



CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA

No. 29

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A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,
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Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

Translation Editor: Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
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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, 2.4% Orthodox and 0.2% of other persuasions.

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

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

On June 15, 1940, the Red Army 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 27, 1940, the Church was declared separate from the state, and the representative of the Holy See was expelled.

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

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

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

Vincentas Borisevičius, Bishop of Telšiai, was arrested on February 3, 1946, and condemned to death after a secret trial. Before year's end, his auxiliary, Bishop Pranas Ramanauskas, was also arrested and deported to Siberia. Bishop Teofilius Matulionis of Kaišiadorys and Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys of Vilnius were deported 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 situations. 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, is also under severe government restrictions. In 1965, Monsignor Juozas Labukas-Matulaitis was consecrated in Rome to head the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkaviškis.

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

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translation Editor

**THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA No. 29**

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Lithuania

August 26, 1977

VLADAS LAPIENIS IN A SECURITY PRISON

It is difficult to make an accurate assessment of existence in a security prison because the prisoners cannot put everything in letters: The censor does not allow it to pass. Vladas Lapienis complains in one letter: "The interrogator told me that I am allowed to write one letter a month and only about commonplace occurrences. But such occurrences are very limited in prison; they are repetitive and uninteresting. Occasionally, as I write, a thought will accidentally stray from the established standard. And so, one or two weeks later, I am informed that the censor did not allow the letter to pass and then I have to write again."

The letters of Vladas Lapienis are interesting because alongside every-day events we find beautiful ideas, thoughts and encouragement. He writes his wife: "When I was home, I often related to you excerpts or interesting ideas from books and newspapers I read. So, in keeping with that old habit, I will do likewise in this letter." And so every letter contains a handful of interesting ideas. For instance:

"It sometimes happens that, at certain times, one's life changes to such an extent that one experiences more in several days, weeks or months than one would in one or several years under different circum-

stances . . . Even here, prayer is not a burden for me or a dry habit, but a living communion with God . . . Now, more than ever, I understand the richness of the "Our Father," the surprising beauty of the "Hail Mary," and the veritable treasury of faith contained in the "Apostles' Creed" . . .

"God's grace reaches even here: It visits, it comforts, it strengthens. God sees each tremor of the soul. Nothing can be hidden from His all-seeing eye . . . Travelling down the road of life, you reach a crossroads, where, like the hero in the story, you face a fateful dilemma: Take one road and lose your soul; take the other and suffer much agony and hardship. You need only choose which road to take!

"Naturally, harsh forceful measures greatly exhaust a man, increasing his longing for those dear to him. From sheer homesickness, the health of a more sensitive person can collapse completely. But even in the most difficult situations one cannot forget that one is an adopted child of God and will have to give an accounting of every word, thought and action . . .

"How great a gift of God is love! It alleviates suffering. The Russian writer Dostoevski said: 'Let them curse us, but we will still love them; they will not be able to withstand our love.'

The prisoner always asks his wife to include in her letters "some short morning prayer and some short quote from the Scriptures. Don't write long prayers or quotes because the atheists will not let me have them anyway . . . I have always looked forward to your letters and continue to look forward to them. The only ones I do not look forward to are those which do not contain a single word about the spiritual life. Crumbs of the truths of faith are more precious than gold."

Great faith and reliance on Divine Providence have given the prisoner spiritual strength, despite his poor health. In February he described his mood thus: "I have never before felt this way. I am at peace as never before. I feel no hatred or anger toward anyone. I fear nothing, except sudden noises . . .

"I advise you not to fall into such despair over the present more difficult situation. Does it say anywhere in Scripture that the road of life for the citizens of this world is strewn with roses?"

Seeing his situation very realistically, Lapienis asks his wife not to seek lawyers for the upcoming trial: "You are a Catholic and I am also a believer, but Attorney Kudaba is an atheist, a nonbeliever; then, how can he defend me, when he holds anti-religious views? Security agents are the same type of defenders . . . Besides, in a

case such as mine, under the present circumstances, even were the lawyer outstanding, he can do absolutely nothing. Then what kind of defender and adviser can he be if he is helpless . . .

"So, I once again sincerely ask you, until the end of the trial, never to seek help regarding my case from a lawyer or any other government official, because that would worsen my already difficult situation.

You yourself wrote in a letter that in my absence you have encountered a great deal of deceit: Is it worthwhile then to allow yourself to be deceived further? Go to the legal services division as soon as possible and tell Attorney Kudaba that I categorically refuse a defense attorney and never consult him on my case.

"If you truly wish to help me, go as often as possible to Jesus in the Tabernacle and also to Our Blessed Mother Mary. And there pour everything out, there seek help, advice and protection for yourself and me. There, you will certainly not meet with lies or deceit. . .

"Don't suffer on my account, for I clearly remember what the Prince of Apostles, St. Peter, said: "For what credit is it, if when you do wrong and are beaten for it you take it patiently? But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called . . ." (First Letter of Peter, 20-21).

"With God, it is good everywhere.

"I also want to be alone with my thoughts, in my separate world, and look deeper into that world. Besides, I often remember the life of Blessed Maximilian Kolbe, especially the end of his life, and my suffering seems very small compared to his. "I will walk my road, atoning with suffering for the mistakes of my youth and disregarding what anyone might think or say about me." (Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas). [Contemporary Lithuanian writer — Transl. Note].

In his letters Vladas Lapienis does not write anything directly about living conditions in the prison isolation facilities. We can only guess at them from the frequent complaints about his failing health. In the November 12, 1976 letter he writes:

"My slacks have begun to tear, but mostly they no longer fit; I don't know whether the waistband has stretched or my stomach has shrunk . . . My heart has faltered several times. At my age it is difficult for it to become accustomed to a new way of life. I don't know whether it will become accustomed and reconciled to this regimen or will completely stop working. Moreover, I often have headaches."

In his December 25th letter he again mentions his health:

"My health has worsened considerably. Ten or fourteen days after my arrest I suffered several mild heart attacks. Later I began having headaches. I often have headaches even now. Also, after being here for some time, I began having increasingly more frequent nosebleeds and now have them almost daily . . . My eyesight is growing weaker. The daylight is very weak and so I am constantly forced to use electric lights which cause my eyes to tire very quickly. During my first weeks here, I used to read and write all day long, but now I can no longer read or write so much. Sometimes, my blood pressure rises suddenly and my head begins to ache. As protection against a stroke, could you bring me lemons or cranberries . . ."

In January, the prisoner again writes:

"I no longer suffer daily nosebleeds and I am not as much frightened by sudden noises. For the second week, I no longer stuff cotton in my ears or wear a winter hat indoors. My head still hurts frequently, and when my blood pressure jumps suddenly, I eat lemons or cranberries and my blood pressure decreases. This is how I protect myself against a stroke. My whole body itches as though from a rash, especially my hands and feet. The itching increases in the afternoon; sometimes my hands and feet feel on fire. When I scratch in my sleep I cause sores which don't heal for a long time. Sometimes tiny red pimples appear on my legs and arms and itch terribly. The doctor said that this is a nervous type allergy and there is nothing she can do. It is true that the nervous system suffers tremendously here."

In February Lapienis' health grew worse, he began to suffer daily nosebleeds, constant roaring sounds in his head, sensitivity to sounds and insomnia: "Some nights I grow tired of waiting for six o'clock, namely, the order to get up . . ."

His health was similar during almost the entire period of interrogation. In a June letter he describes his health thus: "I am quite tired physically, but have gained strength spiritually. I am trying to accept lovingly and gratefully all the hardships and trials from the Lord's divine hands and suffer everything patiently."

Interrogation of Ona Pranskunaitė

The interrogators showed Ona Pranskunaitė the transcripts of the interrogations of J.(onas) (John) Matulionis and Patrubavicius and ordered her to follow their example and testify, but she refused to give any testimony.

During the first two months, (Miss) Pranskunaitė was held in a cell with a female criminal from Klaipėda charged under article 68 of the Criminal Code. The following two months, she was again held with another female criminal from Kaunas, also charged under art. 68.

The interrogators threatened to have Ona Pranskunaitė confined to a psychiatric hospital. At one point, the interrogations were especially harsh. Miss Pranskunaitė admitted she was guilty of believing in the Constitution, the Helsinki agreements and the article by the administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, (Msgr.) Česlovas Krivaitis entitled "In Our Native Land", about the freedom of Catholics in Lithuania, but the security agents shattered all her illusions. In the words of Miss Pranskunaitė, she learned where hell and the devil are located: namely, in the Vilnius headquarters of the KGB.

Trial

During July 20-25, 1977, the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian S.S.R. tried the case of Vladas Lapienis, Jonas Kastytis Matulionis and Ona Pranskunaitė. The date of the trial was scrupulously kept secret, so that most friends of the accused were not aware the trial was being held. There were some who, though aware of the trial, did not dare attend the trial proceedings. After noting that there were hardly any spectators, Security agents allowed everyone to enter the courtroom. Those whom they considered less acceptable were prevented through trickery from attending the trial. For instance, the wife of Vladas Lapienis was listed among the witnesses and was not permitted to attend the beginning of the trial. The trial took place on July 20, 22 and 25. Lapienis had refused the services of a lawyer. *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* does not have information on much of the details of the trial.

The following individuals were called as witnesses: (Mrs) Ruzgienė, (Mr) Aleksis and (Mrs) Lapienienė.

Mrs. Ruzgienė admitted that Lapienis had provided her with a typewriter and that she had made five copies of the *Gulag Archipelago* which she gave to Lapienis.

Aleksis, formerly a colonel in independent Lithuania, testified regarding the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* that when he had read the first issues, he had thought it was an unnecessary provocation of the government, but he now felt that if,

dictated by his conscience, Lapienis contributed to it, he was worthy of praise.

Lapienis' wife was told by the judge that her husband defamed the Soviet Union by alleging that religious books, prayerbooks and typewriters are confiscated from the faithful. (Mrs) Lapienienė boldly asserted that this was true: "You took books and a typewriter during the search . . . During the search you were brutal . . ." The court did not allow (Mrs) Lapieniene to testify any further.

Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, exhausted from the interrogations, said he regretted having contributed to the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

Ona Pranskunaite spoke very little and in a low voice. Those attending the trial only heard her complain of poor health.

Before the final statement of Vladas Lapienis, the court called a recess and allowed the spectators to return to the courtroom only after Lapienis had finished speaking. *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* has managed to obtain the text of the final statement of Vladas Lapienis.

Final Statement of Vladas Lapienis

I abhor injustice, lying, deceit and trickery and also force. Therefore, whenever I see those evils, I cannot in good conscience pass them in silence. However, certain government officials call this fight against evil, this criticism, anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, an attempt to undermine the Soviet government and the like.

Is it possible that injustice, lying, deceit, trickery and other evils are the foundations of the Soviet government and its strength, that it labels the fight against these evils an attempt to undermine or weaken the Soviet government, and accuses those who struggle against these evils of committing a crime, under article 68 or 199 of the Criminal Code of the Lithuanian SSR.

Only when differences of opinion are allowed to be expressed freely, does truth become clear, mistakes come to light and evils are unmasked; and in order to accomplish this, errors must be pointed out, notwithstanding individuals, their positions or their titles. When the root of this evil becomes clear, it can then be eradicated. Not a single decent man, aware of this evil, has the right to refrain from pointing it out, from bringing it into the light of day. Sooner or later those who ignore criticism will be crushed. Criticism, though extremely unpleasant and painful to some at the time, can never-

theless be a friendly assistance to those in error.

Is it not evil that brings so much misfortune, unnecessary hardship and meaningless suffering? I fail to understand why certain Security employees and other government officials fear the truth. Must not truth be the foundation of government? Those who are consumed by hatred and revenge and built this case because I pointed out their errors in my statements, because I brought attention to existing evils, are unjust. Citizens who tell the truth in a straightforward manner should be respected and not punished, and those who, wishing to gain favor with the government, hide errors from it, should be feared because those errors profit no one and bring no honor.

When those evils are brought into the light of day, and mistakes are pointed out, there arises the opportunity to eradicate all those evils from their very foundations. We have the duty to fearlessly bring all injustice to light, regardless of being called fanatic, anti-Soviet or other. The word of truth, though extremely unpleasant and painful to some at the time and though it causes suffering to the one who uttered it, is nonetheless essentially a brotherly assistance to others.

During questioning, my interrogators more than once asked me why I see nothing but evil in Soviet life? That is not true. I expose evil not because I see no good, but because evil brings hardship, misfortune and suffering to people. Therefore, if we wish to attain a better life, we must fight against it. Of course, it is much more pleasant to rejoice at victories attained and the government will praise and perhaps even reward such action. But to expose mistakes and injustice, to criticize certain government officials and "disturb their peace," requires sacrifice, risk and at times causes loss of freedom for a time.

Lenin has said: "Only after we bring down and permanently conquer the bourgeoisie throughout the world, will wars become impossible" (*Writings*, v. 28, p. 68). You speak about the victory of socialism throughout the world, but you fear an old man in his eighties, who is pointing out the exploitation of the Soviet order by certain government officials. Isn't that odd?

The persecution of believers, repressions, the attempt to solve most problems by forcible means: This is forcing the will of the minority on the majority. A striking example is the ghost of the Stalin cult which still today terrorizes many countries and individuals.

Why do you still refuse to understand the simple truth that force

and physical punishment cannot be used to reeducate a grown man and that this punishment will leave scars on men's hearts which will never heal and will never stop aching. Those are wounds inflicted by government representatives on the citizens of their country. By using physical punishment you will simply set them more strongly against the government. This is attested to by psychologists and educators.

When most atheist books, brochures, newspapers and magazines write, (often they attack) God, the Church, the Pope, the religious and believers, but believers are not allowed similar means of defending themselves, there remains only one means of defense, called the "illegal" press by government officials: among them, *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

Moreover, the use of such means (to defend your thought in writing) is practically imposed by art. 124 of the USSR Constitution, which recognizes the freedom of anti-religious propaganda for all citizens, but not religious propaganda. Where are equal rights? Lenin dealt with equal rights, namely, with the freedom of conscience, more justly: "The Soviet Constitution recognizes the right of religious and anti-religious propaganda for all citizens." (J. Yeroslavsk, *About Religion* 1959, p. 27).

But now it is quite true that when art. 124 of the Constitution does not acknowledge the right of religious propaganda, this article actually denies believers basic human rights and forces the community communities outside the law, namely, drives it underground.

I did not contact the publishers of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* in any way and did not submit any of my articles to it. Once a Soviet citizen has written a statement or letter to government agencies and mailed it, he cannot be accused or held responsible if his letter or statement, through channels unknown to him, reaches the so-called "illegal" publication and even at times foreign countries. Isn't it true that much secret USSR information reaches the foreign press or radio airwaves. Then why could not my statements or replies to them, if they were of interest to the publishers of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, reach their hands without my consent?

As regards the "illegality" and "anti-Soviet" nature of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, that charge must be denied in the interest of objective truth. If atheist attacks against the believer community and the illegal actions of certain government officials are considered legal, then the defense of the interests of

the believer community against these attacks, the defense of one's own or another's person or rights against dangerous threats against the believer community cannot be considered illegal. Such a defense is not considered a crime by the USSR Criminal Code art. 14 and 15 of the Criminal Code which state that "an action is not criminal which, though it falls under the provisions of criminal law, is committed under conditions of urgent self-defense" or "is committed under conditions of urgent necessity, is not a crime."

I might also add that *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* is illegal only in the sense that Soviet government organs ban the inherently rightful religious press and prevent the faithful from using mass media.

The Constitution assures all citizens freedom of conscience and guarantees the freedom of press and speech. International human rights documents, for instance, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, art. 19 state: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." We therefore clearly see that no law forbids any individual to spread his or her convictions, ideas and information, and to disseminate them in writing or orally. Then what is illegal? What kind of crime is this?

Those who undermine human rights—the rights of the believer community—are committing a crime. Not a single country, not only capitalist, but also socialist (excluding Albania and China) bans the religious press: newspapers, magazines, books. No one forbids the defense of one's ideas and beliefs and their dissemination. Why then is it forbidden here? We can unabashedly state that it is not the faithful who are violating the human rights and freedoms recognized throughout the world—not we, but the atheists, under the cloak of government.

If everyone has equal rights, then why are the faithful not allowed to freely defend their beliefs by means of the mass media? Just as Communists have the right to fight for their beliefs, so the faithful must have the same right. Tell us and explain to us how the faithful can protect themselves against defamatory articles which appear in the press, against distorted facts, against the wrong interpretation of Church teachings? V. Lenin was correct in saying: "Without the freedom of assembly, press and speech all speeches about the freedom of religion will remain a regrettable game and dishonorable lie." ("Self-Government is Tottering" *Writings*, v. 6, 1951,

Lith. trans). The Soviet press often writes that we have complete religious freedom. If that is truly so, then where is the Catholic press? In what store, at what newsstand can one buy Catholic newspapers, magazines, religious books, prayerbooks, rosaries, religious pictures or cards, crosses, scapulars, candles and other religious necessities?

The indictment charges me with having " . . .written articles and statements containing fabrications smearing the soviet state and social order." I would like to say this regarding this charge: I have never written or submitted any articles. It is true that after the illegal actions of certain security agents, after the November 20, 1973 search and interrogation, I wrote statements: a) on November 30, 1973 to the Chairman of the LSSR Internal Security Committee; b) on January 4, 1974 to the LSSR Attorney General; c) on June 12, 1974 to the USSR Attorney General and the Chairman of the USSR Internal Security Committee; d) on October 15, 1974 to the Chairman of the LSSR Internal Security Committee; e) on April 23, 1976 to Central Party Committee Secretary General L. Brezhnev.

In these statements I detailed how on November 20, 1973 security agents confiscated my typewriter, manuscripts, religious books which had no bearing on the case and most of which were not even listed in either the record of the search or the accompanying report and that they thus violated art. 192 of the LSSR Code of Criminal Procedure; later, during the interrogation, they attempted to obtain evidence through threats, lies, deceit and other illegal actions and did not allow me to defend myself. They thus violated articles 17 and 18 of the same code, and thus committed a crime under art. 187 of the USSR Criminal Code. Through my statements I attempted to secure the return of the confiscated books, handwritten material and typewriter.

A couple of years later, i.e., on July 3, 1975 some of the confiscated books were returned, but the rest were kept and no explanation was given, why they were not returned; the typewriter was not returned either. And only now, after reading all the case documents, did I learn that the remaining books were destroyed as early as 1975. They were burned. Is this respect for the individual and the law?

If security agents whose main duty is to protect socialist justice, do not observe the laws, then how can we expect ordinary citizens to observe them? I noticed that the checkists use a rather old method: they switch the blame from themselves to others (in this case, me).

As for my statements written between 1973 and 1975, I was more than once summoned to Security headquarters and the attorney

general's office for questioning, and at the time not one of the interrogators or prosecutors saw any defamatory fabrications in them, debasing the Soviet system and no one made any mention of it (see transcripts of the interrogations), but merely promised to return the handwritten documents and books which had no bearing on the case. If my statements written in 1973 and 1974 contained no defamatory fabrications debasing the Soviet system, then how did these statements, kept in security and prosecutor's files three or more years suddenly become defamatory in 1977? While in the files, their content could not have changed, and the Soviet system also did not change during that time. Can we possibly be returning to the former violations of Soviet justice committed during the Stalin personality cult years which the XXth Party Congress condemned? If not, why was such an absurd accusation concocted?

Regardless of the idea involved, if it is opposed by the government with the use of force, and the supporters of this idea are not only forbidden to disseminate their idea, but are also forbidden to defend themselves, it will then be clear to every sane person that this is fiction and not freedom.

What would the Marxists think if Soviet society were to proclaim to the communist party that the freedom of anti-communist propaganda is guaranteed to all citizens, but Communist propaganda is not recognized? Communist would probably say that this is not freedom, but vile demagoguery. Would Communists rejoice if their ideas were being destroyed before their very eyes and those of society, while they were not allowed to defend themselves? Communists would not only deplore such "freedom," but would condemn it as a mockery of basic human rights and basic freedoms. Then why do Communists offer others such "freedom" which they themselves do not recognize as freedom?

Here are some excerpts from atheist books on religion: *Discussions On Religion and Science* (Vilnius, 1963): "The goal of the Soviet Union Communist Party is the establishment of a Communist society ... it is not possible to establish a Communist society without overcoming religious superstition" (p. 286). "Communism and religion are not compatible" (p. 212). "Thoughts On Religion" by J. Galitskaya (Vilnius, 1963): "It is impossible to be a religious person and a Soviet individual, a believer and a good citizen; that is, a decent person" (p. 137); "Morals end where religion begins" (p. 140); "The Roman Popes are the greatest charlatans who have ever exploited religion" (p. 157); "The Vicars of

Christ in Rome have for twelve hundred years running committed horrible crimes and disgusting offenses in God's name" (p. 167); "Most scholars supported the philosophy of "three frauds": Moses, Christ and Mohammed" (p. 234). So, you can curse, attack God, the Church and the Pope, condemn religious leaders, believers, conduct propaganda against any kind of religious, and the party and authorities will even praise you for it. But, God forbid, you utter a single word against the godless and don't attempt to defend yourself against atheist attacks. If you do, you will wind up behind bars and will be punished for having committed a crime under art. 68 or 199 of the LSSR Criminal Code, i.e., for systematically conducting anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda or for spreading patently false rumors. And this is freedom of conscience!

What kind of freedom of conscience is it when the Constitution lists only the freedom of anti-religious propaganda, when every atheist has the right to invade your conscience, denude it, ridicule it, revile it, even were it the most innocent. That is a mockery of believers, that is shackling the conscience, those are chains, that is a mockery of humanity itself: Every citizen of another country would protest were he to learn of this.

In addition to my duties to the State, I, as a Catholic, have duties to religion and Church, which obligate my conscience. To defend the rights of believers and the Church is not politics, but the holy duty of every Catholic.

When there is no more persecution of believers, there will no longer be anyone to proclaim discontent, shock and resistance, and also there will no longer be any *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

Time spent in prison for defending human rights and fundamental freedoms is not wasted, but beautifully works toward spiritual renewal. After the suffering of persecution passes, the martyr always become shining examples, while the persecutors and torturers become the damned.

We, the Catholics of Lithuania, are determined to fight for our faith and true equality, for our rights to be guaranteed not only in words and on paper but in our daily lives.

To be convicted of fulfilling my duties is not only not shameful for me, but honorable. I stand alongside Eternal Truth who said: "Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when you are persecuted and suffer slander for My sake." (Mat. 5, 10-12).

We must obey God more than men.

It is amazing that people are arrested, placed in prison, accused of attempting to undermine the Soviet government, of systematically conducting anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, of anti-Soviet activity, of destroying the Soviet state and social order with defamatory fabrications, but not a single justice department official has attempted to explain to the individual the boundaries which once crossed mark the start of anti-Soviet sentiment and base all this on facts and strict arguments. From the first day of one's arrest, interrogators behave the opposite, completely convinced of the guilt of the accused.

When typewritten or handwritten material without the approbation of "Glavlit" is found during searches, it is not objective proof based on facts to maintain that it is anti-Soviet and defamatory to the Soviet system, but merely a subjective opinion. In order for any document to be weighed objectively, it is necessary to scrupulously examine it and determine how much truth it contains and how much maliciously distorted facts, i.e. intentional lies. And only after thoroughly investigating all this, can this be asserted.

Security agents and certain other government officials either cannot or will not understand the essence of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, but simply stubbornly insist on using the term "anti-Soviet" and use it as a cover and abuse it haphazardly. This term is used in interrogation transcripts, in indictments against the accused, in presenting proof of guilt and in court rulings. Very often and without any grounds, those who think differently are called anti-Soviet activists, characters who hold anti-Soviet views, who defame their country, their fellow - citizens, who are open foes of socialism and the like. Great pains are taken to assure the accused that he has supposedly committed crimes dangerous to the state. Justice department officials do not explain to the accused the crime he is accused of, the circumstances surrounding his crime, whether he has told a deliberate lie, whether this is truly defamatory (a lie that destroys honor) and how much truth and how much lies are contained in that document. They merely rush to charge him with anti-Soviet activity, with defamation. Even while probing the case, they do not avail themselves of all the means provided by law to fully, impartially and objectively investigate the circumstances surrounding the case, as provided by art. 18 of the LSSR Code of Criminal Procedure, but merely present the circumstances most damaging to the accused and do not present the mitigat-

ing and justifying circumstances. Once you have fallen into the hands of the security police, then, according to their logic, you are guilty. You must be charged and convicted. An individual who dares write complaints to the prosecutor's office or the party about the mistakes of certain security agents, will of necessity become guilty, wind up behind bars, be sentenced for deliberately committed actions, as provided under art. 68 and 199 of the LSSR Criminal Code. After all Security agents don't "make mistakes." They merely prosecute "the enemies of socialism." The Russian writer F. Dostoevski accurately writes in his *Crime and Punishment*: "I am first inclined to suspect evil rather than good: An unfortunate trait typical of a cold heart" (p. 131). He writes further: "The inquisitorial mistrust and even suspicion is bitter". (Ibid, p. 143).

During the era of the Stalin personality cult there were mass repression, and evil was suspected before good. It would certainly not be desirable that in Dostoevski's words, inquisitorial mistrust and even suspicion were to flourish in our society. It would not be desirable that the mistakes of the Stalin cult era were to be continued. That would merely worsen the general crisis of socialism, which in the long run would end in catastrophe.

It is a poor achievement for a nation to have its prisons and labor camps overflowing with prisoners. Great good could be achieved for society if the government were to concern itself with justice and not revenge.

On July 25th, the court handed down its ruling. It was read in a low voice and quickly, so that even V. Lapienis who stood close to the bench stated he did not hear or understand everything clearly. Trial spectators in the back of the courtroom were all the more nearly unable to hear the text of the verdict.

V. Lapienis was sentenced to three years in strict regime labor camps and two years in exile; Jonas Kastytis Matulionis, to two years suspended sentence, and Ona Pranskunaitė to two years in a general regime labor camp. V. Lapienis' typewriter and general documentation were confiscated.

We are reprinting what *Tiesa (Truth)* (August 21, 1977 issue) wrote about this trial:

". . . The Jesuit-run Vatican Radio tried especially hard to harm our country, our republic, in some small way. With this purpose in mind, the Vatican Jesuits are determined to make use of any Lithuanian misfit to denigrate Soviet Lithuania

and besmirch the achievements of our people. Such misfits, who refuse to march together with all the people, are few, but they still exist. Just recently in Vilnius the open trial of three such slanderers came to an end: a retired Vilnius resident, Vldas Lapienis, artist Kastytis Jonas Matulionis of the Vilnius United Clothing Store and Ona Pranskūnaitė, former employee of the Panevėžys linen manufacturing firm *Linās*.

They all three produced and disseminated biased and openly defamatory publications (*Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* — Ed. note), which presented a distorted view of internal state policies toward the Catholic Church, deceitfully reported on the so-called undermining of the freedom of conscience and the persecution of believers.

After illegally reaching foreign countries, these publications are used by Lithuanian bourgeois nationalists for foul motives in their fight against the working people's government in Lithuania. The reactionary clerical newspapers *Draugas* and *Darbininkas* and Vatican Radio have even more widely circulated fabrications of which I mentioned only a few in this article due to lack of space.

Vldas Lapienis did not arrive at the dock all at once. Taking his advanced age into consideration, investigation agencies many times spoke with him, warned him to cease and desist his criminal activity. However, Lapienis did not wish to walk the straight and narrow path and involved Matulionis in his criminal activity. He further attempted, under the cloak of distributing religious literature, to mislead people and spread anti-Soviet slander. His hands have been soiled with many fabrications denigrating the decent people of our republic.

K. J. Matulionis, who has studied linguistics, was used by V. Lapienis to correct the syntax of anti-Soviet defamatory publications. Moreover, K. J. Matulionis himself helped circulate these publications. (Miss) O. Pranskūnaitė, although semi-literate — having attended school only through the fourth grade — typed and duplicated defamatory publications. From her typewriter emerged the rumor about the parents' meeting at the J. Janonis Middle School in Šiauliai, which was not held, slander about the Budėnas family from Marcinkoniai and other fabrications.

At the trial, the spreaders of slander seemed to realize that they were mere tools in the activity of reactionary clericals,

that Vatican Radio was primarily responsible for their erring ways, by so malevolently spreading to the air waves the lies they circulated.

"I will never again take part in the crime I am now accused of. Kastytis Jonas Matulionis said, regretting his imprudent actions.

"I regret having behaved thus. I acted without fully understanding everything. I promise this will not recur in the future," Ona Pranskunaite also repented.

The Soviet court is humane. In view of the fact that K. J. Matulionis understood his errors and promised to refrain from criminal activity, the court handed him only a suspended sentence. K. J. Matulionis is now free and his future depends only on his actions.

"In view of the fact that Miss Ona Pranskunaitė is semi-literate and was drawn into criminal activity, as well as that she repented her imprudent actions at the trial and promised to refrain from such future actions, the court also gave Ona Pranskunaitė much less severe sentence.

"These imprudent persons who were misled by Vatican Radio will probably repent more than once when they recall their errors. This is a good opportunity to note that Vatican Radio and other Western propaganda centers have recently expanded their web of imperialist propaganda even more. Hiding behind the mask of benefactors, they are seeking donations by spreading various fabrications, rumors. Their attempts will be in vain if we all remain vigilant."

Excerpts from the Diary of a Trial Spectator

July 25, 1977

Today is the third day of the trial. After long tormenting interrogations, they probably expected to see sympathetic persons in the courtroom, feel their glance, know that in this hour of need someone was ardently praying to the Lord for them. Unfortunately, the first two days a terrifying void stared back at them. Only an occasional friend, having belatedly learned of the trial date and sitting at the back of the room, a group of security police, like barbed wire: These were the trial spectators.

Lord, you have required of them the most painful sacrifice: great suffering and abandonment by those close to them. It would seem that the security police can rejoice at their clever move of choosing a trial date when most people are on vacation. Do not rejoice! The suffering of those on trial will call forth a new wave of yearning for the truth in the hearts of the young!

We are already in the courtroom. This time there is even a small group of us. The chairs in the first row are so closely packed together that no one will dare sit in them. Well, we occupied two rows further down. We thought we would be able to see and hear everything. Our joy was shortlived; a band of soldiers approached and we were roughly ordered to move to back rows. So what do you fear, comrade security agents? Our united front? Fear it! We feel strong even when thousands of miles and prison walls separate us, so two rows of chairs... a mere trifle!

Finally the court and the accused, guarded by soldiers, entered the room. Pale faces and faltering steps attested to the broken health of those on trial.

(Miss) Onutė Pranskunaitė was allowed to make a final statement. How we yearned to hear that beloved voice, her final statement. Unfortunately, we heard not a single sentence clearly.

What next? The court called a recess until 3:00 P.M. Our faces fell when we heard this news. What should we do now; it was still only 10:30 A.M. We would wait and will not leave the courtroom. And perhaps this is a security police trick? "About 3:00 P.M.". More likely it could be around 12 noon or 1:00 P.M.

Unfortunately, our wishes were once again not fulfilled; the secretary "politely" asked us to leave the courtroom. We tried to resist; the secretary did not have a gun and could not shoot us. The poor young girl said in a nervous voice: "Please leave, because sometimes those who remain in the courtroom cut off our microphones." We left, not so much out of obedience, but out of compassion for the poor secretary... How interesting: "Cut off their microphones!"

We formed a tight group, chatted, prayed and constantly glanced toward the courtroom. The security police kept their eyes and probably their ears on us, but of what importance are they (our poor brothers) if Truth is on our side!

Finally 3:00 P.M. came. We all flocked into the courtroom.

We took our places and it seemed that they would be unable to move us from the courtroom even with a tractor, even if the court were to reconvene around 8:00 P.M. But they had no need of a tractor. The rough voice of a Security policeman ordered "Would everyone please leave the courtroom," proved more powerful than technology. With our heads bowed we left without understanding the reason for our ouster. Could it possibly again be because of the microphones. . . ?"

What luck! At 3:30 the doors opened wide inviting us in. One young man was about to bring in a bouquet of flowers. Leave the flowers," sharply yelled a security policeman.

"I'm going to a birthday party," softly protested the youth.

"I told you to leave them. Flowers don't belong here!" the Security policeman retorted as with a knife.

Flowers don't belong here. And where do they belong? A child gives his mother a flower for her sacrifice and love, the graves of heroes are covered with flowers because they gave their lives for their country's freedom, but believers who have sacrificed their lives to reveal the truth are not allowed to accept a small lowly flower from their friends. They don't belong here . . . Oh, my brothers, may your suffering blossom into miraculous flowers in eternity. That is the proper place to bestow the most spectacular flowers on you.

Only now did we understand why we had been ousted from the courtroom. The accused and the soldiers were already at the dock. Why, our suffering brethren were denied the chance to glance at their friends. They stood with their backs to us and were prodded by soldiers if anyone attempted to look back. Oh my dear brethren, our glances did not meet, but you will bolster us with your spiritual strength, and we will continue to look to the Almighty to grant you strength in your heroic suffering.

The decision of the court is read. We all stand and listen. "Slandering literature ... for distributing and duplicating slanderous literature, for writing statements . . ." The sentence: three years, two years . . . The sentence has been read. We have to leave the courtroom. It seemed as though our legs are paralyzed. We stood like sticks in our places and did not seem to hear the soldier's rough order to leave. We wanted to look into the faces of the convicted, breathe that air of suffering and debasement which our brethren had breathed such a long time.

Finally, unwillingly, as if in doubt, we filed out one by one. We did not want to share our thoughts, our mood was as at the funeral of a loved one. After standing outside the Supreme Court room for a while, stunned by events and pressure, we left the Supreme Court building and went to Aušros Vartai (**Gates of Dawn**) to place on the altar one more offence against TRUTH.

**STATEMENTS TO THE BELGRADE COMMISSION
INVESTIGATING ADHERENCE TO
THE 1975 HELSINKI INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS**

(Regarding the Situation of Roman Catholics and other believers in Lithuania)

In the Soviet Union the struggle against religion is an essential element in the program of the Communist Party. "Freedom of conscience" is understood here in a special way. A. Veshchikov in his brochure, "Soviet Law on Religious Cults", (Vilnius, 1963) describes freedom of conscience as follows: "In our understanding of freedom of conscience, there is a definitive liberation of all people from religious superstition." (p. 10). This same idea is expressed in the pamphlet "Soviet Laws on Religious Cults and the Freedom of Conscience" (Vilnius, 1970) by J. Anidas and Rimaitis: "True freedom of conscience is possible only . . . when all available scientific, cultural and ideological resources are employed to help man free himself of anti-scientific religious influences. So long as believers have not rid themselves of religious superstition, full freedom of conscience is not possible." (p. 54)

Such a view and explanation of freedom of conscience is self-contradictory: wherever there is force, restriction and struggle, freedom cannot exist. It also contradicts international pledges: *The Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, *The Helsinki Final Act*, *The International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, as well as *The International Pact on Citizen Rights*

The Soviet Union, as a member of the United Nations Organization, pledged to respect and safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms, but did not alter its declared policy

toward religion within its own borders. Not only are old laws still in effect, but even after the Helsinki accords of July 28, 1976, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania confirmed the Statutes on Religious Congregations, comprising 53 articles, which we already made public in 1976 in our document No. 2. We again call attention to the fact that these statutes are based entirely on various Soviet regulations and statutes, created before the Helsinki accords, and discriminate against believers; for instance, anti-religious propaganda is allowed, but religious propaganda is not, only religious services can be conducted and so forth.

Article 26 of the *International Pact on Citizen and Political Rights* states: "All men are equal before the law and have the right to have the law protect them equally without any discrimination. In this regard, all discrimination must be forbidden by law and the law must guarantee all individuals equal and effective protection against discrimination of any type, as for instance, regarding race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social background, wealth, birth or other circumstance."

International agreements state that basic human rights and freedoms have priority over international state regulations. By theoretically acknowledging the above, the Soviet Union should amend art. 124 of the USSR Constitution and art. 96 of the Lithuanian SSR Constitution, which state: "The church is separate from the state and the school from the church. The freedom of religious practice and anti-religious propaganda are guaranteed all citizens."

The Church is separate from the state. The term "separate" is used by government organs in different senses. When it is being applied to the Church, it is understood to mean that the Church does not have the right to interfere in internal state affairs—in practice it does not interfere—that is, it cannot indicate which individuals must be elected to the national Supreme Soviet or its presidium, which must be chairmen of *Rayon* executive committees, university professors or instructors and the like. But when that same term "separate" is applied to the state, it has a completely different meaning: Soviet government organs decide which bishops cannot carry out their duties (Bishops J. Steponavičius and V. Sladkevičius), which young men are allowed to enter the seminary—not leaving them in

peace (M. Petrauskas, A. Čiuras and others)—they even indicate which priests can be invited to help in religious feasts and which cannot (A. Kleinas, K. Garuckas, V. Černiauskas and so on). Government organs told Father Bronius Laurinavičius that "without our knowledge" he may not drive a single nail into the church wall. That the term "separate" is used in different senses is acknowledged by the atheists themselves. J. Aničas and J. Rimaitis write: "In literature, when we examine the question of the separation of church and state, the state and the church are sometimes presented as equal partners, for example: 'State organs do not interfere in church activity; the church for her part does not interfere in state affairs.' Such an evaluation is of course not correct. The sovereignty of the Soviet state gives it the right to regulate the various aspects of society. The church, despite its specific role, cannot be an exception."

Logically, the separation of Church and State should mean that she is completely free, independent from the state, and manages her own affairs. However, in the prevailing situation and according to various laws and regulations enacted by the civil administration, it seems that the Church *is not* separate from the state, but only strictly controlled by that administration. Although the Soviet press, when it writes about state and Church relations, often affirms that the Soviet state and its government organs do not interfere in internal Church affairs, that is, in her canonical and dogmatic activity, actual experience proves something completely different: The state, with no regard to the principles of Church rights, determines what is allowed and what is not allowed. Atheists themselves acknowledge this. A. Veshchikov writes: "Soviet laws forbid religious centers to promulgate any regulations or rules for believers. *The clergy are also forbidden to follow and even rely on former religious laws.* (Underlined by the editors of the original Chronicle) p. 20.

The school is separate from the Church. Article 13 of the *International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* states: "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to choose for their children schools other than those established by the public authorities which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions".

This is also repeated in art. 18 of the *International Pact on Citizen and Political Rights* and stressed by *The Universal Declaration on Human Rights*: "Parents have a priority right in determining how their children are to be educated." (art. 26)

Article 65 of the *Basic Principles of the People's Education in the USSR and the Soviet Republics* theoretically acknowledges: "If an international agreement or international pact, in which the USSR participates, establishes rules different from what is laid down in the statutes of the people's education in the USSR and the Soviet Republics, then the regulations of the international agreement or pact apply." But this is different in actual practice.

In the Soviet Union, where the school is separate from the Church, the entire educational apparatus is in state hands and there are no schools other than state schools. The goals and tasks of those schools are set by the basic statutes of the People's Education in the USSR and of the Soviet Republics which require "secular education without religion" (art. 12), that education and upbringing be steeped in Marxist-Leninist philosophy, socialist internationalism, Soviet patriotism and the spirit of Communism (art. 19, 31, 36, 41), that "parents and persons representing them are obligated to raise their children in the spirit of high Communist morals" (art. 57), that "upbringing" in the family be organically coordinated with the educational work of schools, pre-school agencies and the work of community organizations" (art. 57).

How the above-mentioned articles of the *Basic Principles of the People's Educational Agencies* are carried out in practice is related by Assistant Chairman P. Mišutis of the Republican Educational Atheistic Propaganda Coordinating Council in the book *The Practice of Ideological Work and Its Development* (Vilnius, 1974):

"The Fifth Plenary Meeting of the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee (1963) emphasized that educational-atheistic propaganda is a matter of concern throughout the Party." (p. 197) "Recently the discrepancies of atheist work have improved . . . Atheist work in the schools is becoming more intensive. The basic task of instilling materialistic ideology is being transferred to the educational process, without however by-passing atheist groups and clubs whose activity in certain schools even goes beyond school boundaries. It is vitally important to provide better atheist education to parents of children who are still believers,

which task many school organizations are attempting to accomplish.

"Great problems arise in educating youth, students . . . An important role is played here by the Chair of the History of Atheism and of Philosophy, established at the Vilnius V. Kapuskas State University. This Chair plays an increasingly larger role in coordinating and organizing the atheist educational activity of students in the republic . . . Therefore, it is extremely important to work with them more closely, as well as with youth in general. To snatch from the Church's influence the still believing portion of youth." (p. 202)

Such are the goals of all schools. Then, perhaps, it is possible to teach religion to believer children and youth in private?

The January 23, 1918 Lenin's decree *On the Separation of Church and State, and School and Church* permits to teach and learn religion in private (art. 9) but art. 143 of the LSSR Criminal Code forbids it. A violation of this (143rd) article is seen as: "The organization and systematic practice of providing religious education to minors, in violation of regulations provided by law. The violation of regulations provided by law must be viewed as the religious education of minors in any form (for instance, the organization by religious groups and cult servants of any schools, clubs or groups; the systematic meeting of children for the purpose of religious education; the practice of religious education carried out by parents not merely with their own children, but also with other believer children, except for the religious education of children undertaken by parents." (*Commentary on the LSSR Criminal Code*, Vilnius, 1974, p. 226).

This same view is stated in articles 17 and 18 of the *Statutes on Religious Congregations*. Thus, the decrees of Lenin and current state laws are not consistent.

The freedom of religious worship. Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* proclaims: "Everyone has the right to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right covers the freedom to change one's religion and beliefs and the freedom to practice one's religion and beliefs both individually and together with others, in public and in private, teaching, participating in services and conducting religious services. (Underlines by us). Thus, those laws do not conform to international conventions.

The freedom of religious worship is guaranteed by the USSR and LSSR Constitutions, but the faithful of Lithuania do not enjoy this right. A. Veshchikov openly acknowledges that religious congregations "have a strictly limited role under Soviet law" (p. 31). J. AniCas and J. Rimaitis reiterate the same idea: "Religious communities are formed only for the purposes of religious practice" (p. 38).

The term freedom of religious worship is understood to mean *not only holding services and attendance at them, but everything that is connected with religious services*. In order to conduct religious services in the Catholic Church, it is necessary to have priests, liturgical vessels, liturgical books, hymnals, music sheets, rosaries, organs and so forth.

The Catholics of Lithuania receive only as many new books as the civil authorities allow; they also determine the number of seminarians at the seminary. The bishops and church administrators of Lithuania cannot administer the Sacrament of Confirmation without permission from atheist government agencies; the activities of priests are limited to the residence of parish members whom they serve and to the parish church where the priest works (art. 19 of the *Statutes on Religious Congregations*); funeral processions to the cemetery on All Souls Day are forbidden, and priests are punished for this; for example, Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and others in 1976; it is often forbidden to provide the last rites to the ill in hospitals; priests are forbidden to visit the faithful even though they request it (for example, Father K.(arolis) Garuckas and others).

Since Vatican Council II, nearly all believers throughout the world participate in church services in their native tongue, but Lithuanians do so in Latin because here there are no facilities to print in Lithuanian the missals and other books necessary for religious rites. Lithuanians can only dream about producing liturgical vessels and organs. Under the *Statutes on Religious Congregations*, religious centers—curias and religious communities—and parishes in Lithuania do not enjoy any legal individual rights, they are not allowed to set their own regulations, they cannot have rights, obligations or own property; they cannot enter into contracts, inherit wealth, be litigants in trials or parties in arbitration. Article 22 of the above-mentioned statutes states: "Property necessary for the practice of religion, whether transferred under contract for the use of believers who compose

the religious community, or purchased or donated for use in worship, belongs to the state." Even "insurance payments for burned (damaged) houses of worship are assigned to the appropriate Executive Committee of the Council of Workers Representatives, to whom, in the final analysis, these buildings belong" (art. 29).

Most Lithuanian Catholics, especially intellectuals, *cannot* attend religious services, because they are then discharged from their jobs, for instance, teachers and the like.

During the years of Stalin's rule, Lithuanians exiled to the farthest reaches of Russia used to make rosary beads from bread, which they strung on a piece of thread and used to pray. Today, we see in many hands not bread rosaries, but rudimentary rosaries made by the underground, handwritten prayerbooks, Hymnals—many have been imprisoned for making prayerbooks in secret, for example, Povilas Petronis, Juozas Gražys and others—the apartments of believers are decorated with rough photocopied pictures or secretly manufactured metal Crucifixes.

Can this be called freedom of religious practice?

Freedom of anti-religious propaganda means that every Soviet individual has the right freely to express his atheist beliefs and proclaim them orally and in the press. This is guaranteed by art. 124 of the USSR Constitution and art. 96 of the Lithuanian SSR Constitution. In the Soviet Union, freedom of anti-religious propaganda means the struggle against religion—a virtually un-touchable law. It is one of the program points of the Communist Party. A. Veshchikov writes: "The documents of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union contains directives on how to continue developing atheistic work. The meeting examined in depth the question of overcoming religious anachronisms" (p. 29).

Freedom of religious propaganda is nor *granted* believer citizens by the Constitution, thus making believers not equal with atheists before the law, and discriminating against them. As a result, the Catholics of Soviet Lithuania *do not have* any religious newspapers or magazines, Catholic books or even catechisms, while bookstores are piled high with atheist books, and newspapers and magazines literally abound with atheist articles which attempt to "uncrown" the Catholic Church, and to which Catholics cannot reply because they do not have their own press. Thus, the Catholics of Lithuania are not allowed to enjoy the rights and freedoms contained in international agreements, and

which the Soviet Union pledged to respect and uphold.

Therefore, we appeal to the Belgrade Commission, empowered to monitor adherence to the international agreements on basic human rights and freedoms signed in Helsinki in 1975 and ask you to help us, so that the international commitments entered into not be on paper alone, but concretely carried out, that:

1) the term "freedom of conscience" be understood and explained as it is understood by all the peoples of the world;

2) people be granted the freedom of not only anti-religious, but also religious propaganda;

3) believers be granted the freedom of assembly, meeting, press and speech;

4) those articles of the basic educational statutes which restrict freedom of religion and conscience be eliminated;

5) all those who have contributed to the effort to have human rights and basic freedoms respected and protected everywhere be released from prisons and labor camps (Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Petras Plumpa, Povilas Petronis, Šarūnas Žukauskas and others).

Vilnius, Lithuanian SSR

April 10, 1977

Lithuanian Public Group
Monitoring Adherence to the
Helsinki Agreements:

Father Karolis Garuckas
Eitan Finkelstein
Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė
Viktoras Petkus
Tomas Venclova

STATEMENTS

To: Leonid Brezhnev, Chairman of the USSR Constitutional Commission

A statement from: Father St. Valiukėnas
Kretingos 7, apt. 3, Vilnius

I am proposing that the words "carry out atheist propaganda" be deleted from article 52 of the Constitution draft, or that after

"carry out" the words "religious and" be inserted so the sentence will read as follows: "carry out religious and atheist propaganda."

By legalizing only atheist propaganda and making it state policy (as up to now), freedom of conscience is abolished, the first portion of article 52 of the Constitution is voided and articles 34 and 35 of the draft Constitution are contradicted, because atheists become full-fledged care-takers of the state while believers merely have the right to "profess any religion whatsoever and practice religious rites," of course only if atheists, as full-fledged citizens and care-takers of the state, do not wish to invade the conscience of the faithful, if they do not attempt to reeducate them by drastic means and torment them by firing them from work, giving bad references, preventing them from seeking higher education, using the funds of believers for atheist propaganda, appropriating "property necessary for the practice of religion" (art. 22 of the July 28, 1976 order issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the LSSR), forcibly demanding that atheism be studied (There are university chairs of atheism, but none of religion.) and the like. In other words, atheists are privileged, while believers are made into the obedient servants of their will.

The draft Constitution groups citizens into sons and stepsons. Practice confirms this.

Atheists have the right to propagate their ideas, while believers do not. Atheists have the right to squander funds collected from citizens (from believers) on atheist propaganda: on atheist press, lectures, atheist radio and television shows (for example, *Akiratis* (*Horizon*), *Argumentai* (*Arguments*), on movies, plays and so on.

Atheists have the right to invade a citizen's conscience from cradle to the grave: the nursery school child is already bombarded with the allegation that there is no God; later in school the believer student is pressured with full force (even with threats and bad references); many places do not provide the means to transport a deceased believer to church and the cemetery.

Atheists have the right to offend believers with full immunity, by calling them reterded, ignorant, backward, holders of superstition and obsolete beliefs and the like. (See *The Current Lithuanian Language Dictionary*, Vilnius, 1954, p. 70: "Church — 1. a building in which persons who hold religious superstitions assemble to pray.")

Atheist teachers and other officials who have uprooted the foundations of faith from the hearts of young persons and have not instilled in them any other moral standards, have the right to demand believer parents to take responsibility for the pranks of morally crippled children. Atheists have the right to set the number of seminarians in seminaries and tell seminary officials which candidates are to be accepted or rejected by the Seminary.

Atheists had the right to confiscate the property of Seminaries in Vilnius, Kaunas, Telšiai and Vilkaviškis. Presently, the only Lithuanian Seminary is in Kaunas with 50-60 seminarians in very cramped quarters.

Atheists dare to interfere with the appointment of priests and the administration of sacraments, prevent the preparation of youth for sacraments, even apply point "e" of the May 12, 1966 decision of the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the LSSR. It appears that based on the right of atheist propaganda, the LSSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, in article 19 of its July 28, 1976 Decree, limits the priest's activity "to the place of residence of the religious community they serve . . ." This is how attempts are made to interfere with the jurisdiction of church authorities.

In that same decree, the Supreme Soviet Presidium does not recognize a legal person status to the Catholic Church, although Catholic Church representatives sign international agreements alongside the Soviet Union and other states, while at the same time, even unimportant organizations have legal person status in the Soviet Union.

Such is the curious state of affairs when atheists are granted special rights.

The church is separate from the state. The church does not interfere in state affairs, although many believers work in state agencies. Atheist state officials should not interfere in church activities or affairs. All statutes which discriminate against believers must be eliminated, but first of all it is necessary to delete from the draft Constitution the privilege of atheists to "carry out atheist propaganda."

Father St. Valiukėnas

Report to: His Excellency Bishop Liudvikas Povilonis,
Apostolic Administrator of the Kaunas Archdiocese
and the Vilkaviškis Diocese

Copies to: The Lithuanian Public Group Monitoring Adherence to the Helsinki Accords, and to LSSR Commissioner for Religious Affairs K. Tumėnas.

On July 26th of this year, in the Viduklė Roman Catholic Church, I was examining, as required by church law and under instruction from the bishop, children preparing for First Communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation.

At the time, there were about twenty five children and ten fathers and mothers in the church. Because it was harvest time, one father or mother, brought all the children of a particular house, street or town. During harvest time, state farms require seven days of work a week. No one excuses parents from work, especially on weekdays.

Around 5 P.M. a group of persons forced its way into the church: Chairman A. Zigmantas of the Viduklė District, a militiaman from Raseiniai (whose name I do not know) and four teachers: (Mrs) Menkeliuniienė, (Mrs) Lukminienė, (Mrs) Plišauskienė, and a fourth whose name I do not know, standing in the vestibule. They quickly looked over the children and without saying a word to either me (although I did not stop my questioning) or to the parents, they left the church and went to the firehouse where they compiled a report. It later became clear that this operation was organized by Chairman A. Skeiveris of the Raseiniai *Rayon* (or perhaps he is simply carrying out orders). He personally brought the militiaman in his car and picked up the members of the punitive expedition. But as is typical, he personally did not enter the church, but stayed in his car. Later he will be able to say: "We had nothing to do with this, the community' itself accomplished this."

The next day, this same *Rayon* chairman sent from Raseiniai a militia Major (or maybe a security agent) with two witnesses, (Director of the Cultural Center Germanavičius and District Secretary (Mrs) A. Morkuvienė) and wrote in a report that a tourist from Tbilisi with three small children (one still in diapers!) spent twenty days here.

I would like to mention certain details from the past, which will clarify what the officials of the Raseiniai *Rayon* were seeking to achieve and how the ideological "struggle" is being conducted in Lithuania.

I came to Viduklė on August 17, 1976. A group of parishioners from Igliauka accompanied me. All attended Mass at the

church, ate sandwiches in the churchyard and left for home after singing several Lithuanian songs. Several days later District Chairman A. Zigmantas went from person to person asking whether the new pastor and the people had not sung the Lithuanian anthem in church. Of course, no one had sung the anthem and he found no witnesses. The district chairman probably did not know that, until 1948, this anthem was sung daily over Vilnius Radio, that this anthem is printed in the book *The Poetry of Lithuania*, (Vilnius, 1967, Vol. 1, p. 222) and is entitled "A National Hymn." After the sadly infamous All Souls Day procession to the Viduklė cemetery, District Chairman A. Zigmantas wrote a complaint that "Pastor Alf. Svarinskas offended the town atheists and disrupted traffic with religious procession." The Raseiniai authorities edited this accusation to read: "offended town residents and disrupted traffic." It would be interesting to know what percentage of Lithuanian Communists are offended by religious services? After the fine imposed by the administrative committee, Zigmantas again sought witnesses in the town. Zigmantas was called as witness at the Raseiniai People's Court. So, as the need arose, he acted as either accuser or witness. In this case, he even succeeded in finding one fictional witness, J. Zdanis, who works at the Miškai Farm, but who was introduced at the trial as a community motor vehicle inspector.

Even in the fall of last year, the Raseiniai *Rayon* Chairman A. Skeiveris threatened me in his office in the presence of his assistant Z. Butkus: "We will not tolerate such a priest in our *Rayon*. Here, all state farm chairmen obey." I had occasion to state that I am not a state farm chairman and am not subject to the 1961 godless regulations which both officials used at the time to illuminate me, but to church law and instructions from the bishop.

It should be noted that a few years ago the same *Rayon* officials concocted a shemeful trial, which resounded throughout Lithuania and the civilized world, of Rev. P. Bubnys, pastor of Girkalnis.

Over the years, *Rayon* officials have become accustomed to administer the Church. And no one dares oppose them because everyone knows that Soviet law does not protect the priest, that they will not find justice anywhere. Šiluva is a classic example. Every year (as this year) Vice-Chairman Z. Butkus indicates which priest will be allowed to preach to the people and conduct services. Last year, on the last Sunday, only four *Rayon*-approved

priests were allowed to walk in the procession, while the others had to watch from the sacristy window.

Today, as I conclude this statement, a new event surprised the residents of Viduklė. A representative of the Viduklė militia and two teachers (one of them (Miss) Petraitytė) searched for children in the streets and apartments and took them for interrogation to the middle school. Some managed to lock themselves at home, so they caught only five. The parents were at work. Therefore, the children were left at the mercy of the punishers. People were shocked by such behavior from militiamen and teachers. I wonder how the prosecutor's office will view such entrapment of minors, such interrogations without the knowledge of parents and the compelling of the children to sign dictated statements. One thing is clear: this is a clear physical and moral damaging of children.

What a terrible paradox! When on Saturdays and Sundays, at the Cultural Center, teenagers swear, fight, throw cigarette butts, rocks and firewood into the pastor's well, when people are afraid to walk the streets of Viduklė at night, there are no militiamen or teachers around. Very soon they themselves will suffer at the hands of this youth. I have spoken of this to Vice-Chairman Z. Butkus and to Security policemen.

Freedom for hoodlums, but entrapment and interrogations for decent children . . .

But these sad facts (and not the only instances in Lithuania) are the best indications of the "full freedom of conscience" in Lithuania and the methods used by the godless in their struggle against religion—not with scientific proof, but with force and discrimination. But these methods have an opposite effect. After learning of the punitive expedition, people express their sympathy by telephone and children personally prayed for their pastor. The parishioners' religious activity and religious practice became stronger. This year I have already consecrated over 26,000 communion wafers.

The above-mentioned events are the most vicious violations of the Soviet Constitution, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Helsinki agreements. I therefore ask Your Excellency to voice the strongest protest to the appropriate agencies regarding the discrimination against priests and the faithful.

Viduklė, August 9, 1977

Father A. Svarinskas
Pastor of Viduklė

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Kaunas

In the middle of August, the Commission for Religious Affairs notified the seminary administration which candidates are given permission by the government to study at the Theological Seminary. Twenty candidates were allowed to enroll in the first-year philosophy course. There were over 40 applications for study at the Seminary. This is how the "most democratic" government in the world "does not interfere" in internal church affairs.

Those who entered the Seminary were many times diligently recruited to work as KGB agents. Security agents most diligently recruit as agents timid, unprincipled and introverted seminarians. They avoid recruiting courageous and candid young men in order that they not reveal the KGB's criminal activity.

It is very unfortunate that this year again several unqualified candidates enrolled in the Seminary, while a sizeable group of good candidates was rejected.

Kaunas

To: Lithuanian SSR Commissioner for Religious Affairs with
the USSR Council of Ministers, Citizen K. Tumėnas

Copies to: His Excellency Bishop J. Matulaitis-Labukas
His Excellency Bishop L. Povilonis
His Excellency Bishop R. Krikščiūnas
Most Reverend Administrator Msgr. Č. Krivaitis
Most Reverend Administrator Canon J. Andrikonis

A statement from: The rector of the Kaunas Intradioesan
Seminary Professor, Dr. Viktoras Butkus

On June 12, 1976, the Moscow English-language weekly *Moscow News* and on July 21, 1976, the French *Les Nouvelles de Moscou* printed an interview with Father Viktoras Butkus, Rector of the Kaunas Theological Seminary, regarding the situation of the Roman Catholic Church in the Soviet Union.

Later, this interview was reprinted by a long list of Western European and American newspapers (i.e., *Evening News* No. 124, May 30, 1977), it was also repeated by Vatican Radio with rather nasty commentaries. I happened to personally hear this broadcast.

Regarding this interview attributed to me, I must state the following:

I did not grant an interview to either the English or the French "Moscow News" weekly, and have never had any contact with this weekly. I have up to now been unsuccessful in determining who wrote this interview attributed to me. Unfortunately, I have also been unsuccessful in obtaining *Moscow News* in either English or French, and am unable to verify the original text of this interview; however, the Vatican Radio broadcast contained many errors which no priest, especially not a Seminary rector, could have ever made.

In this matter, I ask that it be determined who wrote this interview in my name and without my consent, that it be retracted and all possible steps be taken to ensure that this does not recur in the future.

Kaunas, June 18, 1977

Respectfully yours,
Prof. Dr. Viktoras Butkus

C o m m e n t a r y

It is incredible that Dr. Viktoras Butkus could have written this statement without the knowledge and consent of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs. That is the general opinion of practically all Lithuanian priests. Until now, only the bravest priests dared write and distribute statements unfavorable to the government, and not those who obediently carry out the will of the godless government.

Dr. Butkus has greatly compromised the Moscow weekly with this statement. For markedly lesser "sins" against the Soviet government, offending priests have been ousted from high Church positions. The future will uncover the truth: if Dr. Butkus continues to head the Seminary and travel to peace conferences, it will mean that his statement was merely a political maneuver by the godless government, for instance, to compromise the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and Vatican Radio which commented on the Seminary Rector's interview.

If Dr. Butkus' statement is truly sincere, it would be desirable that his other interviews be retracted, or perhaps only interviews published in his name containing lies or covering up the true situation of the Catholic Church, e.g., interview in the December 31, 1965 Communist *Laisvėje (In Freedom)*.

Vilnius

At the beginning of 1977, the publishing house "Vaizdas" printed the Catholic prayerbook "Visada su Dievu" ("Always With God") which was edited two years ago. The exact printing is not known, there should have been about 60,000 copies. The binders delayed binding the prayerbooks until September and performed their work rather poorly. There were some prayerbooks which fell apart after being opened the first time. Speculators were already selling these prayerbooks several months ago for seven to ten rubles each.

This long-awaited prayerbook will disappoint many. Many thousands will not receive it. It is unsuitable for our youth because of its large format. It is clearly too limited for more devout Catholics. Choirs will feel the absence of funeral hymns, the rosary hymn and so forth.

Vilnius

During August 18-23, Lithuania was visited by the bishops of Mainz, Erfurt and Berlin and three priests who accompanied them. The guests visited Aušros Vartai (The Gates of Dawn), and the Panevėžys and Kaunas Cathedrals. Everywhere, the Catholics of Lithuania very warmly welcomed the visiting bishops and beautifully demonstrated their faith. On August 21st, the Kaunas Cathedral overflowed with worshippers.

This visit by the bishops prior to the Belgrade Conference was an attempt by the Soviet government to mask the enslaved situation of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. The German Bishops were even allowed to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Kaunas Cathedral. When will the bishops of Lithuania, Julijus Steponavičius and Vincas Sladkevičius, be allowed to do the same?

Kaunas

To: U.N. Commission on Human Rights

Copies to: USSR Attorney General

LSSR State Prosecutor

A Letter of Protest from: Citizen Jaugelis, Virgilijus,
Son of Vincas,
Residing in Lithuania,
Kaunas, Markso g. No. 40, apt. 1

On June 23, 1976, in the town of Raseiniai, I was forcibly arrested by a militiaman and a security police employee, who did not name the

charges against me. After forcibly seating me in their car and without presenting any document, they wanted to conduct a body and luggage search. When I refused to submit to a search, they drove me toward the woods outside town. On the way, they tried to take away my luggage, all the while using foul Russian curses and threats. Afterward, they drove me to the security police office and confiscated my luggage. After examining it thoroughly, they confiscated the book "Krikščionis pasaulyje" (A Christian in the world") by A. Maceina, which they did not and will not return.

When on June 24, 1976 I wrote the State Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR a letter of protest regarding the above-mentioned events, I received a reply only on September 2nd, that the investigation of this offense was forwarded to the Raseiniai militia and security police; in other words, to those who committed the offense.

I then wrote a letter of complaint on December 22nd to the Attorney General of the USSR, to which I received a reply on February 18, 1977 stating that everything had been forwarded to the LSSR State Prosecutor for investigation. Some time later, I was summoned to the Kaunas Security Headquarters and a security employee stated that my book would not be returned because it is "ideologically dangerous" and, moreover, I might duplicate it.

I will not name here the international agreements which deal with respect for and protection against the violation of basic human rights signed by the USSR, which pledged to uphold them and bring all her laws in compliance with them. I am merely asking you very sincerely to obtain the return of my confiscated book and remind those responsible that (due to commitments made in the field of human rights) these or similar actions not be repeated either in my native country or anywhere in the Soviet Union.

Kirdeikiai R a y o n of Utena

The Kirdeikiai cemetery is in a very beautiful spot, but this beauty was marred by the huge piles of wreaths and trash in the cemetery which no one took care of. The pastor of the parish of Kirdeikiai, Father Petras Kražanskas reminded his parishioners to spruce up the gravesites before Mother's Day and asked for help in a general clean-up of the cemetery. The parishioners gathered on April 30th to clean out the piles of trash from the cemetery. The people were pleased with the orderly cemetery, but Kirdeikiai Middle School Principal (Mrs) V. Rastenienė and teachers (Miss) D. Baškytė, (Mrs) V. Blažiunienė, Z. Misiūnas and others were not so

pleased. And so, on May 11th, Middle School Principal (Mrs) V. Rastenienė reported in school that the pastor had desecrated the graves of activists. The people were astounded because no one, during the clean-up or later, had noticed that the graves had been disturbed. At the principal's behest, Kirdeikai State Farm Party Secretary Pranas Privariunas spent two days driving from village to village persuading people to testify that the pastor ordered them to demolish the graves of activists. However, not a single person was found who would agree to lie; on the contrary, all asserted that the pastor had told them to clean up not only the graves of relatives but also to decorate neglected graves. The faithful merely laughed at the efforts of the principal and Party secretary to find false witnesses. After failing to find witnesses, Privariunas ordered a mentally disturbed woman to state that she saw how the graves of activists were desecrated during the clean up. She was supported by (Mrs) Genė Maniušienė, but people wondered how these two women could have seen anything when they had not come to the cemetery during the joint clean-up effort.

On May 20th, the pastor was summoned to the Utena *Rayon* prosecutor's office where he had to write an explanation of the entire incident. Vice-Chairman Labanauskas of the *Rayon* Executive Committee obscenely berated Father P. Kražanskas for daring to undertake a clean-up campaign of the cemetery, because the cemetery belongs to the local district council and he has no right to concern himself with the cemetery's management. He finally threatened that he would not tolerate Father P. Kražanskas in the Utena *Rayon*.

Grudžiai, R a y o n o Šiauliai

The pastor of Grudžiai, Father Juozas Vosylius, often complains in his sermons that his parishioners no longer attend church and have become godless. The question arises why the atheists found fertile ground especially in Grudžiai?

The faithful remember with sorrow how the pastor, Father Vosylius, personally used to chase children and the youth from processions. They also cannot forget how in 1973 the assistant pastor, Father A.(ntanas) Jokubauskas tried to teach the children catechism, but the pastor interfered as much as possible: He would not allow the children to see the assistant pastor, he locked the churchyard gate and even filed a complaint to the District Council about the instruction of children.

The parishioners of Gruzdžiai sent letters of protest to the bishop, but the chancery made no reaction to them.

Pociūnėliai, R a y o n of Radviliškis

On June 9, 1977, the pastor, Father A. (ntanas) Jokubauskas [Apparently the same priest mentioned in the previous incident, now serving in another capacity. — Tr. Note] was visited by Representative of the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee Kraujelis, Representative of the Religious Affairs Commission Raslanas and Vice-Chairman A. Krikštanas of the Radviliškis *Rayon* Executive Committee. The visitors tried to convince the priest that he did not have the right to teach children catechism, but the pastor explained that it was his direct duty to prepare children for First Communion and that he would try to fulfill this duty as diligently as possible, even were he to be punished for it.

Central Committee Representative Kraujelis also accused Father Jokubauskas of urging people to attend church on Sundays, because this interferes with work on the state farm.

The pastor objected, saying that Sunday is a day of rest and the faithful have an obligation to attend Holy Mass. Moreover, if a person is forcibly compelled to work for months at a time without rest, he will work exhausted, without enthusiasm, and his work will not be fruitful.

Central Party Committee Representative Kraujelis threatened, "If it were up to me, Father, you would, from this very evening, no longer have the right to act as a priest, and your work permit would be recinded."

Pavilnys, R a y o n of Vilnius

During the night of February 18-19, 1977 the Church in Pavilnys was vandalized, the Blessed Sacrament was desecrated, a monstrance, reliquaries and several candlesticks were stolen.

Kėdainiai

(Mrs) Janonienė was being buried on May 16, 1977. School friends wished to express their condolences to their classmates on their mother's death by walking in the funeral procession and carrying wreaths. The decedent's entire family is religious; therefore, the late (Mrs) Janonienė was being buried with church rites. When Principal (Mrs.) Laurinaitienė of the Kėdainiai First Middle school learned that the decedent would be buried with a priest officiating, she forbade the schoolgirls to attend the funeral. If they

disobeyed, they would fail their examinations. Nearly all the frightened girls, except for a few brave ones, did not march in the funeral procession.

Salos

On July 13, 1977 Bronius Zuikis was being buried in the village of Urliai. His sister summoned Father Lionginas Neniškis from Duokškis. The Rokiškis band was also engaged. When the musicians saw a priest participating in the funeral they said: "We will not play if the priest attends the funeral. We are forbidden to do this by Rokiškis *Rayon* Secretary Lukoševičius."

Despite the fact that the band had already been paid, the musicians refused to accompany the priest to the cemetery.

Svėdasai

In 1977, (Mrs) Teodora Juodienė erected a statue of the Blessed Mother on her mother's grave at the Svėdasai cemetery. District Chairman Giedraitis drew up a report stating that the statue was erected illegally and forced Mrs. Juodienė and her husband to sign the complaint. In June 1977 (Mrs) Juodienė was summoned to the Anykščiai *Rayon* Executive Committee. *Rayon* authorities demanded that the statue erected in the cemetery be demolished by July 15th of this year (despite the fact that a building permit had been requested); otherwise, they would personally have to pay for having it demolished.

Ceikiniai

The pastor of Ceikiniai, Father Karolis Garuckas, a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, received an anonymous letter from "Lithuanians" in July, in which Father K. Garuckas is blamed for the Lithuanian Helsinki group maintaining contact with Moscow dissidents, most of which are of Jewish descent and that Dr. Finkelshtein is a member of the above-mentioned group. It is thought that this is an attempt by the KGB to disband the Helsinki group.

Meškuičiai R a y o n of Šiauliai

The famous Lithuanian Hill of Crosses which has weathered many storms, has, under the guidance of Divine Providence, remained unscathed this year, and escaped new wounds. The hill is slowly recovering from the wounds inflicted by the godless, but the scars remain. By May 2, 1977 there already stood 360 large and small crosses

on the hill. All kinds of inscriptions can be found there: this one gives thanks for good health, asks assistance for the nation; that one prays for the conversion of those who have strayed. One cross has even been brought from Siberia.

Evidence of the last (November, 1975) wounds of the desecration of crosses can still be seen: The visitor is greeted by protruding metal posts, which are monuments to the hatred of the godless. At the back of the hill can be seen three twisted protruding metal scraps which also were once crosses.

In the center stands a blackened tree stump surrounded by crosses: the remains of the maple cut down by the godless during the last destruction and which had been planted during the years of independence. The tree was cut down, but the roots remain . . .

The atheists did not and will not succeed in uprooting the Faith from the hearts of the people. Once again, next to the stump, a large beautiful cross bearing an old-fashioned metal figure of Christ has "sprouted up." It was fashioned from the trunk of that same maple which was cut down and found (it seems) at the bottom of the hill. It bears the inscription "May 2, 1977. God has ordained thus: If the roots remain, the tree will come up again. The Godless are powerless here!"

Crosses continue to "sprout." On the stone marking the 1863 uprising, someone has also carved a cross. Love is ever inventive!

Žvirgždaičiai R a y o n of Šakiai

On July 4, 1977 a delegation from the Catholic parish in Žvirgždaičiai went to Vilnius and handed Commissioner for Religious Affairs Tumėnas a statement signed by over one hundred of faithful. The statement details the illegal closing of the Žvirgždaičiai house of worship and the destruction of their religious community. The faithful demanded that their violated rights be restored because the community did not violate any law. The liquidation of their community is an offense by the local government against basic human rights.

The Commissioner explained to the delegation on its arrival that their church was closed and the parish disbanded because of illegal church construction in the cemetery. The faithful protested that the local government had driven them from everywhere, even from the parish hall where services were held. They were left without a roof over their heads. Everything was burned down. They then built

a wooden shelter in a corner of the cemetery and there for a time prayed. They did not know of laws forbidding such construction because they were not made public at the time. Since ancient times, it has been a custom in Lithuania to build chapels and even churches in cemeteries. The parishioners were simply continuing this tradition. Tumėnas told them to address the *Rayon* authorities on this matter. On July 11, 1977 a six-person delegation went to see Šakiai *Rayon* Vice-Chairman (Mrs) Donata Noreikienė and had a statement listing their demands. The statement was again signed by over one hundred persons. The Vice-Chairman accepted the statement and stated that when Commissioner K. Tumėnas arrives, they will come to see them and will examine and discuss everything.

The faithful of Žvirgždaičiai are now impatient waiting for the visitors.

Slabadai R a y o n of Vilkaviškis

Commissioner for Religious Affairs K. (azimieras) Tumėnas and Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Vice-Chairman J. Urbonas came to Slabadai on June 30, 1977 and examined the renovated chapel. They were met by the faithful. After examining the beautifully restored chapel, Tumėnas demanded to see the church flags: Could they possibly contain some anti-Soviet or nationalist symbols? Those assembled demanded that the parish council be confirmed and the question of taxes be clarified, because the *Rayon* Vice-Chairman was holding up the payment of taxes with the intention of confiscating the chapel. Commissioner Tumėnas promised the faithful to fill their request within six months.

Vištytis R a y o n of Vilkaviškis

When a priest wishes to visit a neighboring parish in a border zone, he has to see various government agencies; a parish pastor who wishes to ask the assistance of a priest is required to go see the *Rayon* Executive Committee vice-chairman in order to receive permission to invite the priest in question. Once he has received oral permission (written permission is never granted), he must return to see the district chairman to have the invitation form signed. Later, the invitation document must be presented to the priest who wishes to attend devotions within a border zone. The priest then takes the said document to the *Rayon* militia. The militia for its part contacts the security police, the security police in turn contact the vice-chairman and the days later makes a reply.

This torturous road was travelled when permission was sought for the pastor of Kybartai, Father Sigitas Tomkevičius to attend the Portiuncula recollections in Vištytis on August 7, 1977.

When Vištytis pastor Father Montvila went to the *Rayon* with the request that Father Tomkevičius be allowed to attend the recollections, the *Rayon* Chairman Juškevičius (Vice-Chairman Urbonas was on vacation) gave his permission. The documents were submitted within the time limit to the militia department.

Ten days later, the pastor of Kybartai, Father Tomkevičius went to the Vilkaviškis militia department and learned that permission would not be granted.

"Why?" asked the pastor.

"We don't know," replied the employees.

An inquiry had to be made to the Security police chief. The latter used many pretexts in explaining his refusal, saying that one assistant priest would be sufficient for the recollections, that there is much work at Kybartai and so on.

After the recollections, the pastor of Vištytis Father Montvila telephoned *Rayon* Vice-Chairman Urbonas and asked why he refused permission for the Kybartai pastor to come assist him. The Vice-Chairman replied the same: that the Vištytis recollections are allowed to have only one priest, the Gražiškiai pastor.

"But one is not enough for such recollections, several visiting priests are needed," remarked the pastor.

"I don't know about that, I don't grant permission to the zone. Permission is granted by the Security police," replied the vice-chairman.

Žalioji R a y o n of Vilkaviškis

On June 10, 1977 a "Volga" stopped in front of the former (now converted into a mill) church. From it emerged Commissioner for Religious Affairs K. Tumėnas and Vice-Chairman J. Urbonas of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon*. They were met by a large crowd of believers, who demanded that their former church be returned to them and the parish committee confirmed. The government officials attempted to convince the faithful that it is more convenient for them to use the local state farm means of transportation to go to other parish churches. The faithful did not agree with this. In their opinion, this is impossible, because the farm director does not even allow the use of cars for funerals.

The energetic parishioners were not persuaded by the officials.

Women (T. Kaminskienė, A. Burauskienė, J. Matulevičienė and others) were especially tenacious in defending church matters. When the visitors saw that the people were growing restless and demands were increasing, and moreover, that the crowd of believers was becoming larger, they promised to confirm the church committee and left.

After Tumėnas and Urbonas had left, the faithful began to be terrorized.

At the end of June 1977, Director Edvardas Adomavičius of the Rumokai Experimental Farm Station summoned head of the tractor pool Zenas Matulevičius and berated him for being a believer, for daring to sign the statement demanding the return of the church and so on. For his courageous defense of his views, Zenas Matulevičius was docked 200 rubles in bonus pay and plans are being made to fire him from his job because believers cannot hold responsible positions.

After the visit of K. Tumėnas, an upheaval began at the former church. Officials of the Rumokai experimental farm were in charge of the mill as authorized by the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* authorities. Left-over grain from all farm storehouses was brought in so there would be something to grind.

The Party secretary drew up a list of party members asking that the church building be used as a mill.

Angered by such tactics, the people began to circulate a petition protesting to the *Rayon* the illegal actions of government officials and local atheists.

LATEST NEWS

Šiauliai

On August 23, 1977, Šiauliai resident (Mrs) Petkevičienė was summoned to the Vilnius Security Police. She was interrogated for two days in connection with the case of Balys Gajauskas. At first, she was questioned by Interrogator Kazys. His coarse and obscene language was reminiscent of the terrible Beria era.

Mr. Petkevičius was also interrogated. The interrogators suggested to the Petkevičiuses that they emigrate abroad.

Vilnius

On August 23, 1977, at about 1:00 P.M., at the Vilnius railroad station, security police arrested Viktoras Petkus, a member of the

Lithuanian Helsinki Group, and another young man (name unknown). After being interrogated, the young man was released the following day. In the afternoon, a search was conducted in the Petkus apartment and two typewriters and many documents were confiscated.

At present Viktoras Petkus is being held at the State Security Prison, Vilnius, Lenino 40.

Vilnius

Engineer-Economist Antanas Terleckas was also arrested at the same time. The security police began searching his home the evening of the 23rd and finished the following day around 5:00 p.m. They dug up the garden and around the house. They found much hidden material. After several days of interrogation, Terleckas was released and forced to sign a pledge to refrain from anti-Soviet activity in the future.

Vilnius

At the beginning of May 1977, former long-term political prisoner (served two prison terms, a total of 17 years) Kęstutis Jokubynas left for Canada.

As soon as he had left, the Security police mounted a slander campaign against him. Close friends and acquaintances of Kęstutis endorse his leaving, because moral death awaited him in his native land.

Kęstutis Jokubynas is a decent, good man and Lithuanian, who has devoted his entire life to his native land.

Because Jokubynas personally knows many Russian dissidents, he will be able to be a good intermediary between Lithuanian activists and Russian dissidents. Russian dissidents are numerous and influential in the Soviet Union and abroad. Therefore, they can provide great assistance to us Lithuanians, the representatives of a small nation.

The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania wishes Kęstutis Jokubynas countless blessings from the Lord.

NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

"Aušra" (Dawn) No. 7. This issue writes about the desecration of the Hill of Crosses, the undermining of our cultural heritage; the concluding article reports on the hardships of Lithuanians living in Byelorussia. The article "Whose Mirror is Distorted?" presents facts

in reply to the propaganda article of author J. Baltušis. A new section has been inaugurated in this issue entitled: "SOS! SOS! SOS!" which will present the most striking current events and the most painful incidents of persecution and national destruction.

"Rūpintojėlis" (Suffering Christ) No. 2. The article "What Demands Are Being Placed on Us by the Complicated Maze of Current-Day Life?" is most worthy of attention. The author examines the problem of secularization and offers possible means of action, how to resist the spreading godlessness (lay apostolate, struggle against fear and so on.)

"Dievas ir Tėvynė" (God and Country) Nr. 5. a large portion of this issue is devoted to a critique of dialectic materialism; proofs of God's existence are presented. The article "The Honorable Teacher" recounts the life and death of teacher Regina Procevičiūtė. It is essential that *Dievas ir Tėvynė* continue to gather material on noble Lithuanians who remained heroically faithful to God and country under difficult circumstances. The issue covers 81 pages.

Fellow Lithuanian, remember the following;

Petras Plumpa, Povilas Petronis, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Sergejus Kovalev, Ona Pranskunaitė, Vladas Lapienis, Viktoras Petkus and others who bear the shackles of imprisonment so that you may freely believe and live.

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