

ENVELOPES? - OR ANTI-SEMITIC PROCLAMATIONS?

Envelopes produced by Antanas Rimantas Šakalys are being sold in the centre of Vilnius, in the main post office building.

In their appearance, A.R.Šakalys' envelopes adhere more to bygone Soviet period standards than they do to modern-day requirements of postal services. More important on the front of the envelopes is not the right side for the name and address of the receiver, but the left, thematic side. Usually this spot is reserved for an historical figure or group - politicians, writers, public or state figures, described by the author of the "envelopes" with commentary that reflects his/her personal point of view. In this way, a postal item becomes a propaganda leaflet. This kind of artwork is nothing new, it has simply been taken over from the ideologized practice of Soviet philately.

Compared with the usual envelopes, A.R.Šakalys' "masterpieces" are quite pricey - from 1.5 to 3.5 Lt - and yet they are bought up by certain customers, amongst whom there are a fair number of lovers of anti-Semitic seasonings: some of the envelopes are dedicated to a so-called "Jewish theme". The commentary on the "Jewish envelopes" is no different from any other ignorant anti-Semitic writings - starting from the "academic" ones (ostensibly scholarly works by ultra-right or

ultra-left pseudoscholars) and ending with hooligan scrawls on fences.

Three years ago, during the 62nd commemoration of the annihilation of the Vilna Ghetto, A.R.Šakalys issued an enveloped dedicated... to the 5th anniversary of the death of Aleksandras Lileikis, former chief of the Vilnius district security police, and a Nazi handyman. The envelope bears his portrait, and underneath it the following words: "A.Lileikis, a victim of Zionist-racist terrorization, died on September 26, 2000. Even after his death attempts are being made to slander and defile him. Lileikis contributed a great deal in defending a free Lithuania and in fostering a Lithuanian spirit in the USA, where he worked in a publishing house. The bright memory of this national patriot will remain alive."

It's difficult to say what the concept "national patriot" means. One would love to ask the writer: is there such a thing as an anti-national patriot? And it's obvious that the admirer of this "national patriot" has not the slightest comprehension that a Zionist cannot at the same time be a racist. After all, if one is a Zionist, then for sure one is a Jew, and it's the racists who persecute Jews. But the writer of these "envelope" texts doesn't care who can or can't be what. The important thing is to at-

tach a defining label - "Zionist-racist" - the perceptive reader will figure out that the reference here is to the hated "Jews", whom the author calls Zionists-racists in a conspiratorial tone, in order not to himself become known as an anti-Semite.

A.R.Šakalys couldn't not have a go at Judaism as well. According to the author of the "envelopes", the 18th century Jewish religious thinker Eliyahu Shlomo ben Zalman, known world-wide as the Vilna Gaon (1720-1792), is "a Talmud commentator, a racist-inclined Zionist". A.R.Šakalys does not explain how the Gaon became a Zionist, even though Zionism appeared a good century later, nor does he explain what "racist-inclined Zionism" is. "Talmud", "Zionism" and "race" are like an ideological narcotic for the philistine mentality plagued by anti-Semitism, and it arouses sweet spasms of zoological hatred for the Jews. A.R.Šakalys treats his customers to a generous helping of it.

A.R.Šakalys' text explains that the Gaon convinced the Jews that "Lithuania was God's gift to the Jewish people", and that is why the Jews "tried to settle in the towns, created businesses, took over commerce and medicine, formed the Social Democratic 'Bund'" (which "later became the

Communist Party" - yet another inadvertent admission of the "envelope" author's ignorance), "... and through it tried to form 'Litbela' - a country of Lithuanians-Belorusians. The 'Bund' was abolished after they were chased out of Vilnius and the Republic of Lithuania was established. But they did not let go of 'God's gift' in Lithuania, and tried to incite a riot in 1926. In 1939 they waited for the Soviets, and only then did they understand that they would have to move to an autonomous Jewish republic (a gift from Stalin). They had to reorient themselves after the Second World War, and with the help of Great Britain, had to take another gift - Arab Palestine."

Such were the remote 20th century events prophesied by the Gaon, who lived here in the 18th century!

It's not a student, but a 70 year-old man who considers himself a cultural figure, who comes up with such anti-Semitic drivel. His "envelopes" are sold in a kiosk belonging to Jonas Jarma-



Envelope with the head of a sculpture that some call the Vilna Gaon.

lavičius which is located under the roof of the Central Post Office. This trade in "envelopes" which incite antagonism against the Jews, has been going on for more than three years. How many years will it take the institutions of law and order to understand that the sale of R.Šakalys "products" on the theme of Jewish history is an attempt to incite national hatred against the Jews?

"J of L" Inf.