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RELIGIOUS INCIDENT STATISTICS FOR SOVIET LITHUANIAN SCHOOLS

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Incidents involving Roman Catholicism clearly do occur in Soviet Lithuanian schools. Whether one wants to consider them persecution or harassment or legitimate suppression of unruly behavior (or a mixture of all three) depends on different definitions of what constitutes harassment and what represents acceptable social behavior on the part of schoolchildren. On the factual level underground publications have presented a wealth of detailed descriptions which in general have not been challenged by Soviet authorities. It is obviously difficult for any authorities to refute directly claims by sources the existence of which they do not want to recognize, but they could do it indirectly in cases where the underground descriptions contain gross errors. The very extent of descriptive detail given by the underground sources also argues against pure invention or magnification of vague rumors. Given their emotional involvement in the incidents, neither official Soviet nor underground publications are to be expected to represent neutral information sources. In order to elucidate what is actually taking place, one can systematically analyze the information available. A statistical analysis may help to bring out patterns not evident in case-to-case reporting, and it may also help to detect systematic bias on the part of the sources because a set of plausible accounts may lead to implausible overall patterns.

The objective of this study is to analyze a major body of information available on the subject: the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.¹ This is the oldest Lithuanian underground periodical, published since March 1972 and reaching its 61st issue in early 1984. It has thus averaged five issues per year. As the *Chronicle* issues reach the West, they are translated from Lithuanian into several languages. An English translation is published by the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League of America.² Most issues include a separate section entitled "In the Soviet

School," which is largely concerned with incidents of alleged harassment of Catholic children in Soviet Lithuanian primary and secondary schools. The report of an incident may range in length from a few sentences to several pages, and it most often reveals the names and grades (or positions) of both the children and the authority figures involved as well as dates and locations. Sometimes the description takes the form of a petition or letter to the authorities reproduced in the *Chronicle*. Our study covered the "In the Soviet School" section whenever it occurred, from Nos. 10 to 56, which include approximately nine years (from early 1974 to February 1983). Reports were analyzed according to types of action (e.g., threats, interrogations, scoldings, low grades), perpetrators (e.g., teachers, security agents, other children), and recipients (e.g., by grade and sex).

In its narrowest sense the study represents only a content analysis of the English translation of the *Chronicle* section on schools. Translation may have introduced subtle changes in terminology. Beyond that, the *Chronicle* may have some bias, taking the form of exaggeration or omission of relevant details. The journal itself depends on local sources for information such as parents and other adult church members who themselves do not observe the classrooms but obtain information from children. Like adults, children tend to distort their personal experiences. In short, the information analyzed has been passed on through several intermediary stages, each applying an intentional or unintentional filter or magnification device. Careful statistical analysis may help detect suspiciously underreported or overreported features. On the other hand, absence of such imbalance would reflect favorably on the credibility of the data.

The broader context of the incidents should also be kept in mind. The previously independent Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.³ The religious situation in Lithuania may be viewed in terms of a political authority confronting a religion that it (for right or wrong reasons) considers harmful. Instead of this asymmetrical view (which many pro-Catholic and pro-Soviet people have in common), one could view the situation as a competition between two religions or ideologies, both convinced of being the guardians of Truth. Even this more symmetrical view cannot, of course, overlook the asymmetry in present physical power between the two contestants. The respective degrees of intolerance toward other ideologies could be weighed by comparing the present attitudes and practices of Soviet authorities to those of Catholic authorities in countries where Catholicism is or was a state-supported religion. Last but not least the issue of obvious outside involvement in the religious struggle within Lithuania cannot be forgotten.

The freedom of religion granted by the Soviet Constitution is construed by the regime in the narrowest possible way, and one of the restrictions is that freedom to practice a non-Marxist religion is considered an adult right, something akin to smoking and drinking. Although citizenship is symbolically reached with obtention of the internal passport at the age of 16, full adult rights are granted only at the age of 18. Accordingly, the

Statute on Religious Associations of the Lithuanian SSR (adopted in July 1976) specifies that "A religious society is a local association of believing citizens (who are) eighteen years of age or over," and that "Religious associations have no right to organize and conduct special children's and youth meetings."⁴ While in general the parents exert various rights on behalf of the minors,⁵ this does not apply to religious matters outside the walls of the home.

Given these official views, the severity of penalties meted out to Catholic children in Lithuanian schools should be considered in the context of the general rigid and harsh school discipline in the Soviet Union compared to that in North America. One may wonder how the punishments for non-Marxist religious practice compare with those for smoking and drinking. Unfortunately, we have no sufficient information on the latter.

From the viewpoint of a struggle (however uneven) between two religions or ideologies, one has to wonder to what extent the children involved in the incidents are independent actors with firmly developed views and to what extent they are pawns in a power struggle between conflicting value systems at home and at the state school. Within the school the Soviet authorities are the only ones in a position to interrogate, threaten, and impose penalties. The *Chronicle* is obviously not the place to learn about possible counter-penalties applied at home to children who accept or yield to atheist views taught at school. For that, one would have to go to Soviet publications. Based on one author's familiarity with the press in Estonia, it would seem that the number of Soviet reports on religious pressures in the home is so low that no systematic analysis could be carried out. Furthermore, compared to the Lithuanian *Chronicle*, official Soviet reports tend to be drastically short on factual information (who? what? when? where?).

Types of Action

Incidents in the regular schools (grades 1 to 11) reported in the *Chronicle*, issues No. 10 to 56, were systematically categorized according to their type (rather than severity, the evaluation of which could be subjective). The rare reports on incidents in vocational schools were excluded. Five broad divisions of action were distinguished (plus a residual "Other" division); these were in turn broken up into eighteen more detailed categories. In the following description the more frequently occurring divisions are presented first, and the same applies to categories within each division (for which a typical example is often given).

(1) *VITUPERATION*—verbal assault by teachers or other authority figures, with no response demanded. *THREAT*: the student is warned that something will happen if s/he does not conform. (The teacher "threatened the girl with a trip to the home of polar bears" or "stated that all believers would be transferred to the retarded children's boarding school in Skaudvilė."⁶) *SCOLDING*: verbal reprimand or accusation regarding a behavior which is directly or indirectly Catholic. (In front of the entire class, Principal Liskauskas told a student who had participated in a pilgrimage:

“You have vomited on the school and I will have to lick it off.”) **INSULT**: a personal attack, often with intent to embarrass the child in front of others. (“You little churchmouse!”) **RIDICULING OF FAITH**: an attack on Catholicism or priests without personal insult to the student. (“All priests are agents of bourgeois capitalism.”)

(2) **PASSIVE RESPONSE DEMAND**—verbal assault with relatively short or passive response demanded. **INTERROGATION**: repeated and persistent verbal or written inquiry (or questionnaire), e.g., a barrage of questions about the student’s church activities. **INQUIRY**: a single question or statement linking the student to some Catholic behavior. (“All believers please raise your hands.”) **DEMAND**: the pupil is told to do or desist from doing something, with indirect anti-Catholic implications; compliance may or may not follow. (A student is enrolled in the Young Pioneers without her/his consent.) **PRESSURE**: repeated attempts to achieve compliance but (in contrast to “Demands”) without direct orders. (A Catholic student is repeatedly badgered about the benefits of Young Pioneers membership.)

(3) **ADMINISTRATIVE PUNISHMENT. LOW GRADE**: “behavior” (conduct, citizenship) grade is lowered because of behavior with Catholic implications. At times a subject grade is affected instead. It should be emphasized that lowering the conduct grade is a very serious penalty with potential lifelong consequences for a Soviet citizen. Entrance to college is highly likely to be blocked, and seeking employment also becomes more difficult. **PENALTY**: a sanction for non-compliance in religious matters, excluding low grade, detention, suspension, and physical punishment. (A student is forced to write an apologetic composition.) **DETENTION**: the pupil is forced to remain after class or school, or to report to the school authority’s office. **SUSPENSION**: temporary banning from class or school. Permanent expulsion was very rare.

(4) **DISHONEST DEMAND**—demand involving insincerity on the part of harasser or target. **FORCED ATHEISM**: a demand with direct anti-Catholic implications. (Assignment to compose an atheist poem.) **BETRAYAL DEMAND**: an attempt (successful or not) to make the student act in a way harmful to another believer. (“I want the names of those who were at church.”) **BRIBE OFFER**: a bonus offer (sincere or not) in exchange for some behavior, regardless of whether the subject accepts the deal. (“I’ll give you an A in music if you sing a religious hymn”—so that fun can be made of it.) **DECEPTION**: untruths expressed in order to achieve or deter certain behavior. (“You get diseases from holy water.” “Your mother said it would be okay to join the Young Pioneers.”)

(5) **PHYSICAL ACTION. SEARCH**: an attempt (successful or not) to find some religious item (crucifix, rosary) among the student’s possessions, regardless of whether an object, if found, is confiscated or not. **PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT**: hitting, pulling the ears, making the student stand long periods with arms raised, etc.

(6) **OTHER**—all activities which do not fit the preceding eighteen

categories, such as peer pressure, parental consultation, demands of insubordination to parents, and reporting to the authorities.

It can be seen that the broad divisions were made on the basis of the extent of action brought to bear on the student or required on the part of the student. This is *not* a grouping by severity of action as perceived by the students because some children might prefer a beating to being subjected to vague but harrowing threats or to bearing the guilt of having kept quiet when their faith was ridiculed. The reader may wish to regroup the categories in a different way.

The frequency of occurrence of the various categories is shown in Table 1, and that of the broad divisions is shown in Table 2. The total number

Table 1
Frequency of Detailed Categories of Action Against Catholic Children
Reported in Soviet Lithuanian Schools (1974-1983)

	TOTAL COMPONENTS		TARGETS				PERPETRATORS			
	N	%	Individual		Class		Individual		Team	
			N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
VITUPERATION										
Threat	161	15.9	140	16.5	21	13.0	146	16.1	15	14.2
Scolding	92	9.1	84	9.9	8	4.9	80	8.8	12	11.3
Insult	88	8.7	75	8.8	13	8.0	80	8.8	8	7.5
Ridiculing of Faith	44	4.3	28	3.3	16	9.9	41	4.5	3	2.8
PASSIVE RESPONSE DEMAND										
Interrogation	151	14.9	117	13.8	34	21.0	120	13.2	31	29.2
Inquiry	44	4.3	23	2.7	21	13.0	39	4.3	5	4.7
Demand	34	3.4	25	2.9	9	5.6	29	3.2	5	4.7
Pressure	15	1.5	14	1.6	1	0.6	15	1.7	0	0
ADMINISTRATIVE PUNISHMENT										
Low Grade	90	8.9	90	10.6	0	0	90	9.9	0	0
Penalty	33	3.2	30	3.5	3	1.9	26	2.9	7	6.6
Detention	28	2.8	28	3.3	0	0	26	2.9	2	1.9
Suspension	22	2.2	22	2.6	0	0	19	2.1	3	2.8
DISHONEST DEMAND										
Forced Atheism	52	5.1	33	3.9	19	11.7	49	5.4	3	2.8
Betrayal Demand	34	3.4	33	3.9	1	0.6	31	3.4	3	2.8
Bribe Offer	20	2.0	18	2.1	2	1.2	15	1.7	5	4.7
Deception	18	1.8	16	1.9	2	1.2	17	1.9	1	0.9
PHYSICAL ACTION										
Search	24	2.4	24	2.8	0	0	23	2.3	1	0.9
Physical Punishment	11	1.1	11	1.3	0	0	11	1.2	0	0
OTHER										
	51	5.0	39	4.6	12	7.4	49	5.4	2	1.9
TOTAL	1012	100.0	850	100.0	162	100.0	906	99.9	106	99.7

Table 2
Frequency of Broad Types of Actions Against Catholic Children
Reported in Soviet Lithuanian Schools (1974-1983)

	TOTAL		TARGETS				PERPETRATORS			
	COMPONENTS		Individual		Class		Individual		Team	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
VITUPERATION	385	38.0	327	38.5	58	35.8	347	38.3	38	35.8
PASSIVE RESPONSE DEMAND	244	24.1	179	21.0	65	40.1	203	22.4	41	38.7
ADMINISTRATIVE PUNISHMENT	173	17.1	170	20.0	3	1.9	161	17.8	12	11.3
DISHONEST DEMAND	124	12.3	100	11.8	24	14.8	112	12.4	12	11.3
PHYSICAL ACTION	35	3.5	35	4.1	0	0	34	3.8	1	0.9
OTHER	51	5.0	39	4.6	12	7.4	49	5.4	2	1.9
TOTAL	1012	100.0	850	100.0	162	100.0	906	100.1	106	99.9

of separate incidents analyzed was 408. If the same incident was described in several issues of the *Chronicle*, only the most detailed description was used. If the description of a single incident included features belonging to several of the categories described above, all these categories were credited. For instance, both the Insult and Threat components would be checked off in the following case: "Student A was insulted and then threatened for going to church." Thus, the total number of components (1012) recorded in Table 1 is larger than the total number of incidents (408). Table 2 shows the cumulative number of components for the broad divisions. The example above would contribute two components to the Vituperation count: one Insult and one Threat.

The reports on incidents which took place outside the school grounds were excluded. If the location shifted during the incident, only the components taking place inside the school were counted. An example follows:

On May 28, 1981, a security agent visiting Middle School No. 1 in Garliava interrogated ninth-graders Mindaugas Babonas and Antanas Sutkaitis. After two hours of interrogation, he took the students to the Kaunas Security Police and detained them there for two and a half hours. The students were threatened with detention in the cellar, internment in a colony, etc.⁸

Here only Interrogation was entered, without Detention or Threat. This restriction does exclude some of the severest actions. However, such cases were few, and one had to draw a line somewhere, using a non-subjective operational criterion.

Incidents involving whole classrooms (or larger units such as students present at school assemblies) were recorded separately from those involving smaller groups or single students. When the *Chronicle* mentions the names of several students, it is at times unclear whether they were harass-

ed separately or together. In such cases (which were rare and never included more than fifteen names) each student was counted as a separate incident for the given category and grade level. Thus, in the example above the Interrogation category was credited twice for the ninth grade. If a group was mentioned without the number of students or names listed the relevant category was only credited once.

Statements given in present tense were disregarded because they tend to be vague. Consider the following passage, where verbal forms have been italicized.

Švekšna Middle School teacher Sigitas Urmolevičius *gives* believer students atheist books, *orders* them to study and talk on atheist subjects. On February 9, 1977, he *summoned* two students, 7a-grade student Jučys and 9-grade student Lamsargis, to the teachers' room and *struck* them for not answering atheist questions.⁹

Here the frequency and dates of book giving and orders are missing. Only Detention and Physical Punishment categories would each be credited, and twice—once for each student.

The few incidents where religious motivation was not explicitly stated (e.g., for refusal to join the Young Pioneers) were discarded. The following two excerpts are illustrative.

In February 1981 homeroom teacher Kadienė pressured student Arvydas Liepa (9th grade) to enroll in the Communist Youth League. He kept resisting. The teacher then ordered him to write an atheist composition and gave him atheist literature to read. The boy kept the books forced on him, but did not write the composition.¹⁰

The students of the Grade VIIId of the High School No. 41 in Vilnius decided to commemorate the 16th of February (Lithuanian Independence Day—Translator's note). It was suggested that the students come to school that day wearing traditional Lithuanian ties instead of the pioneer neckties. Some of the students wrote slogans such as "Freedom for Lithuania!" on the houses. . . . Students Vytautas Jusevičius and Albinas Prakelis were interrogated by the principal himself, in the presence of all the teachers. The conduct mark of the more active students was lowered. . . .¹¹

The first excerpt (of a longer incident) was entered under Pressure and Forced Atheism, although the student was not harassed directly for his religious practices but for refusal to conform to the wishes of authorities regarding extra-curricular activities; the religious motivation for refusal was clear, given that the teacher reacted by pushing the atheist religion. The second passage was discarded from analysis for lack of expression of religious motivation, even though patriotic ("nationalist") and Catholic feelings in Lithuania often coincide.

Most Common Forms of Action

As seen in the first two columns of Table 1, nearly a third of the total of 1012 components consisted of Threats and Interrogations. Scoldings, Insults, Low Grades, and Forced Atheism cases represented another third, leaving the remaining third for all other categories combined. As one might

expect, actions going beyond the verbal stage are relatively rare. In particular, this applies to Physical Punishment, Searches, and Detentions. Regarding long-term penalties, the frequencies also are in the expected order, with many more Low Grades than Suspensions (which probably entail a lowered conduct grade). While they do not tell us anything new about usual harassment gradients, these findings increase the credibility of the *Chronicle*: invented or heavily selected incidents could easily lead to odd frequency profiles (unless one visualizes the *Chronicle* editors continuously performing an analysis of the type presented here).

The third and fourth columns in Table 1 show the frequencies for individual targets and classrooms separately. Frequencies for individual targets are very close to those for the total, something to be expected since they represent more than 80% of all cases. Actions targeting a whole class (as compared to individual students) are relatively high on Interrogations, Inquiries, Ridiculing of Faith, and (maybe less expectedly) on Forced Atheism. They are low not only on Low Grades (an eminently individual penalty) but also on Scolding (compared to scolding of individual students). Differences in other categories involve too small numbers to be statistically meaningful. The last two columns in Table 1 show the differences between individual harassers (which represent 90% of all cases and therefore determine the general pattern) and teams of two or more harassers. Compared to individual harassers, teams are involved relatively heavily in Interrogations (and they most often target individual students, according to more detailed data not shown here). They do not deal in low grades but are relatively active in other non-physical penalties. The absence of physical punishment by team harassers is in line with the low total number of physical acts. Here one should remember that the analysis is limited to actions taking place on school grounds, omitting the occasional follow-ups in the cellars of the security police buildings. Marxist-Leninist regimes rarely indulge in wanton public displays of violence.

The frequency of occurrence of the broad divisions of action is shown in Table 2. Once more, the overall frequency profile is credible. Collective (class) targets are expectedly low on Administrative Punishment and Physical Action but somewhat surprisingly high on Passive Response Demands (as compared to sheer Vituperation). One possible reason is that fulmination against Catholicism is so widespread in the classroom that students ignore and underreport it unless it becomes personal or makes specific demands. The pattern is rather similar when more than one harasser is involved, instead of more than one or a few targets: Passive Response Demands are high compared to Vituperation. One might presume that the presence of more than one authority figure indicates that they consider the case too serious for mere invective and threats, and some response on the part of the target tends to be demanded.

The Perpetrators

The first part of the discussion will consider actions by individual

authority figures, leaving actions by teams of two or more people for later. These individual acts were preponderantly carried out by teachers, as shown in Table 3. Homeroom teachers have been tabulated separately from others, although it is not certain whether the *Chronicle* is consistent in identifying homeroom teachers as such in all cases. The homeroom and other teachers combined account for 55% of incidents involving individual students and 73% of those involving classrooms or larger collectives. More detailed data (not shown in the table) suggest that teachers are relatively overrepresented in cases involving Forced Atheism (especially homeroom teachers) and ridiculing Catholicism.

Table 3
Types of Perpetrators of Actions Against Catholic Children
Reported in Soviet Lithuanian Schools (1974-1983)

	NUMBER OF COMPONENTS (and percent of the total)		Individual Perpetrator Acting Against Individual Class		Team of Perpetrators Acting Against Individual Class	
Homeroom Teachers	172	(15.4%)	120	42	10	0
Teachers Unspecified	440	(39.3%)	296	66	66	12
Principals and Aids	313	(27.9%)	212	21	74	6
Security Agents	60	(5.4%)	40	4	16	0
Komsomol Leaders	23	(2.1%)	13	2	7	1
Peers	3	(0.3%)	1	0	2	0
Other	109	(9.7%)	76	13	18	2
TOTAL	1120	(100.1%)	758	148	193	21

Note: The total number of components exceeds that in Tables 1 and 2 because some actions are carried out by several team members and are thus counted several times.

The "Principals and Aids" include vice-principals and assistant vice-principals. They are involved in 26% of the cases dealing with individual students but only 14% of the cases involving entire classrooms, as one might expect with officials who do not do much classroom teaching. Principals tend to figure heavily in Administrative Punishment (32 out of a total of 90 Low Grades, 11 out of the 19 Suspensions, and 13 out of the 26 other Penalties).

Many teachers are also Communist Youth League leaders, but the *Chronicle* may have identified as such mostly non-teachers, many of them older students. Their involvement in religious incidents is very low. As for peer pressure on Catholic students, only one case was reported. One may

wonder whether this is so because the *Chronicle* is reluctant to report situations where the population seems to support the Soviet authorities while the Catholics appear to be a minority. However, if peer harassment were extensive, one would also expect more activity on the part of Communist youth leaders, and the *Chronicle* might be expected to report it. Given the low reported level of Communist youth leader activity, one may presume that the low peer pressure against Catholics is not a reporting artifact.

Security agents called in from outside the school represent the most serious level of action against students that still takes place within the school boundaries. A low incidence of such cases can be expected and is in fact observed: 5% of all cases involving individual students, and less for collective cases. We are still talking of non-team actions, and it is surprising that even as many as four cases occurred where the security agent faced a classroom alone, i.e., with the teacher either not present or not involved. Security agents are rather low in such staple items as Threats and Scoldings, concentrating on individual Interrogation (17 out of the total of 90 Interrogation cases) and especially on Betrayal Demands (14 out of 30). Team harassment involved two authority figures in 69 cases and three or more in 37 cases. Almost as many principals as teachers were involved. Security agents were involved in sixteen of the two-person teams but in none of the larger ones. The number of cases is too small to draw any further conclusions.

Table 4
Grade Level Distribution for Action Components of Religious Incidents
Reported in Soviet Lithuanian Schools (1974-1983)

	GRADES											Unknown	Total	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
PERPETRATORS														
Homeroom Teachers	0	2	6	10	24	18	24	22	24	16	0			146
Teachers Unspecified	5	27	27	18	20	52	48	42	25	4	2			270
Principals and Aids	0	0	3	11	31	27	19	26	33	33	54			237
Security Agents	0	0	0	0	1	1	6	2	7	18	12			47
Komsomol Leaders	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	0			7
Peers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0			1
Other	0	0	0	1	10	6	10	6	6	7	10			56
Totals	5	29	36	40	86	105	110	101	96	78	78			764
TARGETS														
Female	4	2	23	20	29	46	40	49	51	36	48	109		457
Male	0	3	7	11	33	30	34	27	29	34	14	77		299
Total	4	5	30	31	62	76	74	76	80	70	62	186		756
% Female	100	40	77	65	47	61	54	64	64	51	77	59		60.4

Table 4 shows the distribution of perpetrators (individual and team harassers combined) by grade level. Individual action predominates at all grade levels, and teams rarely are used below grade 5. The teachers' share decreases from 100% in grades 1-2 to around two thirds in grades 5-8 and then plunges to reach 3% in grade 11. Principals rarely intervene below the fifth grade level, and security agents rarely appear below the seventh grade; at higher grade levels their share progressively increases, especially in teams.

It should be kept in mind that the figures given in Tables 3 and 4 are not the numbers of perpetrators but of action components. Thus, the increasing numbers in upper grades may reflect both an increase in the number of incidents and in the number of action components per incident; the two were not recorded separately.

The Targets

The sex and grade level distribution of students harassed is also shown in Table 4. Sex was judged from the name forms, assuming that -s is a male and -è a female ending. The few other endings (such as -a) always came in conjunction with a first name or surname which did end in -s or -è. Among the harassment targets females exceed the males by a 60-40 ratio, and the female excess occurs at nearly every grade level. Once more, the figures shown refer to action components rather than the number of students involved (which is somewhat smaller). Either more female students were harassed, or the same number received more complex treatment (with more action components); the first assumption seems more probable. However, the imbalance cannot be explained by the overall sex ratio, except possibly in the upper grades.

We could not locate sex ratios for Lithuanian schools, but it can be assumed that the pattern is similar to the one observed in Estonia. For grades 1 to 8, boys represented 50.6 to 51.0% of all Estonian day school students throughout the period of 1970-1981.¹² Very few students of that age attended evening or second-shift schools, and the slight male birth excess is a common worldwide phenomenon. It is highly likely to occur in Lithuania, too. Yet boys accounted for only 40.5% of the 358 components involved in the religious incidents reported for grades 1-8. The likelihood of this happening by random chance is below 0.1% (chi-square = 12.9; $p < .001$). A possible explanation will be given in the next section.

Reported harassment is quite low in the two first grades and then rises steadily until a stable level is reached in the sixth grade. While most schools include all 11 grades during the period in question, some included only grades 1-3 or 1-8 or 9-11. The harassment curve shows no changes that could be attributed to students shifting from one school to another. The few cases reported for grade 1 carried surprisingly severe penalties: two physical punishments and two suspensions. Grade 3 showed the highest level of Dishonest Demands (five Bribe Offers and ten cases of Forced Atheism), but it may be random fluctuation. By the fifth grade the general pattern

is established. In the last two grades (grades 10 and 11) the number of incidents reported decreases; the decrease in grade 10 could be random fluctuation, but the decrease regarding the males in grade 11 looks significant. Before trying other explanations for this decrease, we will consider the total enrollments in various grades.

The only period for which we located student population data was 1970-1975. During that period day school enrollment in grades 1-3 decreased from 61,960 per grade in fall 1970 to 54,290 in fall 1975. In grades 4-8 enrollment per grade increased from 57,900 in 1970 to a peak of 61,450 in 1972 and then decreased to 58,290 in 1975.¹³ This pattern corresponds well to a peak in births in 1958-62, with an average of 61,800 per year.¹⁴ The night or second shift school enrollment did not affect this pattern significantly; no breakdown for grades 1-3 and 4-8 separately was available, but the average enrollment per grade was only 1,540 in 1970 and dropped to 670 by 1975. In contrast to these rather moderate enrollment changes in grades 1-8, the enrollment in grades 9-11 rose from 27,570 per grade in fall 1970 to 57,300 per grade in fall 1975, for day and night schools combined.¹⁵ This means that around 1970 less than one half of the 15- to 17-year-olds continued to go to school while by 1975 almost all of them did, according to the official statistics. During the period covered by our harassment study (1974-1983) the average enrollment in grades 9-11 would be only slightly less than in lower grades and thus could hardly explain the decrease in incidents reported. However, it should be noted that the figures refer to the beginning of the school year. Dropping out during the school year is possible, and is most likely for males in grade 11. The Soviet source used gives only the total enrollment for classes 9 to 11 without breakdowns for each grade separately. Assuming that the dropout rate among professing Catholics is similar to that of the total population (or slightly higher because of harassment), the decrease in incidents involving males in grade 11 might be explained by decreasing enrollment without having to look for further reasons.

The Gender Factor

It was observed earlier that about 60% of harassment involved girls, although they are not likely to form more than 50% of the student body. It may well be that teachers tend to pick more on students of their own sex—and most teachers in Lithuania are female. This hypothesis is indeed given some credence by the following analysis. We recorded all incidents where the perpetrator's and the target's sex could be determined from their names or other terms used (such as pronouns he/she). In the case of several perpetrators or targets, each interaction was counted separately. In the case of vague plurals ("Teacher N. N. scolded several girls"), two interactions were recorded. The results for incidents involving teachers are shown in Table 5. In the case of female teachers only 38% of targets reported are boys, while in the case of male teachers 61% are boys. An average of 41% boys emerges, given the preponderance of female teachers. In more formal

terms, the given row and column totals in Table 5 make one expect only 126 female-female and 16 male-male interactions, on the basis of statistical probability; the actual number is higher by 8 cases. Correspondingly, there are fewer than expected mixed interactions. The difference is statistically significant on the 1% level; i.e., there is less than 1% probability that the deviations from expected values could be due to random chance. However, the outcome of analysis would be similar if male teachers were neutral between tackling girls and boys: the high proportion of females among teachers distorts the overall picture. A separate chi-square significance test for male teachers separately yields $p > .10$, which means that there is a better than 10% probability that the male teachers' tendency to tackle more boys than girls is due to random chance, given the small number of cases. Our conclusion regarding teachers is that female-girl incidents are significantly more frequent than female-boy incidents, while male-boy incidents just might be more frequent than male-girl incidents. The tendency could be interpreted in two ways: either teachers take on preferentially children of their own sex, or students tend to report attacks more frequently when the teacher is of their own sex. We feel the first interpretation is more likely.

Table 5
Sex of Teachers and Students in Religious Confrontations
Reported in Soviet Lithuanian Schools (1974-1983)

		STUDENTS			% Male Among Students
		FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	
TEACHERS (including homeroom teachers)	FEMALE	134 (126.1)	81 (88.9)	215	37.7
	MALE	15 (22.9)	24 (16.1)	39	61.5
	TOTAL	149	105	254	41.3

Figures in parentheses are expected values based on given marginal totals; e.g., $(215/254) (149/254)254 = 126.1$

Chi-square = 7.8; $p < .01$

For female teachers separately: chi-square = 13.1; $p < .001$

For male teachers separately: chi-square = 2.1; $p > .10$

For principals and aids, no such effect emerges (Table 6): the observed figures are very close to the expected ones. Presumably, principals most often handle cases referred to them by classroom teachers, so that the principal's own sex has no selective effect. Is there a difference between the female and male teachers' general propensity to get involved in religious incidents? In 1970-76, 79.0 to 80.5% of Lithuanian teachers (including the

principals) were women; in fall 1975 women formed 81.9% of the 28,400 classroom teachers, 47.2% of the 3,400 specialty (music, physical education, etc.) teachers, and 63.6% of 3,000 principals and assistant principals.¹⁶ Including specialty teachers, 78.2% of teachers were female. Therefore, we would statistically expect 78.2% of the 254 teachers in Table 5 to be female, i.e., 199 teachers. The actual number (215) is significantly higher (chi-square = 6.4; $p < .01$). The tentative conclusion is that male teachers have a somewhat lesser probability than females of getting involved in religious incidents. The difference might be caused by the relative concentration of males into specialty teaching such as physical education where religious conflict situations may be less frequent. Male principals and aids, however, tend to be markedly more active than females in this respect. One would expect that 63.6% of the 176 principals in Table 6 would be females, i.e., 112 principals. The actual number (84) is much smaller, and the difference is highly significant statistically (chi-square = 19.3; $p < .001$). It could be that male principals are harder on cases referred to them, or that teachers are more prone to refer a case to the principal if the latter is a male.

Table 6
Sex of Principals and Students in Religious Confrontations
Reported in Soviet Lithuanian Schools (1974-1983)

		STUDENTS			% Male Among Students
		FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	
PRINCIPALS (including assistant principals)	FEMALE	48 (50.1)	36 (33.9)	84	42.9
	MALE	57 (54.1)	35 (37.1)	92	38.0
	TOTAL	105	71	176	40.3

Chi-square = 0.41; $p > .5$

Geographical Location

Religious incidents are reported predominantly in the countryside of the western half of Lithuania, as shown in the Figure. This map shows the approximate location of all interactions analyzed in the previous section. The "hot spots" should not be construed too narrowly, because a single incident involving several teachers collectively harassing several students adds many points to the map; the most extensive one was Prienai south of Kaunas, 1979, with $4 \times 6 = 24$ interactions. Still, the following general observations can be made.

Large circles on the map indicate the five cities with more than 90,000 inhabitants in 1976. They comprised 35.4% of Lithuania's population,¹⁷ but they accounted for only 7% of the 425 interactions, the majority of them

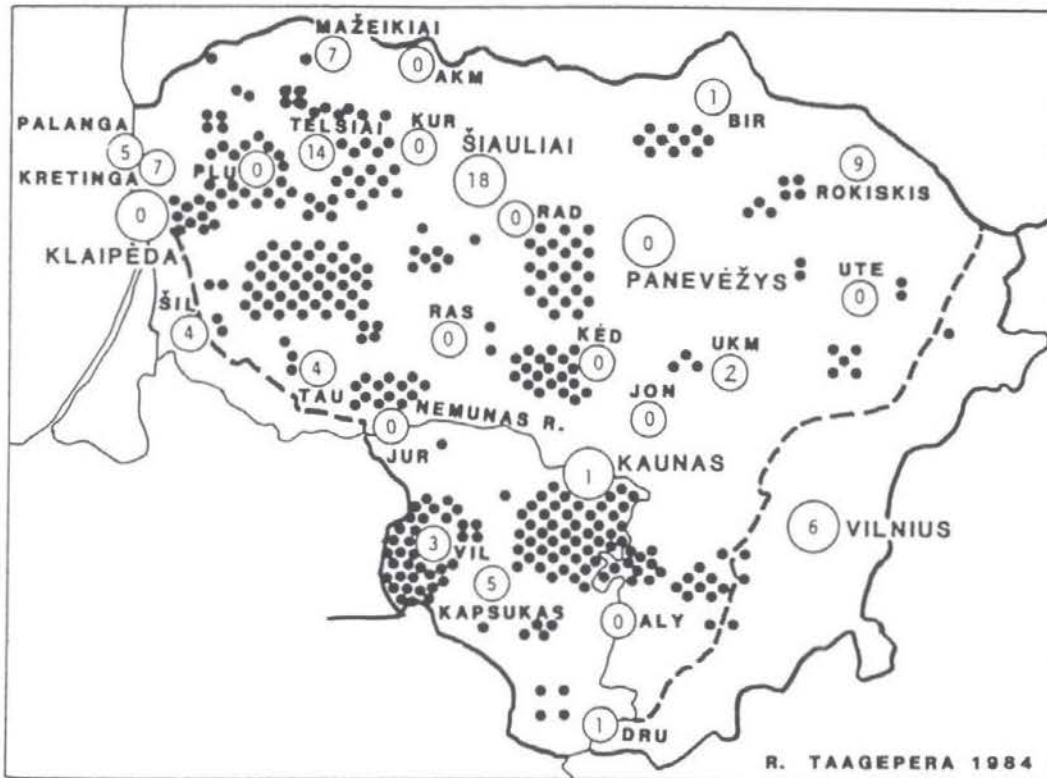


FIG. LOCATION OF RELIGIOUS INCIDENTS IN SOVIET LITHUANIAN SCHOOLS

Source: *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, Nos. 10 to 56. One dot per confrontation; for towns over 10,000 the number of confrontations is shown. The map includes only those cases where the name (or at least the sex) of both the harasser and the target are known.

in Šiauliai. Kaunas had surprisingly fewer incidents than Vilnius, in contrast to the countryside surrounding these two major cities. Small circles indicate the next-largest towns with 10,000 to 50,000 inhabitants in 1976. They accounted for 12.8% of the country's population and a practically equal share (16%) of the religious interactions reported. Random variations are evident, such as heavy incidence in Telšiai and none in the neighboring Plungė, in the middle of the main incidence region.

Smaller towns and the countryside represented 51.8% of the population but 78% of the interactions. Of the total 333 small-town and rural cases, 185 were reported in the quadrant northwest of Kaunas (Žemaitija, in a broad sense), 94 southwest of the Nemunas River (Suvalkija), and only 54 in the eastern half of the country. There are practically no incidents reported in the traditionally Protestant Klaipėda area (ruled by Germany up to 1918) and the Vilnius area (ruled by Poland during Lithuania's independence), the borders of which are indicated on the map. The larger town and city pattern follows the same broad east-west division. A cursory study of all

other (non-school) religious incidents reported in the *Chronicle* shows the same western concentration. Apart from the Vilnius strip, eastern Lithuania shared Lithuania's independence period, is ethnically as Lithuanian as the western part, and has no other traditional religion apart from Catholicism. We have no explanation for the contrast. As for the dearth of urban incidents, two explanations have been offered: either the urban teachers are too sophisticated to get involved in crude forms of harassment, or else the city people practice appreciably less Catholicism. We tend toward the latter explanation.

Frequency of Religious Incidents

How frequent is religious harassment in Soviet Lithuanian schools? Over nine years, the *Chronicle* reports on 408 incidents. Some of them involve several perpetrators and targets; some people are also involved in several incidents. Sometimes the names are not reported; sometimes the same name applies to several action components. Overall, students are reported in connection with 1012 action components, and the corresponding figures are 612 for teachers, 313 for principals and aids, and 60 for security agents. The number of separate people reported during one year is very approximately 50 individual students (not including the collective targets), about 30 teachers, 15 principals and aids, and 3 security agents. These represent very small fractions of the total numbers of students and teachers. However, it is obvious that not all incidents are reported in the *Chronicle*, and some estimates of the fraction reported can be made.

Most of the routine vituperation is not likely to be reported by children to their parents; let us assume that 50% of all incidents are reported. Only a small fraction of Catholic parents are in direct or semi-direct contact with the *Chronicle* contact persons—maybe 25%. Even out of those parents most will not wish to worsen their children's plight by having their names published in the *Chronicle*, with predictable reaction by the Soviet repression authorities; maybe 25% might volunteer details. The probability of a local report actually reaching the publishers of the *Chronicle* is likely to be 50% at best. Furthermore, only a small part of them (50% at the very most) are likely to supply sufficient detail on names, dates, places, and events. People tend to offer emotions and moralizing rather than such dry factual stuff, and the underground *Chronicle* editors are not in a position to pick up a phone and ask for further details. (Most Lithuanians do not have telephones.) Finally, given the limited space, it is not clear that the *Chronicle* can publish all the school reports received which have sufficient detail, but let us assume that everything publishable is published.

Multiplying together all these probabilities leads to $.5 \times .25 \times .25 \times .5 \times .5 \times 1 = 1/128$, meaning that the actual number of incidents might well be 100 times higher than the number reported. To be on the conservative side, let us assume that it is only 30 times higher than the number reported. This would translate into yearly figures like 1,500 students (out of a total

of 500,000), 1,000 teachers (out of about 30,000) and 500 principals and aids (out of a total of about 3,000). Are such figures implausibly high? In a country where up to 148,000 signatures have been collected for Catholic petitions under rather adverse circumstances the number of openly practicing students is bound to be much higher than 1,500 so that the number of potential targets imposes no ceiling on the number of incidents. The school principals are hand-picked for their pro-Moscow attitudes and are expected to implement the official religion of Marxism-Leninism. Given the large incidence of Catholic students, it is not implausible that every year one sixth of the principals would face a religious situation which they cannot ignore short of compromising their ideals, if they have any, and their career even if they do not believe in Marxism-Leninism. As for the classroom teachers, many are likely to be Catholic sympathizers themselves, and most others try to avoid antagonizing both the authorities and the students and their parents. But it is not implausible that every year one out of every thirty teachers either act on their militant atheist convictions or find themselves caught between official demands and the convictions of an appreciable fraction of their students.

We kept track of the names of the perpetrators so as to see whether some of the same teachers or principals might be involved repeatedly over the years. One would expect it, given that some of the harassers show signs of genuine atheistic fanaticism. However, only three teachers figured in more than four separate incidents, and even then the incidents were reported in consecutive issues of the *Chronicle*, suggesting some connection. The reporting of an incident in the *Chronicle* might exert a restraining influence on the particular teacher. The harassers do not enjoy having their names and deeds reported in the underground press and subsequently abroad, and neither do their bosses.¹⁸

Actors or Pawns?

To the impassive observer the findings may present little surprise. Given that eradication of deist religions is a Soviet goal, Soviet Lithuanian school authorities appear to be going about their task in a logical way. Their methods may closely parallel those employed by Western school authorities when dealing with their own discipline problems. It is when civil rights values are introduced that the issue takes a controversial twist: under what circumstances and with what methods can state authorities fight an undesirable religion or sect without infringing on human rights? In a totalitarian society school disciplinary activities are not restricted to the behavior within the school. Although not analyzed in this study, numerous reports in the *Chronicle* describe instances in which school authorities went to students' homes, churches, etc. in an attempt to alter their religious behavior. Thus, "discipline" in Soviet schools encompasses much more than it does in many Western schools where authorities have limited jurisdiction. In a country like Lithuania many, if not most, teachers must have

had a Catholic upbringing. To what extent are they required to act against their will? It is clear from the *Chronicle* that various sanctions are levied against those teachers who do not fill their "atheist quota." There are also accounts of firings or other disciplinary measures taken toward teachers with Catholic leanings.

On the other hand, to what extent might students be exposed to pressures from both sides? The anti-Catholic harassment in schools is undeniable, but what kind of pressures are coming from the other side? How deeply rooted is the Catholic faith in school-age children? Catholics are taught to view religious martyrs of the past with reverence, for one's self is the ultimate sacrifice. But one must wonder whether school-age children are legitimate candidates for even less extreme sacrifices. Given the nature of modern schooling, Catholic children in Soviet Lithuanian schools may be exposed to a more relentless pressure than their parents are subjected to in their work surroundings. Are they sometimes used as proxies by their parents? One is entitled to ask this question when one encounters in the *Chronicle* the following story.

Šilutė resident Kazė Maksvytienė grew up in a Catholic family and in that same spirit she is rearing her three sons who are still students at Šilutė Middle School No. 1. Noticing that members of atheist organizations wear pins on their lapels, the mother pinned crosses on her sons. During recess on October 12, 1981, Teacher Staškuvienė attempted to remove the cross forcibly from Maksvytienė's oldest son, fourth-grader Linas Maksvytis.

The conflict escalated nine days later when the principal ordered a teacher to take the three boys to the raion Internal Affairs Department where four uniformed staffers grilled the ten-year-old to the point of tears, then called in his brothers (seven and eight, respectively): "So your mother told you not to obey your teachers?" — "Mommy told us to obey our teachers, but not to obey when they tell us to remove the cross," both boys replied.¹⁹

The final note of irony was introduced when the younger boys could not sign the interrogation report and were instead told to make, yes, crosses. One feels disgust toward teachers and officials who are not ashamed to put little children through such treatment, but one also wonders about the mother's scheme of actively putting her little ones on the shooting line. The report in the *Chronicle* does not indicate whether she herself wears religious insignia to work or is otherwise harassed because of wearing them.

In some ways both students and teachers may sometimes be pawns in a battle waged at a much higher level: the battle between the Catholic Church and the Marxist-Leninist state. Value-based perspectives are rarely evident in quantitative results, but they have to be taken into account in controversial issues. All such issues have two sides, though not necessarily of equal merit. What is religion? It basically involves a specific system of belief, worship, and conduct, and often a code of ethics and a philosophy. If atheist Buddhism is counted as a religion, then so can Marxism-Leninism.

God has slipped into some later variants of Buddhism, and the same could happen to Leninism in the course of a few centuries, in view of the extensive Lenin worship in the contemporary USSR. There he lies in his mausoleum designed to make the rapidly passing viewers feel that there is something to the Soviet slogans like "Lenin is always with us!" and "Lenin is the most alive of all people!" Since 1974 he carries the party membership card number 000 001. Will there be a personal god slipping through the Soviet atheists' back door? Regardless of the answer, there is evidence (including the materials analyzed in this study) that the Soviets carry religious fanaticism to at least the levels of which they accuse the adherents of other religions. The outlook is grim. Throughout history religious conflicts are not easily settled, and the combination of Catholic asceticism and Leninist persistence does not leave grounds for optimism. The casualties on the microcosmic battlefield investigated here may sometimes be those least intent upon winning. It is the Catholic children—not parents, clergy, or school authorities—who must endure the harassment in Soviet Lithuanian schools.

Conclusions

The statistical profiles emerging from the school incidents described in the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* offer no inconsistencies which would put its credibility in doubt. This is no proof positive that all aspects of the reporting are accurate and complete, but some overall patterns ring true because they are unintentional on the part of the *Chronicle*. Harassment of children because of their (or their parents') Catholic faith does occur in Soviet Lithuanian schools. It takes place mainly in the rural and small-town schools of the western part of the republic. The frequency of incidents gradually increases from grade 1 to 5 and maintains a steady level thereafter. At first, teachers handle it alone, but by the fifth grade the principals and assistant principals enter in a major way and by the seventh grade security agents from outside the school are called in, until by the eleventh grade the teachers almost fade from the picture. Most protagonists are female. Nearly all Lithuanian teachers and most principals are women, and teachers seem to pick preferentially on students of their own sex. This seems to be the reason why nearly two thirds of the students involved in religious incidents are girls. In grade 11 the number of boys harassed drops drastically, for reasons which are unclear. Teachers mentioned in the *Chronicle* do not figure there again during the subsequent years.

Oral thrashing is the usual fare, and in an appreciable proportion of cases students are required to respond in words or in deeds (from answering incriminating questions to joining the Communist Youth League). Tangible penalties occur in about 15% of the cases reported, predominantly in the form of lowered grades. In relatively few cases students are deceived, asked to betray other people, or write statements going against their con-

science. Physical searches or penalties are quite rare on school grounds, but at times students are sent for further action elsewhere.

The cases reported average to about 45 incidents per year, and there are reasonable probabilistic grounds to believe that the actual total is ten and quite possibly a hundred times larger. The distribution of various action components for this larger body of incidents may well be different from that in the sample reported: the tip of the iceberg is a very special part of it. One may presume that almost all of the routine vituperation goes unreported because of its sheer volume and habitual nature on the part of some teachers. As the seriousness of the actions increases, a larger fraction is likely to be reported, but only if they are not so serious that children would not dare to tell about them at home. In particular, cases where the students yielded to demands of betrayal of fellow believers or of religious convictions (be these their own or those of their parents) would be underreported at home—and throughout the later transmission chain to the *Chronicle*. We did not keep track of whether the various demands by the school authorities were successful, precisely because the *Chronicle* is to be expected to report more heavily on cases where such demands failed. Students who caved in to the demands of school authorities share from then on a common interest with them in not letting their parents know.

The incidents rarely arise because of active provocation or challenge by Catholic children or parents. The exceptional case of a mother making her sons wear pins with crosses to school was reported rather approvingly by the *Chronicle*, indicating that it would not underreport such incidents if there were any. In the vast majority of cases Catholic children do not exhibit their faith in school, but some school officials try to ferret out their students' Catholic activities outside the school, or they purposely assign directly anti-Catholic essay topics which provoke resistance. In some cases conflict arises indirectly. A teacher may simply try to look good to her/his superiors by getting the whole class to join the official youth organization, only to find that some students block the plan fulfillment for religious reasons.²⁰

The intermeshing network of parents' demands on their children and the regime's demands on its servants may leave little leeway for autonomous decisions. Opportunism and treason have fertile grounds, and many persons' internal conflicts may reach intolerable levels as they are caught between conflicting demands. There may be few true heroes, but the identifiable villains are many, and most of them are to be found on the side that uses its overwhelming power to try to establish total ideological conformity. Over the nine years studied no trend is visible. Neither side is yielding, and the uneven struggle continues.

NOTES

- 1 Please address all correspondence to Rein Taagepera. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests League of America for supplying copies of their English translation of the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, and student conference travel support by the University of California, Irvine. We thank Ginutis Procuta, Vello Salo, and Jean-Guy Vaillancourt for valuable comments.
- 2 *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* (1974-83), Nos. 10-56 (Brooklyn: Lithuanian Roman Catholic Priests' League). Complete translation of *Lietuvos katalikų bažnyčios kronika* published in Lithuania without Soviet permission. Translation editor: Rev. Casimir Pugevičius. For further description of the *Chronicle*, see V. Stanley Vardys, *The Catholic Church, Dissent and Nationality in Lithuania* (Boulder: East European Quarterly; New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 150-67.
- 3 For a general history of Lithuania since 1940, see Romuald Misiunas and Rein Taagepera, *The Baltic States: Years of Dependence 1940-1980* (London: Hurst; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
- 4 For a full text of the Statute, see Vardys, 244-54. As a teacher put it at a parents' meeting: "Only atheism may be taught to the child from kindergarten on; religion may be taught from the age of eighteen." *Chronicle*, No. 56 (February 14, 1983), 49.
- 5 *Eesti nõukogude entsüklopeedia*, VII (Tallinn: Valgus, 1975), 541.
- 6 *Chronicle*, No. 50 (December 8, 1981), 64, and No. 47 (March 19, 1981), 65. The asylum threat was later disputed by the official Soviet press (Vytautas Valikonis, "Neimatyta, neigirdėta," *Komjaunimo tiesa*, April 14, 1982). This unusual denial did not mention the *Chronicle* but stated that the report appeared originally in the Chicago exile newspaper *Draugas*. A main Soviet argument against the veracity of the report seemed to be that the teacher's name was misspelled. See *Chronicle*, No. 53 (May 31, 1982), 59.
- 7 *Chronicle*, No. 50 (December 8, 1981), 64.
- 8 *Chronicle*, No. 49 (September 8, 1981), 68.
- 9 *Chronicle*, No. 28 (June 29, 1977), 42.
- 10 *Chronicle*, No. 48 (June 29, 1981), 57.
- 11 *Chronicle*, No. 23 (June 13, 1976), 59.
- 12 Calculations based on *Eesti NSV rahvamajandus 1977. aastal* (Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1978), 257-58, and *Eesti NSV rahvamajandus 1981. aastal* (Tallinn: Eesti Raamat, 1982), 238-40.
- 13 *Lietuvos TSR ekonomika ir kultūra 1975 metais* (Vilnius: Mintis, 1976), 260.
- 14 Calculations based on data in Rein Taagepera, "Baltic Population Changes, 1950-1980," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 12 (1981), 36-38.
- 15 *Lietuvos TSR ekonomika ir kultūra 1975 metais*, 260.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 263.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 12-13.
- 18 In response to a brief intimidation report in *Chronicle*, No. 33 (May 31, 1978), 37, a teacher later scolded a student: "Because of you, I've made the chronicles . . . and Vatican Radio talked about me" (*Chronicle* No. 36 [January 6, 1979], 48), but there was no later followup. See also *Chronicle*, No. 20 (December 8, 1975), 38; No. 50 (December 8, 1981), 66; and No. 55 (November 1, 1982), 59.
- 19 *Chronicle*, No. 50 (December 8, 1981), 67-68.
- 20 As teacher Buozienė in Gargždai put it: "You must all join the Pioneers, otherwise it's going to be bad for me." *Chronicle*, No. 57 (April 3, 1983), 60.