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Editors of this issue: Thomas Remeikis

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NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS PROTEST IN LITHUANIA

From the Underground Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania

PART ONE

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Since 1971 the militant Catholic clergy and laymen in Lithuania have been publishing Lietuvos Katalikų Bažnyčios Kronika — Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania (hereafter cited as LKB Kronika). Until the Spring of 1974 nine issues of the underground publications have been received in the West. Despite the intensive efforts to suppress the publication, the Lithuanian Chronicle so far has escaped KGB discovery. It has appeared approximately quarterly in type-written form of about 30 typed pages each issue (mostly single-spaced). The Chronicle has published texts of statements by believers and clergy, protesting Soviet religious discrimination and suppression, court proceedings against the clergy and laymen for religious activities, survey of events in various parts of Lithuania, and interpretive articles on the status of the Catholic Church. In recent issues the Chronicle began to include also materials not directly related to religion. It has reported on the suppression of human rights in general and particularly on the suppression of national rights.

The following are selected items from the 6th and 7th issues of the Chronicle, which cover approximately the period from the beginning of 1973 to the end of August of 1973.

1. Reports of arrests and secret police investigations 1

Vilnius. In 1973, the following Lithuanians were under investigation by the security authorities of Vilnius:2

1. (Miss) Birutė Andrašiūnaitė, an engineer, on March 28;
2. (Miss) Marija Božytė, senior in Lithuanian studies at the Vilnius University, on March 28;
3. (Miss) Birutė Burauskaitė, an engineer, on April 2;
4. (Mr.) Kazimieras Eigminas, a graduate of Vilnius University, a specialist in Lithuanian language, on April 6;
5. (Miss) Elena Eimaitytė, a graduate in German language, on March 27;
6. (Miss) Rėda Jakučionytė, an engineer, on March 28;
7. (Mr.) Zenonas Jakučionis, a graduate of the conservatory;
8. (Miss) Veronika Janulevičiūtė, a member of the Ethnographic Ensemble of the Youth Theater, on March 28;
9. (Mrs.) Virginija Jasiukaitytė - Ašmontienė, a student in Lithuanian studies;
10. (Mr.) Alfonsas Juška, a biophysics specialist, on March 27-28;
11. (Miss) Donata Kanevičiūtė, a mathematician, on April 3;
12. (Mr.) Danas Kaukėnas, a reporter for the "Evening News," on April 4;
13. (Mr.) Kęstutis Labanauskas, a worker in the Institute for the Restoration of Monuments, on March 28;
14. (Mr.) Rimas Matulis, a graduate in the English language, on March 28;
15. (Mr.) Kazimieras Misius, an engineer, on March 28;
16. (Mr.) Egidijus Norvaišas, a graduate student in physics, on March 27;
17. (Mr.) Algimantas Petrauskas, an engineer, on March 28;
18. (Miss) Teresė Povilaitytė, a graduate in Lithuanian language, on March 28;
19. (Mr.) Alfonsas Ramonas, a specialist in physics - mathematics, on March 27;
20. (Mr.) Albinas Simokaitis, an instructor;

21. (Mr.) Edma Stankevičius, a student in journalism;
22. (Mr.) Jonas Trinkūnas, a graduate student in history - philosophy, on March 28;
23. (Miss) Zita Vanagaitė, an architect, on April 3.

The secret police interrogated these individuals about their excursions to the Urals and Siberia: Why did they associate with Lithuanian deportees, why did they visit the camps? The secret police made the accusation that during the excursions attempts allegedly were made to establish ties with the nationalistic strata of Armenians, Georgians, and other nationalities.

The interrogators reproached them for showing an interest in and calling attention to the destruction of ancient cultural monuments as well as for burning candles on castle-hills while on an outing to the Sambia region of East Prussia.

The secret police were interested in the activities of the Folk Song Club of the Trade Unions Hall in Vilnius and of the Vilnius University Student Club Romuva (which was disbanded two years ago)- Questions were asked about the Rasa festival in Kernavė and about the archeological expedition to the Šventoji river.

Those interrogated were scolded for their interest in the past and its idealization because nationalistic moods are spread thereby.

They were asked: Why are only Lithuanian songs sung? Why are partisan songs sung? Why is material about the partisan struggles being collected? In the meetings with the Latvians, why are nationalistic moods being propagated? Why are contacts with Lithuanians in Byelorussia being maintained, books sent to them, newspapers subscribed, their children encouraged to attend Lithuanian schools in Lithuania?

The secret police inquired why so many youths are attracted to ethnographic activities.

R. Matulis was ordered to sign a statement that he will not participate in and will not organize any meetings without the sanction of official organs.

Kaunas. At the end of March of 1973 the following persons were arrested in Kaunas:

1. Vidmanatas Povilonis, an engineer;
2. Antanas Bakalauskas, a lecturer in the Department of Construction of the Polytechnical Institute (Kaunas);
3. Šarūnas Žukauskas, a senior in the Institute of Medicine;
4. Rudaitis, a doctor.

Juozas Rugys was arrested in mid-April; during the search type was discovered.

Viktoras Krūminis, a fourth-year student at the Polytechnical Institute, was dismissed from the institute.

The mother of V. Povilonis addressed the secretary of the Central Committee of the Lithuanian Communist Party, requesting that her son be released. The Procuracy of the Lithuanian SSR notified her that V. Povilonis had been arrested and indicted for committing a very serious crime against the state. He had belonged to an anti-Soviet group, and in February of 1972 had distributed anti-Soviet proclamations in Kaunas.

2. Report of Soviet efforts to control illegal press⁴

At the beginning of 1973 the executive committee of a number of rayons and cities demanded that all offices, farms, and organizations, as well as religious communities, submit types of typewriters. Here is an example of the order:

Please send to the executive committee by March 22 of this year samples of type of typewriters in the possession of the office, factory, farm, organization, or private individuals that are under your direction. Two original samples must be typed on a standard sheet of paper, according to the enclosed example. In addition, please inform us of all other typewriters that are also in your possession, whose type-samples cannot be submitted because of break down, repair, or other reasons.

In sending type-samples it is necessary to indicate the number and name of the typewriter.

It is clear to everyone that type-samples of typewriters are needed for the security organs. Why is the state security concerned about typewriters?

During the past several years, the Catholics of Lithuania sent many complaints to various offices of the government. It must not be forgotten that every complaint to the offices of the Soviet government concerning the restriction of religious freedom is considered a slander and an "ideological diversion." Therefore, the organs of state security want to discover who inspires and organizes this "anti-Soviet" activity.

Furthermore, in Lithuania, religious literature, which is used by people of various professions, is reproduced with the aid of a typewriter. In this manner Soviet citizens are being "harmed"... It can be assumed that the security organs want to discover how this literature is being reproduced and especially they want to frighten everybody.

The efforts of state security officials to control even private typewriters reminds one of the period of the Stalin cult, when all typewriters had to be registered in government offices.

3. Reported sanctions against students for national gesture [5](#)

The students of Vilnius University, on a tourist trip to Dzūkija (southern Lithuania), decided to visit also the monument of Vytautas the Grand Duke of Lithuania, located in Perloja (in the rayon of Varėna). After buying flowers, nine students took off on May 13. In Perloja they placed the flowers at the monument of Vytautas, but did not sing or make speeches. They were followed here by a security official, who later called other secret policemen and the militia. They stopped the students when they were on the way home, returned them to Perloja, and began interrogation. And here are the results: three most active and already previously suspected students were dismissed from the university; they were Eugenijus Banys, Remigijus Kajeckas, and Pranas Grigas. First of all they were dismissed from the Communist Youth Organization (the Komsomol) for violations of Komsomol discipline, and Kajeckas also for having "unstable opinions" (during a search, a prayerbook was found). All three students were dismissed from the university for blatant violations of discipline. The Pro-Rector for Education Sudavičius and (University) authorities accused the students that they had placed flowers at the monuments of Vytautas without any occasion being present. According to the university authorities, this act was a masked commemoration of the Kalanta Anniversary.[6](#)

The victimized students, searching for truth and support, even addressed themselves to the Central Committee of the Lithuanian CP; here also they were rebuffed:

It is enough that you placed flowers near Vytautas — a feudal lord and a robber! This is consistent with the principled attitude and patriotism of neither the Communist Youth nor the Soviet man!

Here is how tourism in Lithuania is encouraged and propagated! Here is how the past of our nation is appreciated!

4. Government instructions for the collection of data on "Catholicism in Lithuania and Contemporary Times" [7](#)

INSTRUCTION TO SOVIET AGENCIES

(For official use)

Data on "Catholicism in Lithuania and Contemporary Times"

Methods of Research

The materials are collected for scientific purposes, having the aim of deeper understanding of the various processes of contemporary Catholicism, as well as those of other denominations. The materials are collected comprehensively: research is done on the nature and scope of sermons and other forms of pastoral work, the role of the activists in the religious community and in the activity of the servants of the cult, the material basis of religious propaganda (churches, equipment of the cult, etc.), the modernization of the cult is observed.

The Sermons

Only active and sufficiently trained atheists are selected to listen to the sermons. Without participating in religious services, but behaving in a civilized manner, the atheist listens attentively to the sermons and later reconstructs their content objectively. The report on the sermon must include the following information:

a) The place where the sermon was given (rayon, church), the time (date, hour), the name of the preacher and his address.

b) The content of the sermon is reconstructed as extensively, fully, and truthfully as possible. Under no circumstances should personal commentary be included in the content of the sermon. Personal notes, comments, conclusions may be included after the account of the sermon, under "comments."

c) The style of the sermon: was read from a syllabus, used an outline, presented without a syllabus and without an outline; the length of the sermon; the consistency of the presentation of ideas; other means of the preacher to influence the believers.

The comments should indicate the number of believers participating in the services (men, women, youths, school children). Indicate who assisted at the services (adults or children). A description should be made of the religious services, their solemnity and emotionalism (the organs, choir, orchestras, soloists, and others), the participation of the believers (singing, praying from the prayer books, response to the priest, etc.). Indicate who was responsible for the collection during the services (a clergyman or a representative of church activists).

Other Pastoral Work of the Clergyman

a) *The clergyman and the believers.* Is the clergyman active in pastoral work? If so, how does this activism manifest itself? Does he differentiate his work among separate groups of believers (men, women, youths, children)? Does he adhere to the Soviet laws on religious cults? If not, note specific instances of violations of laws. What unique qualities are manifested in the clergyman's pastoral work? What is the believers' opinion of him?

b) *The clergyman and the children.* Does the clergyman seek to increase the responsibility of religious parents for religious upbringing of children? If so, by what means? How are the children of religious parents prepared in the catechism and for confirmation?

c) *The environment and personal life of the clergyman.* The relations of the clergyman with loyal intelligentsia. The cultural life of the clergyman (television, radio, telephone, subscriptions of newspapers, books he reads, attendance of theater, concerts, etc.)

The Active Members of the Church

It is necessary to indicate the basic demographic data for the members of the church community, the executive committee, the control commission, and the members of the church choir according to: *sex* (male, female); *age* (18-25, 26-30, etc.); *education* (complete or incomplete primary, complete or incomplete secondary, complete or incomplete higher); *social status* (worker, collective farmer, white collar worker, retired, housewife); *occupation* (list the duties of the working church activists in production collectives); *the participation of the church activists in community affairs* (indicate the church activists' participating in community affairs: cultural, political, etc.).

It is also necessary to describe the relationship between the church activists and the pastor and other clergymen. Do the executive committee and the control commission of the religious community exercise their rights in accordance with the Soviet laws on religious cults, has the pastor usurped these rights? What is the role of the unorganized church activists such as highly religious women and the remaining nuns in the parish?

The Material Basis of Religious Community

a) *The house of worship.* It is necessary to describe the outward appearance of the house of worship and the environment (remodeled or not, churchyard clean or not, gardens, etc.). Describe the interior of the house of worship (painted, decorated, electricity, sound system, etc.). Are there any modernistic features in the interior of the church and in the decorations?

b) *The implements of the cult.* Church bells and their use, liturgical clothing (whether orderly, clean or worn, or dishevelled). The implements of church processions (lights, altars, banners, and other implements and their state).

The Views of Believers Toward the Modernization of the Cult

How do the believers appreciate the introduction of the native tongue into the services? How do they view the shortening of the pre-Communion fasting to one hour? What are their feelings about other liturgical innovations?

(To be continued in next issue)

¹ From LKB Kronika, 1973, No. 6.

² Evidently, those interrogated were associated with some kind of ethnographic activity. In the past several years, numerous ethnographic clubs became a focus of nationalistic activity. These clubs were interested in the past of their nation and their homeland. A crackdown on such activity as conducive to nationalism was ordered sometime in 1972 or 1973. The head of the party's Agitation and Propaganda Section, J. Kuolelis, pointed out that "in recent years not only great achievements of ethnographic enthusiasts, but also essential errors and shortcomings became evident in the work of ethnographical associations" (Komunistas, 1973, No. 3, p. 12). Party and youth organizations were directed to shift attention of such groups to the study of the Soviet period.

³ Reference here is to the nationalist partisan movements after World War II, which fought sovietization of Lithuania. For a study of the partisan movement, see V. Stanley Vardys, "The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania," Slavica Review, September, 1963, pp. 499-522.

4 From LKB Kronika, 1973, No. 6.

5 From LKB Kronika, 1973, No. 7.

6 Reference is to the self-immolation in national protest of Romas Kalanta in Kaunas on May 14, 1972. For details, see *Lituanus*, 1972, No. 4, pp. 58-69.

7 From LKB Kronika, 1973, No. 6.