

CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
No. 31

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**A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ RAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA No. 31
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today**

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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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translation Editor

THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
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In This Issue:

- The KGB and the Seminary.....3
- Our Prisoners.....10
- What is the Purpose of New Agreements?.....13
- News from the Dioceses.....18
- Whom Does A. Šeduikis Wayside Shrine Disturb? 28
- In the Soviet School.....35
- Accusations Against the Chronicle of the
Catholic Church in Lithuania..... 41
- Corrections.....43

Lithuania

February 2, 1978

THE KGB AND THE SEMINARY

The news reaching us from the Kaunas Seminary is not good. The KGB continues diligently recruiting seminarians as agents. Applicants to the Seminary are unabashedly told by Security agents: "If you do not work for us, you will not be admitted to the Seminary." Seminarians are compelled to give written pledges always to provide the information required by the security police.

Through the efforts of the KGB and the Religious Affairs Commission, a sizeable group of completely unsuitable applicants who terrorize good seminarians was admitted to the Seminary.

Seminary officials are afraid to expel such seminarians, lest they suffer the consequences. Most distressing is that some such seminarians have even been ordained, although the bishops who ordained them knew that church law itself forbids the ordination of some of them.

Seminary authorities should be thanked for expelling from the seminary, just before Christmas 1977, fourth-year seminarian R. Jakutis, who was drunk and disorderly during vacation and whom seminarians considered to be a KGB agent. It is impossible to understand the Vilnius Archdiocesan Administrator C.(eslovas) Krivaitis and others who defended this seminarian at a meeting held at the seminary. The passive position of certain instructors and Ordinaries at the meeting attest to what degree they cater to the demands of the KGB.

One seminary instructor blurted out that "we cannot afford the luxury of expelling seminarians." It is true that today every priest who begins his ministry is precious, but it is totally clear that seminarians who are immoral or work for the KGB will not serve the good of the Church.

Certain seminarians clearly work at the KGB's direction. Dedicated seminarians find notes in their drawers urging them not to be zealous because the future does not belong to the zealous. Practice sermons written by seminarians vanish from their drawers. Certain seminarians almost publicly demonstrate their ties to the KGB. Vytautas Rudys has the audacity to tell another seminarian to his face: "The security police are omnipotent and I will see to it that you are expelled from the seminary." This "seminarian" suggested to certain seminary students that they work together, exchange information on the seminary and keep it all secret. After the 1977 spring retreat, Rudys stated that he will never settle down and doesn't give a hoot about spiritual life. There are others like Rudys in other classes. Third-year seminarian Kazlauskas wrote Religious Affairs Commissioner K.(azimieras) Tumėnas a fabricated complaint that the Rev. J. Kauneckas supposedly gave an anti-Soviet speech at the Seminary. Seminary officials and the Ordinaries know that a like group of students exists among first year seminarians; in the fifth-year class there are seminarians who are both morally and philosophically unprepared to receive Holy Orders.

Since there are no means at present of protecting the Catholic Church in Lithuania against the danger of receiving from the seminary priests who are morally distorted or work for the

KGB, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* will henceforth print the names of seminarians who publicly undermine order at the seminary or carry out KGB assignments. We will also report all those who defend such seminarians. To date, efforts to prevent morally depraved KGB agents from being ordained have not borne any fruit—fear of the KGB has paralyzed most people and this, in turn, has encouraged the Security police to infiltrate the seminary even further. It is only the KGB today which can wish that seminarians and priests would not notice how the seminary is being undermined.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* urges all seminarians to lead disciplined lives, seek an earnest spiritual life, and not succumb to the fear of being expelled from the seminary "for politics"; it urges them to work actively to prevent the seminary from becoming an arm of the KGB.

In September 1977, the bishops of Lithuania were sent a letter from a "group of seminarians," in which certain priests are condemned for attempting to draw seminarians "into politics," for disrupting the seminary's unity and the like. Identical thoughts are expressed in the KGB-edited publications *The Church and the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, which has already reached the West and was accurately assessed by the emigrant daily *Draugas* as "a wolf in sheep's clothing."

We reprint below a KGB pamphlet distributed in the fall of 1977 to seminarians, chanceries and priests in the name of "a group of seminarians."

"Certain priests have recently and unexpectedly taken an interest in the Kaunas Seminary. At first glance such an interest would seem laudable and necessary, if it did not have an obverse side: An attempt to disrupt the seminary's healthy atmosphere, draw seminarians away from theological studies and self-enlightenment which is of prime importance to a contemporary intellectual priest. We seminarians would be happy to voice our appreciation of this interest if it pertained only to existing and not to imagined things. But these same patrons, hiding behind a mask of virtue and assistance, are attempting to draw us into political acts foreign to us, they want us to begin serving their personal interests. Moreover, it appears that this interest in us is not entirely unexpected. Not finding any followers among the ranks of their own colleagues, this group of priests has decided to focus attention on the seminarians. In other words, they hope to find support among them. This

spring we had occasion to read the leaflet *S.O.S.*, which supposedly depicts the present situation at the seminary. The authors of the leaflet are so concerned with this situation that they forgot to sign their names, but merely signed "Priests of Lithuania." Many of us asked dozens of Lithuanian priests whether they knew of such a leaflet or wrote it. For some reason no one knew of it, and when told the leaflet's content, they all expressed an opposite view: They endorsed the existing seminary spirit, the seminarians' desire to seek greater knowledge and perfection and their unwillingness to be one-sided.

It would certainly appear that the seminarians are the best judges of what is going on in our seminary. We are therefore outraged at the distorted assertions made by the authors of the *S.O.S.* leaflet and at the various allegations dreamed up and printed by them for the purpose of presenting an inaccurate image of the seminary and denigrate it in the eyes of all the world.

What are the authors of the *S.O.S.* leaflet seeking to attain? They do not like the fact that seminarians engage in sports, that they are concerned with their health and living conditions. But it seems very strange to us that we should renounce sports, when the class and study load exhausts us and we feel the need to exercise, especially since there are no physical education programs. How can we not be concerned with our health and our living conditions when we desire upon ordination to be able priests and bear the heavy burden of duty. We are simply grateful to those who help improve our living conditions. Besides, the authors of *SOS* contradict themselves by writing in that same leaflet that we are invalids and need medicine and rest. Their *SOS* is replete with contradictions. It is strange: Could there possibly still be priests who cannot understand that modern man needs the press and that attempts to express outrage at the seminarians' interest in newspapers and the like are a sign of low learning? The charge that we read only the Communist *Tiesa* (*Truth*) and *Sportas* (*Sports*) is completely unfounded because we receive all Polish religious publications, the magazine of the Moscow Patriarchy and many diverse publications from several countries, and finally we publish our own newspaper *Aukos kelyje* (*On the Road of Sacrifice*). And no one has found fault with the series of lectures, which we ourselves requested. In the future we will ask that their number be increased. The words of a good lecturer always supplements our learning. The authors of *S.O.S.* are actually very absent-minded: They mention

that we are lectured on politics, but in the meantime forget the lectures on art, archeology, ethics and other subjects.

And in some instances they reveal things which even we are not aware of. They write: "During the current academic year, seminarians were forbidden to wear a cross on their lapel, so as not to offend any Soviet youth they might accidentally meet." It seems strange, but we do not recall any such stricture. It is true that during a seminar conducted by the assistant dean, it was mentioned that courtesy does not permit a seminarian to lower himself to the level of street-wise kids who demonstrate their "faith" by weighing themselves down with all kinds of crosses, or to that of under-age children who take pleasure in shiny trinkets.

Blackmail points up the base purposes of the authors of *S.O.S.* Only morally bankrupt persons are capable of resorting to such a weapon in battle. Some seminarian may have said that he can drink when he becomes a priest, or he may not have said it; but the priest who is blackmailing him with it elicits disgust. In such a case, there are countless means of fighting without blackmail. If the seminarian made no such remark, but it was merely invented by our "patrons," we think there is no need for further comment. There are many more unjust accusations: that seminarians are KGB agents, untalented, crippled persons of questionable morality." All this is printed to foment discord and foster an unhealthy atmosphere among seminary students. This is evidence of the "patrons" low morality, callous deceit and undignified manner.. Such rumors are a clear insult to seminary students yearning to become priests.

We therefore address Your Excellencies, Bishops and Diocesan Administrators, asking that the said small handful of priests—the authors of *S.O.S.* and rumor-mongers be exposed, and appropriate warning and punishment measures be taken against them for intimidating seminarians and spreading lies. We continue in our determination to proceed toward the priesthood under your direction and never to join those who, stripped of all human decency, are seeking supporters after their own image.

Respectfully yours,
A Group of Seminarians

The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania has obtained a copy of the letter written by the Rev. J. Kauneckas (graduated

from the Seminary in 1977) to seminary students, which has been circulating among priests and which we reprint below:

To the Students of the Kaunas Interdiocesan Seminary

Someone has decided to deride the seminary: A letter of petition has been written to the bishops and diocesan administrators on behalf of the seminarians and also sent to certain priests. I myself, just recently a seminarian, know very well that there is no student at the seminary who could have publicly spread such a blatant lie.

The letter of petition contains the lie that the seminary receives "all Polish religious publications and many diverse publications from several countries." Everyone knows that there are several religious publishing houses in Poland and that every diocese publishes its own religious newspaper. The modest seminary library could not even hold all of Poland's religious publications. The Seminary receives only three information magazines from the *Pax* publishers (from the past academic year). An occasional spare Polish or German religious book is donated to the seminary from the personal libraries of priests. There is no systematic theological literature at the seminary. For instance, it does not contain a single copy of a complete current translation of the Bible in any of the world's languages. Many collections of sermons are published in Poland and other countries. But the seminary library does not contain a full series of sermons, it does not contain most of the papal encyclicals, memoranda or decrees from the Holy See.

Last summer the Rev. Aleksandras Kaškevič (1976 seminary graduate) travelled to Poland. While there, he attempted to order religious literature for the seminary. He wanted the seminary regularly to receive religious publications. It appears that this is forbidden.

Of the new spiritual reading or meditation books in German, there is only one: on the Cure of Ars. Even in Lithuanian, there are barely one hundred spiritual reading and meditation books published before the war. There is not a single theological textbook, not a single book dealing with current theological problems. Thus, there is no worse mockery of the seminary than to refer to "many publications from various countries." We graduated from the seminary without even seeing the works of modern Lithuanian theologians, without even hearing about them. The seminary does not have a single work by a present-day Lithuanian theologian. We know that such works are published abroad by A.(ntanas) Maceina, Pr.(anas) Gaidamavičius, A. Grauslys and others. Atheists obtain them and quote from them. Thus the article "1964 Works from the

Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Science" printed in 1971 in issue No. 2 of *Problemos* quotes from Maceina, Gaidamavičius, V. Kavolis, A. Baltinis, L.(adas) Tulaba and St.(asys) Yra. Atheists weigh theological problems, read theological works, but we theologians must content ourselves with *Tiesa*, *Sportas* and other Soviet publications; we therefore know nothing of the latest theological studies or current-day problems contained in these studies.

". . . they all (namely, all Lithuanian priests) endorsed the existing seminary spirit." That is not true; most priests are concerned about the situation at the seminary. There were numerous critical remarks on the subject within the seminary itself. We recall the rector's address at the conclusion of the academic year in the spring of 1976, and the conferences with instructors. In the rarely-heard thoughts of our spiritual father we heard not a single reproach about self-indulgence, lack of discipline, disregard for the rule of silence and the like. We all clearly remember such instances: socializing during study periods, sleeping, coffee breaks a half hour before dinner time and such talking during periods of strict silence that a seminarian wishing to study could not possibly concentrate. Seminary deans often discussed this. And you probably all still remember how the director practically pleaded for silence at Saturday conferences, pleaded with us not to disturb others, not to snack during study periods: "You probably manage to sit still longer at the movies . . ." Thanks to his extraordinary efforts, discipline increased somewhat during the past academic year.

Also, numerous seminarians often spoke openly about the lack of order during discussion periods. Is it necessary to mention names? I have personally often criticized the situation at the seminary in open discussions and in the presence of all seminarians: disorder, lack of diligence, lack of discipline and the excessive doubts of some regarding spiritual matters. I will just mention some thoughts: "Should you, a Valančius of the future, doze over a copy of *SJH>rtas*?"

The seminary newspaper *Aukos Kelyje* wrote of such extreme self-indulgence among seminarians that even "on Fridays in Lent, there is snacking in some rooms; coffee is brewed not only during study periods but even during periods of strict silence." And no one denied this in public, because it was a just criticism of facts known to all. Only the anonymous group of seminarians dared defend such "order." And, as we can see, this order left much to be desired this past spring. It would appear that this was why the

S.O.S. leaflet was published. Its authors were concerned over the fact that the interests of certain alumni are limited to food, that they read only *Tiesa* and *Sportas* and show no interest in anything else. According to the letter's authors, this legitimate concern is "an attempt to disrupt the seminary's healthy atmosphere, draw seminarians away from theological studies and self-enlightenment."!

"... We do not recall any such stricture" (wearing a cross on the lapel). Alas, we all still recall how we were forbidden to wear crosses at the seminary during the past academic year. Only after graduating from the seminary did we, newly-ordained priests, pin the crosses on again. Only the authors of "the letter of request" know how it is possible to weigh oneself down with them. And you can hardly call those humble, tiny, hardly noticeable crosses "shiny trinkets."

Could seminarians have written a "request" so unrelated to the truth? No! But who did circulate it at the seminary? How did it get into seminarians' desk drawers? This did not happen without the helping hand of one or another seminarian. And whom does such a seminarian serve?

October 10, 1977

Rev. Jonas Kauneckas

OUR PRISONERS

The case of Balys Gajauskas, under the direction of Major Pilelis, has been closed and remanded to the court. It would appear that the trial will be held at the end of February or the beginning of March.

Gajauskas is accused of involvement with the Solzhenitsyn Fund and the Archives of the Lithuanian Partisans. After the New Year, interrogator Pilelis and Lieut. Col. Kezys came to the Kaunas Security headquarters to interrogate Balys' mother and fiancée. Because his mother is ailing, the interrogator came to her apartment. According to interrogator Kezys, Balys faces a sentence of ten years at hard labor.

Balys Gajauskas has already spent 25 years in labor camps and has survived. Now the KGB wants to finish him off. It is therefore the sacred duty of all decent individuals to use all available means to defend this good and decent Lithuanian Catholic, who is completely

devoted to his Fatherland. Balys Gajauskas can deservedly be considered to be the symbol of a suffering and resisting Fatherland.

With great hope, we are waiting for our emigrant brothers, especially Simas Kudirka who knows Balys well, to do everything in their power to have Balys Gajauskas freed or allowed to go abroad. A new labor camp term for him would be tantamount to a death sentence.

On November 19, 1977, Povilas Petronis was released from labor camp. He was convicted in 1974 (see *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* No. 13) for making prayerbooks and duplicating illegal literature. Prior to his release, he was psychologically bartered for a month at the Vilnius KGB headquarters.

Ona Pranskūnaitė is serving her term in Kozlovko. Her address is: Cuva Sskaja ASSR, Kozlovka, p/ja JUL 34/5a. Ona Pranskūnaitė is working as a seamstress in a raincoat factory. The quotas are very high. After eight hours of work, she goes to another factory where she sews gloves for four hours. In one letter she writes: "My health is poor. Perhaps the fragile candle of my life will be snuffed out here, but in my heart, the love of God, country and countrymen will never be snuffed out... I am prepared for anything: sacrifice, suffering and death."

From the Letters of Nijolė Sadūnaitė

"... My "good times" in Boguchany are coming to an end! One and a half months at the school, one and a half months at the hospital—exactly three months since I've come to Boguchany, and good news: I am leaving it for the village of Irba . . ." (12/20/77).

"The village of Irba is 100 km. (62 miles) from Boguchany. When the weather is good, an airplane arrives at 12:20 P.M. our time on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Cows are milked by hand, work begins at 4:00 A.M. and ends at 10:00 P.M. without any days off. The people drink, no one works . . ." (12/23/77).

Nijolė Sadūnaitė informs us that she has been hospitalized because of a chronic temperature: "Tests are being run. They are looking for TB and other diseases . . . For some reason, my intestinal tract hurts. My temperature has risen to 100 degrees . . ."

"I have been told clearly by people living here that there is no state farm more backward and neglected than Irba. The bread is rotting, there is no feed, calves wandered around without any

care until November 7th and are now dying, as are the cows, because they are only fed straw. And then they want to deduct for them from the wages of those in charge of them. Against me they would probably fabricate a case for the deliberate destruction of animals, with a serious indictment. This thought was voiced by the Siberians themselves. Wages are not paid, some have not been paid since May, there is no bookkeeper, there is complete chaos. Mud, rats, chaos. People are fleeing Irba. As local residents say: "A brothel is no place to live." (1/6/78).

"I've been discharged from the hospital. I will be treating my chronic cholecystitis at home with a diet and medication. My superiors have temporarily allowed me to live and work in Boguchany . . ." (1/11/78)

The letters of Nijolė Sadūnaitė are full of cheer, happiness and love of people. She writes that she receives many letters from Lithuania and abroad: from the U.S., England, Norway, West Germany, Poland and other countries. Even periodicals come from abroad.

While imprisoned, Nijolė received her first letter from abroad only on May 16, 1977. A beautiful letter was sent from Italy by high school girls in Verona. They write: "... if, God forbid, you should have to suffer to the end, then be assured that there are many people who are suffering along with you and for you. . . nnr thoughts are constantly with you, especially when we pray . . ."

Peter Plumpa Writes

"... It is not worth complaining to the Security Police chairman about the non-delivery of letters, because everything is done with their knowledge. They have already often reminded us that letters must be written in Russian, that Russian must also be spoken during visits. In other words, an intensive anti-religious and anti-national campaign is being waged. This year, religious notes have already been confiscated from me four times; at the beginning of June, my prayerbook was snatched from my hands while I was reading (the one I still had at home, with the fern leaf).

"... Since December, I've begun to number my letters from the beginning, but I always write only in Lithuanian and will continue to do so in the future, even were Security agents to stop all my letters. In protest against national discrimination and provocations by Security agents, I've begun since June 6th to speak only Lithuanian with the local officials. It is possible that, as last year, they will again use violence against me: break my arms, batter my head,

and drag me in shackles to the punishment cell; but, after all, that is why we are in prison camps, that is why we are called martyrs and are often even held up as examples. I believe it is possible, with God's help, to bear anything and accept any form of death. It is important to be constantly and thoroughly prepared for this eventuality. We are living in fateful times, when no Christian has the right to bargain with his conscience, nor even to enjoy life's pleasures. We are called to sacrifice and to burn in the night and we must remain thus so long as the night continues, otherwise, the temporary night might become eternal night for us after death.

I wish this light to everyone who considers himself a follower of Christ!"

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF NEW AGREEMENTS?

In 1948, the Soviet government compelled parishes to elect "Committees of twenty" (parish committees), executive committees and enter into unilateral agreements with district and city executive committees.

A campaign began in 1975 to renew these agreements and has continued until now. Last year, agreements were again renewed—even those which were drawn up in 1975. We are quoting from an order issued by Religious Affairs Commissioner K.(azimieras) Tumėnas to Vice-Chairman Urbonas of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee:

"Since the agreements of religious communities in your *Rayon* with the Peoples' Council of Deputies Executive Committee are out date, we ask you to renew them. We remind you that agreements are drawn up in three copies: One copy is sent to the commissioner's office, the second is for the religious community and the third for the *Rayon* Executive Committee. Please renew the agreements by December 15, 1977.

4/22/77

Commissioner K. Tumėnas."

How was this new agreement drawn up? Let us take the Vilka-
viškis *Rayon* as an example. When he received Commissioner
Tumėnas' order, Vice-Chairman Urbonas took the old agreement

forms, crossed out the words:" . . .if under established procedure, it is decided to close the house of prayer (cult building), whose use was permitted by this agreement", and wrote in, as ordered " . . .if under established procedure, the community loses its accreditation . . ."

These forms lay in the drawers of district and city Executive Committees for several months, and in October the order was carried out. In essence, this agreement campaign differed from earlier campaigns. Earlier, the Executive Committee used to give the agreement forms to the pastor, but this time an effort was made to circumvent the pastors.

We quote from the statement written Religious Affairs Commissioner Tumėnas by the Didvyžiai parish committee:

"In 1975 the Didvyžiai religious community renewed its agreement with the Augalai District Executive Committee.

"At the end of October 1977, Klausučiai District Executive Committee Chairman Stasys Kundrotas assigned a rank-and-file member of the Didvyžiai religious community, Albinas Radzevičius, to draw up the new agreement. Because members of the community had heard from the neighboring Alksėnai parish that the church would be closed if the agreement were not renewed, we signed the new agreement.

"After calm deliberation, we, the members of the Didvydžiai religious community, are declaring that we are withdrawing from the new agreement drawn up this year . . ."

In Bartininkai, Gražiškiai and other parishes, the District Executive Committees collected the signatures of parish members on the new agreement without the knowledge of the pastors.

In the Vištytis parish, the District Executive Committee personally appointed a new parish committee. The real parish committee members write as follows:

"To: Religious Affairs Commissioner K. Tumėnas

"A Statement from: The Vištytis Catholic Parish Committee

"We, the parish committee of the Vištytis religious community, are extremely astonished and outraged at being removed from our duties without cause, despite the fact that we did not request it.

"Upon receiving the order from the *Rayon*, Vištytis District representatives called on the assistance of the state farm office and other employees, assembled random individuals at their own discretion and formed a new parish committee; they obtained their signatures on the new agreement by lies and threats.

"Some of the individuals thus assembled are not practicing

Catholics nor even exemplary persons. We protest this gross interference by local authorities in our parish's internal affairs. We ask you to investigate this incident and direct government officials to cease violating the law here and allow us to perform our duties.

"December 1977."

After this complaint was sent to Tumėnas, Executive Committee Vice-Chairman J. Urbonas came to Vištytis, assembled those who had signed the complaint and even individuals who had not, and tried to persuade them with threats and blackmail that they had slandered good persons. The confused and frightened people did not think quickly enough to remind the *Rayon* official that the District does not have the right to form parish committees.

Events at Vištytis are a reminder to all Lithuanian priests to be on the alert against it becoming customary for the government to attempt to form parish committees and executive bodies at their own discretion.

At the Pajavonys parish, a very zealous District chairwoman overextended herself by including her own hand-picked individuals in the parish committee, and was later forced to withdraw them.

At the Kybartai parish, Parish Committee members were summoned without the pastor's knowledge to the City Executive committee and visiting Vice-Chairman Urbonas ordered them to sign the new agreement. When the Kybartai residents refused to comply, Urbonas stated that he would remove the Kybartai Parish Executive Committee chairman from his position and ordered them to sign the agreement by November 1st, otherwise the church would be closed.

On October 31st, several members of the Kybartai Parish Committee took the following statement to Tumėnas in Vilnius:

"On October 28th of this year, the Kybartai City Executive Committee summoned us, the members of the Kybartai Religious Community, to its office, where Vice-Chairman Urbonas, who had arrived from the *Rayon*, ordered us to sign an agreement similar to the one we signed in 1975. The difference is as follows: In the current agreement the following sentence is crossed out in black ink: 'This agreement can be terminated if, under established procedure, it is decided to close the house of prayer (cult building), whose use was permitted by this agreement.' The following sentence has been typed in its place: This agreement can be terminated it, under established

procedure, the community loses its accreditation.'

"We all declined to sign such an amended agreement, since in all of Lithuania not a single *Rayon*, except the *Vilkaviškis Rayon*, requires such an agreement to be signed. As Catholics, we will never consent to have our religious community lose its accreditation. We have also heard that you, Mr. Commissioner, do not require such an agreement.

"When we refused to sign this agreement, Vice-Chairman *Urbonas* stated that he would remove our community chairman, *Vitas Paulauskas*, from his position because he refused to enter into the new Agreement. *Urbonas* suggested that we elect a new chairman right there at the Executive Committee office. This of course, we did not do. We were ordered to sign the new agreement by November 1st; otherwise the law will be enforced; that is, our religious community will lose its accreditation.

"When our former community chairman resigned from his post, we elected *V. Paulauskas* in his stead on September 4, 1977 and informed the *Vilkaviškis Rayon Executive Committee*, which allowed him to hold the post until October 28, 1977. We hold that the removal of our chairman is unjustified because he has not violated any Soviet laws. If our chairman had wanted to enter into the new agreement against our will, we would still have refused to sign it. Until the *Rayon Executive Committee* presents us with a document stating the reasons for the removal of our chairman, we will not elect a new one, since we already have one.

"Our religious community was registered in 1948 and has continually made proper use of the property assigned to it and paid taxes on the church, the land and the like. Our community entered into an agreement with the City Executive Committee in 1975 and the term of this agreement has not yet expired; we therefore see no reason to enter into a new agreement, and we consider the threats of the *Rayon Executive Committee Vice-Chairman* to be in violation of the new USSR Constitution.

"We therefore ask you, Comrade Commissioner, to help us by seeing that people are not provoked, work is not disrupted and we are not persecuted. We are certain that we will not have to seek other recourse in defending our rights.

"*Kybartai, 10/30/77*".

"Members of the *Kybartai Religious Community*"

(17 signatures)

The Religious Affairs Commissioner told the people of Kybartai who had come to see him that no one will close their church and that new agreements are not necessary. What hypocrisy! The Commissioner personally issues the order, but when people protest its implementation, then some lower government official is given the blame, for instance, *Rayon* Vice-Chairman Urbonas.

In the Virbalis parish, the District chairman personally tried to get the signatures of Parish Committee members on the new agreement, but succeeded in deceiving only several members. Later, those who had been deceived put so much pressure on the chairman that he asked the pastor to calm the people as it might end badly for him (the chairman).

The new agreement campaign was halted in the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* at the beginning of November.

In some other *Rayons*, for example, in the Molėtai *Rayon*, an attempt was also made to enter into newly-amended agreements.

Why did the Soviet government feel the need for new agreements? Perhaps it wants to accustom religious communities to renew agreements frequently, in order that the Soviet government might each time have the opportunity to make corrections and additions advantageous to itself. Perhaps this was an experiment to see how many parish committees and executive bodies are "receptive" to acting without the pastor's knowledge. If so, the government had occasion to be convinced that it will find few believers in Lithuania who will sign questionable agreements without first consulting with their pastor.

At present, the government's attempts are becoming apparent, to circumvent the pastor in parish matters, to convince parish executive bodies that they are in charge, to accustom them to act without consulting with and giving an accounting to the parish pastor, and slowly to introduce "Soviet Catholics" into parish executive bodies who would blindly carry out all government demands. It would appear that it will take many years for these government goals to be reached, if they ever are reached in Lithuania. This will depend, above all, on the awareness of priests.

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Kaunas

On January 9, 1978 Jonučiai (Kaunas *Rayon*) resident Juozas Vitkūnas invited the Rev. Vincentas Jalinskas to bless his home. Many guests had gathered for the occasion, especially youths and students, to whom the priest spoke on a religious theme. Suddenly, in the middle of the talk, a uniformed militiaman burst into the room. He was followed by two more militiamen and several civilians. A covered militia vehicle stopped at the door and there appeared more vehicles bringing militiamen and Security police. The house was surrounded and the road to the main street was bristling with militia. The militiaman who had entered the room demanded to see the owner of the house and signaled to the several adults to go into the next room. They were asked where they were from, their names and the like. The people questioned stated that they had committed no crime and would not give their names.

One woman guest told the intruders: "Are we some kind of criminals? You don't have the right to barge in and intimidate people!"

The Security agent retorted: "We will deal with you separately!" Father Jalinskas demanded to see the intruders' documents. The Security agent presented his employment card and stated that he has the right to disperse the gathering because such meetings are forbidden. When the officials ordered the priest to don his coat and get into the vehicle, he retorted: "We adults will not go, nor will we give you the children!" The militiamen tried to drag the adults to the vehicle by force. And all the while the children in the other room sang: *Du gaideliai (Two Roosters) Jurgeli, meistreli (George, the craftsman)* and other songs. A group of children managed to run away, but others were detained by officials who alertly guarded all exits. After the initial fright, the people attending the gathering began to mock the officials and did not disperse. The intruders demanded that they disperse and began to note the names of those leaving. Most gave fictitious names so the Security police would have less work in investigating this "crime." Only two adults were taken away for interrogation.

The militia chasing running children—what a "pretty" picture of the freedom of religion in present-day Lithuania!

At militia headquarters, the interrogator questioned those brought in after placing a stick on his table: a symbol of his justice and power.

He wanted to know who had invited the guests to the gathering, what the priest had said and the like.

Ceikiniai

Someone knocked loudly at the door of the Rev. K.(arolis) Garuckas at 5:00 P.M. on October 7, 1977. When he answered, a short, stocky man entered the room and said "Hello" in a rough voice. After asking whether the priest knew him, he snatched up letters which were on the table. After examining them, he began to rummage through books. He even barged into Father K. Garuckas' combination study and bedroom. Father Garuckas has only one room, divided by a wardrobe. He receives guests and parishioners on one side of the room, and works and sleeps on the other. When the intruder spied a typewriter on the table, he examined what was being written and asked: "Maybe you're writing for the *Chronicle*?"

Only then did Father Garuckas remember that this man had interrogated him several years earlier. He was Paškevičius, Security chief of the Ignalina *Rayon*. Seeing a letter from a soldier and a photograph on the table, the Security agent asked: "What, are you even spying on the army? Where is this letter from? Whose picture is this?" The Security agent accused the priest of writing for the *Chronicle* and passing information abroad. When he noticed liturgical books with multi-colored ribbons he shouted, "What is this, the Lithuanian flag?"

Assured that he was mistaken, he snatched from the table type-written sermon notes on Christ's Resurrection. The Security agent was interested in everything. When he saw a picture of Pope Paul VI hanging on the wall he asked, "Where did you get this?" and added "You detest the Soviet Union . . ."

Seeing that the Security agent was becoming carried away, the priest asked, "Did you come to conduct a search here?"

There would perhaps have been no end to the Security chiefs arbitrariness, had the priest not been called away to visit a seriously ill patient. The Security agent then handed the priest a summons which stated that he was to go on October 10, 1977 to the State Security Committee in Vilnius to see Interrogator Lazarevičius.

Interrogator Lazarevičius greeted Father Garuckas very cordially. First, he stated that Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė and Eitan Finkelshtein had already been interrogated and that only he, Father Garuckas, was left. The interrogator was interested in the following questions:

How had Father Garuckas become a member of the Lithuanian Public Group Monitoring Adherence to the Helsinki Agreements? Where and when had the priest met Tomas Venclova and Viktoras Petkus?

The interrogator held up a handful of documents from the Lithuanian Public Group Monitoring Adherence to the Helsinki Agreements and asked whether the priest had seen them. He asked about the ties of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group with Moscow dissidents. Who was the chairman of this group? How often did the members of this group meet? What kind of statements did they write to the Belgrade Conference? What kind of statements did they write in unison?

The interrogator was especially interested in the Baltic National Committee. The interrogation lasted seven hours.

Švenčionys

The priests of the Švenčionys *Rayon* received the following summons on November 10, 1977:

"The Švenčionys *Rayon* Peoples Council of Deputies Executive Committee is notifying you that a meeting will be held on November 15, 1977, at 11:00 A.M. at the Švenčionys *Rayon* Cultural Center recreation room (Švenčionys, Vilniaus g. No. 2, Second Floor) with the leading members of the *Rayon* Peoples Council of Deputies Executive Committee. You are invited to attend this meeting."

This notice was signed by *Rayon* Executive Committee Vice-Chairman V. Mačionis.

The priests assembled at the Švenčionys rectory and later proceeded to the Cultural Center in a group. There, they were cordially met by Vice-Chairman Mačionis who shook the hand of each and led them to the recreation room. Coffee cups and hard-to-come-by candies were laid out on the table. The priests were invited to sit at the table. A very polite woman tied to serve the priests. Most declined the coffee because they felt this was a ludicrous comedy. Vice-chairman Mačionis, *Rayon* Agricultural Department Chief Lisauskas and the *Rayon* cultural department head sat behind the other table.

Mačionis spoke about all kinds of trivial things: how much was sold of various items, what industries exist in the *Rayon* and the like. Lisauskas spoke of pig sties, harvests and fields being upgraded, and the head of the cultural department talked about the schools.

They then allowed the priests to raise questions of interest to

them. When asked how much alcohol is sold yearly in the *Rayon*, Mačionis replied: "2,500,000 rubles worth of alcohol is sold, and 1,300,000 rubles worth of wine." The *Rayon* has a population of 40,000. He noted that in other *Rayons* — Mažeikiai, for example — even more is consumed.

The priests asked Mačionis to have catechisms and hymnals printed, to have a new and larger printing of a prayerbook issued, to lower the rate per kilowatt of electricity used in churches from 25 kopecks to 4 kopecks (the rate paid by all Soviet citizens), to permit them freely to purchase material needed for church repairs, and to grant church employees pensions. Mačionis made notes of all the requests and stated: "I am not qualified to grant them." He promised to pass them on to the appropriate agencies.

Similar meetings of *Rayon* officials with priests were also arranged in other *Rayons*. What is their purpose? It would appear that it is an attempt to draw the attention of the Belgrade Conference to the "freedom of religion and conscience" in Soviet Lithuania. Or perhaps this is an attempt by the party and government authorities to educate the "backward", to reassure them, "Don't make a fuss, don't complain, we have noted down your demands, we will consider them, and so on."

Kaunas

On Sunday December 11, 1977, a first lieutenant of the militia dispersed old women selling religious articles near the Kaunas Cathedral.

People going into the church tried to defend the old women. The militiaman threatened them: "You're upset? Telephone Brezhnev. If you want to discuss politics, I'll take you to the station; you can discuss politics there."

The faithful tried to explain that they have nowhere to purchase religious articles. How can the new Constitution be reconciled with believers' lack of rights?

The militia lieutenant retorted: "Have you read the Constitution thoroughly? Read it and you will see that the time when you did what you wanted has passed. You should know that the church belongs to the state, you are merely renting it. All church matters are now managed by the government."

Raseiniai

The Rev. Alf. Svarinskas, Pastor of Viduklė, sent the following

request on October 17, 1977 to Raseiniai *Rayon* Vice-Chairman Z. Butkus:

"Two cherished and important Catholic holy days are drawing near: All Saints and All Souls Days. During those two days the Church rejoices in her children who have attained heaven and joy, and pray at the gates of purgatory asking God's mercy for those who are suffering. Following a thousand-year-old tradition, the faithful go to cemeteries on the eve of All Souls Day to pay respect to their dead.

"I, therefore, ask you to grant permission for the Catholics of Vidukle to perform their sacred duty as provided in the Ritual Book (published in 1966). The procession will be purely religious, with the singing of the All Saints' Litany and Psalm 45—"God Is Our Comfort and Strength". It is planned to hold the procession between 5:00 and 6:00 P.M. We will thus not disturb the atheists in any way."

The *Rayon* government did not grant permission, but the procession was nonetheless held. *Rayon* officials do not issue such permits to anyone.

Kaunas

We reprint verbatim a petition to the bishops sent to chancery offices in September 1977 and circulated among the priests and the faithful:

"To: The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of Lithuania

"A great misfortune has befallen Lithuania: It is drowning in alcohol. People drink before work, during work and after work; people drink in the streets, squares, rest rooms, buses and trains; people drink at christenings, weddings and funerals. Factory and office managers as well as workers drink, men and women drink, even minors and children are already drinking. It is no secret that some of the faithful and even some priests partake of 'Satan's drops'.

"Families, undermined by alcohol, are breaking up, thousands of innocents are perishing in auto accidents, detoxification cells and specialized hospitals are overflowing. Thanks to alcohol, criminal acts and venereal diseases are spreading. You, the Princes of the Church, must save the nation during these extremely difficult times. We believe in your works, we pray for you that 'God might bless your pastoral work and impart through you the light of the Holy Spirit, faith, courage and Eucharistic love. We therefore ask you to join all enlightened society in the battle for sobriety. First, our priests must be examples of sobriety. Establish strict rules, order

all bottles thrown out of rectories and refreshments served in the spirit of sobriety and refinement. This applies in particular to priests of the older generation with their outmoded drinking traditions.

"We are waiting for sermons on sobriety and national rebirth.

"We yearn for priests to show the nation the Way of Truth through sermons and the example of their lives, as they did a century ago during the time of the revered Bishop Motiejus Valančius, and join the battle for the nation's salvation.

"We hope that you will not destroy this letter or throw it into some chancery drawer, but will reply to it through your works and concrete measures. You will show thereby that you are concerned with the fate of the Lithuanian nation.

"September 1977

Catholics of Lithuania."

This petition by the faithful is well-founded, because the Ordinaries of Lithuania are rather passive in the face of this great misfortune. As an example, there are urban parishes served by alcoholic priests who are notorious throughout Lithuania and the Ordinaries dare not transfer them because they enjoy the protection of the atheist government.

Pociūnėliai

On December 15, 1977, the pastor of Pociūnėliai, the Rev. A. Jokūbauskas, was visited by a five-person delegation from the *Rayon*, which came to investigate whether the pastor had repaired the church roof with stolen sheet metal. The delegation members estimated the church's roof area and calculated how many tons of sheet metal were used. They threatened to press charges. Not accomplishing anything, they went to the Kaunas warehouse and berated the stockmen for selling the church such an amount of sheet metal.

Up to now during repairs, priests have received only the following assistance from the Soviet government: scolding, verification of documents, threats and the like.

Viduklė

The pastor of the Viduklė parish, the Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas,

was summoned to Vilnius on January 17, 1978 to see Religious Affairs Commissioner K.(azimieras) Tumėnas. The meeting was also attended by Religious Affairs Commission official Raslanas (a KGB representative). The Commissioner accused Father Svarinskas of making a speech at the luncheon which followed the funeral of the Rev. J. Aleksa in Tabariškės and of blackmailing priests who are proponents of peace.

Father Svarinskas did in fact give a talk on that occasion in which he raised certain evils and errors in the lives of priests. He stated that there are priests who travel to Berlin to uphold peace, while we have no catechisms or prayerbooks. Such priests, who do not defend their Church, cannot represent her; they should therefore not wear cassocks when they travel to Berlin.

Public and bold statements by priests on the most vital current issues are a good sign, showing that the Catholic Church in Lithuania is capable of renewing herself and leading the nation's rebirth.

Šiluva

Issue No. 30 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* reported on the pilgrimage of Lithuanian youth to Mary's shrine at Šiluva. In order to prevent the KGB from destroying the cross erected at the meeting place in the woods, the youth transferred it to a safer place on the property of (Mrs.) Zosė Alubickienė. However, four men arrived in a covered vehicle at 1:00 A.M. during the night of September 22nd, uprooted the cross, tore down the wreaths of rue and carted it away. Two Security agents came from Raseiniai during the morning of September 22nd and interrogated (Mrs) Alubickienė and her son about who had erected the cross on their property. To the great disappointment of the interrogators, neither the mother nor the son had seen the cross erected.

Telšiai

A cross bearing the inscription: "The Rev. J. Noreika and the Kev. A. Gargas, Defenders of the Fatherland, executed by the Russians in 1863" stood in the cathedral yard. Someone repainted the entire inscription, but deleted the word "Russians." Who gave permission to deface the historical inscription which for over a century has proclaimed to the sons of this country who had executed these defenders of the Fatherland and why?

Now the cross stands in the corner of the churchyard bearing a

fresh, open, bleeding wound, inflicted in the spring of 1977 by the hand of a degenerate Lithuanian.

Vilnius

Every year, the pastors of Lithuanian parishes must fill out the following questionnaire and submit it to their chancery offices which in turn pass them on to the Religious Affairs Commissioner:

I. Balance as of January 1, 1976

Receipts:

- 1. Voluntary donations**
- 2. Other receipts (indicate source)**
- Total receipts**
- Total receipts including balance from previous year**

II. Expenses

- 1. Employee salaries**
- 2. Church repairs**
- 3. Taxes**
- 4. Mandatory insurance**
- 5. Maintenance of church**
- 6. Contributions to the Peace Fund**
- 7. Contributions to the Architectural and Historical Monuments Fund**
- 8. Seminary support**
- 9. Other expenses**

Balance as of January 1, 1977

The sum distributed as follows:

- a) in the bank**
- b) organization treasuries**

III. Religious services performed:

- 1. Total baptisms**
 - a) infants**
 - b) children between 3 and 7**
 - c) school-age children**
 - d) adults**
- 2. Marriages**
- 3. Funerals**
- 4. First Communion recipients**
- 5. Confirmation recipients**

IV. Permanent employees of the church:

1. Organists
2. Sacristans
3. Church bell ringers
4. Janitors
5. Guards
6. Grounds-keepers
7. Furnace stokers
8. Number of members in church choir.

Since the atheists of Lithuania need this information as a basis for their decisions where to step up their atheistic work, priests submit falsified information. Some give lower figures, others higher ones; the data is thus worthless. Is it not time that priests refused to submit this data? Let the atheists personally collect the data they need.

Žvirgždaičiai

After an interruption of nineteen years, funeral services were held at the Žvirgždaičiai chapel on October 10, 1977. The Šakiai *Rayon* authorities gave the K.(udirkos) Naumiestis pastor, the Rev. J. Jakaitis permission to serve the faithful of Žvirgždaičiai. The chapel and the altar were consecrated. People cried from joy, but Chairman Lisauskas of the *Jaunoji Gvardija* (Young Guard) state farm, in whose territory Žvirgždaičiai is located, fumed and asked the people who was the moving force behind the believers' fight for the chapel. This state farm chairman is notorious for his despotism and people fear him like the secret police. On the eve of All Souls Day, services were again held and many people attended them. Afterward, the state farm chairman asserted: "I will destroy these Vatican hotbeds!" The faithful of Žvirgždaičiai are required to receive written permission for each service from the Šakiai *Rayon* Executive Committee.

Žalioji

Klausučiai District Chairman St. Kundrotas attempted to persuade people who demanded that their church be reopened (see *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* No. 30) to retract their signatures. After summoning people to his office, he had no qualms in even ridiculing the faithful.

On November 16, 1977, two members of the religious com-

munity's (parish) committee were summoned to Vilkaviškis to see *Rayon* Vice-Chairman Urbonas. Seven went. The Vice-Chairman announced that Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee Secretary Griškevičius had replied in the negative to the believers' statement (see *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* No. 30)—the Central Committee will not consider the church matter. Vice-Chairman Urbonas stated that the Religious Affairs Commissioner is also powerless in this matter. The Vilkaviškis *Rayon* authorities have been granted full power to decide on the fate of the Žalioji parish and he, the Vice-Chairman, will use his influence to see to it that the *Rayon* Executive Committee does not agree to reopen the Žalioji church.

One hundred twenty-six Žalioji believers sent a statement to Leonid Brezhnev on November 20, 1977, asking his help in reopening their parish church. The statement ends with the following words:

"This year, we have heard many beautiful words about the new Constitution: that it guarantees all citizens the right to freedom of conscience and religion. In our *Rayon*, however, the rights of believers are observed about as much as are the rights of blacks in South Africa.

"We ask you, Mr. Secretary General, to use your influence in this matter which is causing us great anguish, because we have already exhausted all channels, except for international human rights organizations."

On December 26, 1977, Religious Affairs Commissioner K. Tumėnas received the following believers of the Žalioji parish: J. Nešukaitis, J. Jasaitis, B. Gudaitienė, K. Bubnaitienė and T. Kaminskienė. Tumėnas reproached the faithful for not celebrating Christmas and coming to see him instead. They retorted that they have no place to pray, because a mill has been set up in the church. The Commissioner stated that it is easier for him to open any church in Vilnius than in Žalioji and advised them to rent facilities somewhere for cult matters.

The fight of the Žalioji parish Catholics for their church illustrates the impossible situation of believers: wherever you turn you are sent to the *Rayon* government which is headed by some narrow-minded and blind official who will fanatically deny and forbid everything.

Slabadai

On October 28, 1977 Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Vice-Chairman Urbo-

nas summoned the following women from Slabadai: O. Bušauskienė and J. Naujokienė. The Vice-Chairman informed them that the Slabadai and Žalioji parish committees would not be confirmed. Mocking the two women, Urbonas asked: "And what does that faith give you?" "Very much!" retorted (Mrs.) Naujokienė.

Girdžiai

During the night of September 24, 1977 somebody broke into the Girdžiai church. The intruders were for some reason most interested in two thick notebooks of sermons. They took them from a cabinet, locked the cabinet with a key they found and pocketed the key.

Three churches were burglarized during 1977: the churches of Girdžiai, Vertimai and Eržvilkas.

WHOM DOES A. ŠEDUIKIS' WAYSIDE SHRINE DISTURB?

Alvydas Šeduikis, employed as an organist at the Telšiai cathedral, erected outside his house on Pionierių g. in Telšiai a free-standing wayside cross bearing a figure of the Sorrowing Christ. A month later, on November 17, 1977, Telšiai City Executive Committee Chairwoman E. Janušauskienė ordered the shrine torn down because it had been erected without a permit from the architect. When Šeduikis refused to tear it down and even vowed to defend it, charges were brought against him. Similar charges have also been brought against (Miss) Danutė Dargužaitė for erecting a shrine at the Telšiai cemetery. This particular shrine was erected with a permit from the architect, but she was accused of misleading the architect, since the sketch she submitted did not show a figure of Christ, but merely an empty free-standing shrine. It appears that it is permitted to erect free-standing shrines without religious symbols. In fighting for his shrine, Šeduikis wrote the Religious Affairs Commissioner two statements which we are reprinting verbatim:

Statement

If we leaf through a picture album of Lithuanian villages or through older reproductions of Lithuanian scenes, we often note one element which indicates that we are viewing Lithuanian scenes and not those of another country. It is a small wooden architectural motif: an ornamented cross, a wayside shrine or free-standing covered shrine, which have been the Lithuanian's faithful companions over

the centuries. What astonishing art creations, breathing the unextinguishable strength of folk creativity. They have made Lithuania famous throughout the world. Let us examine how this artistic form of expression is rated by art researchers:

In 1916 B. Ginete-Pilsudsky wrote: "During the first part of the 19th century, crosses were so frequent in Žemaičiai that the distance between them was no more than several dozen meters (*Archives suisses des traditions populaires—XX t. (Swiss Archives of Folk Traditions — Vol. 22)*); therefore the Polish geographer V. Pol called Žemaičiai "God's holy land." In 1926, the French writer J. Maucleire "was amazed at the sheer number of crosses and shrines. They sprout in every garden, on every lawn, by every roadside and there is nothing more artistic than their great diversity." (J. Maucleire, *Sous le ciel pale de Lithuanie (Under Lithuania's Pale Sky)*).

Abundant 20th-century world literature also manifests that Lithuania cannot be imagined without crosses and shrines, for instance V. Szukiewicz notes in the magazine *Vysla* that these monuments distinguish ethnographic Lithuania from her neighbors: "The cross that was fashioned in these places is an unquestionable expression of Lithuania's national creativity, it is a monument that reflects the traditions of that nation's concept of beauty, i.e., it is one of the cultural benchmarks of her glorious past."

Our nation's cultural heritage in wood did not leave as deep imprints of the past as did the cultures of Egypt, India, Sumeria or other world cultures. In our geographical location, wood placed in the ground survives only four or five decades, and the above-ground portion is affected by dampness, cold, sun and various wood fungi. Čiurlionis and Žmuidzinavičius painted leaning shrines and crosses; today we still see one occasionally, standing near an old homestead or along an abandoned road, usually in the last stages of decay. In the words of G. Salvatori (*L'Art rustique populaire en Lithuanie (Rustic Folk Art in Lithuania)*): "These crosses, leaning, falling and again set straight, destroyed and again rebuilt each century by the humble Lithuanian carpenter" have brought to our times ancient mythological information in writings and symbols, ornaments and the selection of building sites; they are an irreplaceable living legacy to science and art, "they manifest the unconquerable will of that small but great nation to live, fighting the devastating conspiracy which men and nature seem to have prepared." The traditions of individual, original and also completely free decorative

style, taken from pagan times, have reached us us like a living relay of our spiritual creativity.

Dr. J.(onas) Basanavičius writes in his 1912 introduction to A. Jaroševičius' album of photographs that wayside crosses are vanishing in Lithuania because of neglect. In those days, the tradition to restore crosses was still alive. The Lithuanian loved the Sorrowing Christ made by his own hand; at the crossroads of civilization's storms, he confided his troubles to the Sorrowing Christ who was so like him. In an album entitled *Crosses of Lithuania* Varnas writes in 1925 that ornamented crosses are vanishing, they are being being replaced by heavy cement and metal crosses. And yet, I. Končius traveled throughout Žemaitija between 1930 and 1935 and established, after counting crosses and shrines, that there were 1.3 per kilometer of road. In the words of M. Alseikaitė-Gimbutienė, roadsides and homesteads are still as if glittering with suns. "Crosses, ornamental circles, stars and fragmented stars—it is a glorious rotation and continual motion, it is rebirth and life, it is the symbol of all we use to ward off death." M.(arija) Gimbutienė *The Ancient Lithuanian Religion*

The storms of the last war destroyed many art treasures, among them part of our wooden architecture. It is no secret that even after the war, local ignoramuses and self-serving individuals destroyed and desecrated crosses and shrines. And at present we see them neglected and decaying, crosses with broken ornaments and images of Christ, and many of them bear a metal plaque with the inscription "Folk Art Protected by the State." The question arises: What is the purpose of the plaque if a believer cannot restore those valuable monuments of folk art, and the plaques do not protect the shrines and crosses against vandals. It is no secret that crosses or shrines laden with figures of saints are primarily religious symbols, they are all without exception commemorative monuments belonging to believers and will survive only if they are passed from generation to generation. It is an integral part of Catholic life which appears very odd to foreigners. Some have construed it as a revival of pagan times and during the times when Lithuanian thinking and press were banned, crosses and shrines were interpreted as prods to national awareness. It is therefore not surprising that the governor general of Vilnius, Murovjev, prohibited by a decree of June 8, 1864 "To erect new and repair old crosses at all unconsecrated sites." And such a decree was necessary be-

cause after the 1863 uprising, the relatives of the dead in-surrectionists erected, according to ancient tradition, crosses and shrines at the site of death or interment. They were not concerned with politics, but with honoring the eternal resting place of a dead brother or son. But the Czar's government did not maintain the ban for long because the new intelligentsia rising in Europe took an all the more revolutionary stand against despotism, even in Lithuania, and scholars and artists showed an increased interest in the ancient Lithuanian culture. New laws were promulgated on December 1, 1878 and again on March 14, 1896 which lifted the ban on the erection of wooden religious symbols at road-sides, in fields and elsewhere.

M. K. Čiurlionis and S. Čiurlionienė published in 1910 a collection of critical essays, 7n *Lithuania*, where, among other things, they write: ". . .in ancient times people already thought about art . . . art, having its source in man's soul, grew along with him and developed with him . . . Old shrines contain the seeds of our architecture, for it is there that the style of Lithuanian buildings and furniture will have had its source . . . the future will also show, perhaps in one hundred, perhaps in two hundred years, that Lithuanian plastic art is rooted in the nation's soul. If in no other way, it is in art that the Lithuanians will made a great rare contribution to European civilizations" (see *Čiurlionio Dailė* V. Lansbergis, Vilnius, 1976). The nation's soul, newly bursting forth with the blooms of rosettes and crosses in Christianity, can alone maintain the Lithuanian's relay of generations in the Christian spirit. The crosses blessing fields, woods, streams, pastures and houses are the most interesting, the most poetic, the most ornamented, the richest in sculptural groupings, containing deep spiritual ties with our most ancient culture.

"One of the most astonishing art creations—the Sorrowing Christ" (V. Rimkus, *Folk Art* Vol. 1, p. 54, Vilnius, 1969) is in the opinion of most world ethnographers, art historians and sociologists (it is even included in the *World Ethnographical Atlas*), a masterpiece of folk art. Based on the opinion of a majority of scholars, P. Galaunė states that folk sculptors chose "that moment from the Passion of Christ when he was imprisoned (*Folk Art*, vol. 1.). Sitting, leaning his head on one hand, often crowned with thorns, brimming with peace, he is lonely and close to every believer. Many beautiful verses have been written to the

borrowing Christ, poets have dedicated their deepest feelings to Him:

. . . My dear Lord, is it our misery
That brought you down from heaven to the wayside
Or perchance those clear autumn nights
Have conjured you up from our soil. . .

(V. Mykolaitis-Putinas: *Sorrowing Christ*
Mono mCnesiai (My Months) Anthology of poetry, 1973

Because a rather large portion of present-day Lithuanian Soviet society is comprised of believers, it is thus not surprising that even now, in keeping with an old and very meaningful national tradition, beautiful shrines or ornamented crosses appear near homesteads, at gravesites and elsewhere. In other words, the folk tradition is alive, we need only support and encourage it. It is therefore very painful to confront the beauraucratic outlook of local government officials on this matter.

In October 1977, I erected a free-standing covered shrine next to the house where I live with my family. Shortly thereafter, we were visited by the Telšiai City Workers Council of Deputies Executive Committee Chairwoman (Mrs.) E. Jonušauskienė, accompanied by Telšiai *Rayon* architect-inspector L. Uniokas. She filed a complaint of illegal construction and ordered the covered shrine demolished. This decision was upheld at a meeting of the *Rayon* Executive Committee held on December 12 of this year.

To date, art. 114 of the LSSR Civil Code has never been applied to the erection of crosses and shrines on one's own property and the beautification of property. On October 11, 1954 the Telšiai Chancery issued letter No. 577 to the faithful: "Crosses may be erected not only in churchyards and cemeteries but also in the yards of the faithful." The chancery reiterated this statement in its letter No. 227 (10/7/72). These letters to the faithful have not been retracted. The tradition of erecting shrines has been alive in Lithuania for over 500 years; I therefore consider the charge against me unjust. And the second charge, that the shrine was erected without a permit from the *Rayon* architect, is unfounded because the architect does not issue permits for outside home decorations.

On November 17th of this year a similar charge was brought against (Miss) Danute Dargužaitė, a resident of Telšiai. She

is charged with erecting a shrine containing wooden statues of Mary and Christ on the graves of her loved ones. She had a permit from the *Rayon* architect, but the city authorities are preparing to demolish the cemetery shrine also. There has never before been such willfulness in Telšiai, and I oppose such current and future decisions. Can Soviet government representatives use such methods when every believer is guaranteed full freedom of religious profession and conscience by art. 52 of the USSR Constitution? Art. 64 of the USSR Constitution directs respect for the feeling of national worth of every USSR citizen. In this instance, art. 68 of the Constitution protects historical and cultural values, including a value that is priceless to us believers and is protected by Soviet and international law: ornamented crosses, shrines and free-standing covered shrines.

With this statement, I am asking you to evaluate properly the historical, ethnographic, religious and artistic architectural value of the free-standing covered shrine and restrain further arbitrary acts by local executive bodies.

Telšiai, 12/77

Alvydas Šeduikis

On December 12, 1977, the Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee decided to compel Šeduikis and (Miss) Dargužaitė to demolish "the illegally erected constructions within one month of receipt of this ruling. In the event that the erectors have not torn down the constructions within the designated time, the public works department is ordered to demolish them at the expense of the erectors." The decision was signed by Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee Vice-Chairman V. Tamašauskas and Secretary R. Liubavičienė.

Second Statement

One month ago, on December 14, 1977, I mailed you a statement. Thinking that you did not receive it, I am again sending you a copy of the first statement. In this statement I would like to note that the Telšiai authorities reacted to the erection of the covered shrine in a manner forbidden by law. Directive No. 325 issued by the Telšiai *Rayon* Workers' Council of Deputies Executive Committee, a copy of which I am enclosing, likens the covered shrine to a field kitchen, a garage, whose unauthorized construction is punishable under art. 114 of the LSSR Civil Code. But this article does not even hint that it is forbidden to erect a cross or shrine

on one's property.

I fail to understand the basis for making such a comparison. The council members were not shown either photographs of the covered shrine or blueprint sketches; they were not given a chance to hear my explanations or read the statement which I sent you; the covered shrine was unanimously condemned to be removed from the yard.

Moreover, during the second half of December 1977, atheist speakers at various meetings made odd allegations against me to the city populace. They said that a "dangerous criminal" is playing at the Cathedral, "a parasite feeding off the church", that he should be shunned, that he leads children astray while teaching them to sing, and so on. Such information was passed on to teachers, city professional union leaders, even doctors and medical personnel, some students and parents. Not one of the speakers who made veiled references to me is acquainted with me, not one has ever met with me, nor has ever shown any interest in matters which are of concern to me. I was not invited to a single closed or open meeting at which I was discussed. Such information passed on by the speakers is clearly slanderous, such blackmail is being used to condemn me as a builder of a covered shrine.

This spreading of rumors among the city's population and especially among atheist members of the intelligentsia has had another important impact, for my wife, a graduate of the conservatory, cannot find work in her field simply because I am an organist; lies are therefore being used to explain indirectly to the people of Telšiai—and if necessary to a wider audience—why the Šeduikis' are not allowed to work in the community. Such a psychological barrier truly affects relationships between people.

There is no children's choir at the cathedral, but the city's atheists are warning the community that such a group exists. In fact, the concept of a children's choir raised by the atheists is worthy of attention. This concept should be supported not only by cathedral authorities but also by you, Mr. Commissioner. But at present, if children come up to the organ loft with their parents or acquaintances, it is not up to me to decide where and in what fashion the faithful must choose the place to pray.

The odd behavior of certain teachers toward children affects me also. Children who attend church are regularly interrogated, questioned whether they serve at Mass, whether they sing in the choir; records are even kept of how often they attend church and whom

they know; an atmosphere of presumed guilt is thus created, children are forced to confess that they commit an offense by going to church.

These methods used by the atheists in their fight against the faithful have long been condemned by responsible officials of the Soviet Union, European nations and the United States at the Helsinki Conference. Article 52 of the new USSR Constitution prohibits fomenting hatred on the basis of religious beliefs. Legally, atheist propaganda and the fomentation of hatred and discord against the faithful are diametrically opposed premises.

We are living at the end of the twentieth century. Thanks to mass media, the world for the first time sees itself as God's People, for the first time on earth, man is elevated, having freedom of conscience, freedom to know and profess God. The world is yearning for the light of international human love and brotherhood, independent of religion or color of skin. Then why are atheist speakers in Telšiai using medieval hatred and illegal methods, why are they allowed to misuse the law and slander believers?

I therefore ask that you discipline those individuals responsible and that the rumors spread to denigrate me and the faithful be retracted and the behavior of the atheists be properly evaluated. I ask that the free-standing covered shrine near my home not be demolished and that such willful actions against decorative-sculptural constructions of a religious nature not recur, that under similar circumstances, a body of competent individuals judge the artistic value of such constructions and not liken them to field kitchens or garages as happened in this instance.

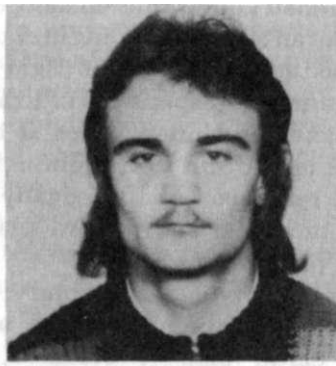
January 15, 1978

A. Šeduikis, Telšiai Cathedral organist

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

In Lithuania, atheist propaganda is increasingly being conducted from above. The Communist occupation apparatus is seeking ever newer and more subtle forms of action. Efforts are made to give the impression that there is no pressure from above in the atheist propaganda front, that atheist propaganda is only scholarly in nature and governed by Marxist methodology.

At the beginning of the 1977-78 academic year, middle school principals were ordered to review in detail the religious relationship of parents and children within and outside the family. To avoid



Vytautas Bogušis

the impression of management from above, school authorities are attempting to implement the directives through atheist councils (such councils exist in every school; they are composed of several members, headed by a chairman appointed by the principal).

In implementing the directives, it is necessary to indicate not only the families and students who believe, but also to what extent they believe. The religiousness of parents can be gauged by the class leader from discussions with parents at the time of visits to their homes, according to the religious articles noted in the home and through other means. As for the students, they are either drawn into discussions or are given questionnaires to fill out, which include questions (which may vary) covering information on the following:

- 1) believing families;
- 2) families which encourage their children to attend church;
- 3) families which do not actually believe but attend church out of habit;
- 4) families whose children not only attend church but are also given religious instruction;
- 5) families whose children not only attend church, but also actively participate in religious life, for example, serve at Mass, sing in the church choir and so on;
- 6) Carefully analyze the degree of religiousness of students and their parents: Do they practice their religion out of belief or only habit? Do they attend church of their own will or at their parents' urging?

All this information must be provided by classroom teachers who are forced to spy and perform work demeaning to a teacher.



Julius Sasnauskas



Andrius Tučkus

Vilnius

To: The Lithuanian SSR Prosecutor

**Copies to: Lithuanian Community Group Monitoring
Adherence to the Helsinki Agreements**

A Statement from:

Vytautas Bogušis, residing in Vilnius, Savičiaus 13-8

Julius Sasnauskas, residing in Vilnius, Garelio 15-15

Kęstutis Subačius, residing in Vilnius, Pionierių 6-1

Andrius Tučkus, residing in Vilnius, Šaltkalvių 68-6

In 1976, we, the undersigned, were tenth-grade students at the A. Vienuolis School in Vilnius. We were more than once forcibly taken to the Security police and the militia and otherwise persecuted for attending church, for our national and religious views and our acquaintance with former political prisoners. At the Security police we were pressured to give false testimony against our mutual friend Viktoras Petkus. We know Petkus as a fine, highly educated and cultivated man. The charges brought against him by the Security police were unfounded and we therefore did not endorse them.

Our persecution was also carried over to the school. We were frequently upbraided for so-called bad influence on the student body. A faculty meeting was held on June 17th at which the school principal called for our expulsion from the school. The faculty would not endorse the principal's suggestion. In spite of this, we were expelled from the school. No account was taken of the fact that 43 of our schoolmates signed a petition demanding that we be

re-admitted to the school. We therefore feel that our expulsion is unjust.

Vilnius, 10/27/77

V. Bogušis, J. Sasnauskas,
K. Subačius, A. Tučkus

Šiauliai

On October 6, 1977, 10th-grade homeroom teacher (Mrs) Petra-
vičienė of the 11th Middle School in Šiauliai told student Dalia
Judikavičiūtė to stay after school on some "important matter."
The following conversation took place:

"So, Dalia, are you or are you not going to join the Communist
Youth League?" asked the homeroom teacher.

"No."

"But look, my child, how will you gain admission to the
university?"

"If I am not admitted, so be it."

"Why don't you want to join the Communist Youth League?"

"I am a believer and will not join. I cannot reconcile the
Communist Youth League with religion."

The homeroom teacher then began to accuse the student of
agitating other girls—as a result there are ten students in the class
who have not yet joined the Communist Youth. Dalia denied this
charge:

"They have heads on their shoulders, don't they?"

After a long discussion, the homeroom teacher (Mrs.) Petra-
vičienė accompanied the girl home and tried to persuade her
mother that Dalia should join the Communist Youth League, but the
mother declared that she believes in God and her daughter would not
join the Communist Youth League.

"Then maybe she'll join in the eleventh grade?"

"Never!"

Students in all Lithuanian schools, from the seventh grade on,
are annoyingly urged to join the Communist Youth League.
Forgetting their nation's misfortune—the occupation—career
teachers, under pressure from the school administration and the
Rayon Education Department, use all kinds of methods to persuade
students to join the Pioneers and the Youth League. They advise
that parents not be told, even permit them to attend church in
secret, and lament that if they do not join they will be the cause of
their (the teachers) perdition and so on.

Musninkai (Širvintai Rayon)

During the summer of 1977, students from Vilnius were brought to the rest and work camp in the town of Musninkai. The local cemetery was ravaged during the night of July 3rd: Sixteen headstones were broken, others were overturned, many figures of Christ Crucified were smashed. The militia determined that the crime had been committed by tenth-grade students Bradauskas and Reimeris.

Širvintai Rayon Executive Committee Vice-Chairman D. Tverbutas several times begged the pastor to calm down the believers to whom the vandalized headstones belonged. The people of Musninkai would like to draw Vice-Chairman D. Tverbutas' attention to the moral upbringing of the youth, since the daily activities of Musninkai Communist Youth League members consist of drinking wine and obscene curses.

Telšiai

Teachers at the 5th Middle School began to check whether students wear medals.

Teachers (Mrs) Šiluvienė and (Mrs.) Povilonienė and Inspector (Mrs) Matūzienė summon children one by one, order them to admit that they attend church and betray their friends.

Similar incidents are occurring at the Žemaitė Middle School. Teachers (Mrs.) Bartkienė, (Miss) Šerelytė, (Miss) Austytė and (Mrs.) Karnishova order students to fill out atheist questionnaires, threaten to punish those who attend church, and Karnishova even pulls their ears. After seeing a student serving at the altar, she threatened to drag him from the altar by his ears.

Parents informed the principal of this action, but he stated that they are free to withdraw their children from school; let the pastor teach them.

Videniškiiai (Molėtai Rayon)

The former Videniškiiai Middle School store attendant (Mrs.) Apalonija Rimšienė was killed in an auto accident on November 30, 1977. Her husband Ignas had died on December 30, 1976. The Children Sigitas (4th grade), Vida (7th grade) and Valentinas (11th grade) were left orphans. The Rimšas family were believers and the children were exemplary pupils.

(Mrs.) Rimšienė was to be buried at the Videniškiiai cemetery on December 2, 1977, with religious rites. Middle School principal

A. Marcinkevičius strictly forbade the pupils to attend the funeral of (Mrs.) Rimšienė. He told the pupils of grades four, seven and eleven that "since (Mrs.) Rimšienė is to be buried from church, the pupils are not to attend the funeral; I don't want to see a single pupil at the funeral."

The ban issued by Principal Marcinkevičius is not an isolated incident in Lithuania. Students are either completely forbidden to attend religious funerals, or they are ordered to stay in the churchyard during services and only on the way to the cemetery are they permitted to join the funeral procession.

Dubičiai (Varėna Rayon)

At the end of the first semester of the 1977-78 academic year, the following students received lower department grades because they attend church: Alfredas Avižys (2nd grade), Virginija Adama-vičiūtė, (7th grade), Marytė Skaramakaitė (7th grade), Rita Kirk-liauskaitė (7th grade), Marytė Avižinytė (8th grade) and Danutė Skaramakaitė (8th grade).

When the teacher asked which students attend church, they admitted it fearlessly. The teacher then explained to them: "Those who attend church cannot be exemplary in conduct."

Raseiniai

During December 1977, Raseiniai Middle School students Šatas (son of the *Rayon* Second Secretary), Stankus (son of the editor of the newspaper *Naujasis Rytėjus*), Jonyla and Jakubauskas (both 11th grade students), emptied the donation box at the Šiluva church. Charges were not brought against them because they gained little: They found only a few rubles.

Tauragė

On November 14, 1977, Tauragė 4th School teacher (Mrs.) Elena Bakutienė was checking whether all grade 4c students were wearing a Pioneer necktie. Seeing that Arūnas Lorančas was not wearing a tie, the teacher asked: "Why aren't you wearing the tie?" The boy explained that he is not a Pioneer.

"Little priest! . . ." the teacher scoffed.

It is not fitting for a Lithuanian teacher to ridicule a Lithuanian boy, even were the USSR Constitution to allow it.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE CHRONICLE
OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN
LITHUANIA

At the end of 1977, there appeared a *samizdat* leaflet entitled *The Church and the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. All the articles in this publication attack the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* in one way or another. The most serious charges are that the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* divides the Church's unity, that it slanders, undermines confidence in priests and bishops, offends "the prestige of a powerful nation" and so on.

Until the appearance of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, KGB collaborators had an ideal situation: they could commit the most public crime—for example, publish lies in the press about the "freedom" of believers in Lithuania, "defend peace" in Berlin—and no one stated publicly that such behavior is unacceptable. The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* disrupted the plans of many people and is determined to continue disrupting them in the future.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* is taking the opportunity to state the following:

The unity of the Church is divided not by the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, but by the KGB and its collaborators.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* does not.. discuss the secret personal misdeeds of either the clergy or government officials, but only those offenses which are public knowledge. Authority can only be redeemed by making amends and not through hypocrisy.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* does not have any private scores to settle with either bishops or priests. When a Soviet official, teacher or priest who has publicly erred mends his ways, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* will commend him.

If the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* were to publish facts only on individual instances of persecution of the faithful and on the tactlessness of teachers toward their students, but were to remain silent on the offenses of priest collaborators with the KGB, who no less undermine the Church, it would trans-

gress against truth and would serve not the Church but the atheists.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* does not encourage unfounded suspicion, division and disrespect for Church officials, but blocks the way of those who consciously or unconsciously serve the destroyers of the Church.

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* repeatedly thanks all our brethren in the free world, whose voice does not harm, but helps the Lithuanian Church. The countries about which the free world speaks the least are the ones which suffer most from atheist government tyranny. In Moldavia, as an example, churches are currently being torn down by bulldozers, and priests do not have the right, in effect, to visit patients in hospitals because they need five permits.!

The *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* believes in Divine Providence and the power of prayer, but this same belief considers silence and cooperation with the destroyers of the Catholic Church in Lithuania to be a crime.

We reprint below a reader's reply to charges against the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*:

1) If the *Chronicle* reports on negative aspects in the lives of the clergy itself, these aspects are not unknown to the community at large, therefore, this is not "soiling one's nest." To try hiding what cannot be hidden is a childish ostrich policy. For the "good of the nest", we must precisely fight negative aspects by airing them in public. Cobwebs gather where there is no self-criticism, the air is stale where there is no cross ventilation. In this instance, it is not those who speak who are causing outrage, but those whose low character gives basis for such talk. St. Paul wrote in his letter to the Christians: "Many among you act like enemies of Christ."

2) Unity is essential, but with whom and for what? "To advance or destroy" (2 Cor., 10-8) the Church? It is acknowledged that the center of unity is the hierarchy, the bishops. But does the hierarchy always promote the word of the Gospel, does it always serve the interests of the Church?

Bishop M. Valančius wrote about Bishop Petkevičius (16th century). The latter was interested in hunting; from dawn to dusk he roamed the fields with his dogs (*Žemaičių vyskupystė*).

This type of hierarchal dynasty has not yet died out. Are we to fall in behind this type of hierarch in the name of unity?

In Kaunas, Bishop M. Valančius devoted all his savings to the poor, the press, the support of repressed priests, while the then Vilnius administrator Msgr. P. Žilinskas, appointed by the Czarist government, used all his capabilities to amass a fortune, to build and purchase homes. At the government's demand, Vilnius administrator P. Žilinskas ordered Russian to be used in all churches, while Bishop Valančius opposed this.

Which hierarch should the priests and the faithful have supported then?

St. Paul wrote to the Galatians (2, 11) that he had "opposed Peter in public, because he was clearly wrong" . . . "he had strayed from the truth of the Gospel." In other words, not every move of a hierarch can be taken at face value. "Do not believe all who claim to have the Spirit, but test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God." (1 Jn. 4, 1).

3) The *Chronicle* is berated for saying that it does not need bishops. We have bishops, if only they could perform their duties! But does the Church need bishops who blindly carry out the directives of atheists?

4) It would be ideal to co-exist with the government, if this "co-existence" were not purchased by betraying the Gospel's principles. Great wisdom is not needed for the art of "co-existence," we need only obey the atheists. The apostles of Christ "did not know how" to co-exist with the government: the world considered them foolish. This label is now being attached to some people . . . So be it.

5) The *Chronicle* sincerely tries to avoid inaccuracies, lies. Under present conditions, it is impossible to verify everything; it is necessary to rely on the testimony of honorable persons. Besides, the *Chronicle* corrects mistakes which occur. It must not be forgotten that there are individuals who, under threat by the Security police, deny a certain report in the *Chronicle* and we thus read in *Tiesa* about the lies of the *Chronicle* and the Vatican.

CORRECTIONS

1) Issue No. 30 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* printed the wrong address for O. Pranskūnaitė. The accurate place of her imprisonment is printed in this issue.

2) Issues No. 29-30 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* wrote about the pastor of the Kirdeikiai parish, the Rev. P. Kraiauskas, **not** *Krasauskas*.

Fellow Lithuanian, Do Not Forget!

Petras Plumpa, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, Ona Pranskūnaitė, Sergei Kovalev, Viktoras Petkus and others who bear the shackles of imprisonment so that you might freely live and believe!

INDEX OF PERSONS

Alubickienė, Zosė 24
Bogušis, Vytautas 37-38
Dargužaitė, Danutė 28, 32, 33
Gajauskas, Balys 10-11
Garuckas, Rev. Karolis 19-21
Jalinskas, Rev. Vincentas 18
Judikavičiūtė, Dalia 38
Petkus, Viktoras 20, 37
Petronis, Povilas 11
Plumpa, Petras 12-13
Pranckūnaitė, Ona 11, 43
Sadūnaitė, Nijolė 11-12
Sasnauskas, Julius 37-38
Šeduikis, Alvydas 28-35
Subačius, Kęstutis 37-38
Svarinskas, Rev. Alfonsas 21, 23-24
Tučkus, Andrius 37-38
Vitkūnas, Juozas

INDEX OF PLACES

Ceikiniai, 19
Dubičiai, 40
Gūdžiai, 28
Kaunas, 18, 21, 22
Musninkai, 39
Pociūnėliai, 23
Raseiniai, 21-22, 40
Šiauliai, 38
Šiluva, 24
Slabadai, 28
Švenčionys
Taurage, 40
Telšiai, 24, 33-35, 39
Videniškiei, 39
Viduklė, 23
Vilnius 25, 37
Žalioji, 26-28
Žvirgždaičiai, 26

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



Places mentioned in the CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA. No. 31