

ELTA¹ INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Contents:

Lithuania on the International Agenda

BALTIC RADIO SERVICES TRANSFERRED FROM "RADIO LIBERTY" TO
"RADIO FREE EUROPE" — 3.

U.S. CONGRESS PASSES RESOLUTION ON "LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY" — 3.

U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE BALTIC STATES — 4.

TRANSFER OF BALTIC PROGRAMS TO R.F.E. — "SIGNIFICANT MESSAGE" — 5.

U.S. AND U.S.S.R. CLASH IN U.N. ON BALTIC STATES — 6.

BALTIC ACTIVITY IN SWEDEN IRRITATES MOSCOW — 6.

A MESSAGE TO MR. MONDALE AND PRESIDENT REAGAN — 7.

Totalitarianism Against Religion

SENATE RESOLUTION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN EAST EUROPE — 8.

MARXISTS CRITICIZED AS "SOFT ON RELIGION" — 8.

CHRISTMAS TREES — A "SUBVERSIVE" ACTIVITY — 10.

U.S. VISITOR DESCRIBES STRICTURES ON RELIGION — 10.

From the Underground Press

NEW RESTRICTIONS ON MAILING OF PARCELS AND BOOKS — 11.

NEW ISSUE (63) OF THE LITHUANIAN "CHRONICLE" — 12.

THE 40th AND 41st ISSUES OF UNDERGROUND "AUŠRA" — 12.

A PORTRAIT OF LATE HELSINKI GROUP MEMBER — 12.

"Prisoners of Conscience"

LITHUANIANS IN P.E.N. REPORT ON IMPRISONED WRITERS — 13.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS URGED TO INQUIRE ABOUT PETKUS — 14.

LITHUANIAN "PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE" IN SOVIET CAMPS — 14.

SKUODIS CASE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA BETWEEN U.S. AND U.S.S.R. — 15.

Also:

V.F.W. ASKS FOR INVESTIGATION OF O.S.I. ACTIVITIES — 16.

LITHUANIAN INTERNEE IN SWITZERLAND FACES DECISION — 16.

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BULLETINS

offering information and documentation on current events and problems concerning Lithuania.

LITHUANIA

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ELTA-PRESSEDIENST

(German)

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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, 1979

3,399,000

as estimated in the same area on January 1, 1939

3,215,000

BALTIC RADIO SERVICES TRANSFERRED FROM "RADIO LIBERTY" TO
"RADIO FREE EUROPE"

On October 2nd the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations released the following media notice:

"Washington - Acting on a request by Sen. Charles H. Percy (R-Il.), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Board for International Broadcasting will immediately transfer the Baltic Language Services Division from Radio Liberty to Radio Free Europe.

"Radio Free Europe broadcasts to the nations of Eastern Europe and Radio Liberty broadcasts only to the Soviet Union. Therefore, Percy said, 'The transfer will correctly place the Baltic Services in Radio Free Europe in conformity with U.S. policy which does not recognize the incorporation of the Baltic Republics into the Soviet Union'.

"Frank Shakespeare, Chairman of the Board for International Broadcasting which unanimously approved the transfer, wrote to tell Percy, that 'the Board was strongly influenced' by Percy's view that this shift would be 'more in line with United States foreign policy'.

"James Buckley, President of RFE/RL, also concluded that the transfer would be 'appropriate and desirable', according to Shakespeare.

"Percy said 'I am delighted that the Board has accepted my proposal. The people of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are unique, and U.S. radio broadcasts must reflect their aspirations for freedom and self-determination. The Baltic Services belong in Radio Free Europe'.

"The transfer will have the practical effect of changing the on-air identification of the broadcasts heard by the peoples of the Baltic States to 'The Lithuanian Service (or Latvian Service, or Estonian Service) of Radio Free Europe'. It will also make the extensive research resources of Radio Free Europe available to the Baltic Services staff. It will have no effect on the cost of the services".

Following the transfer of the Baltic radio programs from Radio Liberty to Radio Free Europe, dr. K. Bobelis, President of the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania, together with dr. C.R. Jurgėla, Vice-president for Political Affairs, wrote a letter of thanks to Sen. Charles H. Percy. They expressed the appreciation of the Lithuanian people for his efforts in this matter and for his cooperation with the Committee in the achievement of this long-sought goal. The Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania believes that the transfer of the Baltic radio programs to Radio Free Europe will further strengthen the case of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on the international agenda.

U.S. CONGRESS PASSES RESOLUTION ON LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

A joint Resolution designating February 16, 1985, as "Lithuanian Independence Day" was passed by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives on October 5, 1984. Senator Baker introduced the resolution in the Senate, while Representative Hall presented it to the House.

According to the Resolution, "free and independent" Lithuania was "by force and fraud occupied and illegally annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940", and the "oppressed people currently living in Lithuania, who still aspire to exercise their right for self-government, should keep the flame of freedom forever burning in their hearts." The Resolution asks the U.S. President to issue a proclamation designating "Lithuanian Independence Day" and calling on the people of the United States to celebrate such day with "appropriate ceremonies and activities."

U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE BALTIC STATES

U.S. policy concerning the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is summarized in the August, 1984, issue of Gist, a reference aid on U.S. foreign relations, issued by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Public Affairs. Following are the key points of the summary:

Background: The US does not recognize the forcible and unlawful incorporation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the USSR that occurred in 1940. As an integral part of US policy toward these occupied countries, the US Government continues to recognize and conduct business with the diplomatic representatives of the last independent Baltic governments. The Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian chiefs of mission in the US enjoy full diplomatic privileges and immunities. Part of their major role is to continue to uphold the ultimate goal of a free Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

To clarify the U.S. stand on the interpretation of the Helsinki Act, during the review conference in Madrid in 1980, the Deputy Chairman of the U.S. Delegation recalled the statement in Principle IV (territorial integrity of states) "that no occupation or acquisition of territory in contravention of international law will be recognized as legal" and said: "I would reiterate my government's consistent interpretation that this provision is applicable to the Baltic States."

Gist quotes extensively from the statement, which President Reagan had delivered to the U.N. Secretary General in July 1983, on the commemoration of the 61st anniversary of the de jure recognition of the three Baltic republics by the U.S. President Reagan emphasized that by not recognizing the "forced incorporation" of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union and by reaffirming this policy, "we demonstrate our continuing commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and to the cause of peace and liberty in the world."

According to Gist, the U.S. position upholding the right to freedom and liberty of the Baltic nations is a "reminder that the democratic West has not forgotten the injustice done to these peoples, and it is also a symbol of hope for the future." The Baltic Missions in the U.S. "remain important symbols to the Baltic peoples, and we continue to deal with their diplomats on a full range of appropriate matters."

The reference aid lists a number of U.S. policy applications, including National Day greetings to the Baltic peoples, Baltic-language broadcasts, etc. As for the effect of this Baltic policy on U.S. - Soviet relations, Gist says that the Soviet Union has been fully aware of it since its enunciation in 1940, and "our espousal of this position has not affected in any significant way the substance or the course of our bilateral relations." The need for de facto contacts with the Soviets on specific topics concerning individuals "does not in our view detract from the integrity of substance of the non-recognition policy," Gist concludes.

TRANSFER OF BALTIC PROGRAMS TO R.F.E. - "SIGNIFICANT MESSAGE"

"Brutal Occupation Neither Forgotten Nor Accepted as Legitimate"

An initiative in American-financed broadcasting to the Soviet block which might at first glance seem no more than a minor administrative change will in fact have a significant impact on US-Soviet relations. Radio programmes in the languages of the Baltic states are now announced as broadcasts from Radio Free Europe rather than Radio Liberty, the sister station, likewise based in Munich, which covers the USSR...

... The Baltic states were independent between the wars, and the western powers did not recognize their forcible incorporation into the USSR as in any way legitimate. They are ruled de facto from Moscow, but de jure they should be independent countries... In 1939 even the Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, denied that Moscow had any claim to these lands, dismissing all rumours of the impending Sovietization of the republics as foul fabrications by the bourgeois media. But the terrible mass arrests, murders and exiling to Siberia which followed were all too real.

The purpose of the Munich-based stations is to provide the free discussion and truthful information denied the peoples of the Soviet block by the controlled media of their regimes... However, those who administer the stations are attacked not only by Moscow; they are frequently criticized by journalists and politicians from Washington who are determined to show praiseworthy concern for the public interest. Some will doubtless question the wisdom of this decision too.

Stalin's post-war policy of incorporating some liberated territory into the USSR while making other countries "peoples democracies" has produced an artificial separation both between East and West and between the inhabitants of central and eastern Europe. Yet to call into doubt any of the present political divisions in the Moscow-dominated area will certainly raise irate accusations from the Kremlin that Washington is again declaring an interest in encouraging the disintegration of the Soviet empire...

If the West wishes to dissuade Moscow from further expansion, it is vital to show that a brutal occupation more than forty years ago is neither forgotten nor accepted as legitimate. The directors of the Munich radio stations have not merely tinkered with their administrative structure; they have sent a significant message of sympathy and encouragement to nations which are bravely preserving their heritage against all efforts of an alien atheist regime.

(From "Broadcasting to Captive Nations,"
The Times, London, October 15, 1984)

U.S. AND USSR CLASH IN U.N. ON BALTIC STATES

Moscow Blocks Baltic Self-determination by Force, U.S. Charges

The United States has told the United Nations that the Soviets had blocked by force Estonia's, Latvia's and Lithuania's struggle for self-determination. The Soviet delegate replied that the Baltic republics had the right to leave the USSR.

On October 18, Ambassador Richard Schifter addressed the General Assembly's Social Committee during a debate on self-determination. The alternate U.S. representative to the U.N. for Security Council Affairs emphasized that the right of self-determination is "inextricably tied to the right of persons freely to determine their political status". In that context, he spoke of the Baltic States, Afghanistan, as well as of Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Schifter said that Soviet preoccupation in the Committee centered on Namibia, Micronesia, Puerto Rico and Grenada. Turning to Puerto Rico, which is a Commonwealth associated with the United States, Schifter noted that the choice between joining the U.S. as the 51st State, maintaining the present status, or choosing independence, will once again be made by the Puerto Rican people in elections on November 6th. He asked: "When did the independence movement of Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania or, for that matter, of Bokhara, last have a chance to test the strength of their respective independence movements at the ballot box?"

The delegate of the Soviet Union, Igor I. Yakovlev, said in his reply that the U.S. delegation had "cast aspersions" on the rights of certain Soviet peoples, and on Soviet foreign policy. The republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania were "freely associated" with the Soviet Union, he said, and had the right to leave it. It was not for the United States delegation to teach them how to exercise the right to self-determination, Yakovlev added. (He failed to mention that a simple oral or written statement in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on these nations' right to self-determination is automatically classified as "anti-Soviet agitation or propaganda" or an "attempt to undermine the Soviet power", and is rewarded with a many-year term in the Gulag camps. Neither did Mr. Yakovlev volunteer the information that the three Baltic States were occupied by invading Soviet troops, in fulfillment of the Stalin-Hitler Pact of August, 1939, which relegated Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to the USSR.)

BALTIC ACTIVITY IN SWEDEN IRRITATES MOSCOW

"The most important task for the Baltic exiles is not to give the enemy any peace, not to allow the Soviet dictatorship to act in silence and secrecy. Our weapons are - truth, facts and satire." Thus Uldis Germanis, PhD, one of the leading figures of the Latvian Community in Sweden, is quoted in the August 22 issue of the Stockholm daily Svenska Dagbladet.

According to the Swedish newspaper, the Balts are the best organized immigrant group. Of the ca. 36,000 Balts now residing in Sweden, 32,000 are Estonians, 3,200 Latvians and about 100 Lithuanians. Many of them are well educated, occupy high posts, and are successful members of the Swedish society. Most importantly, the Balts have succeeded in maintaining their sense of national identity.

The Baltic activity in Sweden, Svenska Dagbladet writes, is a constant irritant to Moscow. The KGB is making strong efforts to infiltrate and divide the Baltic organizations. Quite a few Soviet diplomats were expelled from Sweden for secretly collecting information about the Baltic refugees.

Heinrich Mark, former chairman of the Estonian National Committee in Sweden, maintains that the Balts there have not lost their faith in the eventual recovery of independence by the Baltic nations. This goal is now sought by the third generation of Balts in Sweden. Mark recalls that for many years the Estonians in Sweden have been asking the Social Democratic government for support. Finally, the Minister of Education, Ragnar Edenmann relented and made the following statement to the Estonian delegation: "I am a historian. I do know that all dictatorships have eventually collapsed. Therefore you will be granted the support."

The activity of the Baltic organizations in Sweden does affect their native countries in various ways, Dr. Germanis told the correspondent of Svenska Dagbladet. In the eyes of Moscow's propaganda, Stockholm is a "center of ideological enemies".

A MESSAGE TO MR. MONDALE AND PRESIDENT REAGAN

Whom Will U.S. Voters Support?

... Conspicuously missing from (Mr. Mondale's) summit agenda is the question of the Soviet Union's systematic suppression of human rights. No arms agreement can dampen the aspirations for freedom of more than 100 million Eastern Europeans living against their will under Soviet hegemony... The basis for a permanent peace is jeopardized at least as much by the barbed wire dividing Europe and the ... repression of Eastern Europeans as by the buildup of Soviet and American nuclear arsenals...

... Ironically, the imperative of coexistence with the Soviet Union has led Mr. Mondale to articulate a policy that is reminiscent of the Republican conception of détente. In its initial form, détente was based on the notion that the Soviets could be induced to behave moderately by means of economic incentives and penalties, together with arms talks...

.... Ceding half of Europe to the Soviet empire left us with a foreign policy without a purpose, save for the physical security of the U.S. and its allies...

The message to Mr. Mondale and President Reagan is that on Nov. 6, the voters will support the candidate who will seek to deliver peace and freedom, which, to borrow Harry Truman's words, are "two halves of the same walnut".

Jay Winik, formerly Executive Director of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, "Twin Supports for a Lasting Peace", Wall Street Journal, October 16, 1984

SENATE RESOLUTION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN EAST EUROPE"Repression of Religion" in Baltic States Noted

On September 13, the U.S. Senate unanimously adopted a resolution (S. Con. Res. 119) opposing violations of religious freedom by the governments of the Warsaw Pact states. The resolution expresses the sense of Congress that the U.S. Government should raise publicly and privately the failure of the Warsaw Pact states "to fulfill commitments on religion undertaken in the Helsinki Final Act and to respect international law on human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially in the area of religion". The resolution instructs the President to transmit a copy of the resolution to the Ambassadors from each of the Warsaw Pact states.

The resolution expressly states that "religious activity in the occupied Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia has been harshly repressed by the Government of the Soviet Union".

The adoption of the resolution by the U.S. House of Representatives is expected shortly. "I believe that the governments of Eastern Europe will hear our call for religious freedom", Senator Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) stated on September 17. He is the chairman of The Advisory Council on Religious Rights in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, which unanimously voted to support a new Senate resolution on this issue at its first meeting in Chicago in November 1983.

- MARXISTS CRITICIZED AS "SOFT ON RELIGION"Writers on Atheism and Religion Rebuffed

For the past several years, the Communist authorities in Lithuania have been asking for more sophisticated and effective atheistic scholarship and propaganda. Despite enormous investments and the training of thousands of propagandists, the output of "scientific atheism" has been on the whole crude and counterproductive. While convincing and converting very few, it only managed to further antagonize multitudes of religious believers. But when some Marxist scholars recently responded with a subtler critique of religion, the guardians of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy rapped their knuckles for being too kind on religion...

Two of such "straying" scholars, Jokūbas Minkevičius and A. Lozuraitis, received a stern rebuke in this year's seventh issue of the CP theoretical monthly Komunistas. The task of chastising them was entrusted to a doctor of philosophy named I. Kriveliov(as), whose academic habitat is not indicated. It is clear, however, that Kriveliov represents the ideological hierarchy. And this means that the two "recalcitrants" will not be likely to publish their responses or to defend their views. In the land of "mature socialism", "dialectical" exchanges are not allowed.

Marxists Criticize "Negative Atheism" and "A-Priori" Stand Against Religion

The displeasure of the ideological watchdogs was caused by two articles in the periodical Problemos (No. 29). Here, according to Kriveliov, are some of the authors' sins. They simply disdain so-called "negative atheism", or "atheistic negativism", which they characterize as a "surrogate world view". Lozuraitis writes that in its treatment of religion, Marxism is "shackled by a certain a-priori stand". He is chided for this too "eloquent" description of religion:

"Any religion first emerges as a genuine human need, a cry that comes from the very depths of a certain social movement... religion, which is the ideological expression of this movement, is essentially a faith in the justness of this movement".

According to Kriveliov, Lozuraitis characterizes the role of a religious movement in "imposing" and "attractive" terms. The faith at the base of this movement, he says, "opens new horizons to the believers and gathers them into a mighty social power, which is impossible without a holy conviction, reckless self-sacrifice, without its prophets and martyrs".

"Refusal to Condemn Religion" Chided

Kriveliov finds the same sin of an "objectivist attitude to religion" in Minkevičius' article. Minkevičius dislikes the "condemnation and denigration of religion, the practice of accusing religion of various vices and of assigning it a role, which is not dependent on it". In Minkevičius' article one sees a "refusal to condemn religion". In his view, religion is an "inseparable part of the socio-cultural and ethnic life of a society". Also, as a "social phenomenon religion is simultaneously a cultural phenomenon". Minkevičius takes a stand against the tendency to "exclude religion from culture", which he sees in some of the writings and actions of Lithuanian atheists. This tendency Minkevičius characterizes "not only as a tactical error, but also as a methodological narrowness".

Marxist Professor Reprimanded Previously

(Minkevičius, the leading Lithuanian theoretician of atheism and religion, has been previously criticized for his ideological deviations. In Religijotyros įvadas, "Introduction into Research of Religion", a collection of articles published in 1981, he criticized atheist indoctrination in Lithuania as woefully ineffective and suggested that the regularly heralded imminent demise of religion in the Soviet Union was by no means a foregone conclusion. A review published in the June, 1982 issue of Komunistas faulted the book for "incorrect" interpretation of "important questions". The editors of the section of philosophical and atheistic literature in the Mintis publishing house were requested to show "greater responsibility" in evaluating manuscripts).

What are Kriveliov's counterarguments to Lozuraitis' and Minkevičius' still basically orthodox Marxist, although more sophisticated, positions? He simply cites the prophets of the Marxist-Leninist pantheon about the need for a militant and uncompromising struggle against religion. Marx, he writes, talks about the imperative need to criticize religion. And Lenin, the supreme authority, has bluntly stated that "each religious idea, each idea about any kind of dear God, even any kind of flirtation with that dear God is an indescribable abomination... it is the most dangerous loathsome thing, the most vile 'regression' ". Religion as an integral part of culture? No, Kriveliov thunders, because then fascism and similar abominations would have to be accepted as part of culture. Genuine culture is "progressive" culture (as the concept of "progressiveness" is defined by that most cultured and most progressive institution ever - the Politbureau of the Soviet Communist Party. Ed.). Kriveliov's chief message to the errant Marxists: "A Marxist can have no doubts that in the general process of history, religion is a reactionary phenomenon and therefore must be condemned".

Marxist Critique Embarrassing for Regime

This slap administered to the leading Lithuanian Marxists again demonstrates

that what goes for "philosophic discourse" in the Soviet-controlled territory" is merely a rationalization of the current totalitarian policies. The embarrassing thing for the Soviet authorities is that the critique of the official atheism from Marxist positions in Problemos sometimes coincides with the criticism levelled by the Lithuanian Catholics and other religious believers. An assertion that religion is an organic part of culture cannot be accepted by a government which officially excludes religion from culture, even if that assertion is based on proper Marxist premises. If religion has redeeming features, then the government's total war against religion is put into question. And if religious believers are often moved by idealism and altruism, as Minkevičius and Lozuraitis suggest, then the official party line that Lithuanian Catholic activists, including the imprisoned Revs. Svarinskas and Tamkevičius, are motivated merely by greed and desire for power is exposed as a lie - from a Marxist perspective! Kriveliov's article serves notice to the Lithuanian ideological and educational establishment that, by order of the Politbureau, religion is "poison" and an "abomination", and that it must be discussed and treated as such. More than that, they must not forget the "pernicious role of anticommunist clericalism in the struggle against social progress". Meanwhile, as Kriveliov reminds, the two Lithuanian Marxists did not even mention "anticommunist clericalism" in their articles... Moscovia locuta, causa finita!

CHRISTMAS TREES - A "SUBVERSIVE" ACTIVITY

Soviet Treatment of Catholics Compared With Antisemitic and Racist Measures

"... The article also mentions one more heavy 'crime' by the Rev. S. Tamkevičius - he organized a Christmas tree activity in the Kybartai churchyard. S. Mockuvienė's tone suggests that this was an extraordinary and almost a political crime. The conclusion is that the (official) activities connected with the New Year's fir trees in public squares, schools, concert halls and TV studios is not a transgression, but when this is done in a churchyard, then it becomes almost a destruction of the socialist system. Does not this amount to a hint that religious believers will not be allowed to decorate Christmas trees without official permission in their own homes? (The sale of Christmas trees was more than once forbidden here prior to Christmas). The Nazis and the racists used to post notices: "Jews and Negroes Forbidden to Enter". Why should not similar notices be posted here, saying that religious believers are forbidden this or that. This way we could avoid unnecessary conflicts and even trials; and a large number of our distinguished brethren, who tried to make use of the constitutional rights promising equality, would not languish in jails..."

(From Aušra, The Dawn, No. 41, February 1984)

U.S. VISITOR DESCRIBES STRICTURES ON RELIGION

Americans and the people in the Soviet-dominated part of Europe have been recently subjected to the recurrent sordid spectacle of Western Church dignitaries visiting the USSR and singing praises of "religious freedom" there. For the sake of fairness, one must state that this is by far not the complete picture. For each Rev. Billy Graham or Dr. Bruce Rigdon there are tens of well-informed and sensitive Americans who visit the USSR with open eyes and a full mind and do not automatically echo totalitarian disinformation.

One of such individuals is Monica Clark, who went to the Soviet Union with the Northern California Catholic Peace Mission (Aug. 16 - Sept. 1) and who described her impressions in the October 1 issue of The Catholic Voice, a periodical of the Diocese of Oakland. Her itinerary included Vilnius, Lithuania, where she was told by the priests of increased interest in religion among teenagers and college students. One pastor said the "conflict between the Communist ideology taught in schools and the traditional religious piety practiced by parents and grandparents leaves many young people in a kind of 'spiritual limbo' because neither appeals to them" and "one of the Church's challenges is to find ways to address the spiritual needs of young Catholics."

The writer met a group of Catholic young adults who related their concern about openly practicing their faith. They said that they "might lose their jobs for which they had prepared at the University of Vilnius, if employers learned they were active Catholics." But they also spoke of teachers and supervisors who "quietly support the exercise of religion."

Some priests told Monica Clark that it is "difficult to keep an informed faith alive," because "religious education outside the home is forbidden as are meetings and organizations for religious purposes." There are no formal instructions about sacramental preparations and families "pass the faith from one generation to the next." American-type classes in Scripture, prayer and the sacraments are "only a dream to us," one priest said.

The author of the article heard of Lithuanian families who take their children to pious women for instruction. These so-called "underground nuns" are single women living under private religious vows because religious communities were outlawed in 1947.

The author also took part in the Mass on August 26, scheduled to observe the 500th anniversary of the death of St. Casimir.

NEW RESTRICTIONS ON MAILING OF PARCELS AND BOOKS

"... The contacts with relatives abroad have been recently narrowed even more. The tariffs on gifts sent abroad are constantly increased. While 3-5 years ago, it cost 1-1.5 rubles to send a book to the U.S., in the middle of 1982 the cost went up to 10-15 rubles, i.e. the mailing was several times more expensive than the item being mailed. Moreover, new lists were issued on items-gifts that are not to be mailed to "capitalist" countries. The post offices receive so many of such lists that they become quite confused about them. Telephone conversations with foreign countries have been particularly restricted. People who want to send gifts abroad, must present all passport information, which was not required earlier.

"Since September, 1982, it is forbidden to send books abroad. While 4-10 years ago it was allowed to send abroad any books, since 1980 it has been forbidden to send out any books which were published up to 1975; at present it is forbidden to send abroad any books. (The permission is given only on individual occasions and a special order of the ministry is required for that; obtaining such an order takes a lot of time and energy). Therefore this ban on the mailing of books is unjust and amounts to a crude violation of the human right to a cultural exchange..."

(Aušra, The Dawn, February 1984)

A NEW ISSUE (63) OF THE LITHUANIAN "CHRONICLE"

The 63rd issue of the Lithuanian Chronicle, dated July 1, 1984, was recently received in the West. The underground journal continues its coverage of the impact on Lithuania of the 500th anniversary of Lithuania's patron saint, St. Casimir. Participants in the commemoration of the anniversary continue being harassed and interrogated. Several articles rebuke anti-Catholic propaganda and fabrications in the official press. The Chronicle informs that Mečislovas Jurevičius, a "prisoner of conscience" who completed a three-year term in strict-regime camps, returned to Lithuania on March 27. There are excerpts from letters of the two recently imprisoned priests, the Revs. Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius. House-searches and interrogations are described in detail. According to the journal, the Lithuanian Commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs, Petras Anilionis, threatened Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius with deportation for his "improper meddling". Anilionis also offered to increase the quota of the students at the Theological Seminary in Kaunas if the Church hierarchy agreed that the sentenced priests, the Rev. Svarinskas and Tamkevičius, were "anti-state criminals". Vladas Lapienis, who has been in hiding, according to the latest information, addresses another statement, dated March 9, 1984, to the LSSR Procurator and the head of LSSR State Security on his right to express his ideas. The journal includes a detailed survey of discrimination against religious students.

THE 40TH AND 41ST ISSUES OF UNDERGROUND "AUŠRA"

The 40th (December 1983) and 41st (February 1984) issues of the underground journal Aušra (The Dawn) have recently reached the West. The 40th issue publishes several articles on the 50th anniversary of the transatlantic flight by Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas, whose single-engine plane crashed in East Prussia on its way from New York to Lithuania. The two fliers are compared with other Lithuanian heroic achievers, including the fighters against Soviet tyranny. Aušra informs about the communist attempts to whitewash the 1893 massacre of Lithuanian Catholics in Kražiai by the cossacks. The Soviet Communist Party and the Politbureau are compared with a degenerate character in one of E.T.A. Hoffmann's tales. The concluding segment of the long study, "Forty Years", covers the period of the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, 1941-1944.

The 41st issue of Aušra continues the discussion of the massacre of Kražiai. The writer and member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė (1906-1983) is eulogized in a special article, which also provides information on her writings. An article compares the charges against the Rev. Sigitas Tamkevičius and his subsequent sentencing with Nazi and racist justice. An article on "Clerical Elements in the Service of Hitlerites", which was published in the CP daily Tiesa, is sharply rebuked. The recent governmental strictures on the mailing of parcels and books to and from Lithuania is denounced in an article, "Increasing Limitations".

A PORTRAIT OF LATE HELSINKI GROUP MEMBER

Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė - A Profile in Courage

Additional biographic information on Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė, a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group who died last year, was published in the 41st issue of the underground Aušra (The Dawn, February, 1984). Excerpts follow:

"... In 1941, when Lithuania was assaulted by another, German, occupying power, Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė was almost seized by the Gestapo for her efforts to save certain individuals. Yet during the second Soviet occupation, this and her good deeds were disregarded. On March 16, 1946, she was arrested and sentenced to ten years....

"She passed the Gulag test in a heroic fashion, her head raised, without tears and lamentations. Siberia was not her major calamity. She experienced a much more painful blow when both her sons perished in the struggle against the second Soviet occupation... The death of her sons was probably the main reason for her sentencing.

"Absolutely alone... she carried the burden of the concentration camp and tried... to help others as much as possible, unafraid to raise her voice, in protest. She was released from the camps on October 16, 1956, and took up residence in Šiauliai, the town of her childhood... to which she dedicated her Lyrical Chronicle of the Town of Šiauliai (Šiaulių miesto lyrinė kronika).

"... She also wrote The Camp Tales (Lagerio pasakos), a cycle of stories on the childhood of her sons who perished (in battle), and put together a third collection of poems, Rasos ir ašaros (Dew and Tears)... She liked Akhmatova, Gumilev, Pavlikovskaia and translated their poems into Lithuanian...

"... In addition to her literary labors, O. Lukauskaitė-Poškienė was engaged in a very important activity, which required unusual courage and a spirit of heroic fortitude - she joined the public and open struggle against the violations of human rights in the Soviet socialist system. The cowards' dictum - "You can't blow against the wind" - was totally alien and unacceptable to her. By joining the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, she seemed to continue the campaign of her dead sons...

"Shortly before her death, the poet experienced a very significant spiritual change... She went to confession and received the Holy Communion as well as the Extreme Unction... She died on December 4, 1983... and was buried on December 6. Her funeral was very impressive... People came to it from the most distant corners of Lithuania. A solemn Mass for her soul was celebrated at the Šiauliai church. Funeral orations, sermons, hymns, as well as poems resounded at the grave..."

LITHUANIANS IN "PEN" REPORT ON IMPRISONED WRITERS

Seven Lithuanian writers and journalists are listed in the International PEN Writers in Prison Committee's report, which was discussed in the November, 1984, meeting of the writers' organization in London. They are: Gintautas IEŠMANTAS, Vytautas SKUODIS, Viktoras PETKUS (camps); Antanas TERLECKAS and Povilas PECELIUNAS (internal exile); and Algirdas STATKEVIČIUS (forced psychiatric confinement). The case of Balys GAJAUSKAS is under investigation.

The report confirms the information that has also appeared in the Lithuanian underground press about the tightening repression, interference with the mails, and heavier sentences meted out to non-conformists in the Soviet-ruled areas. Particular concern is expressed about the growing trend of sentencing sane and healthy writers to mental asylums. One of such writers, the Lithuanian Algirdas STATKEVIČIUS, has been "adopted" by the Philippines PEN Center. Viktoras PETKUS has been "adopted" earlier by the Scottish PEN Center.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS URGED TO INQUIRE ABOUT PETKUS

Holy See and Sweden Also Pledge Support

International Red Cross action in the case of Viktoras Petkus was urged by Senator Charles H. Percy (R-Il.). The Senator announced on August 30 that he had addressed the Director of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva to help Petkus, who is imprisoned in the Perm concentration camp.

Senator Percy's appeal was prompted, among others, by the recent news blackout since May 1984 on his welfare or whereabouts. There have also been appeals from Lithuania to inquire about Petkus' condition.

The International Committee on Viktoras Petkus, which is active in West Germany, received a pledge from the papal nuncio there to provide the support of the Holy See in Petkus' case. The head of the Committee, Erich Weiss, also received the following reply from the Swedish Prime Minister, Olaf Palme:

"I would like to emphasize that the human rights situation in the Baltic republics is a cause of concern for the Swedish government. Foreign minister Bodström has repeatedly stated that in the Parliament. In our encounters with Soviet representatives we also often raise the questions of individual champions of human rights, especially of those who are in some way linked with Sweden. The case of Petkus appears to be very tragic. We shall continue raising the violations of human rights in the Baltic area and elsewhere, as soon as we have resolved that such action is imperative. On such occasions we will not forget the information about Viktoras Petkus".

Petkus, a member of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, was sentenced in 1977 to three years in prison, seven in strict-regime camps, and five in internal exile. His crime consisted of the expression of his ideas, which were branded as "anti-Soviet agitation". The mock trial of Petkus was an obvious travesty of justice and the outcome was preordained by the KGB.

LITHUANIAN "PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE" IN SOVIET CAMPS

Information on Lithuanian "prisoners of conscience" in Soviet camps was published in the August 31, 1984, issue of the Munich-based USSR News Brief on human rights.

Edita Abrutienė and Jadvyga Bieliauskienė are among the twelve prisoners in the women's political camp in Barashevo, Mordovian ASSR. Bieliauskienė was one of the five women who started a strike at the beginning of 1984.

A. Andreika was one of the participants in the hunger strike on April 3, 1984, in the men's political camp in Barashevo, Mordovian ASSR (Zh Kh-385/3-5), in support of a demand for the end of a punishment cell system.

Musikevičius, a soldier who was born in Lithuania, was arrested at the end of 1983. He was charged under Article 64 of the Russian Criminal Code ("anti-Soviet agitation") and sentenced to ten years' strict regime camp. In March 1984 he arrived at camp ZhKh-385/3-5 in Barashevo, Mordovian ASSR.

SKUODIS CASE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA BETWEEN U.S. AND U.S.S.R.

"Prisoner of Conscience" Has Valid Claim to U.S. Citizenship

"We consider the Skuodis case to be one of the most important human rights cases on the agenda between the United States and the Soviet Union", U.S. acting Assistant Secretary of State Robert F. Turner stated recently. Mr. Turner was quoted in an article ("American Languishes in Soviet Prison") by Tom Bradley, which was published in the September 10 issue of The Spotlight (Washington, D.C.).

Vytautas Skuodis was arrested by the KGB on January 9, 1980, subjected to a mock-trial, and sentenced to seven years in strict-regime camps and five years of internal exile. His chief "transgression" was the writing of a well-documented study, Spiritual Genocide in Lithuania, which was confiscated by the KGB. After the search of his home in Vilnius, in 1979, Skuodis issued a worldwide appeal to religious believers to come to aid of the Lithuanian people. He also joined the Lithuanian Helsinki Group.

Born Benedict Scott in Chicago on March 21, 1929, Skuodis was taken by his parents to their native Lithuania, when it was still an independent state. The family was subsequently caught up in the horrors of World War II, including the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. Skuodis claimed his American citizenship on November 28, 1979, in an open letter to then President Jimmy Carter. He also called upon Carter for U.S. support of the Lithuanian people in their struggle for freedom.

The Spotlight quotes Turner as saying: "Unfortunately, the Soviet Union considers Mr. Skuodis to be a Soviet citizen subject to Soviet law (as interpreted by Soviet authorities) the same as any other citizen". The Soviets contend that "his claim to U.S. citizenship is immaterial, as they do not recognize dual citizenship". According to Turner, the Skuodis case was raised by the United States at Madrid Review Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1982.

"Unfortunately, the Soviets continue to regard their treatment of individuals such as Mr. Skuodis as an internal matter", Turner explained. "However, we will bear his case prominently in mind in future meetings with Soviet officials and in international forums. In addition, U.S. consular officials remain in regular contact with Mrs. Skuodis so that we may provide both of them whatever assistance we can".

According to The Spotlight, even in prison, Skuodis remains an outspoken critic of the subjugation of the Lithuanian people. In 1981, he staged a hunger strike to protest the Soviet annexation of Lithuania.

The article also links another American citizen who is imprisoned by the Soviets. It is Dr. Algirdas Statkevicius, who was born in Lithuania of American parents. Also an outspoken critic of the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Statkevicius has been held since July, 1980, at the psychiatric prison at Cherniakhovsk (former East Prussia).

(A constant champion of the Skuodis case has been Senator Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) who has contacted Soviet authorities on a number of occasions on his behalf.)

V.F.W. ASKS FOR INVESTIGATION OF O.S.I. ACTIVITIES

"Deferential" Links With KGB Denounced

The U.S. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) have condemned the persecution of naturalized American citizens on "evidence" provided by the Soviet secret police, according to a Washington-based periodical. The Spotlight has published in its October 8, 1984, issue the text of a resolution on the activities of the Office of Special Investigations (OSI), which was passed at the VFW's National Convention in Chicago on August 20. The resolution was submitted by James P. MacDonald of West Seneca, N.Y.

The resolution states that "for the most part, the U.S. press has mysteriously chosen to maintain a hands-off position as to publicizing these shameful trials" of naturalized American citizens. The OSI has "freely admitted that its chief source for denouncements of American citizens through frequent deferential consultations in Moscow is the ... KGB". The resolution calls the OSI "in effect... the willing and subservient, official American government tool of the Russian (Soviet) empire strategically placed in the offices of the U.S. Department of Justice".

The KGB, according to the resolution, was created for the "express purpose of spreading disinformation and creating havoc in other lands" and is "famed for the absence of veracity in its international adventures". That same KGB "currently furnished the OSI doctored tapes and so-called 'witnesses' and 'victims' of the Americanized refugees even though events in question occurred some 40 years ago". The resolution says that "harassment and persecution of Americanized citizens by the OSI... has been so intense that at least two former refugees have committed suicide" and others are threatening to do so rather than be deported.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars request President Reagan to initiate an "immediate and full inquiry" into the affairs of the OSI "to determine whether the civil rights of any person have been violated, and whether in all instances the full scope of due process in law has been provided to all individuals targeted by, investigated by, or tried by the federal courts, for any violation of the immigration and nationality statutes of the United States.

The resolution further asks that the United States Senate be petitioned through proper channels, "to immediately launch an open inquiry into the ... affairs of the Office of Special Investigations covering all aspects of its activities both in the United States in such a manner that the American people may be enabled to be thoroughly and completely informed about the Office of Special Investigations and thereby be able to determine whether such activities are in the best security interest of the United States, especially in these troubled times where threats exist that could break the fragile truce now prevailing between free peoples and the leaders of Red totalitarianism".

LITHUANIAN INTERNEE IN SWITZERLAND FACES DECISION

Rimas Burba was Taken Prisoner in Afghanistan

A young Lithuanian, who was taken prisoner in Afghanistan, is now interned in Switzerland. On November 22, Rimas Burba, 22, will have to decide whether he wants to return to the Soviet Union or to remain in the West. Until that day Burba will remain a ward of the International Red Cross. His status is based on the 1949 Geneva Convention.

Representatives of the International Red Cross have been visiting Burba once a month. He also receives two monthly visits by officials of the Soviet Embassy. His fate, as well as that of the other interned prisoners, is well known to the Swiss press and public. Five interned prisoners have been released so far; two of them have remained in the West, while three (all Russians, according to unconfirmed sources) have returned to the USSR.