



BALTIC NEWS

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

Vol. V, No. 2 (23)

May - June 1979

MARCH FOR 6 MILLIONS

You, your family, your friends and neighbours — you are all asked to join in the **March for 6 Millions** in Hobart, on Thursday evening 14th June. The march will start at 7 p.m. from Franklin Square, on the corner of Elizabeth and Macquarie Streets, and will lead through City streets to St Mary's Cathedral, in Harrington Street.

Please bring battery torches or candles in wind-proof containers. This candlelight procession has become a regular annual event in Hobart, and is attracting ever increasing numbers of people each year.

This year's march will once again commemorate the six million Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians who are struggling for national survival in their own countries. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (known as the 'Baltic States') were overrun by Russian armed forces in 1940 and have remained under the Russian rule to the present day.

Colonization

The Russians are systematically colonizing the three Baltic countries. Starting with the mass deportations of the 'black June' of 1941, the Moscow rulers have eliminated the native civic leaders and replaced them with thousands of Russian colonists.

The Russians' aim today is to melt away the remainder of the Baltic nations. Mass murders and deportations have given way to much subtler methods. Local youths are conscripted into the Russian army and are sent to the depths of Russia — in the hope that they will marry there and never return

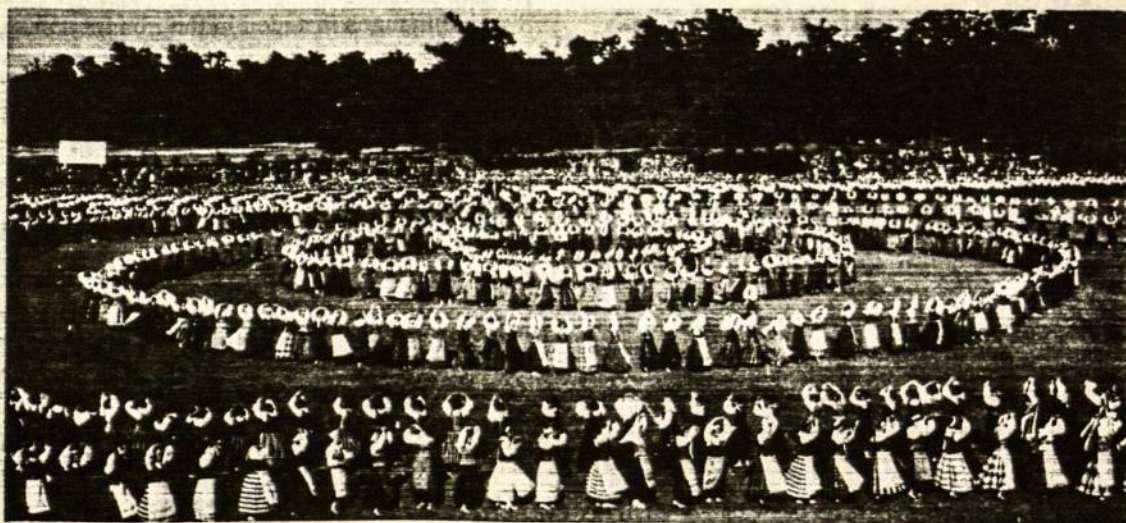
home. Young workers, tradesmen and specialists are offered higher salaries in Siberia, Kazakhstan and other remote areas — and they are promptly replaced by new waves of Russian colonists.

Baltic people who attend church are ridiculed openly. The printing and distribution of Bibles is prohibited, under the threat of heavy prison penalties.

Joint Prayers

This continuing persecution of Baltic Christians will be remembered at the end of the **March for 6 Millions**, on Thursday 14th June. An ecumenical church service will be held in St. Mary's Cathedral, at 7.30 p.m. Representatives of all major Hobart churches will join in ecumenical prayers, and the occasional address will be preached by the Catholic Vicar General, Rt. Rev. Mgr. B.C. Rogers.

Please be there — it will be a quiet way of showing your sympathy and compassion for the less fortunate people in the Baltic countries.



Lithuanian girls dancing traditional folk dances

ADOPT A PRISONER!

An Englishman's idea to help Soviet prisoners is gathering momentum in Great Britain. In a letter to the editor of *Universe*, Kevin Greenan suggested that any family in the free world could 'adopt' a prisoner of conscience in a Soviet jail. The sponsor family was asked to do but one thing: to write regularly to its adoptee.

Greenan's appeal has been very successful. People from all parts of Britain have responded and have already started writing to the prisoners.

But a lot more remains to be done. HELLP Association in Hobart (Australia) has the names and addresses of 500 other Baltic prisoners of conscience in Soviet jails, who are still waiting to be 'adopted'. Will YOU take one of them under your wing? Please don't say 'no' — use the coupon below and respond today. Or, you may write on plain paper, to HELLP, P.O. Box 272 SANDY BAY, Tasmania, 7005.

Receiving mail from abroad means a lot to a Soviet prisoner.

Letters reassure him that he has not been forgotten by the world outside. They also warn the jail administrators that the prisoner does have friends who are free to speak and can publicize any mistreatment of the captives.

To: HELLP (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association).

Post Office Box 272,
SANDY BAY, Tasmania, 7005 (Australia)

Yes, I/We would like to adopt a Baltic prisoner of conscience. Please send me/us the prisoner's name and address.

Name

Address

Postcode

FLASHBACK

WAR AND PEACE

The Russian philosophy of negotiation was stated in 1931 to the Lenin School of Political Warfare in Moscow by Dmitri Manuilski, a Soviet official and at one time the presiding officer of the U.N. Security Council:

"War to the hilt between communism and capitalism is inevitable. Today, of course, we are not strong enough to attack. Our time will come in twenty or thirty years. To win we shall need the element of surprise. The bourgeoisie will have to be put to sleep. So we shall begin by launching the most spectacular peace movement on record. There will be electrifying overtures and unheard-of concessions. The capitalistic countries, stupid and decadent, will rejoice to cooperate in their own destruction. They will leap at another chance to be friends. As soon as their guard is down, we shall smash them with our clenched fist."

GAJAUSKAS AND PETKUS FOR NOBEL PRIZE

Congressional members of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe announced on January 31, 1979, their renomination of selected members of the Soviet Helsinki Monitoring groups for the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. In their letter to the Nobel Institute, the four Senators and six Representatives noted that the Soviet groups, which are not recognized by the regime, 'have sacrificed their ease, security and often their freedom' in their efforts to monitor compliance with the Final Act of the 1975 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).



Balys Gajauskas

The nomination of the Soviet monitors includes members of groups in Moscow, the Ukraine, Lithuania, Georgia and Armenia, as well as the Working Commission on Psychiatric Abuse and Christian Committee. Balys Gajauskas and Viktoras Petkus, who received draconic sentences last year, are the two Lithuanians included in the nomination.

Describing the various repressive measures taken against various groups, the nomination noted that the members 'continue to collect material and to transmit it to the Helsinki signatories for consideration, evaluation and public attention'. Their work 'exemplifies great moral courage and civil conscience', the letter continued, adding that these individuals 'have put their lives at the service of peace and decency'.

The Helsinki Commission was created in 1976 to monitor and encourage implementation of the 35-nation accord designed to increase East-West cooperation. The Commission has published three volumes of English translations from the Soviet monitors and heard testimony from members of the Moscow and Lithuanian groups now in exile in the United States.

(ELTA)

NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

NUCLEAR DEATHS

A. Shifrin, the Director of a centre in Israel that investigates the concentration camps and psychiatric prisons in the Soviet Union, has reported the existence of Soviet camps where prisoners die through atomic radiation. The disclosures have been published in the New York periodical, *Novoye Russkoye Slovo*.

Some of these camps are near the atomic submarine bases. Shifrin names, among others, the Soviet base near Baltiski in Estonia. Prisoners from the camps are forced to clean highly radioactive parts of submarines and thus receive lethal doses of radiation.

Other camps are near the numerous uranium mines and refineries. Prisoners who work there are exposed to radiation and seldom last longer than one year. In a refinery near Tsherepovitsh the radiation is reported to be so high that very few prisoners survive for longer than six months.

'Help Viktoras Petkus!'

The following appeal has reached the West from Lithuania recently:

'We must do everything to save this man. I'm absolutely certain that the Lithuanian diaspora is not doing as much as it could do. The struggle for V. Petkus must become massed, active, and large-scaled. The appeals for his deliverance must be heard in every Catholic church, from St Peter's to the smallest village church, from the university departments, to the trade union bosses and senators. This is the only way to save Petkus.'

This man's trial was described in *Baltic News* Aug.-Dept. 1978 issue. His present address is:

V. Petkus,
600020 g. Vladimir 20
Uczredzenie OD -- 1st-2.

When writing from abroad, it is better to address letters as follows:

V. Petkus,
Moskva
P.J. 5110-1-OD
USSR.



Viktoras Petkus

Roman Catholicism attacked in Press

In Latvia there are a considerable number of practising Roman Catholics with a strong historical influence from Polish Catholicism. Over 60,000 people of Polish descent have not given up their own religion and — being Poles — the use of their language in private. Despite this, Latvia's Soviet Press has hardly mentioned the election of the new Pope; and what little was said was culled from TASS or Moscow newspapers. Now, nearly three months after the election of Pope John Paul, *Padomju Latvijas Komunisti*, No. 12/78, has come up with a strong attack on Catholic beliefs and on priests.

In a seven page article, entitled 'Religion and Ideological Struggle', Mr Z. Balevics, Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, attributes all the ills of the world to 'Religious preachers who through propagating eternal life, love of ones fellowmen, and a mysterious God, are withholding people from collective aims — thereby creating dangerous individualism which can be used by nationalists as a basis for emnity amongst various nations'.

The curious thing is that Mr Z. Balevics does not say one cross word against the Russian Orthodox Church. All his arguments and criticisms are directed at the Western Churches. For instance, 'In Capitalist countries, and countries which have fallen under their influence, religion is used to create emnity against the people of progressive views'. 'Churches promote unreasonable accusations against the progressive teachings of Lenin.'

At the end of his long tirade, Mr Z. Balevics urges all enlightened people to close their ranks against 'promoters of reactionary thought'. He offers an olive-branch to those who hold religious beliefs with these words 'Communists and believers can live together in peace and harmony if the believers observe the rules proscribed by the Communist Party which is armed with the most advanced ideas for the benefit of all people'.

New Chronicle reaches the West

The latest issue of the samizdat 'Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania' (No. 35) is dated November, 1978, and is 65 pages long. Among its highlights are two letters to Pope John Paul II, expressing the hopes of the Lithuanian Catholics for a more purposeful Vatican policy on East Europe. 'Letters from the Gulag' include a moving account of the journey of Ona Pranskunaite, a prisoner of conscience, and a description of the camp marriage of Balys Gajauskas last year. A new Lithuanian underground periodical, *Perspectives*, is announced. There is an extensive survey of the Lithuanian struggle for national and religious rights.

(ELTA)

DEPORTATIONS

FROM THE SOVIET OCCUPIED LITHUANIA

VYTAUTAS VAITIEKŪNAS

DEPORTATION means a system of punishment for a certain crime involving the removal of the criminal to a penal settlement outside his own country. Some countries practice deportation as a method of secondary punishment. Deportation also means expulsion from a country of an alien. Deportation is also used to confine to selected areas for the time of war people unreliable and dangerous to the national security. Most notorious, however, is the mass deportation involving the removal of some social groups or even entire nationalities to compulsory settlement and forced labor outside their own country.

Deportation has been practiced from the most ancient times. The ancient Assyrian empire in the 8th century B. C. deported inhabitants of the conquered Israel. Later, in the 6th century B. C., when Assyria in her turn was conquered and subjugated by Babylonia, Assyrians were deported by the Babylonians. Deportation was also practiced by the ancient Greece and Rome.

When European states acquired overseas colonies, deportation of criminals to the colonies begun. For that purpose, Spain used her South American colonies. Great Britain deported criminals to Australia; France, to Madagascar, French Guiana, New Caledonia, Devil's Island, etc.; Portugal, to Angola.

Under the law of Independent Lithuania, military commandant of a district or city could deport persons, dangerous to national security or to military forces, from the areas where the state of war was proclaimed.

In czarist Russia, from the times of Peter I (1672-1725), simultaneously with deportation of criminals sentenced by court to penal settlement with harsh forced labor-*katorga* in Siberia, deportation were practiced of persons punished for opposition to czarist regime not by court sentence, but by the administrative orders of the Ministry of Interior. Thus, deportation became one of the methods whereby czarist regime fought its adversaries. During the reign of czar Aleksander I (1777-1825), about one million people were thus transferred to Siberia.

To Lithuanians, Siberia was and is synonymous with the reign of terror and of national genocide. For the first time, Lithuanians were deported to Siberia after the Lithuanian-Polish Commonwealth was partitioned in 1793. Several thousands of Lithuanians were also deported after the 1831 uprising against the Russian domination. Even more were deported after the 1863 uprising against the Russians. In addition to the deportation by the orders of the Russian Minister of Interior, the Governor General of Vilnius, Muravyov, was authorized to order deportation of Lithuanian inhabitants who

in one way or another have been involved in the uprising. Entire villages whose inhabitants were suspected of any kind of ties with the uprising were burned down, people deported. Muravyov himself admitted to having deported 9361 persons.

After the Soviet Army invaded and occupied Lithuania in June, 1940, the first individual deportation from occupied Lithuania to USSR was carried out in July 1940, prior to Lithuania's illegal incorporation into the USSR. With the consent of the puppet president of the occupied Lithuania, the puppet minister of interior found it necessary "to deport from the territory of Lithuania and to settle in the Soviet Union the former Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, Antanas Merkys and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Urbšys, together with their families, as persons dangerous to the Lithuanian State."*

After the forcible and illegal incorporation of occupied Lithuania into the USSR in August, 1940, preparation for mass deportations from Lithuania was initiated. First the so-called "accounting", i. e., the list of the families to be deported were prepared, then the executional personnel were appointed and instructed about the procedure of carrying out the deportation.

In conformity with the order No. 001223 of the NKVD of the USSR, two strictly secret orders have been issued in occupied Lithuania concerning the accounting. The order No. 0054 of November 28, 1940, issued by the Lithuanian People's Commissar of Interior stipulates:

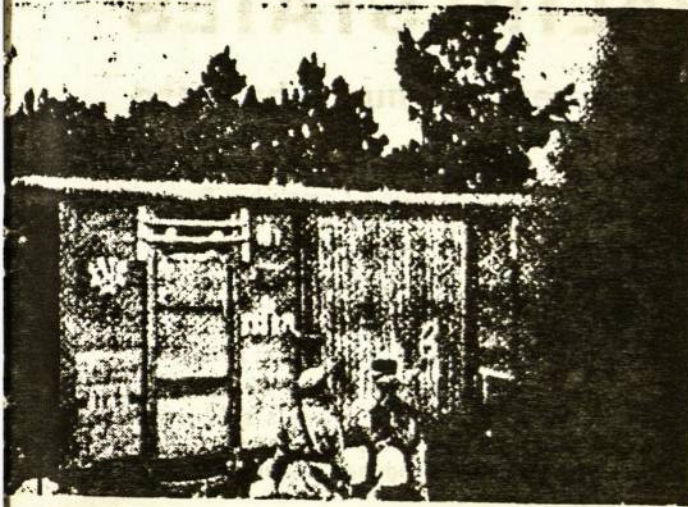
"The index account must cover all those persons who by reason of their social and political past, national chauvinistic opinions, religious convictions, moral and political instability, are opposed to the socialist order and thus might be used by the intelligence services of foreign countries and by the counter-revolutionary centers for anti-soviet purposes.

"These elements include:

"a) All former members of anti-soviet political parties, organizations and groups: Trotskyists, rightists, Emsers (socialist revolutionists), Mensheviks, Socialdemocrats, anarchists, and the like;

"b) All former members of national chauvinistic anti-soviet parties, organizations and groups: nationalists, members of the "Young Lithuania", voldemarists

* Photostatic copy of this document as well as photostatic copies of orders and instruction concerning deportation quoted below are deposited in the Law Library of the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.



● We accuse . . . One of railway cattle-trucks in which thousands of Balts were deported to Russia in June 1941. Men were separated from their wives and children. The deportees were of all ages, all social groups.

populists, Christian Democrats, members of nationalist terroristic organization ("Iron Wolf"), active members of student fraternities, active members of the National Guard, Catholic terroristic organization "White Knight";

"c) Former gendarmes, policemen, former employees of political and criminal police and of the prisons;

"d) Former officers of the czarist, Petliura's and other armies;

"e) Former officers and members of military courts of the armies of Lithuania and Poland;

"f) Former political bandits and volunteers of the white and other armies;

"g) Persons expelled from the Communist Party and the Communist Youth organization for anti-party offenses;

"h) All deserters, political emigrants, re-emigrants, repatriates and contrabandists;

"i) All citizens of foreign countries, representatives of foreign firms, employees of offices of foreign countries, former citizens of foreign countries, former employees of legations, firms, concessions and stock companies of foreign countries;

"j) Persons having personal contacts and maintaining correspondence abroad, with foreign legations and consulates, esperantists and philatelists;

"k) Former employees of the departments of ministries (from councilors up);

"l) Former Red Cross workers and Polish refugees;

"m) Religionists (priests, ministers), sectants and active religionists of religious communities;

"n) Former noblemen, estate owners, merchants bankers, businessmen (who availed themselves of hired labor), shop owners, owners of hotels and restaurants

"For the preparation of these index accounts of anti-soviet elements all sources must be made availed including: agencies' reports, special investigative materials, materials of the Party and State organizations statements of citizens, testimony of the arrested persons and other data."

The last step in preparation for mass deportation was a very detailed strictly secret instruction regarding the procedure and manner for carrying out the deportation. The instruction was issued by the Deputy People's Commissar of State Security of the USSR

On June 14, 1941, the first mass deportation from occupied Lithuania was launched. According to data collected by the Lithuanian Red Cross, 34,260 Lithuanians were deported in two days.

The same scheme of mass deportations adopted in 1941 was resumed during the 2nd soviet occupation of Lithuania. Thirteen waves of mass deportations were carried out after World War II: in July, August, September, 1945; February, 1946; July, August, October, November, December, 1947; May, 1948; March and June, 1949; March, 1950. Because of the shortage of the means of transportation and conveying MVD (NKVD) troops, not all deportation waves embraced all parts of occupied Lithuania.

The deportees were usually seized between 1 and 4 A. M. After the search they have from a half to one hour to pack their household articles. In the course of one hour they have to bid farewell to all they had earned, saved, inherited, acquired. The deportees came from all walks of life and represent all age levels. Though the instruction provided for only 25 persons to a railway car, actually up to 60 people often were stuffed into one car.

The Lithuanian deportees were transported to Altai, Kazakhstan, Northern Russia, and Siberia. Most of the Lithuanian deportees were confined in the forced labor camps.

There are no published soviet statistical data concerning the number of deportees. Demographers in the West calculate Lithuania's population losses by 570,000. The soviet census of 1959 reported a population of 2,711,000 in occupied Lithuania, including Russian colonists. Yet, before the soviet occupation, at the end of 1939, Lithuania's population was 3,215,000.

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6621 So. Troy, Chicago, Ill. 60629, USA.

38th ANNIVERSARY
OF FIRST MASS DEPORTATIONS
FROM THE BALTIC STATES

NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

Inhuman Conditions

Avraham Shifrin, Director of the Central Information Bureau in Israel, dealing with prisons, mental institutions and concentration camps in the Soviet Union, has forwarded to the Estonian Aid Centre in Sweden information about the conditions in the Central Prison in Tallinn. This information has been obtained from Mikhail Korenblit, a former political prisoner in the Soviet Union, who was later allowed to emigrate to Israel.

According to his report, political prisoners in the Central Prison in Tallinn are held in cells without heating and are subjected to hunger and beatings. Particularly notorious are cells Nos. 58 and 102 named 'gorbatshevs' after the chief security officer of the prison. These cells are used especially for political prisoners who refuse to give evidence in courts; they also hold a number of selected criminal prisoners who, on orders from KGB officials, beat and rape the political prisoners.

Some cells in the prison are so far underground that seawater penetrates the concrete. These unheated cells lack bedding of any kind and since there are no sanitary facilities, the floors are covered with human excrement. Prisoners are sometimes kept in these cells for weeks.

The name of the Prison Commandant is Laksberg, the security chief is Gorbatshev and the operative KGB officer is Emelyanov.

Former Communist harassed by KGB

Last summer the flat of Mr Eduards Berklaivs, one-time member of Latvia's Communist Party Central Committee and Vice-Chairman of Latvia's Council of Ministers, was searched by the KGB. They took away private letters, manuscripts of poems and other material. Later, his wife was questioned by the KGB and accused of having contact with Mr J. Orlov, and with the Human Rights Movement in Moscow.

Mr Eduard Berklaivs was stripped of his office in the late 1950s for opposing Latvia's colonisation and demanding that in State and Latvian Administrations, the Latvian language should be used as the official one.

At the time, Moscow demanded that he renounce his views publicly, and when he refused on 15 July 1959, he was expelled from the Communist Party and exiled to Vladimir (known for its notorious prison). A few years ago, Mr Berklaivs was allowed to return to Latvia, but he is still being harassed by the authorities. He cannot get a job, even labouring.

He is followed when he leaves his flat, and agent provocateurs, posing as wellwishers from abroad, have recently been trying to compromise him.

LNA—FCI

LETTERS

Exchange of Dissidents

I was so pleased recently when the Americans extracted five dissidents from the Russians' clutches. Could our own Government follow this fine example and bring a few Baltic prisoners of conscience to Australia, in exchange for spies or other undesirables?

Albury

W. ROBINSON



'The First Steps' — a typical cartoon from the official Soviet periodical, *Slavuta*. Although both Constitutions of the U.S.S.R. (the new and the old) had guaranteed religious freedom, a constant ridicule campaign is waged against all religions by the Government-controlled Soviet media.

Baltic Recognition

My sincere congratulations to Chris Hurford, M.H.R., for disclosing the facts of Mr Whitlam's 'Baltic recognition', in your Nov.-Dec. 1978 issue of *Baltic News*.

For nearly five years, there was a lot of guessing and no certain facts to explain why Australia's Prime Minister of the day had chosen to recognise, *de jure*, Russia's colonial rule in the three Baltic States.

Now we know: the initiative came from the Public Servants.

One thing worries me. Mr Whitlam has paid for his mistake, at the election that followed. But the public servants remain, anonymous and unscathed.

This is hardly fair. We should be entitled to know, who these public servants are; what motivated them to give such un-Australian 'advice'; and whether they are still in influential positions today.

Melbourne

Elizabeth LAIBAKOJIS

The Editor welcomes letters, especially brief ones, at P.O. Box 272, Sandy Bay, 7005, and reserves the right to condense.

COMING EVENTS

- **26th May (Saturday), 8 pm**
Polish Hall, 22 Main Rd., New Town (Tas.)
DANCE
Good Band . . . Novelties . . . All Welcome
Organised jointly by the Lithuanian Association in Hobart and Lithuanian Folk Dancing Group 'Venta'.
- **10th June (Sunday), at 2.30 pm**
at the
Lithuanian House,
44 Errol Street, North Melbourne
**BALTIC REMEMBRANCE DAY
CONCERT AND MEETING**
Organised by
The Joint Baltic Committee in Victoria

- **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.

Generous Help for HELLP

The late Mrs Klava Jakstas has remembered HELLP (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association) in her will. HELLP Association publishes this newsletter, and generally publicizes the Baltic people's current plight. Until her death in Hobart last year, Mrs Jakstas was a Lecturer in Science Russian

at the University of Tasmania. She and her late husband, Aleksas Jakstas, had been very active supporters of HELLP Association since its formation in September 1974.

'Mrs Jakstas' donation could not have come at a better time,' a spokesman for HELLP Association said in Hobart today. 'We tried to secure some advertising from the Federal Government and from the Tasmanian State Government — but received blank refusals from both. The financial future of *Baltic News* looked rather grim for a while; but now, we can breathe again.'

Thanks to its generous supporters, the *Baltic News* will continue to be distributed *free of charge* to all who ask for it.

The following other donations have been received since the last issue:

Joint Baltic Committee of N.S.W., \$20; L. Tidey (Qld), \$10; C. Ford (N.S.W.), A. Simkus (Vic.), H. Kolin (Vic.), Bob Isted (Tas.), E. Mrozowski (Tas.), \$5 each; L. Nobelius (Vic.), \$2.

Many thanks to all!



Not Against Australian Law

In its issue of 26 March, the Sydney-based Lithuanian weekly *Musu Pastoge* exhorts young Lithuanians to 'take up the torch of the fight for freedom, to carry it into the future, and not to let it go out'. The paper says it is not against Australian law to support and advocate the expulsion of Soviet Russians from Lithuania and the re-establishment of an independent Lithuanian State.

'To support freedom for Lithuania is not to plot the overthrow of the USSR Government,' it says. 'We only demand the secession of Lithuania from the Soviet Union, a right which is guaranteed by the Soviet Constitution itself.'

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.

HIJACKING IN THE EAST:

A Shaky Bridge to Freedom

On September 23, 1977 The New York Times published an appeal by seven Soviet citizens — three Lithuanians, three Russians and one Jew — to Carter and Brezhnev, asking them to facilitate their emigration to the United States. One of them was Romas J. Giedra, 34, who served five years in prison for trying to divert a plane to the West. Last summer, Giedra sent an extensive letter, detailing his experiences and explaining the essential difference between hijackers of planes in the West and in Eastern Europe. His letter was first published in the Lithuanian-language weekly Darbininkas (Brooklyn, August 11, 1978).

In September 1977, *The New York Times* and *Baltimore Sun* published an appeal my friends and I had sent to the President of the United States, J. Carter, and to the Chairman of the USSR Supreme Presidium, L. Brezhnev, in which we asked them to help us to emigrate from the USSR and to take residence in the U.S.

In that appeal, we briefly described the main motives that had prompted us to take such a step. We also enumerated the 'crimes' committed and the penalties we have served in the contemporary Soviet concentration camps. Those who read my appeal must have noticed the explanation next to my name: 'He attempted to hijack a plane and to escape to the West'.

Now, when the world is shocked by the hijacking of planes, when innocent people are exposed to threats, when governments are blackmailed, I consider it useful to present a more detailed account of my 'attempt to hijack a plane and to escape to the West'. I want my readers to make up their own minds if my escape to the West and Western-style plane-hijacking have anything in common.

Before starting my account, I would like to make one remark. When a Western reader, who has a foggy notion about Soviet reality, hears about the hijacking of a plane, parallel associations arise immediately in his mind: kidnapping of hostages, political and financial demands, blackmail . . .

I must disappoint such readers. All these things never happen in our part of the world — the hijacking of a Soviet plane is quite different in style and its purpose incomparably 'narrower, smaller and more prosaic'. As soon as the plane lands in some Western airport (e.g., in West Germany or Sweden), the hijacker is the first to leave the plane and hurries to submit himself to the police. The only thing he wants is to remain in that country as a resident.

Not a single one of the 174 articles of the new Soviet Constitution mentions emigration from the USSR. Therefore, individuals who are unable to adjust themselves to the Soviet reality and do not want to live according to the Party and government yardsticks, have but one alternative left — to leave the Soviet Union illegally.

'To leave illegally' — these words are easily said. The irony of fate is that, with its longest borders, this socialist state has fenced itself off very thoroughly, both from friend and foe. Sometimes bigger fences are built against friends than against enemies.



Light Soviet plane YAK 12: Baltic escapee Romas Giedra tried to fly it, in his unsuccessful attempt to flee to the West.

I do not know if in any country of the world there is a practice of raking sandy beaches for the night. Yet our beach of Palanga has been harrowed and raked for more than 30 years. Electronic equipment, barbed wire, mines, rockets, traps, forbidden zones, dogs — all this serves to ensure that the sacred state border is not violated. And where are the secret posts, manned by local people specially enrolled for that purpose, where are the *druzhinniki* (vigilante squads)? They all have been mobilized to guard the sacred borders.

And yet — despite all that — the people keep escaping. In the Soviet concentration camps there is a special category of people imprisoned for their attempt to escape. Their terms are all long — from five to fifteen years. Most of those would-be escapees are young people whose best days are crushed by the forced labor engine.

I am fully convinced that not one of these fellows would have served, or would be serving in the camps now, if the Soviet laws would guarantee the right to emigration.

Such is the logic of hijacking, such is the main difference between the western and the socialist world — some suffer from the overabundance of freedom, others because of the lack of it.

— ELTA

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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