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Kudirka, Simas, and Larry Eichel. **For Those Still at Sea: The Defection of a Lithuanian Sailor.** New York: The Dial Press, 1978. Hard Cover. Photographs. 226 pages. \$7.95.

After nearly a decade, the events of 23 November 1970, and their aftermath are still a source of embarrassment to the humanitarians of the world. For *Those Still at Sea* could not have come at a more opportune time, for its very title reminds us that even at this moment thousands of Asian refugees have taken to the oceans in search of asylum in the democracies of the world. Yes, the wrongs that were perpetrated upon the Lithuanian sailor Simas Kudirka have been rectified to some degree. But the central questions implicit in Kudirka's and Eichel's book are: "— What about the thousands, perhaps millions, of other wrongs that are still crying out to be atoned for? And what is our individual responsibility in seeing that 'those still at sea' are brought to a safe haven?" The compelling account of Kudirka's struggle for freedom is more than an adventure story; more than a tale of political maneuvering; more than just another expose of bureaucratic blundering. Kudirka and Eichel succeed at rekindling the shame that every freedom-loving American must have felt on that infamous day of nine years ago. They succeed at arousing the reader's social conscience, which might have lain dormant for some time.

This book is not just another example of reportorial writing. The authors keep the reader enthralled by small literary surprises, such as shifts in style and point of view. For example, passages based on Eichel's cognition of the Kudirka affair have a decidedly journalistic flavor. He includes a wealth of hard-hitting facts based on solid research; and his sections of dialogue are purportedly taken directly from transcripts of Coast Guard radio communications, written documents, and the recollections of eye-witnesses. Eichel's descriptions of Russian prison life are, of course, a compilation of Kudirka's own reminiscences. Eichel, not having been in any way personally involved in the Kudirka episode, narrates the events from the third-person point of view. When Kudirka speaks for himself, there is naturally a shift to the first-person narrator. A refreshing deviation from the journalistic style is evident here in that the authors have decided to preserve Kudirka's recollections in his own, informal, non-literary diction. As a result of the juxtaposition of two literary styles, there is established a startling contrast between the cold, computer-like, often obscure bureaucratic dialogue of officialdom (both American and Russian) and the honest, sensitive, but at times pitifully naive voice of Kudirka. As a result, one is left with the impression that bureaucracy is the villain in the story. The individual Coast Guard officers who made the fateful mistake of returning Simas to his ship are no more to blame than the Lithuanian KGB agent who took delight in sending the prisoner to solitary confinement. These individuals were only at the mercy of their bureaucracies, mainly because they allowed themselves to be manipulated by the system.

The story of Kudirka's ordeal begins on that fateful day in 1970 when the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Vigilant* was moored alongside a Soviet factory fishing ship. The occasion was a conference between irate Massachusetts fishermen and their Russian counterparts. For *Those Still at Sea* catalogues the unsavory events of that day: Simas' jump onto the *Vigilant's* deck; Commander Eustis' dilemma over what to do with the defector after being given "contradictory sets of orders" (p. 27); Captain Fletcher Brown's and Rear Admiral Ellis' negligent handling of the affair; and finally the Russians' violent, indeed bloody, removal of Simas from the American ship. To the chagrin of the U.S. government, including President Nixon, the Coast Guard almost succeeded in having the Kudirka case "swept under the rug" (p. 57). As a matter of fact, the entire event might have gone unnoticed, had it not been for the indignation of one Robert Brieze, a civilian who was aboard the *Vigilant* for the fishing conference. Brieze, a Latvian-American and himself a one-time defector, alerted the Lithuanian-American community of the outrage and co-operated in their subsequent protests. After the *New York Times* printed an account of the Coast Guard's inept handling of the matter, protests rang out vociferously from private citizens, from philanthropic organizations, and from official sources, such as the United Nations, the U.S. Congress and Senate, and the President. The depth of America's outrage is perhaps most vividly exemplified by William F. Buckley's suggestion that those responsible for the fiasco be forced to swim to a Russian ship and beg for asylum in the U.S.S.R. While the Coast Guard officers were swiftly reprimanded and forced to retire, this act did nothing to alleviate Simas' misery.

The book chronicles the next four years of Kudirka's life as he is interrogated, exiled and imprisoned, shuttled about from one institution to another, and degraded in the most grizzly surround- programs. One can only imagine the secret joy of Lithuanian Catholics on the occasion of the Pontiff's pilgrimage. Mieczyslaw Malinski's Sensitive biography, Pope *John Paul II: The Life of Karol Wojtyla*, portrays its subject as the personification of the spirit of religious freedom. The new

Pope's life story — with its personal sorrows and triumphs, with its political subjection to massive bureaucracies and its many victories over both the Nazi and Communist Machines — exemplifies the indomitable will of the Baltic and Slavic peoples to preserve individual liberties.

Close to the heart of Karol Wojtyła are the Lithuanian people, as Malinski suggests throughout his book. Mention is made of the Lithuanian Chapel in the Papal tombs, the site of a shrine to Our Lady of Aušros Vartai (Polish: Ostra Brama) in Vilnius; the tomb of Queen Jadwiga, whose marriage in 1386 led to the beginning of the union of Poland and Lithuania; and most significantly, the Pope's Inaugural speech, in which he greeted Lithuanian and other Soviet-dominated ethnic groups in their native tongues.

Malinski's story of Karol Wojtyła's life is a first-person account based on a long-lasting personal and professional relationship between the two men. The author's style is simple, spare, matter-of-fact, and thoroughly readable; indeed, the style of the book itself is almost a metaphorical representation of Wojtyła's life — a life devoid of pride, grandiosity, or attention-seeking. The reader cannot help but feel that the Pope himself would approve Malinski's lack of both sensationalism and maudlin sentimentality. In regard to the structure, Malinski ingeniously develops two parallel plots until they converge in the present. Alternate chapters are devoted to two different phases in the Pope's life — namely, (1) his and the narrator's young adulthood in wartime Poland and their subsequent religious training in Cracow and (2) the days immediately following Wojtyła's Inauguration as Pope John Paul II. Malinski executes smooth transitions between alternate chapters. Throughout, the author writes authoritatively about his subject because he concentrates on only those aspects of Wojtyła's life with which he has personal familiarity. As a result, one is left with the impression of having read an affectionate and truthful portrayal of the great man. Because this book covers only the period dating from the author's and Wojtyła's first meeting, which took place during their late teens, Malinski has no pretensions of having written the definitive biography of the Pope.

Malinski does, however, relate those incidents in Karol Wojtyła's life that reflect certain outstanding character traits: his sense of humor; compassion; academic excellence; tenacity; simplicity; courage; athletic prowess; unselfishness; and, above all, his religious devotion. The strength of Wojtyła's convictions is fully and imaginably. It is a tribute to the tenacity of the subjugated minorities of the U.S.S.R. and a slap in the face of the Soviet penal system that Kudirka's sense of dignity did not wither in prison but flourished more than ever. The formerly meek radio operator became an inflammatory political dissident, under the tutelage of the Soviet *literati* with whom he was imprisoned. Protest became a way of life for Simas and the others, regardless of ever harsher punishments; of the loss of family visitation privileges; and of the impending breakup of Simas' marriage.

Even after his release (brought about by the Lithuanian-Americans' success in having his claim to U.S. citizenship recognized), Simas remained cognizant of his mission to tell the free world of horrors endured by Soviet dissidents. In spite of his wife, Gene's, pleas to keep out of trouble for the sake of their marriage, Simas remembered his commitment to the men he left behind. He told Gene: "I can't promise you I'll be quiet. I have seen too much. I have spent the last four years in the best classroom in the world, and I must carry forth what I have learned. It is my duty" (pp. 211-12). *For Those Still at Sea* is partial fulfillment of that commitment. The book is a reminder that there are countless other Simas Kudirkas still out there — in Siberia, the jungles of Viet Nam, Cambodia, Cuba, Iran, or wherever basic human rights are methodically repressed. The book is an urgent appeal to the rest of us to shoulder our responsibility for all the prisoners still to be freed. And perhaps the book is even a warning that we as individuals might easily become victims of repressive bureaucracies if we do not speak out against infringements upon the human freedoms that we cherish.

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