

BALTIC NEWS

A Newsletter of the Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association (HELP) - P.O. Box 272, SANDY BAY, Tas. 7005 (Australia).

Vol. III, No. 1 (12)

February 24, 1977

P.O.C. GROUPS FOR HOBART

H.E.L.L.P. Association in Hobart is writing to various church groups and other voluntary service organisations, in the hope that at least four organisations will each "adopt" a Baltic prisoner of conscience.

New Baltic POC (Prisoners of Conscience) Groups are now being formed in Australia and in several other countries. The purpose of the Groups is to protect the P.O.C.s from arbitrary actions of the authorities and, ultimately, to secure the prisoners' release.

Tasmania's Share

Four prisoners have been allocated to Tasmania for "adoption": Petras Paltarokas, Antanas G. Sakalauskas, Tadas K. Serulis and Vitas Sidoris. This means that the fate of these four men may well be in the hands of the people of Tasmania. If no help comes forth from this island, nobody else will care about the four prisoners' future.

A POC Group is an informal group of 2 to 10 persons of any nationality, at least one of whom is of Baltic origin. Each POC Group assumes responsibility for one or more prisoners of conscience from Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania, who are in Soviet jails or are subject to Soviet exile.

Pro-Prisoner

In order to maintain its credibility and effectiveness, a POC Group does not use the issue of P.O.C.s for political purposes. In other words, a POC Group is pro-prisoner, rather than anti-Soviet.

A number of Baltic POC Groups are already active in various parts of the free world; many more are still needed urgently.

Careful Check

Only persons jailed because of their ethnic, personal or religious persuasions are included in Baltic POC lists. Their bona fides have been checked out carefully, and prisoners serving sentences for obviously criminal offences are not eligible.

The current Baltic POC lists contain the names of 14 residents of Estonia,



Lithuanian seaman Simas Kudirka (above) was imprisoned by the Soviets late in 1970, because he wanted to migrate to the West. Though sentenced to 10 years' hard labour, he was released after 4 years - thanks to the vigorous campaign by a POC Group in the United States of America.

53 Latvians and 135 people from Lithuania. Only one third of them has so far been adopted by the existing POC Groups.

If you wish to join the nearest POC Group in your neighbourhood or form a new Group, please telephone Mrs. Taskunas on 25 2505, or write to her at Post Office Box 272, Sandy Bay, 7005.

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NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

ATOMIC BLAST IN BALTISKI?

An "earthquake" of the strength of 4.5 on the Richter scale shook buildings in Western Estonia and in Helsinki on October 25th last year. "Agence France Presse" investigations suggest that a nuclear accident may have happened in the Soviet underground fortifications in Baltiski (an Estonian town on the Baltic coast).

A long list of death notices appeared in a local newspaper, "Sovetskaya Estonia", on the following day: all young men bearing Russian names.

MASSACRE

On August 7th last year, a Soviet Tartar border guard came to the weekend camp of Estonian gas workers held near Kunda, in northern Estonia, and indiscriminately fired about 120 rounds with his automatic rifle. Many of the 100 participants were wounded and 12 have been reported dead.

HELSINKI VIOLATIONS

The Estonian Central Committee in Sweden is seeking factual material to show that the Soviet Union has violated the principles of human rights as agreed to at the 1975 Helsinki Conference.

Details of imprisonments, loss of employment, harassment, refusal of visa, etc. should be sent to R.E.E. (Foreign Affairs Com.) Fack 11, 10052 Stockholm 29, Sweden. The information will be presented to the signatories of the Helsinki agreement, at a meeting taking place in Belgrade later this year.

LITHUANIAN MONITOR GROUP

A five-member group of Lithuanians has been formed secretly in Moscow to monitor, in the Baltic region, the observance of the Human Rights sections of the Helsinki Declaration.

Many violations of the Declaration have already been documented and reported. The group quotes the new law subjecting religious societies to strict Soviet control; and several new arrests.

THANKS !

This issue of the Baltic News has been financed by the proceeds from the last HELLP Dance (held on 23/10/1976 - \$182); from sale of books (\$27); and the following individual donations.

B.Burbo (Tas.), A.Vaitiekunas & M.Ots (Vic.) \$20 each; J.Sirgunas (Tas.), P.Randma (N.S.W.), J.Miliauskas (W.A) & V.Hawkins (Vic.), A.Kenne (Vic.), A.Putnins (S.A),

To: HELLP Association,
P.O. Box 272,
SANDY BAY, Tasmania. 7005

Please continue sending the Baltic News to me.

I enclose my donation of \$.....

NAME

ADDRESS.....

.....P/CODE.....

T.Tehnas (W.A.), \$10 each; J.Luker (Tas.), \$6; A.Schluter, O.Miezitis, Mr. Rosson, E.Lacis, J.Parums (Tas.), J.W. McKenna (Vic.) & a PENSIONER \$5 each; Mrs.Sobczak (Tas.), \$3.20; M.Nielsen, Mrs. D.Madden, A.Dziendzil, Mr.Terts, W.Craig, E.Loorits all of Tasmania and L.Simanauskas (N.S.W.), \$2 each; Mrs.J. Aiken (Tas.), \$1

Sincere thanks!

VALE, JAMES McAULEY...



Professor James Phillip McAuley - a leading poet and literary critic, a great Australian and valued member of the HELLP Association - died in Hobart on 15th October, 1976.

Professor McAuley had held the chair of English at the University of Tasmania since 1961. He had published extensively and he was made a member of the Order of Australia in the 1975 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

As a member of HELLP, he always offered assistance and encouragement to its activities.

The Association therefore expresses its deep regret at the untimely death of Professor McAuley and extends its deep sympathy to his widow and children.

Time's terraces we tilled,
Spoke old words with fresh meaning;
We've lived from the beginning,
But it's the end that shows
In what faith we fulfilled
The covenant of the rose.

- JAMES McAULEY.

The Exile

He dreams often of going back,
But truth always invades the dream:
House, street, family, are gone,
The country itself has been abolished;
There is no way of being home again.

But, waking, it's much worse; for when
He looks back in the past, trying
To see himself as he then was,
It is all there except himself:
His face is missing from the photographs.

A man repudiated, cancelled,
A life without contexts, or hope,
A fugue unravelling in the void.
He is the one outside, who turns
To find the lost garden already vanished.

- JAMES McAULEY.

Both poems have been reprinted, with kind permission, from: Surprises of the Sun, Poems by James McAuley. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1969.

- Photo: by courtesy of "University of Tasmania News".

To: H.E.L.L.P.* ASSOCIATION,
P.O. Box 272, SANDY BAY, Tasmania, 7005.

I do not recognize Russian sovereignty over Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
I agree with the objectives of H.E.L.L.P.* Association and hereby apply for membership.

Signature _____

NAME (Mr, Mrs, Miss) _____

ADDRESS _____

Phone _____

Action costs money. Donations always welcome.

I ENCLOSE \$_____ Cash/Cheque/Postal Order

If receipt required, please tick here: _____

EDITORIAL

February was the "month of purification" in ancient Rome.

By strange coincidence, two of the three Baltic nations celebrate their Independence Days during this month - the Lithuanians on 16th, and the Estonians on 24th February. The coincidence is significant, because the anniversaries of Baltic independence should now assume a new meaning. Instead of continuing as the days of sorrow or self-pity, they must become the days of stock-taking and purification for the Baltic people on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

This is well realised by the anti-colonial resistance workers in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Their latest underground periodical Austria writes, "A flabby nation, eating its fill of material goods and drinking to excess, is an easy target for the elimination of its national identity and for its destruction. Our nations must be awakened from this spiritual sleep. They will prevail if they prove to be more cultured than the oppressors. That is why ancient history must repeat itself: the Romans had conquered the Greeks by the force of arms, but the Greek culture conquered the Romans".

What about the Baltic migrants in Australia? Are they always aware that they, too, have a responsibility to discharge? For, in the absence of formal representation, they are Estonia's, Latvia's and Lithuania's "unofficial ambassadors" in this country.

An average Australian may find it difficult to believe, for example, that millions of Balts in their own countries are risking their jobs (perhaps even their lives) by attending church regularly - if the Baltic migrant next door does not live up to the Christian ideals himself.

Or, how can one convince the sceptics that the currently widespread alcoholism in the Baltic countries is aided and abetted by the Russian colonists, when the Baltic migrants in Australia are estimated to spend over \$450,000 on intoxicating drinks each year?

Words lose effect, if they are not supported by a living example.



LETTERS

Apology not Complete

I have read with interest Mr. Whitlam's apology to Mr. McGlynn published in the last issue of the "Baltic News". Although he has fully withdrawn all remarks that were harmful to Mr. McGlynn, Mr. Whitlam has not admitted that he was wrong about the history of the Baltic States. I think that Mr. Whitlam should still apologise to the people of Baltic origin for falsely representing their history, and for insulting them.

L. Porte

HELP IN HIGGINS

I enjoyed reading your recent edition of the Baltic News.

If I can ever be of assistance to people from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania living in my electorate, I would be pleased to hear from them.

Roger SHIPTON
Member of Higgins

The editor welcomes letters, especially brief ones, at P.O. Box 272, Sandy Bay 2005, and reserves the right to condense

SOVIET IMPERIALISM

Communist philosophers and party leaders have been vehement in their attacks upon the imperialism of the U.S.A. and other Western Nations. However, imperialism has also become a characteristic of communism and so has made a tragic mockery of Communist claims.

Imperialism is a force which in the name of the aggressive, expansionist policies of one nation can destroy and withhold the rights and human privileges of another nation.

Both, in Vietnam and in the Baltic States we see modern expression of imperialism, loss of religious freedom, and death. Soviet expansion in the Baltic is founded in lies, injustice and greed.

We may take comfort in knowing that imperialism breeds its own destructive viruses and in time it falls. Russian imperialism is also doomed in the court of history.

Katoomba, N.S.W. James T.R. QUILTER.

CONFRONTATIONS WITH TYRANNY

In last year's Baltic News (29/3/76) you have mentioned a new book, "Confrontations with Tyranny" which is supposedly a book of plays, written by Baltic authors about their native countries.

The Estonian co-author Paul Erik Rummo is about 34 years old. His membership of the Communist Party is not uncertain. Author Enn Vetamaa is working for television in Tallinn and has belonged to Kompartei since 1964.

It can be presumed that the plays introduced are dealing with the "tyranny" prior to the Soviet occupation.

Canada

L.KOOBAS.

CALLOUS DISREGARD FOR PEOPLE

Thank you for the Baltic News that I regularly receive from you.

I visited Czechoslovakia a few days before the Russian invasion of 1968. The mood of the people in Prague that summer was one of hope because its people were tasting freedom for the first time in many years. The callous disregard for a proud people shown by the Russians that year exemplifies to me the similar disregard by Russia for the people of the Baltic nations.

I believe we must all work towards the day when Russian suppression of the aspirations of the peoples is ended.

Murray SAINSBURY,
Member for Eden-Monaro.

LACK OF NEWS

I notice in the last issue of Baltic News a letter from J. Carter, S.A.; criticising press coverage of Amnesty International's Annual Report.

This gives the impression that Soviet Russia is not criticised in the report. Soviet Russia is dealt with in 4½ pages, while Sweden and Switzerland together only have half a page.

Amnesty also published a comprehensive Report on Prisoners of Conscience in the U.S.S.R., in November, 1975.

Hobart

Bertha ROLLS

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the HELLP Association for 1976 was held on 7th November in Hobart. It was very well attended by members and other interested persons.

In his annual report, the Chairman (Dr.K.Kruup) said, *inter alia*:

Following the last Annual General Meeting on November 2nd, 1975, the activities of the HELLP Association centered almost entirely around the Federal Elections. Even our first public meeting on November 28th had to include some election matters at the conclusion of a previously arranged address by Mr., now Senator, Brian Harradine. Prior to the election, all candidates were approached and asked to declare their stand on the Baltic question. Extracts from these answers were then published in the pre-election issue of the "Baltic News". The Association also arranged for some advertisements in "The Mercury".

After steps were taken by the Fraser Government to reverse the recognition of Soviet sovereignty over the Baltic States, The Executive Committee of the Association decided to concentrate its efforts on the alternate aim of our Association. This is "to make all people aware of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuanian nations' continuing struggle for survival and self-determination."

Towards obtaining this aim, the Association continued publishing the "Baltic News" and, in spite of unavoidable delays in the middle of the year, five issues have appeared. The Association has also promoted the sale of books on Baltic issues, circulated a petition organised by the BATUN organisation in the USA, and arranged services at the Cenotaph and at St.Carlos church on the anniversary of mass deportations in the Baltic States. The gathering at the Cenotaph was addressed by Senator Harradine.

The Executive Committee also investigated a proposal by the Latvian National Foundation for the creation of a "Second Front". Special car stickers were printed and distributed to members, to publicise the Association. Other activities included correspondence with the New Zealand Government requesting it to reverse the "Baltic recognition", and correspondence with the ABC asking to give more prominence to news from the Baltic States. Attempts to establish more Prisoners of Conscience groups in Hobart are still continuing.

Our Social activities included two dances at the Polish Hall and a barbecue arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Keenan at Clifton Beach. The financial benefits of these activities will be reported by the Treasurer.

The Executive Committee met on the first Tuesday of each month.

Finally, thanks should be expressed to everybody who has contributed towards helping our activities. Our special thanks go to the Polish Association for allowing the use of its rooms, including the Polish Hall.

The guest speaker, Mr. T.R.McGlynn gave a most interesting talk on the past and present political events in the Baltic States. Extracts from his speech are published on Pages 7 and 8 in this issue.

BALTIC STATES AND FASCISM

by T.R.McGlynn

Were the Baltic States in the 1930s "Fascist States like Hitler's Germany"?

Any claim of this kind is a barefaced lie. It is also totally irrelevant to the question of the three Baltic nations' sovereignty. It is a lie because the inter-war history of the Baltic States, which were recognised by Russia in 1920 as sovereign in perpetuity (in the treaties of Tartu, Riga and Moscow), was as follows:

In Lithuania for the first 6 or 7 years there was a functioning Parliamentary Democracy. In 1926 there was a Government in power which was mainly of the Left, with a number of Socialists in it, which entered into negotiations with the hostile Polish Government to permit the establishment within Lithuania of a number of rights for Polish speaking people. Since this proposal did not involve Poland admitting any comparable rights for the very large number of Lithuanians who lived at that time under a repressive Polish military administration in the Lithuanian-speaking territories around Vilnius, the government was thought by many to be selling out its compatriots to the Poles. Accordingly, there was a reaction by Nationalist groups and by pro-catholic parties, and there was a coup d'etat: Army officers took part in this coup, and also civilian politicians. As a result the constitution was changed and Antanas Smetona became the virtual dictator of Lithuania.

However, this does not mean that Lithuania was Fascist. Of course, like in England and Australia, there were Fascists in Lithuania. Who were they? They were led by Professor Voldemaras, who originally was Prime Minister of Lithuania but disagreed about the way in which things were developing. He founded a Fascist party and on two occasions he attempted to overthrow the Smetona Government. His party was suppressed and large numbers of the Lithuanian Fascists found themselves in jail.

These were not the only Fascists in Lithuania. There were also the Germans in Klaipeda, a semi-autonomous region otherwise known as the Memelland, where a large number of the population were Germans. Realising, after Hitler came to power, that it was possible to look forward to the incorporation of Lithuania, as well as of Klaipeda, into the Third Reich, they began also to organise trouble - they attempted a coup; they murdered a number of Lithuanians; accordingly, they were arrested, they were tried and they were executed.

In Estonia and Latvia full parliamentary democracy lasted 14 years approximately, from 1920 to 1934. This democracy was more democratic than any that has ever been based upon the Westminster model or its versions in the British Commonwealth. There was not only autonomy for individuals but also for all ethnic groups in practically everything imaginable: cultural affairs, social affairs, schooling, and even representation in Parliament.

Now, in both those countries the crisis which began with the collapse of Wall Street in 1929 ruined their economies. There was then in each country a threat to the Constitution. That threat was from the Right. And what occurred was that the Presidents in each case took over control, but constitutionally and continued to rule, and to suppress the extreme Right Wing parties, and the German-speaking Nazis, throughout the 1930s.

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BALTIC STATES AND FASCISM

- From Page 7.

We had therefore 3 countries in which there resulted, in the late 1930s, dictatorships of the centre. In Lithuania I would say, from what I have read of Antanas Smetona, that he had roughly the powers that are exercised today by Lee Kwan Yew of Singapore and that were used by DeGaulle in the earlier years of his power. In Estonia and Latvia Konstantin Päts and Karlis Ullmanis had similar powers. By 1938, Päts in particular, having received a very large popular majority in a referendum approving his anti-Fascist coup of 1934, had begun to restore parliamentary life.

The element of authoritarianism that we find in the three Baltic States before 1940 lay in the amount of power required to suppress the Fascists, the Right Wing "War Veterans Parties" and also the Communists. The Communists, incidentally, attempted to overthrow Estonia in 1924 and Latvia in 1933. Conclusive proof was adduced that the Soviet Government and Communist Party was involved in both the planning and financing of those attempts.

So, there were Fascists and there were Nazis in all the Baltic States. There were many more in France, more again in England and Scandinavia. None of those in the Baltic States ever formed, or formed part of, any Baltic Government. All opposed all Baltic Governments with violence. All were suppressed or prosecuted, as in England, throughout the 30s.

Now apart from it being a lie, the accusation of Fascism is, in any case, irrelevant to the question of national sovereignty. Although Fascism is hard to define, except perhaps as anything disapproved of by the Communists, it is agreed that Italy and Germany were Fascist States in the 1930s. It is also suggested, with qualifications, that in the same period Albania, Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Austria, Poland and Greece had right-wing authoritarian or Fascistic tendencies in their Governments. During the war Norway had a Government run by native, Norwegian, Fascists. If having been Fascist in the 1930s (which the Baltic States were not) is justification for the suppression of their sovereignty, then most of Europe clearly has not yet seen justice. Britain in 1940-41 imprisoned many Fascists and Communists simultaneously, as did Estonia in the 1930s. Perhaps war-time Britain also qualifies as Fascist on those grounds? Perhaps, too, it deserved a Soviet invasion in punishment for such action against extremist and traitors?



COMING EVENTS

26th March - (Saturday)

8.30am to 1.00am Polish Hall

HELLP ASSOCIATION DANCE

Come along and enjoy the pleasant surroundings with members and friends of the Association.

Admission \$4.00, students and pensioners \$2.00.

For table bookings ring Joe Paskevicius on 726360