



# BALTIC NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF HELP THE ESTONIAN, LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION (HELP)  
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## Human Lifelines Cut

**The Soviets have cut three lifelines between the Baltic people and their friends and relatives living in the West. New Soviet measures have stopped all pre-paid gift parcels, interrupted the flow of letters and restricted Balts' contact with foreigners.**

Gift parcels to the USSR attract very high import duties and ordinary recipients in Russian-occupied Baltic countries cannot afford to pay them. For example, Soviet charges on a small parcel sent from Hobart last May were assessed at \$295.45. The parcel contained a vinyl jacket, two pairs of jeans, two pullovers, two large scarves, three small scarves and a bedspread.

Until August 1 this year, Soviet import duties and other charges could be prepaid by the sender. Several agencies around the free world were licensed by the Soviet government for this purpose and were widely used.

From August 1, all such licences have been withdrawn, and duty-pre-paid gift parcels are no longer accepted from outside the USSR. The official Soviet explanation is that Vneshposyltorg (the Soviet government's parcels agency) was running at a loss.

Jane Ellis, the editor of Keston College's journal, *Religion in Communist Lands*, disagrees. "They have been doing very well out of it: the import duties yielded millions of dollars' worth of much-needed foreign currency every year," she says. "However, they have clearly decided to forgo this in favour of stifling religious and political dissent."

### Gifts May Lead to Gaol

Another alarming and potentially far-reaching amendment was made this year to the "Anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" article of the Soviet Criminal Code — an article under which dissidents are often brought to trial. It prescribes punishment of up to 10 years in prison plus 5 years exile.

The "Anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" article has been expanded, according to the Gazette of the Supreme Soviet (*Vedomosti Verkhovnogo Soveta*) to include "... actions carried out with the use of money or other material goods received from foreign organisations or persons acting in the interests of such organisations."

Material aid of any kind from abroad can now be considered an "accessory to crime." It can be extended to cover even something as trivial as receiving a pair of jeans.

The Soviet Gazette lists a number of other "tightening up" measures. Severe prison sentences are prescribed for anyone passing economic, scientific, technical or other "official" secrets to foreigners.



● Gift parcels and visitors from the West are now taboo for Grazina Gajauskaite, daughter of Lithuanian prisoner of conscience Balys Gajauskas (pictured with her grandmother) — and for thousands of others.

In June, KGB agents ransacked the Gajauskas family home in Vilnius, and confiscated some books and Grazina's father's letters from prison.

The Soviet law amendments have legalised the blackmail tactics the Soviets have been using against the families of known or suspected Baltic dissidents, according to a reliable Latvian source in London. For years Baltic dissidents have been receiving parcels from the International Red Cross, Amnesty International and other religious and humanitarian organisations. Because they are "foreign," these organisations are now perpetrators of a "crime" which makes package recipients liable to prosecution.

In recent years, these organisations were surprised by the many refusals and returns of their packages. It was recently discovered that the Soviet authorities have a blackmail technique for discouraging foreign help. If the family of an imprisoned person accepts a package, the prisoner is threatened with having to serve out his full sentence. If the family refuses the package, the Soviets promise a possible earlier release of the prisoner.

● More on Page 2

# ... Lifelines Cut

## ● From Page 1

The Soviet authorities are openly interfering with mail, from and to the Russian-occupied Baltic countries.

In the first seven months of his imprisonment, Lithuanian priest A. Svarinskas was allowed to write fourteen letters (two a month), but his family received only three. Father Svarinskas himself received only six letters out of the twenty-four sent to him by his brother and sisters. At Christmas, when hundreds of letters and cards were sent to him from Lithuania, only seven reached him. Complaints from his family to the camp commander brought the reply that Fr Svarinskas would be sending the permitted number of letters from his prison camp.

In the United States, the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee has been investigating the Soviet interference with international mail, over the past 18 months. Chaired by Congressman Benjamin A. Gilman, the Committee has reviewed 1,600 exhibits and logged some 2,300 complaints. Evidence has so far revealed:

- 150 certifications of delivery with 7 signatures. This suggests that mail to Soviet prison camp inmates is intercepted, tampered with, and fraudulently certified as delivered.
- A signed certificate of delivery to a prison camp inmate who had died 3 years before the Soviets claimed he received his mail.
- Over 1,000 exhibits showed Soviets evading postal indemnity payments, by using false statements on why parcels and letters are not delivered to Balts and other nationalities in the Soviet Union.

## World Congress Briefed

The question of Soviet authorities tampering with mail from abroad was brought to the attention of the 14th World Postal Congress which took place in Hamburg, West Germany, in June this year.

The human rights organisation *Gesellschaft fuer Menschenrechte* compiled extensive documentation on the Soviet practice, pointing out, among other things, that correctly addressed letters to prisoners of conscience are frequently returned to senders marked "address unknown", "no longer at this address" or "insufficient address".



● Australians may tour Riga (pictured) and other Baltic capitals. However, if an Australian visitor chooses to stay at a private home without prior Soviet permission, the latest laws make the Baltic host liable to a fine of 50 roubles (about \$A75). This amount is a fortnight's salary for a clerk in the Russian-occupied Baltic States.



● Single parent families like the widow and children of Estonian Juri Kukk (pictured, at Juri's grave in Vologda) will be hit hard by the latest Soviet bans on prepaid gift parcels.

The Australian-based Christian aid society, Friends of the Prisoners (PO Box 12, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005 — Australia), reports that similar difficulties have been experienced by people who write to Soviet prisoners from Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Africa. Anyone who has a letter returned from the USSR is asked to forward such letter, complete with the envelope, to Friends of the Prisoners at the above address. Once enough evidence is collected, a complaint will be sent to the International Postal Union from Australia, too.

In spite of these hitches, quite a few letters do come through. They confirm that letters from the free world are a very important morale-booster for the people in the Baltic countries — and elsewhere in the USSR (see separate report on Page 8 in this issue).

## Contacts with Foreigners

From July 1, 1984, Baltic residents and other Soviet citizens can be fined for being too friendly towards visiting foreigners. According to the *Gazette of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR* (May 25, 1984), Soviet citizens are now liable to fines for rendering "services", such as putting up a foreigner overnight or giving him a lift in a private car, without notifying the Soviet authorities first.

Recent expulsion of an African missionary and the detention of a Latvian-American tour operator point to increasing Soviet nervousness about the so-called "ethnic tourism" to the Baltic Republics.

Mykolas Andriejauskas, a Lithuanian-born monk, decided to celebrate the golden jubilee of his profession amongst his own people, after spending 45 years in Africa and other missionary posts. Last November, he flew from Lusaka to Vilnius, via Moscow — only to be told that his luggage had "vanished". Brother Andriejauskas telephoned his relatives who came immediately, but were not allowed to join him. Andriejauskas was told by the authorities that "there was something wrong with his visa". He was held overnight in isolation, in a Vilnius hotel; he was then flown back to Moscow. The missing luggage was found in the Russian capital, but Andriejauskas was not allowed to stay and was put under police escort on the next plane to London.

— LIS/Keston News

## NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

# Jews Harassed and Gaoled

Six Latvian Jews were arrested on April 10 in Riga after staging a protest in the city centre over the detention of two Jewish relatives, Alexander Balter and Zakhar Zunshain. The protesters were given sentences ranging from 10 to 15 days for "hooliganism".

Balter (26) was arrested on March 29 and sentenced to fifteen days' prison for demonstrating in Moscow for the right to emigrate. Zunshain (33) was arrested in connection with the same Moscow demonstration. He was charged with "anti-Soviet" agitation and, on June 29, he was sentenced to three years ordinary regime labour camp.

For years now, Zunshain and Balter have unsuccessfully tried to migrate from Russian-occupied Latvia to Israel. Last year, Zunshain, his wife Tatyana, Balter and Leonid Umansky (44) twice asked the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet to accept the renunciation of their Soviet citizenships. On the second occasion, Zakhar Zunshain was arrested and held for 15 days, for "hooliganism".

— USSR News Brief.

## New Chief in Latvia

Boris Karlovich Pugo, an ethnic Latvian who is in his late 40's, became first secretary of the Latvian Communist Party in mid-April. Until then, he was head of the KGB in Russian-occupied Latvia.

Pugo took over the Latvian KGB in November 1980 and moved swiftly to assert his authority. In the spring of 1981, long prison terms were handed down to Juris Bumeisters and Dainis Lismans, Latvians accused of organising an illegal social democratic movement.

In 1983, at least eight Latvians were incarcerated for their political or religious beliefs.

Kristian Gerner, a Soviet affairs specialist at the University of Lund in Sweden, says it is too early to say whether Pugo's jump from the KGB to the leadership of the Latvian party was the start of a trend in the non-Russian Soviet-occupied republics.

— The Christian Science Monitor/Latvian Info Bulletin.

## "God's Finger"

● Last year, St Nicholas church in Tallinn (Russian-occupied Estonia) was taken away from its Estonian congregation and converted into a museum and concert hall, under the supervision of Polish experts. Shortly before the work was completed, a fire broke out and the church tower toppled over. "It's God's finger," said the Estonians.

The damage has since been repaired, but no pictures of the toppled tower were allowed to be published in Estonia. This photograph was smuggled out by Western tourists.

— LNF/Australijas Latvietis.



## 15 Years for Signatures



● Enn Tarto.

Estonian human rights worker Enn Tarto has been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in a Russian strict regime camp, to be followed by five years' exile.

Tarto had signed several peaceful petitions to the Soviet government, including the 1981 call for nuclear-free Baltic and the 1979 appeal for immediate renunciation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The sentence, proclaimed by the Peoples' Court in Tallinn on April 20, 1984, is the harshest penalty on record, for peaceful protests of this kind.

— Newsletter from behind the Iron Curtain.

## What Price Freedom?

Three Lithuanian women — Aldona Sukyte, Bronislava Valaitite and Janina Judikeviciute — have offered to spend twenty years each in Soviet prisons and exile, if the Soviets agree to release two priests, Frs Alfonsas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevicius. The priests were gaoled last year for ten years each.

The three women have also protested to the top judicial authorities of Lithuania and the Soviet Union, because they were incarcerated for five to ten days without any charges. Their only "offence" was that they sought permission to attend Fr Tamkevicius's trial.

"Dear Procurator-General", the women's letter concludes, "the priests who have done no harm belong back in Lithuania. If you need Christian blood, then let us stand in for the priests our nation needs so much; do let us complete their sentences on their behalf."

The imprisoned priests' addresses are:

618263 Permskaya oblast, Chusovskoi raion, pos. Kuchino, uchr. VS-389/36, SVARINSKAS, Alfonsas. — USSR.

Permskaya oblast, Chusovskoi raion, pos, Polovinka, uchr. VS-389/37, TAMKEVICIUS, Sigitas. — USSR.

# Cruise across the Baltic

Balts in the free world and Baltic supporters of all nationalities will combine next August, for the "Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise 85." Timed to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the Helsinki Conference, the Cruise will start in Copenhagen, proceed past the borders of the Baltic States to Helsinki, and end in Stockholm with a mass demonstration and a concert in the Skansen outdoor museum.

Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise 85 promises to be an exciting experience — and lots of fun. Highly acclaimed musical ensembles, artists, literary figures and public leaders will take part at every port of call. World-class Baltic basketball and volleyball teams will challenge Danish, Finnish and Swedish teams. A two-day Baltic Tribunal, organised by the World Baltic Conference, will be held in Copenhagen, immediately before departure. English and German will be the official languages for all events — so, the Australian passengers should have no communication problems.

The aims of Cruise 85 are: To attract world media attention to the Baltic peoples' desire for national self-determination; to spark Baltic co-operative movements; to press for total removal of Soviet military forces and nuclear arms from the three Baltic States; and to establish personal contacts among Baltic supporters.

## Youth Initiative

The Cruise 85 project was started by a group of young Latvians in Europe. They have since been joined by young Estonians and Lithuanians in three continents.

The exact dates of the Cruise have not yet been finalised, but will probably be in the first week of August, 1985. The cost is expected to be around US\$300 per person.

As the Cruise ship has only limited accommodation, berths will be allotted on the basis of "first in, first served." To register, contact Dr Peter Darzins, 27 Aroha Tce., Black Forest, SA 5035, 'phone (08)



- The dotted line shows the proposed route of the "Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise 85", planned for August 1985. The \$300 cruise has been organised by a group of young Balts in the free world, and is open to anyone who wishes to join it.

297 4242 (after hours); or: Dr G. Nagels, 19 McIvor St, Cheltenham, Vic 3192.

The European contacts are: M. Graudins, Wenburgstr 60, 4400 Muenster/Westf., West Germany; and V. Zalkalns, Skanstavagen 22, 184 00 Akersberga, Sweden.

North American enquiries should be directed to: VLIK, 1611 Connecticut Ave., Suite 2, Washington, D.C., 20009, U.S.A.

## LETTERS

Because of a lack of space in this issue, readers' letters will be held over until the next issue.

## Prime Minister Meets Baltic Council



● On May 30, Prime Minister Bob Hawke received a delegation of the Baltic Council of Australia (pictured, from left to right): V. Koskins, J. Ritenis (Chairman, BCA), Prime Minister Hawke, Dr B. Vingilis, J. Liepins, J. Peedo.

The Prime Minister was briefed on the current situation in the Soviet-occupied Baltic countries. He was asked to continue the Australian Government's disapproval of human rights infringements in the Baltic; and to voice this in both Houses of Australian Parliament, in dealings with Soviet authorities and in international forums, such as the United Nations.

Representatives of the Baltic Council also called on the Leader of the Opposition (Mr A. S. Peacock) and the Leader of the Australian Democrats (Senator D. L. Chipp).

This "Baltic Day" concluded with a dinner for Parliamentarians at the prestigious Canberra Club. Government, Opposition and independent members were well represented.

# In the Shadow of a Saint

A frail young man — who died five hundred years ago, at the age of 25 — seems to be worrying the Soviets more than America's nuclear arms. He is St Casimir, patron saint of Lithuania. March 4, 1984 marked the 500th anniversary of St Casimir's death, and Soviet authorities went out of their way to obstruct religious ceremonies held in his honour.

According to eyewitnesses, the principal solemn inaugural services in Vilnius (capital of Russian-occupied Lithuania) were marred on March 3, when the authorities ordered the Lithuanian and the Polish services at St Peter and Paul's to be held simultaneously. Less than a half of the congregation could be accommodated in the church. Thousands of others had to stand outside and could not hear the sermons, because all loudspeakers were turned off on official orders.



● St Casimir, as portrayed in Zachariah Ferreri's biography, *Vita beati Casimiri, scripta Vilnae* (1521).

The priests of the Archdiocese of Vilnius were not notified about the inaugural services. Believers had to queue up for hours at the confessional, because some priests were denied permission to hear confessions.

## Church Guarded

Militiamen and security police stood guard, all day long, at the Church of Saint Casimir, now a museum of atheism, in Vilnius.

Church sources allege that a telegram from Pope John Paul II, addressed to the bishops and to all participants in the ceremonies, could not be read: the telegram was deliberately delayed by the Soviets.

Since March 3 was a school day, many young Lithuanians planned to attend a prayer vigil at the Tomb of St Casimir in Vilnius on Sunday, March 4. Their plans were shattered by school authorities who arranged compulsory extra-curricular activities on this Sunday. Undaunted, young believers gathered in Vilnius from all Lithuania to recite poetry, sing hymns and to say the rosary in honour of their patron. KGB agents kept everyone under surveillance until the crowds dispersed, eyewitnesses report.

Interference was also reported at the local level, according to the underground *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

Residents of the town of Garliava said that a statue of St Casimir, which was to be erected in the churchyard, was hauled away by local authorities.

During the principal Mass on March 4 in the village of Zilinai, a compulsory track and field day was organised for all students.

## Free World Prays

Meanwhile, thousands of free Lithuanians and their friends gathered in St Peter's Basilica (Vatican City) on March 4, to take part in a solemn Mass offered by Pope John Paul II for Lithuania, its Church and St Casimir. "On this day, I want to unite myself spiritually with the bishops of Lithuania", the Pontiff told the crowd. No Christians were allowed by Soviet authorities to travel from Lithuania to Rome, for this celebration.

Nevertheless, the people of Lithuania learned of the Pope's actions through Vatican Radio broadcasts to Lithuania, and sent a letter of thanks to the Pontiff. The letter, published in the latest *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, says in part.

"Catholic Lithuania, beginning its seventh century of Christianity under difficult conditions of atheistic oppression, is determined to guard St Casimir's spiritual testament, to struggle and sacrifice — so that the Light of Christ would shine in our days in our homeland, too, and throughout the world."

## Visa Refused

To conclude this year's celebrations in honour of St Casimir, a major service was held at his tomb in Vilnius, on August 26.

The organisers invited Pope John Paul II, but the Kremlin refused permission for him or his representatives to attend.

— LIS/Teviskes Aida/The Times.



● St Casimir's church in Vilnius (pictured) is no longer available for worship. It has been converted into a museum of atheism.

## Book Reviews by J. W. Doyle\*

**Church's Plight**

**THE RESISTANCE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA AGAINST RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION,**  
by P. Dauknys. Rome: Angelicum, 1984. Paper, xii + 183 pp.

In his first chapter, Fr Dauknys sketches the history of Lithuania and its conversion, along with the sad story of its subjection to Russia from 1795 to 1918, when Lithuanian patriots proclaimed their independence. In subsequent chapters he traces the development of Lithuanian independence, its annexation by Russia in 1940, followed by its occupation by Germany and finally its subjugation by Russia in 1944.

What this meant (and means) makes up the body of the book. It is a true tale of terror: killings, mass deportations, concentration camps and psychiatric prisons, torture and intimidation of every kind. All of these are planned to destroy both faith and culture, while giving the impression to the outside world that both are dying of natural causes. But there is a difference between being starved to death and dying of starvation. The Lithuanian people are being starved by being deprived of their traditional culture and religion.

Resistance is heroic; it has to be.

Petitions are signed by thousands of people and sent to Moscow asking that at least the Soviet law is observed. The clandestine *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, circulated since 1972 and smuggled out, gives names and places. But the desperate appeals for help have almost gone unheard by the rest of the world and the people must wonder whether we even know how they are suffering.

Persecution has never been more violent than it is in 1984. Fr Dauknys documents with names, dates, places, figures and statistics. There is now no lack of information.

**Committee Goes Underground**

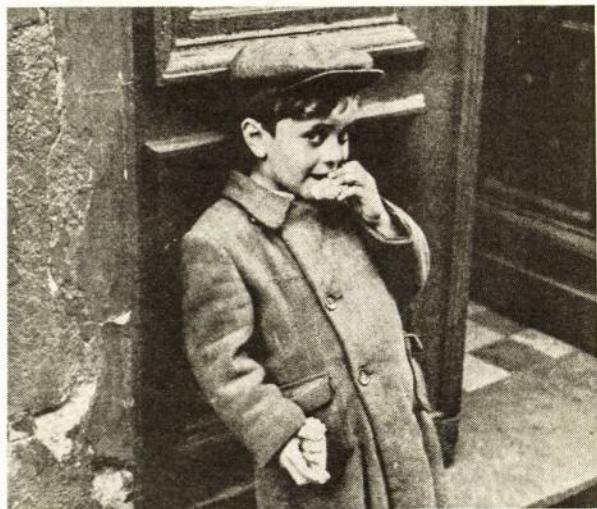
● The Catholic Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights has gone underground, because of a crackdown on its known members. Two foundation members — Frs Svarinskas and Tamkevicius — are serving prison sentences of ten years each. Two other members, Fr Vincas Velavicius (pictured) and Fr Leonas Kalinauskas, have been repeatedly summonsed and cautioned by the Soviet Procuracy.

**Face of Latvia**

**THE DEAD ACCUSE.** Edited by Arturs Plaudis. The author (29 Euston Avenue, Park Orchards, 3114), 1984. Paper, 155pp. \$8 (postage 80c).

Of the many accounts I have read of conditions in Russia and the countries it has overrun, *The Dead Accuse* is the most moving and the most convincing of them all.

*The Dead Accuse* is simply extracts from nearly 200 letters written (chiefly by his aged mother) to a Latvian exile and his wife in Australia. The first were written while he was still in Latvia, in 1944. Then there is nothing till May 1956, when news of his escape reached his parents. His mother's last letter was dated March 2, 1970, just before her death.



The letters are impressive because Arturs Plaudis has left them to speak for themselves, providing a brief introduction and conclusion. Reading of the admirably selected extracts conveys the picture of a simple, hard-working country people living through the destruction of their proud nation.

Lacking an English publisher (versions have appeared in Latvian and German), Plaudis has published the letters himself, from the typescript. It is hoped that others will follow his example and so help us to understand what we have never experienced — the rape of a noble Christian culture. A vigorous local publisher would make *The Dead Accuse* the best seller it should be. Meanwhile, this facsimile edition of 150 copies is a collector's item. "Lies can only be refuted by truth. But since speaking the truth in my homeland is too dangerous for the living, let the dead speak in their place".

\* Rev John W. Doyle, SJ, BA, MACE is Dean of Studies at St John Fisher College, University of Tasmania.

Read BALTIC NEWS —  
then pass it on  
to your friends and neighbours!

# Dog Food Diverted to Balts

The Soviet administrators of Latvia have passed a new law, taxing dog owners 36 roubles per pet. The 36 rouble fee (about \$A54) is equivalent to one month's pension for most retired Latvians. It comes in addition to the 70 kopeek (\$A1) dog licence fee.

The Soviet colonial office is attempting to curb dog ownership because "Soviet statisticians have calculated that a dog eats about 300 grams of various meat products per day; this adds up to about 111 kilograms of meat a year. About a third of this total consists of Category I subproducts (liver, brains, kidneys, hearts). The remainder is either Category II subproducts (lips, lungs, membranes) or regular leftovers." The official announcement continues, "We estimate that each dog eats approximately 55 kilograms of meat suitable for human consumption each year. The meat products consumed by these unproductive beasts should be used to feed our people (Latvians)."

— Cina/Latvian News Digest.



## BALTIC NEWS

An original collection of sixty photographs from the Russian-occupied Baltic States was lost recently, when a *Baltic News* courier was stopped, searched and threatened by the Soviet plainclothes police.

All photographs were taken away, although they had no military or economic content. Pictures of a potholed main street and a queue outside the butcher's were the worst offenders.

As a "compensation," the courier was given a colour brochure on the Baltic States. "All the worthwhile sights are in there," the policeman said.

BALTIC NEWS is edited, composed, wrapped and addressed by unpaid volunteers. Nevertheless, unavoidable costs — such as printing and postage — now add up to \$1,600 per issue. To maintain our free circulation of 5,000 copies to 25 countries, we rely entirely on donations.

We thank our readers for the following financial support received since June:

Lithuanian Community in Hobart, \$500; Lithuanian Community, Melbourne, \$170; Latvian Federation, Melbourne, \$150; Baltic Council of Victoria, V. Grigonis, \$100 each; Anonymous, \$30; S. and I. Tamosaitis, \$25; K. Starinskis, L. Kalade, \$20 each; B. Starinskienė, \$10; Mrs K. Augunas, Mrs Z. Pervan, \$5 each; Baltic Council of Australia, \$500; A. Klimaitis (WA), \$200; Anonymous Tasmanian, \$150; J. Peedo (NSW), Lithuanian National Foundation (Vic), Baltic Women's Ass of SA, \$100 each; Dr A. V. Stepanas (ACT), J. Strazdas (USA), \$50 each; Lithuanian Society for Human Rights (NSW), N. Murray (Tas), \$40 each; R. Samsonas (Vic), \$35; A. Karazija (Vic), Adelaide Estonian Society, \$30 each; Daugavas Vanagi (UK), £25; T. R. Hoyle (SA), H. Juodvalkis (Tas), \$25 each; C. Ford, V. E. Lukis, T. Kroll-Simmull, J. Arends, Anonymous (NSW), E. Lalic, E. Kuplis, J. Paskevicius, K. Paskevicius (Tas), M. Mauragis, J. Treimanis (ACT), J. Vabolis (SA), A. Wyschinski (Qld), E. Sidlauskas, B. Prasmantas (Vic), J. Cyzas (WA), \$20 each; E. Bernhards, B. Van Gerven (Tas), J. Ruzgys (Qld), \$15 each; L. and N. Tidey, L. Messer, J. Carter (Qld), B. Lazauskas (USA), A. Vinevicius, Dr R. E. Cavalouski, E. Ups, A. Jurgens (NSW), A. G. Miglis, A. Kabel (Vic), P. Banik, M. Smyth (WA), A. P. Grigulis, Anonymous (ACT), D. Hogan (NZ), G. Kujath, S. Majic, Anonymous (Tas), \$10 each; J. Krutulis (Tas), \$6; L. Deek, P. Sudmeyer, W. B. Sikorski (Tas), M. and J. Evans, I. Jurgens, P. Jurgens, R. Milasas (NSW), J. Surjan, K. Podenas (Vic), G. Jakimavicius (UK), H. Sulcs (SA), J. and M. Valtas (ACT), \$5 each; D. Lord, S. Gross, P. Sipavicius (Qld), S. Taskunas (Tas), L. Nobelius (Vic), \$2 each.

## Peace Camp Smashed

About seventy hippies who had set up a "peace" camp near Riga, capital of Russian-occupied Latvia, were dispersed at gunpoint on June 22, 1983, according to information recently passed out of the USSR. The hippies were sent home after police had taken personal details from each person's internal passport — a Soviet document similar to the passbooks carried by black Africans in South Africa.

This combined army/police operation was led by Major V. Y. Mefodovsky, head of Saulkrasti police station in the Riga district.

— The Guardian of Liberty/Latvian Info Bulletin.

## COMING EVENTS

● 23 NOVEMBER, 1984 (Friday)

8 pm  
St David's Cathedral Centre,  
125 Macquarie St, Hobart

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of H.E.L.L.P. Association

Guest Speakers Roman Zachariak and Victor Rudewych, of the Australian Ukrainian Review (Melbourne)

Members are reminded that written nominations for the Executive Committee (up to 12 members) are to be sent to the Secretary of Association, PO Box 272, Sandy Bay, Tasmania, 7005, not later than November 9, 1984. The nominations must be signed by two members of the Association and by the nominee.

Visitors and intending new members welcome.

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.....

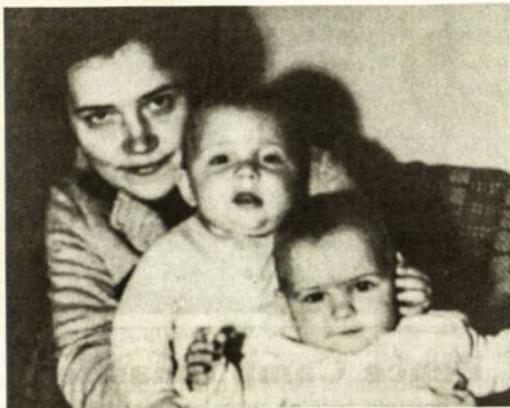
POSTCODE.....

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

# Letters Bring Results

In our last issue, we reported on Gunta Rozkalns's plight, after her Baptist husband Janis was imprisoned by the Soviets for 8 years. The story was also published by the *Door of Hope* and several other Australian periodicals.

Many people responded with letters and gift parcels. One of them — a Victorian — has since received a reply from Gunta. Here are some extracts from her letter:



● Gunta Rozkalns photographed with her twin daughters. Gunta was allowed to visit her husband, imprisoned Latvian Baptist Janis Rozkalns, in May and spent three days with him. Janis (34) has been ill with pneumonia and has been under treatment in the camp hospital.

"I am overwhelmed with joy to know that so many are with me through this very difficult time. So many of God's children who are praying and living with me through our sorrows.

"Janis feared God and strove always to live to please Him. And he is precious to God. And so we have great hope that God will step in with his victorious hand and work a miracle. That is our prayer.

"At present Janis is so very far away from us. Further knowledge is not available so I wait impatiently for news daily.

"I have received so many letters and postcards from your country with comforting words of sympathy and strength. My heartfelt thanks. From yourselves I received a letter and also 2 parcels. Many many thanks for everything. If it is possible for you to write, it is such an encouragement to me. Especially when they are letters from outside Latvia.

Lovingly, your sister  
Gunta ROZKALNS,  
Lenina iela 209-13A,  
RIGA 39,  
Latvia, USSR.

## The Delay Was Unavoidable . . .

Mrs M. Ramsay of Howrah (Tasmania) read about Latvian poet Alfreds Zarins's arrest in the March 1982 issue of *Baltic News*. She wrote to Alfreds and his wife Lauma in December 1982, sent Season's Greetings and expressed concern to Lauma about Alfred's health.

Mrs Ramsay had to wait until Alfreds was released, but, on July 13, 1984, she did receive his reply. The letter said, in part:

"Dear Mrs Ramsay,

I returned at the end of March 1984 and found your letter, sent to my wife and children, with Christmas greetings for me.

"It gave me a great deal of pleasure. I am very much obliged to you! It is very comforting to know that, in my hard years, I had friends with interest in human rights.

"My state of health is a little better now and I am looking for work. My daughter Inga is still in secondary school, but my son Ainars is in compulsory military service now. My wife Lauma, a teacher of Latvian language and literature, has not worked since August 1983. For all that, we are joyful; we are all together again.

"With best wishes to you and your family. I am also sending my love to all my countrymen you know."

Sincerely yours,  
A. Zarins.

Postal Address: 228730 Latvian SSR,  
Aluksne,  
Omskas str. 5-17,  
Zarins Alfreds,  
USSR.

### Mrs Ramsay comments:

"What a joyful day for me, when I received this reply from Alfred himself! I have been writing to prisoners and authorities for years and, if I never get another reply, I'll feel it all worthwhile.

"To all of you, out there in letter-writing land of freedom, I say: Write those letters now. They don't have to be very long. But I believe, every letter I write is a *blow for freedom, mine and theirs*. Even if it is the censors who end up reading the letters, it must make someone somewhere think . . . Even if all my letters end up in bonfires at the back of prisons, someone will know.

Sincerely,  
(Mrs) M. Ramsay."

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