



**CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
No 73, March 19, 1987**

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**CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN
LITHUANIA No. 73**

**A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 73
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today**

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COVER: Liudas Dambrauskas, released from the-Mordovian prison hospital in January, 1987. A chemist, the Kaunas resident was sentenced to 3.5 years strict regime camp and 2 years internal exile in October, 1984, for writing his memoirs about prison life under Stalin. Dambrauskas has a long-standing heart condition and suffered from tuberculosis while in camp. (p. 14)

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Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On June 28, 1940, the teaching of religion and recitation of prayers in schools was forbidden. The University's Department of Theology and Philosophy was abolished, and all private schools were nationalized. The seminaries at 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. Bishops Matulionis and Ramanauskas were allowed to return to Lithuania, but not to minister to their dioceses or to communicate with the clergy or laity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rev. Casimir Pugevičius
Translator

Appearing since 1972
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CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA, NO. 73

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Lithuania

March 19,1987

600 YEARS HAVE BEEN KNEELING

*The love of the Father of the Ages protects
The land of the Nemunas and Neris,
Under the Lithuanian roof
A new fire will now glow.*

*Where primeval forests murmured,
And the flames of altars burned,
Spires raise high the Cross of Christ,
Not to be conquered by storms.*

*Not the wildest winds shall root up,
Christ, our living love for you!
You conquered the world,
You are the ruler of Lithuania!*

*Marked with the sign of the cross,
Six centuries kneel...
The cross helps to conquer,
If you carry it with Jesus.*

*Embracing the cross, we stride
Along the roads of joy and suffering
Never having disowned it,
We believe! God will not abandon us!*

We have begun the jubilee year of 1987. What is the attitude of Catholic Lithuania as it begins the jubilee? Resolve, faithfulness, regardless of atheistic deceit. Even though belatedly received, Catholic baptism determined our nation's destiny during the past 600 years. The lateness of our baptism created conditions under which the Polish clergy had a disproportionate influence on the ecclesiastical and cultural life of Lithuania. At the same time by its universality and its respect for national cultural values, that very Catholicism was the foundation upon which our national revival movement matured and ripened, in spite of an atmosphere of Czarist Russian terror.

Today, as we commemorate the jubilee of the baptism of Lithuania while in the grip of that same Russia's new empire, we must draw wisdom from the historical experience of the past six centuries, and especially from the struggles and the achievements of Catholic Lithuania at the end of the last century.

The primitive atheistic materialism which Lector J. Sakalauskas of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania has been so zealously promoting during preparations for the jubilee, considers Catholic baptism to be the beginning of Lithuania's troubles, and sees the Russian occupations -- both those of the last century and of this one — as eras of national "self-determination".

Every thinking Lithuanian is feels deeply that history is not on the side of the Party propagandists.

Describing in 1939 the 550th anniversary of the baptism of Lithuania as it was commemorated in independent Lithuania, Professor Stasys Šalkauskis wrote: "Having once done ourselves a disservice by delaying our baptism, surely we will not now be in a hurry to dissociate ourselves from its good effects just because the decadence of civilized nations is headed in that direction? This would be like the fool in that story, who mourned during a wedding and chuckled at funerals."

As we commemorate the baptism received by Lithuania 600 years ago, the government atheists would like us to mourn, yet it was Catholic baptism which prevented a "fortunate" assimilation into that great Russian Orthodox nation whose vast territories were once ruled by the Grand Dukes of Lithuania.

Atheists today would also like us to accept with complete admiration and joy the efforts of Czarist Russia and of the rulers of the contemporary Russian Empire to de-Catholicize and to de-nationalize Lithuania.

Even the more thinking Soviet scholars admit the groundlessness of these government atheist views. At the end of January this year, in the Library of the Republic in Vilnius, a scientific conference was arranged, dedicated to the 600th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity into Lithuania. Speaking during the conference, philosopher B. Genzelis evaluated the significance of the introduction of Christianity to Lithuania thus: In the cultural sphere, the influence of Christianity has been positive: the cultural treasures accumulated by the Christian nations of Western Europe became accessible to Lithuania. The political significance was negative because of the increased national influence of the Poles (although the fact that Catholic baptism lessened the danger of Lithuania becoming Russian was passed over), and in the religious sphere, the atheistic philosopher honorably refused to evaluate the significance of Lithuania's Catholic baptism since as a philosopher of the atheistic-materialistic school, he could not evaluate this objectively.

The lecturer mentioned a number of deficiencies in contemporary militant atheism. Having brought up a favorite term of the atheists — religious extremism — Doctor of Marxist Philosophy B. Genzelis affirmed that religious extremism had been generated by atheist extremism. He also emphasized that a great deal of harm had been done to the culture of Lithuania by the "bulldozer

atheism" cultivated during the Soviet era when monuments of religious art were destroyed: wayside crosses and shrines in Lithuania, etc. "Bulldozer atheism" was not infrequently disseminated in printed atheistic propaganda published at the behest of the government.

Antanas Rybelis, a staff member of the *Mintis (Thought)* Publishing House, tried to counter, saying that atheistic literature of such a nature had not been published, but he himself admitted that the publishing house had not been able to push an objective collection of historical documents concerning the baptism of Lithuania past the barriers of government censorship. We had to be satisfied with the collection of extracts from the bulls of popes declaring crusades against pagan Lithuania tentatively edited in the post-war years by confirmed atheist professor Pakarklis. As participants in the conference agreed almost unanimously, such an incomplete and biased publication really will not contribute to an objective evaluation of the significance of Christianity in the history of our nation.

The Catholics of Lithuania know that the conditions for such an objective evaluation do not exist in contemporary Lithuania ruled by the atheists, despite all the campaigns of reorganization and openness proclaimed by Mikhail Gorbachev. At the beginning of the jubilee year, Lithuania was visited by the new Vice Chairman for Catholic Affairs, Kuznetsov, of the Moscow Council for Religious Affairs. He is a trained member of the KGB, who served in the Soviet Embassy in Italy for seven years. Regardless of his polite smile, his visit bodes no good for the Catholic Church in Lithuania. Kuznetsov tried to convince the bishops of Lithuania that their most important duty is to keep the believing public from any struggle for the rights of believers. The Catholics of Klaipėda, according to him, can be completely content with not having recovered the church built by the faithful themselves and unjustly taken away from them. Remodeling the little old church would suffice.

Bishops Vincentas Sladkevičius and Antanas Vaičius would be able to attend meetings of the Vatican Congregation of which they are members only when they agree to be of service also to the atheistic government, getting more actively involved in the Friends of Peace movement.

The new Moscow "protector of the Catholics" was disturbed on account of the activities of religious orders in Lithuania, and he asked with some concern whether *Opus Dei* was not active in Lithuania.

The Rector of the Theological Seminary in Kaunas, back from consultations in Moscow, told the seminarians at the beginning of the jubilee year that Moscow was threatening even to close the last theological seminary for three reasons:

1. Some of the seminarians belong to religious orders;
2. In the seminary, there are anti-Soviet organizations in operation (in the Vice Rector's opinion, such an anti-Soviet organization disrupting



Lithuania's sole official seminary, in Kaunas.

unity among the seminarians consists of seminarians publicly taking pledges of abstinence from alcohol);

3. Lithuanian spirit is alive in the seminary. Although the seminary supposedly prepares seminarians only for Lithuania, it should be more international in spirit, that is, the ranks of seminarians and professors should be thinned out with little-known individuals who, nevertheless would be more dedicated to the atheistic government. These are just a few examples indicating the contemporary plight of the Catholic Church in Lithuania as it celebrates the 600th anniversary of its beginnings.

One hundred years ago, the 500th anniversary of the baptism of Lithuania was commemorated during similarly difficult times of Czarist oppression. In 1887, the jubilee fell between two memorable dates: the 1886 massacre of Kęstaičiai and the 1893 massacre of Kražiai. In spite of the painful trials of those times, the Catholic Church in Lithuania grew unusually strong during the past one hundred years: in its organizational aspect the Ecclesiastical Province of Lithuania was created, directly responsible to the Apostolic See; in the spiritual and cultural area, Catholicism sank its roots more deeply in Lithuanian hearts.

We trust that regardless of today's painful trials, God will allow Catholicism in Lithuania to wax and mature as we begin the seventh century of

Christian Lithuania. Hence, in spite of the difficult conditions, repressions, and the sacrifices accumulated by the prisoners in jail, this jubilee year is a joyous year. We thank the Lord for everything, but especially for His way of the cross which He shares with us, leading to eternal resurrection!

*Six hundred years are kneeling --
The bleeding wounds complain--
But with the prayer of hope on our lips,
Oh God, You refresh us again!*

*Embrace our little nation,
Cleansed by baptismal waters
Invited to the joy of heaven.
It will gain new strength.*

*Six hundred years are flowing
In the stream of life.
For our faith and for baptism
Let this hymn be our thanks!*

UNITY OR SERVITUDE?

The new "Gorbachev Era" is urging on the people by all means at its disposal the idea of the "great reorganization" based on a new way of thinking and acting. The inspirer and creator of this new re-ordering says himself that present times have "posed problems of undreamed novelty and unheard scope which must be solved in as short a span of history as possible."

Is this great "reorganization" not similar to the "great leaps forward" and "cultural revolutions", complete with quotations from Mao which have faded into historical oblivion, and which also were supposed to be carried out in a brief time.

However, all those movements born of megalomania are remembered today only as a bad dream which caught millions of people up in its dizzy spin. And who will count the meaningless sacrifices and the wrecked lives? Just as earlier, so the prime purpose and task of the contemporary movement is to attain complete unity of thought and action. That means to renounce one's own subjective thinking and individual outlook and to "switch" to a collective mechanism with compulsory programming. It is just like K. Saja's story, "Ninetroubles" (*Devynpédziai*): To do nothing which displeases the ox: Not to sing, not to speak loudly, not to think for oneself, etc.

The all-union conference of social studies deans which took place in Moscow, October 1, 1986, reeks of a new Maoism. On that occasion, Mikhail Gorbachev said that for the speedier implementation of restructuring and for the attainment of new conditions for Soviet society, it is essential to activate ideological theoretical activity; that is, in institutions of higher learning, to focus basic attention on the teaching of social studies (Marxism-Leninism, scientific Communism, party history, atheistic Communism, etc.). He went on to explain that the ability to keep one's bearings in today's complex and contradictory world is not a natural gift, it does not come about of itself by studying special disciplines. Hence, specialists of the future must be taught this ability since only social studies can form the spiritual underpinnings of the personality of the Soviet specialist. The teaching of social studies - that is the question of questions, (c.f. the quotations from Mao Tse Tung in *Tire Morning Dawns Red*)

The chief Communist Party ideologue, Yegor Ligachev, spoke along the same lines, inviting everyone to unity in word and work.

Nevertheless, regardless of all the fancy talk and ringing mottoes concerning unity, there is one section of the public with whom it is urged not to unite but to do battle, that is the believing public, especially the Catholic Church, and most of all the Catholic Church of Lithuania - that solitary outpost in the republics subjugated by the Communists.

On September 28, 1986, the editorial in *Pravda* writes, "The most important task is to use all the forms and means of atheistic education to assemble a deep, offensive political content," (This means an offensive and not unity!) In the editorial, criticism is leveled against the fact that in some scientific works and works of literature and art, the life of the Church and Church ritual are idealized, and an attempt is being made to identify religious morality with the principles of socialist social virtue, and writers who sometimes "flirt" with God, objectively helping to revive ideas of God, are condemned.

Ligachev is offended because some Soviet people are beginning to talk about tolerating religious ideas and a return to the Tightness of religious decency. These values were created by the masses in their war against exploitation and against the wealthy. The proponents of religion oppose the materialistic world-view with all the means at their disposal. This is why they invented the myth that freedom of religion is being suppressed in the Soviet Union. At times, religious accoutrements disguise bourgeois nationalism, for example, the activities of Islam, the Uniates and some Catholic clergy. As long as such phenomena recur, the *Pravda* editorial urges that all propagators of scientific atheism, all those who work in education, teachers, writers, artists, proponents of culture, all thinking workers, and above all, all Communists, be recruited for the war on religious ideology. Here of course must be added the basic arsenal for this war: press, television, radio, and also the most dependable apparatus of

compulsion: the KGB, the militia, the prosecutorial apparatus, administrative organs, etc.

All these gigantic forces are gathered on one side of the barricade, the side of the attackers. And what is left on the other side of the barricade? Who is that dangerous enemy against which all the powers of earth and hell are drawn up? How is it to hold out against the ever-new and increasingly ruthless waves of assault?

Perhaps it would not hold out if it were not the Catholic Church, built on the rock of immortality, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, for it is defended and guarded by Jesus Christ, God, our refuge and our strength. All the trials experienced over six hundred years, the Catholic Church in Lithuania was able to bear only because it firmly believed in the mission of Christ here on earth, that Christ Himself abides with her. The rampaging of the Calvinist reformation, the threats of Czarism and activities of freethinkers and finally, the well-organized efforts of state atheism shatter against this immovable rock of strength.

Of course, it cannot be claimed that in this life-or-death struggle, the Church does not suffer losses. Some grow weary of the constant tension, while others shamefully retreat on account of their weak faith; some are paralyzed with fear for the uncertainty of the future, while others instinctively shirk suffering and sacrifice; some are unwilling to renounce their daily comforts, while others are infected by scepticism. This is natural and human.

However, the basic nucleus of the Church remains firm and unchanged. This is, as it were, that community of Christians confirmed and dedicated on the first Pentecost, to whom the way they have chosen and their purpose are clear. It is impossible to break and defeat such a person who, for love of the truth, does not shirk suffering, is not afraid even to sacrifice liberty or life. Nevertheless, there are those who call such individuals simple fools, for as the p st A. Drilinga writes, "Why agonize over the fact that an evil-doer has deceived a decent person, has spat into his heart, has trampled faith and hope, for all that occurs beyond you, not with you, does not effect you.... thus have sober-minded people spoken who may perhaps never know what suffering is..." Hence, atheism, knowing that it will not be able to overcome the defenders of Christ's Church by frontal assault, has called upon a method tested long ago by all totalitarian regimes: "Divide and conquer!"

One of these methods consists of calling for unity (a peculiar paradox), in order that, by the actions of certain leaders and clergy of the Catholic Church, they might break the resistance of zealous and loyal defenders of the faith to force and persecution, the bending of the Church to the state.

For that reason, proponents of "unity" are promised a variety of perquisites: a better and wealthier parish, appropriate titles, even a bishopric. As often happens in life, here too the human element has triumphed. Similar



Bishop Steponavičius (left) and Father Tamkevičius

co-workers of atheism have been found who publicly and privately have not missed an opportunity to criticize and even condemn activities of the Helsinki Group and the Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights, who have looked with undisguised opposition at the efforts of Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius, Juozas Zdebskis and others, to improve the prestige of the Church and of religion; they ignore and take offense even at Vatican Radio broadcasts and underground publications. And all this in the name of the good of the Church, the love of Christ and Christian unity, renouncing all conflict with representatives of the government. If only they had enough civic courage to admit that they represent only the atheist viewpoint, they would not have to hide their iscariotic actions under hypocritical arguments, and all "for a bit of gold, a spoon of tasty food".



The late Father Juozas Zdebskis

Could there be a truer copy of the Pharisees of Christ's time? The Pharisees condemned Christ to death, lest He incite a revolt which could provoke Roman acts of violence against the Jews and the synogogue. Today it is feared that the activities of the zealous defenders of the Faith might evoke great repressions of the clery and the Church. However, the loyal ones, regardless of painful sacrifices, in the face of the choice which has arisen — with whom and against whom? — have remained strong and unshakeable. How great a significance the solution of this problem of choice has had is shown by the following example, one of many.

In his time, when the implementation of atheistic "unity" began to bear fruit (a split among the priests), Father Pranciškus Masilionis, tormented by painful thoughts, tramped on foot seven kilometers through the snow and

cold to a provincial backwater to visit Father Juozas Zdebskis and ask him, "Whose side are you on, Father Juozas?"

Upon hearing the reply, "I am with those to whom God, the Church and our ancestral land are dear, who are not afraid to risk freedom or life," he went back on foot, only now in high spirits, feeling neither fatigue nor unrest. After the blood of priests had run in the streets, and after many honorable men dedicated to God and country had been put in chains, it became clear that the Catholic Church in Lithuania and the Lithuanian nation would survive in this life or death struggle. The blood of martyrs and the suffering of the despised sanctify and strengthen every good effort.

And how does the atheist overlord value the effort of the proponents of that so-called unity? Is he grateful to them, or does he just use their ignorance? To the on-looker, it does not seem that they are equal partners, or trustworthy allies (sometimes praised, it is true, allowed to visit the Vatican and to attend various conferences, and granted interviews with foreign journalists), it more likely reminds us of relations between slave-driver and slave, the strong and the weak. The differentiation of relations between each other, based on such principles do not give one either a policy or an advisory voice. Here there is only one iron-clad and merciless law: to do unconditionally what one is told, "what pleases the ox" (*Devynbėdžiai*). (sic)

The Creator made man free and inspired him with a yearning for goodness and truth. Our Savior showed us the horror of sin and redeemed mankind by His blood for eternal happiness and joy, for the most noble and loyal unity with the King of Heaven and Earth. Let us not, therefore, be tempted by false prophets, let us not become enamored of their deceitful and hypocritical invitations. Our unity is Christ! He alone is our Way, Truth and Life.

**From: Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights
Underground Group No. 7**

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

A Petition

In 1987, the Catholic Church celebrates the 600 year jubilee of the baptism of Lithuania. It is obvious that every Catholic in Lithuania wants this anniversary to be celebrated solemnly. To this just desire of the Catholics of Lithuania, Soviet government officials are reacting by inciting a campaign of hatred and suspicion against the Catholic Church in Lithuania. Witness the angry provocative tone and the rudeness of atheistic articles appearing in the Soviet press.

At the beginning of 1986, the magazine *Soviet Woman (Tarybinė moteris)* published Vldas Balkevičius' article, "The Holy Family" ("*Šventoji šeimyna*"), full of calumnious inventions aimed at the persons of Jesus and Mary so dear to all Christians. Even though the author of the article knows well that the groundlessness of those calumnies is universally acknowledged, nevertheless he repeats those calumnies, wishing to demean and insult the faithful. Would not all Communists feel offended if someone proclaimed publicly in the press that the Communist Party was founded by a bastard, the son of a loose woman? This is how a Soviet magazine acts toward believers.

The shrine of the Mother of God at Šiluva is dear to all Lithuanian Catholics. The religious festivals which take place there attract crowds of worshippers by the thousands. After this year's festival at Šiluva, the weekly *Literatura ir menas (Literature and Art)* ran a long article in which crude fun is poked at the religious festival of Šiluva and its participants. It even goes so far as to call the sacrifice of the Mass, sacred to all Christians, a public advertisement for drunkenness.

In the Soviet press, priests who conscientiously carry out the important task placed upon them by *Canon Law* - to care for the catechization of children and youth — are crudely attacked. Deputy Petras Anilionis of the Council for Religious Affairs, in an article published October, 1986, in *Valstiečių laikraštis (Peasants' Newspaper)*, not only attacks priests trying to carry out this duty, but he even cynically ridicules those priests who do not dare keep young priests from fulfilling this duty. How would the Communists react if the attempt were made to oblige the leadership of the Communist Party in some country to force its members not to keep Party rules? At the present time, this is how the Soviet government is acting with the Catholic priests of Lithuania.

September 30, 1986, *Tiesa (Truth)* reprinted the *Pravda* editorial, "Developing Convinced Atheists". In this editorial, religion is called a lying system of beliefs from beginning to end, that is, any positive role for religion in society is categorically denied. The article urges war on religion using every means. And after publication of such an official editorial, Commissioner Petras Anilionis of the Council for Religious Affairs summons the bishops of Lithuania and demands that they sign a statement supporting Soviet government policy regarding the question of peace. What significance can the signatures of the bishops officially called "liars from beginning to end" have then under such a statement, unless it is to thoroughly demean the bishops and to ridicule them.

We demand:

1. That the Commissioner discontinue such terrorizing of the bishops in Lithuania;
2. That the crude and calumnious atheist pre-jubilee propaganda through the mass media be stopped;

3. That the priests not be prevented from fulfilling the duty imposed on them by *Canon Law* in the area of religious education of children and youth;

4. That the other means of oppressing the Church which the government atheists have employed in preparation for the Lithuanian Christianity Jubilee be revoked and that the imprisoned zealous Lithuanian priests be released.

November, 1986

THANK YOU

We thank Divine Providence most sincerely for the constant protection which has surrounded the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* for fifteen years. We are grateful for the joys and for the sufferings, everything which the Will of the Lord has sent.

The editorial staff of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* thanks all who have suffered for the *Chronicle* in camps and in prisons, and have experienced the nightmare of searches and interrogations.

We thank our brethren abroad for their dedication defending the affairs of the Church and the nation, translating and disseminating the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

We thank all who assist the *Chronicle* by their work, prayer and donations.

May the good God reward them all!

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS FOR YOUR SACRIFICE

On January 6, 1987, Vilnius resident Vladas Lapienis was released from labor camp in Mordovia. He refused to sign any promise to be loyal to the Soviet government in the future. The chekists were satisfied with a written request from Lapienis' wife to release him on account of bad health and on account of the care for the elderly which her husband requires.

Docent Vytautas Skuodis, having completed his sentence of seven years strict regime, was taken to exile in Magadan. After being kept for a whole month in Chelyabinsk prison in solitary confinement, on February 5 Skuodis was released. The KGB repeatedly demanded a promise from Skuodis in writing that he would not break Soviet law in the future. Skuodis, arguing that he had never broken Soviet law, but that on the contrary, those who terrorized and tried him had not abided by either the Constitution or with international agreements which the U.S.S.R. had signed, refused to comply with the officials'

demands. "Making such a promise in writing would in itself be an acknowledgement that in the past, I did not keep the law, and that's not true," said Skuodis. Finally, Skuodis agreed to sign the following text drafted by the KGB themselves: "I request that you let me go to the U.S.A. I will not break the law."

In January, 1987, Antanas Terleckas returned from exile in the region of Magadan to Lithuania. Before leaving, Terleckas wrote to officials, "I will return an old man; I am not dangerous anyway on account of my health."

At the end of January, 1987, Kaunas resident Liudas Dambrauskas was released from the Mordovia prison hospital.

The faithful of Lithuania congratulate and thank Vladas Lapienis, Vytautas Skuodas, Liudas Dambrauskas, Antanas Terleckas and Algirdas Patackas (released from KGB detention in Vilnius) for the sufferings which they had to undergo in interrogations in Soviet prisons and in labor camps, for the entire road of labor and sacrifice which they travelled which have been placed on the altar of the country and the Church.

P.S. According to available information, since February 11, 1987, the priest-prisoners Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius have been brought from the Perm Camp and are being kept in the isolation prison of the Vilnius KGB. A request in writing to be allowed to emigrate is being demanded of them. The essential condition for release which the KGB is proposing to the priest-prisoners is a "promise" not to break Soviet laws in the future, that is, to be loyal to the Soviet government.

SEARCHES AND INTERROGATIONS

K a u n a s

On November 18, 1986, a thorough search was carried out in the apartment of Mrs. Miliūnienė, mother-in-law of Algirdas Patackas who was under arrest. The apartment is located in Kaunas, Aluntų g-vė., nr. 47. Directing the raid was KGB Major Vidzėnas. During the search, a portable typewriter was seized, together with a few copies of the article "The Essential Structural Sign of the Religion of the Baits". After the search, Mrs. Miliūnienė was taken to KGB headquarters and interrogated.

K a u n a s

On October 10, 1986, KGB staff personnel showed former political prisoner Liudas Simutis, whom they had summoned to KGB headquarters in Kaunas, Algirdas Patackas' manuscripts of the incriminating publication *Lietuvos ateitis*, No. 6 (*Future of Lithuania*), including "A Letter to the Seminarians of Lithuania", written by Simutis, and demanded that he tell them how the letter came to be in *Lietuvos ateitis*. The prisoner explained that the letter was addressed also to Security Committee staff member Vidzėnas, and he did

not know how the letter could have gotten from this office into an illegal publication.

K a u n a s

On November 4, 1986, Nijolė Patackienė, wife of Algirdas Patackas, was interrogated by KGB Agent Stepučinskas. The chekist inquired whether Mrs. Patackienė was acquainted with Jūratė Banevičiūtė, Arūnas Rekašius, Liudas Simutis and Povilas Butkevičius, and how she would characterize them. She replied that she did not know the individuals mentioned. Interrogator Stepučinskas inquired whether she had seen the publications *Ethos* or *Lietuvos ateitis*. When she replied that she had not, the KGB agent showed her manuscripts of *Lietuvos ateitis* and asked whether she did not recognize articles written in her husband's hand. The interrogator persistently inquired about Algirdas Patackas' political views, and tried to convince Nijolė that her husband had anti-Soviet views. She tried to show that her husband never got involved in political questions. Interrogator Stepučinskas also demanded she characterize Patackas' religious views, how often he went to church, etc. Mrs. Patackas absolutely refused to answer such questions.

K a u n a s

In November, 1986, Antanas Patackas, the father of Algirdas Patackas, was summoned four times to the KGB in Vilnius for interrogation. The last interrogation took place November 25. Antanas Patackas was interrogated by Major Vidzėnas, to whom it appears that the further prosecution of Algirdas Patackas' case has been turned over as of November. The investigator showed Patackas manuscripts of *Lietuvos ateitis*, demanding that he identify articles written in his son's hand. The KGB agent accused Antanas Patackas of writing articles for the underground publication *Aušra (Dawn)*, and authorship of the books *Atskiroji Lietuva (A Separate Lithuania)*, *Lietuvių kalbos istorija (A History of the Lithuanian Language)*, *Kun. A. Jakavonis*, etc. The prisoner denied it.

K a u n a s

On January 12, 1987, Investigator Stepučinskas summoned Nijolė Patackienė, the wife of A. Patackas who had been arrested, and informed her that the case against her husband accusing him under Par. 199 of the Criminal Code was ready, and had been handed over to the court. He claimed that investigative organs had proven that Patackas had edited issue number 6 of *Lietuvos ateitis (The Future of Lithuania)*. The investigator, anticipating the court, told Nijolė Patackienė to get her husband's things ready, since he was going to be sentenced to three years in prison.

In preparing the criminal case against Algirdas Patackas, about one hundred interrogations were carried out, and many workdays were wasted. For refusing to give the "requisite" evidence, Petras Kimbrys, staff member of the Čiurlionis Museum of Art, was relieved of his duties as scientific co-worker, effective November 1, 1986, as "not meeting the requirements" (even though Kimbrys had spent ten years in the post). As of February 1987, he had not yet obtained employment.

At the end, the Patackas case took an unexpected turn. With just a week to go before the trial, Patackas was released from the Vilnius KGB Investigative Isolation Center on February 4, 1987. By decision of Prosecutor Bakučionis, the following reason was given: "In the light of changed political conditions in the Soviet Union, Algirdas Patackas is not dangerous to the public."

Vilnius

On December 9, 1986, Captain A. Vidzenas, Chief Investigator of the Investigation Section of the State Security Committee of the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian S.S.R., in the presence of Edvardas Šimonis of Saulėtekio al. 35-69, Vilnius and Edmundas Mikučiauskas, of Saulėtekio al. 29-57, as public witnesses, carried out a search of the home of Vincenta Vertelkaitė of Baltarusių 10, with the purpose of seizing illegally produced literature and documents which could have a bearing on the case. The search was begun at 11:45 A. M., and ended at 8:50 P. M. During the search, Miss Vertelkaitė was ill. The search was carried out in five rooms, and other areas. Found and seized during the search were: *Aušra*, Nos. 31 (71), 37(77); *Alma Mater* 1-1979, the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* Nos. 56, 60, 61, 62; *Lietuvos krikšto veikėjai (Those Who Played a Role in the Baptism of Lithuania)*; nine pamphlets; *Zhizn Jezusa* (in Russian); in photocopy form, 24 copies of the pamphlet "*Dievo Motinos stebuklas Girkalnyje*" ("The Miracle of the Mother of God at Girkalnis"); four copies of a pamphlet by A. Sabaliauskas, "*Kelionė po šventąj žemę*" ("Journey in the Holy Land"); six copies of Stasys Yla's "*Žvėrys ir žmonės dievų miške*" ("Men and Beasts in the Forest of the Gods"); fifteen copies of "*12 pasokalbėjimų su mažaisiais*" ("12 Talks with Little Children") by Stasys Yla; *Religija be ateistinių prietarų (Religion without Atheistic Superstitions)* by J. Marcininkas (483 pages); *Niekšybės paslaptis (The Mystery of Iniquity)* by Antanas Maceina, published in Brooklyn, 1964; *M. K. Čiurlionis, kūrėjas ir žmogus (M. K. Čiurlionis, the Creator and the Man)* by Stasys Yla, in photocopy form, 469 pages; *Mūsų praeities paieška (In Search of Our Past)* by Č. Giedgaudas; *Idealas ir laikas (Ideals and the Times)* by Juozas Girnius in photocopy form, 71 pages; *Žmogus be dievo (Man without God)*; *Ethos; Baltų kultūrų ir lietuvišką savimonę (Baltic Culture and Lithuanian Self-image)*, one photocopy; *Simas* by Jurgis Gliada, one photocopy; "Twelve Talks with Little Children", five photocopies;

a talk by Father Prosperas Bubnys; one photocopy of *Poezijos pilnatis (The Fullness of Poetry)*; *Rinktinės mintys (Selected Thoughts)* by Prunskis, one photocopy; *Žodžiai ir prasmė (Words and Meanings)* by Šilbajoris, one photocopy; *Dievas ir žmogus (God and Man)*, one photocopy; *1410 metų karas su kryžiočiais ir Žalgerio mūšis (The 1410 War with the Knights of the Cross and the Battle of Gruenwald)*, one photocopy; four copies of *Niekšybės paslaptis* by Maceina; a typescript of the pamphlet "*Kas ta ateistinė tiesa?*" ("What is this Atheistic Truth"), 1982, 61 pages; *Perspektyvos*, no. 21; a twelve-page typescript entitled "*Prelato ar teismo ir filmo nuopolis?*" ("The Downfall of the Monsignor or of the Court and the Film?"); a seven-page typescript entitled "Birštono-Olbyla" ("The Birštonas -Olšauskas Case"); a fourteen-page typescript entitled "*Didž. gerb. Tarybinės moteris redakcijai*" ("To the Honorable Editors of *Soviet Woman*"); a talk by Father Juozas Zdebskis, November 11, 1971, five pages; "*Simo Kudirkos teismo procesas*" ("The Trial of Simas Kudirka"); the statement of Sigitas Tamkevičius dated February 7, 1970, etc.

When Vanda Kudukyte of Žirmūnų 81-3 and Ona Česnulevičiūtė of Signalo 3, Kaunas, came by the apartment during the search, their address books and some Christmas cards were taken from them. After the search, Vincenta Vertelkaitė was first interrogated by KGB Captain Vidžėnas, then by KGB agent Valaitis and a third time by the same Valaitis. Some books and two typewriters were returned, as well as audio cassettes.

On December 9, 1986, a search was carried out at the home of Joana Vertelkaitė, of Taikos 110-19 in Vilnius (sister of Vincenta Vertelkaitė). Looking for publications produced in Vilkaviškis, the KGB seized and never returned about 750 catechisms, three copies of *Lietuvos enciklopedija* Vol 15 (printed in the U.S.A.); about fifteen copies of "*Pasikalbėjimais su mažais apie Jėzų*" ("*Talks with Little Ones about Jesus*"); *Poezijos pilnatis (The Fullness of Poetry)* by Brazdžionis; *Niekšybės paslaptis* by Maceina, etc.

On December 9, 1986, KGB agents carried out a search at the home of Aldona Matusevičiūtė of Taikos 8-19, Vilnius. Seized during the search were: *Niekšybės paslaptis*, Maceina, 200 photocopies; the books *Dovydaitis*; *M. K. Čiurlionis, kūrėjas ir žmogus*; Brazdžionis' *Poezijos pilnatis*; between 500 and 600 photocopies of *Tauta ir tautinė ištikimybė (Nation and National Loyalty)*, etc.

Vilnius

On December 9, 1986, a search was carried out at the home of Alfonsas Vinclova and his parents. An original of the book *Istoki religijai* was seized at the home of Alfonsas Vinclova.

Vilnius

On December 16, 1986, Vilnius KGB Investigator V. M. Sokolovsky interrogated Mrs. Ineta Tamošiūniene. He asked whether she was acquainted with Gediminas Jakubčionis, since when and how she would characterize Jakubčionis. To these questions, she responded, "He is a very gifted specialist, a product of the Bauman School of Technology in Moscow, where it is unusually difficult even to get in, and he finished with a red diploma. At ENIMSE, he came up with some inventions."

The chekist was further interested in Jakubčionis' activities in the Temperance Society. He stated that Jakubčionis disseminated underground literature among members of the society. The woman under interrogation categorically denied everything. To this, Chekist Sokolovsky replied, "We know for sure that Jakubčionis used to deliver underground literature to you directly from the reproduction base."

"Well you know, sir, this is too much! Think of it! They know for sure! What goes on in my apartment is known only by the walls! If a person visits me with a large bag, that doesn't mean that I know what's in it, and I am not accustomed to going through my guests' bags! So your proofs amount to a soap bubble!"

When Mrs. Tamošiūnienė refused to speak about the activities of G. Jakubčionis, the chekist began threatening, "Don't spoil our relationship! You have reason not to like us! We know whose daughter you are, but we have no ill-will toward you. You are a good engineer. They have a very high opinion of you at work and we would not want you, after twenty years of work as an engineer, to have any unpleasantness on account of your stubbornness. Everywhere at the present time, positions are being cut back. You have two children, you are not paid up for your cooperative apartment, your husband is an invalid. Besides, we know where he is at the present time, and we can hold him there. You probably heard quite a bit from your father about the beauties of Mordovia. Perhaps you'd like to spend some time there? But what of the children?"

"I think, sir, that the country needs workers and it will rear the children. Good engineers are needed, even in the camps. By the way, my father worked as an engineer, even in camp. Later, when a railroad planned by ignoramus fell apart, they remembered that they had a specialist behind bars. You can stop trying to bully me," Mrs. Tamošiūnienė shot back, and requested that they not waste her time with empty questions. The interrogation was over by noon.

Vilnius

On December 16, 1986, Miss Jovita Niūniavaitė was interrogated at KGB headquarters by Chekist Kalakauskas. He asked whether she was ac-

quainted with Gediminas Jakubčionis, stated that the conversation would not be used in court, and that no record was being kept. He asked when and where she had made his acquaintance, and whether she was not in the habit of giving him some sort of literature; or perhaps she used to give him something to be reproduced. She replied that he did not give her any literature nor did she ever give him any. Dissatisfied with the results of the conversation, Chekist Kalakauskas warned that under the guise of budget cutbacks, the chekists could discharge Miss Niūniavaitė from her job.

K a p č i a m i e s t i s (Lazdijai *Rayon*)

On February 19, 1987, Gintautas Sakavičius, a resident of Kapčiamiestis, was summoned to the offices of the KGB in Vilnius to see Investigator Buzinskas. Assistant Prosecutor Bakučionis and Investigator Buzinskas asked what Sakavičius knew about the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. When the young man replied in the negative, the officials presented him with some sort of literature and pressured him to admit that it belonged to him. Sakavičius denied it. The young man was questioned for more than six hours. He refused to sign the interrogation record.

OUR PRISONERS

Father Jonas Matulionis writes:

"Today is our patronal feast - Saint Casimir. I ask his protection and intercession for everyone... Every place, every corner of our lives, is a gift of God. Frequent searches, underserved accusations, hired sleuths and terrorists — their unimaginative attempts to humiliate can do only as much as they are allowed, while the Lord is always with us. I am receiving the newspapers and magazines. The obvious annoyance of one warden does not disturb my spiritual calm. They don't like people who are better informed, better educated, spiritually stronger, readers or thinkers. On February 24, the lieutenant for operations summoned me and told me that they had destroyed a letter containing four reproductions of photographs or lithographs. On the other side was a Lithuanian text. We talked for a good half-hour, and he finally admitted that he could have shown me the pictures and the sender's address.

"Give my regards to those who have returned. Whether I shall return earlier, only God knows. I ask for favors only from the just and merciful Lord, and not from unjust and deceitful man... To all, the graces and blessings of the Sacred Host." (Father Matulionis' sentence was reduced. He was released on November 16, 1987. — Trans. Note)

March, 1987

From Father Sigitas Tamkevičius' letter:

"Here we are at the new year. May God grant that this year be in your life, as well as in the life of all people dear to my heart, most meaningful and good. You know that in a prisoner's heart, there are always many different longings. But perhaps my greatest wish is that everyone with whom Providence has brought me into contact along the path of life, would grow in grace and love as did the Infant of Bethlehem.

"This year also, the train of my life rolls on along the same tracks. Monotony, boredom - but there's no lack of that in freedom. It is our duty to open the windows and doors of our heart, and let in Him in whose sight everything becomes special and sacred. How valuable is the lesson of Nazareth. Dull days glow with Divine light, if only in that everyday routine we do not lose sight of Him Who called Himself the Light of the World, if with Him we lie down and rise up, work and suffer.

"Sometimes the thought occurs to me: Lord, how long these years are! And there are still so many of them! How tiresome this boredom, how fed up I am with everything, up to here. When will it all end? But no sooner have such thoughts occurred when something in my heart speaks up and reminds me: You have no right to complain. You must always be strong since you have received very much from the Lord, since the prayer of the Church accompanies you as it once accompanied the Apostle Peter... In my prayer I ask the Lord's blessing for those who exemplify Christian love... remembering also the prisoner."

January 1, 1987

Povilas Pečeliūnas writes:

"... In my last letter I wrote why, from my youth, I liked Ibsen's *Brand*. (*A freedom fighter - Trans. Note*) To sum it up, I liked it because many of the ideas in *Brand*, were already in my heart. *Brand* only formulated them more clearly and forcefully, so it would be a mistake to consider me a follower of *Brand*. After all, it is pleasant when you find in some work thoughts which are already in your heart. So this is one more appendix to *Brand*.

"Yes, it is difficult to find Danutė at home. She works, and all the rest of the time she devotes to my elderly mother who has not been out of the sickbed for three years, and whose life is sustained only by her boundless longing to see me once again.

"... You write 'You have hope!' For one such as I, reality holds not the least grounds for 'hope'. All illusions lead to an absurd 'philosophy'... which you summed up in the aphorism, 'The goat is full and the cabbage is safe.' I know a little bit about philosophy and history, but I never heard of such a case. I have read about the strangest miracles in the book *Visų metų šventųjų gyvenimai (The Lives of the Saints Throughout the Year)*. However, I did not find anything com-

parable there, either, unless at the time the 'goat', thanks to a 'miracle', felt 'satisfied'. But in that case, why the 'cabbage'? The connection escapes me. And if there is the slightest connection between the 'goat' and the 'cabbage', then the 'cabbage' is always devoured. Then perhaps this is the 'very newest philosophy' which no one has yet popularized. If so, then why did you not indicate the 'philosopher'?

"Well, enough of that. The subject is so trivial that one begrudges the paper and the time.

"Winter will be around here for a long time, while for you, everything probably already is redolent of spring, and Easter is not too far away — April 19...

"... Please don't hold it against me if I have written something clumsy. You see, I cannot be gentle when each day, I have to encounter the searing wind from the Arctic Sea..." (Pečeliūnas was returned to Lithuania from exile on October 26, 1987. - Trans. Note)

Igrim, March 4, 1987

To: The Presidium of the Supreme Committee of the Lithuanian SSR

From: Gintautas Iešmantas

Residing in Altay S.S.R. *Rayon* of Vuktil, Podzhar

"The news has probably reached you that I have refused to write a petition asking to be excused from serving the rest of my sentence. In my view, the requirement to write such a petition which as a condition for returning to my homeland with the corresponding obligations is contrary to the principles of truth and justice and not in keeping with the spirit of *perestroika*. Why? After all, more than one individual has agreed to such an offer. My case is no different, is it? This or that instance is not important. There are higher values.

"Today, we are constantly required to speak only the truth, call a spade a spade, to bring up deficiencies boldly; it is said that there can never be enough truth. We heard them talking about that from the podium of the XXVII Congress and from the January meeting of the Plenum; in the reports and speeches of other leading persons, ideas about a new look at reality and policy have been ringing and continue to ring. If we allow that it is possible to shake off prior attitudes, then every honest and conscientious person will be able to see that I was accused precisely because I was guided by the aforesaid principles now being extolled from the rostrums, I was tried and sentenced for the voice of truth and conscience which would not let me remain silent.

"Basing myself on dialectic, I uncompromisingly analyzed reality as it is in poetic creation. I resolutely condemned evils prevalent in society and I touched upon vices which are publicly addressed today with full voice. And I did not deviate from Socialism, I did not deviate from Democracy, speaking in

known words, precisely so that there might be more socialism and more democracy. The march of events showed that in my works (*Rubikonas - The Rubicon, Tiesos liudijimas - Witness to the Truth, Laisves paradoksas - Paradox of Freedom*, etc.) and the diagnosis I offered in my poetry was and still is true.

"Let us take, for instance, the article by V. Lazutka published in *Tiesa (Truth)*, entitled '*Visuomenės moksliai: be kritikos nėra kūrybos*' ('Social Studies: No Creativity without Criticism'), February 11, 1987. In it, conclusions are drawn and ideas expressed which I raised nine or ten years ago, after agonizing over them in my heart long and hard. Only Lazutka in his article bases himself on the world of abstractions, hides behind words and raises questions indirectly, while I talked about reality and expressed criticism based on specific examples supported by experience.

"I also arrived at practical, concrete, clear conclusions, revealing the essence and the real content of things and meanings. In other words, for me dialectic was not a tired doctrine proclaimed from platforms by paid professors in order to confirm the existing situation, but a revolutionary instrument of truth, breathing with eternal life, a textbook for the struggle for the new, not allowing one to become complacent or to justify something untrue or unjust.

"True, not all those ideas and thoughts which I expressed are being realized yet today; some of their aspects are often spoken of vaguely in half-truths or passed over in silence. But after all, only the first steps have been taken *in perestroika*. Tell me then, where was I wrong? For telling the truth? For bringing up short-comings and mistakes sharply and without compromise? But that's the way it must be done.

"More. Stories were spread about me that I was a 'bourgeois nationalist', that I had spoken about tearing Lithuania away from the Soviet Union, etc. But in the trial and everywhere else, they passed over in silence the fact that I had based myself on the right granted by the Constitution for any Soviet republic to secede from the U.S.S.R. More than that, I was on trial because I believed that such a right exists, not just on paper as a bait or a trick, but that it was possible to effect it in reality. And to effect it not in order to restore some sort of mythical past, but marching ahead on the basis of Socialism.

"So it was not I who transgressed against the Constitution, but they who arrested, accused and tried me. In my so-called nationalism there is more internationalism than there is in the words and deeds of those who boast that they are above nationalism but who, in reality, reinforce lying and hypocrisy. Internationalism is not a heedless kowtowing to external forces, submission to their will, but an uncompromising concern with the affairs of one's nation without hurting the interests of others.

"Yes, I am not afraid to emphasize the fact that I was and am for Lithuania seceding from the U.S.S.R. as a separate Socialist state. That is a sacred right of everyone living in Lithuania, not to be denied by any hypocriti-



Gintautas Iešmantas

cal sophisms, and I'm also convinced of something that the international and internal situation confirms that such a move would serve the interests of Socialism and of peace and of real friendship among nations. Anyone who throws stones at me for striving to the eternal dream of the Lithuanian nation stands in opposition to the one and the other.

"Some will throw it up to me that I supposedly chose one way to express my thoughts. But please be frank and honest as the spirit of *perestroika* demands: Is any other way possible? Today, after the January meeting of the plenum, it has finally become clear to all that what I said could not be said otherwise. An intolerance for uncanonized opinions and ideas had prevailed; they had been considered attacking socialism; the uncovering of wrongs in the political or ideological sphere had been vilified as lying and calumny, or at best,

denigration. In the atmosphere of stereotyped thinking, any non-standard judgement appeared unclear and suspicious by its very nature.

"On the other hand, not only was there no rostrum, there was not even the possibility to express publicly ideas contrary to the existing situation. So far, there still is none to this day. It is no accident that a shortage of critical, that is independent, thinking is felt. And as we know from of old, without such thinking, without struggle between alternative opposing views, there is not the desired progress and sooner or later a paralysis sets in and governmental abuses begin.

"This is why, at the present time, the question of democratizing societal life has been raised so sharply. And it is being raised, it seems, not for nothing but in order to tell the truth about our times, our life and our world, and to participate actively in the struggle for that which is new and progressive. But is this not what I desired?

"In the fall of 1985, KGB investigator Urbonas came to the camp where I was interned and had the nerve to say 'Yes, in many aspects, you are right. Your ideas and thoughts may very well be implemented. But you shouldn't have leaped forward with them ahead of time. You should have waited. It will be accomplished without you.'

"Such is the approach to the question. Such are our morals! You see defects, you see that mistakes are being made, that we are on the wrong road. But keep quiet. Don't stick your neck out. Let it be. No direction is given as long as no steps are taken from above.

"Is it not such a position which Mikhail Gorbachev condemned as harmful and amoral in one of his speeches? I would say that it is a criminal attitude. For it is activists proclaiming such 'civic' views who decide fates and 'determine' what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad.

"In other words, they think they have the sole right to the last word on what constitutes the truth. And they carry the stamp, according to Mieželaitis, of present conditions; that is, conditions currently condemned but not yet abolished. They receive stars for 'diligent' work, they are necessary, they are cultivated. What sort of morality are they trying to effect in this way? Sycophantic, conformist, based not on conscience or truth but on postulates detrimental to the latter.

"How, finally, in such an atmosphere, can literature, criticism and philosophy not drag along behind politics, merely explaining and illustrating proposed theses instead of independently exploring and testing roads to the future? Of course, I could live like many, not bothering my head with dangerous questions, closing my eyes to all that there is no desire or ability (there are those, too) to see, until it is shown from above. But I did not know how, and did not wish to live like that. And I rejoice, I am glad, that I was able to cross the barrier of fear and conformity, to find a non-standard road, as they like to say today.

T spoke about this at my trial, rejecting on the basis of arguments presented stereotyped accusations and conclusions deliberately distorting the truth and reality. That was a shameful trial for those who prepared it and carried it out. It unmasked them, uncovered their conservatism, interfering with progress. My accusers encountered immovable resolve and strength of conviction; in an attack of impotent rage they rushed to increase the suggested term of the sentence to the permissible limit. To them, neither truth nor justice were important. But what kind of truth and justice can we speak of when the essence of the indictment consists of beliefs, or even opinions not in keeping with the standards then prevalent and circulating? It was no accident that the trial became a civil, moral and spiritual victory for those on trial. This is to say nothing of the investigative process. Here is one eloquent example:

"During the investigation, I was confronted with the false accusation that I had allegedly blackmailed the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania with a threat to kill him. To support them, the investigators gathered a great number of texts and statements which were not mine, and even engaged the services of handwriting experts, although its tendentiousness was apparent even to the layman's eye. It was good that a second set of experts independent of the KGB materialized, who had the courage to stand up against the conclusions of the KGB 'specialists'.

"Not satisfied, the KGB called on a third group, this one from Moscow. The court of appeals finally demonstrated the error of the original group of experts. However, did the court, the prosecutor's office or other instances show any interest in why the prosecutors submitted such deliberately erroneous expert testimony, how it originated, or what was its purpose or that of the indictment itself?

"I do not raise this question just to show how much I had to undergo, but in order that one might stop and think where such efforts by the prosecution to bring in 'reinforced indictments' can lead. This has been well discussed in the article, "*Pravde v glaze*" ("Looking Truth in the Eye"), appearing in *Literaturnaya gazeta* (December, 1986). They tell you, 'It's our business to bring an indictment against you, and it's your business to defend yourself. If you get out of it, all well and good. If you sink, better yet! It makes no difference to us here, we wash our hands of it like Pontius Pilate.'

"What it amounts to, according to the author of the aforesaid article is that, 'Saving the drowning is the affair of those drowning.'

"All the more since in political cases, right up until the trial, one is not allowed to avail oneself of the services of an attorney, even though his role is minimal.

"The spirit of *perestroika* requires that we look with open eyes to the past which has brought society to a state of paralysis in various areas. It is necessary, finally, to tell the whole truth also about the results of the personality

cult for Lithuania. The taboos which up till now bound our thoughts in this area must finally be abolished. Hence, I wish -- not only wish but must -- turn you attention to the events of autumn, 1974, concerning me.

"At that time the KGB organs, on the basis of a false accusation (or their own trumped-up version), carried out a search of my apartment. The complaint that I had written a fifteen-verse poem about Romas Kalanta (The young Lithuanian who immolated himself May 14, 1972, to protest the Soviet occupation. - Trans. Note), and travelling about in my assignments as a journalist, disseminated it throughout Lithuania, of course, was not proven. However, this was unimportant to the KGB agents since they had as their aim to seize my poetic work, characterizing it as 'anti-Soviet poems' (so it was formulated in the official record of the search).

"The poetry seized from me was used so that it might be possible to expell me from the Party, from my employment, from the journalists' union and of course, this was done on 'authoritative' and hypocritical pretexts. Is it not apparent that in this way it is possible without difficulty to take care of anyone? At the beginning of this year, in an article published in *Pravda*, a very similar case of a search and its purpose is described. How is it possible to stride boldly and resolutely forward without abolishing the threatening shadow of these abuses? And it is not the only one, and not just in my case.

"It is not difficult to write a petition requesting to be released and to promise 'not to be involved in the future in illegal activities', as the suggested formula had it. But that would mean admitting that I had, at one time, engaged in such activities. That would be manifestly untrue. It would mean reconciling oneself with those injustices which have been committed in my case and in those of other prisoners. It would mean reconciling myself with the completely false, deliberately distorted interpretation of my convictions and views which KGB organs as well as the court submitted. It would mean shrugging off abuses experienced in camp, shrugging off physical and spiritual sufferings experienced, and the humiliation.

"It would mean reconciling oneself to the confiscation of my work, both at the time of my arrest (the collection *Lukesys - Expectation* and material collected for a scientific work on alienation), as well as the period of the investigation (for the KGB, I wrote 270 verses and the poem *Kelias - The Road*, which, of course, all fell into the hands of my accusers). It would mean shrugging off the process of democratization, as if to say, 'It's none of my business'.

"Quite the contrary! It is not they who persecuted, tried or imprisoned me, and not they who from their rostrums hurled anathemas in my direction who are heart and mind in favor of democratization. Of course, today they also join in the restructuring. But they have done this for known reasons. Meanwhile, the entire road of suffering and trials traversed by myself as well as other political prisoners, all of my spiritual efforts, works of political philosophy

and poetic work are part of the limitless number of internal and external reasons and incentives which have made me and helped me to get used to the idea of restructuring and for fresh breezes to blow. And I say this without any prejudice. This is why it is essential to release people without prior conditions or obligations.

"I understand that with this letter, I risk bringing upon myself a new era of wrath from the powers that be. But my personal life is unimportant to me. I am concerned with the fate of truth. I am concerned for the future. All that I have done, I have done led on by this concern as well as uneasiness concerning the future of Lithuania and the Lithuanian nation. For this purpose I have written this worried but faith and hope-filled letter. The Rubicon must be crossed finally and irrevocably."

February 19, 1987

To Gintautas Iešmantas' letter, the Prosecutor of the L.S.S.R. responded, "The accusations set forth in the letter do not coincide with the facts and arguments of the case, and do not give any juridical basis to take measures to excuse you from serving further sentence, which the court handed December 22, 1980."

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

To: Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
From: Priests of the Diocese of Telšiai and the Prelature of Klaipėda

A Petition

The Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics guarantees freedom of conscience and freedom of religious practice: "To citizens of the U.S.S.R., freedom of conscience is guaranteed; that is the right to profess any religion or not profess any, to practice religious cults, or to carry on anti-religious propaganda." (Art. 52)

The same is stated in the Constitution of the Lithuanian S.S.R. (Art. 50.) Besides, the government of the U.S.S.R. has signed the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, in the 18th paragraph of which is emphasized the right of every citizen to profess his beliefs and to proclaim them.

The atheists of the L.S.S.R. have the rights guaranteed in the aforesaid documents and make use of them. Meanwhile, the faithful are seriously constrained. The teaching of religious truth is allowed only in church during the sermon at services, and only to older people.

Up to the age of eighteen, believers may not be introduced to the truths of religion or its practice, even in church during services. This is allowed only to the parents themselves at home.

We are quite shocked by the obvious inequality. The atheists are granted the possibility of carrying on anti-religious propaganda, of using government support and all the mass media of information, beginning with kindergarden and ending with funeral services. Believers, however, are not allowed to make use of any mass media of information. They are forced to hand over the education of their believing children into atheist hands.

Canon Law categorically obliges priests to concern themselves with the preparation not only of adults, but also of youth and children for religious practice. (Canons 773-777) Parents, busy with work, turn to the priests, requesting them to teach the children. Fulfilling this obligation, priests come up against the strict prohibitions of government officials — atheists — become involved in conflict situations and are repressed. Not long ago, the priests Prosperas Bubnys, Juozapas Zdebskis and Antanas Šeškevičius were imprisoned for acquainting children with religious practice. In 1986 alone, Fathers Antanas Ivanauskas, Antanas Šeškevičius and Vytautas Insoda were penalized. Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis, having been more active, have been imprisoned for long terms.

For atheistic reasons alone, the Cathedral of Vilnius has been confiscated and transformed into an art gallery, and the Church of Saint Casimir in Vilnius into a museum of atheism. The Church of Mary, Queen of Peace erected with the hands and donations of the faithful has been taken away in Klaipeda, where for many years in that port city of 200,000 residents, believers have been suffocating in a small house of prayer and cannot wait for the wrong committed by the atheists to be redressed. Clergy and faithful are painfully effected by the constant insults to the feelings of the faithful, especially in the press and in school - something which clearly contradicts the claims of atheist propaganda and which, alas, is allowed in our country.

The priests and the faithful know that in other socialist countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Germany, Poland and Hungary, priests are allowed to prepare the children of believing parents for the practice of religion, not only in church, but also in facilities connected with the church.

Seeing that a great restructuring is currently being carried out, we come to you, most honorable General Secretary, with a request that this restructuring effect also the freedom of religious practice in our republic, especially that we priests be granted the ability to carry out without restriction one of the most important requirements of Church law: preparing the children of believing parents for the practice of their religion.

Signed by the following priests of the Diocese of Telšiai and the Klaipėda Prelature:

Fathers: Vincentas Klebonas, Vincentas Vėlavičius, Boleslovas Jonauskis, Alfonsas Pridotkas, Algirdas Pakamanis, Jonas Petrauskas, Konstantinas Velioniškis, Juozapas Rutalč, Jonas Bugelis, Vincas Gauronskis, Ignas Žeberskis, Antanas Striukis, Jonas Bučinskas, Antanas Gylys, Petras Linkevičius, Petras Puzaras, Stanislovas Lierinskas, Albinas Arnašius, Ferdinandas Žilyš, Jonas Kauneckas,

Bronislovas Latakas, Juozapas Grabauskas, Adomas Alminas, Petras Stukas, Alfonsas Klimavičius, Juozapas Olšauskas, Jonas Pakalniškis, Stasys Letukas, Vytautas Kadys, Feliksas Valaitis,

Liudvikas Dambrauskas, Antanas Beniušis, Bronislovas Burneikis, Albertas Franskaitis, Adolfas Pudžemys, Bronislovas Bradžius, Klemensas Arlauskas, Antanas Augustis, Liudas Tamašauskas, Antanas Petronaitis,

Antanas Jurgaitis, Aloyzas Lideikis, Domininkas Skirmontas, Juozapas Gausiūnas, Jonas Paliukas, Juozapas Pacinskas, Kazimieras Žukas, Juozapas Siurys, Tadas Poška, Jonas Gedvilą,

Romualdas Žulpa, Pranciškus Venskus, Konstantinas Jadviršis, Edmundas Atkočiūnas, Stanislovas Vaitelis, Juozapas Gunta, Stanislovas Ilinčius, Kazimieras Rimkus, Juozapas Razminas, Henrikas Sirtautas,

Vytautas Žvirzdinas, Juozapas Maželis, Vladas Šlevas, Petras Našlėnas, Kazimieras Gaščiūnas, Zenonas Degutis, Antanas Ivanauskas, Česlovas Degutis, Antanas Ričkus, Liudas Serapinas,

Petras Jasas, Stanislovas Anužis, Vladislovas Juškys, Juozapas Miklovas, Petras Merliūnas, Bernardas Talaišis, Petras Balsys, Antanas Garjonis, Antanas Bunkus, Anupras Gauronskis,

Liudas Šarkauskas, Anupras Žukas, Česlovas Gudliauskas, Aloyzas Volskis,

Vytautas Mikutavičius, Juozapas Jonauskas, Juozapas Širvaitis, Domininkas Bivainis, Petras Bernotas, Klemensas Puidokas,

Antanas Šeškevičius, Jonas Rudzinskas, Kazimieras Prialgauskas, Jonas Vičiulis, Bronislovas Racevičius, Julius Miškinis, Domininkas Giedra, Algis Genutis, Juozapas Šukys, Tomas Švambarys,

Juozapas Bukauskas, Leonas Veselis, Henrikas Šelgas, Kazimieras Gylys, Vytautas Petrauskas, Kazimieras Macelis, Antanas Zdanavičius.

To: The Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian SSR
The Ministry of Education of the Lithuanian SSR
The Executive Committee of the Klaipėda *Rayon*
The Editors of the Klaipėda *Rayon* newspaper *Banga*
Copy to: Antanas Vaičius, Bishop of Telšiai

**From: Father Antanas Šeškevičius, son of Kazys
The believers of the parish of Gargždai, Klaipėda Rayon**

A Petition

On September 9, of this year, the Klaipėda *Rayon* newspaper, *Banga (Wave)*, published an article under the heading, "*Niekam nevalia pažeidinėti įstatymų*" ("No One Is Allowed to Break the Law"), in which Secretary J. Surplienč of the Executive Committee of the Gargždai City Council of Peoples' Deputies accuses me and the faithful of unlawful funeral services and of the unlawful preparation of children for confession. We appeal to you, hoping for a more just judgement. We therefore explain the article:

1. We quote the introduction to the article: "Art. 96 of the Constitution of the Lithuanian S.S.R. proclaims that in order to guarantee the citizens' freedom of conscience in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Church is separate from the state, and the school from the Church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda are guaranteed to all citizens."

It further affirms: "Nowhere is the believer the least bit distinguished from the unbeliever."

(1) Art. 96 of the Constitution requires: "A deputy is obliged to give the electorate an accounting of his work and the work of the council...", and Art. 50 speaks of religious freedom. This is no confusion of numbers by mistake. Is it not shameful for the Secretary not to be acquainted with the Constitution and to play with it so lightly? At the same level are the editors of *Banga* who print it. If they act this way with the Constitution, then what could be said about religious rights which they distort in the articles, together with religious illiterates. The faithful must remain silent; while the atheists have all the newspapers, they do not have a single one. This is why all sorts of absurdities and calumnies are written against them.

(2) The Secretary claims that citizens are not being wronged because of religion. According to the Constitution, that is how it should be. And if it were so, the faithful would have their own newspapers and would be publishing books for the whole nation. However, they do not have a single newspaper nor a single book about religion. True, they did print some prayer books and catechisms: a few thousand of each for adults, while for children, catechisms are printed clandestinely. Meanwhile, the atheists have a press: so not one believer is being wronged, but all of them.

According to the freedom of conscience granted by the Constitution (Art. 50), all teachers and civil servants would not be afraid to go to church, students would not be persecuted for going to church, they would not be dragooned into atheistic organizations, the faithful could freely accompany their dead to the cemetery, priests could freely teach children catechism and

teach religion to school-children in church throughout the year. The faithful could build churches and have their own radio programs and many other rights. It is true that other socialist republics have such rights; only we do not.

The Secretary does not know the Constitution, nor life. She knows well that a believing teacher cannot publicly appear in church if he or she wishes to go on teaching. Hence, teachers travel as far as possible to other parishes where no one recognizes them. School-children, at least during vacation, dare to go to church. Once some school-girls told a priest: "Our teacher strictly forbids us to believe in God."

How many such cases there are! More than one teacher has been relieved of her duties on account of religion. One street-sweeper who used to clean the sidewalk in front of the Gargždai Party Headquarters used to take her children to church. When the KGB found out about it, they threatened her in such a way that she no longer goes to church herself, nor allows her children to go. For a morsel of bread, a person is forced to renounce religion. Such is the freedom of conscience which the Constitution guarantees! If this is how they treat a street-sweeper, then all the more so workers and officials; and everyone knows it, it is no secret to anyone.

They confiscated the Cathedral of Vilnius. They turned the Church of Saint Casimir into a Museum of Atheism, many churches they closed outright. Queen of Peace Church in Kalipėda, they converted into a concert hall; the people of Gargždai are suffering in a little church-barracks, and the government does not allow them to erect a new one or to remodel the old one. The faithful are not only forbidden to purchase a bus to transport elderly people to church, but even to rent one. How naive then do the Secretary's words appear: "Nowhere is there the least discrimination between the believer and the unbeliever."

(3) The Secretary gets off the subject and teaches that the believer, upon becoming acquainted with the scientific facts, "becomes convinced that there is no god and that religion is empty mysticism".

At the same time, one of the greatest scientists of the century, Albert Einstein, affirms, "I cannot imagine a scientist without religion... The world is a great farm very well cared for, so there must be a farmer."

The inventor of the computer, a professor and engineer, states: "It would be a clear sign of insanity if one were to claim that electronic brains were able to materialize of themselves, without any intelligent planner. But what are they compared to the brain of a living human being? They are just one more ridiculous child's toy. If the computer could not materialize without a planner, then how could even a single vein of a living organism materialize of itself; it is incomparably better than even the most perfectly designed machine. I cannot disbelieve, since my intelligence forces me to believe in God." (Hathaway)

The great naturalist, Charles Darwin (1809-1882), in a letter to Fordyce, states categorically, "Never in my work was I an atheist. Never did I deny God."

Ask the child who is beginning to think, "Did this watch make itself?"

He immediately replies, "How could it make itself without a watchmaker?"

But Secretary Surplienė believes that the whole world materialized of itself. Can there be a greater absurdity than atheism? It is the greatest enemy of science and logic. "Scientists are the most religious of people." (Einstein)

2. *Funerals not in keeping with the law.* The Secretary quotes Regulation Number 48 of the *Regulations for Religious Associations*, which allows services to be carried out without requesting government permission in buildings for religious worship, and Number 50, which forbids religious processions or ceremonies outside without permission. She emphasizes that the faithful and I did not obey Regulation Number 50, since I accompanied the funeral procession to the cemetery.

Response:

(1) The Secretary, accusing the priest and faithful of "illegal funeral rites", bases this on the *Regulations for Religious Associations*. But the *Regulations* themselves are illegal, imposed on priests and faithful by force. They are contrary to *Canon Law*, and by the same token, in violation of freedom of conscience and even of the Soviet Constitution, which guarantees freedom of conscience and separation of Church and state. The nationalizing of churches and the administration of Church property according to government regulations violates Church law, Canons 1518-1551. The Church Committees through which the state interferes in internal affairs of the churches and subjugates the Church to itself is in violation not only of Church law, but also of the Soviet Constitution (Art. 50). The *Regulations for Religious Associations* specify that in the hospital, only those patients are allowed to receive the sacraments who are seriously ill or danger of death. (Art. 49)

Where then is freedom of conscience for the healthy? Priests are forbidden to make pastoral visits to the faithful, (*kalėduojima*) (Art. 45) But the Church commands it. There are many instances in which the *Regulations* are opposed to freedom of conscience and the Constitution. The freedom of conscience guaranteed by the Constitution is hemmed in by all sorts of regulations, bans, penalties and administrative directives the way a prisoner is confined to camp by several rows of barbed wire. Freedom is taken captive. It is therefore no wonder that more than once, the priests of Lithuania have sent signed statements to the government that they are unable to keep regulations which are op-

posed to *Canon Law*, freedom of conscience and by the same token, the Soviet Constitution.

In other Communist countries, the Church is also separated from the state, but there, they abide by their constitutions, so believers there enjoy somewhat greater freedom, both of conscience and of the Church. For example, in Poland, teachers, students and government workers freely attend church. Believers have their own press, they freely teach religion in church facilities, religious orders function openly, there are processions in the streets, thousands of devotees go to Czestochowa with banners and crosses and they erect new churches. But how are things here?

There, the state does not interfere in the acceptance of candidates for the seminary while here, every applicant must first get through the Offices of the KGB and the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, and obtain their approval. The Commissioner sets quotas for seminarians even though there is a great shortage of priests in Lithuania. Without the Commissioner's permission, the bishops do not have any right to appoint priests to parishes. The faithful must pay higher taxes for their churches. Even the dead are given no freedom: no crosses are allowed on their graves.

(2) In 1966, the government published a *Ritual for the Dioceses of Lithuania, Part II*. It was thoroughly censored by the government and approved by the Commissioner. In it is set forth the order of services for funerals: The cross and two banners lead the procession, while the priest precedes the casket (pp. 256-285). The Church has held to this arrangement for burial for six hundred years. It is the duty and right of a priest to carry out funerals in accordance with the *Ritual*.

(3) Then Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Kazimieras Tumėnas, summoned me by telegraph to Vilnius in 1977 on account of the petition I submitted regarding funerals and told me clearly, "Carry the cross, the priest may precede the deceased." Tumėnas so informed Vice Chairman A. Leita of the Klaipėda *Rayon* Executive Committee. We abide by this, since it conforms with directives of the Church and of the Constitution, although not with the atheists' desire to oppress the faithful more and more, stripping them completely of their rights.

3. The preparation of children for confession not in accord with the law. Secretary Surplienė accuses me and the faithful of this on the basis of the separation of the school from the Church, and of transgressing Art. 17 and 18 of the *Regulations for Religious Associations*.

Response:

(1) The Constitution, our basic law, must be applied in practice. In other countries, separation of Church and state is understood as follows: Religion is not taught in school, but a religious community is not forbidden to have its own schools, e.g., in Poland, Democratic Germany, Hungary and else-

where, the children of believers are taught religion in church facilities. There are separate kindergartens and freedom of conscience is maintained.

Meanwhile in our country, the religious regulations which government atheists are so bent on enforcing deprive believers of freedom of religion and freedom of conscience which are guaranteed by the Constitution and by human nature. By their behavior, the atheists in practice even transgress against the regulations; they arrive at the most laughable absurdities: it is forbidden to question two children to test them in religion, since that, according to their firmest convictions, is school.

When atheistic propaganda fails to produce the desired results and parents continue to take their children to church so that they might be introduced there to the truths of religion, those who help busy parents to prepare the children for First Confession and Communion are persecuted by commissions and administrative fines. For example, on July 9 of this year, when a rather large number of children, together with their mothers and other faithful gathered in the church of Gargždai before the evening services to be tested by me on religion in order to obtain a ticket for confession, a group of some sort of government officials suddenly forced their way into church disrespectfully. Among them was Mrs. J. Surplienė; Miss Z. Vitkutė, Director of the Finance Division; Social Security Director Šuminas and others.

Precisely at that moment, I told all the children: "Anyone wishing to obtain a ticket should go out into the churchyard to be quizzed."

I followed, together with many children and their mothers. The Director of the Finance Division shouted in church, "Where are you taking the children?"

In the churchyard, in the presence of the mothers who were there, I quizzed them, one by one. Suddenly, the Social Security Director ran out of church and began looking for the priest. The mothers would not allow Šuminas near the priest, protesting, "We need the priest. We prepared our children and brought them to be tested."

The Director shouted from a distance, "You're teaching catechism! Will you sign a report?"

I will not sign any reports," I replied.

One could hear the mothers and grandmothers lecturing them: "What kind of Lithuanians are you?..."

The commission withdrew, and I continued to quiz the children and give them tickets for confession.

The next day, at the offices of the City Executive Committee, I asked Secretary Surplienė who had come to church the day before. She explained that it had been a commission which had drafted the report and submitted it to Vice Chairman Leita of the Klaipėda *Rayon* Executive Committee. Here is how Art. 50 of the Constitution actually sounds:

"Citizens of the Lithuanian S.S.R. are guaranteed freedom of conscience. The Church is separated from the state and the school from the Church."

Representatives of the state and of the school take charge in church! Art. 50 of the Constitution states:

"It is forbidden to incite discord and hatred in connection with religions."

But what do the atheists do?

(2) Even Art. 17 of the *Regulations for Religious Associations* allow special gatherings of children and youth having a connection with carrying out services. But confession and communion are precisely part of worship and priests have the duty to prepare them. In the churches, such preparation and instruction take place daily during the sermon and through catechism for grown-ups. Is that school? The Secretary tells us to limit ourselves to taking care of the sick and dying. Christ-God commands: "Go and teach all nations." So whom are priests supposed to listen to more - atheist Surplienė or Christ?

(3) Although the atheists try in all ways to deprive the faithful of the possibility of knowing their faith more deeply and have been forcing atheism on everybody for forty years, Secretary Surplienė cannot rejoice that the number of faithful in Lithuania is decreasing, or that children go to church and practice their religion just to receive gifts.

We request you to influence the atheists-Communists to abide by the Constitution and grant everyone freedom of conscience which the basic law of the land guarantees.

Gargždai, September 27, 1986

Signed by Father A. Šeškevičius
and 682 faithful

(The petition has been shortened, the language uncorrected. - Ed. Note)

Šiauliai

On March 31, 1987, Vice Commissioner for Religious Affairs Lebedev and Vice Chairwoman Gaurilčikienė of the Šiauliai City Executive Committee conducted a seminar for members of the Šiauliai City and *Rayon* church committees. Lebedev gave those assembled a wide-ranging explanation of the 600 anniversary of the baptism of Lithuania and preparation for it, repeatedly trying to convince people that the government is posing no obstacles in the way of this preparation. He emphasized that priests can perform their priestly duties only within the confines of their own parish, and if they wish to go to another parish, permission of the *Rayon* Executive Committee is necessary. In this regard, the lecturer had some negative comments about Father Al-

girdas Pakamanis, pastor of the parishes of Žarėnai-Latveliai and Father Feliksas Balionas, pastor of Bazilioniai. Lebedev mentioned several Lithuanian priests who regularly work in other Soviet republics and that in his opinion is actually a crime. He told church committee members to keep an eye on the pastoral activities of priests, to listen carefully to their sermons and if they noticed anything contrary to the requirements posed by the government, to inform the appropriate organs. He emphasized that a priest is just a minister of cult and that his activities must be strictly limited to administration of the sacraments at the request of the faithful. In the words of Lebedev, the sole and true administrators of churches are the so-called committees of twenty. He told them to oppose the collection of signatures under petitions allegedly vilifying Soviet reality and the sale of religious articles.

To the question whether Pope John Paul II would be able to participate in the 600th anniversary of the Baptism of Lithuania, the lecturer responded in the negative. Asked why, he explained that the pope is very much opposed to the Soviet Union. In the words of Lebedev, he does not even recognize Socialist Lithuania.

To the question why His Excellency, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, has been kept in exile for more than 25 years, the Vice Commissioner for Religious Affairs replied that it was not a government matter, but that Bishop Steponavičius had been assigned to Žagarė to work as associate pastor by the bishop for not keeping Soviet law.

The faithful dispersed from the seminar depressed. They had been hoping for more open discussion with the government officials, but this discussion did not differ in any way from earlier "brainwashings".

Alytus

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

**Copies to: Chairman Chebrikov of the U.S.S.R. KGB
Chief of the Lithuanian S.S.R. KGB**

Bishops and Administrators of Dioceses of Lithuania

From: Father Antanas Gražulis

Residing at: Lietuvoje, Alytaus m., Pušyno 6.

A Petition

On January 8, 1987, the newspaper *Pravda* published an article by Chairman Chebrikov of the Soviet Union KGB. In it, the author mentions that there are instances when KGB officials break the law.

Honorable General Secretary, feeling that members of the security committee of Lithuania are acting arbitrarily, I appeal to you.

On November 17, 1986, two men (unknown to me), informing me by telephone to expect guests, visited my housekeeper, Mrs. Jarmalienė, who lives at Pušyno 6 (I also live here as a tenant). They identified themselves as K G B agents. They told the housekeeper to go into town and not to return before 1:00 P.M. After lunch, she was again ordered to leave her home. Left to themselves in the apartment, the K G B worked on something, for hammerblows and other sounds could be heard. The uninvited guest left only after dark.

For approximately two weeks beginning November 17, neighbor Bendoravičius' dog was poisoned under suspicious circumstances. More than once, after dark, even in the rain, my brother and I used to see two strange men near the housekeeper's storage shed. Spotting us, they would immediately withdraw.

Later, the housekeeper was ordered to unlock the door to the house at 6:00 A. M. At 6:07, two men (as my brother and I witnessed) entered the house but did not turn on the light. At dawn, as on the former occasion, they told the housekeeper to go downtown, and to return only at the time specified by them. At lunchtime my brother, having requested permission of the housekeeper to use the telephone, saw two strange men. Covering their faces, they ran into the room. After preparing lunch, the housekeeper again had to leave the "guests" alone in the rooms till evening. During that time, they could be heard working on the other side of the wall. The uninvited guests left at 11:35 P.M.

After their departure, some sort of interference materialized in my radio receiver and in the housekeeper's, preventing us from listening even to the Vilnius station. At intervals, the station's programs could not be heard at all. I inquired at the Alytus B.G.A. Combine about the interference with the Vilnius radio broadcasts. They explained that the combine does not do such work. Radio specialists of my acquaintance suspect that eavesdropping devices may possibly have been installed in the housekeeper's home or in the neighboring house. On November 30, at 6:15 A.M., a friend of mine leaving on a journey noticed standing at the corner of the house, a man who, upon seeing him, quickly withdrew.

With the approach of Christmas, the persecution stepped up. On December 23, automobiles were parked around the house where I lived. Some would arrive and others would leave. Seated in them were two or three individuals. Protruding from the automobiles under the backdoor windows were some sort of antennas (such as I have never seen in the stores). When anyone approached the automobiles, they would quickly stow the antennas inside and cover over some sort of apparatus. When they sensed that we were watching them, they would drive away. On the basis of the license plates, investigators determined that all those automobiles were from Vilnius. I was suspicious of

these automobiles whose license plate numbers were: 3246LID, A8236LI, A7600LI, R3972LI. I informed you of this by telegram December 23.

Honorable General Secretary, what I have described was told to me personally by the housekeeper. The appropriate individuals can force her as a pensioner with a heart condition to deny the things she told me. The housekeeper explained to me, "How could I not let them in. I am afraid of them. They can do everything. They can kill me and wreak vengeance on my children, throwing them out of work..."

Is this not a transgression of Soviet law and of the most elementary human rights? Why is it not possible even to listen to Soviet news without interference?

January 29, 1987

K l a i p ė d a

During the month of August, 1986, Miss V. Zalomskytė was fined 25 rubles for catechizing children.

K a p s u k a s

As usual on January 27, the faithful of Lithuania gathered in great numbers in the church of Marijampolė to celebrate the commemoration of the death of the honorable Servant of God, Archbishop Jurgis Matulevičius

Participating in the celebration were bishops: Julijonas Steponavičius Juozapas Priekšas and Vladas Michelevičius and many priests. The sermon at the principle Mass was delivered by Bishop Michelevičius, and during Mass, a joint choir of organists sang, (sic)

At the end of services, the faithful did not disperse from the Archbishop's tomb for a long time.

The evening of January 26, children and youth from various corners of Lithuania assembled at the tomb of Archbishop Jurgis Matulevičius to draw faith, determination and the spirit of sacrifice. After Mass and the homily which was delivered by Father Kęstutis Brilius, representatives of the youth from various parishes carried out a pre-planned program: hymns were sung and prayers and poems were read.

R u d a m i n a (Lazdijai *Rayon*)

On February 5 and 7, 1987, the first anniversary of the death of Father Juozapas Zdebskis was commemorated in the church of Rudamina.

Participating in services February 5 were about thirty priests and His Excellency, Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius. After Mass, the bishop together with the clergy and faithful, went in procession to the grave of Father

Zdebskis in the churchyard where they all prayed together. Bishop Sladkevičius and Father Leonas Kalinauskas preached.

On February 7 (a Saturday), a large number of faithful, youth and adults, who had not been able to take part in services February 5 on account of work or school, came to the church in Rudamina. On Saturday, seven priests and His Excellency Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius concelebrated Mass. In the sermon which was preached by His Excellency, Bishop Steponavičius, the virtues of Father Zdebskis were extolled along with the contribution his activities had made to the history of the Church and the nation.

After Mass, the bishop, the priests and the young people dressed in national costume, as well as the other participants, gathered at the grave of Father Zdebskis. After prayers for the dead conducted by Bishop Steponavičius, a few words were said by the Dean of Lazdijai, Father Vincencas Jalinskas, and a youth representative. All sang *Marija, Marija* together.

Žarėnai - Latveliai (Šiauliai Rayon)

On August 18, 1987, the Peoples' Court of the City of Šiauliai, presided over by Chairman V. Krūmas and Vice Chairman A. Neverauskas fined the pastor of the parish of Žarėnai-Latveliai, Father Algirdas Pakamanis, 50 rubles. In the verdict of August 18, it is noted that Father Pakamanis is accused and the fine is assessed because without government permission, he went to Varduva and there, during a religious festival preached, they were informed, a sermon non-religious in content. Father Pakamanis, arguing that the *Regulations for Religious Associations* were unlawful and incompatible with a priest's conscience, refused to pay the fine.

On January 3, 1987, Executive L. Jocienė of the Peoples' Court of Šiauliai urged Father Pakamanis in writing to pay the fine. On January 10, again a final warning was received to come in and pay the 50 ruble fine. Because Father Pakamanis refused to do so, Executive Jocienė, Militia official Senior Lieutenant Juozapavičius; Valdemaras Meiliulis, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the District of Šakynai and driver Pranas Beleckas showed up at the rectory. Militia officer Juozapavičius explained that Father Pakamanis had broken Soviet law and had been justly sentenced. The priest having refused to pay the fine, the aforesaid sum of money would be extracted by confiscating personal property. Court Executive Jocienė drew up an inventory on the basis of which the windshield and electronic clock from his *Moskvich* would be taken.

On January 19, 1987, four representatives of the faithful of Klaipėda appealed to the U.S.S.R. Council for Religious Affairs demanding the return of the return of the church of the Queen of Peace, unjustly confiscated from them by the government. The government officials tried to "placate" the people, offering to rebuild a small church in Klaipėda, or even permission to

build a new one. The people in Klaipėda categorically refused such offers, demanding full redress for unjust actions by the government.

That same day, another delegation of about fifteen individuals came to the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow. Among them were people from just about every Diocese of Lithuania: Juozas Kazalupskas, Petras Cidzikas, Petras Gražulis, Alfonsas Bumbulis, Saulius Kelpšas, Janina Judikevičiūtė, Aldona Raižytė, Robertas Grigas, Miss Žemaitytė, Miss Valaitytė and others. The delegation joined residents of Klaipėda in demanding the return of the Shrine of the Queen of Peace in Klaipėda which had been unjustly seized and converted into a concert hall. They demanded that government atheists stop interfering in the internal affairs of the Church, allow His Excellency, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, to carry out his pastoral duties in the Archdiocese of Vilnius, cease terrorizing the bishops, stop interfering with young men freely enrolling in the seminary of Kaunas, the only one open in the entire republic; and discontinue the persecution being carried on by government officials (KGB, militia and teachers) against the faithful and especially the youth.

The official of the Office of the Council for Religious Affairs who received them acted especially courteously, something which is quite uncharacteristic in encounters of the faithful with government officials. He himself admitted that the confiscation at one time of Orthodox and Catholic churches and their conversion into warehouses and stables as well as their outright destruction, the suppression of convents and monasteries, was a "black mark on the country's history". He expressed surprise and said he did not know on what basis the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian S.S.R. had issued the order to close the church of Klaipėda, that in his opinion it was an obvious mistake but that it would probably be impossible to correct it by returning the confiscated church, for the government had as yet never returned anything except for one monastery in Russia, whose return had been an exception. This was followed by his earlier offer to agree to a reconstruction of the present church or erection of a new one.

Those who had come, just like the people of Klaipėda, would not agree to any alternatives and they demanded a complete correction of the mistake which even the official of the Office of the Council for Religious Affairs admitted. Taking his leave, the official mentioned that in Vilnius at that time, responsible officials of their office were visiting and were considering just that very question of the church of Klaipėda, so they would soon be receiving a reply. Regarding the crass interference of government officials in the internal affairs of the Church, the terrorizing of believing youth, they said in the office that they had heard nothing.

The next day (January 20), the aforesaid delegation which was joined by residents of Klaipėda, went to the reception room of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. Their arrival had been known ahead of time and they were

expected. The delegation was received by Krygin, a responsible official of the Central Committee. Krygin could not believe it, and to put it mildly, pretended that he knew nothing about the persecution being carried on by the government against the faithful and the crass interference of the KGB in seminary affairs. And only when Petras Gražulis and Saulius Kelpšas successively described in a few words how they were being terrorized by the KGB for the seventh year and being prevented from enrolling in the seminary, did Krygin promise to give his attention to such "mistakes".

The representative of the Central Committee promised those who had come to give them an answer within one month regarding the question of returning the Queen of Peace Church in Klaipeda. The faithful told Krygin that they would continue to seek justice and to collect signatures on petitions until the church was returned.

As the interview was drawing to a close, the delegation drew the attention of the representative of the Central Committee of the Communist Party to the fact that the KGB in the republic and other government officials are preventing the faithful from appealing to the government on questions of concern to them and investigating and terrorizing those collecting signatures or signing protests. Some of them frightened by the threats of the chekists even repudiated their signatures. Those going to Moscow to meet with government officials are repeatedly detained and turned back, while those who come back are interrogated and threatened at KGB headquarters and terrorized at work.

Members of the delegation demanded that Representative Krygin of the Central Committee show concern for these "mistakes" of government officials, forbid such crass terrorizing of people and predicted that if it were not given suitable attention, in time, the same fate awaited them, who had dared to seek truth and justice.

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

To: General Secretary M. Gorbachev
From: Marytė Gudaitytė
Residing in: Prienu raj., Skersbalio km.

A Petition

Once again, I come to you in the hope that my request will be heard.

On March 27, 1985, the Director of the Pranas Mažylis School of Nursing in Kaunas sent me to KGB headquarters to agent Jocas. The KGB agent, in the course of the interview, stated that I would no longer be able to

study since I had signed Christmas greetings to the priest-prisoners Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius. As we were speaking, one more KGB agent entered and he explained that I would not be able to continue studies because it would be impossible to trust me as a nurse because they said I might give my enemies poison instead of medicine.

Director Tamošauskienė of the school said that she herself would not dismiss me from school, but the KGB required it and she had to carry out their orders.

On April 9, 1985, in accordance with Order No. 198, I was dismissed from the P. Mažylis School of Nursing in Kaunas for actions incompatible with those of a Soviet student.

On April 12, 1985, I went with my father to the Ministry of Advanced and Special Higher Studies. We were received by staff member Stanys of the Ministry of Education. He explained that I had been dismissed justly, but that I would be able to finish school the following year. After that, some official named Šnipas summoned me. He explained that writing letters to Fathers Tamkevičius and Svarinskas was a great crime. It amounts to anti-Soviet activity, and my father and I are extremists, and so my dismissal from school was justified.

In May of the same year, I wrote you a petition, requesting to be allowed to finish school. From the Ministry of Education I received a negative reply.

On April 4, 1986, I again went to the Ministry of Advanced and Special Higher Studies. Stanys told me to go to the Pranas Mažylis Nursing School in Kaunas. On April 5, I went there. Assistant Director of the School Grigas said that I would not be able to study in this school, and advised me to go to some other nursing school. On April 11, 1986, I went to the Utena Nursing School. The school director, upon finding out everything about me, was surprised at how I could still be working in the kindergarten, and refused my application. She told me to apply to the P. Mažylis Nursing School.

I therefore request you to help me to finish school. I wish to be a nurse and help people.

(To date, no one has replied to Miss Gudaitytė petition, and so far, she has no possibility of finishing the education she began. - Ed. Note)

A d u t i š k i s (Švenčioniai Rayon)

Recently, in Adučiškis, persecution of school children for practicing their religion has specially increased. The teachers, not satisfied with atheistic propaganda, visit the pupils' parents, threatening all sorts of punishments, if the parents continue to allow their children to come to church. Especially sharp in his attacks on the parents is Teacher Trivickas.

Commentary on the article "*Konfliktas gimtadienio diena*" ("Birthday Conflict") by Aldona Svirbutavičiūtė:

On March 28, 1987, *Komjaunimo tiesa (Communist Youth Truth)*, in a long article responded to a complaint by believing parents concerning a conflict in the Village of Makniūnai, Alytus *Rayon*, where fifty children gathered to celebrate the birthday of the Gražulis sisters, and were roughly set upon and interrogated by militia, teachers and other activists. Newspaper correspondent Svirbutavičiūtė, emphasizing the trend to "openness" and "democratization", comments widely on Senior Assistant Prosecutor Bakučionis of the Lithuanian S.S.R. to the complaint of parents. My attention was attracted by some peculiarities of this commentary's style and content, and it is this I would like to discuss.

In her article, the writer begins with the thoughts of a girl who has participated in a birthday to the effect that the evening will be pleasant since the parents have given permission for dancing and singing. We do not notice any criminal intent as the jurists phrase it. But further on, fragments from a letter by the parents are quoted: "Janina and Angelė Gražulis invited our children to a birthday party. We gave them permission on condition that there be adults present at the affair, and that the children should be home by eleven. At 10:10 P.M., an automobile drove into our yard. Some officials forced their way into the premises where the birthday was being celebrated. They then tried to justify this intrusion by saying that a raid was being carried out on the Alytus *Rayon* House of Culture.

"Afterwards, a militia major began interrogating and threatening the children, demanding to know their names. We, the parents, protest against such arbitrary action by officials. What crime did the children commit, celebrating a birthday party without alcohol, on private premises and under adult supervision? What did they do that was so terrible?"

There were eleven signatures under the complaint.

Even though Aldona Svirbutavičiūtė, as mentioned, submitted only excerpts from the parents' letters, here on the spot as though she were afraid of a flash of unadorned (but to us Catholics of Lithuania so familiar!) reality, she hastened to cover it up: "I shall say immediately - the parents are wrong. They know well that the children broke the rules for the behavior of minors."

However, even delving more deeply into the disjointed and vague article, the essence of "the crime" never becomes clear. The entire heavy "artillery" of the accusation is that the children were visiting after 10:00 P.M. Strange. For we all know that the republican and regional press more than once expressed concern that most of the so-called discotheques and evenings of dance begin about midnight at best and continue until three in the morning. And not only adults participate. And perhaps we should pass over questions of

sobriety and adult supervision, especially since official newspapers speak in subdued tones about violent "culture" and the "subtleties" of night orgies.

But try gathering fifty young people and arranging a birthday party without alcohol where young people would enjoy themselves - dancing under adult supervision, and singing folk songs spontaneously driven by an inner need! Does this not sound almost like a fantasy in the light of the demoralization ravaging our youth today?

Encountering such a phenomenon at the birthday party for the Gražulis sisters, not only the participants in the raid but also the reporter could at least have thanked those who planned the evening, the children's parents; at least to express astonishment at what method of education formed these young people, so noble, and what worldview supplies the support to sustain it as such. Alas, as we know from the parents' protest, it turned out exactly the opposite. What then, is the reason for the dissatisfaction of officials?

In the meaningful phrases of the article, separate phrases from interrogation from the children, the truth will out.

"At the Gražulis', we said a prayer and danced..."

"In the hall, on the wall, was a wooden cross."

"What did the participants in this affair have in common? Family relationship?"

No, explains the author of the article, for it was not only members of the Gražulis family who were present.

"Then perhaps it was friendship?"

But friendship can, in the view of the reporter, exist only among contemporaries. But here, there were older people, and even strangers! See, what criminals! Do not dare to assemble, Lithuanians, if you are not members of the same family, and if you (oh, horrors!) are possibly united not by family relationship, not by age, not profession, but by that cross of Christ hanging on the wall. So what if He is the inspiration for your sobriety, your song and your pure, youthful enjoyment! So what if He is the source of your respect for your parents, your bond with them? Don't you dare, and if you nevertheless are unafraid, waiting for you are raids and interrogations, similar to the one described in Makniūnai. And what if we applied this rule set by the writer for celebrating birthdays: only family members, only contemporaries, no one younger than the youth, no strangers ~ to evenings at the House of Culture or to those sadly notorious dates with soldiers which the schools arranged under the pretext of "international education"?

As we see, there is a double standard, and that difference separates our public into two halves treated unequally, not limiting itself to the surface - the driving away of guests at the birthday party.

This year in *Jaunimo gratos (Ranks of Youth)* nos. 1 and 2, there was a deeper look into the life of Lithuanian punks - from their dyed hair and

rivet-studded jackets to their philosophizing and formulas on how to get high on "chemicals" cheaper than liquor. Here, you see, is a social problem of global proportions! And where did all this come from? And why are they like that? But has even one news item in the press mentioned that in Lithuania there are thousands of Catholic youngsters who are living according to positive values, who know how to have a good time without liquor, treasure the folk-songs mentioned in the article, take an interest in the nation's cultural heritage and guard it, know how to love chastely and establish close-knit, happy families? Has even one sociologist, even one official publication shown any interest in how they got that way, what sources in people give rise to such qualities when the environment is openly amoral and hostile?

No, how can it be? We have a long way to go to the punks, and if anyone takes an interest in us, it will probably be the KGB or participants in a similar raid.

Of course, we do not desire praise from the government. We live this way not for them, but for God. And yet, long ago, we noticed the similarities between vocal viewpoints: a foreign profanity written on the wall flaunts itself for years on a central street, and it does not bother anyone. But let anyone inscribe "Freedom for religion! Freedom for political prisoners!" that same night not only the surface cement but the bricks will be removed.

On account of these clear differences in treating the problem, one must admit: the Gražulis', in writing their petition (what is the correspondent so angry about), "that believers are persecuted", "terrorized", "where is freedom of conscience?", and not for nothing, it seems, is there so much unease in the eyes of the little school children being interrogated, which Miss Svirbutavičiūtė says she noticed. Miss Svirbutaviči ends her article with praise for a boy very characteristic in atheistic pedagogy, who: "Is a man, since urged by his grandmother to go to church, he jumps out the window." And further, "The children choose their road. Let them pick it independently. Let them choose truths without sidetracks."

Yes, Miss Svirbutavičiūtė, the children you describe have chosen their way - as you yourself noticed - without alcohol, with Lithuanian song, under the supervision of parents. To you and to participants in the raid, it seemed uneven with sidetracks. You suggest they pick another. However, the Tightness of that road - "right through the window" - which you so blithely suggest, is doubtful.

And now that we have gotten on the subject of paths, let me finish with the last reel of that fine film by Tengiz Abuladzhe You remember: A little old lady limps over to the heroine and asks whether this road goes to the shrine. She receives the reply that this is a street named after the dictator who tore down the shrine and it does not lead to any shrine. The little old lady ex-

claims in surprise: "Then why is such a road which does not lead to the shrine needed in general?"

NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

Aušra (The Dawn), No. 56 (96). In December, 1986, a new issue of the underground publication, *Aušra*, number 56 appeared.

In the publication is mentioned the centennial of the birth of that noted activist in Lithuanian learning and Catholic society, Professor Pranas Dovydaitis.

For the article "Preparing for the Christianity Jubilee," material from the sermon of October 13, 1986 at Šiluva is used. Much attention is devoted in the publication to a scientific-historical study of the Seinai-Suvalkai territory, which was begun in *Aušra* No. 55. This historical study of the Seinai-Suvalkai territory will be continued in further issues of *Aušra*.

Lithuanians, remember that:

Father Alfonsas Svarinskas
Father Sigitas Tamkevičius
Father Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis
Viktoras Petkus
Balys Gajauskas
Gintautas Iešmantas
Povilas Pečeliūnas

and others bear the shackles of imprisonment so that you might live and believe freely.

Lithuania, 1987

(Trans. Note - since the appearance of this issue of the *Chronicle*, Father Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis and Povilas Pečeliūnas have been released.)

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