to me that at such moments, the world becomes better and more beautiful. As long as the heart continues beating, our steps forward do not stop. Is this not why the separations and prisons, camps, and insults were suffered. You both have the right to look everyone boldly in the eye. Nothing diminishes this right. It has been won at the price of life! For that reason, it is bright and great.

November 8, 1987

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

L a z d i j a i

On December 12, 1987, Vice Chairman Vanagas of the Lazdijai-Royon Executive Committee summoned the priests of the *Rayon* of Lazdijai to the Offices of the Executive Committee of the Town of Vcisiejai, and warned them that priests commit a criminal act inviting other priests to religious festivals

without consulting the *rayon* government. Also, crosses cannot be erected in churchyards without permission, as Father Vincentas Jalinskas did, for instance, in Lazdijai.

Lazdijai *Rayon* Vice Chairman Vanagas expressed annoyance that the faithful assembled in Rudamina were spreading the word that Father Juozas Zdebskis was murdered. In the opinion of Vanagas, there is no proof for it, and accidents happen everywhere to everyone. So this should not be done.

The priests, for their part, brought up to Vice Chairman Vanagas the unsuitable behavior of teachers when they herd schoolchildren out of church at funerals. They also stated that organizing excursions is not a crime, so the church watchman of Lazdijai, Alvydas Vainoras, who had organized an excursion to the Festival of the Mother of Mercy at the Gates of Dawn in Vilnius, and Žemaičių Kalvarija, has been fined 50 rubles unjustly.

Š i a u l i a i

On December 16, 1987, all the clergy of the City of Šiauliai were summoned to the Šiauliai City Executive Committee for a talk. Among them was the leader of the Adventists, Oželis, and the Orthodox priest.

The talk was conducted by First Secretary K. Žalenskas of the Šiauliai City Party Committee, Chairman P. Morkūnas of the City Executive Committee, and Vice Chairman J. Gaurilčikienė. The latter made an announcement concerning current Party policy with regard to the Church. She said that, "The Party and other state agencies will try to involve clergy actively in community work, that is, in various organizations run by the Party."

Party Secretary Žalenskas accused the Associate Pastor of St. George Parish in Šiauliai, Father Kazimieras Gražulis, of bringing out too pointedly in his sermons the negative aspects of our society.

The Pastor of the Church of SS. Peter and Paul in Šiauliai, and Dean, Msgr. Kleopas Jakaitis, gave the government some useful suggestions for taking better care of the city cemetery. The Associate Pastor of SS. Peter and Paul, Father Antanas Milašius, on the basis of information in the newspaper *Gim-tasis Kraštas* (*Native Land*), concerning the procession which took place on All Souls' Day in Rokiškis, expressed the wish that in the City of Šiauliai also, permission be given to perform religious rites in the cemetery on All Souls' Day.

Vice Chairman J. Gaurilčikienė of the City Executive Committee, avoiding a direct answer, stated that the next All Souls' Day is still far off, and wasn't worth talking about.

Father Milašius inquired what to do so while that quizzing children in church in preparation for First Holy Communion, it would not be necessary to fear committees sent by the government. To this question also, Party and government representatives of the City of Šiauliai had nothing specific to reply.

After the meeting, government and Party officials arranged a trip for the priests to the K. Preikšas Pedagogical Institute in the City of Šiauliai.

Šiauliai

On July 7, 1987, the Associate Pastor of the Church of St. George in Šiauliai, Father Kazimieras Gražulis, delivered a sermon during the great festival at Žemaičių Kalvarija, in which he recalled that the church of Klaipėda had still not been returned to the faithful, the teaching of religion was forbidden and cameramen would be filming the crowds of faithful from the highest vantage-point, and show it to the world as truth of religious "freedom". Meanwhile, no one is paying any attention to the requests of the faithful.

For that reason, Father Gražulis was summoned to the Šiauliai City Executive Committee where the Vice Chairman of the Šiauliai City Executive Committee, Gaurilčikienė, read him a warning from the Commissioner, Petras Anilionis. The priest refused to sign an acknowledgement of the warning, as he was unjustly accused.

On September 11, in Šiluva, Father Gražulis in his sermons mentioned obvious examples of persecution of religion: the KGB interferes in the internal affairs of the seminary in Kaunas. He mentioned specific examples of the recruitment and terrorizing of seminarians: Vytautas Prajara was threatened with physical violence and the mother of the newly ordained Rolandas Kaušas was discharged from her duties as teacher because she had given her son a petition to the seminary in Kaunas. He mentioned examples of the insulting and vilification of priests in the press and urged believing youth not to be hypocrites and not to join atheistic organizations. For this, Father Gražulis received a warning from Commissioner for Religious Affairs Petras Anilionis in which he was accused of inciting hatred between believers and atheists and with trying to prove the absence of religious freedom in Lithuania.

In October, the Šiauliai City Executive Committee fined Father Gražulis 25 rubles, arguing "that he is libelling or vilifying our way of life".

Father Gražulis refused to pay the fine.

Gargždai (Klaipėda Rayon)

On June 9, 1987, at 6:00 P.M., City Executive Committee Secretary Surplienė barged into the church in Gargždai, where the Associate Pastor, Father Antanas Šeškevičius, was testing about 40 children who were candidates for First Communion.

On the spot, a report was drawn up which Father Šeškevičius refused to sign.

A few days later, Father Šeškevičius received in the mail the following communication: "By decision of Administrative Case 23-65, June 10, 1987,

Gargždai. The Administrative Committee of the Executive Committee of the Council of Peoples' Deputies of the City of Gargždai in the *Rayon* of Klaipėda.

"Chairman M. Jurevičiūtė, Secretary J. Surplienė, Members Z. Lukas, J. Miliauskienė, M. Vaišnorienė.

"Having in open session considered Administrative Case No. 23-65, has determined that Šeškevičius, Antanas, Son of Kazys, address: Gargždai, Tilto 1, place of employment: the church in Gargždai, on June 9, 1987, taught a group of children catechism in church, and thus violated Par. 214 of the Lithuanian S.S.R. *Code of Administrative Law Infringements*.

"In accord with the *Regulations for Assigning and Collecting Administrative Penalties*, the committee has decided to mete out to Šeškevičius, Antanas, Son of Kazys, the administrative penalty, *warning*."

The signatures of all follow, accompanied by a seal.

When Father Šeškevičius did not cease quizzing the children, a strange man and Teachers Poleikienė and Dapkevičienė barged into church at 6:00 P.M. on June 24, 1987, and served him with a repeat warning. Father Šeškevičius did not sign the warning this time, either.

G a r g ž d a i

On January 30, 1987, Associate Pastor of Gargždai, Father Antanas Šeškevičius, sent a petition to the Procurator of the Lithuanian S.S.R. Father Šeškevičius was moved to write the petition by Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis, and his assistant, Jozėnas, who, in their official warning, accused the priest of organizing the faithful to write petitions to various government agencies.

Most of them concern the believers' demand to be allowed to elevate the roof of the church-barracks of Gargždai. The aforesaid petition is a reasoned response to accusations which have been brought and, at the same time, a request that the procurator remind the Office of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs of the Constitution, which states, "Every citizen of the L.S.S.R. has the right to submit to state organs and public organizations suggestions for the improvement in its activities and to improve shortcomings in its work.

"Officials are obliged within a reasonable time period to consider the suggestions and statements of citizens, to respond to them, and to take the necessary measures.

"Persecution for criticism is forbidden. Those who do so are to be held accountable."

Father Šeškevičius writes in his petition, "The parish of Gargždai is writing, and will continue to write, petitions for the elevation of the roof on the church-barracks. For this, no organization is necessary; life itself forces us to do so... What kind of priest would I be if I did not help the faithful in their trouble?..."

The people of Radviliškis wrote twenty-five petitions in nine years and received permission to raise the roof of their church... The Commissioner is pressuring us to be quiet, but the Soviet Constitution of the L.S.S.R., Par. 6, guarantees, "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union exists to serve the people. If it really did serve the people, it would not be necessary to write twenty-five petitions. We have been putting up with this for ten years already."

Ukmergė

On September 28, 1987, priests of the Deanery of Ukmergė applied to the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkauskis, Archbishop Liudas Povilonis, Commissioner for the Council for Religious Affairs Petras Anilionis, and Executive Committee Chairman for the *Rayon* of Ukmergė, A. Bernotas, with a petition defending the pastor of the parish of Deltuva, Father Eugenijus Bartulis, unjustly accused in the article, "The Priest Tells Them to Separate", published in the September, 1987 issue of *Soviet Woman*, and the September 5, 1987 edition of the rayon newspaper, *Native Land*.

In their petition, the priests of the Deanery of Ukmergė write, "A priest's efforts to preserve the stability of a marriage are being twisted 180 degrees. His sensitive administration of the church is called 'interference in things which are none of his affair'!

"A woman of retirement age is demeaned and called the priest's paramour."

At the end of their petition, the priests appeal to religious and state leaders, requesting them to evaluate carefully the atheists' attacks on Father Bartulis, and to take the necessary measures, that similar excesses not be repeated.

The following priests signed the petition, Fathers: J. Užusienis, J. Babonas, V. Pesliakas, P. Tavoraitis, G. Dunda, J. Girdevičius, Vl. Petkevičius, D. Vairą, V. Ramanauskas, V. Vaškelis, J. Voveris.

Alytus

On October 5, 1987, Vice Chairman A. Makštutis of the Alytus City Executive Committee, summoning Father Robertas Rumšas, Associate Pastor of Alytus I, informed him of the warning sent by Commissioner Petras Anilionis in which Father Rumšas is accused of delivering a sermon non-religious in content on September 11, 1987, in Šiluva, without permission of the Raseiniai *Rayon* government, and exalted the sentenced priests Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigita Tamkevičius, and Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis.

Father Rumšas wrote a petition to General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. We are printing the text of the petition:

"I came to Šiluva as a worshipper, and my worship as a priest is the Holy Mass. What intention I must pray for, Soviet law, as far as I know, does not indicate. I prayed for the priest-prisoners according to Christ's urging, 'Whenever you did this for one of the least important of these brothers of mine (among whom Christ lists prisoners), you did it for Me.' (Mt 25,40)

"Surely, I, a Catholic priest, can pray for prisoners according to the urging of the Gospel. Part of the Holy Mass is the Liturgy of the Word of God, during which the intention for prayer is announced, and the Gospel is explained. By urging people to show love and pray for the priest-prisoners, I did not violate the Gospel, and at the same time, my word cannot be considered non-religious. The Divine Authority - the Gospel, and not the atheists - government officials - determine what forms religious content.

"Otherwise, we would come against the absurd. For example, how would atheistic propagandists react if the atheistic content of their atheistic lectures had to be set by believers?

"Speaking at Mass about the priest-prisoners, I mentioned that they did not only personally reject the state atheism, but also acted to see that it would not be accepted by others. This statement cannot be considered either disinformation or calumny, since such an attitude is the duty of every priest. Surely, no priest in proclaiming the Gospel, can suppress some aspects of our life, e.g., atheism. To make the Gospel and atheism equivalent would be absurd.

"Honorable General Secretary, order Religious Affairs Commissioner Petras Anilionis to recall this unfounded and absurd warning."

Garliava (Kaunas *Rayon*)

On December 8, 1987, Father Vytautas Prajara, Associate Pastor of the parish of Garliava, was summoned to the Garliava Executive Committee. Kaunas *Rayon* Executive Committee Chairman Gelčienė read a warning from Petras Anilionis. The warning stated that on November 15, Father Prajara had organized a political-nationalistic commemoration in honor of Maironis in the church, and gave an anti-Soviet sermon. The priest is also to blame for the fact that after the services, the Lithuanian National Anthem was sung. In the warning, it is also indicated that on November 17, in the Church of Saint Theresa at the Gates of Dawn in Vilnius, Father Prajara delivered an anti-Soviet sermon, calumniating the Soviet system. It is for this reason the warning is given.

No copy of the warning was handed over, nor was anyone allowed to make a copy.

Father Vytautas Prajara refused to sign an acknowledgement of the warning.

Šlavantai (*Lazdijai Rayon*)

During the night of November 13, 1987, unknown culprits broke into the Šlavantai church. They broke open the church doors, and tore out the tabernacles on the main and side altars. They did not find the Blessed Sacrament, which is kept in a safe in the sacristy. A crowbar was left in the sacristy. They were unable to pry the safe open.

Garliava

On December 1, 1987, the Garliava Executive Committee summoned the members of the so-called "committee of twenty" of the Garliava church. The conference was conducted by the Assistant Procurator for the Kaunas *Rayon*.

The Vice Chairman of the Kaunas *Rayon* Executive Committee, the Chairman of the Garliava City Executive Committee, and his vice chairman accused the church committee of allowing the associate pastor, Father Vytautas Prajara, to vilify the Soviet system and government during the sermon.

During the commemoration of the poet, Father Maironis, in the church, the Lithuanian National Anthem was sung which, in the words of government representatives, is strictly forbidden. Moreover, it is not allowed to elect as a member of the church committee a former political prisoner (Jadvyga Bieliauskienė - Ed. Note). Priests who had formerly been tried and sentenced are not allowed to celebrate Mass or to deliver sermons.

Ending the discussion, the government representatives began to threaten the members of the church committee, saying that if, in the future, the situation at the church in Garliava does not change, their names will be publicized in the press. Moreover, a meeting of the church committee will be called again, at which the assistant procurator will explain to the members of the church committee what the Church, the priests, and believers can do in the Soviet system, and what they cannot.

With this, the representatives of the Kaunas *Rayon* and Garliava City government ended their task of "education".

Mikoliškiai (*Kretinga Rayon*)

On August 23, 1987, the solemn commemoration of the 600th Anniversary of the Baptism of Lithuania was celebrated at the Mikoliškiai parish church. Many faithful from surrounding parishes came to the solemn services in which Bishop Antanas Vaičius also participated. The faithful of the parish of Gargždai were going to the solemnities in a chartered bus. But, before they reached Mikoliškiai, traffic police stopped the bus and demanded that the driver discharge his passengers. Despite the fact that driver had all the documents necessary for the trip, his driver's license was taken away, and the faithful had to travel the remaining 4 km. to the church of Mikoliškiai on foot.

K a u n a s

On February 13, 1987, Executive Committee Chairman Kazakevičius of the City of Kaunas came to the home of Army officer Juozas Kazalupskas, residing at Kaunas, Mažoji 1-10. The purpose of Kazakevičius's visit was to find out if Army officer Kazalupskas wrote the petition for the church of Klaipėda, and whether he really signed it. They also asked whether Kazalupskas collected signatures on the petition, and whether he accompanied the delegation of the faithful to Moscow.

To all these questions, Kazalupskas answered in the affirmative, adding that about 90,000 of the faithful had signed a petition for the return of the church of Klaipėda, but to date, the question of the Church of the Queen of Peace has not been finally settled. This is evidence that the government pays no heed to the faithful.

When Kaunas City Executive Committee Chairman Kazakevičius accused him of going to Moscow needlessly and wasting the time of responsible officials, Kazalupskas replied that if they did not return the church of Klaipėda, the faithful will fight with all the means at their disposal until they return it. As for delegations to Moscow, they have gone in the past, and they will continue to go-

On June 21, 1987, a representative of the Committee on Elections to Local Councils came to the home of Juozas Kazalupskas, and demanded an explanation as to why Kazalupskas is not voting.

Kzalupskas stated that as a believer, he is obliged to defend the faith and the faithful, so as an expression of protest, he refuses to vote, since Bishop Steponavičius of the Diocese of Vilnius has been removed from his duties by the court and exiled to Žagarė.

Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigita Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis, were sentenced just because they were concerned that people be sober, decent, and conscientious.

K y b a r t a i (Vilkaviškis *Rayon*)

On November 18, 1987, at 9:00 A.M., Romas Žemaitis was summoned to the Vilnius *Rayon* draft board. Major Spritsin and Commissar Vozgirda spoke to him. They were interested in knowing whether Žemaitis had still not changed his decision not to take the military oath, and how he justified such behavior on his part.

Žemaitis explained that by not taking the oath, he is protesting against the unjust imprisonment of Fathers Sigita Tamkevičius and Alfonsas Svarinskas, and also against the fact that he himself, together with Father Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis, was unjustly imprisoned in Russian camps.

Žemaitis explained his conviction that Lithuanians should do their military service in Lithuania. Commissar Vozgirda replied that in that case, no

one would be able to keep them in line. The Commissar tried to accuse Žemaitis of urging other young men not to take the military oath.

Žemaitis denied the accusation, explaining that he had never pressured or tried to convince anyone not to take the military oath, but that he did not hide his personal stand on this question, nor did he intend to hide it in the future.

Having failed to re-educate the young man, Commissar Vozgirda told the major to take him to Procurator J. Matonis. The procurator tried politely to convince him to take the military oath. To this, Žemaitis replied that he would take the military oath, but on one condition. Let them announce in the press, over television and by radio, that he and Father Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis had been unjustly arrested and sentenced to two and three years respectively of imprisonment.

The procurator replied that there was no way they could do this. Then Žemaitis, for his part, said that they should understand that he also could not take the military oath. Finally, the procurator suggested that Žemaitis submit a petition to emigrate, and he guaranteed that here, there would be no obstacles.

Žemaitis refused the offer, arguing that he is Lithuanian, his homeland is Lithuania, and he did not intend to leave Lithuania for any other place.

Not satisfied with the answer, Procurator Matonis tried to frighten him, saying that even if he did not take the oath, they would take him for two years of military service, and take him off to the depths of Siberia, where conditions would be similar to prison camp.

Žemaitis replied that wherever he was, he would always speak about God and about his homeland, Lithuania. With this, the conversation which had lasted two hours, ended.

Prienai

For the fourth year, the KGB has rejected Algis Gudaitis's application to the seminary in Kaunas. In 1984, together with his brother Aldonas, he had submitted an application, but the KGB struck both of them from the list.

In 1985, when they applied a second time, they accepted his brother, Aldonas Gudaitis, but once again rejected Algis Gudaitis. Algis and Aldonas Gudaitis are twins. By law, twins are not separated, either in school or in the army. The Gudaitises have gone to school together and served in the army together. But when they applied to the seminary, the KGB separated them.

This year, too, 1987, Algis Gudaitis tried to apply to the seminary in Kaunas but again, received the same reply, "This year, we cannot accept your application. Try applying next year."

The case of Algis Gudaitis is not unique, even though recently, the atheistic press and television have been constantly advertising that they place no obstacles to applicants for the Kaunas seminary. The editorial of the

television program *Argumentai* brazenly stated, "This year, all young men wishing to study at the seminary in Kaunas were accepted."

Gadunavas (Telšiai *Rayon*)

In the *Rayon* of Telšiai, in the neighborhood of Gadunavas, an old cross, ready to collapse, stood since time immemorial. A local resident, Vincas Urnikis, decided to replace the delapidated cross with a new one. Mrs. Sabutiene, a resident of the same *Džiugas* Soviet farm, gave him a new cross, fashioned forty years previously by her father, Stenbra.

On October 29, 1987, Vincas Urnikis and Albinas Austys replaced the cross. Three days later, Urnikis was summoned to the Office of the District of Gadunavas, where he was told to tear down the newly erected cross. To Urnikis's explanation that he had simply replaced the old cross which had stood on that spot more than fifty years, and had not been in the way of either the Germans or the Russians, with a new one, no one paid any attention.

Urnikis refused to tear down the cross.

On November 11, the *Rayon* architect came to the district and demanded that Urnikis sign a complaint about his erecting the cross privately. On November 30, Urnikis, Austys and Sabutienė were summoned before the Administrative Committee of the *Rayon* of Telšiai where, pursuant to Par. 153 of the *Criminal Code*, they were penalized: Urnikis and Austys with a 50 ruble fine, while Sabutienė, for allowing the aforesaid individuals to put up the cross which had been on her property, received a reprimand.

The night of December 24, the cross was demolished.

Kaunas

On October 6, 1987, the Kaunas Interdiocesan Seminary was visited by Henrikas Zabulis, Minister of Higher and Specialized Education for Lithuania. In his talk to the seminarians, Zabulis gave high marks to the economic achievements of the republic, gave a wide-ranging report on the situation of higher learning in the republic, and spoke about various categories of institutions of higher learning.

After the lecture, the Minister responded to questions from the seminarians: "What is the meaning of teaching atheism in institutions of higher learning?" the seminarians wanted to know.

The Minister judged the question impertinent, and began setting forth his personal views on atheism and religion. He stated that among us, there is complete freedom of religion. The speaker acknowledged that he became an atheist while studying the Greek and Latin languages, and ancient literature. In the Greek language, the word "Christ" means anointed, there is an analogical word in the Hebrew language, and since both words are generic, there could not have been a Christ, since the name is generic.

Obviously, this argument seemed very stupid to the audience, and provoked laughter. No one had ever heard of any philological argument against the existence of God.

Stating that questions were beginning to repeat themselves, and that similar questions are posed by various extremists, Minister Zabulis declared that he would respond only to questions in writing.

In their questions, the seminarians expressed annoyance at articles in *Soviet Woman* magazine, in which V. Balkevičius dares to ridicule Mary, the Mother of God, so blatantly. Is this not discrimination against believers the seminarians asked? Minister Zabulis tried to avoid answering, explaining that he reads much, and takes an interest in atheistic literature, but that he had not read the articles by Balkevičius.

Finally, he admitted that among the atheists there can be ignoramuses. In his opinion, it was only because of occasional individuals failing to absorb the methodology of atheistic education, that conflicts between believers and atheists arise in school and at work.

Minister Zabulis responded to the questions of the seminarians, not seriously, but in a shallow manner. He would not allow himself to get involved in wider discussions, and he kept cutting off questions.

The meeting lasted one and a half hours.

On October 8, 1987, Commissioner Petras Anilionis lectured the first class of the Kaunas seminary. He spoke long and tediously about Church-state relations, about the necessity of staying out of politics, and of being priests loyal to the Soviet government. Anilionis attacked so-called "religious extremists". He told how every year, among priests graduating the seminary, a few extremists show up.

Anilionis claimed that Fathers Edmundas Atkočiūnas, Juozas Kaminskas, Kazimieras Gražulis, and Vytautas Sadauskas had already managed to draw attention to themselves with their anti-Soviet attacks, and Father Rokas Puzonas had already exceeded all limits and would be made criminally liable, if Bishop Sladkevičius did not save him.

Anilionis urged the seminarians to avoid so-called extremists within the seminary, and not to give into those who would like to pull them onto the "anti-Soviet merry-go-round".

"We see and know everything, and we will not allow parasites to breed in the seminary!" shouted Anilionis.

He recalled also the August 23 rally which took place at the Adomas Mickevičius Monument in Vilnius, and expressed annoyance that among the active participants was Julius Sasnauskas, presently a first-classman in the seminary who, in the words of the Commissioner, had not yet learned from his mistakes in the past. Julius Sasnauskas explained that he considered it his duty to

participate in the commemoration of the victims of Stalin and Hitler, and that this activity was not organized in the West, as Anilionis claimed.

The seminarians, growing bolder, began to pose questions. First-classman Arūnas Janušauskas stated that before he came to the seminary, KGB agents had told him to spy on seminary instructors and his own classmates, saying that he was doing so at the direction of Commissioner Petras Anilionis.

Anilionis was shocked by the way the meeting turned out.

On November 27, 1987, Petras Anilionis "educated" the fifth class seminarians. During the lecture, the speaker described how hopeless the climate had been for freedom of conscience in independent Lithuania, and that only now, under conditions of socialism, were the conditions present to practice full freedom of conscience. At the end of his lecture, Anilionis advised the future priests not to get involved in politics, and to concern themselves strictly with "satisfying the needs of the faithful".

In his words, "It is too bad that priests who have just finished the seminary begin to be actively involved in anti-Soviet activity (i.e., struggling for the rights of believers and conscientiously carrying out ones' duties as a priest)".

After the lecture, the seminarians posed a whole list of questions for the Commissioner. Seminarian V. Sabaliauskas inquired why believing youth may not gather even privately in the home, in small groups, and discuss questions of religion of concern to them; why participants in a gathering of this sort often have to deal with security agents; he emphasized that such examples are not rare, hence, how to reconcile them with the Soviet freedom of conscience touted by Anilionis.

The Commissioner tried to explain that if the KGB actually gets involved, it means that religion in that case was being used as a cover, and the security police see through it that in such meetings, there is some sort of forbidden activity.

The question of V. Aukštakalnis, asking why the Office of the Council for Religious Affairs interferes in the right belonging to the bishops to assign priests to parishes and why seminarians are recruited to work as security agents, threw Commissioner Anilionis off balance.

Annoyed, he began excoriating "priest extremists", declaring that there is interference in the appointment of priests only because they cannot stand it when the extremists dictate to the bishops. The fact of recruiting seminarians he denied outright, saying that the KGB agents, in their conversations, seek only to get acquainted with the seminarians and with their outlook, but not to recruit them.

Moreover, in his opinion, the government should know what opinions a person holds preparing to enter the seminary. It must know whether the person is suitable to be a priest or not.

Aukštakalnis emphatically stated, and offered himself as a personal example, that the KGB specifically demands that they sign an agreement to cooperate by supplying information concerning life in the seminary. Otherwise, they threatened not to accept him for the seminary.

Having no argument against the seminarian's statement, the Commissioner asked not to be mixed up with the KGB and KGB agents, but that the KGB, to his way of thinking, has its own laws and knows what it is doing.

Seminarian Miroslavas Balcevičius got into the conversation: "I am concerned neither with the idea of independence for Lithuania, concern for which you accuse us of, nor with politics. I want only one thing, the priesthood. I am of Polish nationality, yet for five years, the KGB has given me no peace. They tried to recruit me before I entered the seminary, and now, during vacation time, they won't leave me alone: they promise various kinds of subsidy help, and career. I would like to ask why the KGB incites national dissatisfaction, urging me to join a Polish National Church, which they are trying to organize in Lithuania."

The Commissioner was unable to answer the question. He was rescued from a tricky situation by the seminarians, who presented him with a concrete suggestion: "Comrade Commissioner, when you return to Vilnius, please tell the security organs to stop compromising the U.S.S.R. Constitution by such activities, and also your beautiful tales about freedom of conscience in our socialist society."

Commissioner Anilionis declared that the lecture was over, and that he would try to respond to issues of concern to the seminarians the next time.

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

P a n e v ė ž y s

In December, 1986, Stanislova Stanevičiūtė, Instructor in Atheism at the Panevėžys School of Medicine, demanded of her students during a lecture that they write a paper, in which they would demonstrate that there is no God.

Surmising from reading the papers that student Neringa Dalbokaitė is a believer, she began actively "educating" her. Instructor Stanevičiūtė, summoning Miss Dalbokaitė to the Lenin Room, expressed annoyance that Neringa, being a believer, joined the Communist Youth Organization.

Miss Dalbokaitė explained that when she enrolled in the Communist Youth, she had been only fourteen years old, and dependent on her parents, who are non-believers.

This reply was followed by a whole list of questions supplied by Instructor Stanevičiūtė: "Who pushed her into religion? Where did she get literature? When did she start believing? Who brought her to church the first time?"

For further "education", the instructor in atheism brought in the usual weapon of the atheists: vilification and insulting of the Church.

Similar "educational sessions" were repeated several more times, and when the desired results were not obtained, Dalbokaitė was forbidden to leave her dormitory from 6:00 to 8:00 A.M., in an effort to prevent her from going to church and participating in Holy Mass.

In February 1987, the school administration, learning that Ingrida Krikštaponytė, her classmate, received the Sacrament of Baptism, expelled Dalbokaitė from the Communist Youth League and began still later "educating" her. Group leader, Teacher Urbonienė, joined in the "re-education".

Viekšniai (*Akment Rayon*)

On October 11, 1987, the 600-year jubilee of Lithuania was being celebrated in the church of Viekšniai. On October 9, in an effort to keep people out of church, Juozas Tamulevičius, a teacher at the Viekšniai Middle School, warned Seventh Class pupils that he would be standing at the churchyard gates personally, taking down the names of those going to church. To bolster the threat, he added that pupils could be expelled from school and the parents given a substantial fine.

Lazdijai

On November 15, 1987, at about four o'clock in the morning, a little group of youth who were religious believers gathered in the bus station of Lazdijai to go to Vilnius and participate in the Festival of Our Lady of Mercy of the Gates of Dawn.

The children and youth were going to the religious festival with their parents' knowledge. In the group were a few adults, among them, Alvydas Vainoras, an employee of the church in Lazdijai.

On November 11, Alvydas Vainoras was summoned to the Executive Committee where Chairman Kreizas accused him of organizing the aforesaid trip, and ordered him to acknowledge in writing a criminal complaint. Vainoras, arguing that he had committed no crime, refused to sign.

The Executive Committee of Lazdijai *Rayon*, headed by Vice Chairman Leonas Vanagas of the *Rayon* Executive Committee, fined Alvydas Vainoras 50 rubles. The young people were met at the bus station in Lazdijai by Chief Inspector Valė Jakulevičienė, of the Department of Juvenile Affairs, and Assistant Director Jonas Malinauskas, of the Lazdijai Middle School.

Arriving in Vilnius and alighting from the bus, the little group of pilgrims was watched by the driver of the bus which had brought them. At about

9:00 P.M., when they returned to Lazdijai, the faithful were met at the station by Teacher Gorochovenko, and Assistant Director Jonas Malinauskas.

On November 16, 1987, the pupils were questioned in school: "When they had gone to Vilnius, where they had gone in Vilnius, and for what purpose?"

After several days had slipped by, Homeroom Teacher Snieguole Vilgotskaite demanded that signed questionnaires be filled out, in which the following questions were asked:

Do you go to church?

What do you do in church?

Why do you go to church?

Teacher Snieguole Vilgotskaite demanded that questions be answered conscientiously, without lying, and signing one's name in full. In this way, the pupils who are religious believers were terrorized just because they went in organized fashion to the Festival of the Mother of God, which took place in Vilnius at the Gates of Dawn.

NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

Aušra (*The Dawn*), No. 60(100). In September 1987, the underground publication *Aušra*, No. 60(100) appeared. In the introductory article of the publication, an appeal by a group of Lithuanians to people of good will in countries throughout the world, an attempt is made to call world public attention to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939.

In the appeal, a request is made: "Do not hesitate in the face of injustice and the suffering of others! With all the information media at your disposal, publicize the plight of the Baltic States, and ask the leaders of your governments in the next general session of the U.N. Assembly to bring up for discussion the question of the forcible incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. In the article, "Let Us Give Them Every Kind of Support," the problem of Gintautas Iešmantas, Povilas Pečeliūnas and other prisoners is brought up. A demand is made for unconditional rehabilitation of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and the plight of human rights in the Soviet Union is discussed.

Quite a bit of space in the publication is devoted to the August 23 demonstration in Vilnius. Vytautas Bogušis' open letter to Chief Director D. Tamulevičiūtė of the Vilnius Youth Theater and a report of the general meeting of the staff of the Youth Theater which criticized Vytautas Bogušis for participating in the August 23 demonstration, appears.

Lithuanian, remember that:

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius

Viktoras Petkus

Balys Gajauskas

Gintautas Iešmantas

and others bear the chains of slavery so that you might live and believe
in freedom!

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