



**CHRONICLE OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN LITHUANIA
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**CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN
LITHUANIA No. 74**

**A Translation of the Complete Lithuanian Original
LIETUVOS KATALIKŲ BAŽNYČIOS KRONIKA Nr. 74
Documenting the Struggle for Human Rights
In Soviet-Occupied Lithuania Today**

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Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League of America

COVER: The bishops of Lithuania in Vilnius for the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Baptism of Lithuania in June, 1987. From second left: Bishops Vladas Michelevičius, Juozas Preikšas, Vincentas Sladkevičius, Archbishop Liudas Povilonis, Bishops Antanas Vaičius and Romualdas Krikščiūnas. (Page 8)

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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 Teofilius Matulionis of Kaišiadorys and Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys of Vilnius were deported to a Siberian labor camp. Archbishop Reinys perished in prison at Vladimir, November 8, 1953. By 1947,

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

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

After Stalin's death in 1953, there was a slight improvement in the religious 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
Read this and pass it on!

THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA, No. 74

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Lithuania July 12,1987

THANK YOU!

Holy Father, we thank you for the love which you have shown our ancestral land and its Church, during the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Baptism of Lithuania.

Your prayer, attention and love for Lithuania will provide support for us, continuing a tradition of six hundred years of fidelity to the Apostolic See. We pledge that, following the example of our forefathers, we will do everything possible so that the tics of atheism might not tear our ancestral land away from the rock of Saint Peter, just as in the past neither Protestantism nor Orthodoxy were able to tear it away. We will always accompany Your Holiness with prayer and love along the difficult way of your sacred duties.

Catholic Lithuania

We sincerely thank all those who remembered Catholic Lithuania as it celebrated the 600-year jubilee of its baptism:

The Bishops' Conferences of the U.S.A., Brazil, England and other countries and the World Conference of Major Superiors, all of which proclaimed and carried out days of prayer for Lithuania and the Church of Lithuania.

We thank the cardinals and bishops who wanted to come for the principle festivities of the jubilee which took place in Vilnius: His Eminence Cardinal Hopner, President of the Bishops' Conference of Germany; His Eminence, Cardinal Archbishop Bernardin of Chicago, that great friend of Lithuania; Cardinal Glemp, the Primate of Poland; Archbishop Groer of Vienna, and many others. You were not allowed to participate in the jubilee celebration, but Catholic Lithuania will always look for you as most honorable guests.

We sincerely thank government leaders who remembered Lithuania and the jubilee of its baptism: The Australian Senate and President Reagan of the United States.

Our thanks to all individuals and organizations who remembered this anniversary of the baptism of Lithuania: in the U.S.A., the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Ireland and other countries.

We are particularly grateful to the sixty-six members of the United States Congress who, on the occasion of the jubilee, wrote to Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev of the U.S.S.R. Central Committee concerning the release of priest-prisoners of conscience.

May the good God reward you all!



Joseph Cardinal Bernardin (left) of Chicago accepting a gift in the name of the Catholics of Lithuania from Bishop Antanas Vaičius of Telšiai, Lithuania. The presentation took place in Rome at the Basilica of St. Mary Major, following a Mass of thanksgiving for the beatification of Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis . Bishop Vaičius headed a delegation of eight priests sent to Rome from Lithuania, representing the six dioceses of Lithuania, the seminary and the Marian Fathers, to participate in the ceremonies commemorating the 600th anniversary of Lithuania's baptism in June, 1987.

BROKEN CROSSES

When, traversing the hills and dales of our native land, we see by the wayside a large, centuries-old oak with its spreading branches, we immediately think to ourselves, "It has been standing, rustling, for so many years, while generation after generation passes by."

Such an oak is Christianity which has sunk roots six-hundred years deep in our land. Christianity is Christ come to our land, to our homes, to our hearts. It is Christ bringing light to our minds, parting the curtain which separated us from the answers to the most important questions of our lives, which move everyone without exception: Where did the world come from? Where did I come from? What awaits me after death? What kind of person should I be?

It is Christ, showing the way for man to attain happiness, true and eternal happiness. It is Christ become our friend who will never let us down; become our guide at the confusing crossroads of life; become our comfort and support in the difficult hours, our hope at life's sunset. Christ is strength for our weak will, our constant invitation to noble humanism, an invitation to respond to the call of duty and the cry of the unfortunate, an invitation to adorn the world with our work and to struggle against untruth, against sin, against error. He is an invitation to love, to sacrifice, an invitation to serve great and sacred causes.

The Spirit of Christ is able, like nothing else, according to one German writer (G. Roetzinger), to become masters of our own passions and inclinations and servants of our brother, to turn from wolves to sheep, and from sheep to heroes. It would be worth thinking and meditating about this often, especially when the sands of time mark a new century for the nation.

This year, the Church will adorn itself with an artistic new emblem in which this most significant event is symbolically portrayed. We see six broken crosses and a seventh one erect, reminiscent of the Pillar of Gediminas (a Lithuanian national symbol - Trans. Note). Thus are portrayed our nation's past and future: our tears, our endeavors, mistakes and tasks.

Six crosses - six centuries of Christianity in the history of our nation. The crosses are broken because the road of Christianity to our nation was difficult, our nation's history is painful. Lithuanians have experienced the highs and the lows.

The poet A. Rukas wrote (1987) that a Lithuanian is one who:

*"...Brought the Muscovites to their knees,
Who bathed his steed in the Black Sea,
Whom the Cossacks slaughtered in Kražiai
And governors hung on Insurgents' Hill."*

And we might add: The Lithuanian is the one whom they dragged off to the wilds of Siberia, to suffering and to death. The poet, contemplating on all this writes:

*"My nation,
Like a wounded animal
Whimpers, licking
The blood-stained Nemunas' bank."*

(K. Bradūnas)

The road of Christianity to Lithuania was difficult. Our neighbors, the Teutonic Order, which sought to subjugate the Lithuanians under the pretext of conversion, did not possess the Christian spirit or Gospel love. The first ruler of Lithuania to be baptized was Mindaugas, in 1250. But it was not given to Christianity to take root in our nation. With the assassination of Mindaugas, it too was killed.

140 years had to pass before the Lithuanians renounced paganism. It took close ties with the Poles; it took the marriage of the Lithuanian Jogaila and the Polish Jadwiga, even though this friendship between Trakai and Cracow (capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, respectively - Trans. Note), this loan of Polish culture, cost Lithuania dearly. The time came when Polish became the official language of Lithuania (1697).

The Church of Lithuania lacked zealous and dedicated Lithuanian clergy, and this was a painful wound: the Lithuanians had no opportunity to get to know the teaching of Christ in depth.

History did not give Lithuania peaceful times. In the 17th Century, our land was devastated by invading Swedes, later the Russians who burned Vilnius. Gediminas' city burned for seventeen days; the university was destroyed. The foreigners pillaged, killed and burned. War was accompanied by plague and famine. An even more painful page of history was turned over when the Russians occupied Lithuania at the end of the 18th Century. The name of Lithuania disappeared from the map: It was called the Northwest Territory (*"Sievero zapadnyj kraj"*).

The 19th Century was especially cruel to Lithuania. The Russians persecuted any manifestation of Lithuanian culture. They introduced Polish into the University of Vilnius (1816), which became the Polish bastion until 1932 when it was suppressed. The Lithuanian nation was left without an anvil on which to forge its intelligentsia.

Many churches and monasteries were closed. The Russian government began to interfere with the education of the clergy. In 1837, Czar Nicholas I forbade the sons of the peasantry to enter the seminary, while the sons of the gentry required permission of the Governor General. Candidates for the semi-

nary had to pledge allegiance to the government. For seven years, they did not allow anyone to enter the seminary (1863-1870). Later, they limited the number of seminarians so drastically that only about sixty young men were allowed to study in the seminaries of Vilnius, Kaunas and Mogelev.

Many priests were exiled to the depths of Russia. In 1863, the Diocese of Žemaitija lost one-sixth of its priests: 106 priests were sent to the farthest corners of Russia. Bishop Motiejus Valančius himself was transferred from Varniai to Kaunas, and kept there under house arrest. The government sought to leave the people without priests. The lot of the exile fell also to the bishops: Bishops Krasinskis, Grinoveckis, Zvieravičius and Ropas died far from their flocks.

The Russians looked upon Catholicism as an anti-state element. Governor-General Muroviov wrote, "The schools must be protected from the influence of Catholic clergy."

One very painful blow to Lithuania was the ban on Lithuanian printing in the Latin alphabet. The Lithuanians were being suffocated, denied access to that cultural treasure, the book. Bishop Antanas Baranauskas wrote:

*"The morning mist
Does not fall at dawn
As copiously as our brothers'
Tears rain."*

However, during 120 years of Russian oppression, the Lithuanians did not assimilate. During forty years of the press ban, they did not give up Lithuanian writing. The nation of plow-boys did not bow to the will of the foreigners. The Lithuanians won the war for Lithuanian writing because they would not stop fighting: They wrote, they secretly printed and distributed books, they went to prison, to Siberia.

Professor Balys Sruoga, the German concentration camp martyr, wrote:

*"We did not fall asleep,
Even though oppressed,
Even though wronged,
Even though stifled."*

Similar waves are, even now, rolling over our country. After the Second World War, many churches were closed, monasteries and convents suppressed, literature banned and persecuted, the number of seminarians limited and atheism was proclaimed the state religion. The Archdiocese of Vilnius has been without a bishop throughout most of the post-war era: Archbishop Mečislovas Reinys died in Vladimir Prison and Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius has been in

exile for twenty-six years and is not allowed to function. Zealous clergy, loyal to the Church, are called extremists, considered disrupters of unity, and more than one of them have been and are behind bars.

The government atheists, ignoring their own laws and international agreements, interfere most crudely in the internal affairs of the Church and the conscience of the individual. In the press, calumnies and ridicule regarding Christianity do not let up, when at the same time more than one seriously thinking Russian admits that it was precisely the introduction of Christianity which strengthened Russia.

Thus we know from history, and we are witnesses these days, how difficult it is for the Tree of Christianity to stand, to rise and to enlighten when it is constantly and ruthlessly being broken. What does the destruction of crosses produce? A brighter human spirit? A lighter heart? No. Author A. Zurba writes: "Now there is increasingly less of helping others," now that wayside crosses are being destroyed and God is concealed from children and youth.

"It is dark in the heart without a thought of God," the Eastern poet Nezamy said a few hundred years ago. The writer P. Dirgėla notes, "It is terrible when man learns about the true God of the world only after reaching maturity, when he is no longer a child."

Crosses can be demolished not only by the storms of history, not only by those who in their souls, as the 1980 Nobel Prize winner Czeslov Miloszcz says, "That attention to the Absolute which becomes prayer has not been developed."

The cross can be demolished also by those who consider themselves believers. This is even more terrible. Christianity within us is wounded and distorted by egoism, self-love, doubt and fear. One must become accustomed to Christianity. The more accustomed we become, the better we understand it. The better we understand it, the more we ourselves grow. Frequently we take from Christianity what is "fitting", what "suits" us and we reject what we do not understand or what, on account of our own negligence, we simply do not wish to understand.

We have been baptized, but is our soul truly Christian? This is the most important and essential question which each one of us must answer in all seriousness. Thus, do we see things through the eyes of Christ?

External storms we need not fear. Christ did not promise His Church tranquil days. He promised its survival in even the worst of storms, and this comforts and encourages us. The thing we have to fear most is that the Tree of Christianity fall, or that it become bent out of shape in ourselves - that would be the worst thing. This happens when, although considering ourselves Christians, we do not renounce pagan behavior, when we do not value Christianity with all its demands, do not live in accordance with it, do not dare to stand under its flag or because of our faults and negligence, we are unable to stand under it. Not without reason does the poet Justinas Marcinkevičius write:

*"Weather-beaten tree, surely
You will not suddenly snap within me?"*

In the symbol which will adorn our churches, we see a seventh cross, an upright cross. This means: The Lithuanian's soul must be Christian, the land of Lithuania must be the land of Jesus and Mary! Striding into our seventh century of Christianity, the cross in our hearts must remain upright, unbroken, even though tomorrow be dark and stormy! We must preserve a clear conscience, a strong faith, noble hearts, devout souls, industrious hands, strong and indissoluble families. Such must be our future! We must remain faithful to the baptism of our ancestors and our own.

THE JUBILEE AND UNINVITED HELPERS

One after another across the country, celebrations of the 600th anniversary of the Baptism of Lithuania are taking place. This will continue throughout the jubilee year. In various parishes, they will be celebrated in different ways, depending on how much heart and effort parish leaders and the faithful themselves put into them. The main celebration of the jubilee took place June 28 at the principal Mass in the Church of SS. Peter and Paul in Vilnius. At the same time, celebrations took place in five churches in Vilnius. Presiding at solemn services in the Church of SS. Peter and Paul was His Excellency, Bishop Liudas Povilonis; in the Church of St. Theresa, Bishop Romualdas Krikščiūnas and the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Msgr. Algirdas Gutauskas; in the Church of St. Nicholas, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius and the Administrator of the Diocese of Panevėžys, Msgr. Kazimieras Dulksnys; in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Bishop Juozas Preikšas. In two churches of Vilnius, solemn jubilee services were held in Polish: Holy Spirit where Bishop Vldas Michelevičius presided and and St. Raphael where Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius was the celebrant.

Participating in the jubilee celebration were guests: the Bishop of Riga and representatives of the Orthodox and Protestant churches. Participating in the services from the government were Commissioners for Religious Affairs Konstantin Kharchev from the U.S.S.R. and Petras Anilionis from Lithuania.

During services, a pastoral letter from the bishops and the diocesan administrators of Lithuania, specially intended for the occasion, was read to the faithful urging them "to learn, to be guided by and live by the living Christian spirit -- the grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit".

Perhaps the warmest and spiritually uplifting celebration took place in the Church of St. Nicholas. The faithful received with great warmth and cordiality their shepherd, His Excellency, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, who has not been allowed to return to Vilnius for twenty-six years. Ignoring the demand



Participants in the 600 jubilee celebration in Vilnius.

of the government atheists that during the solemnities he preach only one sermon — read the bishops' pastoral letter -- Bishop Steponavičius addressed the assembled faithful from the altar.

In his sermon, he gave a sensitive overview of the road travelled by the Church in our country for six hundred years: the ups and downs experienced by the Church and the nation. The most important role fell to those tireless laborers in the vineyard and inextinguishable beacons who by their example and works showed not only their own nation but the world that the Church is that firm rock not yielding to any temptations or onslaughts of hell. These were Saint Casimir, Blessed Mykolas Giedraitis, Blessed Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis, Mažvydas, Poška, Sirvydas, Bretkūnas, Valančius, Baranauskas, Maironis, Vyžgantas, Jakštas and a host of others.

"Under the operation of Divine Grace, every difficult period for the Church, every undeserved loss and suffering as well as the contemporary state atheism produce and develop new defenders of the Faith and even martyrs. It is not fear and denial, but courage and loyalty which must guide those to whom our religion is dear, to whom Christ is the strongest support and help," said Bishop Steponavičius.

In the churches, during the Prayer of the Faithful, solemn promises and words of thanks to the Most High were uttered by children, youth,

newlyweds, parents, seminarians and priests. Joining in the Prayer of the Faithful was the crowd of thousands which filled the churches and churchyards, and outside some churches, the streets and squares. With Their Excellencies the bishops leading, the nation renewed its baptismal promises and a medal dedicated to the jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania was blessed.

At the end of the solemnities, after taking leave of their shepherds, the faithful who had assembled from the various corners of Lithuania dispersed, bearing in their hearts a renewed *credo*, the hope that God would continue to bless and protect the Church of Lithuania in the face of all-out efforts today to impose atheism.

In preparation for the principal celebration of the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania, the ordinaries and the commission for the celebration of the jubilee were constantly obliged to consult in all organizational matters (even those purely ecclesiastical such as how many sermons to preach, etc.) with the appropriate government officials, specifically with the staff of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis, and to obtain from it permission for even the least move. The Commissioner himself, and those like him, did not let the least opportunity pass - meetings with bishops, priests and faithful, press and television reports - to trumpet the constant desire and great efforts of the government to help the Catholic Church of Lithuania to prepare for this unusual feast, so that it might transpire as smoothly and solemnly as possible.

Let us briefly recall some of the government's "efforts to help" the faithful. Let us page through the Soviet press. This jubilee year, as never before in the press, the Catholic Church, the pope, clergy and faithful are being angrily and sarcastically attacked and the feelings of the believing individual are being ridiculed without restraint. Let us just page through the press for June. It glitters with such atheistic articles such as:

Tiesa (6-13), "The Vatican and the Archbishop's Last Mass"; *Tiesa* (6-4), A. Balsys' "Removing the Guise of Mysticism"; *Tiesa* (6-7), "The Traveller from the Vatican"; *Teisa* (6-6), Henrikas JaSkfJnas' "I Cannot Remain Silent"; *Literatura irmenas* (6-13), "Calling Them by Their Real Names"; *Komjaunimo tiesa* (6-18), "The Gentle Inquisitor"; *Komjaunimo tiesa* (6-19), J. Stankaitis' "Whence Saints, and Why?", etc., etc.

Television: Prior to the jubilee, it, too, tried to help as much as it could. Program followed program. A whole series of film clips, being shown for nth time, were called on to help out *Akiračiai (Horizons)* and newsman Stulina: *The Sting, Nine Levels of Downfall, The Devils Work for the Priest's Benefit*, etc. The purpose of all of them was the same, to denigrate the Church, to ridicule the faithful or, as Anilionis says, to assist in the jubilee.

Lithuanian television organized so-called interviews with various representatives of the public. It should be understood that there were no believers among them. During one such interview, the Hill of Crosses became the most

important target. Participants in the program, as usual, "unanimously" expressed annoyance with this "center of obscurantism and extreme fanaticism". Allegedly, Catholics with their crosses have desecrated a burial site of their pagan forebears. They demanded that the hill itself be destroyed as an embarrassment to the City of Šiauliai striving for a high level of culture, etc.

What kind of culture are they talking about when evil hands have more than once been raised against the unique Hill of Crosses, without a peer in the world, in every foot of which, together with the crosses, the people's longings, hopes, thanksgiving and petitions have taken root. Or perhaps acts of vandalism and barbarism are now being set as the norm of Socialist culture?

On June 16, Petras Anilionis summoned the bishops and diocesan administrators of Lithuania. In the agenda the Commissioner dealt with three questions.

Jubilee celebrations in the parishes: Anilionis demanded that the bishops spare no effort, try their best to see that in their course, there would be no "extremists' excesses", as the government called them. What does Anilionis consider to be such terrible so-called excesses?

On May 9, in Varlaukys, Father Edmundas Atkočiūnas invited Father Petras Našlėnas, known to the government as an "extremist", to preach at the jubilee commemoration. Such individuals, in the words of the Commissioner, should be forbidden as a rule from speaking at commemorations. Moreover, Father Atkočiūnas allowed to speak in church Jadvyga Bieliauskienė, whom Anilionis continues to consider a terrible state criminal, released early from the place where she was serving sentence by decision of the Soviet government only on account of poor health.

Mrs. Bieliauskiene urged the faithful to join the temperance movement which is now being officially encouraged. Hence, a clear thinking, even an active, atheist should not consider Mrs. Bieliauskienė's talk a state crime; however, for Anilionis, the very fact that such people are allowed to speak in church is a crime which according to him is incompatible with *Canon Law* and therefore a challenge to the entire Soviet state. In a word (and this for the Commissioner is the worst thing), such excesses modelled on the extremist actions of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and of Polish clericals, supporters of *Solidarity*, shall not be tolerated and shall be strictly punished.

There were no fewer extremist excesses on February 14 in Valkininkai. The greatest of these was the participation of Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius and the sermon he gave. In the commemoration which took place in the Cathedral of Kaunas, where he could not have acted as an extremist, Bishop Steponavičius did not participate, but he gladly agreed to go to Valkininkai, Anilionis said. Anilionis was also displeased by the fact that the pastor, Father Algimantas Keina, allowed Father Jonas Boruta, an alumnus of the correspondence seminary, to preach at the celebration.

"In some churches, during the commemorations, montages were produced portraying restrictions on the Church experienced from Czarist Russia and the Soviet government. This bodes no good, especially when they forget to bring up the Soviet government's help in preparation for the jubilee: the printing of holy cards and calendars in government printing houses," said Anilionis.

During the celebration in Valkininkai, the imprisoned priests, Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis were mentioned. This is allegedly a challenge to the Vatican, which promised the Soviet government that during the commemoration of the jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania in Rome, their names would not be mentioned. "The bishops must see to it that such transgressions against public order not take place in jubilee celebrations," said the Commissioner heatedly.

Anilionis also shared his thoughts about the delegation of priests which would be going to the jubilee celebrations planned at the Vatican. He explained by way of warning, that as a preventative to anti-Soviet excesses, government agents had already been sent to Rome to observe how the delegation would conduct itself. He demanded that the bishops warn members of the delegation that if "excesses" should occur, the entire delegation could be recalled before the celebration. He said the Soviet Embassy in Rome would take care of this.

He demanded that they take care that there be no excesses in Vilnius. Anilionis had heard that the Administrator of the Diocese of Panevėžys, Msgr. Kazimieras Dulksnys, assigned to conduct jubilee services in the Church of St. Nicholas, planned to turn over his officiating duties to Bishop Steponavičius. At that point, addressing Msgr. Dulksnys directly, he warned, "Should this happen, remember that you still have to live in the Soviet Union. Such deference to the extremists we will not forgive!"

The second question which the Commissioner touched on during the meeting was the matter of the seminary in Kaunas. "The Soviet government understands the situation. It wishes and it is trying to see that there be more priests in Lithuania. But the bishops, on the contrary, are creating conditions for the extremists to blame the Soviet government for the existing shortage of priests," Anilionis lectured. Otherwise, in his opinion, it is impossible to explain the fact that this year ordination to the priesthood was postponed for three seminarians.

Special attention was called to the case of seminarian Zubavičius. "How the extremists, Bishop Steponavičius and Fathers Donatas Valiukonis and Algimantas Keina are able to lead the bishops and the diocesan administrators around by the nose! It was their fault that orders were delayed for a positively thinking seminarian," Anilionis complained. "It is your affair," he continued, "don't ordain a single seminarian if you wish, but then, it will be necessary to consider as anti-Soviet libel statements and complaints that there is a shortage of priests.

"Apparently, bishops do not ordain seminarians loyal to the Soviet government because they wish to make room for illegally ordained priests. We thought that with the imprisonment of Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius, the stream of the illegals would cease. However, this year also, Bishop Sladkevičius of Kaišiadorys again wrote out faculties for two newly-hatched illegals. Therefore, this year the quota of young men accepted into the seminary shall be decreased by two places, and in the future, as many illegals as you ordain, so many fewer shall be accepted into the seminary. I am warning the Bishop of Kaišiadorys not to do so again. We will find ways to punish disobedient ordinaries for such activity."

The more he spoke, the more emotional the Commissioner became.

The third important question, according to Anilionis, requiring immediate discussion would sound something like this: Diocesan support for the Peace Fund is poor. Only the Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius is paying 100 rubles per parish. The poorest situation is in the Dioceses of Kaišiadorys and Telšiai: There, barely 46 rubles a parish are paid.

Bishop Antanas Vaičius tried to explain, "Commissioner, you are not being consistent. You say that there are too many small parishes in the Diocese of Telšiai to be able to appoint a separate priest for each one, but on the other hand, you require even the smallest collect for the Peace Fund the same amount as the parishes in the big cities."

Anilionis was silent. Later he attacked the bishops because during the Bishops' Conference, they had dared to reject the government's offer to publish a Catholic newspaper, of which only the first two pages would be reserved for information submitted by Anilionis' office. "Even if you don't want it, the newspaper will come out. We have priests who will publish the newspaper even without your concurrence," Anilionis ended.

On June 25, just before the celebration, Anilionis made his last pre-jubilee visit to the Vilnius Diocesan Chancery and all churches where baptism jubilee services were to take place. The Commissioner was intent on giving final warnings and once more checking whether government requirements had been conveyed and not forgotten, on giving the bishops orders or, in other words, "on helping the Church so that the celebration would take place in an attractive and expeditious manner".

So he warned pastors and committee chairmen that one of their most important duties was to keep careful guard over the pulpits, so that some extremist priest would not try to repeat Father Antanas Jokubauskas' 1984 excess at the Jubilee of Saint Casimir in the Church of SS. Peter and Paul. They had to guarantee that the sole sermon read during the celebration would be the joint bishops' communication to the faithful censored and approved by the Commissioner's office. Committee members must be vigilant and stop any attempt by priests or laity to speak in church or in the churchyard. Included in the

duties of pastor- and committees, according to Anilionis, must be the concern that outside the churches there be no beggars or purveyors of religious articles. After all, what would guests from abroad think of it? It would be an embarrassment to the Soviet government.

Visiting the Church of SS. Peter and Paul, the Commissioner was dismayed upon seeing the disarrayed churchyard. When Father Vaičekonis explained that this had occurred because the government had not allowed the purchase of sufficient cement blocks to surface the paths, he fell silent. There are large stacks of such blocks next to the Museum of History and Ethnography. Participants in the jubilee celebration who did not get into the Church of SS. Peter and Paul stood in the mud, since it was raining.

Recalling just a few such "great government efforts to help", the participation by the Commissioners for Religious Affairs from Moscow and Vilnius, Kharchev and Anilionis, during the main services in the Church of SS. Peter and Paul becomes impossible to understand.

During this jubilee year of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, the *Min-tis* Publishing House issued 5,000 copies of an album called *77ie Church in Lithuania*.

The well bound and well designed publication at first glance appears quite attractive. One could think that it really was a gift to the faithful celebrating the 600-year jubilee. However, the introduction is a commentary on the album. The question arises whether *such* an introduction was necessary for the album if it was intended for the believers of Lithuania.

Let us cite a few places:

"The Soviet state does not interfere in the internal affairs of the Church, in its activities; it merely sets down the principles and rules for the Constitution of Religious Associations."

"Most residents of Soviet Lithuania, continuing old traditions of free-thinking in our country, do not profess any religion."

They do not forget to emphasize the fact that all churches and church inventory are government property, etc. Whatever else, the Lithuanian Catholic needs no explanation of such Soviet "freedom". He knows it well. In the introduction, it is indicated that the album may be of greatest interest to those who are interested in architecture and art, but this is only in the introduction. Of 630 active churches, in the album there are pictures of 127, some of poor quality and not especially meaningful. Dates of erection are given only for the more important churches of Lithuania, already well-known to most people. However, no opportunity is lost to use the dates of church renovations in a slanted way.

And finally, where is the believer in Lithuania to purchase this album since it is sold only in the Dollar Stores? The *Pažanga* Book Store in Kaunas sold it only to specially reserved book collections.



Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius during his 75th birthday celebration in 1986. A priest for more than 51 years, Bishop Steponavičius has never been allowed to administer his See, the Archdiocese of Vilnius. Exiled without a trial for 27 years to the border town of Žagari, Lithuania, Bishop Steponavičius was permitted to visit the City of Vilnius only once, in 1980, to mark the occasion of his 25th anniversary as a bishop. Often rumored to be the Cardinal "in pectore" named by Pope John Paul II, Bishop Steponavičius has captured the concern of the West. In July, 1987, more than 100 members of the U.S. House of Representatives petitioned the U.S.S.R.'s Council for Religious Affairs Chairman Konstantui Kharchev to end the exile and allow Bishop Steponavičius to assume his duties as Apostolic Administrator of Vilnius.

PETITIONS AND PROTESTS

To: His Excellency, Archbishop Liudas Povilonis
Copies to: His Excellency, Bishop Vincentas Sladkevičius
His Excellency, Bishop Antanas Vaičius
His Excellency, Bishop Juozas Preikšas
Msgr. Kazimieras Dulksnys
Msgr. Algirdas Gutauskas

Your Excellency,

The bishops and administrators of the Church of Lithuania have sent me their letter of March 11 in which they propose that I preside at the solemn services commemorating the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania which are to take place in the Church of SS. Peter and Paul in Vilnius, and to preach the principal sermon. That letter of Your Excellencies and Your Reverences provides me with the opportunity of commenting on the jubilee celebration. The principal services of the jubilee should be the fruit of the labor of three years preparatory work on the part of the Bishops' Conference and the Baptism Jubilee Committee.

I am sure that the Bishops' Conference, as well as the Baptism Jubilee Committee, in their meetings discussed and voted specific ways in which the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania should be celebrated. Not having participated in a single meeting of the Bishops' Conference since I am not invited to its meetings, I know nothing of what decisions were made or directions given which are to be followed in order that the jubilee celebration be solemn and impressive. I therefore do not presume to preside over the jubilee celebration out of fear lest I deviate from the decisions taken by the Bishops' Conference with regard to the jubilee celebration. Besides, living in Žagarė far from Vilnius, I do not have the opportunity to confer with the pastor of the Church of SS. Peter and Paul or members of the Baptism Jubilee Committee regarding the program for the jubilee celebration.

I would suggest the services take place in five churches with a bishop presiding in each church, who would preach the principle sermon or ask one of the priests to preach it. The time, place and order of jubilee services should be announced in advance in all the churches of Lithuania.

May the great jubilee celebration in Vilnius be such that as to serve the good and honor of the Church in our country and for the joy and spiritual good of the believing public.

With true respect and love,

Bishop J. Steponavičius.

March 28, 1987

To: The Bishops and Administrators of Lithuania
From: Priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius

A Petition

In the desire that the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania be celebrated in a manner most profitable spiritually to the believing public of our nation, we suggest:

1. That the Holy Father be once more invited to the jubilee and the bishops of neighboring countries be invited to the principal services.

2. That the main services of the jubilee in Vilnius be held all week, assigning each day to a separate diocese; that services be held the last day, June 28 — a Sunday — in at least six churches in Vilnius in order that as many of the faithful as possible be able to participate.

3. If it proves possible for a delegation of priests to travel to the Vatican for the jubilee, we suggest that representatives of diocesan priests' councils be chosen as members of the priests' delegation as their representatives.

4. We ask you to see that government officials not interfere with clergy or faithful teaching children the truths of religion.

5. The 1987 booklet writes about the transfer to Sunday of five holy days of obligation falling on weekdays. The holy days transferred were very dear to the believing public and the numbers of faithful participating in them used to be no less than on Sunday. On what basis has this been done on the occasion of the jubilee year? This is a great spiritual loss.

Signed by the following priests:

J. Budrevičius, A. Keina, P. Purlys, J. Naumovičius, D. Valiukonis, J. Boruta, J. Lauriūnas, V. Černiauskas, A. Petronis, V. Pūkas, J. Šlenys, I. Jakutis, B. Andriuškevičius, E. Paulioninis, J. Vaitonis, A. Simonaitis, A. Belickas, K. Zemenas, M. Savickas, J. Aškelevičius, S. Tunaitis, S. Markevičius, A. Čeponis, K. Gailius.

To: The Bishops and Administrators of Dioceses of Lithuania
From: Priests of the Archdiocese of Kaunas

A Petition

In the desire that the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania be celebrated in a manner most profitable spiritually to the believing public of our nation, we suggest:

1. That the Holy Father be once more invited to the jubilee and the bishops of neighboring countries be invited to the principal services.

2. That the main services of the jubilee in Vilnius be held all week, assigning each day to a separate diocese; that services be held the last day, June 28 - a Sunday - in at least six churches in Vilnius in order that as many of the faithful as possible be able to participate. (It would be fitting for one of the bishops to conduct services at each church.)

3. If it proves possible for a delegation of priests to travel to the Vatican for the jubilee, we suggest that representatives of diocesan priests' councils be chosen as members of the priests' delegation as their representatives.

4. We ask you to see that government officials not interfere with clergy or faithful teaching children the truths of religion.

5. Why have the holy days of obligation which the faithful held in very high esteem and attended no less than on the days to which they were transferred, been abolished?

Signed by the following priests:

L. Kalinauskas, P. Matulaitis, V. Bruokas, G. Jankauskas, V. Ramanauskas, K. Daknevičius, A. Jakubauskas, J. Razmantas, St. Pilka, F. Balionas, L. Jagminas, L. Semaška, J. Vaičekauskas, V. Griganavičius, V.K. Peslikas, J. Babonas, A. Imbra, Pr. Gaižauskas, E. Bartulis, A. Bulotas.

To: Bishops and Administrators of Dioceses of Lithuania

From: Priests of the Diocese of Telsiai and the Prelature of Klaipeda

A Petition

It is painful to us that regardless of petitions and special efforts we shall be celebrating the solemnities of the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania on June 28 without our Holy Father, John Paul II. This is especially painful when we know the Holy Father's desire to be with us at the feet of the Blessed Mother of God at the Gates of Dawn. We sincerely thank you for your five pastoral letters on the occasion of the jubilee year. We request one more letter in which the most obvious problems in the area of religion and morality in our country be spelled out and that specific measures to combat them be indicated, introducing and solidifying for the future the following traditions of Christian life:

1. Fostering Christian customs in the family:

a. To point out, especially to parents, the need on Sundays to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with their families.

b. Repeatedly to urge the timely baptism of infants, the careful preparation of children for First Confession and Communion, the essential nature Easter Confession or Communion, the need to begin family life with the Sacrament of Matrimony and the celebration of religious holy days in a spirit of deep faith.

2. In the struggle for a sober Lithuania:

a. To oblige the clergy to practice sobriety and to popularize zealously it among the faithful.

b. Each year during Advent and Lent, to conduct services in parish churches for sobriety: preaching appropriate sermons, administering the pledge and renewing it.

c. To drive home to the faithful that no intoxicants be used at funerals or memorials for the deceased, to urge that family celebrations be held without intoxicants.

3. In the struggle for a chaste way of life:

a. In sermons and confession, to instill a love of chastity in the hearts of the youth.

b. Constantly to remind people of the importance of pre-marital chastity for a happy family future.

c. To urge faithfulness to the marriage vows.

4. In fostering respect for God-given life, repeatedly and firmly to speak out against abortion.

Among the clergy, various rumors and suspicions are proliferating regarding clergy delegations going abroad on various occasions. In order to avoid misunderstandings, we would suggest that delegates going to religious celebrations abroad be chosen in priests' councils.

We suggest that the bishops request that in place of the little religious newspaper being urged by the Soviet government, the scope and circulation of the *Catholic Calendar-Directory* be enlarged (That is, that it be a directory not only for priests but also for the believing public), that at least one religious classic be published each year, e.g., *The Imitation of Christ*, et. al.

Signed by the following priests:

T. Poškus, B. Budrikis, J. Kauneckas, J. Tamašauskas, J. Paliokas, V. Vėlavičius, L. Dambrauskas, J. Petrauskas A. Šeškevičius, V. Šlevas, K. Žukas, J. Bučelis, A. Arnašius, B. Jonauskas, J. Kusas, V. Sadauskas, A. Alminas, J. Miškinis, B. Bacevičius, J. Šiaurys, E. Atkočiūnas, A. Lideikis, A. Genutis, P. Linkevičius, F. Žilys, A. Beniušis, S. Anužis, V. Klebonis, A. Pakamanis, V. Žvirzdinas.

To: The Bishops and Administrators of Dioceses of Lithuania

From: Priests of the Diocese of Vilkaviškis

A Petition

In the desire that the 600-year jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania be celebrated in a manner most profitable spiritually, we suggest:

1. That the Holy Father be once more invited to the jubilee and the bishops of neighboring countries be invited to the principal services.

2. That the main services of the jubilee in Vilnius be held all week, assigning each day to a separate diocese; that services be held the last day, June 28 - a Sunday - in at least six churches in Vilnius in order that as many of the faithful as possible be able to participate. (It would be fitting for one of the bishops to conduct services at each church.)

3. If it proves possible for a delegation of priests to travel to the Vatican for the jubilee, we suggest that representatives of diocesan priests' councils be chosen as members of the priests' delegation as their representatives.

4. We request that care be taken that government officials not interfere with clergy or faithful teaching children the truths of religion.

5. We request that a separate church and day be assigned for the Diocese of Vilkauskis to commemorate the jubilee.

Signed by the following priests:

V. Jalinskas, V. Stakėnas, J. Maksvytis, L. Kunevičius, J. Žemaitis, A. Deltuva, St. Mikalajūnas, A. Gražulis, V. Užkuraitis, G. Dovydaitis, I. Plioraitis, P. Dumbliauskas, G. Pušinaitis, V. Bobinas, A. Diskevičius, J. Varkala, J. Baranauskas, J. Grudzinskas, J. Sventickas, B. Jarušauskas, B. Razukas, K. Kudirka, D. Brogys, J. Mioldažys, A. Mioldažys, B. Čegelskas, J. Gražulis, V. Urbonas, V. Česna, A. Pangonis, K. Juškevičius, K. Brilius, J. Rusinas, J. Šalčius, J. Užupis, J. Palukaitis, R. Žukauskas, T. Valainas, A. Račkauskas, S. Samuolis, J. Marčiulionis, V. Rudzinskas, J. Malinauskas, B. Paltanavičius, A. Aleksandravičius, P. Sitka, P. Orlickas, J. Jakaitis, V. Jackūnas, J. Buga, V. Vaitauskas, Vl. Bilius, A. Vitkus, K. Montvila, A. Sadauskas, Pr. Račiūnas, J. Poderis, A. Liesus, J. Gumauskas.

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

A Petition

Twenty-six years ago, the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, by order of Soviet government organs, was exiled from Vilnius and settled by force outside the archdiocese in Žagarė. The bishop was being punished because he observed *Canon Law*, refusing to ordain unsuitable candidates to the priesthood and refusing in his own name to forbid priests to exercise one of their most important obligations: that of teaching children catechism; to ban minors from the altar and out of processions. They were required to do so by the civil government of those times.



Bishop Steponavičius (left) with Father Sigitas Tamkevičius.

For failure to carry out these requirements, the bishop was punished by the civil government without any trial to an indeterminate sentence not provided in the *Criminal Code*. This unjust decision is still in effect today during the era of openness and restructuring. Academician Andrei Sakharov, who was similarly punished, has already been released from exile in Gorky, while Bishop Steponavičius is still being held in exile in Žagarė.

We ask you, General Secretary, to see that Bishop Steponavičius be allowed to return to Vilnius and to carry out his duties as the Bishop of the Archdiocese of Vilnius.

We also request the release of the imprisoned priests: Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis (Father Matulionis was amnestied on November 16, 1987 — Trans. Note) They were sentenced only because they called public attention to painful wrongs taking place in our society: disregard of the basic Constitutional rights of citizens, and the spread of drunkenness and lack of conscientiousness. No one who raises these questions today is punished. In painful contrast, the priests are in prison for daring to do the same.

We ask you, General Secretary, in the same connection, to instruct that the cases of the priests under sentence be reviewed, and that the priests be released.

Priests and Faithful of Lithuania

Signed:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Vilnius (Church of Good Hope) 1883 | Miroslavas (VI) - 1728 |
| St. Michael - 1801 | Šventežeris (VI) - 738 |
| St. Peter and Paul - 847 | Santaika (VI) - 603 |
| St. Ann - 541 | Igliauka (VI) - 764 |
| Holy Spirit - 502 | Vilkaviškis (VI) - 1352 |
| St. Raphael - 476 | Gražiškiai (VI) - 157 |
| St. Theresa - 162 | Bartininkai (VI) - 98 |
| Calvary - 242 | Lankeliškės (VI) - 107 |
| Druskininkai (Vn) - 1980 | Keturvalakiai (VI) - 408 |
| Valkininkai (Vn) - 625 | Alksninė (VI) - 75 |
| Kalesninkai (Vn) - 733 | Pilviškiai (VI) - 399 |
| Ratnyčia (Vn) - 380 | Varėna (Vn) - 470 |
| Kabeliai (Vn) - 275 | Eišiškės (Vn) - 470 |
| N. Vilia - 504 | Lieplaukė (T) - 161 |
| Paberžė (Vn) - 817 | Lausoda (T) - 102 |
| Dubičiai (Vn) - 382 | Viešvėnai (T) - 237 |
| Butrimonys (Vn) - 285 | Telšiai - 3000 |
| Veisiejai (VI) - 708 | Rietavas (T) - 424 |
| Sasna (VI) - 293 | Gadunavas (T) - 103 |
| Kapsukas (VI) - 2317 | Plungė (T) - 1169 |
| Bagotoji (VI) - 140 | Mosėdis (T) - 426 |
| Gižai (VI) - 353 | Skuodas (T) - 355 |
| Virbalis (VI) - 344 | Nevarėnai (T) - 320 |
| Kybartai (VI) - 185 | Žarėnai-Latveliai - 830 |
| Alksnėnai (VI) - 666 | Panevėžys - 3706 |
| Kalvarija (VI) - 845 | |

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

A Petition

We placed much hope in your program for restructuring and democratization of the country, trusting that it would essentially improve the condition of human rights in the Soviet Union, that prisoners of conscience would be released and that the persecution of people for political, national and religious reasons would end. The first step was even taken in that direction. By order of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., February 2 and 9, 1987, about one hundred individuals, sentenced for so-called "state crimes", were released from Soviet prisons, camps and exile.

However, it must be remarked that this act of the Soviet government so widely publicized in the West was not a political amnesty, but a "pardon" which effected only an insignificant portion of political prisoners. According to our information, the greater part of Lithuanian prisoners of conscience are still in their places of confinement. We are very concerned about the fate of these people, our fellow nationals and former comrades in incarceration, and would like to call your attention to their plight.

Fathers Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius were sentenced in 1983 for religious activity on behalf of society, which was inspired not by the desire to subvert the Soviet government, but by deep understanding of their human and priestly duty. At the beginning of this year, Father Svarinskas and Father Tamkevičius were brought to the Vilnius KGB Isolation Prison where in exchange for freedom, they were asked to renounce their principles. Not considering themselves guilty, they would not agree to compromise their consciences. So Father Svarinskas was returned to Perm Camp, and Father Tamkevičius to a new place of imprisonment, Mordovia.

Viktoras Petkus and Balys Gajauskas, members of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, were arrested in 1977 and sentenced to ten years each of deprivation of freedom and five years of exile. Viktoras Petkus, together with other members of the group, has publicized many instances of offenses against human rights in Lithuania, urging the Soviet government to abide by the letter and spirit of the Helsinki Accords. He has also spoken in favor of Lithuania's secession from the U.S.S.R.

Balys Gajauskas has been accused of: gathering documents about the Stalinist terror in Lithuania, the organizing of material assistance to prisoners and the attempt to translate Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's book, *Gulag Archipelago*. In all, Balys Gajauskas has spent thirty-five years in Soviet prisons and camps, Viktoras Petkus twenty-five years and Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, twenty years.

Gintautas Iešmantas and Povilas Pečeliūnas (Pečeliūnas was returned to Lithuania from exile on October 26, 1987 - Trans. Note) are presently in

exile. Both were sentenced for involvement with the underground publications *Perspektyvos* and *Alma Mater*. In their articles and petitions, Iešmantas and Pečeliūnas have spoken out for a restructuring of the Soviet social political system for openness and democracy. In the light of changes today, the accusations against them appear absurd: today the same kind of statements sound widely from the very highest tribunes and from the pages of the Soviet press. Meanwhile, Iešmantas and Pečeliūnas are still considered, "especially dangerous state criminals".

Father Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis is serving a three-year sentence in one of the criminal camps in the Region of Chita. His entire "guilt" is that on All Souls' Days, together with his parishioners, he participated in a procession to the cemetery. (Father Matulionis was amnestied on November 16, 1987 -- Trans. Note)

In 1981, Jonas Pakuckas was proclaimed a traitor to the fatherland and sentenced to fifteen years deprivation of freedom for trying to cross the U.S.S.R.-Finnish border.

Many young Lithuanians have been held criminally liable and sentenced for their refusal to serve in the Soviet Army because of their participation in street processions and for alleged ridiculing of Soviet symbols. Cases of this kind also need review and new treatment.

We are listing only the names of Lithuanian political prisoners. Together with them in Soviet prisons, camps, psychiatric hospitals and exile, hundreds of other prisoners of conscience - Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, Caucasians, Estonians, Latvians and others — await liberation.

If you really want to solve the problem of human rights still existing in the Soviet Union, first of all, it is essential to amnesty all political prisoners. After that, Art. 70 of the *Criminal Code* of the Russian Federated Socialist Republic should be abolished (as well as the corresponding articles in Union republics), since they are anti-Constitutional and absurd from a logical as well as juridical perspective. Only these measures will allow political, national and religious repressions to be stopped and will prevent their repetition.

Signed by former political and prisoners of conscience:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Jadvyga Bieliauskienė | 8. Nijolė Sadūnaitė |
| 2. Petras Cidzikas | 9. Julius Sasnauskas |
| 3. Liudas Dambrauskas | 10. Liudas Simutis |
| 4. Anastazas Janulis | 11. Vytautas Skuodis |
| 5. Mečislovas Jurevičius | 12. Gemma Stanelytė |
| 6. Vladas Lapienis | 13. Antanas Terleckas |
| 7. Petras Plumpa | 14. Vytautas Vaičiūnas |

**To: The General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist
Party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev
Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs of the U.S.S.R.,
Konstantin Kharchev**

Copies to: The Bishops of Lithuania

From: Faithful of Lithuania and the City of Klaipėda

A Petition

January 19-20, 1987, a delegation of believers from Lithuania approached the Central Committee of the U.S.S.R. and the Council for Religious Affairs regarding the return of the Church of the the Queen of Peace in the City of Klaipėda. We were received by the Central Committee staff member in charge, Krygin, who promised within a month to give us a specific reply. In our petition were indicated the names and addresses of those individuals who could be informed of the government organs' decision.

Vice Chairwoman Blažienė of the Klaipėda City Executive Committee, instead of an answer, threatened citizen Birutė Mockienė, a resident of Klaipėda, with four years of imprisonment if she did not stop worrying about the return of the church. Comrade Blažienė likewise gave no reply to Antanas Avelis, a resident of Klaipėda.

On February 13 of this year, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the City of Kaunas, Comrade Kazakevičius, visited Kaunas resident Juozas Kazalupskas, and instead of a reply, conducted an interrogation. A month and a half later, a telephone call was made to CPSU Central Committee Propaganda Division staff member B. M. Kuvinev, to whom the case of the Klaipėda church had been assigned. She replied that the decision concerning the return of the the church of Klaipėda had been turned over to the Council for Religious Affairs. The Council for Religious Affairs replied that the question was being decided. Another inquiry was made to the Council for Religious Affairs and to Comrade Kuvinev. The answer was as follows: the matter has been sent for decision to the republic government organ - the Lithuanian S.S.R. Council of Ministers, Comrade Česnavičius and Comrade Petras Anilionis, Commissioner for Religious Affairs.

On March 12, 1987, a delegation applied to Commissioner Petras Anilionis of the Council for Religious Affairs. He replied that the return of the building was not within his jurisdiction, that this question is determined by executive organs.

Then we applied as directed by Kuvinev, to the Council of Ministers of the Lithuanian S.S.R. There we were not received, and they explained that in the future they would not receive us in connection with this question. From an interview with the pastor of the church in Klaipėda we understood that plans were afoot to return the confiscated Church of the Queen of Peace, but that

they were considering closing the little church presently functioning. When Klaipėda is compared with other cities of Lithuania, with regard to the number of residents, there should be more than one church in Klaipėda. Hence, a great uproar could result if the return of the confiscated church causes the closing of the one which is operational.

Commissioner Petras Anilionis said that in his opinion, both churches were needed in Klaipėda, and we should say so in our petitions. At that time it never occurred to us that the operational church could be closed. When news of the possibility of closing the operational church spread among the faithful, they began keeping vigil within it day and night to prevent the closing of the church. The situation demands a decision without delay.

We, the Catholics of Lithuania, trust that the question will be settled favorably, in the light of the democratic changes.

We ask you, General Secretary, to help us and to monitor the activities of our republican government organs so that the vicious circle in connection with the question of the church of Klaipėda be broken.

P.S. We request a specific answer in writing indicating a date of return for the church.

Signed:

Saulius Kelpšas, Laimutė Truskauskaitė Aldona Raižytė, Gintas Sakavičius, Alfonsas Bumbulis, Petras Gražulis, Vitas Rinkevičius, Arūnas Rekašius, Domininkas Čepas, Juozas Kazalupskas, Salomėja Menkevičiūtė, Petras Cidzikas.

March 16, 1987

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

Copies to: The Bishops and Administrators of the Dioceses of Lithuania
Rector of the Kaunas Interdiocesan Seminary, Viktoras Butkus
President of the L.S.S.R. Council of Ministers
Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, attached to the Council of Ministers of the L.S.S.R., Petras Anilionis

A Petition

We priests, who finished the seminary in 1987, seeing the present difficult plight of the Church in Lithuania, look uneasily at the Church and especially at the future of the only seminary in Lithuania. Although the Constitution guarantees freedom of conscience and the Church is separated from the state, in reality, this is not so. In Lithuania, the faithful continue to be discriminated against, their rights are violated, and the state interferes in exclusively ecclesiastical

tical matters. This is especially obvious when we recall our road to the priesthood, knowing that the situation remains unchanged.

A young man deciding to seek the priesthood begins to be persecuted, pressured to change his mind, harassed and ridiculed in school. The persecution does not let up even during his service in the Soviet Army. It begins to manifest itself especially crudely when he applies for entry into the interdiocesan seminary in Kaunas. This triggers the constant summonses to the military commissariat, where security agents await him or it starts the ringing of the doorbell or the visits of internal security agents to his place of employment and apartment, and those of his parents. There are attempts to change his mind: the threats, the demands that he sign up to work for the security organs, the orders to show up for appointments. Otherwise, no hope for entering the seminary is held out.

Nevertheless, most of the young men remain constant to their chosen ideal. If the required number of candidates do not materialize, the state organs are forced to pass some of the young men who have not succumbed. Nor does the persecution of the latter let up during the seminary years.

Here are a couple of examples:

1. Vytautas Prajara was ridiculed in school for his religious beliefs and was forbidden to go to church. When he submitted his application to the seminary and passed the entrance examinations, he was soon summoned to the military commissariat where a security agent awaited him. There an attempt was made to recruit him to work, that is to cooperate with, the security police; he was threatened that otherwise, he would not enter, "You are in our hands. There are many who apply but only a small portion enter. If you sign up with us, your entrance into the seminary is guaranteed."

With this and similar blandishments, they tried to recruit him. When he would not agree, after two hours they let him go, after setting up the following appointment. By September there were three appointments, and during all of them they continued trying to recruit him.

After he was admitted to the seminary, the persecution did not stop. During vacation breaks they would telephone him at home. At the end of his second year, he was summoned to the military commissariat for his physical (so it stated in the letter), but no one asked about his health. They merely took him to another office where the same security agent was waiting.

Bringing up fabricated accusations without any basis, he reprimanded him for trying to avoid appointments. Never is anyone summoned officially to the offices of the Security Committee, but only under pretext, using the military commissariat, the Department of Motor Vehicles, etc., as a cover. The security agent threatened him with expulsion from the seminary.

They demanded that he sign up to work for them. When Prajara refused, they began cursing and threatening him with physical reprisal. "If you

won't listen to reason, then we'll take care of you by physical force. You won't be able to get away from us, anywhere."

The wave of threats lasted about an hour. He also noticed that on several occasions, when he went for a walk in the city on Wednesdays, he was followed by security agents.

2. Kazimieras Gražulis was also ridiculed in school for his religion, and demeaned among his classmates. When he finished middle school, he decided to enter the seminary, but the security police would not approve his candidacy. For four years in a row, security organs would not allow him to enter the seminary. There was no obstacle posed by the seminary administration or bishops. So it was the security organs which did not allow him to enter the seminary.

Other seminarians who would not agree to compromise their consciences were similarly persecuted and terrorized. Some are promised good parishes. They are even promised elevation to the episcopacy and the like. What a great lie it is to proclaim everywhere that the government does not interfere in the affairs of the Church, that no one poses any obstacles to entering the seminary. These are just a few specific examples. Most of the seminarians are afraid to say anything about it because of threats, since after every recruiting session, they would warn the seminarians not to say anything to anyone about the interview which had taken place, saying that it had to be kept secret.

We request the Soviet government to give attention to the facts we have submitted and to arrive at the appropriate conclusions.

1. To cease persecution of young men wishing to become priests.
2. To allow the spiritual and seminary leadership to pick its own candidates to the priesthood and not to limit their number.
3. Not to blackmail, threaten or recruit those who enter.

Signed by priests ordained this year:

Vytautas Prajara, Kazimieras Gražulis, Jeronimas Petrikas, Robertas Rumšas.

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

Copies to: The Bishops and Administrators of Dioceses of Lithuania

From: Associate Pastor of Alytus II, Father Antanas Gražulis

A Petition

For several years now, the Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Kaunas has been trying to assign me to some parish as pastor-administrator, but because of interference on the part of Soviet government officials, those assignments keep being delayed. As far as I know from His Excellency Liudas

Povilonis, I was appointed to Veiveriai, Šeštokai, Krosna, Būdvielis, Meteliai, Ūdrija, Išlauža and recently to Žemoji Panemunė. Rumor has it that even the L.S.S.R. Council of Ministers discussed my transfer from Alytus to that parish. It is strange that working as a priest in the little parish of Žemoji Panemunė I should be "more dangerous" to the U.S.S.R. than working in Alytus.

The holding up of appointments used to be explained by my refusal to pick up from the City Executive Committee the credentials issued by the Commissioner for Religious Affairs. Those credentials were not necessary for me as a priest since I had been registered in the City of Alytus before the credentials had been sent. This year, because of KGB trickery, an eavesdropping device was installed in the apartment I rent and the landlady terrorized; I was forced to move to another apartment and by the same token, for registration purposes, I had to pick up the aforesaid credentials from the Office of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs.

Therefore, the excuse for holding up my earlier appointments fell by the wayside. But His Excellency, the archbishop, continues to be prevented from transferring me to another parish.

What can be the reason for holding up my latest appointment? The only thought that suggests itself is that it is in reprisal for my family's petitions written in 1986 to the L.S.S.R. Prosecutor, and in May, 1987, to you, the General Secretary.

This would be a curtailment of criticism and the citizen's right to direct complaints and petitions to the government of the U.S.S.R., and all this is going on in these days of openness and restructuring.

Moreover, such interference by officials of the civil government is incompatible with the principles of the separation of the Church from the state and the state from the Church, declared in the Constitutions of the U.S.S.R. and the L.S.S.R.

Please take steps to see that Soviet government organs would not interfere with the Church leadership assigning me to such duties as it sees useful to the Church and society.

June 12, 1987

To: The Prosecutor of the Lithuanian S.S.R., A.A. Novikov
Copy to: The Catholic Committee for the Defense of Believers' Rights
From: Felicija-Nijole Sadunaitė, daughter of Jonas
Residing at Vilnius, Architektu 27-2

A Petition

On April 1, 1987, KGB Agent Reinys violated Par. 192 of the L.S.S.R. Criminal Code which states that all articles and documents taken in the course



Nijolė Sadūnaitė

of a search must be listed in the record of search and seizure. Reinys, in charge of a search at Antakalnio 62-2, where I had stopped to visit, did not leave any record of the search, but immediately arrested me and threatened the lady of the house for daring to receive me as a guest, knowing that I have long been sought by the KGB.

Phoning for a car, he told her to pack me some food and clothing, because I was going to be in the KGB cellars for a long time. Asking where my things were, he took my purse and told me that after checking everything, he would return it. Reinys took my prayerbook-psalter, notebook with religious

reflections and addresses, photographs of people dear to me, including pictures of my deceased parents, and he took letters I had written with Easter greetings. He did not list the things taken from me in the search record and he did not even leave a copy of the search record, he gave me no receipt stating that he had taken my things.

The car which came took me to the KGB office at Lenino 40 where he left me in an office on the third floor guarded by two KGB agents. After an hour and a half, more or less, just before twelve noon, I was taken to see KGB Colonel Lintauskas. In his office I found sitting Republic Prosecutor Jurgis Bakučionis, who tried to convince me that no one had been looking for me. So why had they arrested me? Bakučionis was not telling the truth. They had been looking for me for over four years, not only in Lithuania questioning relations, but in Latvia, the Caucasus and Armenia. At the Chosta Station, my picture had even been hung among criminal offenders and they were looking for me in many other places.

Bakučionis further explained that it was not the KGB but he who would prosecute my case. He accused me of not working anywhere and of not having any permanent address. I then asked him to take me home to my cooperative apartment at Architektų 27-2 where I live, where my passport and my work permit, issued March 7, 1987, were. In the work permit it stated that I have been working since 1980 at the church of Paberžė (*Rayon* of Vilnius), as a helper taking care of laundering and repair of church vestments and looking after the churchyard and the building under supervision of the pastor (I include the document with this petition).

Bakučionis became confused and stated that he did not need my passport because he knew me personally. When I asked him whether so many male KGB agents were afraid to drive me to Lazdynai, he replied that he was not afraid but that it was already late, when it was only 12:00 noon; the day was only beginning.

Why did he refuse to be convinced that I was working, and instead accuse me untruthfully? I invited the prosecutor to drive to my place of work (about 30 km), where not only the pastor but the sacristan and other witnesses would testify that I had been working from 1980 to the present. Why did he keep making excuses and not take me home or to my place of work? Was it only so that having falsely accused me on purpose, he might justify my arrest?

During the interrogation, Bakučionis and Liniauskas were very upset; it was clear that they had gotten themselves into an unpleasant situation. In reply to the prosecutor's question about the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, no. 73, and my memoirs, I replied that it was the same as during the KGB interrogations, 1974-75: I was not going to answer any questions concerning the case, I would give no evidence and would not sign their reports. The reason was the same: the investigators themselves were committing a crime

since they were transgressing Soviet law, paragraphs of the Constitution and international agreements, so I would not lift a finger in this criminal case to help them; besides at this time of democratization and restructuring advertised by Mikhail Gorbachev, such actions on the part of investigators must be understood as a contradiction to Gorbachev's policy. Hence, I would not sign either the untruthful report or the record of arrest.

Then they took me to the interrogation-isolation cells which are in the KGB cellars. They locked me up in a cell and a half-hour later the female KGB medical aide came and carried out a personal search: she took from my neck a little cross even though I asked her not to. She questioned me about my health and told me I had to take a bath. Why did I have to? No one is ever ordered to do so; it is only suggested. Was it just so the clothing, shoes and food I had brought with me would be left in her charge? Exactly so, she told me to leave all these things in the cell where my bedding had already been brought and soup, tea and a teapot of water had been left.

Reinys had told me that they were not going to give me lunch, but here, on the contrary, he had seen to it. The medical aide took me to the shower and locked me in, and only after a good half-hour, came back and returned me to my cell. My spirits that entire day were high: I was in a holiday mood, rejoicing that I was able to join my small sacrifice to the great Sacrifice of Christ, for my beloved stray brothers and sisters.

There in the cell I thanked the good God. That evening I ate. A half-hour later, I felt a sharp pain in the calf of my left leg, where a deep depression appeared all the way to the leg-bone, and the muscles contracted the toes of both feet like a cramp, spreading and distorting them. I was quite surprised because this was the first such incident in my whole life. Another good half-hour passed before the spasms and pain diminished, even though I lay down immediately and massaged my legs. I felt a great weakness, doubt about everything and unaccustomed apathy, and prepared to sleep.

Where did such a sudden change of mood come from? It appears that they had drugged me. As soon as the leg cramps passed, the window in the cell door slammed open and a soldier ordered me to leave with all my things. It was about 8:00 P.M.

They took me once more to the eighth floor as they did before, only this time as I learned April 7 from Prosecutor Bakučionis, to the office of Vice Chairman Henrikas Vaigauskas of the KGB. Sitting behind the desk was Vaigauskas, at his right was Chief of the Investigation Sub-division Baltinis, and at his left, Bakučionis. On the table stood two large microphones, one of which was aimed at Vaigauskas and the other at me.

They seated me across from Vaigauskas. I felt uncertain about everything; I did not even ask who those two unknown men were, for I recognized only Bakučionis and saw the other two for the first time. I paid no attention and

did not even ask what the microphones were for. I have never in my life been so dull of mind. All three of them spoke to me, especially Vaigauskas, explaining, arguing, questioning, claiming that I exaggerated in writing my memoirs. I told them that quite the contrary, I minimized quite a bit.

Afterwards, at 9:00 P.M., they showed me the text of a decision and expressed the hope that I would sign it. In the decision was repeated the false accusation that I was not working anywhere and had no permanent residence. I did not react to this as though it did not concern me. It stated further that I had been detained on suspicion of having committed an offense under Par. 199-1 without giving any details confirming my "guilt". Since this "criminal" activity of mine had ceased - it went on to say -- they had decided after consultation to release me.

I read the text several times, but since my senses were dulled, I asked Bakučionis, even repeating the question, why no promises were being required of me. He explained that he knew that I would not sign such a statement. Therefore, the decision had already been signed by Bakučionis. But why did Vaigauskas, who was in charge of the interview, not sign? He merely expressed the hope that I would not tell anyone about that late-night interview, and not write about it. Why did Vaigauskas fear publicity if he and his friends were acting justly? After all, this is contrary to Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of restructuring and openness.

Vaigauskas went on to explain to me that some woman was being held and if I signed, she would be released. Even this nonsense I believed that evening. I took the ballpoint pen which Bakučionis handed me; my fingers were like wood, not my own; and I began to sign.

Even as I wrote, I wondered why the letters were coming out so large when I always write small. After I had signed, Bakučionis, rejoicing, said, "This is the first time we have seen how Nijolė signs her name!"

Vaigauskas came up and shook my hand, promising his support everywhere and the return of my things taken during the search. They released me from the KGB offices at 9:30 P.M. For the next two days, I was very upset, dizzy, lost my appetite, could not digest what I ate and was very weak. To this day, I am extremely tormented by thirst and my mouth keeps feeling dry. Where did all this come from? Before April 1, I never showed such symptoms!

Almost four weeks passed, but neither Reinys nor Vaigauskas nor Bakučionis returned my things. On April 7, Bakučionis explained to me that the KGB has much work and it was necessary to decipher my prayerbook, notes, etc.

Once again I request that the articles taken by Reinys be returned to me. If I do not receive them, I shall be forced to apply to the appropriate higher authorities.

April 27, 1987

RAIDS AND INVESTIGATIONS

Vilkaviškis

On March 6, 1987, a group of KGB, without giving their names, carried out a search at the home of Ona and Jurgis Brilius at No. 30 Vilniaus, in the City of Vilkaviškis. During the search the chekists took three issues of the underground publication *Tiesos kelias (The Way of Truth)*, ten reams of typing paper, carbon paper, etc. The search lasted five hours.

In the course of the search, Father Antanas Liubšys, pastor of the parish of Bartininkai in the *Rayon* of Vilkaviškis was detained. When he firmly declared that he had to return to his parish in time for evening services, the priest was released after some delay.

After the search, the security agents took Brilius to Vilkaviškis KGB Headquarters for questioning. The chekists expressed annoyance and repeatedly accused Brilius of rearing his children poorly - two sons are priests. They also warned him that his daughter, Birutė Briliūtė, had allegedly been caught writing the *Chronicle*, and had been arrested.

Brilius stated that he had raised his children in the same way in which he himself lives. He refused to sign the report.

Kybartai (Vilkaviškis *Rayon*)

On March 6, 1987, a search was made at the apartment of Miss Ona Sarakauskaitė, a resident of Kybartai at no. 19, Chepayevo skg. Simultaneously, a search was made of the living quarters of Birutė Briliūtė and Ona Kavaliauskaitė in the same house.

The purpose of the search: "To turn up and seize literature libelous in content and the means by which it is reproduced". In charge of the search was Major Reinys, Chief Investigator of the Vilnius KGB Investigation Division and Vilkaviškis *Rayon* Assistant Prosecutor Siugzdinytė. Taken from the room during the search where Ona Kavaliauskaitė lived were: an audio cassette containing the sermons preached at the funeral of Father Juozas Zdebskis in Rudamina, sixteen copies of the photograph of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas with the inscription, "For Church and country", five copies of Father Sigitas Tamkevičius' letter written July 1, 1984 and books: Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, *Recrūtų atsiminimai (Memoirs of Conscripts)*, by R.G., Raila's *Kitokios Lietuvos ilgesys (Longing for a Different Lithuania)* and a letter written by Robertas Grigas.

From Miss Briliūtė, they took: a portable typewriter and two envelopes with handwritten and typed texts as well as a few petitions addressed to government agencies.

The search took seven hours. After the search, Investigator Reinys interrogated Miss Briliūtė and Miss Sarakauskaitė for about two hours more.

Neither Miss Sarakauskaite nor Miss Briliūtė signed the report of the interrogation.

Ky b a r t a i

On March 18, 1987, Ona Sarakauskaite, a resident of Kybartai, Chepayevo no. 19, was summoned to see Investigator Stepučinskas. Investigator Stepučinskas questioned Miss Sarakauskaite as a witness in the "Vilkaviškis case", unknown to her, regarding distribution and reproduction of underground literature. During the investigation, a number of questions were posed: Was she acquainted with Dana and Antanas Kelmeliai, Janina and Romas Blazukai residents of Vilkaviškis; did they take part in the funeral of Father Juozas Zdebskis and the anniversary; how many people they saw there; who delivered the sermons and speeches; what they know about articles seized during the search in the room of Ona Kavaliauskaitė? Miss Sarakauskaite did not sign the report of the investigation. That same day, she was fingerprinted and a sample of her handwriting was made.

Ky b a r t a i

On March 19, 1987, in Vilnius, KGB Agent Reinys interrogated Birutė Briliūtė. Reinys presented the suspect with a whole list of questions regarding the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* and *Aušra (Dawn)*: Did she know who finances the aforesaid underground publications; What their circulations are and how often they come out; How often they get abroad and so forth. Concluding the interrogation, Reinys stated that Miss Briliūtė was being released only temporarily, and would be obliged to meet with him many times. Miss Briliūtė did not sign the record of interrogation.

Ky b a r t a i

On March 19, 1987, Miss Ona Kavaliauskaitė was also summoned to the offices of the Vilnius KGB to see Investigator Stepučinskas. Investigator Stepučinskas questioned Miss Kavaliauskaitė about articles taken from her during the search. He asked where she knew Grigas from, whether she had been at the funeral of Father Juozas Zdebskis and at his anniversary memorial in Rudamina. After lunch, Investigator Stepučinskas apprised Miss Kavaliauskaitė of the March 17 KGB decision to fingerprint her and to obtain samples of her handwriting. This procedure took about two hours. Miss Kavaliauskaitė refused to sign the report.

K a u n a s

On April 10, 1987, Liudvikas Simutis, residing at Borisos 25-3 in Kaunas, was summoned to the Kaunas KGB. At the Security Headquarters, he was presented with an official warning to acknowledge in writing. Simutis is ac-

cused of drafting and disseminating documents libellous in content: A petition to KGB Investigator Vidzenas regarding the case of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas (1983) and an open letter to the younger priests and seminarians of Lithuania (1984).

Simutis categorically refused to acknowledge the warning in writing, arguing that in both documents, he had written only the truth and only about things well known to him personally; besides, these documents had been disseminated without his assistance or his permission, so the aforesaid accusation did not conform in any way with the U.S.S.R. policy of openness and democratization.

Vilnius

On April 1, 1987, a raid was carried out at Antakalnio 62-2 in Vilnius. Directing the raid was Major Reinys. In the apartment, the chekists found Nijolė Sadūnaitė visiting. The KGB, after threatening the apartment owner for daring to have such a state criminal in her home, arrested Nijolė Sadūnaitė and took her away to KGB headquarters. On the way, Major Reinys accused her, "In your volumes of memoirs, you actually ridicule us. Now you're going to be put away for a long time, and you won't write any more memoirs."

To this, Nijolė Sadūnaitė, laughing, replied that actually she had written just about everything and had no more to write, but now the KGB was going to provide her material for a third volume of memoirs. At KGB headquarters, Miss Sadūnaite was interrogated by Prosecutor Bakučionis and KGB Agent Liniauskas. She was presented with a whole list of questions regarding the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, her memoirs *KGB akiratyje* and *Penkti metai Gerasis Dievas slepia nuo KGB* (Published in English as one volume entitled *A Radiance in the Gulag: Trinity Communications - Trans. Note*).

Miss Sadūnaite categorically refused to answer questions regarding the case. Prosecutor Bakučionis tried once more to accuse Nijolė Sadūnaitė of being unemployed and not having a permanent residence. Before taking her to the KGB cellars - the isolation cells, Nijolė Sadūnaitė was ordered to sign the arrest papers. The prisoner refused to sign. That same evening, about nine o'clock (drugged, it is suspected, with scopalamine), Miss Sadūnaitė was again summoned for interrogation.

Waiting for her in the office this time were General H. Vaigauskas, Chief of the Investigation Division Baltinas and Prosecutor Bakučionis. Once more, a list of questions followed regarding the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, no. 73, a copy of which Nijolė Sadūnaitė had succeeded in tearing up during the search. To the question why she had torn it up, the suspect explained that after reading the *Chronicle*, one is supposed to hand it on. She was

being arrested and the KGB certainly was not about to disseminate the *Chronicle*, so she destroyed it.

The chekists told Nijolė Sadūnaitė that some woman had allegedly been arrested and a copy of *Chronicle* no. 73 had been found in her possession. They tried to play on the sympathies of Miss Sadūnaitė, saying that the woman's fate was in her hands. If she signed the text presented by Prosecutor Bakučionis, the aforesaid woman and she would be released.

In the text, it stated that Nijolė Sadūnaitė had been arrested on suspicion of having committed a crime under Article 199-1 of the *Criminal Code*, but since the crime had been prevented, she was being released. Dizzy from the narcotics, Miss Sadūnaitė re-read the text several times and then tried to ask why they were releasing her if she was promising the KGB nothing. Finally, as though not with her own hands, she signed in large handwriting, and was released. Vaigauskas expressed the hope that no one would find out about their late-night interview.

Some time later, Miss Sadūnaitė addressed a petition to Prosecutor Novikov, demanding that the articles taken from her during the raid be returned (A prayerbook-psalter, a notebook containing religious thoughts and addresses and some photographs, letters, etc.), or that they would give her some sort of receipt that the articles belonging to her were really with the KGB.

On March 18, Miss Sadūnaitė was summoned to KGB headquarters where Investigator Stepučinskas returned the things belonging to her, retaining only photographs of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas and Father Sigitas Tamkevičius, alleging that Prosecutor Bakučionis had taken them because on the photographs is the inscription, "For God and Country!"

Vilnius

On April 1, 1987, a search was carried out at the apartment of Vilnius resident Miss Bronė Vazgilevičiūtė at Dzerzhinskio 160-2. On April 1, Miss Vazgilevičiūtė had stopped by to visit at Antakalnio 62-2, where a raid was already in progress. At the direction of Chekist Reinys, in charge of the raid, a personal search was made of Miss Vazgilevičiūtė, during which the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, no. 73, was found. Without delay, Miss Vazgilevičiūtė was taken to her apartment and a search was made. In the course of it, they took the pamphlet, "Memories of Father Juozas Zdebskis," the poem, "600 Years is Kneeling" and a typescript, "A Response to the Article by V. Balkevičius", etc. After the search, Miss Vazgilevičiūtė was questioned.

On April 4, at KGB Headquarters, Miss Elena Šuliuskaitė, who had been in Miss Vazgilevičiūtė's apartment, was questioned. The questioning was conducted by Chekist Vidzenas. The security agent was interested in knowing whether Miss Šuliuskaitė was acquainted with Nijolė Sadūnaitė, and he

presented her with a list of questions regarding the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

Miss Šuliauskaitė refused to sign the record of interrogation.

OUR PRISONERS

Irina Ratushinskaya

(Tried for Religious Poetry)

*My despised Country,
What is more shameful than your nights...
When did you lack unnatural children,
Executioners and slaves even more!*

*How you trampled those trusting you,
How you murdered in blind zeal
Those who knew not how to betray themselves or others,
Those condemned to love You...*

*No, I do not blame the terrorized —
Silent, your flocks of nightingales
Why are your trampled teardrops
Crystallizing on the crosses?*

*As in my dream of your crucified people,
In their footsteps I must soon
Go out to die
For you, my damned, my beloved.*

*Along that road, of all the most terrible -
Of hatred - the border of love
Despised and outraged —
Bless me, Stepmother and Mother!*

1987

Father Sigitas Tamkevičius writes:

"I'm writing my first letter from Mordovia. As you see, the 'prophecies' have not been fulfilled. I arrived in Barashev April 10, so I did not celebrate Easter on wheels. I travelled from Vilnius to camp by train, just as on former occasions. The third time, I had the opportunity not only to become tired, but also to see much and think about much. Thank God for everything, but espe-

cially for the external incarceration which teaches me to value all the more my internal freedom.

"Upon my arrival, I began learning the tailor's trade, but I soon re-classified myself as a launderer. I have tried many professions in my life. In the army, I worked as a construction hand, a carpenter, a metal worker, a projectionist, a librarian, in 1969 as a land reclaimer and a punch-press operator. Lately, I have tried my talents in wielding a broom, a soup ladle and now, a washing machine, iron, etc., besides my twenty-five years in the Vineyard of Christ.

"I am convinced that everywhere and at all times, it is possible to live a full life and to be useful to others. If the Lord has sent me to labor camp, we are to understand that my life here is more necessary for the Church than my freedom. I have the opportunity to offer something to God, the possibility of setting my ideals higher than all other values. I do not regret returning; I could not do otherwise. External freedom which people treasure so highly is not the greatest value. The value of interior freedom is greater, and this freedom no one can take away; one can only lose it oneself by not living according to one's conscience.

"On April 18, I commemorated the silver jubilee of my priesthood. I thank God who has given me so very much. The priesthood has drawn me close to the Lord, and given me the possibility of serving the people; the priesthood gave me many noble people, the memory of whom sustains me even here, far from my homeland. All that I have accomplished and given others during twenty-five years of priesthood is very little compared to what I have received from others. I do not know how long or in what conditions God will allow me to work, but I would like that time to be marked by holiness and sacrifice. It seems to me that in today's world, the spoken word is badly devalued and the hearts of people can be reached by the language of sacrifice.

"I ask you and all with whom the priesthood brought me into contact to pray that the Lord would bless the road before me. Pentecost is coming. I wish everyone ample gifts of the Holy Spirit."

May, 1987

From the letters of Father Jonas-Kastytis Matulionis:

"...I am grateful for the light of my native language. From the homeland they write in Lithuanian, and I receive some of the letters. Your letter had been forwarded to the hospital in Chita, where they had taken me without my consent. Before that, they had said that there was not much more time to serve, and that it was unnecessary to travel. Afterwards, I bothered someone and they sent me (from March 9 to April 22). Only God knows what they were thinking of and why they sent me.... I thought that I would not be returning, not only to my

hometown, but to camp; my health was in critical condition in the hospital. I submitted myself to the will of God....

"Life in camp is the same old routine, well known to you. Life here is difficult and dreary. You can imagine how dear to me are the travelling letters when they finally reach me. Although there are only 180 km. from camp to Chita, a three hour journey, the letters took more than a month for the round-trip...

"Today they summoned me to pick up a package sent from France, something which is always a novelty and a surprise. At the same time, I asked the censor for the holy cards. She replied, 'We're not going to give them to you. You can get them back only when you leave. Those are the orders of the administration.'

"It is strange that the museums are full of little religious pictures. In the bookshops, one can find postcards with a religious theme, but I am forbidden to have any. So this *is perestroika!* Under such conditions there is no sense sending holy cards. You, too... experienced more than once how good it is to have nothing. To be wealthy with God, everywhere and always my thanks and obedience to the Lord! The carrying out of His will is no longer an obligation. Let there be no limits to obedience...

"In a few days, in Rome, the holiness of Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis will be proclaimed to the world. Lithuania will celebrate the jubilee of its baptism. During the feastdays and celebrations, I will be in spirit with everyone. In the Siberian silence, I will pray, offer and sing: 'Holy God, We Praise Your Name', 'God is Our Refuge and Our Strength', '*Marija, Marija!*' Those hymns never rang out in the Siberian Trans-baikal. I thank the Lord for sending me to this corner of the earth to praise and thank him, to ask his forgiveness and to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which has never been offered here before."

May-June, 1987

On April 7, 1987, Viktoras Petkus was transferred by court order to the strict regime zone, and since that time, even though by law he had the right to send two letters a month, *it was May 28 before he wrote*. In a short letter written in Russian (so that the censors would not hold it up), Petkus wrote, "I have only just today collected my thoughts somewhat..."

From the context, and the experience of other prisoners, it appears that Petkus was drugged.

Gintautas Iešmantas writes:

"... My life goes on now at an accustomed pace. Nothing in it essentially changes except that in February - you probably heard about it - I wrote let-

ters to the U.S.S.R. and L.S.S.R. Supreme Soviets. In them, I wanted to explain why I had refused to write a statement obliging myself in the future not to break the law. Besides, in my letter to the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian S.S.R., which was quite far-ranging and in-depth, my purpose was to remind everyone who claims to be struggling for restructuring about me. I thought to myself, 'Let them know that I also have an opinion on this subject, and I still exist; untruth and injustice have not broken me, etc.' Hence, I never expected to receive replies to those letters.

"And yet, the replies came. True, it was not the addressees who replied, but the appropriate prosecutors' offices. They dotted every i, as the saying goes. I think it's interesting to see what those replies were like, so I present them here, one after the other.

"First of all, the letter from the U.S.S.R. Prosecutor's Office:

"In connection with your letter of February 1, 1987, received from the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., I wish to inform you that the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. considers the question of amnesty, of persons sentenced for anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, only upon petition by those under sentence, requesting clemency. Division Chief Prosecutor J.E. Ovtarov.'

"So all those innocent petitions for release, obliging oneself not to break the law, are treated by higher instances as requests for clemency. Otherwise, political prisoners are not released. Of course, there is no rule without an exception... This is how mercy appears when its robe of deceit is removed!

"And what do 'Lithuanian' officials say?

"I wish to inform you that your letter of February 19, 1987, addressed to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian S.S.R., has been received by the Republic Prosecutor's Office and I have looked it over. The arguments set forth in the letter do not correspond to the facts and evidence in the case and provide no juridical basis to take steps to release you from carrying out the rest of your sentence, handed down by the court, December 8, 1980. Hence your letter is left without results. A. A. Novikov, Prosecutor of the Lithuanian S.S.R.'

"No comment is necessary, as they say, in such cases. Unless we could add that the reply itself uncovers an old way of thinking which reeks of mothballs and contradicts even in its style, the spirit of restructuring. But what can you expect of the Novikovs? They are the obvious fruits of Griškevičius' 'national' policy. Did you read his report to the Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Lithuania (*Tiesa*, March 14)? If not, read it. There is revealed the true essence of the internationalization of societal life. In the papers, they also talk about the enemies of restructuring. Television commentator Bovin calls them 'conservatives'; others call them 'bureaucrats'; Vanagas in *Literatūra ir menas (Literature and Art)* calls them generally *fedka*.

"As we see, the greatest obstacle is not from the *fedka*; it is the specific high officials and agencies. But I have gotten off the subject. I wanted simply to inform you but I became involved in undesirable heavy thinking. Our lords might become angry.

"Here it is also coming on to spring. A south wind is blowing, and today the thaw set in, apparently signalling the beginning of spring. True, the whole of March was beautiful, sunny and windless. By day, the sun which is very warm here, began ever so slightly in the very heat of the sun, to melt the snow. The song of the titmouse has begun. What will this spring produce? So far, I hope for nothing!

"As the replies of the prosecutors' offices show, there is nothing to hope for. But why talk about it? After all, we are not living so that we might hope for anything, expecting favors is foreign to us. This is why we are walking such a way of thorns. It is hard, but good, when you know that you are living honestly. Then it is always spring in your heart and soul..

March 29, 1987

Balys Gajauskas' address in exile:

682460
Chabarovskij kraj
T. Chumikan r-on
P. Chumikan, ul. Sovietskaya-4
Balys Gajauskas

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

K a u n a s

On April 29, 1987, the priests of the *Rayon* were summoned to meet with representatives of the government at the Offices of the Kaunas *Rayon* Executive Committee. Various officials told the priests about the achievements at the *Rayon*. Among them was mentioned the fact that with the restriction of liquor sales, the *rayon* is experiencing a deficit of two million. After the officials' statements, the pastor of Babtai, Father Ricardas Mikutevičius, asked why priests still do not have equal rights with the atheists. The lecturers tried to deny it, saying that one of the priests was even invited to the presidium of the meeting. Father Mikutevičius showed that priests are not accepted into the Society for the Preservation of Monuments and that among the priests there are those who are not bad writers, but not one of them is in the Writers' Union.

The pastor of Tabariškiai, Father Petras Dumbliuskas, brought up the idea that priests are not even accepted in temperance societies, and here, by their work, they could really do a good job for the benefit of all. During the meeting, priests working in the *Rayon* of Kaunas protested against government sanctioned killing of unborn children, of whom every year in Lithuania, many more are killed than the number of men who used to die annually during the war.

K a u n a s

On April 23, 1987, the priests of the *sRayon* of Alytus were summoned to the Offices of the City Executive Committee for a meeting with Commissioner Petras Anilionis of the Council for Religious Affairs. Only a few came. The Commissioner demanded that the priests make every effort to see that during the Baptism Jubilee there be no "untoward incidents".

K a u n a s

At twelve noon on May 13, 1987, the priests of the City of Kaunas were summoned to the quarters of the Executive Committee of the City of Kaunas. Vice Chairman Kazakevičius of the Executive Committee of Kaunas spoke. He gave the pastoral work of the priests good marks. In his words, "I am glad that among us, there are no misunderstandings."

The speaker expressed the hope that there would be no misunderstandings in the future, either. Vice Chairman Kazakevičius warned the priests to be alert with the approach of the 600th Anniversary of the Baptism of Lithuania and demanded that:

- in the churches, no signatures be gathered on petitions or protests;
- in the churchyards and vestibles, there be no dealing in religious objects;

~ the jubilee medal be displayed in churches only with the permission of the Executive Committee, after agreeing on where it should be displayed.

Toward the end of the meeting, Vice Chairman Kazakevičius asked whether there were any questions. None materialized. After the lecturer's speech, the priests began to applaud. Kazakevičius himself stopped them, saying, "It's unnecessary to applaud."

K l a i p è d a

On March 25, 1987, Commissioner for Religious Affairs Vėtrė Anilionis summoned the members of church committees in the *Rayon* of Klaipėda. In his speech, the Commissioner paid most attention to Jubilee Year solemnities and demanded care lest there be "excesses" on the part of the faithful. The Commissioner denigrated the saints of Lithuania as much as he could. He tried to convince those assembled that Saint Casimir was not a Lithuanian,

but a Pole, who did not even know any Lithuanian and the future Blessed Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis had served the Poles exclusively and had given Vilnius to the Ecclesiastical Province of Poland, something that even the Soviet government is unable to correct.

At the end, one woman asked when the Church of the Queen of Peace in Klaipėda would be returned. Anilionis advised her to wait patiently, because the question was still being decided. "No signatures or their collectors will do any good here," said the Commissioner, "you must pull them into line and patiently wait."

K r e t i n g a

At the end of March, 1987, Vice Commissioner Juozėnas of the Council for Religious Affairs spoke to the members of Kretinga *Rayon* church committees. To this day, Juozėnas cannot calm down and keeps bringing up the question of how a year ago, in the church of Kretinga, the pastor, Father Bronius Burneikis, could bury solemnly, with church services, such a "criminal" as the late Petras Paulaitis. Vice Chairman Juozėnas is somewhat placated by the fact that this year, on the anniversary of the death of Petras Paulaitis, his name was not mentioned before Mass, and the extremist, Father Rokas Puzonas, was not allowed to preach. "Now that is praiseworthy," said Juozėnas, "however, committee members should as a whole not allow church premises to be used for honoring 'state criminals'".

T e l l i a i

On March 26, 1987, the members of local parish committees, called by the government "twenties", were summoned to the House of Culture in Telšiai. Petras Anilionis spoke to them. Participating in the meeting also was Telšiai *Rayon* Executive Committee Vice Chairwoman Miss B. Urbelyte. The main theme of Commissioner Anilionis' lecture was preparation for the 600-year Jubilee of the Baptism of Lithuania, with a view to helping the Catholic Church in Lithuania celebrate this anniversary more fittingly.

He explained how many catechisms, *Catholic Calendar-Directories*, etc., the government has pulished and "the number the government authorized to be printed is fully sufficient for the believers."

He promised that in the future, 50,000 jubilee cards would be printed, and that all would be turned over to the believers. "For ourselves, we will retain only a few samples," Commissioner Anilionis explained.

He boasted that when the bishops refused to publish the full-color church albums, the government entrusted this task to the *Mintis* Publishers. Five hundred albums will show up in the bookstores by April. He reminded everyone

that before long, Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis would be proclaimed Blessed in the Vatican. He emphasized that in the Vatican, he is called Georg Matulevich, but the representatives of the Soviet government will try to initiate a discussion with the Vatican concerning the "restoration" of his Lithuanian surname.

He explained that he had been successful in coming to an agreement with the clergy that they would allow the government to print portraits of Jurgis Matulaitis and that they were already being prepared. He did not forget to remind them that several permissions had been granted for refurbishing and reconstruction of churches, and that permissions were being readied for priests to travel to the solemnities scheduled at the Vatican. The Commissioner tried in every way to convince those assembled that the government is very interested in a saint for Lithuania.

"So, reports that the Catholic Church in Lithuania is persecuted are pure nonsense and lies," Anilionis stated.

In the second part of his lecture, Anilionis spoke out firmly and extensively against collecting signatures on documents demanding the return of the church of Klaipėda and the restoration to freedom of the unjustly sentenced priests, Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis. He emphasized that the gathering of signatures has never yet decided any disputed question and in the future, collecting them would do no good. In Anilionis' opinion, favorable results could be expected only from negotiations between the government and the bishops. In closings he threatened that those who gather signatures would be punished in the future.

After the lecture, the faithful presented the speaker with a whole list of questions. To the question why the faithful cannot freely obtain prayerbooks in bookstores or at bookstalls, the Commissioner replied that for this, the bishops were to blame: They take all the prayerbooks and even try to profiteer at the faithful's expense.

To a request from the faithful of Gadunava to lower the taxes on the church, since they have to pay the government 1200 rubles a year, the Commissioner stated that apparently the believers did not need the church very much if they do not have the money to support it. He advised them to ask the government organs that they close the church.

When someone asked why believing youngsters in school were pressured in all sorts of ways to renounce their beliefs and to stay away from church, Anilionis replied that the teachers have to do this; this is what is called anti-religious propaganda.

With these and similar replies, Commissioner Petras Anilionis of the Council for Religious Affairs completed his lecture and once more demonstrated the governments' "sincere" concern for the Catholic Church in Lithuania.

O b e l i a i (Rokiškis *Rayon*)

In March, 1987, a KGB agent from Vilnius faulted the local pastor, Father Antanas Zulona ., for participating in "anti-Soviet gathering" organized by the Dean of Rokiškis, Father Juozas Janulis. What the chekist calls "gatherings" are occasional deanery conferences convened by the dean. To the KGB agent's knowledge, there are no such things in other deaneries, so they should not be in the Deanery of Rokiškis.

V a r p u t ė n a i (Šiauliai *Rayon*)

On May 9, 1987, in the church of Varputėnai, a commemoration of the 600th Anniversary of the Baptism of Lithuania took place. Soon after the commemoration, Father Edmundas Atkočiūnas, the associate pastor of Kuršėnai ministering to Varputėnai, was summoned to the *Rayon* Executive Committee where Vice Chairman Tekorius read him the a warning from the Commissioner for the Council for Religious Affairs because of infractions against the *Regulations for Religious Associations* during the jubilee solemnities.

Apparently, without the consent of the *Rayon* government, guest clergy from other parishes participated in the celebration. The sermon was preached by the "extremist" emeritus of Plungė, Father Petras Našlėnas. In the parish cemetery, located not far from the church, a wayside shrine was erected and blessed during the solemnities without *Rayon* government permission.

The Commissioner was also displeased because, during the commemoration, the faithful were urged to join the temperance movement by Jadvyga Bieliauskienė who had recently returned from a Soviet labor camp.

Father Atkočiūnas refused to acknowledge receipt of the warning in writing. It was signed by two witnesses summoned from nearby offices.

P a b e r ž ė (Vilnius *Rayon*)

On March 2, 1987, during the principal Mass, unknown malefactors broke into the rectory of Paberžė and stole the church's ledger. After a ten-hour search, militia officers who were summoned could not find the thieves' fingerprints. At the end of the search, the officials took the fingerprints of the pastor, Father Donatas Valiukonis.

Ž i e ž m a r i a i (Kaišiadorys *Rayon*)

During the night of June 10, 1987, the church of Žiežmariai was robbed. Unknown perpetrators broke a church window, bent the iron window frame and broke into the church. They broke down the sacristy door, tore out the offering boxes and stole the financial donations of the faithful.

Vilnius

A new wave of petitions and protests is sweeping across Lithuania. The faithful are demanding that His Excellency, Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius, be allowed to return to Vilnius and to carry out his duties as shepherd without interference, and also that the unjustly sentenced priests, Alfonsas Svarinskas, Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas-Kaštytis Matulionis, be released from prison.

On March 29, 1987, signatures on similar petitions were being collected in the vestibule of Saint Raphael's church. The pastor of this church, Father Antanas Dilys, told the women collecting the signatures to go outside the doors, saying, "Do you want them to transfer me out of Vilnius?"

He threatened to call the militia. The gathering of signatures was continued outside, on the steps. The pastor came repeatedly, sternly demanding that they go away: "What's the matter, isn't a word to the wise sufficient?" Father Dilys repeated several times.

One of the women collecting signatures explained that they had already gone outside the doors and were collecting signatures here as the pastor had demanded. Father Dilys corrected them, saying that the churchyard also belonged to the church and that he "let" them collect signatures only outside the churchyard gates, or from house to house. "Would you like it if I came to your home and took over?" Father Dilys fumed. /

Reminded that the church belongs also to the faithful, Father Dilys explained that he does not allow signatures to be collected so that the government would not close the church.

Vilnius

On April 4, 1987, signatures were being collected in front of the church of Saint Ann. When a certain man entering the church was invited to sign, he replied, sternly protesting, "Do you know who I am? You are not allowed to collect signatures," he repeated, "that will hurt the pastor!"

During services, this person, dressed in surplice, served at the altar.

Vilnius

On April 10, 1987, a lenten retreat was taking place at the Church of Saint Theresa in Vilnius. Signatures on behalf of Bishop Steponavičius and the imprisoned priests were being collected in the corridor of the Church of Saint Theresa connecting the church with the Chapel of the Gates of Dawn. The women collecting the signatures were driven out by the sacristan of Saint Theresa's Church, Povilas Stanelis, and a young man preparing to enter the seminary. They acted very rudely, threatening to call the militia, and they urged people not to sign the petition, saying that the signatures were being collected to have the church closed.

When it was suggested that they read the text, they did not. When one of the women gathering signatures said that for a sacristan who acted like that, the uniform of the security police would be more fitting, not a surplice, Stanelis left. The young man continued to threaten to call the militia, demanding that they leave. When the women refused, he used force against them, trying to take away the signatures they had collected.

To complaints about the rude behavior of the staff member, Administrator Algirdas Gutauskas replied that when the men came, it would be even worse for the women collecting signatures. The administrator for the diocese, Gutauskas, allowed them to collect signatures only outside the church doors.

The evening of April 10, signatures were being collected at the Church of Divine Providence. Here, a group of servers boldly demanded that the collecting of signatures be discontinued, threatened them with militia and even a beating. Their boldness shows conclusively that the young men acted so not of their own volition.

S k u o d a s

On Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday in 1987, signatures on a petition to General Secretary Gorbachev were collected also at the Skuodas church, asking for Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius' return from exile to Vilnius, and the release of the imprisoned priests. The dean, Father Petras Palšis, read the petition from the pulpit and urged the faithful to support the aforesaid requests with their signatures. Immediately after Low Sunday, Father Palšis was summoned to the *Rayon* Executive Committee where Vice Chairwoman Ložiene berated him for collecting signatures. The Vice Chairwoman stated that she had not expected the dean to act so. "Government agencies knew that signatures were being collected in the churches, but that the dean himself would urge the faithful from the pulpit to sign - that's too much, and cannot be tolerated!" the Vice Chairwoman fumed.

As they were parting, Vice Chairwoman Ložienė warned Father Palšis that if this warning did not help, he would have to meet with the prosecutor.

K a u n a s

During March, 1987, third-year seminarian Eitvydas Merkys was appointed assistant forms master and seminarian Medardas Juršėnas was appointed master of ceremonies. They remained in their assignments just one day. Learning of the appointments, Commissioner Anilionis ordered the assignments switched. Merkys would have to be master of ceremonies and Juršėnas assistant forms master.



The church and rectory in Miroslavas in 1968.

Government officials have begun to interfere not only in the assignment of priests, but even in seminarians' chores, and this in a country where the Church is separated from the state! -JS

M i r o s l a v a s (Alytus Rayon)

On June 7, 1987, at Pentecost, the first Mass of Father Kazimieras Gražulis took place in the church of Miroslavas. That day, in the churchyard, signatures were collected under a petition to the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, requesting them the release of Bishop Steponavičius from exile, and the imprisoned priests: Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, who had worked in the parish of Miroslavas for years, Fathers Sigitas Tamkevičius and Jonas Matulionis. District Chairman Rubliauskas, walking about the churchyard, threatened the signature collectors and seized from one woman the text of the petition which eight individuals had already signed.

P r i e n a i

The night of August 23, 1986, on a little hill not far from the newly-laid the Pricnai-Kapsukas-Alytus Road, a wooden cross was erected among the

pin. The cross stood for seven days, after which it was knocked down by government officials.

The night of April 30, 1987, on the same spot, a second cross arose which lasted for three days before it was knocked down. The night of May 16, a cross was erected on the Prienai-Kaunas Road, on so-called Brides' Hill. On May 19, the atheists knocked it down.

The night of June 11, along the Prienai-Alytus Road, at approximately the 7 km. mark, on a high mound near the forest, the people erected a six-meter birchwood cross; by the cross was the inscription, "Look, dear brothers, at the exiles' processions through the tundras and steppes, pliers painfully squeezing the living heart of our beloved and unhappy country."

On June 13, the atheists cut up the aforesaid cross and threw it out, taking only the crucifix. The next day, someone gathered up the pieces of the cross and set them out on the ground and next to it, erected one more modest-sized cross. After one night, both crosses disappeared.

K a u n a s

More than fourteen years have passed since that day when, on March 27, 1973, a criminal case was trumped-up against Dr. Izidorius Rudaitis, residing at Žemaičių g., nr. 12, in Kaunas, in which he was accused of anti-Soviet activity. Rudaitis was sentenced to three years of strict regime camp and confiscation of property. While he was serving sentence in the camp in Mor-dovia, government officials confiscated a GAZ-21 automobile belonging to Rudaitis, and put a lien on his account in the savings bank.

Rudaitis returned from camp and in March 1976, registered as a resident of his apartment at Žemaičių g., nr. 12. In 1978, with his first floor landlords, he installed natural gas at his own expense, regularly made the required payments and lived as a full-fledged householder.

On April 27, 1984, chekists presenting a warrant from the prosecutor under the trumped-up charge that Dr. Rudaitis was involved in speculation in automobile parts, carried out a search. During the search, as is customary with the KGB, they looked for automobile parts in the bookshelves, in personal notes and in the desk drawers. A search was carried out also in the shed.

About three months after the search, Dr. Rudaitis was summoned to the offices of the KGB where agent Rusteika, accusing Rudaitis of anti-Soviet activity, forced him to sign a warning. The doctor refused to take part in this charade of lies. Seeing that he was going to gain nothing as an adversary, the KGB agent turned to slyness. From stern talk about anti-Soviet activity, he switched to problems of returning confiscated property.

Chekist Rusteika advised Rudaitis to apply to the Supreme Court for the return of the money in the savings account. The doctor applied to the

Supreme Court and from chairman of the court M. Ignotas, he received a communication that the lien on his account had already been lifted.

On January 28, 1985, Supreme Court Vice Chairman J. Misitlnas, by official communication, number 9-2-4-38-85, informed Dr. Rudaitis that in accordance with Par. 50 of the L.S.S.R. Criminal Code, points one and two, the part of the verdict concerning the confiscation of property cannot be carried out if it had not been carried out for five years, counting from the date of the verdict.

Since July, 1984, from time to time KGB agent Rusteika would visit the home of Dr. Rudaitis where, remembering to emphasize his friendship to him, he would ask about the underground press and other questions of interest to the KGB. When the doctor replied that he knew nothing, the chekist would leave.

Then, on January 9, 1986, at about 11:00 P.M., Chairman Rugienis of the Eleven Apartments Fiscal Department and militia officer Koreiva came. From Dr. Rudaitis and his son Ažuolas Rudaitis, they took their passports and their house book, cancelled both their registrations by force, and ordered them to get out of the apartment within three days. Neither the father nor the son left the apartment.

On January 13, those same officials threw their things out of the apartment on to the stairway. Rudaitis appealed to Prosecutor Vilimas of the Kaunas City Lenin *Rayon*, submitting the appropriate documents and setting forth in detail all the events. The prosecutor, after considering the documentation he had received, ordered agent Maskvytis to open the apartment and to return Rudaitis' thrown-out things from the stairway back to the apartment.

Maskvytis did not carry out the prosecutor's order. With the permission of Prosecutor Vilimas, the Rudaitis' moved their furniture back in themselves. It appears that while Izidorius and Ažuolas Rudaitis were "living" on the stairway, the apartment administration with the intervention of Lenin *Rayon* Deputy Kavolis, reassigned Rudaitis' apartment to Miss D. Mikutenaitė.

This was done January 16, and now, on March 2, 1987, the Kaunas Lenin *Rayon* Peoples' Court concluded that Izidorius and Ažuolas Rudaitis broke into the apartment of Miss Mikutenaitė. Based on a document of January 28, 1985, in which it affirms that confiscation of property not carried out for five years becomes null and void, it is clear that the apartment legally belongs to Dr. Rudaitis. The apartment administration did not have the right to sell a personal apartment.

After every incident, chekist Rusteika would visit Dr. Rudaitis and kept saying that it was essential for the doctor to apply to the KGB which would straighten everything out in his favor. Rudaitis would reply that he did not think that all this was going on without KGB knowledge; on the contrary, it was their plot.

Rusteika did not cease trying to convince them that he must not give in since the law was on the doctor's side. Rudaitis requested that KGB agent Rusteika testify in court that he had lived here and was living here. The chekist agreed, but when the day of the trial arrived, he refused, unofficially arguing that Chief Bagdonas of the Kaunas Zone KGB was not allowing him.

Regardless of a whole list of witnesses, all of whom testified that Dr. Rudaitis and his son Ažuolas Rudaitis were permanent residents, on June 4, 1987, the Lenin *Rayon* Peoples' Court, with Judge Blazeovich presiding, decided to evict Izidorius and Ažuolas Rudaitis from the apartment at Žemaičių g., nr. 12, without providing any living space.

One must conclude that after the 1984 search and threats, the chekists, seeing that Dr. Rudaitis was not broken (He wrote his memoirs, followed political events and lived the life of a true Catholic Lithuanian; during the visits of chekist Rusteika the talks also did not go the way the KGB wanted them to go), decided to blackmail the old doctor still more, thinking that perhaps he would break, and begin to regret the loss of the apartment, become frightened and the KGB would be able to come to terms with him; he would be unable to withstand such moral and material pressure.

Of course, as usual, the KGB scatters the embers through the hands of others. So, on this occasion: the apartment administration, the militia, Deputy Kavolis and others were all just tools in their hands. Prosecutor Vilimas at first tried to bring criminal charges against the apartment administration, but it was explained to him that Rudaitis must not be defended — he is an enemy of the Soviet government.

U.S.S.R. law stands on slippery grounds, so it is not difficult to turn it in the direction the KGB wants. So, the pressure against Dr. Rudaitis continues.

Veiveriai (Prienai *Rayon*)

During the month of June, 1987, a cross was erected in the Veiveriai churchyard to commemorate the 600-year jubilee of the baptism of Lithuania. Immediately after the erection of the cross, the pastor of Veiveriai, Father Kazimieras Skučas, was summoned to the *Rayon* Executive Committee where he was reprimanded for putting up the cross without government permission. The priest explained that in the churchyard and cemetery, as far as he knew, crosses can be erected without special government permission. He had done so in his former parishes and no one had penalized him for this.

"Hence, when, for this offense you are transferred to another parish, it will be necessary to inform the government of that *rayon* that you are a hardened lawbreaker," stated the Executive Committee Vice Chairman.

At the same time, he explained that he would most likely have received permission to erect the cross if only he had applied in time. As an example, he mentioned Father Juozas Užupis, pastor of Prienai, who in 1984 applied to the

rayon government for permission to erect a wayside shrine in the churchyard, allegedly permission was given, only the pastor later reconsidered and did not erect a shrine in the churchyard — he put it up in the church itself. The permit was still valid; after three months it still rests with the *rayon* architect.

In 1984, no one gave the pastor of Prienai permission to erect any wayside shrine. Hearing such nonsense on the part of government officials, Father Užupis hurried to see the *rayon* architect, thinking perhaps that after three years he would be allowed to put up a wayside shrine in the churchyard to commemorate the jubilee of Saint Casimir. The *rayon* architect explained that all talk regarding a former permit is just a soap bubble.

Lithuanian, do not forget 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

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