



# BALTIC NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF HELP THE ESTONIAN, LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION (HELP)  
P.O. BOX 272, SANDY BAY, TAS. 7005 (AUSTRALIA).

Vol. V, No. 1(22)

March-April 1979

## Another Review of Helsinki

Observance of the 1975 Helsinki agreements will be reviewed for the second time, in Madrid (Spain) next year. Baltic organisations in the free world have already started their preparations for this important conference.

The Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania (VLIK) held a general meeting in Chicago (U.S.A.) on December 9-10, 1978. It was agreed that the pre-conference campaign should not be confined to the North American continent, but is to be extended to West European countries, too.

The preparatory committee of the European Helsinki Group met in Aarau (Switzerland) on January 26-27. More than one hundred delegates attended, representing all interested nations.

### Action in Tasmania

Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association (HELP) in Tasmania/Australia has decided to continue the factual documentation of human rights infringements in the Baltic States. The Association's findings will be published in *Baltic News* which is distributed to all Australian parliamentarians, the press, libraries and influential readers in Australia and abroad.

The Helsinki act, signed at the conclusion of the European Security and Co-operation conference four years ago, was first reviewed at the Belgrade conference in 1977. The talks came to a deadlock when the Soviet Union refused to discuss its own breaches of human rights. The conference was adjourned until 1980, and will be reconvened in Madrid.

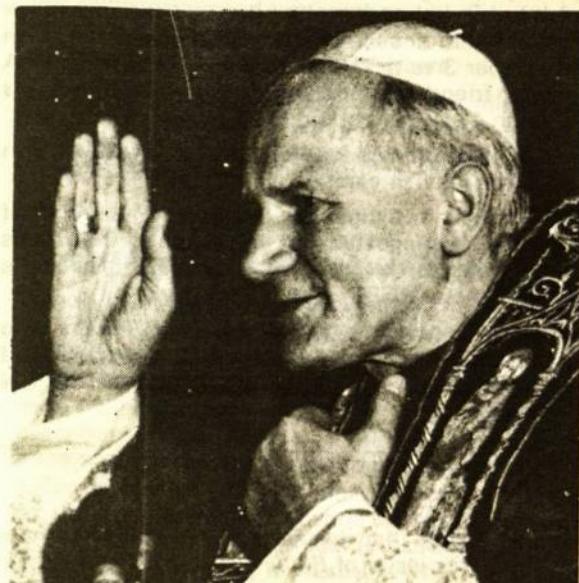
### New Director for Tasmania

Miss Jeanie Richardson is the new Regional Director of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs in Tasmania.

The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Mr McKellar, said Miss Richardson was the first woman to be appointed a State Regional Director by his Department.

She succeeds Mr Cyril Eddy who retired from this position last year. Mr Jan Urbanski has been Acting Regional Director.

Miss Richardson, who will take up her appointment in Hobart in mid-April, has just returned from a three-year posting as a Senior Migration Officer in London, her third tour of duty in Britain.



• Pope John Paul II: Will he tip the scales in Madrid next year?

### Vatican's Role

Some observers believe that the Vatican could play an important role at the Madrid conference. Unlike the United States and other business-minded countries, the Vatican conducts no trade with the Soviet Union (or with any other country, for that matter). This will give the Vatican's delegates a free hand to raise the question of human rights, without any fear of trade sanctions or boycotts from the Russians.

The representatives of the Holy See had achieved nothing at the Helsinki and Belgrade conferences. The adherents of the faith behind the Iron Curtain were still denied the basic right to practise their religion, and the spokesmen for the Church of Silence — such as the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* — openly expressed their disappointment at the Vatican's passive stance.

With the election of Pope John Paul II last year, the Vatican's *Ostpolitik* is expected to change. The new Pope hails from Communist-controlled Poland and is well experienced in dealing with atheist State leaders. While the heads of other states may be told not to interfere in the Soviet Union's internal affairs, this does not apply to the Pope. His spiritual dominion transcends state boundaries, and it is not only his right but also his duty to defend the fundamental rights of believers.

## NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

# Tourists trapped

Tourists travelling behind the Iron Curtain face new risks of false arrest and heavy prison sentences as the KGB seeks revenge for defections.

Laimanis Niedre, a Swedish citizen of Latvian extraction, was arrested by the KGB secret police while photographing some dilapidated churches during a visit to Latvia last year. Convicted of crimes against the state in a secret trial, he was sentenced on November 3 to ten years in prison at hard labor. A Latvian friend accompanying him, Janis Skudra, was hit with 12 years at hard labor.

The Swedish consul was denied access to the trial in Riga, the Latvian capital.

After much investigation, the Baltic Federation of Canada has suggested that the reason for the arrests and harsh sentences was to avenge last year's defection of a KGB major in New York.

Amants Lechinski, a highly-trained KGB major who was a Latvian, defected to the West from the United Nations where he was a translator for the UN Secretariat.

### Sorry!

We apologize that, because of hitches beyond our control, this issue of *Baltic News* could not appear earlier.

We thank our readers for the many messages of encouragement and for the following donations which reached us in the meantime:

P. Siauciunas (Tas.) \$150; K. Simonas (N.S.W.), Lithuanian Club in Sydney, \$100 each; V. Priscepionka (Canada), B. Barsteika (U.S.A.), J. Kniuiups (U.S.A.), E.J. Gallaway (N.S.W.), A. Grikepelis (Vic.), V. Mikelaitis (Tas.), \$20 each; J. Sirgunas (Tas.), O. Miezitis (Tas.), J. Luker (Tas.), J. Janavicius (N.S.W.), V. Hawkins (Vic.), J. & O. Motiejunas (U.S.A.), P. Zumbakis (U.S.A.), \$10 each; L. Kalasim (Tas.), W. Craig (Tas.), M. Trus (Tas.), E. Looritz (Tas.), J. Watchorn (Tas.), C. McSherry (Tas.), M. Cibulskis (N.Z.), B. Zalys (N.S.W.), E. Fogarty (N.S.W.), Dr H. Salasoo (N.S.W.), A. Kramilius (N.S.W.), C. Ford (N.S.W.), \$5 each; E. Lewinski (Tas.), \$4; Rev. J. Aarik (S.A.), L. Rupinskas (S.A.), \$3 each; L. Nobelius (Vic.), L. Hays (W.A.), J. Ola (Tas.), \$2 each.

Many thanks!

TO: H.E.L.L.P. (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association),  
Post Office Box 272,  
SANDY BAY, Tasmania, 7005 (Australia).

I do not recognize the Russian sovereignty over the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania).

Please send me the *Baltic News*, free of charge and without any obligation.

Name .....

ADDRESS .....

..... POSTCODE .....

Optional:  
I enclose my donation of \$..... Cash/Cheque/M.O.

Lechinski was head of the Soviet committee which established contacts with Latvian emigres in the West. Similar committees exist in Estonia and Lithuania, the two other Baltic nations.

The KGB is particularly concerned because Lechinski has jeopardized large segments of Soviet intelligence operations in Canada and the U.S. as well as KGB attempts to blackmail Baltic emigrants.

The Soviet government has charged U.S. Latvian organizations kidnapped Lechinski with the help of the CIA but the defector's first wife and his present wife's daughter have pleaded in the Soviet press for him to return. If he had been kidnapped, such pleas would seem unnecessary.

The Swedish government has unsuccessfully demanded the transcript of Nierde's trial.

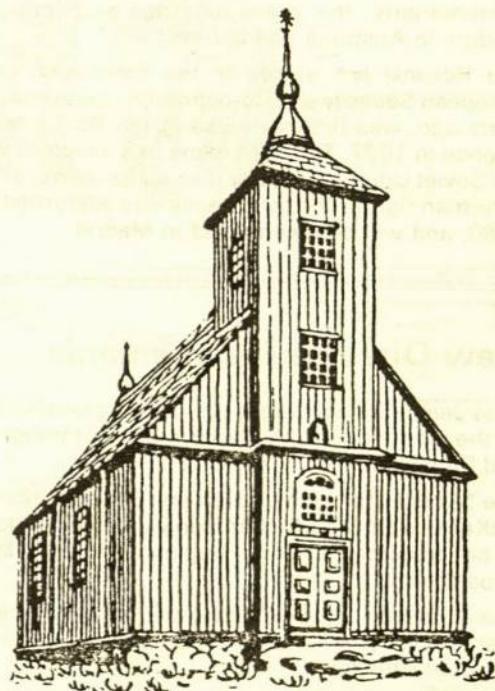
— Based on a report in *THE SUNDAY SUN* (Canada).

### STOP PRESS

*Laimanis Niedre is free!*

As this issue of *BALTIC NEWS* was going to press, news reached Australia that the Soviet authorities had released Mr Niedre from prison on March 23.

This is yet another proof that public exposure of Soviet misdeeds can bring results. The Soviet rulers are sensitive to adverse publicity in the Western press and will increasingly react to persistent pressure of public opinion.



● An old wooden church at Verpene . . . Tourists who photograph historic relics like this, may land in Soviet jail (see Story, 'Tourists Trapped').

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Dual Nationality

During the period prior to my taking my seat in the Senate I was involved with several groups seeking to stimulate positive action by the Federal Government on problems associated with Dual Nationality.

In particular, at a meeting organized by the Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association, I undertook to raise the matter in the Senate, and did so by way of Notice of Motion on the 15th November, 1978. It reads as follows:

'That the Senate notes with concern the lack of action by the Australian Government to relieve Australian citizens of the disadvantages of Dual Nationality, particularly as experienced in visiting former homelands and urges the Government to speedily implement the recommendations contained in the Report of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence on Dual Nationality tabled in the Senate on 14th October, 1976.'

I may say that I anticipate the motion to be debated in a non-partisan way, and have framed it to command as much support as possible. I expect the motion to be debated this Autumn session, possibly late March.

I expect many of your members will wish to acquaint Senators with personal examples of problems created by Dual Nationality. I can assure you this will be brought to the notice of the Government.

Devonport, Tas.

Senator Michael TATE

## Defeated

You may recall that your organisation made a submission regarding dual nationality to a Parliamentary Committee I chaired in 1975 and 1976.

As you probably know the Fraser Government has not carried out our recommendations.

Last week the new Passport Bill was debated and you may be interested in my contribution [when among other things I] read into *Hansard* part of a submission from the Joint Baltic Committee of Canberra:

'8. A matter which requires special attention regarding Australian citizens of Baltic origin travelling abroad is the information contained in Australian passports issued to such travellers. At present such passports require to state the place of birth of the holder of the passport. If such place happens to be within the present boundaries of the Soviet Union and the passport is presented to a Soviet authority abroad, or at a place which is governed by the Soviet Union, the authority may treat the person as a Soviet citizen for all purposes. He may be detained, imprisoned or deported to remote Soviet regions, without giving him adequate right and opportunity to defend himself.'

'9. We believe that there is no special need to state in the passport the place of birth of the holder of the passport. Such information is in the same category as the religion or the race of a person.'

I am afraid that the Labor Party's amendment:

'This House is of the opinion that the place of birth shall only be disclosed on an (Australian) passport if the holder or applicant so selects,'

was defeated by the Government.

(Dr) R.E. KLUGMAN,  
M.H.R. for Prospect.

Fairfield, N.S.W.

## Disappointed

I travelled 300 kilometres to hear Mr McKellar speak at the last H.E.L.P. Annual meeting. To put it mildly, I was disappointed by what he had to say on the question of dual nationality.

The Minister lumped us together with Greeks, Italians and the Dutch — without comprehending that the Baltic problem is entirely different.

Having been born in Latvia, I wouldn't mind being treated as a dual Australian/Latvian national. What I do object to, is being treated as a dual Australian/Russian citizen.

Launceston, Tas.

J. BRIEDIS

## Need for Government Action

During the recent meeting arranged by H.E.L.P. with the Hon. Mr McKellar (Minister for Immigration) in Hobart, I asked a question regarding the protection of Australian citizens whose nationality was in doubt once they left Australian shores. In particular I was describing my own case — a third-generation Australian-born, married to a Lithuanian and claimed as a Russian citizen. Mr McKellar's answer was based on the suggestion that anyone with a background which complicated their present Australian nationality should elect to stay in Australia where they were 'safe', and shrugged off responsibility for overseas problems because there was a small paragraph in a booklet supplied with passports, cautioning would-be travellers that Australia cannot be responsible.

With the continuing and therefore multiplying numbers of people who marry and have families even distantly connected with peoples of Soviet dominated countries, I see a very high proportion of Australian citizens at risk when they travel overseas. They often unknowingly carry *dual nationality*.

The anomalies of dual nationality have aroused concern for many years, to a point that, early in 1975, a Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence enquired into the matter. In 1976, a Report was presented which concluded with six recommendations, of which No. 4 is most relevant to this case:

'4. As a shorter-term objective, high priority should be accorded to entering into bi-lateral agreements between Australia and those countries whose nationality laws cause Australian citizens to be dual-nationals, and who suffer disadvantage because of this circumstance.'

It appears that these recommendations are in need of re-presentation to the present Government of Australia, for action in the immediate future, before some 60-70% of present Australian citizens are either limited in their areas of world travel, or who will need to plan safely for the future, and stay at home.

Hobart, Tas.

Melva TRUCHANAS

# LATVIA TODAY

By the late Edgars Liepins, London

Edgars Liepins was 7 years old when Latvia's Independence was proclaimed and 29 years old when he saw that Independence taken away by an invading army. Under Soviet rule he spent 8 years in labour-camps, the last six helping to build the new "science city" of Novosibirsk in Siberia - which was the venue of the recently held "British Week".

After his release from labour-camps in 1956, E. Liepins lived and worked in Riga - until last Autumn, when he was allowed to come to join his wife in England. His notes contain no bitterness or resentment; they are written in such an objective manner that one can only admire his spiritual strength and detachment. His untimely death in March of this year was a great loss to the Latvian community in exile.

J.P.

**TO SIGN OR NOT TO SIGN:** I think what is most dreaded and disliked by all nationalities in the Soviet Union is the political education in Marxism/Leninism - from which noone is allowed to escape whatever his position at work or his status in the community.

At the highest level all Heads of Institutions (Educational, Industrial or Cultural) are asked every year to send a fixed number of executives to the Marxist/Leninist University for a three-year course. As this has to be taken in one's own time (i.e. in the evenings) and no reimbursement is made for expenses such as fares, not surprisingly it is not exactly popular.

For employees in the middle rank there are compulsory political lectures once or twice a month - which take place after working hours and usually last 2-3 hours. A register of attendance is kept and anyone absent is called to the office of the institution's political organiser the next day to explain his absence.

**YEARLY RITUAL:** In addition to the meetings already mentioned there are others which have to be attended by all employees - from directors to cleaners. One such meeting is a yearly ritual, usually held in October or November, under the title of "The Importance of the Five-Year Plan". The speaker at this after-working-hours meeting is generally the local Party Secretary, but if the particular industry of institutions is of great importance to the overall USSR economy, a member of Latvia's CPCC is the speaker.

**"COMRADES' COURTS":** No-one can be sure, when going to work, that he will not detained for an hour or more at some meeting after the day's work is finished. Meetings most frequently sprung without foreknowledge are in connection with the so-called "Comrades' Courts". At these, the whole work force is not required to attend - only those who work in the same department as the person "on trial". To be called to attend one of these is a most distasteful experience as it involves public censure and vilification of a fellow-worker. Indeed, those at these meetings are encouraged and sometimes ordered to do their share of abusing by

the Court's Chairman who, incidentally, is very often the worker's Trade Union Secretary, his assistants being Party, or Communist Youth, activists.

According to Soviet law these Courts should be strictly limited to cases of breaches of discipline such persistent absenteeism, consuming alcohol on duty or other general misbehaviour, but as with all Soviet Laws they can be stretched, twisted or broken in the interests of "higher aims". As these are nowhere clearly promulgated, an individual can find himself in front of a "Comrades Court" on some trumped-up charge lodged by those whose position in the Communist Party, Trade Union or Administration gives them the power to decide what is "in the interests of higher aims". For example a worker who complains of conditions in which he has to work, or grumbles that he has been bypassed for promotion can find himself in front of a Court on a charge of undermining the works discipline by trying to reduce managements' authority.

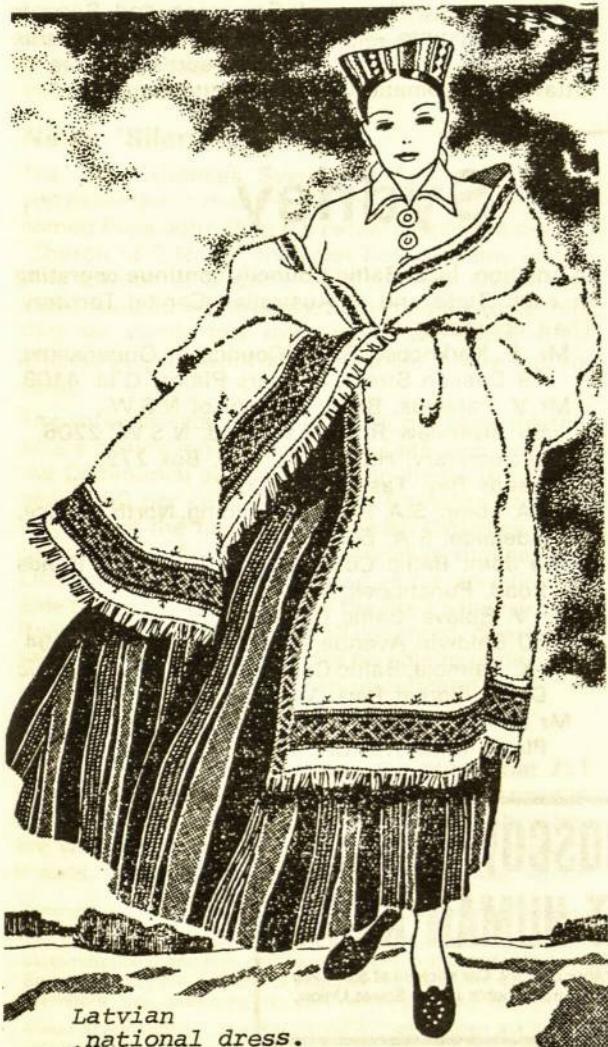
A person sentenced by such a Court (maximum fine 50 roubles - almost £40 at the present rate of exchange) is usually forced to leave his job and seek employment elsewhere otherwise it is almost certain he will later have to face the Court again.

**YOUTH UNDER HAMMER AND SICKLE:** The communist party aim is to indoctrinate not only adults in Marxism/Leninism. Great attention is also paid to the younger generation. In kindergartens all games and children's books etc. are directly or indirectly permeated with indications that Marxism/Leninism teachings are of the highest order, and that only these can save mankind from all ills and unhappiness - anything else is either bourgeois falsehood or religious myth. Later education follows the same pattern, picturing the ideal communist society in such a way that there is no doubt in the childrens' minds as to what is best for them. It is only after schooldays are over and the children, full of illusions, have to face reality - which is far removed from the idealistic school book presentation of a communist society, that reaction sets. Many become cynical of anything the CP might say and try to compensate for the deception by a purely materialistic approach to everything, by excessive drinking and an attitude of "live for to-day..."

**FROM FREEDOM TO COLONISATION:** There are also those, perhaps the largest section, who accept reality, study for their chosen professions, and later, in their small way, try to serve people as best they can in the existing political climate. I would like to mention Latvian teachers who are trying to keep educational standards in Latvian schools as high as circumstances permit, particularly in teaching children their own language and literature. Unfortunately, they are not allowed to teach the true history of Latvia and its people. This has to be taught according to the interpretation by USSR CP, which is that only

Russians are Latvia's friends; the Communist Party is their saviour; and Latvia's twenty-two years of Independence was not wanted by the Latvians but was imposed on them by a bourgeois clique who were in the service of western imperialist capitalists.

Most people in Latvia are very much aware that the country is systematically being colonised. New industries are developed on orders from Moscow; industries which, incidentally, can produce only with imported raw materials. Since the beginning of the 1950's there has been a shortage of labour to man these new industries and the managements have been instructed to import workers from Russia and other Soviet Republics - with the result that in some towns Latvians are already in a minority. Consequently, directly and by various devious ways the newcomers are acting as pioneers in the Russification of Latvia. Wherever these newcomers are in a majority Latvian Language street signs are taken down and replaced in Cyrillic letters. At places of work even where the Latvians are in the majority, if there are newcomers who do not understand Latvian, all communications in writing and speech must be made in Russian - and public meetings must be conducted in Russian.



In government offices, at any level, if a member of the public makes an application or request and the official concerned is a Russian or other non-Latvian, at best he requests a Russian translation - at worst files the application without taking any action. Later enquiries as to his decision regarding the application bring forth the answer "I do not understand Latvian". On the other hand, Latvian officials are required to know the Russian language and to deal promptly with newcomers' problems. Any slackness here and the official can be accused of "nationalistic and chauvinism" and lose his job.

**"ALL UNION" INDUSTRIES:** All major industries in Latvia are classed as "All Union", which means they are planned in Moscow and built to serve all the USSR. Top management and top technical positions are in Russian hands, and in many cases middle management too. Latvians feel that, whatever their education and qualifications, they are appointed to only those jobs not wanted by the Russians. This leads to resentment, especially amongst the younger Latvians, who know that despite their scientific or technical ability, they cannot hope to reach advanced positions unless they are willing to go to Russia's hinterland to work on new projects there. Very often pent up feelings give way to anger against the newcomers - even while it is accepted that the ordinary Russian worker is in no way responsible for this discrimination. Public quarrels, with acrimonious words from both Latvians and the newcomers, are not unusual. At any gathering where it is necessary for both groups to be present, it is most noticeable that they try to avoid any social intercourse with each other; the very opposite of the "United Soviet Nation" which is the avowed aim of the communist system.

**IN CONCLUSION** - noted Liepins in his Diary - I would say that people's lives in Latvia today are dominated by the tedious crude-propaganda-saturated press, television and radio; by the irksome controls of foreign rule; and most of all by **FEAR**.

**FEAR** to discuss anything other than the most mundane and trivial matters in case one of those present is a KGB informer.

**FEAR** to express an opinion on any order or regulation which has CP backing.

**FEAR** to correspond too frequently with those abroad in case the authorities interpret this as co-operation with subversive elements in the West. And bearing upon this;

**FEAR** that if the political situation between the USSR and the West deteriorates Latvians will again be deported.

People who have received regular letters from relatives abroad since the late 1950's are usually left alone but the recipients of any unaccustomed letters are called to the local CP office and questioned as to who the writer is, why he writes etc. So much for the Helsinki Agreement!

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- **Dual Nationality: Page 3**

CANADA:

# Baltic Evening on Parliament Hill

A Latvian dissident recently released after 15 years in a Soviet slave labour camp was a featured guest at the Seventh Annual Baltic Evening on the Canadian Parliament Hill, Ottawa, on February 21.

He is Gunar Rode, who was seen in a film called 'Prisonland', a graphic report of Soviet oppression of its enslaved political prisoners. The material for the film, in which he appeared, was smuggled out of Russia.

Ottawa was Mr Rode's first stop in North America on a lecture tour. He spoke for the Baltic Community on the very night that the Balts unveiled their book of documents prepared for presentation to the United Nations.

The book was prepared by the people of five nations in exile — the Balts (Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian), Ukrainians and Belorussians.

This special edition was presented officially to be given to the Prime Minister. Copies of the book were delivered to Members of Parliament and Senators. It is expected that presentation will also be made to Congressmen and Senators in the United States.

The annual Baltic Evening is an example of how representatives of the people of Canada drop all party lines to meet the needs of a Canadian constituency, a group seeking to correct the tragedy of their relatives behind the iron curtain who have lost their rights and freedom.

It has become such a prestigious annual event of the Parliamentary year, that many who sought to participate have had to be denied because of limited space.

Sponsored by the Baltic Federation of Canada, the evening provides a glimpse of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian culture through a small ethnographic display and culturally representative entertainment.

It is both a celebration of the heritage of the 90,000 Canadians of the Baltic origin and a commemoration of the lost freedom suffered by the formerly independent Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The speakers of both Houses — the Hon. James Jerome of the House of Commons and Senator Renaud Lapointe — addressed the gathering, this year. Cabinet Ministers and representatives of Ottawa's diplomatic Corps also attended.

## B.C.A. now in Sydney

This year, the Baltic Council of Australia has its quarters in Sydney. The principal office bearers are:

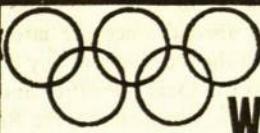
President — R. Kalamae (Estonian)  
Secretary — G.P. Bogdanovics (Latvian)  
Treasurer — V. Patasius (Lithuanian)

Council's postal address is:  
The Baltic Council in Australia,  
P.O. Box 147,  
Darlinghurst, N.S.W. 2010.

For urgent communication:  
Mr R. Kalamae,  
68 Albert Street,  
Revesby, N.S.W. 2212  
Phone:  
Home: 02-77 8069  
Business: (9.00-16.00): 02 929 8166/58.

In addition, local Baltic Councils continue operating in each State and in Australian Capital Territory. Their addresses are:

Mr. E. Korknobel, Baltic Council of Queensland,  
19 Deacon Street, Coopers Plains, Qld. 4108.  
Mr V. Patasius, Baltic Council of N.S.W.,  
55 Riverview Road, Earlwood, N.S.W. 2206.  
The Secretary, H.E.L.L.P., P.O. Box 272,  
Sandy Bay, Tasmania, 7005.  
Mr A. Lomp, S.A. Railway Building, North Terrace,  
Adelaide, S.A. 5000.  
The Joint Baltic Committee of N.S.W., 3 Bonds  
Road, Punchbowl, N.S.W. 2196.  
Mr V. Rolavs, Baltic Council of Victoria,  
30 Baldwin Avenue, Montmorency, Vic. 3094.  
Mr K. Palmoja, Baltic Council of W.A., 72 Oceanic  
Drive, Floreat Park, W.A. 6014.  
Mr A. Auzins, Baltic Council of A.C.T., 10 Lamb  
Place, Chifley, A.C.T. 2606.



**NO MOSCOW GAMES  
WITHOUT HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Olympic Games should be moved to another country. Car stickers at \$1 — are available from the Australian Committee for Human Rights in the Soviet Union, P.O. Box 104, Woollahra, 2025 NSW.

## NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

# Pope and Carter Asked to Help

An unofficial Committee for the Defence of the Rights of Catholic Believers was formed in Lithuania on November 13, 1978. This was announced on November 22, 1978, at a press conference in Moscow. Three of the five founders, all Lithuanian priests, said that their action was prompted by the election of Pope John Paul II. The new Committee has already sent several letters of protest to the Soviet authorities. It has also asked the Pope, President Carter and the Archbishop of Canterbury to seek an international agreement to defend religious rights.

The Revs. Alfonsas Svarinskas, Juozas Zdebskis and Sigitas Tamkevičius, who took part in the conference, are prominent members of the Roman Catholic movement in Lithuania. They have been frequently attacked in the Communist press, fined, and imprisoned. Also present at the conference was the Russian Orthodox priest Gleb Yakunin who last year formed an Orthodox Committee in Moscow to defend the rights of believers. The remaining two members of the Committee are the Revs. Jonas Kauneckas and Vincentas Velavičius.

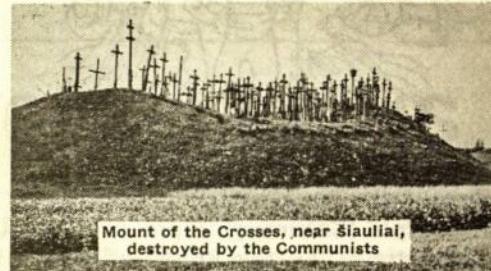
### Never 'Silent'

The Rev. Alfonsas Svarinskas told the Western correspondents that the Catholics in Lithuania welcomed Pope John Paul II's recent statement that the 'Church of Silence' shall not be silent any longer. 'The Church of Silence,' said the Rev. Svarinskas, 'never existed in Lithuania. Some of our people think that we should talk softly when we speak of our affairs, but we want to bring them loudly into the open.'

The three priests said that 70-75 per cent of Lithuania's population are practising Catholics, although the Communist authorities acknowledge their number as 50 per cent. Lithuanian Catholics form the majority of the four million Roman Catholics in the Soviet Union. According to Svarinskas, thousands of Lithuanians in the Western part of the republic were able to see the ceremonial of the Pope's investiture on Polish television. 'We were all delighted,' Svarinskas said. 'A westerner would not be able to understand us, but the present Pope can understand us.'

### Shortage of Priests

The Rev. Svarinskas informed the press that 711 priests were active and 628 churches were open in Lithuania at present. Ninety-five of these churches are without a priest. He emphasized the shortage of priests. There is only one seminary in Kaunas, which



Mount of the Crosses, near Šiauliai, destroyed by the Communists

has graduated only ten priests this year, although 17 priests have died this year already, while last year's death toll was 23. As a result, there were no priests to replace the departed ones. The average age of priests in Lithuania is 60, Svarinskas said. According to him, the authorities allow only one-third of those who want to study for the priesthood to enrol in the seminary. Two Lithuanian bishops, Vincentas Sladkevicius and Julijonas Steponavicius, are being kept in internal exile for twenty years, without a trial and without any clear cause.

### 'Everybody a Dissident'

When the journalists asked if the Lithuanian priests called themselves dissidents, The Rev. Svarinskas replied that this term was not applicable to Lithuania. 'In Lithuania, everybody is a dissident,' he said, 'except the collaborators whose numbers are small here.' He asserted that the religious awakening in Lithuania was growing stronger, especially among the young. Atheism is not popular in Lithuania. Although religious instruction of children is forbidden, some 50 per cent of city dwellers and around 95 per cent of the people in the countryside get married in the church and almost all receive church funerals.

People interested in this group's work are invited to write to the individual members of the Committee. Their addresses are:

Kun. Jonas KAUNECKAS, 235610 TELŠIAI, Pionierių g. 51 — USSR.

Kun. Alfonsas SVARINSKAS, 234422 Raseinių raj., VIDUKLĖ, Šaltinio g. 1 — USSR.

Kun. Sigitas TAMKEVIČIUS, 234290 Vilkaviškio raj. KYBARTAI, Darvino g. 12 — USSR.

Kun. Vincas VELAVIČIUS, 235915 SKAUDVILE. Tauragės g. 17 — USSR.

Kun. Juozas ZDEBSKIS, 234560 Lazdijų raj., SLAVANTAI — USSR.

BALTIC NEWS is published by HELLP (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association) in Hobart, Australia. HELLP is a non-denominational and non-party-political group of concerned Australians, who (1) do not recognize Russian sovereignty over the three Baltic States; and (2) are working to publicize the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian people's continuing struggle for survival and freedom. New members are welcome to join at any time. Postal address: P.O. Box 272, SANDY BAY, Tasmania, 7005 — Australia.

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# COMING EVENTS



- **28th April (Saturday), 8 pm**  
Polish Hall, 22 Main Rd., New Town  
**AUTUMN BALL**  
Organised by Lithuanian Folk Dancing Group 'Venta'  
Admission \$4 — B.Y.O.  
Music by 'Take Five'  
Dancing Display by Lithuanian Dancers.

## ● 14th June (Thursday)

**38th ANNIVERSARY  
OF FIRST MASS DEPORTATIONS  
FROM THE BALTIC STATES**

- 4.30 pm—7 pm:** Vigil in Franklin Square, Hobart City  
*If you cannot come for the whole of this time, join us when you can!*
- 7.00 pm:** Candlelight Procession, from Franklin Square (corner Elizabeth and Macquarie Streets) to St Mary's Cathedral, (corner Harrington and Patrick Streets).

*Please bring your own candles (in wind-proof containers) or battery torches.*

- 7.30 pm:** Ecumenical Church Service, in St Mary's Cathedral, corner Harrington and Patrick Streets.
- Guest Speaker:** Rt. Rev. Mgr. B.C. Rogers, Vicar General.



Counting of prisoners in a Soviet camp. During this subtle torture, prisoners are made to stand hours on end in the freezing cold even through the night. Sometimes prisoners are counted 9 or 10 times during 24 hours.

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## BALTIC NEWS

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