



BALTIC NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF HELP THE ESTONIAN, LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION (HELLP)
P.O. BOX 272, SANDY BAY, TAS. 7005 (AUSTRALIA).

Vol. V, No. 3 (24)

September - October 1979

"Adoptions" Off to a Good Start

Australians and New Zealanders are world-famous for their generosity and for their willingness to help people in need. This was proven again, when in the last issue of *Baltic News*, we invited our readers to "adopt" Baltic P.O.C.s (prisoners of conscience).

Replies came from all States of Australia as well as from New Zealand. In each case, a family or an individual in this part of the world agreed to write regularly to their "adopted" prisoner in a Soviet jail or concentration camp.

In response to many enquiries, we are publishing a few hints on how to write to these prisoners.

Pro-Prisoner

Firstly, always remember that this action is humanitarian and not political. The tone of your letters must therefore be always pro-prisoner, not anti-Soviet.

Use any language. If you write in English and the prisoner replies in his native tongue, the *Baltic News* staff will translate it for you (free of charge, of course).

In your first letter, say a few things about yourself: your nationality, profession and perhaps age. Explain how you and your friends are concerned about human rights and the wellbeing of the prisoner. Offer your help.

In subsequent letters, remain personal and friendly. Enquire about the prisoner's health, about his general wellbeing and special needs. Tell him about the actions you and your group have undertaken on his behalf. In particular, tell the prisoner about any influential people you have been able to interest in his case: Senators, Members of Parliament, professional colleagues, trade unionists, newspaper and TV personalities, any well-known sportsmen. This will help to alert prison authorities that there is widespread interest in the particular prisoner.

Please date and number your letters, so the prisoner can tell if some do not get through. Above all, write regularly. At least one letter per month means a greater chance of freedom. If at all possible keep a photostat copy of each letter and envelope.

Postal Hints

The two most effective methods of reaching prisoners seem to be (1) by open postcard (without envelope), or (2) by registered airmail.

When registering your letter, ask for *acknowledgement of delivery*. When filling out the pink card R15 (c5), "Advice of Delivery", make sure you mark it in



• Latvian patriot Gunars Rode (pictured) spent 15 years in Russian prisons with hard labour. His only trespass was that he "held political beliefs unacceptable to the communist government". Today, Gunars Rode is a free man and is living in the West — thanks to hundreds of letters ordinary people in the free world had sent on his behalf to the Soviet authorities. Rode's plight was first reported in the *Baltic News* on June 4, 1975.

large letters, "Deliver to the Addressee only". This acknowledgement of delivery will cost you an extra 50 cents, in addition to the postage (55 cents) and registration fee (\$2). However, it is worth it all, when you remember what is at stake.

If you do not receive the Advice of Delivery after 90 days, signed to your satisfaction, complain in writing at your Post Office. If you receive no response 6 months after mailing any registered letter, you are entitled to a cash compensation of approximately \$13 - \$14 Australian from Australian Post (who will in turn collect from the Soviet Government).

A man in the U.S., J. Gurvich, has collected several thousand dollars for the letters "lost" inside U.S.S.R. An extensive campaign in Germany two years ago resulted in \$250,000 worth of indemnities collected by senders for the Soviet authorities' failure to deliver their mail

Continued on next page

H.E.L.L.P. Meeting



Mr Janis Delins of Melbourne (pictured) will be the guest speaker at this year's Annual Meeting of Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association (H.E.L.L.P.) in Hobart. The meeting will be held in Polish Hall, 22 New Town Road, New Town, on Saturday 13 October 1979, starting at 7.15 p.m. Interested non-members are welcome, and admission to the meeting will be free.

Mr Delins will speak on 'The 1979 Latvian Song Festival and its contribution to Latvia's freedom'. He was one of 5,000 people who travelled to the Swedish island of Gotland last June, to partake in a massive all-world Latvian song festival. Held almost within a stone's throw from Russian-held mainland Latvia, this impressive cultural display by the world's free Latvians caused considerable

worry to the Soviet colonial authorities.

Many foreign visitors had their visas cancelled; others were denied entry altogether.

Mr Janis Delins is the son of Mr E. Delins, publisher and editor of Australijas Latvietis. Janis is Chairman of the Australian Latvian Youth Association; he also holds important offices in several other Baltic organisations.

The meeting will be followed by a Dance with the usual novelties, a good Continental band and lots of fun. The dance will start at 8.30 p.m., admission \$4. The Lithuanian folk-dancing group VENTA has been invited to give a floor-show during the evening. Supper will be also available. Table bookings are optional, and may be arranged by 'phoning Joe Paskevicius on 72 6360.

Adoptions

• Continued from page 1

Do not Despair

Letters to the prisoners of conscience inside the Soviet Union often go undelivered, despite international postal regulations. Do not give up easily. If the Soviet authorities see that the sender persistently goes on writing to the same individual, they will eventually allow the letters to go through. To facilitate the task, several people in a family or group may write to the same prisoner, but all letters should be signed by one person. Numerous letters from the same sender indicate to Soviet officials that the writer is determined to communicate with the prisoner, and you are more likely to meet with some success.

More Sponsors Needed

Many Baltic P.O.C.s are still waiting to be "adopted". The first list is published on Page 6 in this issue; further lists will follow in future issues of *Baltic News*.

Please ask your friends, neighbours and workmates to join in this humanitarian campaign. Every letter mailed to the Soviet prisoners will improve their physical and mental conditions and may speed up their release.

The long-range aim is to gradually decrease the frequency of arrests and imprisonment of P.O.C.s in the Baltic countries, to increase the frequency of releases from Soviet jails, and to improve the conditions in Soviet prisons and concentration camps.

Letters from the Gulag, page 5.

New Bulletin on P.O.C.s

French-language *Cahiers du Samizdat* has started printing a new *Bulletin d'Information — News Brief* on the prisoners of conscience (P.O.C.s). Published in Brussels (Belgium), the third issue of *News Brief* contains information on Baltic prisoners Balys Gajauskas, V. Petkus, J. Susnevičius and Vladas Lapienis.

(E.L.)

BALTIC NEWS

We thank the following supporters, for donations received since the last issue of *Baltic News*:

Baltic Women's Assoc. in S.A., \$100; Baltic Council of Australia, \$50; D. R. Cullen (W.A.), S. Jarembauskas (N.S.W.), \$30 each; Joint Baltic Committee, Vic., \$25; P. Remma (N.S.W.), Daugavas Vanagi (Vic.), H. Juodvalkis, V. Feldmanis, E. Kuplis (all Tas.), \$20 each; N. Balton (N.S.W.), \$17; J. V. Rubis (Qld.), \$12; J. Ruzgys (Qld.), Rev. W. K. Glover, P. Lanno (both W.A.), C. Ford (N.S.W.), J. Parums, K. F. Lowrie, MLC, E. Laciš, 2 anonymous (all Tas.), \$10 each; J. Binkevicius (S.A.), \$7; R. F. Evans, S. Juhasz, P. Reiljan, Rev. S. Gaidelis (all Vic.), P. Sudmeyer, J. Barta (both Tas.), \$5 each; D. Madden, E. G. Kujath (both Tas.), \$2 each.

Since *Baltic News* is sent free of charge to all who ask for it, its continued publication relies entirely on donations and advertising.

—SINCERE THANKS!

NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

ABUSE OF PSYCHIATRY

New information on Henrikas Klimasauskas, a Lithuanian "prisoner of conscience," was received last August from reliable sources in Scandinavia.

Henrikas Klimasauskas graduated from the Construction Institute and received a senior engineer's degree while he was still a deportee in Irkutsk, near Lake Baikal. Subsequently, he worked on various construction projects and, on the eve of his return to Lithuania, had risen to the rank of chief engineer at the local construction board. Back in Lithuania, he continued working in his specialty and became chief of the production department of Kaunas Construction Trust No.2.

In his job, Klimasauskas met up with a rather common fraudulent practice. He observed how some individuals included non-existent work projects in their reports and were awarded prizes and bonus. Conscientious as he was, he wrote a complaint to the LSSR People's Control Board. When that office failed to investigate, Klimasauskas submitted a complaint to the USSR People's Control Board. Following an investigation, the director of the trust, Vitkus, and the chief engineer, Stankevicius, both members of the Communist Party, were each fined 500 rubles. They retaliated by denouncing Klimasauskas to the KGB.

On February 13, 1976, Klimasauskas was arrested on his way to work. His office and apartment were searched. During the search, security agents discovered more than a dozen copies of Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* in Lithuanian translation. Klimasauskas was promptly arrested. For a while he was kept in the Vilnius prison and was then transferred to a psychiatric hospital. He was then diagnosed as an "invalid of group two," i.e., suffering from a persecution mania. He was said to suffer from a

On August 1976, Klimasauskas was sent to a psychiatric hospital in the former East Prussian town of Insterburg (Isrutis, in Lithuanian). Its present address is 238100 Kaliningradskaya Oblast, Gorod Cherniakhovsk, Psicheskayabolnitsa, USSR. In the morning he is taken to the city where he supervises construction projects. At night, he is again placed behind locked doors with the mental patients. His official monthly wages are 120 rubles, but all he gets is 12 rubles - the rest is deducted for "room, board and

medical treatment." Whenever his family visits him, four Russians bring him in and supervise the conversation, which is to be conducted in Russian only.

Another Victim

A young Lithuanian woman, Jurate Galeckaite, is being forcibly treated in a Soviet psychiatric hospital. This was revealed by Gunar Rode, a Latvian dissident and former political prisoner in the Mordovian camps.

In 1974, while still in camp, he signed a protest against the compulsory "cure" of Galeckaite. According to Rode, she was arrested in 1972 with two other youths. She was accused by the KGB of participation in a demonstration in a demonstration with a flag of independent Lithuania.

Plea for Lithuanians

The Lithuanian Community of Canberra has sent a letter to the Soviet President, Mr Brezhnev, calling on him to 'be faithful to the spirit of the Helsinki Conference and the Constitution of the U.S.S.R.', and to release three Lithuanians from Soviet prisons.



* Jill Muskett, (left) and Ingrid Slaidins were among the many people who marched by candlelight in Hobart last June. Organised by H.E.L.L.P. Association, the candlelight procession has become an annual event to commemorate the mass deportation of Baltic people to the depths of Russia and Siberia. Similar public meetings are also held in other Australian capital cities. For example, 1,200 people attended the Ecumenical Service for Captive Nations, held in Melbourne on July 22, 1979.

— Photo by courtesy of 'The Mercury' (Hobart)

ANNUAL BALTIC DANCE

13 October (Saturday)
8.30 p.m.

Polish Hall,
22 New Town Road, New Town

Admission \$4

Good Band . . . Supper . . . All Welcome

Special feature: Dance display by
VENTA Lithuanian Folk Dancers

Table bookings (optional) 72 6360

A WEDDING IN THE GULAG

On July 27, 1978, Irena Dumbryte arrived at the Sosnovka camp in Mordovskaya ASSR to be married to Balys Gajauskas. She was accompanied by her sister, Mrs Laima Sulskiene and the Rev. J. Zdebskis. She had been informed by the authorities earlier that she could bring two witnesses with her to take part in the wedding ceremony, but they were not allowed to enter.



Balys Gajauskas

The civil marriage procedure took 10-15 minutes. The bride wore a white dress. Gajauskas appeared in the striped prisoner's garb, his head shaven. The camp commander told the bride that she and Gajauskas would not be given a three day personal appointment, as she had been promised earlier, because Gajauskas had already used up two days in his meetings with his mother on June 6. The following day, she travelled to the deputy chief of the camp board, Novikov, who crudely retorted that they would not be allowed to spend the three days together. Back in Sosnovka, she went again to the camp commander Novikov. Several hours later, she was told that she would be allowed a two-hour non-private meeting with her husband.

Irena and Balys Gajauskas were made to sit at two separate tables, with a jailer next to each of them. The door of the room was open and people kept going in and out in order to distract them. Irena Gajauskas had brought some food which she hoped to be able to give to her husband, but was not permitted to do so. She and Gajauskas had to speak in Russian, although both are Lithuanians. The jailers told them that a censor with a command of the Lithuanian language would be available only in a week or later. The newlyweds were not even allowed to shake hands as they parted.

Since civil marriage is invalid from the Church's point of view, the Rev. J. Zdebskis received permission from the bishop to make it legal by having the bride and groom say the vows and then receive Holy Communion. They were allowed to voice the marriage vows, but the jailers did not allow them to receive the Communion.

Irena and Balys Gajauskas will be allowed to meet again one year later. The camp commander said that Gajauskas may get penalized and, in that case, he

will not be allowed a personal meeting even after one year. This is the spirit of humanism that reigns in the jungle of contemporary Gulag.

— Translated from: *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania.*

Documents submitted to Pope

The first four documents of the Catholic Committee for the Defence of the Rights of Believers, founded in Lithuania on November 13, 1978, were personally presented to Pope John Paul II earlier this year, in Rome. (A report on this Committee's formation was published in the March/April issue of the *Baltic News*).

In the first document, dated November 13, 1978 the members of the Committee introduced themselves to the Pope.

The second document, also dated November 13, 1978 declares that the Committee will seek for the Catholics equal rights with the atheists.

The Committee will act publicly and will not seek any political goals.

The Committee expresses its solidarity with the defenders of the human rights in the Soviet Union and in the whole world. Especially close cooperation is desired with the Christian Committee for Defence of Believers' Right in the USSR: "We will consider this cooperation as a modest contribution to the ecumenical movement"

If any member of the Catholic Committee for the Defence of Believers is prevented from exercising his duties, his place will be immediately taken by one of the candidates who have been selected in advance.

The Committee asks all interested persons to address themselves on questions of their concern to any member of that Committee.



● Rev. A. Svarinskas: an outspoken member of the Committee for the Defence of Believers' rights, in Russian-held Lithuania.

LETTERS FROM THE GULAG



• Nijole Sadunaite (pictured) before her trial. This Lithuanian woman was sentenced to 3 years in labour camps and 3 years internal exile. Her "crime"? Nijole helped produce the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania which, since 1972, has been reporting Russian persecution of religious believers in the Baltic countries.

Nijole Sadunaite writes:

In her Siberian exile, Sadunaite receives only a small part of the letters and parcels addressed to her from abroad. Other letters reach her very late. Her own letters are meeting a similar fate. On November 29, 1977, she wrote: 'They didn't get my letters (I wrote six), only some postcards. It is strange — who — ever felt such a need for these simple letters?! There was nothing interesting, or secret, in them . . .'

On April 3, 1978, Sadunaite wrote: 'Th. Scharf wrote a letter from West Germany to the chief of the Central Post Office, asking how she could send parcels to me and how they should be addressed, so that they wouldn't be returned? . . . Some parcels were sent back abroad as 'incompletely addressed', although they had arrived in Bogushany, where the postal workers know me!'

On February 1, 1978, Claudia Damm wrote to Sadunaite from West Germany: 'I have been writing to you every 14 days for the past one-and-a-half years.' Sadunaite received only three letters from Miss Damm, who did not receive any of the four registered letters sent to her by Sadunaite. She comments: ' . . . Some censorship! All I write is a couple of words on the postcard. Poor KGB men . . . Not a grain of shame or conscience. That's their "morality".'

Nijole Sadunaite never received a registered letter from Benigna Kaiser, West Germany, sent on December 10, 1977, or a Lithuanian calendar mailed to her in 1978 from Israel. The censors are 'afraid' of labels with German language inscriptions and remove them. They also tear up cellophane bags.

'The purpose of the KGB censors is obvious — to obstruct the correspondence with Sadunaite by all means possible. She must not be allowed to feel the material and moral support of like-minded people.

'The postal officials want that Sadunaite's address be written in Russian: SSSR Krasnojarskij kraj, 663430, Bogucany, Partizanskaja 17, kv. 1, Sadunaite Nijole.'

Vladas Lapienis writes:

' . . . To deprive many people of their spiritual or physical freedom so that one or several individuals might profit from it, is a great crime against natural law . . .

'When one becomes a prisoner (especially during the interrogations) one must decide quickly, there is no time for consulting someone, or for quiet contemplation. There remains a single possibility — to listen to the voice of one's conscience. Great trouble awaits a man who, on such occasions, enters into a conflict with his conscience.'

Major Aleksandrov, commander of the third column, fifth zone, is constantly harassing Lapienis. He confiscated the onions bought by Lapienis' wife and burned his newspapers.

Lapienis asks not to send him religious pictures, because they can be confiscated. The same is true for typewritten prayers and religious ideas.

More than fifteen Lithuanian political prisoners are in camp 19, in Lesna, not far from Potma, where Lapienis was transferred on July 15th. His present address: Vladas Lapienis, Mordovskaya ASSR, st. Potma, p/o Lesnoy, uchr. zhch. 385/19-3.



• Nijole Sadunaite in Siberia today.

TO: H.E.L.L.P. (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association),
Post Office Box 272,
SANDY BAY, Tasmania, 7005 (Australia).

I do not recognize the Russian sovereignty over the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania).

Please send me the *Baltic News*, free of charge and without any obligation.

Name

ADDRESS

..... POSTCODE

Optional:

I enclose my donation of \$.....Cash/Cheque/M.O.

Estonian Prisoners of Conscience in the Soviet Union

<u>Surname, First name</u>	<u>Born</u>	<u>Sentenced</u>	<u>Conviction based on Article No.</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Camp No.</u>	<u>Other Identification</u>
EICHVALD, Vladimir	1914	1971	190-1 (194-1)			Radio engineer
EINASTO, Peeter	1939 ?					Research worker
IRD, Ulo		1972 ?		15 yrs		
JAAKOB, Johannes		1974		15 yrs		
JUSKEVITSH, Artjom	1931	1975	68-1	5 yrs	389/37	Engineer
JARVO, ?	1925 ?	1955 ?		25 yrs		
KALJU, Jaan						Lorry-driver
KANGUR, Bernhard		1973		15 yrs		
KIIREND, Mati	1939	1975	68-1	5 yrs	389/35	Engineer
KIROTOSK, Alfred		1974		15 yrs		
KIVILO, Karl					389/35	
KOOP, David	1931	1977		3 yrs		
KUKK, Valter		1973		10 yrs	385/19	
KORBOJA, Kaarel		1972 ?		15 yrs	385/19	
LAARMAN, Richard		1966		15 yrs		
LEIVAND, Jaak	1949	1971 ?				
LILL, Ilmar					385/19	
LINRA, ?				25 yrs	389/36	
LOVEN, Ivan	1928	1977		5 yrs		
MATUSON (MATUS), ?					389/36	
MERILA, Tonia					385/19	
MUST, Leonhard		1966		15 yrs	385/19	
MATIK, Kalju	1932	1975	68-1, 207-1	6 yrs	389/36	Engineer
MOLDER, August				15 yrs	385/19	
NURMSAAR, E	1930 ?					
PERTMAN, Juri					385/19	
PRAKS, Teivo	1930			25 yrs	389/35	
PUPART, Artur						
Johannes	1924	1970		15 yrs		
REINHOLD, Teeder	1905	1954 ?		25 yrs	385/19	Lawyer
RITSON, Poigo		1966		13 yrs		
SILLAMAGI, Kaarel		1966		13 yrs		
SOLDATOV, Aleksander	1958	1976				
SOLDATOV, Sergei	1933	1975	68-1	6 yrs	385/19	Engineer, translator
TURU, ?		1952 ?		25 yrs	389/35	
UNT, Voldemar				15 yrs	385/19	
VAIKMA, Edgar	1918 ?					Theologian
WALDMAN, Iive						
VALDUR, ?						
VARES, Karl	1912 ?			25 yrs		Musician
VETRA, ?				25 yrs	389/36	
ZAITSEV, Larissa	1950	1977		4 yrs		
ZAITSEV, Ludmilla	1946	1977		4½ yrs		

CAMP ADDRESSES

No. 385/19

USSR

431170 Mordovskaya ASSR

Zubovo-Polyansky raion

Posyelek Umorsky/Lesnoi

Uchrezhdenie ZhKh — 385/19

No. 389/35

USSR

618810 Permskaya oblast

Chusovskoy raion

Stantsiya Vaesvyatskaya

Uchrezhdenie VS — 389/15

No. 389/36

USSR

618263 Permskaya oblast

Chusovskoy raion

Posyolok Kuchino

Uchrezhdenie VS — 389/36

No. 389/37

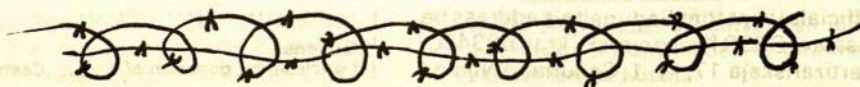
USSR

618801 Permskaya oblast

Chusovskoy raion

Stantsiya Polevinka

Uchrezhdenie VS — 389/37



BOOK REVIEW

Estonian Sufferings and Hopes

GRAVES WITHOUT CROSSES,
by Arved VIIRLAID.

Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd. Toronto, Vancouver,
1972.

A good writer, by dealing with the particular, can induce in the reader a feeling for the universal.

The Estonian writer, Arved Viirlaid, has succeeded in doing this in his big novel (some 200,000 words) "Graves without Crosses".

Viirlaid takes a few dozen Estonians, and makes us share their sufferings and their hopes as they endure the occupation of their country in 1944 by the Russians, and as they plan to escape to the West.

The book's hero, Taavi Randoja, who fled to Finland to join the Estonian regiment there, has returned with other compatriots, to try to defend Estonia against the Russians.

They soon discover that they are fighting a losing battle, and realize that they must either leave the country, or take refuge in the woods, which the Russians loath to enter.

Taavi, and his wife and son, attempt with others, to escape by boat, but the venture ends in disaster (they have, unknowingly, been betrayed); and they join the freedom fighters in the forest near their village.

We see and feel the horrors of the occupation: the theft of crops and animals, the arrest of fellow-countrymen, the gradual demoralization of a whole community.

We suffer with those taken prisoner, as they experience ill-treatment, torture, cold, hunger, and vermin. We realize what pleasure there can be, for one deprived of them, in the simple action of a wash, a hot bath, clean clothing, even the use of a comb.

Taavi's wife Ilme undergoes pregnancy and childbirth in primitive conditions, only to see the baby die from lack of warmth and nourishment.

Taavi is taken prisoner, but escapes, but his son is held hostage, and Taavi is told that his son will be released when he gives himself up for questioning.

It is a terrible dilemma. Taavi knows that he would be forced by torture to betray his fellow-men; and feels certain, too, that both he and his son will be put to death whatever he does or says.

Ilme urges him to go, so that her boy will be released; she has lost a daughter, and is mad with grief for her son. When Taavi tries to show her the uselessness of his surrender she tries to drown herself.

What makes the people's plight harder to bear is their knowledge that some of their own folk are traitors; in particular the woman Marta, a former sweetheart of Taavi, who wants Taavi for herself again, and will go to any length to gain his desire. She betrays those attempting to flee by boat, and tempts an idiot, by offering herself to him, to throw a hand grenade into a cave sheltering Ilme and others. She even assists (admittedly under coercion) in the torture of Taavi's mother with acid to betray the whereabouts of her son.

Eventually the hopelessness of their situation becomes clear, and Taavi is faced with a terrible decision: to stay with his wife and mother in a state of helplessness; or to abandon temporarily and they escape and continue the fight.

Taavi decides that he cannot leave his wife again; then is startled to learn that his mother has already accepted the fact that he will be going, and that it is Ilme who has told her son.

Taavi, when he considers the suffering and anguish of his people, can compare them only with Christ in the bearing of His cross.

It is not surprising to learn that Arved Viirlaid himself experienced many of the things in the novel. When the Germans occupied Estonia, he went to Finland as a lieutenant in the Estonian regiment there, but returned in 1944 to take part in the fight for independence.

One small complaint: in a book which deals explicitly with murder, rape, torture, and filth, it jars to see used the unexplained abbreviation "S.O.B.." Whether this use is by the author, or by the translator, one cannot tell, but in fairness to the translator (Ilse Lehist) I must say that the English is such that, but for the acknowledgment, I would not have known that it was a translation.

— TED STURGES.

A.E. (Ted) Sturges is a well-known Tasmanian writer and poet. His book, *Flaherty's Fall and Other Stories*, was published in 1975 (Cat & Fiddle Press).



Group of Estonian partisans. Rifles and machine guns were obtained from Russian soldiers.

Who is the Secret Cardinal?

When Pope John Paul II appointed fifteen new cardinals on June 30, one name remained *in pectore* - unannounced. *In pectore* is Latin for "in the breast" or, more loosely, "in the Pope's heart".

Vatican observers believe that the secret cardinal is Bishop Julijonas Steponavicius in Russian-held Lithuania, to whom Pope John Paul had reportedly sent his own cardinal's red hat after his election to the Holy See last year.

Bishop Steponavicius is apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. However, the Russian authorities have stopped him from carrying out his duties over the past 18 years.

House Arrest

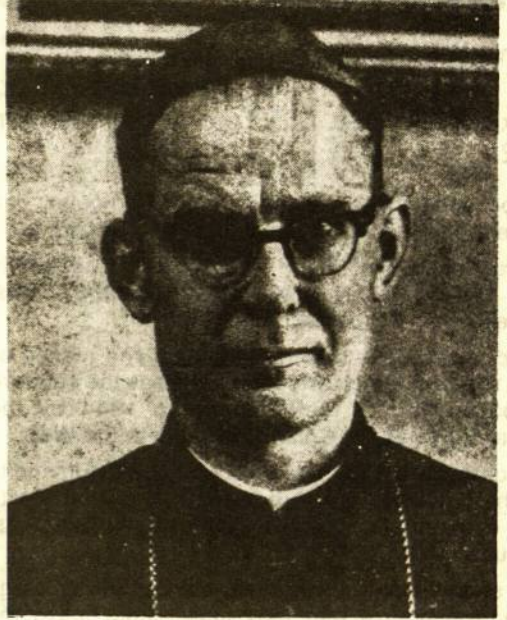
Born in 1911 and ordained a priest in 1936, the Lithuanian prelate was ordained a bishop on September 11, 1955.

He was ordained an Auxiliary to the ordaining Bishop, Kazimieras Paltarokas. After Bishop Paltarokas' death three years later, Bishop Steponavicius was named apostolic administrator of Panevezys.

In 1961, he was placed under house arrest for refusing to ordain three candidates for the priesthood who were sponsored by the Soviet government.

Since then, Bishop Steponavicius has been listed in the official Vatican yearbook as *impedito* - impeded from fulfilling his office. Since 1964, he has been listed as apostolic administrator of Vilnius.

But Bishop Steponavicius, deprived of his passport and denied a living permit for Vilnius, has been residing since 1961 in Zagare, a small settlement in a different diocese.



● Bishop Steponavicius: a courageous defender of the faith in Russian-held Lithuania.

But a complaint by the Bishop to Soviet authorities in 1972 brought an official response that his situation was unchanged because he was "not reformed".

Helsinki Contradiction

In a brave move four years ago, 65 out of 100 priests in the Vilnius archdiocese signed a collective letter to the Soviet authorities which called the Soviet treatment of Bishop Steponavicius a "blatant contradiction of the spirit and letter of the Helsinki agreements".

Lithuanians have not had a cardinal for almost 400 years. The last Lithuanian cardinal was Jurgis Radvila, born in 1556 and deceased in 1600. He was the second son of Michael Radvila ("the Black"), the former Duke of Olika and Nesvyzius. Cardinal Radvila was the Bishop of Vilnius, and later the Bishop of Cracow.

It has been rumoured that Bishop Steponavicius is the clandestine editor of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*. Published since March 1972, the underground *Chronicle* documents of human rights in Russian-occupied Lithuania. 37 issues have so far reached the West.

-Based on reports in *Europos Lietuvis* (London), *Catholic Leader* Brisbane and *CCCL*.



St. George's Church, Siauliai, Soviet-occupied Lithuania, was badly damaged during fire of suspicious origin March 17, 1976, while several fire companies stood about and joked.

BALTIC NEWS is published by HELLP (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association) in Hobart, Australia. HELLP is a non-denominational and non-party-political group of concerned Australians, who (1) do not recognize Russian sovereignty over the three Baltic States; and (2) are working to publicize the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian people's continuing struggle for survival and freedom. New members are welcome to join at any time. Postal address: P.O. Box 272, SANDY BAY, Tasmania, 7005 — Australia.

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