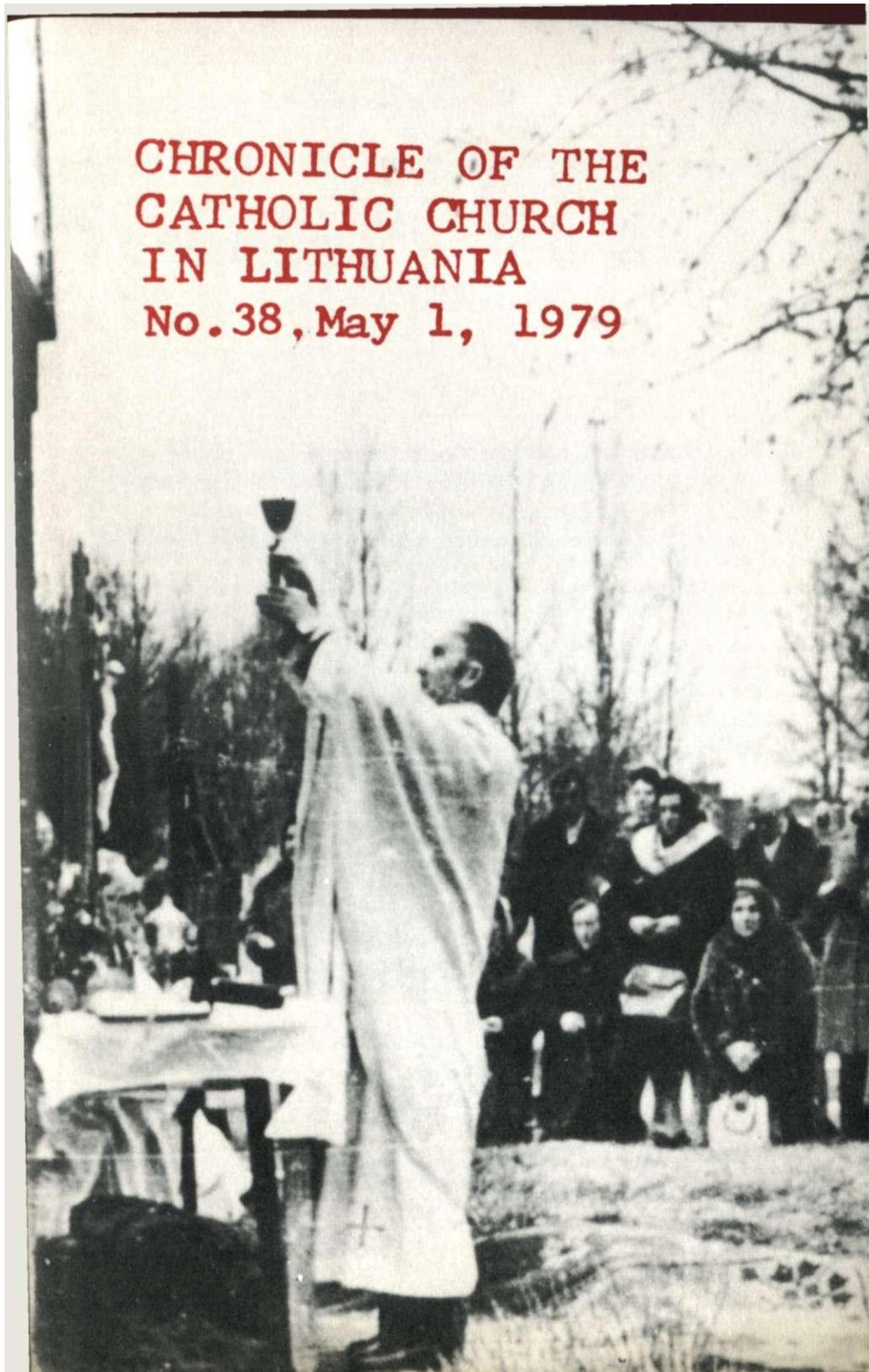


**CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
No. 38, May 1, 1979**



CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA No. 38

A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original,
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA No. 38
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today

Translated by: Vita Matusaitis
Translation Editor: Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
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generous gift from friends

IN MEMORY OF JONAS MATULIONIS,
who died January 24, 1980 Toronto, Canada.

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COVER: Father Antanas Lukošaitis offers Easter Mass in the
cemetery at Žalioji, Lithuania. In 1979, the local church was converted into a mill.

CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA No. 38

Introduction

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

In the two archdioceses and four dioceses were: 708 churches, 314 chapels, 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 25, 1940, the Church was declared separate from the state, and the representative of the Holy See was expelled.

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

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

On June 15, 1941, 34,260 Lithuanians were packed off in cattle-

cars to undisclosed points in the Soviet Union. After World War II, the mass deportations resumed and continued until 1953.

Vincentas Borisevičius, Bishop of Telšiai, was arrested on February 3, 1946, and condemned to death after a secret trial. Before year's end, his auxiliary, Bishop Pranas Ramanauskas, was also arrested and deported to Siberia. Bishop Teofilus Matulionis of Kaišiadorys and Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys of Vilnius were deported to a Siberian labor camp. Archbishop Reinys perished in prison at Vladimir, November 8, 1953. By 1947, Lithuania was left with a single bishop, Kazimieras Paltarokas, of Panevėžys. He died in 1958.

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

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

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

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

Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, consecrated in 1957, is also under severe government restrictions. In 1965, Monsignor Juozas Labukas-Matulaitis was consecrated in Rome to head the Archdiocese of Kaunas and the Diocese of Vilkauskis.

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

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

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translation Editor

Read it and pass it on!
Issued since **1972**.

CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA No. **38**

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CONCIENCE ABOVE LAWS

On December 25, **1978**, the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers sent to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR a document outlining how the "Regulations for Religious Associations" issued by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR conflict with the Lithuanian SSR Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other international documents endorsed by the Soviet Union, and asked that the Regulations be repealed.

In a show of solidarity with the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers, priests from all the dioceses of Lithuania have sent various Soviet government agencies statements which we reprint below in full. These statements are vital

documents which prove that the large majority of Lithuanian priests have not been broken in spirit and are fully determined to fight the goal of state atheism and stifle the Catholic Church in Lithuania.

To: The Prosecutor General of the Union of the Soviet
Socialist Republics

Copies to: The Chancery of the Vilnius Archdiocese;
Lithuanian SSR Commissioner of the Council for
Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers
of the USSR;
Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights
of Believers.

A Statement from: The priests of the Vilnius Archdiocese.

During the past several years, our Republic's *Rayon* Executive Committees have begun to summon for instructions priests and members of the executive organs of local religious communities, demanding that the "Regulations for Religious Associations" issued in 1979 by the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR be fully implemented. Because the above document clearly contradicts the freedom of belief and the free activity of religious associations, the clergy and the believing community is gravely concerned at demands that it be observed in full.

1. Reliable state and Party individuals have solemnly assured us on many occasions that the state must not interfere in internal Church affairs, that churches have the right to manage their own affairs unhindered, according to their teachings and laws. However, the said "Regulations for Religious Associations" not merely make no mention of this right, but plainly deny it. Catholic, Orthodox and other Churches have hierarchical structures by their very nature and according to their canons: Only ordained persons—bishops and priests—can govern them and their subdivisions, while the "regulations" impose on them the structure of certain sects where the role of governing belongs to representatives of ordinary believers.

What is even stranger, local Soviet (atheist!) organs are accorded the right to intervene in the selection of members of religious community executive organs, but the hierarchy is forbidden this right. In other words, the Church should not care who

manages the affairs of its local units: faithful Christians or atheist puppets . . . This is no ordinary interference in internal Church affairs, but a direct blow against the Church's very nature which it received from Christ and which it cannot alter.

For instance, Christ and the Church tell priests: "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to all creation." (Mark 16, 15), while the "Regulations" forbid them to minister to anyone beyond their parish boundaries, not even to a gravely ill or dying believer. There is no need to even ask whom the servant of Christ will obey in such an instance. There is only the question: Why must the state place priests and believers in the position where they are forced to disobey?

2. The "Foundations" of Soviet laws on education, marriage and family and related areas clearly indicate that if any article of Soviet law conflicts with international agreements ratified by Soviet authorities, that article is invalid and the rules of the international agreement must be applied. In the 1976 "Regulations" it is not an occasional article, but most articles, which contradict the spirit and letter of a variety of international agreements.

In concrete terms, they contradict Article 18 of the 1948 Universal declaration of Human Rights on the freedom of religious teaching, Article 19 on the freedom of disseminating ideas and article 30 on the prohibition of interpreting any articles of the Declaration to the detriment of rights and freedoms. They also contradict Article 5-b of the 1960 Convention on the War Against Discrimination in the Field of Education, which directs that parents be guaranteed the opportunity to raise their children in keeping with their religious and moral beliefs, and which forbids imposing on children religious teaching or anti-religious upbringing against their and their parents' will. Article 3 of the same Convention binds the signatory states to abrogate all legal rulings and administrative degrees which contradict the Convention, while the Supreme Soviet Presidium of our Republic ignores the Convention.

3. A number of paragraphs in the "Regulations" which contradict religious freedom and the equality of believing citizens and non-believers, cannot be reconciled with article 52 and 34 of the Constitution of the USSR and corresponding articles of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR.

In view of the above-named reasons, neither we, nor our believers whom we are obliged to inform accurately, can consider

the Regulations legal, and our conscience forbids us to obey them all.

In view of the fact that the Constitution has entrusted you, Mr. Prosecutor General of the USSR, with the supreme duty to protect the law throughout the territory of the USSR, we ask you to demand:

a) That the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR repeal the said "Regulations;"

b) That it guarantee to every Church (denomination) the right to adhere to its structure and follow its canons, and recognize the right of juridical entity to religious associations;

c) That it guarantee the hierarchy, religious associations and individual believers the right freely to disseminate their beliefs on an equal footing with representatives of other outlooks, and the freedom of systematic religious instruction of children and young people in keeping with their parents' and their own wishes;

d) That it guarantee citizens the right to express publicly their faith, and in the presence of the appropriate professional qualifications to fill any position in any area of industry, culture and other community activity.

If full legality and complete equality of citizens were implemented, it would serve truly to unite citizens, to solve the domestic, cultural and moral problems which exist in our society and enhance the international reputation of the Soviet Union.

Lithuanian SSR
February 1979

Priests of the Vilnius Archdiocese:

Rev. K.(arolis) Garuckas, member of the Lithuanian Community Group Monitoring the Implementation of the Helsinki Agreements, Rev. B.(ronius) Laurinavičius, member of the Lithuanian Community Group Monitoring the Implementation of the Helsinki Agreements, (Signed) V. Černiauskas, A. Keina, J. Lauriunas, M. Petravičius, J. Vaitonis, A. Andriuškevičius, K. Gajauskas, N. Pakalka, N. Jaura, D. Baužys, K. Molis, J. Budrevičius, J. Grigaitis, M. Stonis, K. Pukėnas, A. Dziekan, A. Trusevic, J. Obremski, K. Vaičionis, P. Jankus, S. Malachovski, L. Savickas, S. Valiukėnas, J. Slėnys, J. Juodagalvis, V. Bronickis, P. Bekiš, K. Vasiliauskas, I. Paberžis, A. Valatka, R. Blažys, J. Tunaitis, S. Puidokas, V. Aliulis, S. Tunaitis, A. Čėponis, V. Rūkas, A. Simonaitis, K.

Gailius, K. Žemėnas, D. Valančiauskas, A. Kanišauskas, A. Ulickas, D. Valiukonis, J. Baltušis, R. Černiauskas, J. Kardelis, D. Puidokas, M. Savickas, A. Petronis, A. Merkys, K. Valeikis, V. Jeskelevičius, J. Kukta, S. Kakarieka, S. Markevičius, I. Jakutis, P., Tarvydas

To: The Supreme Soviet Presidium of the USSR;
The Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR.

Copies to: The Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers;
The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of Lithuania;
Religious Affairs Commissioner P. Anilionis.

We the undersigned priests of the Vilnius Archdiocese support statement No. 5 of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers dated December 25, 1978 to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR, the bishops and diocesan administrators of Lithuania and Religious Affairs Commissioner P.(etras) Anilionis, and affirm that we consider the Regulations for Religious Associations to be legally invalid and that we cannot observe them because they discriminate against believers, restrict their conscience, are contrary to the teachings and laws (cannons) of the Catholic Church, the Constitutions of the Soviet Union and the Lithuanian SSR, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international commitments of the Soviet Union.

Lithuania
January 25, 1979

(Signed) Members of the Lithuanian Community Group Monitoring the Implementation of the Helsinki Agreements, the Reverends Karolis Garuckas and Bronius Laurinavičius, and the Reverends: V. Černiauskas, A. Keina, M. Petravičius, J. Vaitonis, J. Lauriūnas, A. Andriuškevičius, K. Gajauskas, N. Pakalka, N. Jaura, D. Baužys, K. Molis, J. Budrevičius, J. Grigaitis, M. Stonys, K. Pukėnas, A. Dziekan, A. Trusevic, J. Obrembski, K. Vaičionis, L. Savickas, P. Jankus, S. Malachovski, S. Valiukėnas, J. Slėnys, V. Bronickis, K. Vasiliauskas, S. Puidokas, S. Tunaitis, A. Čeponis, A. Simonaitis, K. Žemėnas, A. Kanišauskas, D. Valiukonis, D. Valan-

čiauškaš, A. Ulickas, J. Baltušis, J. Kardelis, M. Savickas, A. Merkys, V. Jeskelevičius, J. Kukta, I. Paberžis, P. Tarvydas, R. Blažys, J. Tunaitis, S. Kakarieka, V. Rūkas, K. Gailius, R. Černiauskas, D. Puidokas, A. Petronis, K. Valeikis, J. Jakutis, P. Bekis, A. Valatka, S. Markevičius.

To: The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR.

Copies to: The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of Lithuania;
The Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers.

A Statement from: The Priests of the Kaunas Archdiocese,
235467 Žagarė, Joniškis *Rayon*, Rev. Gustavas Gudanavičius.

On August 1, 1975 in Helsinki, 34 states, among them the USSR and the Vatican, signed the Final Act which reads as follows:

— The participating states will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, regardless of differences of race, sex, language and religion . . .

— In this context, the participating states will recognize and respect the freedom of the individual to profess, individually or together with others, religion or faith, in accordance with conscience . . .

— The participating states recognize the universal meaning of human rights and basic freedoms . . .

— In the field of human rights and basic freedoms, the participating states will implement the goals of the United Nations statutes and the Universal Declaration of Human rights (For the Good of Peace, Security and Cooperation, Vilnius, *Mintis* pub., 1975, pp. 22-23).

— In implementing their sovereign rights, including the right to promulgate their own laws and set administrative regulations, they will adjust them to their legal commitments under international law; they will, moreover, give proper consideration to the articles of the Final Act of the European Conference on Security and Cooperation and will implement them (Ibid, p. 26).

Catholics of Lithuania and other believers thought that, once this important document is signed at the highest level, religious discrimination would cease, that all decrees directed against believers would be repealed or declared null and void. Unfortunately, the opposite proved to be true. On July 28, 1976, the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR issued a new decree whose purpose was to destroy the Catholic Church in Lithuania as rapidly as possible. And thus all the international agreements entered into by the USSR have given us nothing . . .

After reviewing the said decree—"Regulations for Religious Associations"—we priests, as the true leaders of parishes under canon law, the real representatives, the embodiment of the deepest sorrows, worries and affairs of the believers of the entire diocese, are compelled by our conscience to state that this law is unconstitutional, inhuman and contrary to international agreements by the USSR. We, therefore, cannot comply with it! We would moreover like to note that the Catholic Church, by its very nature, is not some kind of political organization but a purely religious community. Internally it independently manages its affairs according to canon law. Even representatives of the Soviet government recognize this when they affirm:

— Soviet state and government organs do not interfere in internal Church affairs, i.e. in her canonical and dogmatic activity (J.(uozas) Rugienis, "Soviet and Religious Cult Laws", Tarybu darbas (Soviet Work), 1972, No. 9, p. 17).

In actual practice, however, things are quite different. Just a few examples by way of illustration: Section 4 of the so-called agreement which has been forcibly imposed on the Church and has harassed priests and believers for a decade reads as follows:

"This agreement can be broken under fixed conditions, once it has been determined to close the house of worship (cult building) whose use was permitted by this agreement."

The paragraphs of the agreement and regulations are drafted in a vague manner, without legal preciseness, leaving Soviet officials and atheists the possibility of interpreting them arbitrarily to their advantage and the Church's destruction. The Regulations for Religious Associations have delivered us to the mercy of the atheists and executive committee representatives of varied rank.

We once again wish to point out that the Catholics of Lithuania built churches with their own sweat and funds over a period of 600 years! And we cannot even entertain the thought that our shrines,

many of which are monuments of Soviet or Republican importance (while the churches closed during the Stalin-Khrushchev era are an open, bleeding wound in the hearts of believers) are closed down "at somebody's decision." And, on the contrary, we are convinced, on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act, that the faithful need new churches in Klaipėda, Elektrėnai, Akmenė and other new districts in major cities.

Article 3 of the Regulations for Religious Associations allows a person to become a member of a religious community only upon attaining eighteen years of age. According to Church teaching and canon law, a person becomes a full-fledged member of the Church at Baptism.

We the priests of the Kaunas Archdiocese are familiar with Document No. 5 of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers, give it our full support and ask the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR to declare the July 28, 1976 decree "On the regulations for Religious Associations" to be null and void.

Kaunas, January 25, 1979

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul

Signed by 102 priests of the Kaunas archdiocese: Gustavas Gudanavičius, Leonardas Jagminas, Vysk. Julijonas Steponavičius, Juozas Dobilaitis, Bronius Nemeikštis, Julijonas Kazlauskas, Vaclovas Polikaitis, Aleksandras Počiulpis, Jonas Alesius, Vladas Luzgauskas, Jonas Bujokas, Lionginas Vaičiulionis, Jonas Babonas, Zigmąs Grinevičius, Jonas Račaitis, Vladas Valavičius, Vaclovas Ramanauskas, Pranciškus Ščepavičius, Antanas Jokubauskas, Vytautas Radzevičius, Kęstutis Diknevičius, Feliksas Balionas, Antanas Lileika, Vaclovas Tamoševičius, Bronius Gimžauskas, Jonas Povilaitis, Prosperas Bubnys, Mykolas Buožius, Petras Mikutis, Bronius Gaižutis, Jonas Jakubonis, Stasys Kadys, Kazimieras Sirūnas, Jonas Aleksišūnas, Vincas Pranskietis, Liudvikas Mažonavičius, Antanas Ylius, Juozas Vaicekauskas, Jonas Survyla, Leonas Kalinauskas, Eugenijus Jokubauskas, Jurgis Užusienis, Pranciškus Matulaitis, Valentinas Beržinis, Romualdas Mizaras, Kleopas Jakaitis, Antanas Imbras, Jurgis Birbilas, Steponas Pilka, Mykolas Dobrovolskis, Antanas Kazlauskas, Liudvikas Semaška, Juozapas Matulevičius, Eduardas Šimaška, Petras Meilus, Antanas

Danyla, Petras Liubonas, Gerardas Dunda, Jonas Voveris, Jonas Albavičius, Albertas Perminas, Valerijonas Kekys, Klemensas Valavičius, Boleslavas Vaira, Vladas Petkevičius, Jonas Girdzevičius, Vytautas Pesliakas, Juozas Vaičeliūnas, Jonas Tamonis, Alfonsas Bulota, Juozas Indriūnas, Alfonsas Svarinskas, Juozapas Razmantas, Petras Našlėnas, Romualdas Macevičius, Petras Tavoraitis, Pranas Gimžauskas, Jonas Rakauskas, Pranciškus Bastys, Ričardas Mikutavičius, Jonas Fabijanskas, Antanas Slavinskas, Povilas Prancunus, Algirdas Močius, Jonas Augustauskas, Eugenijus Bartulis, Aleksandras Markaitis, Jonas Kazlauskas, Pijus Žiugžda, Vytautas Gringanavičius, Antanas Urbanavičius, Vladas Simaška, Boleslavas Radavičius, Jonas Gudas, Viktoras Šauklis, Juozapas Armonas, Jonas Buliauskas, Kan. Juozapas Želvys, Jonas Maleckis, Petras Marcinkus, Vladas Požėla, Pranciškus Tuminas.

To: The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR
A Statement from: The Priests of the Vilkaiviškis Diocese.

We, the undersigned priests, are voicing our opinion on the question of the "Regulations for Religious Associations" adopted by the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR on July 28, 1976:

The "Regulations for Religious Associations":

- a) discriminate against priests and believers and make them second-class citizens of the Soviet Union;
- b) contradict the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international agreements signed by the Soviet Union;
- c) serve only atheists by helping them administer the Church's internal life by the crudest means possible.

No conscientious priest or believer will be able to observe these Regulations because they are contrary to Church law. The forcible implementation of the Regulations will result in unpleasant consequences as exemplified by the January 10th trial of Father Tamkevičius, pastor of Kybartai.

We priests endorse Document No. 5 of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers which sets forth the attitude of Lithuanian priests and believers toward the Regulations for Religious Associations.

We ask the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet to present our

arguments to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and to obtain from it permission to repeal the said Regulations.

Signed by 92 priests of the Vilkaviškis Diocese: Deanery of Alytus: Leonardas Kavaliūnas, Kęstutis Bekasovas, Vincas Akelis, Juozas Berteška (Dean), Antanas Mioldažys, Vladas Bobinas, Vytautas Būdas, Jonas Baranauskas, Juozas Gumauskas, Juozas Radzevičius, Juozas Matulevičius, Vitas Urbonas. Deanery of Šakiai: Jonas Buga, Gintautas Skučas, Vytautas Užkuraitis, Stanislovas Mikalajūnas, Juozas Jakaitis, Jonas Bučinskas, Antanas Akevičius, Juozas Frainas, Juozas Adomaitis, Antanas Maskeliūnas, Antanas Aleksandravičius, Petras Sitka, Antanas Račkauskas, Juozas Žemaitis (Dean), Jonas Malinauskas, Salemonas Samuolis, Juozas Juškaitis. Deanery of Aleksotas: Vaclovas Stankenas, Povilas Jančiauskas, Petras Dumbliauskas, Juozas Užupis, Antanas Gražulis, Jonas Paliukaitis, Vincas Čėsna, Vaclovas Radzevičius, Antanas Pangonis, Vincas Dumčius, Petras Vagneris, Antanas Jančiauskas, Andrius Rimas, Juozas Pilipaitis, Pranas Liutvinas, Juozas Pečiukonis. Deanery of Kapsukas: Vaclovas Degutis (Dean), Lionginas Kunevičius, Jonas Kubilius, Kazimieras Burba, Andrius Gustaitis, Juozas Mioldažys, Leonas Leščinskas, Juozas Varvuolis, Juozas Šalčius, Antanas Bakys, Jonas Maskvytis, Kazimieras Kudirka, Kazimieras Juškevičius, Kazimieras Skučas, Albinas Deltuva, Jonas Rasinas, Juozas Matulaitis, Gvidonas Dovydaitis, Albinas Jaudegis, Mykolas Žemaitis, Pranciškus Šulskis, Deanery of Lazdijai: Pranas Adomaitis, Ignas Plioraitis, Boleslavas Jarušauskas, Juozas Kriščiūnas, Gintautas Steponaitis, Konstantinas Ambrasas, Stanislovas Račkauskas, Alfonsas Sadauskas, Jonas Grudzinskas, Jurgis Sventickas, Juozas Zdebskis, Antanas Vitkus, Krizantas Juknevičius, Deanery of Vilkaviškis: Boleslovas Rašukas, Antanas Lukošaitis, Juozas Kupstaitis, Vytautas Vaitauskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius, Vincas Jaliniskas, Boleslovas Čegelskas, Juozas Preikšas (Dean), Algis Pasiliauskas, Vladas Bilius, Kazimieras Montvila, Virgilijus Jaugelis, Algirdas Andrišiūnas.

To: The Präsidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR;

The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of Lithuania;
Religious Affairs Commissioner P.(etras) Anilionis.

A Statement from: Priests of the Kaišiadorys Diocese.

We priests of the Kaišiadorys Diocese endorse the December

25, 1978 document of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers regarding the Regulations for Religious Associations promulgated in 1976 and state that, with these Regulations, discrimination against believing Catholics in Soviet Lithuania will gain the force of law. Information and evidence obtained from our daily experience confirm this. Very recently, for instance, Vice-Chairwoman Gančerienė of the Molėtai *Rayon* Executive Committee summoned *rayon* priests and demanded, on the strength of the Regulations, that children be forbidden to assist at services, forbade priests to examine groups of children preparing for First Communion, and moreover demanded that priests not invite other priests to recollections without permission from the *rayon*.

a) They reflect neither the will nor the interests of the Lithuanian nation, 70 percent of whose inhabitants are believing Catholics;

b) They completely ignore the centuries-old cultural heritage of the Lithuanian nation;

c) These Regulations directly contradict the canon law of the Church, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the U.N. General Assembly, and the commitment of the Helsinki Final Act.

These Regulations place Lithuania's believers and Catholic Church in a position which is clearly contrary to what Church canon laws require from the faithful and priests. If the Soviet government allows the Catholic Church to exist and often reiterates that it does not interfere in canonical Church activity, then why do the Regulations, by their very nature, place believers in an adversary position?

We therefore wish to state the following: In instances when state administrative organs demand that we act contrary to the juridical regulations of the Catholic Church, we will follow Church canons and not the Regulations for Religious Associations which are contrary to the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR and discriminate against the rights of believers.

We take this occasion to ask once more that the long-term exile of Bishop V. Sladkevičius of the Kaišiadorys Diocese be lifted and that he be returned to administer the Kaišiadorys Diocese.

February 11, 1979

Signed by 42 priests: Jonas Pilka, Petras Laskauskas, Bronislavas Bulika, Zenonas Navickas, Juozapas Matulaitis, Marijonas

Petkevičius, Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius, Bronislavas Novelskis, Juozapas Stasiūnas, Pranciškus Venckus, Edvardas Kraujelis, Jonas Jonys, Ignas Milašius, Stasys Lindė, Stanislovas Kiškis, Juozapas Masalskis, Petras Kražauskas, Petras Budrauskas, Česlovas Zažeckas, Jonas Voveris, Zigmantas Stančiauskas, Jonas Danyla, Jonas Mintauckis, Alfonsas Šatas, Mykolas Balnys, Vilius Cukuras, Jonas Kaušyla, Petras Žiugžda, Jonas Tomkus, Antanas Arminas, Vytautas Sudavičius, Jonas Zubrus, Juozapas Anusevičius, Petras Valatka, Jonas Ažubalis, Bronislavas Klimas, Aleksandras Alkovikas, Juozapas Gylys, Albinas Šilkinis, Stanislovas Stankevičius, Antanas Jurgilas, Jonas Žvinys.

To: The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR
A Statement from: The priests of the Panevėžys Diocese.

The most renowned states of the world, among them the Soviet Union, signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), as well as the Helsinki agreements which uphold human rights. Concurrently they pledged not to pass laws and decrees contrary to human rights and repeal existing decrees and regulations which limit human rights.

The Soviet Constitution proclaims the freedom to profess religion. If the Constitution did not contain an article (50) restricting religious propaganda, thereby violating the freedom of belief of a majority of Lithuanian inhabitants (75%), and granting unlimited freedom of propaganda to the godless, who are in the minority, then this article could be considered democratic.

The following shameful documents prove that the atheist government places believers in a debased, powerless position: the Regulations for Religious Associations (1976) and the Agreement on the Rental of Church Buildings, which the government has drawn up and submitted to the faithful for their signature. The first version of this agreement was drafted under Stalin (1948) and the second, harsher, version, has been forcibly imposed on the faithful for the past ten years.

We are aware that the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers has addressed the Soviet Government (Dec. 25, 1978) regarding these documents, which restrict the rights of believers, and that the faithful of several Lithuanian dioceses intend to appeal on the matter. We waited and hoped that state officials would satisfy the demands of the oppressed and would repeal the said

documents, which are inherently null and void, in view of the Soviet authorities having signed the Human Rights Conventions.

As long as these unjust documents are not revoked, we feel the duty to appeal and also support the rightful demands of other dioceses. We do so on the basis of article 47 of the Lithuanian SSR Constitution:

"Every citizen of the Lithuanian SSR has the right to submit suggestions to state organs and community organizations on improving their activity and criticize the defects of their work."

But we find it incomprehensible why Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis, using the diocesan chancery to attain his goal, took steps to block the rightful request of the faithful of the Panevėžys Diocese?

Therefore, we the undersigned priests of the Panevėžys Diocese, representing 400,000 faithful from our diocese, ask Soviet authorities to note that the above-named documents discriminate against believers and strive to destroy the Catholic Church in Lithuania.

1. Regarding the Regulations for Religious Associations:

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1978, the Soviet government presented Lithuania's faithful with the Regulations for Religious Associations which wronged and degraded the faithful anew and threatened to destroy the Lithuanian Catholic Church by administrative means. These regulations became a written document proving religious persecution in Lithuania. So long as these regulations are in effect, Soviet authorities will find it impossible to prove in international forums, where the question of the freedom of belief will be debated, that freedom of belief exists in the Soviet Union. We fully endorse Statement No. 5 of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers, regarding the Regulations for Religious Associations.

2. Regarding the Agreement on the Rental of Church Buildings:

The harsh, Stalin-dictated agreement on the rental of church buildings was signed simultaneously (1948) throughout Lithuania. The second version of the agreement, containing more elements of religious restriction, submitted for signature for the past ten years using force, deceit and illegal means, seeks to enslave and destroy the Lithuanian Catholic Church. Such a contract will be evidence in the international forum that the Catholic Church is persecuted in Lithuania.

The whole world knows that Lithuanian churches were built with the work and contributions of the faithful over the past 600 years. Existing church art treasures and other inventory were acquired by the same means. Through nationalization, the church building fell into the hands of the godless. The faithful were given only one alternative: Rent the church building. This is where the arbitrariness of atheist officials become evident. They printed the agreement—a dictate. With this agreement, they appropriated the entire church inventory, including consecrated articles and art objects. Intimidated, threatened and hoping to somehow exist as a community, the faithful signed the "agreement." That is not an agreement; it is force.

What rent must the faithful pay on churches they themselves built?

The faithful are enjoined to pay real estate taxes to the state, insurance payments, perform repairs which sometimes amount to more than several years' rent, give away all art treasures, including sacred articles, give away the entire church inventory, even articles to be purchased or donated in the future, regardless of the donor's intention.

For example, in 1976 Pope Paul VI gave new missals to the Catholic Church in Lithuania and not to the godless. Under the new agreement, why must they revert to non-believers? The agreement requires lay persons—members of the church committee—to report on the revenues the priest receives for religious services. But it also requires to report on who used the religious services. But that is forcible intrusion into the matters of conscience of an individual. This has happened in other Soviet Republics where similar "agreements" have already been implemented. On the other hand, the government makes no commitment—not even to allow material for church repairs to be purchased. The agreement also sets forth circumstances under which churches may be closed, not by law, but under the agreement. The government signs the agreement not with the church committee, but with individuals. An individual is not a juridical entity. Is that a contract? The mere existence of such a document proves that the Catholic Church in the Soviet Union is completely bereft of rights.

We therefore ask:

1. That the rights of juridical entity be recognized to the Lithuanian Catholic Church and her subdivisions.
2. That Catholic Church parishes not be prevented from having

their own parish committees, set up and acting according to the canons and regulations of the Roman Catholic Church, confirmed by Church authorities.

3. That illegal documents be repealed, namely, the Regulations for Religious Associations and the rental contract being imposed on the Church by changing it into a bilateral free agreement.

For committees of twenty, executive and other organs are formed by the government at its order.

We wish to state that so long as there are no Church Committees, priests will participate in committees of twenty and executive organs on the basis of the principle of equal rights.

4. That the genocide of priests, being implemented through the only Kaunas Theological Seminary in Lithuania, be stopped.

In 1946, Soviet authorities restricted the number of seminarians: Out of over 400 seminary students, only 150 remained, in 1949 only 75 and even later only 25. In 1969 and 1971, the seminary trained only three priests per year. During the past ten years only twelve priests were ordained for the Panevėžys Diocese. This year our diocese will receive only two priests and next year only one. But, in 1949, twelve priests were ordained for the Panevėžys Diocese. Over the past three years (1976, 1977, 1978) seventeen priests have died in the diocese. The faithful are well aware that the shortage of priests is not the result of a lack of candidates, but due to the fact that the government forbids certain young men to enter the seminary.

Godless officials threaten to impose monetary fines on the faithful and imprison them for preparing children for First Communion. They claim that group instruction of children for First Communion amounts to establishing a school, unabashed at earning the reputation of persecuting such a school. No one in the world considers instruction for First Communion to be a school. By preventing the instruction of children for First Communion, atheists violate the freedom of religion and thereby commit a crime against the Constitution and the Human Rights Conventions which have been signed, because they render the practice of religion impossible and the freedom of conscience loses its meaning. Priests do not accept this lack of rights and will continue to prepare all comers for the sacraments.

We ask you to consider the rightful demands of the faithful.

March 1979

Signed by 118 priests of the Panevėžys Diocese: Petras Adomonis, Bronius Antanaitis, Vincentas Arlauskas, Balys Barkauskas, Jonas Bagdonas, Juozas Bagdonas, Antanas Balaišis, Bronius Balaiša, Vytautas Balašauskas, Jonas Balčiūnas, Juozas Balčiūnas, Jurgis Balickaitis, Kostas Balsys, Petras Baltuška, Algis Baniulis, Kazimieras Baronas, Gediminas Blynas, Laimingas Blynas, Adolfas Breivė, Petras Budriūnas, Jonas Buliauskas, Povilas Čiuškis, Juozas Dubnikas, Kazimieras Dulksnys, Steponas Galvydis, Juozas Garška, Juozas Giedraitis, Kazimieras Girnius, Mykolas Gylys, Antanas Gobis, Alfonsas Grašys, Antanas Gružauskas, Klemensas Gutauskas, Gaudentas Ikamas, Vincentas Inkratas, Alfonsas Jančys, Povilas Jankevičius, Juozas Janulis, Bronius, Jareckas, Jonas Jatulis, Jonas Juodelis, Jonas Jurgaitis, Antanas Juška, Alfonsas Kadžius, Antanas Kairys, Vytautas Kapočius, Aleksandras Kaškevičius, Lionginas Keršulis, Petras Kiela, Anicetas Kisielius, Vladas Kremenskas, Stanislovas Krikštanaitis, Stanislovas Krumpliauskas, Petras Kuzmickas, Jonas Lapinskas, Antanas Liesis, Juozas Lukšas, Leonas Lukšas, Petras Markevičius, Vytautas Marozas, Pranciškus Masilionis, Leonas Mažeika, Antanas Mikulėnas, Algirdas Miškinis, Povilas Miškinis, Antanas Mitrikas, Jonas Morkvėnas, Kazimieras Mozūras, Jonas Nagulevičius, Algis Narušis, Lionginas Neniškis, Petras Nykštaš, Povilas Paškevičius, Steponas Pelešynas, Albinas Pipiras, Jonas Pranevičius, Augustinas Pranskietis, Leopoldas Pratkelis, Izidorius Puriuškis, Antanas Rameikis, Pranciškus Raščius, Petras Rauduvė, Jonas Rimša, Pranciškus Sabaliauskas, Petras Senulis, Leonardas Skardinskas, Vincentas Stankevičius, Mykolas Stonys, Bronius Strazdas, Alfonsas Strelčiūnas, Aloyzas Sungaila, Povilas Svirskis, Ignas Šiaučiūnas, Bronius Šlapelis, Povilas Šliauteris, Gediminas Šukys, Juozas Šumskis, Albertas Talačka, Leonardas Tamošauskas, Stanislovas Tamulionis, Pranciškus Tamulionis, Petras Tarutis, Petras Tijušauskas, Vytautas Tvarijonas, Jonas Uogintas, Sigitas Uždavynys, Eduardas Vaišnoras, Antanas Valavičiūnas, Antanas Valantinas, Juozas Varnas, Povilas Varžinskas, Antanas Vaškevičius, Titas Vinkšnelis, Antanas Zakrys, Antanas Zulonas, Bronius Žilinskas, Serafinas Žvinys, Benediktas Urbonas.

To: The Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party-
Copies to: The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the
Lithuanian SSR;
The Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR;
The Commissioner for Religious Affairs;
The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of
Lithuania;
The Catholic Committee for the Defense of the
Rights of Believers.
A Statement from: The Priests of the Telšiai Diocese and
the Klaipėda Prelature.

We the priests of the Telšiai diocese appeal to you and other state agencies not only on our own behalf, but we voice here the will and concern of the hundreds of thousands of Catholics whom we serve in their spiritual matters. We belong to the nearly 2000-year-old Church instituted by Christ. Its benefits to all mankind and also to our Republic's culture are gigantic and indisputable. The University of Vilnius, the first high schools, colleges and primary schools were founded by the Church. The originators of Lithuanian literature were also representatives of this Church. It is with good reason that today the entire civilized world acknowledges and values the Christian Church. It is no coincidence either that, upon the election of Pope John II, the officials of the world's nations, including socialist nations, congratulated him, in recognition of the Catholic Church's vital role and importance in the present-day life of mankind.

But the direct and primary purpose of the Catholic Church is to sanctify and save people. Therefore the Church's direct course of action is based on her founder's—Christ's—divine mission (see Mathew 28:19; John 20:21). This mission is expressed through the rightful jurisdiction of bishops and priests, received from the Vicar of Christ—the Pope. In their work, bishops and priests must strictly adhere to dogmatic and canonical rules and duties. Otherwise, they will not fulfill the mission assigned them by the Church.

The Soviet government has made a commitment not to interfere in the dogmatic, canonical and religious activity of the Church. A decision of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party, dated November 10, 1954 reads as follows:

"To direct Soviet Union Communist Party district committees,

national committees, Central Committees of Communist Parties in Soviet Republics and all party organizations resolutely to root out errors in atheist propaganda and in the future assure that the feelings of believers and church servants are not offended, as well as to prevent administrative interference in church activity. It is essential to remember that insults against the church, clergy and believing citizens cannot be reconciled with the scientific-atheist propaganda line implemented by the party and state and is contrary to the Constitution of the USSR which accords Soviet citizens freedom of conscience."

The new USSR Constitution reads as follows: "USSR citizens are guaranteed freedom of conscience; namely, to profess any religion or not profess any, practice religious cults or conduct atheist propaganda. Inciting discord and hatred in connection with religious beliefs is forbidden. The Church in the USSR is separate from the state and the school from the church" (USSR Constitution, art. 52).

Article 50 of the Lithuanian SSR Constitution reiterates this. In light of the above decision of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party, these articles of the Constitution can unhesitatingly be interpreted as granting the Church the right freely to administer its affairs and act according to its principles in its internal life and activity — according to canon law, the keeping with dogmatic and liturgical requirements. It seems this is affirmed by proper government representatives in charge of matters arising between the state and the Church (see J.(uozas) Rugienis, "*Tarybos ir religinių kultų įstatymai*" (Soviet and Religious Cult Laws), *Tarybų darbas (Soviet Work)*, 1972, No. 9, p. 17 and K.(azimieras) Tumėnas, *Įstatymai ir religinės bendruomenės Laws and Religious Communities*", *Tarybų darbas*, 1975, No. 4, p. 26).

In 1905 Lenin wrote in his article *Socializmas ir religija* ("Socialism and Religion"): "The state must not concern itself with religion; religious societies must not have ties with the state government."

It would appear that the Church has the freedom to carry out at least its basic mission. But in actual life, things are quite different.

I.

On July 28, 1976 the Regulations for Religious Associations were confirmed and adopted. They brutally interfere in internal Church affairs, completely disregard canon law and dogmatic or

even liturgical doctrine and actually abolish the freedom of the Church to fulfill its direct religious obligations; they deprive citizens of the opportunity to enjoy the constitutionally granted freedom of conscience.

A. Canon 87 of the Church explicitly asserts that an individual becomes full-fledged member of the Church from the very moment of baptism, and not from the age of eighteen as indicated in the Regulations. The Church and believing parents are directed by canon law to take care of children in matters of religion and provide them with religious services according to the requirements of canon law, dogma and liturgy (see Canons 1330-1331; 1336).

Therefore, Article 3 of the Regulations for Religious Associations brutally violates Church canons and interferes in its purely religious activity. It also violates the freedom of conscience, for up to the age of eighteen an individual would be forcibly excluded from religious life and would be denied the right to enjoy the freedom of conscience granted him by the country's Constitution. Therefore, Article 3 of the Regulations for Religious Associations is unconstitutional, totally contrary to the policy of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party and as such cannot have the force of law.

B. Recently, under the Regulations, local government organs, bypassing chanceries, pastors and parish administrators, interfere in the composition of parish committees and unilaterally impose so-called "contracts." Here, neither the faithful, parish pastors nor the Chancery are allowed to make any corrections or suggestions in the contract—the contract is such as the civil government, likes it. This is not only a violation of canons in principle, but is contrary to the Civil Code of the Lithuanian SSR.

In view of the pressure and intimidation used by local administrative organs against church committee members, the forcible signing of contracts is null and void from the standpoint of both Canon Law of the Church and Soviet laws:

In view of the pressure and intimidation used by local administrative organs against church committee members, the forcible signing of contracts is null and void from the standpoint of both Canon Law of the Church and Soviet laws:

1. It is void from the standpoint of Church canon law: Canon 461-467; 1519-1528. These canons direct Ordinaries and pastors or priests who act as pastors to direct the administration of the parish.

Here they are completely eliminated or circumvented.

2. It is void from the standpoint of over-all Soviet law:

a. Under the Civil Code of the Lithuanian SSR, a contract must be a bilateral free juridical act. In this instance, it is imposed already drawn up, is unilateral and not free.

b. According to the LSSR Civil Code (Art. 168) the substance of a contract is composed of agreement on all points in question. This is completely lacking here.

c. Soviet law does not consider the Church committee to be a juridical entity. It therefore cannot be a contracting party with a juridical person—the *rayon* or city executive committee (LSSR Civil Code, art. 23-24), because it has no rights. Under the imposed contract, the church committee is given many duties, obligations, incurs large expense, but has no legal status.

3. By violating the vital Leninist and constitutional principle that "the church is separate from the state" our Republic's administrative organs wish to completely subordinate the activity of the church committee and actually interfere in countless areas of internal Church activities. For instance, they control when religious festivals are held, who will preach, which priests will attend, etc.

Under the Regulations for Religious Associations, priests and believers are subject to restrictions: A priest cannot administer the sacraments in another parish; believers cannot invite a priest from another parish when they wish; without special permission, a priest cannot assist in a neighboring parish (see Art. 19 of the Regulations). Contrary to canon law, priests are forbidden to regularly visit their parishioners (see art. 45 of the Regulations). In some places, priests are forbidden to bury the dead in keeping with liturgical requirements. On the basis of the said Regulations, certain places forbid children to actively participate in services, and if they do participate, it is not only the children who are punished, their parents also suffer discrimination.

II.

1. It is common knowledge that an absolute majority of inhabitants in our Republic are believing Catholics. Their basic rights as believers are completely ignored and thereby the principles of freedom of conscience and democracy proclaimed by the USSR and Lithuanian SSR Constitutions are violated. Although the equality of all citizens before the law is proclaimed and equal rights and freedoms guaranteed all citizens (Art. 37, 43, 50, 47, 56 of the

Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR), but in actual practice:

a. No citizen who publicly practices his faith can assume a management position in state agencies or places of employment;

b. No citizen who publicly practices his faith can be elected a representative to defend believers, no clergyman can be elected a deputy to any council;

c. No believing citizen is permitted to defend the faith in the press, on radio or television;

d. School-children who practice their faith are prevented from seeking higher learning and are rudely insulted and debased.

Thus, there is a privileged class—atheists—in the Republic and those who have no rights—believers who publicly practice their faith.

2. The policy of the Lithuanian SSR administration is clearly contrary to Art. 50 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR which proclaims: "To incite discord and hatred in connection with religious beliefs is forbidden." But this is permitted and encouraged by Soviet authorities:

a. Atheist articles (especially in the *rayon* press), frequently replete with brutal scorn and bereft of scholarly value, which call believers ignorant, backward, etc.

b. Weekly atheist radio and television programs full of insulting and offensive statements against the Church, her representatives, and even the Pope;

c. Schools hold atheist programs which brutally ridicule believers, priests and the sacraments.

Serious attention must be directed to the fact that a large-scale terror campaign, full of hatred and reaching frightful proportions, is being conducted against practicing children.

All this is a clear indicator of an unconstitutional attitude, irreconcilable with the abovenamed decision of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party and full of hatred toward believers, which of course produces a reaction, troubles people's lives, upsets believers and forces them to defend themselves. If believing citizens continue to be treated this way in the future, they will be driven against their will into the underground by local Soviet authorities. They should therefore take full responsibility for this and not accuse citizens who are defending their rights, as stated in the Constitution.

In conclusion, we ask and suggest on our own behalf and that of believers;

1. That the Regulations for Religious Associations promulgated

on July 28, 1976 and contrary to Church canons and the Constitution be revoked and repealed.

2. For the purpose of drawing up new contracts between *rayon* (city) executive committees and church committees, it is first necessary to coordinate the interest of both sides, determine the legal status of the church committee and its relationship with the parish pastor. From the Church's standpoint, this could be accomplished by proper representatives from the Chancery.

3. The constitutionally guaranteed freedom of conscience is incomprehensible and unimaginable without at least minimal freedom of publication and information. We should be allowed to print at least enough catechisms, religious textbooks and prayerbooks.

4. State intolerance of believers must be restricted, atheist programs and other activities offensive to believers must be banned for they rudely debase what believers hold to be holy; the frightful terrorization and debasement of believing children who actively participate in worship must be forbidden.

5. We priests consider it our full right to ignore regulations which contradict the Constitution, church law and our direct obligations. Moreover, we will no longer inform the civil government about church-sponsored recollections or about preachers who come to them and will no longer provide councils with purely sacramental or religious statistical information on the number of baptisms, marriages, funerals and other religious services rendered because this is purely a matter of internal church life, with no juridical meaning in civil law.

Up to now, collective statements by priests or believers have yet to receive a reply from the appropriate state agencies. We therefore cite art. 47 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR: "Officials are obliged to consider the suggestions and statements of citizens within the prescribed time period, reply to them and take appropriate action." If this statement as well is buried in some drawer, as happened in the past, it will be just one more indication, this time official, that the Constitution deems us believers to be completely bereft of all rights.

March 1979

Signed by 110 priests of the Telšiai Diocese and the Klaipėda Prelature: Vincentas Vėlavičius, Antanas Šeškevičius, Kazimieras Casčiūnas, Bronislavas Burneikis, Jonas Kauneckas, Kle-

mensas Puidokas, Jonas Bučinskas, Jonas Pakalniškis, Petras Serapinas, Antanas Kiela, Jonas Lukošius, Juozapas Meidus, Jonas Ilskis, Petras Puzanas, Romualdas Žulpa, Antanas Struikis, Pranciškus Venskus, Liudvikas Dambrauskas, Domininkas Giedra, Antanas Jurgaitis, Klemensas Arlauskas, Konstantinas Petrikas, Vincencas Senkus, Liudvikas Šarkauskas, Stanislovas Vaitilis, Adomas Alminas, Adomas Milerius, Jonas Paliukas, Anicetas Kerpauskas, Konstantinas Velioniškis, Jonas Kusas, Vaclovas Stirbys, Alfonsas Lukoševičius, Valentinas Šikšnys, Leonas Šapokas, Kazimieras Žukas, Juozapas Pačinskas, Tomas Švambrys, Juozapas Rutale, Antanas Ivanauskas, Kazimieras Rimkus, Antanas Ričkus, Pranciškus Šatkus, Albertas Novodželskis, Vytautas Kadys, Petras Jasas, Petras Stukas, Antanas Zdanavičius, Juozapas Janauskas, Antanas Petronaitis, Tadas Poška, Petras Bemetas, Vincencas Gauronskis, Izidorius Juškys, Juozapas Buikus, Pranas Daugnora, Henrikas Sirtautas, Stasys Ežerinskas, Stasys Ilinčius, Antanas Beniušis, Juozas Mantvydas, Jonas Rudzinskas, Petras Merliūnas, Aloyzas Baškys, Juozapas Maželis, Alfonsas Škinūnas, Vladislovas Šlevas, Izidorius Juškys, Bronislavas Latakas, Julius Budrikis, Julijonas Miškinis, Brunonas Bagužas, Vladislavas Abramavičius, Vladislovas Radveinis, Ferdinandas Žilys, Jonas Gedvila, Juozapas Šukys, Juozapas Grabauskas, Domininkas Biveinis, Aleksandras Jakutis, Vincencas Vitkus, Liudas Serapinas, Juozas Gedgaudas, Jonas Petrauskis, Kazimieras viršila, Pranas Puzė, Bronius Racevičius, Alfonsas Klimavičius, Juozas Olšauskas, Algirdas Pakamanis, Jonas Vičiulis, Juozas Guntta, Kazys Macelis, Alfonsas Pridotkas, Juozas Liutkevičius, Juozas Bukauskas, Juozas Gasiunas, Vytautas Mikutavičius, Vincencas Klebonas, Petras Mitkus, Antanas Puodžiūnas, Henrikas Šulcas, Jonas Jasimavičius, Česlovas Degutis, Bernardas Talaišis, Petras Lygnugaris, Antanas Augustis, Julijonas Tamašauskas, Bronius Brazdžius, Antanas Jakaitis.

To: The Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Copies to: The First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Lithuanian SSR;

Commissioner for Religious Affairs of the Lithuanian, SSR;
The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of Lithuania.

A Statement from: The priests of the Vilnius Archdiocese.

In asking that Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius be restored to the position of Apostolic Administrator of the Vilnius Archdiocese, we

priests of the Vilnius Archdiocese wrote a petition, signed by 61 priests to the Council of Ministers of the USSR in 1970; in September, 1975, we sent a statement to the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR signed by 66 priests; and on February 15, 1976, a group of priests sent a statement to the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Soviet Union Communist Party on behalf of all the priests of the Vilnius Archdiocese. And we repeatedly appeal to you, Mr. Secretary General, regarding the same matter, because the current situation of the Vilnius Archdiocese, with one administrator replacing another, is abnormal from the standpoint of Church canons, the laws of the Lithuanian SSR and believers.

The diocese does not have a bishop: For reasons he himself does not know, he was exiled by order of Soviet authorities far outside the diocese's boundaries, to Žagarė (Archdiocese of Kaunas). Catholic Church canons hold the true leader of the diocese to be the bishop, not an administrator; an administrator can fill this position only on a temporary basis.

According to the Criminal Code of the Lithuanian SSR, internal exile (Art. 27), external exile (Art. 28), deprivation of the rights to hold a certain position or perform certain work (Art. 30), dismissal from a position (Art. 31) can only be decided by the court. Bishop Steponavičius was not tried!

Internal exile, both as the main and an additional form of punishment can be imposed by the court for two to five years (Art. 27), external exile for one to five years (Art. 28), deprivation of the right to hold a certain position or perform certain work also for one to five years (Art. 30). The Bishop has already been in exile for over eighteen years!

Believers view this as discrimination against them: They are outside the law; a clergyman can be unjustly repressed, he is deprived of the opportunity to defend himself, and the believing community cannot defend him either.

In view of the above, we the undersigned priests, ask in our own name and that of all people who love truth and justice, that you, Mr. Secretary General, allow Bishop Steponavičius to return from Žagarė to the position of Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius.

Lithuania SSR
February 2, 1979

Signed by 64 priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius: K. Garuckas, B. Laurinavičius, V. Černiauskas, A. Keina, J. Lauriūnas, M. Petravičius, J. Vaitonis, A. Andriuškevičius, K. Gajauskas, N. Pakalka, N. Jaubra, D. Baužys, K. Molis, J. Budrevičius, P. Bekiš, K. Vasiliauskas, J. Tunaitis, L. Paberžis, A. Valatka, P. Vaičekonis, S. Puidokas, J. Morkūnas, B. Sakavičius, S. Kakarieka, S. Markevičius, S. Tunaitis, V. Aiulis, V. Rūkas, J. Grigaitis, S. Lydys, M. Stonys, K. Pukėnas, A. Dziekan, A. Trusevic, J. Obrembski, A. Čeponis, P. Jankus, S. Malakovski, L. Savickas, S. Valiukėnas, J. Slėnys, P. Tarvydas, A. Gutauskas, J. Juodagalvis, K. Kinduryš, B. Bronickis, R. Blažys, K. Gailius, K. Valeikis, A. Simonaitis, K. Žemėnas, A. Kanišauskas, D. Valiukonis, D. Valančiauskas, R. Černiauskas, D. Puidokas, A. Ulickas, J. Baltušis, J. Kardelis, M. Savickas, A. Merkys, V. Jaskėlevičius, A. Petronis, J. Kukta.

When the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers sent Document No. 5 to the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the USSR, arguing that the Regulations for Religious Associations discriminate against the Catholic Church and must be repealed, P. (etras) Anilionis, the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, stated there are only five or ten priests in all Lithuania who oppose the regulations passed by the Supreme Soviet Presidium and all other priests are satisfied with them. What will he say now, after 75% of Lithuanian priests have stated that the Regulations of the Supreme Soviet Presidium are inhuman, unconstitutional and no one will be able to observe them?

By sending Soviet authorities the statements printed above, the priests of Lithuania have not only demonstrated their solidarity with the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers, but have also proven that Soviet totalitarianism during 1940-1979 has not succeeded in breaking their spirit and loyalty to the Church.

The question arises, who are those 25% of the priests who did not sign the letters of protest against the Regulations for Religious Associations?" Actually, in all the dioceses only a mere 8-9% of priests refused to sign the statement; the rest, especially those living in the countryside, were not visited due to difficult winter road conditions. The reasons which prevented a small handful of priests from signing the protests are as follows:

- a. extreme old age and fear of having any dealings with government agencies;
- b. collaboration with the KGB;

c. placing personal career above Church matters.

The priests of Lithuania are waiting for Lithuania's bishops and shepherds now in office to also speak out against the Regulations for Religious Associations. Shepherds should be the first to react at such vital moments in the life of the Church.

DEATH OF FATHER KAROLIS GARUCKAS, S.J.

After a serious illness, the pastor of Ceikiniai and member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, Father Karolis Garuckas, S.J. died at the hospital of Švenčioniai on April 6, 1979.

The nation lost an active and courageous fighter for basic human rights, and the Church — a zealous and skillful apostle.

A huge crowd of believers from all corners of Lithuania, over one hundred priests, the exiled bishops Julijonas Steponavičius and Vincentas Sladkevičius and the Administrator of the Vilnius Archdiocese, A. Gutauskas, gathered on April 10th to accompany Father Karolis Garuckas on his final journey on this earth and pray for his soul.

The Revs. Jonas Lauriūnas and Algimantas Keina and Msgr. Bronius Antanaitis preached eloquent sermons at the funeral, and Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, member of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers, at the gravesite.

A person who attended the funeral writes: "While listening to the warm words of farewell from the friends and colleagues of Father Karolis, it seemed we were transported in thought to that remote corner of Lithuania—Paberžė—where Father A. Mackevičius kindled in people's hearts the determination to resist oppression, deceit and exploitation.

Is it possible Father Karolis is no longer with us?

No, he remains with us. The oak cross rising above his grave will constantly remind and urge every Lithuanian to oppose oppression and fight for eternal values.

With this brief report on the funeral, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* reminds readers that a special issue is being prepared on the life, work and last days on earth of Father Karolis Garuckas.



Fr. Karolis Garuckas' funeral procession by his grave. 1979.IV.10.



Fr. Alf. Svarinskas, member of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of believers' Rights in Lithuania, saying a sermon by the casket of Fr. K. Garuckas. 1979.IV. 10.

ON BEHALF OF NATIONAL TEMPERANCE

To: His Excellency the Administrator of the Diocese of
Telšiai.

An Appeal from: The Priests of the Diocese of Telšiai.

These days we often read in newspapers, see on television news and hear radio bulletins about floods, hurricanes, earthquakes and other calamities which cause dreadful material damage and cost thousands of lives.

In our country, thank God, there are no great natural disasters. But our nation is drowning in another evil, a flood of drunkenness which claims no fewer victims. Man and women drink too much, so do young people and teenagers; unfortunately, even church servants among our own ranks do also.

People drink "to your health", but in fact health is being undermined; people wish luck, but in fact individuals and the nation as a whole is drowning in misfortune. Moreover, the soul is being destroyed! For Christ has said that drunks will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Seeing these disasters of body and soul as well as the danger threatening our nation, we the undersigned priests of the Diocese of Telšiai pledge to personally refrain from alcoholic beverages and urge others to refrain from using them.

With this purpose in mind, we appeal to Your Excellency asking you to urge, through your authoritative spoken and written word, the priests and believers of the diocese to do their utmost to return our country to the temperance which ruled at the time of Bishop Valančius.

Reverends: Msgr. Jonas Beinoris, Chancellor, Klemensas Arlauskas, Antanas Striukis, Bronislavas Burneikis, Juozas Meidus, Msgr. Antanas Kiela, Jonas Petrauskis, Jonas Ilskis, Bronius Pakalniškis, Jonas Kauneckas, Msgr. Kazimieras Gaščiūnas.

Dear Brother Priests:

At the urging of others and personally aware of the intense importance of the matter, I appeal to you with this letter.

Our intelligentsia today writes with great concern about the continually spreading alcoholism. There is basis for concern. Alcohol

is becoming increasingly popular and becomes our inseparable companion, destroying good customs, beautiful traditions, producing dreadful consequences.

The reproach that no one, except perhaps the motor vehicle inspectors (Professor Dr. A. Marcinkevičius), is fighting against alcoholism is well founded. This reproach is especially distressing to us priests who are the most responsible before God, the Church and the Nation.

What should we do then? One hundred twenty years ago our nation's noble son, the Bishop of Samogitia, M.(otiejus) Valančius, answered this question. It was he who, under extremely difficult circumstances, instituted temperance throughout the diocese of Samogitia.

In 1858 he wrote his priests as follows: "It was with great joy that I learned that the majority of people in the parishes have pledged to refrain from indulging in liquor. I credit this to the grace of God and the zeal of the clergy and hope that the sheep throughout my diocese will follow the example . . . And so, to prevent our being like the Pharisees who Christ accused of imposing hardships on others but themselves not lifting one finger, I convey to all the beloved priests in Christ my warmest wish that they refrain from drinking themselves and also refrain from giving any liquor to others . . . and thereby prove they have become an example to the people in their flock."

Somewhat later (November 28, 1858) the bishop invited Cathedral Chapter members, professors and seminarians to join the temperance movement, striving for a new era to begin with a new generation of priests.

On March 1, 1859, the bishop addressed a letter to landowners, for at the time they were quite important: "In loving your people and sincerely wishing them well, keep them within your paternal care to prevent anyone breaking the general temperance . . . Hardened drinkers will die out, a new generation will grow up, healthy and strong persons will revive."

Because the temperance campaign was conducted with such faith, strength and energy, the results were therefore amazing: over one half million non-drinkers banded together in 197 parishes of the diocese, and during the second year of temperance, revenues from alcohol fell by 68%

St. Paul, the Apostle of Nations, once wrote to the Romans: "Understand the times we live in. The hour has come for you to

awaken from sleep." (Romans 13:11).

Dear Brother Priests! The hour has come for us to awaken from sleep! The approaching Easter holidays are precisely a perfect opportunity to rise together with Christ. Therefore:

1. Let us personally realize and make our flock aware that we must call on God in all matters and not reach for a liquor bottle.

2. Let us resolve and publicly declare that we will no longer touch a single drop of alcohol, and that we will not offer it to others.

3. Let us do our utmost to create a strong temperance movement in all the parishes of the diocese.

4. Let us sternly demand that alcohol not be used in connection with religious services.

5. Let us urge believers to receive Holy Communion frequently for that intention, to say the Holy Rosary individually or in groups.

6. When we greet our parishioners Easter morning, let us speak of the temperance campaign with moving words.

May the Risen Christ help you!

Rev. A. Vaičius,

Administrator of the Diocese of Telšiai

Telšiai

Easter 1979.

APPEAL TO UNESCO BY THE CATHOLIC COMMITTEE
FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS OF BELIEVERS

April 18, 1979
Document No. 12

To: The United Nations UNESCO organization's
International Conference: "For the Peace and Happy
Future of All Children."

Violations of Children's Rights in the Lithuanian SSR

On behalf of the faithful and priests of Lithuania, we thank UNESCO for proclaiming 1979 the International Year of the Child. All

the world's people of good will have responded to the urging to assure children all rights and provide proper conditions for them to grow and DEVELOP INTO VALUABLE BUILDERS OF THE FUTURE.

We are best acquainted with the living conditions of children in the Lithuanian SSR and therefore wish to inform UNESCO of them in this letter.

In our country, it is customary to quote Lenin's words: "The best of everything for children!" One example used to illustrate the great concern shown children is the fact that the Soviet Union has 120,000 permanent nursery schools which care for over 13 million children. In fact, the children of the Lithuanian SSR are not dying of starvation and have the opportunity for education, but here, as is rare elsewhere in the world, children are deprived of many of their basic rights.

In Soviet Lithuania it is usual to speak out about innocent children dying in wars somewhere and the fact there are countries where children are dying of starvation, but the fact that the murder of unborn life is legal in this country is passed over in silence. Although no official statistics are released, Lithuania's doctors assert that some 50,000 unborn children, i.e. as many as are born, are murdered every year in our homeland. For a nation as small as Lithuania, this is a terrifying number. The child's basic right is to be born. It is difficult to expect those who deprive him of this right to grant other rights necessary to the child's development.

The Lithuanian SSR produces an excessive amount of alcoholic beverages—annual consumption amounts to some one half billion rubles. As a result, many parents are alcoholics and their children are born physically impaired. Alcoholism causes a sharp rise in the dissolution of marriages and as a consequence it is the children who suffer the most. No nursery school and no baby-sitter can replace a child's father or mother. At present, one of the most vital tasks in fighting for children's rights is to reduce to a minimum the production of alcoholic beverages in Lithuania and use the most effective measures to fight spreading alcoholism, such a nature as Lithuania has never before experienced, except during the era of the Czarist Russia. It is very unfortunate that thus far the Soviet government has not allowed temperance societies to operate.

In this document, we wish to stop at greater length at the question of how children are prevented from developing spiritually in the Lithuanian SSR.

The children of the Lithuanian SSR do not have the right to be

raised in keeping with their parents' beliefs. From earliest infancy, nursery schools instill atheism in the children of believing parents, even if the parents do not wish it. Godless education continues in the middle schools and in the schools of higher learning atheism courses are already required. Unless they pass a course in Marxist atheism, believing students cannot graduate. In schools believing children are forced to speak, write, draw and act against their conscience, and if such children refuse to carry out the demands of atheist teachers, they are given failing marks or lower department grades. No one consults believing parents whether they consent to have their children given an atheist education—it is done forcibly, on the pretext that atheism is progress and religion is backwardness.

The children of the Lithuanian SSR are deprived of nearly all means of learning about religion and gaining a deeper Christian outlook. During 34 years of Soviet government in Lithuania not a single catechism has been printed, nor a single religious book from which children might learn the basics of Christianity. It is true that a New Testament was published, but because of its small printing—11,000 copies (of which many of these precious books were sent abroad)—children do not have access to it. Meanwhile, all school textbooks are seeped in biased and often slanderous ideas against religion, the Church, the clergy. Book stores and libraries overflow with inferior atheist books and brochures. For instance, during 1960-1977 some 250 atheist titles were published in Lithuania (P. Misutis, *Religion, the Church, Atheism*, 1978, p. 136).

In schools, believing children are forced to join the atheist Pioneer and Communist Youth organizations. Those who do not wish to join are intimidated, kept after school, given lower department grades. A vivid example of such terrorization is the Stebuliai Grammar School (*Rayon* of Lazdijai) where certain teachers use inquisition-type methods to enroll students in godless organizations.

Those who do not join the Communist Youth League are prevented from enrolling in schools of higher education. Those who are forcibly enrolled in atheist organizations are forced to speak against their own and their parents' convictions. Children are thus emotionally traumatized and are taught to be hypocrites. The result of such "education" is wide-spread nihilism and delinquency among teenagers and young people; the number of young offenders is constantly on the increase.

Believing school children are persecuted for attending church.

Their religious beliefs are held against them in schools, they are ridiculed, drawn in caricature, even given lower department grades. For instance, in 1979 at the end of the second trimester at the Kybartai Middle School (*Rayon* of Vilkaviškis) students Rima Abraitytė, Roma ir Rita Griškaitytės, Audronė Juraitė, Rima Žiemelytė and other girls, who are believers and also good students, were given lower department grades just because they attended church and did not join atheist organizations. Similar cases occur in the majority of Lithuanian schools.

Schools create a terrible atmosphere of intolerance toward believing children. After hearing nothing but slander against religion, non-believing students terrorize believing children. For instance, Vytautas and Teresė Semenauskas tell how their son Vitalijus is persecuted at the First Middle School in Plungė. Communist Youth members Kačerginskas, Malakauskas and Šakinis ridicule the believing Vitalijus and have beaten him. When the mother complained to the principal, he stated that such a mother should be deprived of her rights as a mother!

Believing children are prevented from performing religious rites. It is very common in the Lithuanian SSR for teachers to chase from the church believing children who have come to pray for a friend's deceased father or mother. Soviet educators behave in this manner throughout Lithuania.

Under Soviet law, any form of religious instruction of children is forbidden. Only parents have the actual right to teach their children religion within the family circle. The following priests have been imprisoned for instructing children: Juozas Zdebskis, Prosperas Bubnys, Antanas Šeškevičius. In its May 12, 1966 decree, the Supreme Soviet Presidium of the Lithuanian SSR forbids teaching children about religion. Children thereby suffer brutal discrimination because they are deprived of proper preparation for religious life.

Believing children under eighteen years of age are forbidden to participate in religious rites: Choir, procession or Holy Mass. For participating, children are scolded and threatened, and priests are punished by fines. The pastor of Valkininkai, Father Algimantas Keina, punished twice for allowing children to serve at Holy Mass. Even state security organs interrogate children who serve at Holy Mass, for example in Telšiai, Kybartai, Veisiejai, etc. Over a period of several months in 1979, an eighth-grade student named Judeikis at the Veisiejai Middle School was interrogated three times by security police officials.

Every year believing children are forced to fill out special questionnaires which check on the devoutness of students. There are cases of believing children being officially recorded in schools like actual criminals. This was done in 1978 at the Donelaitis Middle School in Kybartai (*Rayon* of Vilkaviškis)

Reference letters for religious students often mention their religious beliefs and they thereby find it more difficult to enter schools of higher education. This is done in all the schools of Lithuania.

Recently, another distressing example of discrimination against children has come to light. State security police officials are trying to persuade believing children, without their parents' knowledge, to cooperate with the security police by providing information it requires. This has happened in Telšiai, Kybartai, Veisiejai, Šlavantai and elsewhere. Children are being morally crippled.

We wish to stress that the above-named instances of discrimination against believing children are not random blunders by isolated godless teachers or government officials, but a coordinated campaign against the religious beliefs of children. This campaign is instigated and directed by the Ministry of Education and party organs.

We hear on the radio that UNESCO is concerned about starving, abandoned and illiterate children. There is great danger in ignoring the greatest crime against children, i.e., their moral crippling and corruption, by depriving them of the conditions to develop and grow in keeping with their beliefs.

We therefore ask UNESCO, on the occasion of the International Year of the Child, to make public and condemn discrimination against believing children in the Lithuanian SSR. We assume full responsibility for the accuracy of the facts submitted and are prepared to illustrate with countless examples the deplorable situation in which the children of Lithuania presently find themselves.

Members of the Catholic Committee
for the Defense of the Rights of believers:

Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas
Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius
Rev. Vincas Velavičius
Rev. Juozas Zdebskis

OPEN LETTER TO
HIS EXCELLENCY JULIJONAS STEPONAVIČIUS,
APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF
THE VILNIUS ARCHDIOCESE

Copies to: The Bishops and Diocesan Administrators of
Lithuania;
The Kaunas Theological Seminary;
The Catholic Committee for the Defense of the
Rights of Believers.

At the end of 1977, fourth-year seminarian Ričardas Jakutis was expelled from the Kaunas Theological Seminary. A committee headed by the rector of the seminary was formed to investigate his case. On December 20, 1977 the rector publicly announced the findings, to be more accurate, the facts of seminarian Jakutis' immoral behavior. The facts were confirmed by (Mrs) Šorienė in her letter to the seminary rector and by (Miss) Činskytė in her statement to the bishops and diocesan administrators of Lithuania. Seminarian Jakutis did not deny the charges—he admitted his guilt.

Suddenly, we heard unexpected news: Jakutis has been secretly ordained deacon and is functioning as a deacon at the church of Nemenčinė.

On February 6, 1979 Father A.(lfonsas) Svarinskas, at the urging of the faithful, visited Bishop Labukas to inquire who had ordained Jakutis deacon. The bishop did not deny the fact, but claimed he did not know who had ordained him: perhaps the bishops of Belorussia or the Ukraine . . . On February 7, 1979 the Rev. A. Gutauskas, administrator of the Vilnius archdiocese, told a large group of priests from the Archdiocese of Vilnius, who came to see him about Jakutis, Kazlauskas and his own sudden election to the position of administrator: "Jakutis was ordained by Bishop Labukas."

How should the behavior of the Rev. Č. Krivaitis, administrator of the Vilnius archdiocese, be interpreted, what forces inspired him to continue to consider the immoral young man expelled from the seminary a good seminarian? On January 11, 1978 during a meeting at the Seminary, he demanded that Jakutis be readmitted to the Seminary as unjustly slandered; he made the expelled seminarian his protege, found him a place to stay in Nemenčinė with the Rev. K. Pukėnas, provided him with material support and even presented him to the ordaining Bishop as a suitable and serious candidate. Moreover, everyone is amazed at Jakutis' strange attitude.

He did not act like someone ousted from the seminary, but like a good seminarian, sent by Vilnius archdiocesan administrator Krivaitis to Father Pukėnas in Nemenčinė "to carry out liturgical training."

A strange incident provides an obviously accurate answer to all these questions. Officials of the civil government became concerned over Jakutis' fate. They even visited witnesses to his offenses (for example, Mrs. Šorienė) and demanded that they recant their compromising testimony. In other words, the civil government considered him one of theirs. Willingly or not, we come to a strange conclusion: Father Krivaitis, Father Pukėnas, the bishop who ordained Jakutis and representatives of the civil government worked hand in hand to ordain the young man, who was unfit for the priesthood, deacon.

A second, no less unexpected event was the abrupt readmission of seminarian Algis Kazlauskas to the seminary. In 1977, the seminary administration severely warned him to mend his ways, and in the fall of 1978 it decided during a meeting of Seminary instructors to expel him from the seminary as unfit for the priesthood. Father Krivaitis, then administrator of the Vilnius archdiocese, objected to this decision. He changed the expulsion decision: he gave Kazlauskas time to mend his ways and allowed him a one-year academic leave of absence. With complete disregard to the Vatican II decree on the training of priests, which requires that "in selecting and reviewing candidates, the standards must always be most demanding, even if a great shortage of priests exists ...", several months later, i.e., in the middle of January 1979, Kazlauskas was readmitted to the Seminary.

During the Soviet era, a large number of good seminarians have been expelled from the Seminary at the demand of the civil government. Some of them waited as much as ten or more years for permission to return. Examples are J. Čepėnas, Father J. Giedraitis, Father A. Graužinis, Father J. Zubrus, Father V. Rūkas and others. Kazlauskas could not even wait out the year! It took him only several months to "change" his character, culture, temperament, vanity. Everyone knows that man is not a thing that can be altered quickly. The canons of the Catholic Church also foresee a person changing, but demands a long time to accomplish this (canon 2295).

The Seminary justifies its actions by claiming that the true masters of the Seminary are the Ordinaries and not they. Kazlauskas was readmitted at the demand of Bishop L. Povilonis. More-

over, the bishop is working on having other seminarians who were expelled from the Seminary as unfit for the priesthood readmitted: A. Paškevičius and K. Mangevičius.

On January 8, 1979 several priests of the Vilnius Archdiocese, impressed by Kazlauskas' intelligence, appealed to Bishop Povilonis to readmit Kazlauskas to the seminary. Does a candidate for the priesthood need only intelligence? On the other hand, who knows Jakutis and Kazlauskas best, we who lived with them at the seminary or those who meet them only occasionally on display? We feel that all seminarians who have not made deals with the security police would speak out against them if they did not fear expulsion from the seminary. Moreover, Kazlauskas' readmission proves the seminary officials' lack the principles, their view of sacred things from between their fingers. They act contrary to their convictions: They first decide he is unfit, then readmit him.

In March 1978, at the demand of civil government officials, Seminary authorities expelled from the seminary two good seminarians who had broken neither Seminary regulations nor Church canons: Vytautas Pūkas and Petras Blažukas. After comparing their fate with that of Jakutis and Kazlauskas we can clearly see who compels the seminary to alter its decisions so abruptly.

What does all this mean? Jakutis and Kazlauskas were expelled from the seminary as unfit for the priesthood, but Father Krivaitis, administrator of the Vilnius archdiocese, continued to consider them good seminarians; certain priests, for example Father Pukėnas and Vaičionis, took them under their wing; the Vilnius Chancery gave them material support, they wore cassocks, served at the altar. Jakutis was even ordained deacon, while Kazlauskas was readmitted to the seminary, prior to the end of his "academic leave of absence," to the same class his friends now attend.

On the other hand, at the demand of the state security police, the expelled seminarians are protected by neither the Seminary, the Ordinaries, nor the chancery. Blažukas does not even have the hope that the Religious Affairs Commissioner will some day allow him to return to the seminary. How ironic! Those others encounter no obstacles from the seminary or the civil government, while Blažukas faces the most insurmountable barriers.

Do we need clearer proof that the seminary, certain bishops and diocesan administrators and certain priests bow to the interests of the civil government? With their help, in addition to good seminarians, the atheists are training so called "loyal priests"

who cater to them and compromise to Church. This fact will not be concealed from the world by either the rector Dr. V. Butkus or by other high Catholic Church officials in Lithuania who grant deceitful interviews to foreign newspapers and radios: they maintain it is not state officials, but they who control the Seminary. When we entered the Seminary and studied there, we personally felt the heavy hand of the state security police. We can therefore now attest to the fact that the state security police has great influence on the Kaunas Theological Seminary.

Everyone understands and sees the atheists' desire to destroy the Church by the hand of her own children, to compromise her, disturb her internal life, divide the unity of her priests. However, how must we understand and justify the behavior of their tools—certain priests and even bishops—which contradicts both Church canons and the decrees of the Second Vatican Council? We view Jakutis' ordination and Kazlauskas' readmission to the Seminary as direct acts of undermining the Church.

Here a historical fact reluctantly comes to mind: the Nuremberg trials which accused persons of causing rivers of blood and tears. Although they all justified themselves with "We were ordered," "ordered from above", but the court condemned them, confirming that over and above the law, there exists every individual's personal decision and responsibility.

The Nuremberg trials are over, but the trial of history continues. It is likely that the so-called sons of the Church loyal to the civil government will be stood at the pillar of shame. Their high positions or the titles they hold will not gain them any protection against this. And in the Lord's court, it is doubtful the excuse "We were ordered" will suffice.

Dear Lithuanian, noble Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius! Today our gaze turns only toward you and Bishop Sladkevičius. You are our nation's pride and hope. We understand and commiserate with you. Your lot is heavy. You are an exile. At this time you are not allowed to administer the diocese, but the real master of the Vilnius archdiocese is not administrator Gutauskas, but you. In the realm of spiritual church activity, you have the same power and right as bishops who hold office. You therefore share with them the great responsibility not only for the Vilnius Archdiocese entrusted to you by the Vatican, but also for the fate of the entire Catholic Church in Lithuania.

Because Jakutis and Kazlauskas belong to the Vilnius Archdiocese, we appeal to you on behalf of all priests and believers who love the Church and ask that you forbid Jakutis to perform the duties of deacon, not only in the church of Nemenčinė but throughout the Vilnius Archdiocese, because ever new stories of his escapades flow from Telšiai, and prevent Kazlauskas from being ordained until you are morally convinced of his sincere reform.

Lithuania, February 1979

Lithuanian priests who know R. Jakutis and A. Kazlauskas: A. Beniušis, R. Černiauskas, M. Savickas, A. Čeponis, J. Alesius, P. Merliūnas, P. Šliauteris, S. Lindė, J. Kauneckas, S. Tamulionis,

Priests who only know R. Jakutis; F. Baliūnas, K. Daknevičius, V. Beržinis, A. Bulota, E. Bartulis, V. Stakevičius, J. Maleckis, J. Pečiukonis, V. Kapočius, S. Puidokas.

(The open letter has been abbreviated. — Ed.)

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

Vilnius

The faithful of Lithuania heard with great joy the broadcast greeting of the Holy Father to the Lithuanians: "To my brother Lithuanians, I wish the hope of Easter in Christ!" The priests and faithful of Lithuania are very grateful for the Pope's concern.

Vilnius

In all the dioceses after Easter 1979, Religious Affairs Commissioner Petras Anilionis urged the Deans who were summoned to city executive committees to observe the Regulations for Religious Associations. We will report more fully in the next issue of the *Chronicle*.

Panevėžys

Bishop R. Krikščiūnas is saying that the Soviet government will not permit Lithuania's bishops to go to Poland when the Holy Father visits there. The government argues that the Pope's visit to Poland is not a church matter, but only a return visit to Polish authorities by the head of the Vatican State.

Klaipeda

To: The Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

A Statement from: The Catholics of the City of Klaipeda and the entire Republic.

We the Catholics of the City of Klaipeda in the Lithuanian SSR and the entire Republic appeal to you, Mr. Secretary General, with the request that you help us regain the church built in Klaipeda in 1961 at the expense and by the care of all Lithuanian Catholics. Soon thereafter, the church was confiscated from the faithful and converted into a philharmonic hall.

Permission to build the Catholic church in Klaipeda was received from the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Council of Ministers of the USSR through the Council of Ministers of Lithuania. The permission was signed by then Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, Khrushchev.

On August 15, 1960 we were notified that the church is being closed. On February 26, 1961, the builders of the church, the Revs. Liudvikas Povilonis (now bishop) and Bronius Burneikis were indicted. Just before the priests were arrested, the matter of permission for the construction was taken to Vilnius to the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR.

After this church was confiscated, we appealed to the authorities of the USSR asking that the said church be returned, but our request was not granted.

The Catholic church which now serves the city and parish of Klaipeda does not meet the needs of the faithful: It is small, has a low ceiling, people often faint and are forced to stand outside due to overcrowding and poor ventilation. The former churches of Nida and Juodkrantė were closed, there was therefore a marked increase in the number of people at the Klaipeda church. The faithful are forced to travel to other parish churches.

Moreover, because Klaipeda is a seaport, it is visited by many sailors as well as other citizens from various states. Some of them also visit the Catholic Church and express surprise that it is the only church, and such a miserable one, in a city of this size. When they inquire whether this is the only Catholic church in the city of Klaipeda, they are told that the large and beautiful shrine of the Queen of Peace which was constructed has been confiscated from the faithful and turned into a philharmonic hall. This dishonors the representatives of the Soviet government.

We are also sending a statement of similar content to the chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, V.A. Kurojedov. The statement addressed to him has been signed by 10,241 believers of the Lithuanian SSR.

The question arises, why the faithful of the city and parish of Klaipeda, who had constructed such a beautiful and spacious shrine of the Queen of Peace, cannot use it, but must content themselves with the small unsuitable building or must travel to other churches, wasting their valuable time?

Therefore, we believers of the city and parish of Klaipeda as well as of all Lithuania appeal to you, aware of the fact that if you consent to help us, the said church will certainly be returned to us.

We feel that the return of this shrine would serve to enhance the prestige of the Soviet Union not only in our country, but also internationally. This step would be welcomed by all the world's people of good will.

We, the faithful of all Lithuania, trust in your help and await your decision.

The Faithful of the city of Klaipeda and
of all Lithuania

(The request with 10,241 signatures was sent to the above-mentioned address).

Copies of this statement were sent to all the bishops and diocesan administrators of Lithuania.

Klaipeda

On April 29, 1979, the pastor of Klaipeda, Father Jonas Baikuskas, informed the faithful in church that he would immediately begin to repair the church and that approval had been received from the Telšiai Diocesan Chancery. The pastor's announcement greatly outraged the faithful because repair work undertaken now, when the faithful are demanding the return of the confiscated church would only serve the interest of the Soviet government. When they went to the Telšiai Chancery, the faithful of Klaipeda learned that their pastor, Father Baikuskas, had not cleared his repair plans with the diocesan administrator.

The faithful of Klaipeda have long been asking the diocesan administrator of Telšiai to appoint a new pastor for them, because Father Baikuskas is unsuitable for this position in the parish of Klaipeda. Every request from the faithful has met with no response because Father Baikuskas has the backing of the atheist

government and the administrator cannot transfer him.

Therefore, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* urges Father Baikauskas to cede his position honorably as pastor to a younger priest with the ability to properly carry out his pastoral ministry in a major city.

The Rev. Baikauskas' continued stay in Klaipėda only serves the interests of the godless.

Panevėžys

In February 1979 Chancellor Vladas Rabašauskas of the Panevėžys diocese warned deans of the diocese in the name of Commissioner Anilionis, that signatures were being collected in other dioceses to a statement demanding that the Regulations for Religious Associations which contradict the principles of the Constitution be repealed. The Chancellor stressed that were the priests of the deaconate to sign such a statement, the deans would be punished. It would be interesting to know on the basis of what laws this warning was issued. Neither state nor church laws forbid submitting requests or demands to the authorities.

Telšiai

On February 10, 1979, (Mrs) Šuorienė (she was the principal witness in expelling seminarian Ričardas Jakutis from the Kaunas Theological Seminary for immoral conduct) was summoned to the Telšiai security police. When Mrs. Šuorienė refused to go to the security police, she was warned she would be taken there by militia car. At the security police, Mrs. Šuorienė had to relate in detail everything she knows about Jakutis. Security agents demanded that she submit all her testimony in writing.

It would appear that Jakutis' future is of great concern to the security police.

Viešvėnai (Rayon of Telšiai)

The faithful of the parish of Viešvėnai are unhappy that the government has forbidden Father Jonas Kauneckas to minister to the Viešvėnai parish. The faithful have appealed several times to Father Antanas Vaičius, Administrator of the Telšiai Diocese, and have presented him with a petition bearing 37 signatures, but the Administrator claims he is powerless—it is not up to him.

In fact the Administrator is powerless to do anything because

Religious Affairs Commissioner Anilionis has forbidden Father Jonas Kauneckas to serve the Viešvėnai parish. At first, he sent the Telšiai Executive Committee a certificate of registry, certifying two priests to serve the Viešvėnai parish: Father Juozas Pačinskas and Father Jonas Kauneckas. Later Father Kauneckas' name was crossed off the certificate of registry at the Commissioner's office. The faithful were informed of this by the Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee. Afterward, a delegation of believers twice visited the Commissioner's office in Vilnius and presented him with the following petition:

To: The Commissioner for Religious Affairs
From: The faithful of the parish of Viešvėnai.

A S t a t e m e n t

The Soviet Constitution states that "the Church is separate from the state." (art. 50) and the Soviet government does not interfere in Church affairs. We therefore find it incomprehensible why you, Mr. Commissioner, have forbidden Father Kauneckas to serve the Viešvėnai church.

It is due to his efforts that the bell tower was repaired, the church painted, lighting and church vestments put in order. In his sermons, Father Kauneckas urged us to be conscientious and diligent, encouraged our children to be good students, not smoke or drink, respect adults and teachers. Moreover, the priest committed no offense when he explained to us that science does not contradict faith, that teachers do not have the right to punish or ridicule children who attend church. This freedom is guaranteed us by the Constitution: Soviet laws do not forbid belief, but guarantee everyone the freedom of belief.

Do not undermine confidence in the new Constitution; allow Father Kauneckas to once again minister in Viešvėnai.

Signed by 97 believers.

February 12, 1979

The Commissioner promised to satisfy their request.

On February 26, 1979, the faithful of Viešvėnai received a letter signed by Commissioner Anilionis which contends that dioc-



Father Antanas Lukošaitis offers Easter Mass in the cemetery at Žalioji, Lithuania. In 1979, the local church was converted into a mill.



The Soviet government is blocking the purchase of this hovel by Z. Dvylaitytė, to prevent it from being converted into a catechism school. Slabadai, 1979.

san administrators appoint priests to parishes and Soviet government organs do not interfere in Church affairs.

Žalioji (Rayon of Vilkaviškis)

On March 1, 1979, the retired old people of the Catholic parish of Žalioji sent a petition to Religious Affairs Commissioner Petras Anilionis requesting permission for a priest from a neighboring parish to come at Easter time and celebrate Resurrection services in a private home, because the real church has been converted into a mill. The statement was signed by 77 senior citizens. With no reply forthcoming, the faithful sent a second request to the government of the *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis on March 27th requesting permission to hold a Resurrection Mass on Easter in the Žalioji cemetery, at the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In lieu of a reply, the cemetery gates were locked.

The pastor of the parish of Didvyžiai, Father Antanas Lukošaitis, availing himself of Soviet laws which permit prayer in cemeteries, celebrated Resurrection services, attended by area believers at the Žalioji cemetery at 7:00 A.M. on Easter morning.

After Easter, the secretary of the party organization at the Rumokai Experimental farm, Vladas Žemaitis, interrogated Vidmantas Kaminskas about how many people attended the services, from where the brass band had come and who took pictures. It seems that not only local officials, but *rayon* officials as well, are seriously concerned about religious services held in cemeteries.

After Easter, thirty-five believers sent the *rayon* government a letter of protest which states among other things: "Your order to lock all the cemetery gates caused great outrage. We cannot find the right words for this behavior."

On April 18, 1979, funeral services were held at the Žalioji cemetery for the late J. Bubnaitis. Chairman Gudynas of the Klausučiai District forbade area employees to go to the cemetery with wreaths and demanded that wreaths be left by the cemetery fence.

Slabadai (Rayon of Vilkaviškis)

(Miss) Zuzana Dvylaitytė, the caretaker of the Slabadai chapel, took up residence in a delapidated shack which had been inhabited by former chapel custodian (Mrs) Buškauskienė until her death. The faithful of Slabadai said they wanted (Miss) Dvylaitytė to live there and take care of the chapel. At the urging of Vice-Chairman Juozas Urbonas of the Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Executive Committee, the

local government has forbidden Miss Dvylaitytė to purchase the shack. When she appealed to the Religious Affairs Commissioner (Dec. 29, 1978), he asked: "Are you perhaps thinking of establishing a school for children?" And so chapel caretaker Dvylaitytė will have to move from the shack. Soviet officials foresee danger to Marxist ideology if this shack is sold to the chapel custodian!

Šaukėnai (R a y o n of Kelmė)

To: The Council of the Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR

A P e t i t i o n

The church of the Šaukėnai parish burned down at the end of the last war. A new wood-frame church with flax fiber poured inside for insulation was built in 1947. Of course, after so many years, the flax fibers have contracted, the lumber in the walls has decayed, holes have appeared through which the wind whistles, snow blows in during the winter and rain enters when it rains. Besides, it is very cold in the winter. All this compels us to ask the Council of Ministers for permission to add one layer of brick on the outside.

In view of the fact that bricks are now freely available, we hope to receive permission for the construction work.

Committee of the Šaukėnai Roman
Catholic Community.

January 23, 1976

N.B. More than three years have gone by since the request was submitted and there is still no reply. It would be interesting to know how much time Soviet agencies are allowed to reply to citizen requests?

Kelmė

On March 29, 1979, the Kelmė *Rayon* Executive Committee ordered all *rayon* priests to come to the *rayon*. The pastors of Kelmė, Kražiai, Karklėnai, Tytuvėnai, Užventis and Pakražantė came. The Russian Orthodox priest from Kolainiai sat in front. The pastors of Stulgiai, Šaukėnai, Vaiguva and Lioliai were not present. Therefore, not everyone obeyed. The assembled priests were lectured by Chairman Januška of the *Rayon* Executive Committee on local

economic matters: how much milk was produced, how many pigs were fattened, how many plows were repaired, etc. These same petty details were also explained last year to priests who had been summoned to the *rayon*.

It is surprising that certain priests still come to such "lectures." So long as such "obedient sheep" exist, *rayon* atheists will lecture them on plows and the increase in pig production.

Užventis (Rayon of Kelmė)

There is a Jewish burial grounds not far from Užventis right next to the main road. These graves were left untouched during the German occupation period. Now, rampaging atheists devoid of any humanity have desecrated many tombstones at the Jewish cemetery and have stolen others. What is more, horses and goats graze there in the summer.

Užventis (Rayon of Kelmė)

Vice-Chairman A. Pažarauskas of the Kelmė *Rayon* forbids the priest to escort the dead to the cemetery through the town.

Šaukėnai (Rayon of Kelmė)

Bronislava Budrienė, a resident of Šaukėnai, died on February 20, 1979. Because she was a deeply religious woman, her children decided to bury her with church rites. Her one daughter was chairwoman of the Šaukėnai district. There began a rash of complaints. At the direction of the Šaukėnai cultural center methodologist, two "Volgas" drove up to the Budrys property. They were fiddled with atheists who attempted by means of various threats to dissuade the children from a Christian burial. The children succumbed to the pressure and buried their believing mother without the church.

The mood of the faithful was spoiled even further when the Russian spoke at the gravesite saying: "I hereby open the meeting at the grave of the deceased Budrienė." This was reiterated by communist-atheist teacher Monika Kančalskienė.

Kaunas

On November 21, 1977, Professor Ladauskas, head of the Obstetrics-Gynecology Department at the Kaunas Medical Institute, was lecturing students on obstetrics. The professor warned that in our Republic you can still occasionally find physicians who categorical-

ly refuse to perform abortions because of their religious convictions. At times, such physicians are followed by interns. The professor stressed that such things are being combated strenuously. "We will not allow religious convictions to stand in the way of women's rights!" Professor Ladauskas concluded his lecture.

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

Telšiai

On February 6, 1979 a security police employee arrived at the Fifth Middle School in Telšiai and interrogated the following grade 10B students: Auksė Juodviršytė, Almantas Fabijonas, Rolandas Jankauskas. Arūnas Razminas was also interrogated somewhat later. The security agent wanted to recruit the students to work as security police agents. He ordered the students to spy on their friends.

Tenth-grader Romas Perminas of the Fourth Middle School in Telšiai was systematically persecuted for several months. (Dec. 1978 — Feb. 1979) with the same goal in mind. Security agents meet him near his home on his way to school or coming back; moreover they order him to come to fixed meeting places which the student is ordered to keep secret. Romas Perminas told the security agents he would not keep anything secret and told all comers about everything in an attempt to rid himself of the security agents. During January-February 1979, the teenager tried to avoid meeting the security agents: he hid from them, did not arrive at the appointed time or bluntly told them he would not come. When this happened, the agents tried to intimidate him in various ways. For example, one security agent even threatened the teenager they would castrate him if they catch him. The security police is especially anxious to have an agent in the tenth grade of the Fourth Middle School in Telšiai because not a single tenth-grade boy has joined the Communist Youth League and two students serve at Holy Mass. Vice Principal Andrijauskas threatened that the Party Bureau will investigate the class because of these "offenses."

Telšiai

At the Fifth Middle School, during one lesson in February of this year, fifth-grade homeroom teacher Urbšienė stood student Arūnas Bladžius in front of the entire class and began to ridi-

cule him: "Look, children, you see before you a religious bigot!" Later, she kept grade 5B student Arūnas Remeza after School, accusing the boy of agitating her homeroom student Arūnas Bladžius to attend church.

Mažeikiai

Students at the Third Middle School were ordered to answer the following questions:

1. What religious book have you read (title and author if you remember)?
2. Do you believe in God?
3. How many times have you been in church?
4. Do your parents believe?
5. Why do you go to church? (out of curiosity, boredom, someone forces you)?
6. Who else in the class believes, does not believe, doubts (list their names)?
7. Who else in the school believes (write down the class, name, underline the names of those students who serve at Mass, sing in the church choir, participate in processions)?
8. Has any program on a religious theme been conducted in class?
9. Through which subject could you prove that there is no God?
10. During what classes did you discuss God?
11. What Christian denomination do you profess?

N.B. Certain questions in the questionnaire are worded in such a manner that in answering them, the student is forced to become a traitor.

Mažeikiai

In January 1979, ninth-grade homeroom teacher (Mrs) Bučienė of the First Middle School summoned one of her students, Marytė Česnauskaitė, and questioned her about the reason she does not join the Communist Youth League. When the girl did not reply, the teacher continued:

"I know, you go to church!"

"Yes, I am a believer and attend church."

The teacher began to explain the "nonsense" of believing in God and advised the girl to read atheist books.

"No, I won't read such books, because I don't like them," the girl replied boldly.

Finally, the teacher compromised:

"Well, if you can't do otherwise, go ahead and attend that church of yours, but at least don't participate in "extra activities."

The student laughed:

"There are no extra activities there. We neither dance nor put on plays there, we pray in church!"

Several days later, there was an open classroom Communist Youth League meeting during which religious was to be discussed. Marytė asked the class teacher to excuse her from attending the meeting. Teacher Bučienė would not excuse her from the meeting. While the class Communist Youth members slandered religion, the girl calmly read from a collection of poems by Maironis. Afterward, the class Communist Youth members besieged Marytė with questions: Why does she believe? Why does she attend church? etc. The girl did not answer the questions. Then the homeroom teacher addressed her:

"Why won't you speak with and answer your friends?"

"I will not answer here. Come to my home, we will talk there."

"But your parents will be there!"

"But, teacher, I don't hide anything from my parents!" the girl exclaimed in surprise.

Mažeikiai

At the First Middle School, grade 4C homeroom teacher (Mrs) Brigaliūnienė harassed student Rita Ruzgytė for a long time. When summoned, the girl's mother urged the teachers to direct more attention to those students who are hoodlums, rob their friends in the street and in school, swear and smoke. Since her daughter has committed no offense, she asked the teacher to stop keeping her after school simply because she attends church.

Mažeikiai

In October 1978, teacher Markienė of the First Middle School kept student Santa Bučytė after school. She scolded the girl for attending church and ordered her to bring her mother to school the next day.

When she arrived at school, the girl's mother asked the teacher what had happened—perhaps the girl had become a poor student?

"No, your daughter is a very good student."

"Then perhaps her behavior is bad?" the mother inquired.

"No, her behavior is also good. Your daughter attends

church!"

"And is that a crime?" the mother exclaimed in astonishment. "She wants to go and I don't forbid her because I also attend church."

The angry teacher retorted:

"I don't want to lose my job because of your daughter!"

Švėkšna (Rayon of Šilutė)

In December 1978, the work of "educating" students was especially intensified at the Švėkšna Middle School in order to implement the program drawn up by Education Minister Rimkus which aims to deprive school children of their national identity and belief in God. This program is administered with special zeal by teacher Ilijara Rimkutė-Černiauskienė. She introduced in the district the so-called obligatory civil "baptism" of children with a list of acceptable names. She calls zone party meetings in order to revive atheist activity; she urges officials of state farms to use any means whatsoever to punish believers, especially the parents of children who serve at Mass. It is encouraging that parents are not being intimidated. Such parents are the Būdvytis family, (Mrs) Adelė Rimkienė, (Mrs) Auškielienė and others. They reply: "Our children serve and will continue to serve at the altar. We know that then they will not break windows, will not steal or drink as do the school's party secretary Bronislavas Vilkas, his wife, son and those like them."

In order to keep her position, school principal Ona Bintvariėnė is also very actively pursuing atheist work.

Other Švėkšna Middle School teachers—Petras Čeliauskas, the Urmulevičius, Stanislava and Jonas Vaitkus, Bronislava Žemulienė, Vanda Vytuvytė-Šimkuvienė—should also stop and think about atheist and denationalizing activities.

Garliava

Homeroom teachers at the Second Middle School in Garliava were ordered to answer the following questions:

1. Atheist activities conducted by homeroom teachers with students?

2. What individual work do you perform with students?

3. How do you determine the religious status of families in your class and the religious influence of parents on children?

4. Number of religious parents in the class (preferably by

name).

5. What individual work is performed with believing parents ?

6. Number of religious students in the class (preferably by name).

7. Atheist activities conducted by class Communist Youth or Pioneer Organizations.

8. Have you learned about the methods of atheist work in courses, seminars, activities of methodology groups?

9. What is the result of atheist work in your classroom:

- a. How many fewer believing parents?
- b. How many fewer believing students?
- c. How many active atheists have you fostered?

Kybartai (R a y o n of Vilkaviškis)

In 1979, at the end of the second trimester, good and excellent students at the Donelaitis Middle School in Kybartai were given lower department grades in an attempt to force believing students to renounce the church and join the Communist Youth or Pioneer organization. Principal Sinkevičius was especially zealous in this offense.

We are reporting the names of some exemplary students who suffered because of the Faith:

Sigita Počaitė — Grade 8F
Rima Abraitytė — Grade 9D
Roma Griškaitytė — Grade 8C
Rita Griškaitytė — Grade 5B
Elė Šicraitytė — Grade 6A
Irena Sabaliauskaitė — Grade 10C
Audronė Juraitė — Grade 6A
Rima Tamelytė — Grade 8A
Rima Žiemelytė — Grade 6D
Reda Sakalauskaitė — Grade 4D
Birutė Bailiūnaitė — Grade 5A
Jolita Liukinevičiūtė — 6A

This list is far from complete, but it eloquently shows what criteria are used to evaluate students in Soviet schools. Priority is not given to education or the student's behavior, but to his atheist views. A child can even be a believer: it is important though that he join the Pioneers or the Communist Youth League, obediently fulfill atheist obligations and the school administration will hold him up as an example to other students.

To: The Ministry of Education

A Letter of Complaint from: The parents of students of the K. Donelaitis School in Kybartai.

We the undersigned parents were astounded when at the end of the second trimester our children, who are good students and have not broken any school rules, were given lower department grades, down to satisfactory. The administration of the Kybartai Middle School did this because our children are believers and do not belong to the Pioneer or Communist Youth organizations.

On the other hand, Pioneer and Communist Youth member—for example, Rimas Balkauskas (Grade 9D), Rita Bemotaitytė (Grade 5A) and Rita Laurinaitytė (Grade IPC)—were given exemplary department grades, though their grades for the trimester included three to four C's.

In our view, such behavior from the educators of Kybartai is not only unprofessional but criminal as well, because exemplary students feel persecuted for their faith. As far as we know, the Constitution of the Lithuanian SSR and other Soviet laws forbid fighting against belief by such means.

We ask that you thoroughly investigate the instances of lowered department grades not only involving our children but other believing students as well, and direct our educators, especially principal Sinkevičius, to correct the unjustly lowered department grades and in the future to refrain from persecuting our children in this way.

April 1979

Signed by parents:

Verbilas, Kybartai, M. Melninkaitės 3
Sabaliauskas, Kybartai, M. Melninkaitės 13
Šioraitis, "Šilupės" kolūkis, Daugėlaičiai,
Počas, Kybartai, Gorkio 22
Žiemelis, Kybartai, Gorkio 22-1,
Abraitis, Kybartai, Pionierių 20
Griškaitis, Kybartai, Komjaunimo 36a-54
Paujauskienė, Kybartai, Komjaunimo 12-8
Tamelienė, Kybartai, Komjaunimo sk. 23
Liukinevičius, Kybartai, Komjaunimo sk. 8,
Sabaliauskas, Kybartai, Komjaunimo sk. 10
Jakimčinskienė, Kybartai, Komjaunimo sk. 26
Jurienė, Kybartai, Ostrovskio 36
Želvienė, Gutkaimio km.

Please reply individually to every parent who has signed the letter.

Grade 6A homeroom teacher (Mrs) Iešmantavičienė of the Kybartai Middle School ordered all students to draw something on an atheist subject. Two courageous believing girls Elė Šioraitytė and Jolita Liukinevičiutė refused to draw. Teacher Iešmantavičienė became enraged at student Šioraitytė and for a long time insulted her in various ways.

Didvyžiai (Rayon of Vilkaviškis)

On Easter morning 1979, Principal Salomėja Mėkelaitienė and Teacher Regina Naujokaitienė of the Arminai-Sūduva Middle School came to spy at the Resurrection services in the Didvyžiai church.

The teachers, who fanatically implement the will of the Soviet government, are horrified that most school children actively participate in religious services—processions and Holy Mass—in Didvyžiai. The boys upset them most for they fear some of them could be future candidates for the Seminary.

After Easter, Principal Mėkelaitienė interrogated student Levutė Vekeriotaitė, ordering her to betray the students who had attended services during the feast.

Arminai (Rayon of Vilkaviškis)

In 1979, at the end of the second trimester, seventh-grader Ričardas Radzevičius, a good student at the Arminai-Sūduva Middle School, received a lower department grade because he attends church and serves at Holy Mass. The persons responsible for this offense were: Secretary of the School Party Organization Aldona Matijošaitienė and school Principal Salomėja Mėkelaitienė.

Krosna (Rayon of Lazdijai)

Homeroom teacher Jesevičienė told students that guests (inspectors — Ed.) were expected at the school and pleaded with believing students not to say they go to church, and if they do say it, then only that they are forced by their parents.

On April 12, 1979 the visiting inspectors asked students: "Who among you go to church?"

Seventeen students boldly stood up.

"Do you go at the behest of your parents?" the bewildered inspectors asked.

"On our own," rang out the reply.

Šaukėnai (Rayon of Kelmė)

On February 30, 1979 a special showing of an anti-religious film entitled "Black Procession" was presented to school children at the Šaukėnai cultural center. The film contains clips secretly taken during recollections in Šiluva and Žemaičių Kalvarija. During these recollections, various communist agents burst into the church and film the people praying there. This is how they gather "material" for anti-religious propaganda, this is how the solemnity of the services is disrupted and the faithful distracted. It is worse than hooliganism!

In this instance, teachers Žeromskaitė and Spudaitė strictly ordered all their students to attend the film. After ushering the students into the hall, they guarded the doors to prevent anyone leaving.

At the beginning, an actor's voice was heard saying: "Come to me, men and women, and I will reveal to you my hatred of religion." Such a statement clearly shows what atheists rely on. They are not interested in truth, they trade in hatred for the church, religion, truth. Their science is lies.

The film made the assertion that religious people are bad. This is how the youth of Lithuania is exploited, this is how the conscience of believing children is confused!

From the Diary of a Ninth-Grade Student

For a long time homeroom teacher S. tried to persuade me to join the Communist Youth League. She told me to keep up with my classmates. She praised me for being first-rate, for adapting and finding time for everything, only unfortunately I deny myself the "best", and when she learned that I regularly attend church she became terrible angry and ordered me to bring my parents. At the end of November, Father came to the school to see the principal and explained to him that none of the children in our family will ever join the Communist Youth League. He disapproves of the organization and we children don't want to join, and as for attending church . . . Father objected strenuously and explained, on his way out, that he is a Lithuanian and does not want to be anything else.

After my parents' visit, my homeroom teacher again gave me no peace. She urged me to disobey my parents and tempted me to

join the Communist Youth League without their knowledge, besides, she ordered me not to go to church. She asked that I willingly choose the way offered by them. I thought, but did not dare say: "You are urging me to swim with the crowd with the current. Thank you, dear homeroom teacher, I've seen many such "happy ones" who followed the path you offered." The teacher did not give up hope and continued to ask me. I told her but one thing: "No, I will certainly not join the Communist Youth, and will continue going to church!" Then the homeroom teacher cajoled me: "You can go to church, only join the Communist Youth." Although she compromised, that compromise is unacceptable to me: I want to be a person, not a hypocrite.

When she saw she was not moving me, the homeroom teacher dragged me to the principal. He tried to lull me with gentle words, but when this did not work, he removed his mask and began to shout terribly' "Either join the Communist Youth League or leave our school!"

He did not frighten me: It is better to be uneducated, than an educated traitor.

They stopped summoning me for talks, although the principal had said he would, but most teachers began giving me much lower department grades. Lithuanian is taught by the homeroom teacher herself, she therefore finds it very convenient to get back at me. I compared my compositions with other girls: for similar mistakes they were given B's, and I a D.

The vice-principal who is also the art teacher was very angry at me. I could never please her. She began to call me a religious bigot, always adding that this is not a church . . . Well, that is their will, and that will of theirs is very unjust and malevolent.

Because I could not stand this atmosphere, I told my homeroom teacher I wanted to transfer to another school and asked for a letter of recommendation. The letter of recommendation listed all my vices with considerable elaboration. It even included the detail that while in the fifth grade I wiped my shoes with my scarf. And as a crowning touch to all my vices—that I am very religious.

NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

1. **Alma Mater**, No. 1. This new publication appeared at the beginning of 1979. The publishers of **Alma Mater** are prepared to act as Defenders of the Truth. The publication is well edited, current and aimed at university students. Lithuania has long needed such a

publication. The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania wishes the publishers of Alma Mater God's blessing in making a valuable contribution to the future of the Nation and the Church.

2. Aušra (The Dawn), No. 15 (55);. Date of publication: February 1979. The *Chronicle* recommends that priests and intellectuals thoroughly acquaint themselves with the petition of L. Regelsonas "To the Authorities of the USSR." L. Regelsonas, a scholar, convert and the father of a large family, can be held up as an example to many on how truth must be cherished and courageously defended. The issue contains much valuable information.

3. Dievas ir Tėvynė (God and Country), No. 11. The issue contains the revised version of the poem by Bičiulis "Night Visitor" and the story "Night" which tells of a priest's interrogation at KGB headquarters.

4. Tiesos kelias (The way of the Truth), No. 12. The issue reports on the activity of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of Believers, on Pope John Paul II and his work. Several articles are included on the pastoral ministry of priests and on the life of the Catholic Church in the modern world: an outline of Pope John Paul II's encyclical "Young Revolutionaries," etc.

5. Rūpintojėlis (Suffering Christ), No. 8 & 9. Both issues appeared in April. Issue No. 8 reports in detail on the popular "Friends of the Eucharist" movement in Lithuania. The aware and believing youth of Lithuania should join this movement in as great numbers as possible, and priests should support it to the best of their ability.

Issue No. 9 contains an article on the late Father Karolis Garuckas, S.J., a former contributor to Rūpintojėlis under the pen name Vaidevutis.

6. Perspektyvos (Perspectives) No. 7, 8 and 9. All three issues appeared simultaneously. As in earlier issues, Perspektyvos continues to print many valuable articles in a dialogue format. In the report "Press Conference in Vilnius" the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and its disseminators abroad are accused of not fully disclosing the problems of the Nation and Church. The *Chronicle* hopes its believing and non-believing brothers in the homeland will supplement by their actions what it fails to accomplish.

7. Lietuvių archyvas (Archives of the Lithuanians), Vol. I (VI). Published by the "Lithuanian Historical Fund." This volume contains the memoirs of Alfonsas Andriukaitis entitled "Punishment Without a Crime." They depict the Way of Calvary traveled by the Andriukaitis family and not only by them: by thousands of the best

Lithuanians. Lithuania's intelligentsia and young people preparing to venture forth into the world should read Vol. VI of *Lietuvių archyvas*. Our thanks to the author for such a valuable memoir.

Correction

"News from the Dioceses" in issue No. 36 of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* contained an item about the caretaker of the Didvyžiai church, (Miss) Z. Dvylaitė, being interrogated. The correct name of the elderly woman is Z. Dvylaitytė. She takes care of the Slabadai chapel and not the Didvyžiai church.

Request from the Chronicle

Please forward information promptly. Submit material to the *Chronicle* as soon as you obtain it. Because of delays, some material reaches readers after considerable delay and loses some of its currency.

Fellow Lithuanian Don't Forget!

P.(etras) Plumpa, N.(ijolė) Sadūnaitė, P.(etras) Paulaitis, S.(ergei) Kovalev, V.(ladas) Lapienis, B.(alys) Gajauskas, V.(iktoras) Petkus and others who bear the shackles of prison so that you might live and believe freely!

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