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ELTOS INFORMACIJOS

(Lithuanian)

29 West 57th Street
New York, N.Y. 10019, USA

is situated at the southern end of the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, right at the European continent's geographic center. It emerged as a unified state in the early decades of the 13th century and became internationally recognized as the Kingdom of Lithuania in 1251 A.D.

After centuries of vast expansion eastward and southward, in 1569 Lithuania became a partner in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which lasted till 1795 when it was partitioned between Austria, Prussia and Russia. Lithuania fell under the Russian rule.

Lithuania succeeded in re-establishing its independence in 1918, at the end of World War I, but was occupied again in 1940 by the armed forces of Russia, now known as the Soviet Union. It has been held in Soviet bondage since then.

Population

as provisionally estimated for January 1, 1975

3,290,000

as estimated in the same area on January 1, 1939

3,215,000

NEW "CHRONICLE" (No. 34) REACHES WEST

The latest issue of Lietuvos Kataliku Bažnyčios Kronika (The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania) was received in the West recently. The Chronicle began appearing in 1972 and is one of the outstanding samizdat journals in the Soviet Union.

The new issue of the Chronicle (No. 34) is dated August 15, 1978. It contains a letter of Lithuanian Catholics to Jean Cardinal Villot on the occasion of the death of Pope Paul VI. Also featured is a detailed description of the trial of Viktoras Petkus, on July 10-13, 1978. Protest actions by Lithuanian Catholics against discriminatory policies are discussed. Confidential documents outlining methodical "atheization and denationalization" of Lithuanian children are presented.

LETTER TO VATICAN ON POPE PAUL VI DEATH

A letter by "Lithuanian Catholics" was sent to Cardinal J. Villot, the Vatican Secretary of State:

"In the evening of August 6, 1978, sad news on the death of Pope Paul VI were transmitted by radio to our country. Although we, Lithuanian Catholics, live behind the Iron Curtain, we are well acquainted with this giant of Christian spirit, a zealous and courageous defender of God's affairs in this stormy age of mental and spiritual crises. The late Pope's Easter greeting in Lithuanian... goes on echoing in our hearts. We are infinitely grateful to Paul VI for His permission to create the Chapel of Martyrs underneath St. Peter's Basilica and for His consecration of the picture of God's Mother. The missals and the breviaries donated to us remind us constantly of his paternal care....

"Our words are late in reaching the free world, but in our prayers we are always one with the sorrows and the joys of the Church.

"We beg the Almighty that a courageous, determined and Holy Pope be elected and that our sufferings and our struggle against the forcible atheization of our nation find an echo in His heart.

"On this occasion, we express the complete loyalty and filial love of our nation to the Apostolic See.

"The Chronicle... asks Lithuanians abroad to transmit this letter to the addressee."

(The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania,
Nr. 34, August 15, 1978)

OPERA STAR REQUESTS PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE

Vaclovas Daunoras, soloist of the Vilnius Academic Opera and of the Ballet Theatre has asked the chairman of the LSSR Supreme Soviet, Barkauskas, on October 3, 1978, for permission to emigrate with his family. The internationally renowned basso said in his letter that he finds it impossible to continue pursuing his profession in Lithuania under the present conditions and that he wanted to leave for Italy.

Born in 1937, Daunoras started his operatic career in 1960. In 1962, he won the first award at the M. Glinka competition for vocalists in the Soviet Union. He was also awarded the Grand Prix at the international singers' competition in Toulouse, France. In 1965, he was named Honored Art Worker. He frequently travelled abroad with concert tours.

Daunoras' status underwent a sudden change with the appointment of Virgilijus Noreika, a known KGB collaborator, as director of the Vilnius Opera House. He began harassing Daunoras, dismissed him with his brother Ričardas from the opera, and transferred them to the Kaunas Operetta Theatre. In July 1976, Ričardas Daunoras went to France with a student ensemble on a concert tour. He asked for political asylum and remained in the West. In retaliation, Vaclovas Daunoras was dismissed from the Operetta Theatre in Kaunas and stopped from going abroad. His planned concert tours in Poland and Cuba were cancelled. A completed phonograph record of his was never released. Soon after he submitted his request for emigration, he began receiving anonymous threatening letters.

"WHEREAS, Thousands are persecuted and oppressed in various countries of the world, especially the brave and courageous dissidents in the communist dominated countries who are bringing to the world's attention, at the risk of their lives and security of their families, the degree of slavery and persecution their countrymen must endure: deprived of the right to work, the right to choose their place to live, the right to speak -- even to listen; the right to join their spouse or family living in another country -- all these basic rights which we take for granted, yet totally are denied these thousands of our brothers and sisters...."

(From a Resolution, presented to the 87th Convention of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in Phoenix, Arizona, 1978, by the Federation of Lithuanian Women's Clubs)

THE TRIAL OF VIKTORAS PETKUS

"... From the very first day of V. Petkus' trial, one could feel that it was a most carefully rehearsed stage spectacle. On July 10, when the indictment was read, Estonian, Latvian witnesses, i.e. those unfamiliar with the Lithuanian language, were...allowed to enter the courtroom. All they managed to see was that V. Petkus was forcibly dragged into the court by four militiamen who held his arms pinned behind his back. He told the court that he was innocent and he refused the lawyer's services. During the entire remaining time, V. Petkus demonstratively ignored the trial proceedings, refused to answer any questions, refrained from defending himself, or giving any explanations, and simply dozed away.

"... On July 11, a large group of V. Petkus' friends and ideological sympathizers arrived at the Supreme Court in Vilnius, but they were not allowed into the courtroom. The security agent posted at the door of the courtroom told anyone wishing to enter that 'all seats were taken'.

"The first to be allowed into the courtroom were the witnesses, the Rev. K. Garuckas, O. Lukauskaitė-Poškienė, and R. Ragaišis. To their astonishment, they saw that the court room, which had been locked until their arrival, was already filled with some dubious types. Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė (member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group) took a look at the courtroom and loudly asked the Rev. Garuckas (also member of the Helsinki Group):

"'Are they all witnesses? Or, perhaps, the representatives of the press? Ah, no. They are apparently privileged guests.'

"Indeed, these were supernumeraries in the trial spectacle, who were allowed into the auditorium through the service door in order to fill the courtroom and to leave no room for those who sympathized with V. Petkus and who were genuinely interested in seeing and hearing the court process.

"A large group of people who could not get into the auditorium, wanted to deliver a protest to the chairman of the Supreme Court, but he did not deign to talk with them. His secretary declared that this was a closed trial. Soon a sign was posted on the door of the courtroom, saying that V. Petkus was being tried in this auditorium and that the trial was 'not public.' The dubious types left the courtroom during the first intermission....

"The essential witnesses, who testified in reference to Articles 68 and 70 of the Penal Code, were questioned only late in the evening. Upon entering the courtroom, each of them greeted V. Petkus and said a few nice words, characterizing him, such as, 'a good Catholic, a true Lithuanian, a decent and cultured human being.' Showing their solidarity with V. Petkus, they refused to testify in any manner.

"When the Rev. K. Garuckas entered the courtroom, he greeted Petkus in the Catholic manner and transmitted to him the greetings of all those who were not allowed into the courtroom. To the judge's question, if he knew the accused, Garuckas answered that he knew him as a good Catholic, a true Lithuanian, and a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group....

"'We acted together, therefore you may put me in the dock next to V. Petkus. I'll consider it a honor to die in the camp as my teachers, Bishop Reinyš and Father Andriuška have died. I refuse to say anything more.'

"One of the witnesses, Jadvyga Petkevičienė, handed Petkus a rose, which was immediately taken away from him. Mrs. Petkevičienė expressed the attitude of all decent Lithuanians when she said: 'The hour is yours, sor of the nation,

because you have sacrificed your freedom for our rights.'

"O. Lukauskaitė-Poškienė said the following: 'I know Viktoras Petkus, member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, as a decent cultured and good human being. After his arrest, I have written to the procurator's office, protesting the arrest of a man who did not commit any crimes. I am still convinced about his innocence today, and therefore I ask you, judge, to restore legality and to stop the case. My statement is finished, and I refuse to answer any further questions.

"What began on July 12 was not a court session but a movie tragicomedy. When witnesses arrived to testify, they were not allowed into the courtroom. Two cars belonging to the local film studio were parked in front of the courtroom, while movie personnel were busy in the auditorium... Čivilis, a young soldier and the only witness to have presented incriminating testimony against Petkus, was led into the courtroom by uniformed men. Already on the second day of the trial, he tearfully confessed to some young men that, when the KGB forced him to testify for the first time, he was completely drunk and did not have the faintest idea of what was going on, and agreed with everything he was told to confirm. Later on, he was unable to deny his statements. A poor youth! He was never sexually abused by Petkus, but he was morally raped by those who forced him to give false testimony. The youths who used to visit V. Petkus' apartment and study The History of Lithuania by Šapoka, as well as religious books, never saw him there....

"E. Finkelšteinas, member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, sent the following written statement to the Supreme Court: 'I refuse to participate in the case of V. Petkus as a witness, because I am a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group just as V. Petkus, and together with Petkus I bear full responsibility for the activity of the Group and for the documents prepared by the LHG. I can take part in the trial as a defendant only.

"Two landladies of Petkus' apartment were called into the courtroom. At the entrance door, they were asked by the security agent if they would testify and how. When they replied, 'whatever the teacher will ask, we'll reply', the witnesses were allowed into the courtroom. Questioning of witnesses in front of the courtroom door?! In the courtroom, the landladies told that Petkus lived in their apartment for eight years and that there was never any drinking there, and when they cleaned his room, they never found an empty bottle, not even a cork. Youths would gather at Petkus' place, but they acted seriously and politely.

"The public prosecutor Bakučionis did not expect such a testimony....

"During the trial, the testimony of the Latvian Kalninš was read, dealing with the creation of a planned liberation committee for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The incriminating evidence... was bought from Kalninš for a permission to go West. And, indeed, before the trial had even started, Kalninš and his family were already in the West. Meanwhile, on the basis of his own testimony, he should have been sitting in the dock next to Petkus. Where is the logic? One member of the organization gets a prison term, while the other is rewarded with freedom in the West.

"The entire July 12th trial session was filmed. On July 13th, witnesses were also not allowed into the courtroom. High and low ranking KGB men kept buzzing around the people who were standing in the anteroom. They behaved in a serious and quiet manner. Before the start of the trial session, KGB agents and militia-men cleared all those who had come to take part in the trial, except for the witnesses. The youths departed quietly and gathered on the wide courthouse stairs. An armful of carnations appeared from an unknown source... they were distributed one by one to the witnesses and to the assembled youths.

"Holding carnations in their hands, the youths and Petkus' friends gathered on one side of the stairs and started saying the rosary.... KGB agents, militia-men and druzhinniki stood nearby, while a militia vehicle was waiting at the ready. A large crowd of the citizens of Vilnius watched this unusual spectacle through the window of the Republic Library. The militia and security men, unfamiliar with such a form of protest, became confused and did not know what to do. A man from the film studio, or perhaps a KGB agent, started filming the praying people from all sides. One of them... began photographing the cameraman....

"After the lunch intermission, the witnesses saw that the courtroom was already packed with people who had assembled through the service door. The KGB men allowed only five individuals to enter the courtroom: A. Terleckas, O. Lukauskaitė-Poškienė, the Rev. K. Garuckas and Petkus' two landladies. Others were rudely pushed away from the door. T. Velikanova, who came from Moscow, was brutally knocked down on the floor by lieut. col. Baltinas.

"The court declared that Viktoras Petkus was a specially dangerous criminal and condemned him to three years of prison, seven years of severe regime camps, and five additional years of exile.

"The court also declared that P. Ragaišis would be criminally liable for his refusal to testify during the trial.

"This was the end of the cruel judicial tragicomedy.

"P.S. The description of the Petkus' trial is based on a written statement by one of the participants in the trial."

(Chronicle of the Catholic Church in
Lithuania, No. 34, 1978)

Reliable sources from the Soviet Union inform us that Viktoras Petkus, who is now serving his prison term, needs support and assistance. Letters to him should be written in Russian or English. His address:

Viktoras Petkus
600020 g. Vladimir 20
Uchrezhdenye OD-1ST-2
USSR

THE CHRONICLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA (No. 33)

(Second & Last Part of Summaries & Excerpts)

Is Religious Propaganda Allowed?

"Religious propaganda is being practiced in our country.... Yet it is natural and logical that religious propaganda be practiced within the framework of the performance of religious cults...because the great majority of our country's citizens are nonbelievers and do not feel the need of such propaganda." (Nauka i religia, No. 4, 1978, p. 13).

"The great majority of Lithuania's population are Roman Catholics and do not feel the need for atheistic propaganda. Why, then, is it disseminated by all means, including compulsion? Where then is the equality between believers and atheists before the law?!"

TO THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD

(Appeal on behalf of Balys Gajauskas, see ELTA Bulletin, October, 1978, issue).

WHAT'S NEW IN THE WORLD?

To the Chairman of the Board of USSR
Main Board of Correction Labor Agencies,

S t a t e m e n t

of Mrs. Elena Lapienienė, Vilnius, Dauguviečio 5-11, April 10, 1978

"My husband, Vladas Lapienis, b. 1906, is serving time in Mordovia (Tengušev, Barašev, uchr. ZhX 385/3/51). The camp administration has twice punished him with isolation cell and now they are threatening him with PKT (a prison-type establishment) for his alleged refusal to work.

"Actually, my husband has been retired since 1966 and has a record of chronic illness. The one-and-a-half years of prison have completely undermined his health. The camp physician, after talking with my husband for several minutes, wrote down that my husband may do heavy physical work. The camp administration make him to carry coal, to stoke furnaces, and to do heavy labor that only a healthy individual could bear. In addition, my husband is forced to sew gloves, although the camp administration knows that his poor sight does not allow him to do this kind of work. When my husband refused to do work which his health does not permit, the camp administration began to punish him in various ways.

"Please instruct the camp administration to stop persecuting my husband and forcing him to do heavy labor. Please also annul the other punishments: the isolation cell, the injunction against receiving a parcel this year, the (cancelled) visit, and the (cancelled) permission to purchase food items at the camp store."

"An analogous statement was submitted to the Chairman of the Medical Board USSR Ministry of the Interior.

"At the end of April, Mrs. E. Lapienienė travelled to Mordovia to visit her husband. She was allowed to see him briefly and to hand him some food. V. Lapienis related to her that on March 24 two camp physicians, in the presence of Major Aleksandrov, gave him a physical check-up, diagnosed him as an invalid of group two and assigned him to six hours work daily in the sewing section. The prisoners are complaining about Major Aleksandrov's cruelty."

WHY ARE PRIESTS PROTECTING A KGB AGENT ?

"On the eve of Christmas 1977, fourth-year seminarian, Ričardas Jakutis, was expelled from the Kaunas Theological Seminary for drunken spree and amoral behavior.... He was previously suspected of being a KGB agent.... A special commission of the seminary, headed by its president, went to Telšiai to investigate his transgressions.... Jakutis confessed his guilt to the president and the administrator as well as, publicly, to the students. Yet upon his return... he began immediately collecting 'evidence' about his innocence.

"During a meeting at the seminary, the administrator of Vilnius archdiocese, Č. Krivaitis, demanded that Jakutis be returned to the seminary as a 'slandered innocent.' At the end of January; the Rev. Gutauskas, Rector of the Aurora Gate Parish in Vilnius, and the Rev. A. Dilys, Rector of St. Peter's Church, went to Telšiai to investigate Jakutis' innocence.' They did it in secret, without notifying the Curia of Telšiai Diocese or the administration of the seminary... They asserted that they were convinced that Jakutis was innocent.

"Why are Krivaitis, Dilys and Gutauskas making such efforts to return Jakutis, a KGB man, to the seminary? These clergymen are working for the Soviet government, and not for the Lithuanian Church.

Statement of Lithuanian Bishops and Administrators of Dioceses

Miss Činskytė (Telšiai, February 2, 1978) testifies about the immoral behavior of seminarian Jakutis.

President of Seminary on Jakutis' Behavior

The President of the Theological Seminary in Kaunas, Dr. V. Butkus, presents some example of Jakutis' immoral actions. Dated December 20, 1977.

KGB — HANDS OFF THE SEMINARY

S t a t e m e n t

signed by 22 priests of the Vilkaiviškis diocese, April 12, 1978, and sent to Lithuanian Bishops and Administrators of Dioceses & to Dr. V. Butkus, President of the Kaunas Seminary

"On the Saturday, before Easter 1978, K. Tumėnas, Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs, came to the Kaunas Theological Seminary and demanded that two seminarians, P. Blažukas and V. Pūkas, be expelled from the seminary.

"On this occasion, we, the priests of the Vilkaiviškis Diocese, state the following:

"1. The right to deal with the affairs of the Theological Seminary is limited to the ordinaries of Lithuania and to the leadership of the Seminary, on the basis of church law. According to that law, there was no reason to expell ...Blažukas and Pūkas from the Seminary. The commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs has no right to meddle in the acceptance or dismissal of seminarians.

"2. The seminarians who were expelled from the Seminary are accused of multiplying illegal literature. We, the priests of Lithuania, have no other

literature. All our literature -- most of the prayerbooks, all catechisms, sermon literature, religious books -- is 'illegal', published without the permission of the Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs. Seminarians cannot be expelled...because of such literature.

"3. The unjustified expulsion of seminarians from the Seminary makes it imperative to see that the young men seek priesthood in the underground.

"Please, take the necessary steps to have the groundlessly expelled seminarians...returned to the seminary still during this year."

Appeal of the Believers of Prienai Parish

to the Apostolic Administrator of Vilkaviškis Diocese
and to the President of the Theological Seminary, 301
signatories, April 14, 1978. A similar appeal was sent
to the Apostolic Administrator alone by 316 believers
of Prienai parish

The signatories write of the "sad news" -- the expulsion of "our seminarian" P. Blažukas "by governmental orders." They are "convinced that he has not transgressed any church or civil laws" and ask to transmit to the "appropriate agencies our request that P. Blažukas be allowed to continue his studies toward priesthood.

The Chronicle comments that the KGB would gladly forgive P. Blažukas his "non-existent crime" if he agreed to be "KGB informer."

MURDERER RASLANAS APPOINTED TO TELŠIAI

The religious activism of the young people in the city of Telšiai has evoked "crude reprisals" by the local authorities. The failure of these "gendarme tactics" has led to the temporary transfer of Raslanas, an aide to the Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs, from Vilnius to Telšiai, in order to bolster the local authorities. The people of Telšiai have recognized Raslanas as a former NKVD agent who took an active part in the massacre of 73 Lithuanian political prisoners in Telšiai, on June 24-25, 1941. They were "tortured to death" without trial. Raslanas was one of the initiators and organizers of the massacre....

"All such torturers should be tried as the German war criminals in Nürnberg. Can the difficulties of the Lithuanian believers be explained by the fact that their affairs are handled by such criminals?... Commissioner Tumėnas is merely a secondary figure, while Raslanas is the chief."

"Since at present it is impossible to do away with the believers of Telšiai by means of a bloodbath, henchman Raslanas has thought of a different method. An attempt is made to prove that an underground organization of believers, The Heroes of the Eucharist, is active in Telšiai.... Teachers, too, have joined the KGB agents as active helpers and inquisitors of their students...."

The principal of the Third High School, Jankauskas, is notorious for such activity. He interrogated and threatened students Uksaitė (11th grade), Mėmis (10th grade). His wife, Mrs. Jankauskienė, grilled students Rudavičius and Sarutis. The students had to fill out a questionnaire with the following questions: "Do you go to church? Why do you? Why don't you? Do you believe in the existence of God? Do you celebrate religious holidays at home? Etc.

"In the 4th High School, the interrogators were...Rudienė, a teacher, Adomaitienė, the principal, and Andrijauskas, a teacher and the leader of the raion's atheists. Classes were shortened or completely cancelled.... The fol-

lowing students were interrogated: Meiženytė, Bumblauskaitė, Riškūtė (8th grade); Meiženis, Bružas (10th grade); Jurkūtė, Misevičiūtė (10th grade); Stonkūtė (11th grade), etc. ..."

"The children are forbidden to wear buttons with the picture of a small way-side chapel. They are immediately asked where they obtained those buttons, why they are wearing them, and if they belonged to the Friends of the Eucharist? The interrogators are trying to convince them that the Friends of the Eucharist is a political organization that transmits information to foreign powers, slanders the Soviet government, etc. The young people are questioned about the leader of the Friends of the Eucharist and are being told that it is the organist of the Cathedral, known as a dangerous criminal who has served time in prison.

"All students are being threatened that the information about their religious beliefs would be included in their resumes and personal references, and they would not be accepted anywhere for studies....

"On December 9, 1977, the chairman of the executive committee of the Telšiai ... threatened the administrator of the Telšiai diocese that, if the young people would continue attending church, they would be charged with responsibility for the anti-Soviet inscriptions that appeared in Telšiai during the holiday of October Revolution."

In his Christmas sermon, the vicar of Telšiai asserted that the "rampage of the atheists" has not diminished church attendance by young people but that, on the contrary, it has increased.

NEWS FROM DIOCESES

Commissioner Requests Information on Religion

Vilnius. Text of a Memorandum sent on April 11, 1977, by K. Tumėnas, Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs, to chairmen of raion executive committees. He requests information on the "state of religiosity" in the respective raions by January 15, 1978. To be included is data on the activities of religious communities, sample texts of sermons, church attendance, the financial status of religious committees, violation of laws on religion, complaints, etc.

KGB Press Conference on Growth of Religion

Kaunas. On March 27, 1978, the chief of Kaunas KGB, Bagdonas, gave a "press conference" to newspapermen, propaganda workers and Party activists. He complained about the increase in church attendance and warned that priests were trying to attract more people to the church by focusing on "national-religious themes" in their sermons.

Concern About Bishop's Trip to Vatican

Kaunas. Bishop J. Labukas, Apostolic Administrator of the Kaunas archdiocese and Vilkaviškis diocese, left for the Vatican in May 1978. "The clergy is concerned that the poorly informed Vatican Curia might appoint KGB collaborators as bishops."

Seminarians Interrogated

Kaunas. Seminarians E. Paulionis (April 28) and R. Dalgėla (May 5) were questioned by Vilnius KGB in connection with the Petkus' case.

Communist Officials Lecture on Religion

Kaunas. Commissioner Tumėnas gave a public lecture on the "Situation of Religion in Lithuania," April 14, 1978. He emphasized that "conflicts with the

believers must be avoided, tensions should not be increased, and that the religious feelings of the believers should not be insulted." He also said that the believers annually donated about one million rubles, and that "a small portion of that sum -- about 23,000 rubles -- ends up in the government's pocket." Actually, the government takes much larger share. Each small parish with a tiny wooden church contributes more than 500 rubles, while the brick and stone churches yield some 2,000-3,000 rubles. Churches in the cities pay even more. Since there are about 700 priests in Lithuania, it is easy to compute the total income of the government.

Kaunas. On October 11, 1978, a militant atheist, A. Guiga, secretary of the Požėla raion in Kaunas, was guest speaker at the course on atheism, which is required at the Kaunas Medicine Institute. He said that "reactionary priests" still existed and mentioned two of them -- the rector of Adutiškis, the Rev. Laurinavičius who "tries to attract children to assist at the Mass" and the Rev. Valančiauskas (Švenčionys raion), who is trying to "penetrate farms and factories." Guiga also mentioned that most believers get married and baptize their children in other churches than their own. Some written comments by students were critical.

Authorities Interfere in Appointment of Priests

On December 30, 1977, Commissioner Tumėnas and deputy chairman of the executive committee of Telšiai raion, Tamašauskas, demanded that the Rev. K. Gasčiūnas be transferred from Telšiai. The executive committee has for the third time rejected an elected church committee of the Telšiai parish.

Zarasai. Bishop R. Krikščiūnas dismissed the rector of Zarasai, Rev. G. Šukis, and appointed the Rev. Vytautas TvariJonas in his place. Tumėnas expressed his protest against this appointment and suggested the Rev. S. Pelesynas as his candidate.

Priests Prevented from Attending Patients in Hospitals

Gargždai. On March 24, 1978, the Rev. Antanas Šeškevičius was invited to visit Stanislovas Milašius, who was gravely ill at the Gargždai old people's home. Several other old people asked the priest to hear their confessions and to give them the Holy Communion. The director of the old people's home, Striauka, who abused the priest verbally, ordered him to get out. Šeškevičius invoked in vain the article by Commissioner Tumėnas (Tarybų Darbas, No. 5, 1975), who said that priests have the right to confer the sacraments in hospitals if the patients so desire. The Rev. Šeškevičius lodged a complaint to the authorities about the director's behavior.

Skuodas. Kazimiera Aklienė, 81, was brought to the Skuodas hospital after an operation. Feeling very ill, she asked for a priest with the last sacraments. Chief physician Mažrimas retorted: "As long as I am alive, no priest will set foot in my hospital." Then the patient asked to be taken to her friends in Skuodas, where she would receive the sacraments and would then return to the hospital. Dr. Mažrimas ordered to have her removed from the ward and left in the corridor. He told her husband that we would not allow her into the hospital any more. Mrs. Aklienė was left without supervision in the drafty corridor and died on April 8th. Mrs. Magdalena Sėlenienė, 88, was also denied a priest, and died without the last sacraments on January 8th. Complaints to the Skuodas raion Communist Party officials always bring an identical reply: "He is O.K. for us!"

Sanctions Against Believers

Salos. Danutė Česonienė, secretary of Salos district, had her daughter Vida baptized in the Kamajai parish. For this, she was dismissed from her post at the end of 1977. She was also expelled from her job at the local kindergarten.

Janė Butkevičienė, brigade leader at the local sovkhos and member of the Communist Party, gave a religious funeral to her mother and took part in it. At a Communist Party meeting, it was resolved to dismiss her from work.

Druskininkai. Aldona Balevičiūtė, secretary of the town's executive committee, was preparing for a church wedding, to be held on April 15, 1978. Her superiors, deputy chairman V. Marinionokas and Navickienė, found out about it and attacked her for "holding on to religious superstitions." They hurled various threats at her: she would be dismissed from work, denied an apartment, and expelled from the university, unless she "renounced the church." When she said that this was the family tradition, her father was accused of "forcing his daughter to adhere to religious practices."

Authorities Dictate Priest's Funeral

The Rev. Antanas Tyla, Rector of Notėnai parish, was buried on January 27, 1978, after a prolonged struggle between the believers and the authorities. In his testament, Rev. Tyla asked to be buried next to his mother, in the cemetery of the Notėnai churchyard. But, when the believers began to dig his grave, the local Communist Party authorities immediately forbade it. The believers then went to the Curia of the Telšiai diocese for help. When the Curia turned to the office of the Commissioner for the Religious Affairs, it received the reply that questions concerning funerals are handled by local authorities. The believers then gave an ultimatum to the chairman of Notėnai district, Šetkauskas; they threatened to leave their priest unburied if the authorities persisted in their injunction. Šetkauskas finally appealed to the Communist Party secretary, Sabanskis, saying that the people were "enraged" and that the whole matter may get into the Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania. Finally Sabanskis relented, and the priest was buried in the churchyard.

The Struggle for the Church of Žalioji

The previous issue of the Chronicle (No. 32) reported on the request of the believers of Klausučiai village to reopen the Žalioji village church. The request was sent to the Council for Religious Affairs in Moscow, which transmitted it to Commissioner Tumėnas. He, in turn, sent it to the executive committee of the Vilkaviškis raion. Deputy chairman of the committee, Urbonas, began interrogating Bronius Mackevičius, a local worker who drafted the request. Urbonas told him that the Vilkaviškis executive committee was granted the right to determine the fate of the Žalioji church, and it has decided not to allow its opening. Mackevičius asked for this answer in writing, but Urbonas replied that no written answers are issued. "This is how Moscow handles the believers' requests after the adoption of the new Constitution -- they are sent to those against whose behavior the believers complained."

On May 10, 1978, twenty-two members of the Žalioji parish church committee sent a statement to J. Maniušis, Chairman of the LSSR Council of Ministers, in which they said:

"We see it clearly that J. Urbonas, deputy chairman of the Vilkaviškis raion mocks not only the believers but his superiors as well.... They can issue their own laws and directives, without any regard to the demands of the Council of Ministers or the USSR Constitution..."

IN THE SOVIET SCHOOL

Forbidden Funerals

Telšiai. Teacher Rumbutienė forbade the 10th (6) grade students of the Fifth High School to take part in a religious funeral of their classmate's mother on Nov. 21, 1977.

Kybartai. On May 5, 1978, sixth-grade students of the local high school were ordered out of the church, where a funeral service was taking place.

Ignalina. The classmates of ten-year old Rimas Stukėnas were not allowed to attend a funeral Mass for his soul.

Religious Students Harassed

Šiauliai. On April 1, 1978, the principal of the Šiauliai high school, Snieskus, tried to convince the father of ninth-grader Dalia Judikavičiūtė that her religious beliefs would "bar her the way to university education." The principal said that she belonged to some "sect" and that the KGB was "showing interest in her."

Šiauliai. Irena Dapkūtė, 11th grade student at the eighth high school was grilled for an hour in the principal's office. The principal, Mrs. Jonaitienė, assisted by two students, was trying in vain to persuade Irena to join the Komsomol and to stop going to church.

Šiauliai. An "atheist evening" was organized in the Šiauliai seventh high school on Christmas eve, 1977. The leader of the school's atheists, Greibenčenkaitė, mocked religious students and tried to force them to play roles ridiculing believers. She also threatened to reduce their grades, if they failed to come to the evening.

Kretinga. Since October, 1977, students of the Kretinga second high school have been assisting at the Mass in the local church. The school administration, especially the principal Kecorius, the Komsomol secretary, Aleksandravičiūtė, and the class guardian, Raguckas, are using threats in trying to stop those students from participating in religious services. Eighth-grader Saulius Katkus was threatened with expulsion. Also threatened were students Eugenijus Drungila and Antanas Puškorius.

Kybartai. Seventh-graders at the local high-school were assigned to recite atheistic poems or prose excerpts. Several students resisted and told teacher Sukackienė that they were "religious believers and would not recite atheistic poems against their convictions."

Leipalingis. Vytautas Česnulis, teacher of biology at the local high school, is a fervent propagator of atheism in his classes. One of the eleventh-graders characterized Česnulis' propaganda as "typical for Lithuanian atheists in its lack of wisdom, its cynicism, and ignorance of religion."

Prienai. The Easter services at the Užuguostis church this year were attended by many students. Some of these students... including Kazlauskaitė, Sinkevičiūtė and Krikščiūnaitė... were strongly reprimanded for attending church. The rectors of Pakuonis, Skriaudžiai and Užuguostis were summoned to the executive committee of the Prienai raion on April 17, 1978, where they were chastized for "allowing

children attend religious services." The priests refused to bar children from the church and admonished the officials to adhere to the "new Constitution."

Aukštadvaris (Trakai raion). High school students Saulius Sekonas (5th grade) and Pilinkas (8th grade) were ridiculed for going to church. Baranauskaitė and Kalinkevičius (both 7th grade) were "strictly warned" not to go to church on Sundays. The school party secretary, Vereckas, threatened student Spiliauskaitė with lowered grades and ridicule in the school paper if she continued going to church.

Parents of Religious Students Pressured

Palanga. On March 30, 1978, Jovaišienė, a teacher at the second high school, visited the parents of fourth-grader Stonkūtė and told her parents that they were not allowed to take their children to religious services. She and her husband "forcibly" enrolled student Senavaitis (4th grade) into the pioneer organization.

Zuikai (Ignalina raion). Fourth-grader Rimutė Balčiūnaitė was coaxed by the teachers at the eight-year school to enroll in the pioneer organization. Her parents told her to resign from it, which she did. Thereupon, the parents were subjected to the "blackmail" by the secretary of the Party organization, Sidorovas, and the kolkhoz chairman, A. Balčiūnas.

CATHOLICS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Report on the Persecution of Catholics in the Moldavian SSR.

NEW UNDERGROUND PUBLICATIONS

See ELTA-Bulletin, October 1978.

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