



BALTIC NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF HELP THE ESTONIAN, LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION (HELP)
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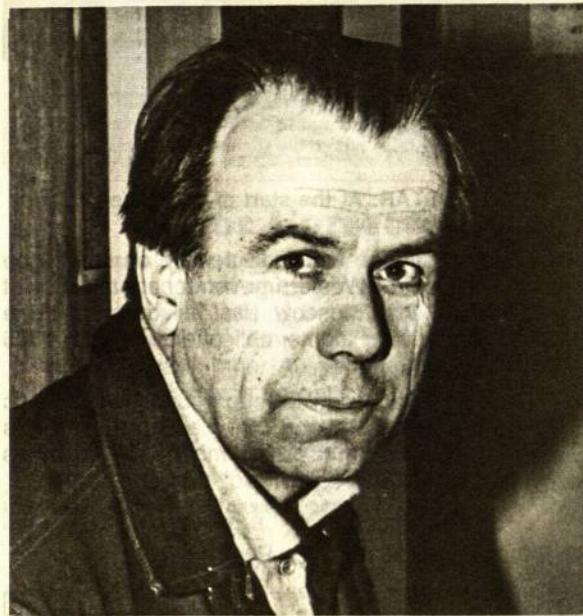
Vol.XI, No. 3 (47)

Complimentary Copy

September, 1985

The Missing "New Aussie"

When will Mart Niklus come to Australia to live? The Australian Government issued an entry permit and a visa to this Estonian scientist more than three years ago; but the Soviets still refuse to let him go.



● Mart Niklus: long overdue in Australia.

MART NIKLUS is one of 700 Soviet prisoners of conscience adopted by Friends of the Prisoners — an Australia-wide ecumenical Christian association with headquarters in Hobart. Several "friends" write to Niklus regularly and pray for him.

One of them, Mrs Patricia Halligan, of Mandurah, Western Australia, has worked particularly hard to make Niklus' plight better known. She has written about her prisoner to the Teachers' Federation, the Ray Martin Show, Four Corners (ABC), Pressure Point, Des Guifoyle's radio talk-back show, State Affairs (Channel 7), *Western Mail* and numerous members of Parliament.

From time to time, Mrs Halligan stages one-person peaceful demonstrations in Mandurah and in surrounding towns. She helped collect signatures for the latest world-wide petition on Niklus' behalf. Over 7,000 signatures have so far been collected in 13 countries.

"I feel this signature drive was a valuable public education exercise," she says. "Even though many walk past, something sinks in."

Of her prisoner, Mrs Halligan says: "Mart Niklus, though a total stranger, has become a real person to me. His mother thinks the Soviets may have silently liquidated him, as she has heard nothing for a long time. I pray that this is not so. I pray that God will spare him to tell the world what he has suffered."

Mart Niklus was born into a school teacher's family on September 22, 1934, in the city of Tartu, Estonia. He graduated from the University of Tartu with a degree in biology — zoology.

In 1958, Niklus sent to the West some photographs depicting conditions in Russian-occupied Estonia. For this, he was gaoled for almost eight years. On his release in July 1966, he was not allowed to work in his profession, and had to earn his living as a builders' labourer, driver and engineering assistant. In September 1968, he found work at the Tartu Foreign Languages Institute, teaching English and French. After pressure from the KGB, however, he was dismissed from that position in November 1979.

Mart Niklus signed the 1979 Baltic Appeal* and several statements protesting against Soviet violations of human and national rights. He also co-ordinated the efforts of various human rights activists in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

In 1980, he applied for permission to migrate to Sweden. His request was declined, and on April 29, 1980, he was arrested, and later sentenced to ten years special regime hard labour camp and five years exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". He is now in the notorious Chistopol prison in

On March 26, 1984, Mart Niklus was visited by his mother, Elfriede Niklus. When he was not allowed to speak to his mother in Estonian, Niklus declared a hunger strike. This received a lot of publicity in the free world and finally, on June 26 this year, the Soviets gave in.

Niklus's health is now poor — he is suffering from malignant radiculitis, skin disease and stomach pains.

The Estonian Relief Committee (EVVA, c/o Eili Annuk, 12 Sorlie Ave, Northmead, 2152) approached the Australian government on Niklus's behalf in October 1981. An entry permit and a visa (valid indefinitely) were granted in 1982. Niklus was guaranteed a job by Esto Constructions in Sydney. Mr Jogevers of Sydney offered accommodation: a home unit is still standing vacant, reserved for Mart Niklus.

Support this prisoner of conscience by sending him a card or a letter: CCCP, 422950 Tatarskaya ASSR, G. Chistopol, Uchrazhdenie UE-148/st-4, NIKLUS Mart, USSR.

Gift parcels may be sent to his mother: CCCP, Eesti NSV, 202400 Tartu, Vikerkaare 25, Mrs Elfriede Niklus, USSR.

* For more details, see: "New Call for Freedom", *Baltic News*, November-December, 1979, P3.

Protest Ship Chased by Soviets

Forty Western journalists and 400 passengers on a protest cruise in the Baltic Sea were chased from the Baltic coastline by Soviet warships on July 27, 1985. At one stage, a gunboat raced at high speed on a collision course. It veered off only at the last minute.

The Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise along the coastlines of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia had been arranged by Baltic youth organisations in the West, to mark the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Accord. The event also coincided with the 45th anniversary of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States.

From international waters 12 miles out, the organisers had hoped to send literature ashore by balloon and in unsinkable containers.

Kremlin Angry

But the Kremlin, incensed at publicity over the cruise, had ordered its warships to keep the ship, the *Baltic Star*, well away from its shores.

Off the coast of Latvia, a Soviet fishing vessel stopped dead in the path of the cruise ship, forcing the captain to change course.

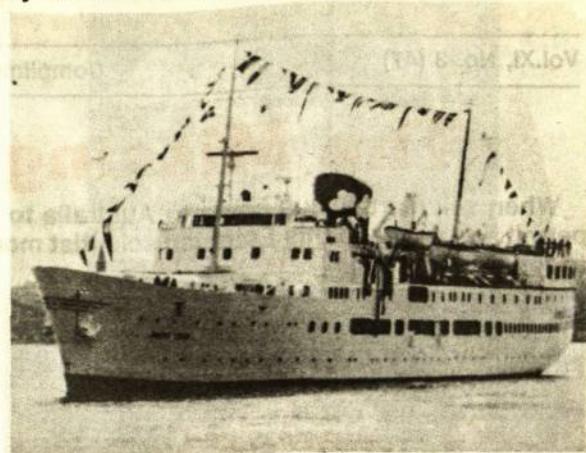
When a group of Estonians held a symbolic demonstration on deck, casting flowers on the sea, a warship suddenly shone a spotlight on them.

Thousands of leaflets and miniature flags of free Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were finally floated off in the Baltic Sea, off the coast of occupied Estonia.

Helsinki Demonstration

The *Baltic Star* docked in Helsinki on Sunday morning July 28, twenty-four hours before Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was due to arrive with 34 other foreign ministers to attend celebrations commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Helsinki Accord. Moscow signed this agreement, but did not honour its human rights provisions.

On the same Sunday, the Baltic visitors and their supporters staged the largest anti-Soviet demonstration in Finland since Warsaw Pact nations invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968. Hundreds of Finnish police cordoned off the Soviet Embassy to hold back the peaceful protesters who marched to the applause of crowds lining the streets.



● **BALTIC STAR:** At the start of its Peace Cruise.

The demonstration focused attention on one of the main complaints of Western governments and Soviet dissidents — that Moscow has failed to fulfil the far-reaching human rights obligations of the 1975 Helsinki agreement.

The Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise, the Baltic Tribunal (see Page 4) and other associated events were widely reported in the mass media of all countries except the USSR, its satellites . . . and Australia!

— Chris Mosey in Daily Mail/News Weekly/
Reuter-Kyodo/Tēviškės Aidai.

● Other Helsinki reports: Pages 4, 6.

The Helsinki Accords

In 1975, representatives from every European state except Albania and Andorra as well as from Canada and the United States held the European Security and Cooperation Conference (ESCC) in Helsinki, Finland. Preparations for this conference included three years of contacts to lay down the presuppositions, six months of preparatory talks in 1972-73, the Foreign Ministers' conference in Helsinki in July, 1973, and further negotiations in Geneva.

The final document was signed on August 1, 1975, and became known as the "Helsinki Accords". In it, 35 countries agreed to work for increased cooperation in matters of economics, peacekeeping and human rights. The declaration was vague on questions of military security and disarmament.

Everyone believed at the time that the wonderful principles of security, nonintervention in internal affairs, and cooperation in economic, scientific, and environmental matters would largely remain theory. At least, none of the Western delegations anticipated the resonance the passage on human rights would find in the Soviet Union and in other Eastern European countries. These results gave rise to contradictory feelings and attitudes: Was one going to support those who invoked the Helsinki Accords, even if that annoyed the Soviet Union? Or was it better to ignore them for the sake of detente?

— Adapted from: GROSSE, Alfred, *The Western Alliance*, London: Macmillan, 1980, pp287-288.



● The Baltic demonstration in Helsinki on July 28 was the biggest since 1968. Protesters wore prison-style striped shirts with numbers showing the years of Soviet occupation.

— Photo: The Japan Times/AP.

Australia Speaks Up for Balts

Australia has informed the United Nations Commission on Human Rights of continuous violations of human rights in the Russian-occupied Baltic States. The report was made by Ambassador R. H. Robertson, the Australian representative in Geneva, on March 8 — nine days after the Australian Senate had passed its Baltic Resolution (see report in last *Baltic News*).

In his speech, Ambassador Robertson commented on the human rights situation in Afghanistan and then spoke of events in Poland since 1983 — the year of the Human Rights Commission's first public resolution on Poland. He went on:

"The Commission at its last Session decided by a narrow margin to take no action on Poland. My delegation however believes that continuing international attention to the situation in Poland is justified. While measures announced during 1984 brought about some improvements, many of our concerns have not been erased.

"Nor do we feel able to overlook other Eastern European situations. Reference has been made in this debate to events in the USSR. Human rights violations in the Baltic States, in particular the repression of individuals engaging in no more than the non-violent expression of national and religious convictions, are a cause of concern to Australian public opinion. This concern is shared by the Australian Government.

Error Corrected

Earlier this year, an Australian Passport Office issued a passport in which the bearer's place of birth was shown as "Tallinn, S UN", the code "S UN" standing for "Soviet Union". Similar mistakes were made in several other Australian passports issued to Australian citizens born in the Baltic States.

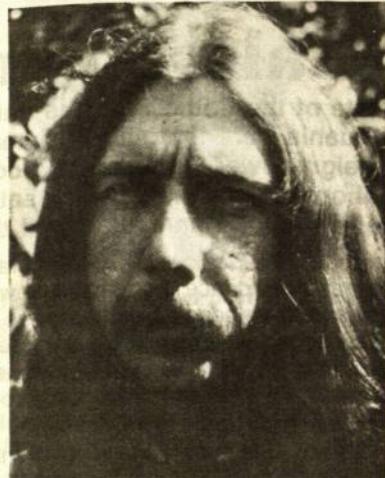
Baltic organisations, and the Latvian Consul in Melbourne (Mr Emils Delins) reported this irregularity to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The following explanation has now been received from the Department of Foreign Affairs:

"There has been no change in the Government's policy which is that it does not recognise *de jure* the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the USSR . . . This matter has come to attention as the result of misinterpretation by certain Passport Offices of new passport procedures connected with the introduction of country codes to record the country of birth in the new series of Australian passports.

"The list of country codes provided to Passport Offices did not contain country codes for Latvia, Estonia or Lithuania (or a number of other countries). Unfortunately some Passport Offices misinterpreted this to mean that the code for the Soviet Union should be used in these particular cases. All Passport Offices have now been reminded that the policy in relation to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania has not changed and that the name of the country should be shown in full where no code has been listed."



"Such repressive measures are not, of course, confined to the Baltic Republics. Certain minority and ethnic groups seeking to assert their cultural and religious identity are also subject to such measures, and in this connection the difficulties faced by Soviet Jews who wish to emigrate deserve particular mention."



● Repression of Baltic individuals such as Arvo Pesti (pictured) is a cause of concern to Australians.

Pesti is now serving a five years' sentence in a Soviet strict regime labour camp, to be followed by 2 years' exile. His "crime": he signed an anti-nuclear petition.

Lower House, Too

Following representations by the Baltic Council of Australia, a Baltic Resolution similar to that passed by the Australian Senate will be discussed in the Australian House of Representatives later this year.

Two separate Baltic Resolutions have been submitted to go on the Notice Paper. One has been initiated by Dr Dick Klugman, Labor Member for Prospect. The second motion is sponsored by two Liberal members, Mr P. M. Ruddock and Mr I. M. Macphee.

Baltic Conference

On September 18, 1985, the Baltic Council of Australia (BCA) is organising a one-day Baltic Conference in Canberra.

The get-together will culminate in the Baltic Dinner 1985, to be held in Parliament House on the same night. Senators P. E. Baume, B. Harradine, C. V. J. Mason and G. F. Richardson will act as sponsors.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of HELLP (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association) will be held on Friday, NOVEMBER 8, 1985, at 8 pm, in Migrant Resource Centre, 222 Elizabeth St, Hobart (upstairs). Supper afterwards.

Members are reminded that written nominations for the Executive Committee are to be sent to the Secretary of Association, PO Box 272, Sandy Bay, Tas, 7005, not later than October 25, 1985. Nominations must be signed by two members of the Association and by the nominee.

● Evidence was submitted at the Baltic Tribunal on July 25-26, 1985 that Baltic people living under the Soviet rule are denied even the most fundamental human rights — such as the right to practise their religion.

For example: the organisers of this religious procession to the Hill of Crosses (Lithuania) on July 22, 1979, were questioned, searched and finally imprisoned.



Balts Remember Helsinki

The fate of the Baltic States is unique in the modern history of mankind. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were the only parliamentary-system self-governing countries to be occupied by a foreign power, annexed and colonised. These are amongst the findings of the Baltic Tribunal on Soviet Crimes which sat in the Danish capital of Copenhagen on July 25-26, on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the Helsinki Accords.

Organised by the Baltic World Confederation, the Tribunal heard evidence from various witnesses with first-hand knowledge of life under the Soviets. The witnesses included former Siberian déportees, as well as high Soviet officials who had personally participated in crimes.

The international jury of five consisted of: Prof. Theodor Veiter, Chairman (University of Innsbruck/Austria), Per Ahlmark (Swedish minister of state, leader of Liberal party, former member of Council of Europe); Rev Michael Bourdeaux (founder and international director of Keston College, UK); Jean-Marie Daillet (a member of French Parliament) and Sir James Edmund Sanford Fawcett, D.S.C. (former UK delegate to the United Nations and Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Council of Europe). The Australian representative, Michael Hodgman, QC, MHR, was unable to fly to Copenhagen because of a last-minute ear infection.

The tribunal noted that the Soviet Union had deliberately broken its treaties with the Baltic States. Since the forced takeover, the native people's languages, systems and cultures were "russified".

Population was drastically changed through genocide, deportations and resettlement.

In its concluding Manifesto, the presiding jury called on democratic countries everywhere to

raise the Baltic question at every international forum, and to demand freedom and independence for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Seven Soviet observers attended every session of the Tribunal. Some of them were fluent in Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian.

Stockholm Seminar

Across the Baltic Sea, in Stockholm, a Baltic Futures Seminar was arranged to coincide with the Helsinki anniversary.

Several speakers stressed that the people living now in the Baltic countries will have to decide their own futures eventually.

Russian dissident Vladimir Bukovsky thought it was in the interest of the Soviet Union to abandon its empire in Eastern Europe.

The tribunal, the Stockholm seminar and the Baltic cruise (see Page 2) were widely reported in the British and European mass media. Over 500 news items and articles appeared in the newspapers. Amongst the most significant were:

The Daily Telegraph (July 27), The Times (July 27), The Observer (July 28), Daily Mail (July 29), The Financial Times (July 30), Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (July 26-27), Die Welt (July 26), General-Anzeiger (July 26), Frankfurter Rundschau (Aug 5), Rheinischer Merkur (Aug 3), The Japan Times (July 30).

Australian Stand-in Offer



● Father Svarinskas (left) and Zigmas Augaitis.

An Australian bus driver has offered to go to a Soviet prison and complete the sentence of Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, a Baltic prisoner of conscience.

Lithuanian-born Zigmas Augaitis, 56, has written to the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Bill Hayden, asking him to arrange this exchange. Zigmas told Mr Hayden that Fr Svarinskas can have full use of his bank account and his house in Burwood, a suburb of Melbourne.

The 60-year-old priest was sentenced by the Soviets on May 6, 1983, to seven years' strict regime camp and three years' exile for his involvement in the Catholic Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in Lithuania.

For more information on Fr Svarinskas and other Baltic prisoners, write to: Friends of the Prisoners, PO Box 12, Sandy Bay, Tas, 7005.

SRT/TévaAidai.

NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

Jewish Writer Victimised

Jewish writer and human rights campaigner Vladimir Frenkel (40) was arrested in Riga, Latvia, on January 15, 1985. Frenkel was accused of co-publishing an underground periodical, *The Homeland*; and defaming the State and the Soviet social system (Article 183 of the penal code of the Latvian Socialist Republic).

On June 17, he was found guilty and condemned to 18 months' imprisonment.

Two years ago, Vladimir Frenkel and his aged mother made their first request to emigrate to Israel to join Vladimir's brother there. They were refused. For the following 18 months, Frenkel tried to gain recognition for his right to emigrate, and lodged several unsuccessful requests with Soviet authorities.

According to the International Committee Against Repression (Paris), "Frenkel is now a new link in the chain of illegal persecution suffered by Jews wanting to emigrate from the USSR: Iossif Berntstein, Zakhar Zunshain, Iakov Levine, Iakov Mecha, Marc Nepomniachty, Nadezhda Fradkova, Aleksander Kholmiansky, Dan Shapiro, Iuli Edenstein, Leonid Volovsky . . ."

— USSR News Brief/LND/Annals (Aust)/Comite international contre la repression.

Abandoned by His Kin



The Estonian Lutheran Church is apparently not defending 56-year-old suspended pastor Harri Mõtsnik (pictured) who was arrested on April 3, on charges of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". In an interview with the IDL, the Budapest-based information service of European Lutherans, Archbishop Edgar Hark described Mõtsnik as "a man with whom we could not co-operate".

The Archbishop told the IDL that Pastor Mõtsnik had continued his "criticising activities", despite multiple warnings from the Church. Archbishop Hark claimed the sermons and writings of the former pastor of the Lutheran congregation in Urvaste in southern Estonia were "full of nonsense", so the Church leadership had finally removed him from office. The Archbishop said that, in his opinion, Mõtsnik is "no healthy man".

Harri Mõtsnik had trained as a lawyer and criticised Soviet laws from the legal viewpoint. He entered the ministry rather late in life and was ordained in 1972. His repeated public attacks on Soviet human rights violations and their policies toward Estonia resulted in a KGB interrogation and warning in 1983. Mõtsnik blames Marxist-Leninist atheism for destroying the concept of Christian ethics in the hearts of ordinary people. This, he says, is an obstacle to true peace.

— Keston News Service.

Silenced



● Another Lithuanian has been arrested for writing about life in Soviet labour camps. This time, it is 79-year-old Vladas Lapenė (pictured, in his younger days). Lapenė had previously spent 5 years (1976-81) in Soviet concentration camps for duplicating and disseminating *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

After his release, Lapenė continued to be harassed by the KGB, Soviet secret police. On February 13, 1984, he was body-searched at KGB headquarters. Among the items seized were a book, *Man without God*, and his handwritten *Memoirs of a Soviet Prisoner*.

On March 29, Lapenė was sentenced to 4 years' labour camp and 2 years' exile.

In 1984, Lapenė wrote several protests to the Prosecutor of the Lithuanian SSR and the Chairman of the KGB, asking for the return of his manuscripts. He pointed out that the KGB could not prove he was disseminating them, and it was not a crime to possess his own writings. Lapenė had also signed a petition protesting against the closed trial of Lithuanian Catholic priest, Father Alfonsas Svarinskas, in May 1983 (see Story, Page 4).

— LIS.

Arsenal on Baltic Territory

About 174 land-based Soviet nuclear delivery systems, including missiles and long-range artillery, are now stationed in the Russian-occupied Baltic States. These include at least two nuclear-tipped SS-20 missiles, deployed near the Estonian towns of Tapa and Kopru as recently as last year.

Submarine and naval delivery systems in the Baltic total about 140, although some land and sea-based Soviet weapons, such as 203mm artillery or the naval SS-9 missile, also have conventional warheads.

The threat brought to the Baltic States by Soviet military concentrations was a major motive for an open letter sent to the West in 1981 by 38 Baltic citizens, asking that their three countries be included in any agreement for a Nordic nuclear-free zone.

Several of the signatories of this open letter have since been arrested in Estonia and Latvia, and sentenced to harsh prison terms.

— WFFL/EVVA/The Chr Sc Monitor.

BOOK REVIEW

Shattered Hopes of Helsinki

HELSINKI VICTIMS IN THE SOVIET UNION, 1975-1985, by Yuri Belov. Published by Polyglott, Frankfurt/West Germany, 1985.

The Soviet government signed the ESCC — Final Act in Helsinki on August 1, 1975. After 60 bitter years, there were still those who hoped for change. A "Helsinki Movement" began in the USSR and joined forces with a number of human rights groups concerned with abuse of psychiatry and with religious persecution, treatment of the disabled and emigration sanctions.

Since 1975, 6,000 individuals known by name have been arrested in the USSR for a faith or philosophy which differs from Soviet ideology. Freedom of the press, freedom of movement and freedom of ideas are severely restricted and the Helsinki Movement addresses itself to these problems.

Dr Yuri Orlov, founder of the Moscow Group, denounced the "unbelievable indifference" of the West. The USSR has suffered no sanctions in trade or cultural and scientific exchanges. The West is supporting a system which contravenes fundamental principles of human dignity.

By the time the second ESCC review meeting began in Madrid in 1980 **every** active member of the Helsinki Movement in the USSR was under arrest. Still no public condemnation was made by the West.

Clash with Constitution

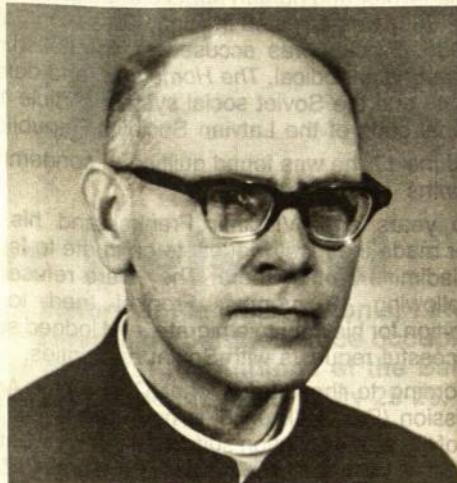
Paragraph 227 of the Penal Code of the RSFSR forbids even speaking to another person about religious belief as an "infringement of person and rights of citizens". The code thus contradicts the Soviet constitution of 1977, which grants freedom of speech and assembly (Article 50), freedom to associate in public organisations (Article 51) and freedom of conscience (Article 52). The catch is that these freedoms are permitted only insofar as they "strengthen and develop the socialist system" (Article 50) and accord "with the aims of building communism" (Article 51).

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

This Christmas, give presents that are different and educational — books about the Baltic people:

- LEAVE YOUR TEARS IN MOSCOW, by Barbara Armonas, 222pp. Friends of the Prisoners' 1985 Book of the Year. Limited stocks. — \$5, plus \$2 postage and packing.
- AN INFANT BORN IN BONDAGE: 44 Lithuanian prisoners' meditations on liberty. Bi-lingual edition (English and Lithuanian), 99pp, large format. — \$7, plus \$2 postage and packing.
- CATHOLICS IN SOVIET-OCCUPIED LITHUANIA (Faith under persecution), 120pp. — \$2, plus \$1.50 postage and packing.
- THE BALTIC DILEMMA, Vols 1 and 2, by Edgars Dunsdorfs, \$12 plus \$3.50 postage (Vol 2 is also available separately, at \$8 plus \$2 postage and packing).

If unavailable at your local booksellers, all these books may be ordered from: BALTIC NEWS, PO Box 272, Sandy Bay, Tas, 7005.



● Helsinki monitor Rev Bronius Laurinavičius (pictured) was killed in Vilnius (Lithuania) on November 25, 1981, when some "persons unknown" pushed him under a Maz-503 truck driven by G. Lazutkin. The incident occurred near the intersection of Dzerzhinski and Žalgiris Streets, at around 8.20 pm. Eyewitnesses came forward, but the culprits were not identified and no inquest was held.

In his will, Father Laurinavičius had asked to be buried near the church of Švenčionėliai, which had been built through his efforts. The Soviet authorities refused; he was buried in Adutiškis.

This book contains documentation on each of the Helsinki Movement members: it is a telling list of broken lives.

These men and women are workers, technicians, poets, writers, psychiatrists (sent for "treatment" in psychiatric prisons!), geologists, engineers, priests, teachers, historians, journalists, lawyers and doctors. Their photographs, prison, exile and family addresses are vital information for anyone concerned with human rights. The contradictions and cruelties of the Soviet regime must not continue unchallenged, and its victims must know of our support.

Dr Reinhard Gnauck, chairman of the International Society for Human Rights, states the position clearly in the final chapter. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, prohibition of Solidarnosc, tighter frontiers in middle Europe, decreasing emigration permits for Jews and Germans, increasing persecution of Christians, a record number of prisoners in the GDR, the worsening human rights situation in Rumania — these have all developed since the "Accord"!

"One wonders whether any foreign minister from a democratic government will mention, during his anniversary speech, the crushed Helsinki Groups in the Soviet Union, or the names of the victims in the concentration camps, or even insist on their release, before the glasses are raised to toast the Helsinki agreement," Dr Gnauck comments.

Helsinki Victims is a must for anyone interested in human rights. Priced at five Deutschmarks (\$A2.55), it is available from: IGFM, D-6000 Frankfurt/M., Kaiserstrasse 72, West Germany.

— Reviewed by VICKI CARNICELLI.

The Latvian Connection

By one of those quirks of history so bizarre that a novelist would scarcely dare invent it, the lush little Caribbean island of Tobago has become a mecca for exiles from Latvia, 5,000 miles away on the shores of the cold grey Baltic Sea.

The site for this unlikely pilgrimage is the tiny town of Plymouth, set on a bluff overlooking Tobago's idyllic north coast. Here, the Latvians — denied access to their own homeland which was swallowed up by the Soviet Union 45 years ago — come every three years to visit a monument which looks down on a magnificent palm-fringed bay named after James, Duke of Courland, a 17th Century ruler of both Tobago and Latvia.

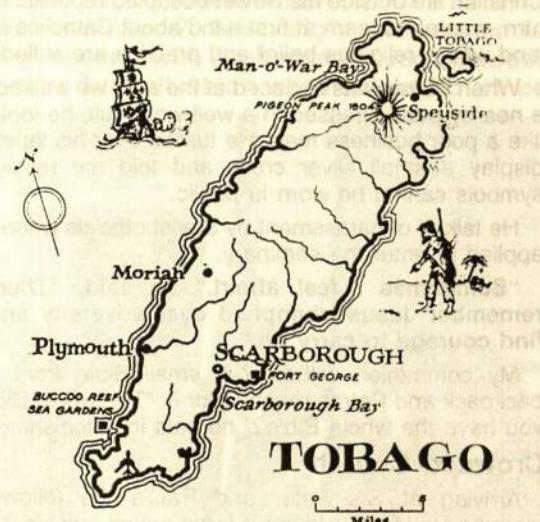
Although he had no title to it, King Charles I of England gave Tobago to the Duke, his godson, in 1639. Courland sent 600 of his subjects to colonise the island where the native Carib Indians challenged them until 1688 when the Dutch took the island and sent the Courlanders packing — some fleeing to New England, others back home to the Baltic.

The island changed hands no fewer than 30 times again, as Britain, France, Holland, and Spain squabbled over it until the British finally consolidated their hold on Tobago after the Napoleonic Wars.

Today, the relics of those centuries of conflict may be found in well-preserved stone forts, their cannon snouts still pointing seaward, overlooking strategic anchorages with names like Bloody Bay and Man of War Bay.

The most spectacular is Fort King George, perched high above the little capital city of Scarborough and beautifully preserved and maintained by the Trinidad and Tobago Tourist Board. Another overlooks Great Courland Bay, where Britain's Admiral Hood launched the successful invasion in 1803, and where today the Latvian exiles so incongruously gather to sing their songs and dream their dreams of a far-off lost homeland.

John Bierman, *Boston Sunday Globe*, April 7, 1985.



THANK YOU!

BALTIC NEWS is meant to go round.

Every time a new issue arrives at his Bethlehem, Conn, home, Mr Bronislaw Lazauskas photostats 60 copies of BALTIC NEWS and distributes them throughout the New England (US) region. Mr Erich Weiss does the same in Germany: thanks to him, copies of BALTIC NEWS reach all human rights organisations in Western Europe.

Miss Mary Smyth in Perth, WA and hundreds of other readers pass their BALTIC NEWS on to friends, neighbours and work-mates. In this way, every copy printed by us is read by an average of 8 persons.

BALTIC NEWS is still sent, free of charge, to anyone who wishes to read it. Currently, we have about 7,000 subscribers, and the number keeps rising.

This free distribution has been made possible only by our readers' continuing financial support. We thank you for the following donations received since the last issue:

Latvian Federation, Melbourne, Lithuanian Community, Melbourne, \$150 each; Baltic Council of Victoria, \$100; P. Morkunas (Vic), \$30; E. Margan-Marganavicius, A. Purvitis, M. Reiters, \$20 each; Mrs Z. Gailitis (Vic), \$10; L. Nobelius (Vic) \$2.

Baltic Council of Australia, \$500; Joint Baltic Council of NSW, \$130; Lithuanian Catholic Women's Assn of Victoria, Baltic Women's Assn of SA, Lithuanian Committee of Sydney, Rev P. Becs, L. Pukys (NSW), Dr K. Trimakas (USA), \$100 each; Anonymous Tasmanian, \$59.40; Lithuanian Pensioners "Paguoda" of Canberra, Sir Reginald Wright (Tas), \$50 each; Lithuanian Community of Perth, \$44; Hank Petrusma, N. J. Murray (Tas), \$40 each; R. Zolins (NSW), \$30; Lt P. D. Kalade (UK), \$28.31; Rev P. Gaidamavicius (Canada), \$27.24; M. Kond (NSW), Hon K. F. Lowrie, MLC (Tas), \$25 each; RSL Estonian Sub-branch of Sydney, L. Mirleib, A. Giniunas, B. Barkus, J. Reisgys, A. Wiedebaum, E. Smugajs (NSW), E. Kuplis, J. Gudauskas, E. Lacin (Tas), A. D. and A. B. Damper, A. K. Serelis (Vic), Baltic Council of Canberra, K. Kaldma (ACT), P. and M. Kajons (Qld), G. Petrukenas, Mrs Lingiene (WA), \$20 each; A. Mosinskis (Brazil), \$14.70; E. Bernhards (Tas), J. Ruzgys (Qld), \$15 each; V. Stalba, L. Slaustas, J. Jonavicius (SA), Dr S. Statkus, G. Tretners, F. Egilis, J.

Petraitis (Vic), S. Stasevicius, Mrs Michelsons, A. Slaidius (Tas), O. Kuusik, R. Patasius (NSW), R. J. Cameron (ACT), D. Stocks (Qld), Lithuanian Youth Assn of Great Britain, Anonymous Tasmanian and West Australian, \$10 each; E. Loorits, R. Krauze, A. Melditon (Tas), A. Zavisaite, V. Miezis (NSW), J. Surjan (Vic), P. Dz (Qld), I. S. Zeiberts (SA), \$5 each; R. Atvarnieks, J. Jenkin (Vic), M. Valtas (Qld), \$2 each; Kesner Kahn (USA) \$1.47.

Anonymous Tasmanian, \$20; J. Zakarevicius, V. Stalba (SA), P. Culliver (Vic), \$10 each; H. Randel (NSW), A. Lendraitis, J. Abukievicius (SA), \$5 each; C. Pieciukaitis (SA), \$2.

Our next issue (December 1985) will feature an exclusive eyewitness report on the deliberate destruction of a church in Russian-occupied Lithuania. The believers' subsequent plight will be shown in an authentic photograph, previously unpublished.

In an article smuggled out of a Soviet prison, gaoled Helsinki monitor Balys Gajauskas will share his thoughts on the nuclear threat and peace movements. There will be news from the Baltic States and readers' letters, as well as a host of other reading.

TO: H.E.L.L.P. (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association),
Post Office Box 272,
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Petras and His Faith

by Monica Clark

I met Petras quite by accident during a visit to the Church of Sts Peter and Paul in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius last year. It was a warm August Saturday. I had walked to the church to join in the 500th anniversary celebration of the death of St Casimir, Patron of Lithuania.

Petras, a 24-year-old student at Lithuania's only seminary, was assisting the priests. An altar boy with whom my companion had spoken briefly when we arrived introduced me to Petras, who spoke English.

Petras was eager to learn all he could about Christian life outside his Soviet-occupied republic. I, in turn, wanted to learn at first hand about Catholics in a land where religious belief and practice are stifled.

When Petras was replaced at the altar we walked to a nearby park. Dressed in a well-worn suit, he looked like a poor business man. He turned over his lapel to display a small silver cross and told me religious symbols cannot be worn in public.

He talked of harassment by Soviet officials when he applied to enter the seminary.

"Sometimes I feel afraid," he said. "Then I remember Jesus triumphed over adversity and I find courage to carry on."

My companion withdrew a small Bible from his backpack and Petras reached for it. "The whole Bible, you have the whole Bible?" he said in astonishment.

Crowded Church

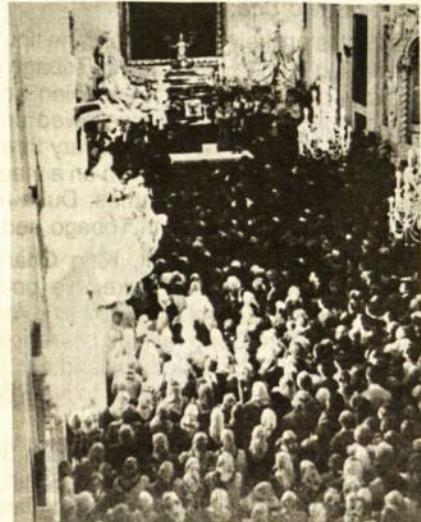
Arriving at Sts Peter and Paul's the following morning for Mass, I found a large crowd outside. "It's too early to go in," I thought. Soon I realised there wasn't standing room inside.

Petras escorted me to a reserved seat in the sanctuary and I stared at the crowd, so tightly



• Young believers swarming around Bishops (from left) L. Povilonis and K. Dubinskis and Fr A. Gutauskas at the festivities in honour of St Casimir, Lithuania's only saint, on August 26, 1984. Pope John Paul II was refused permission to travel to Lithuania to take part in this celebration.

— Photo: © Lithuanian Information Center.



• Part of the huge congregation in Sts Peter and Paul's Church in Vilnius on August 26, 1984. In the pulpit: Bishop Antanas Vaičius.

— Photo: © Lithuanian Information Center.

packed that even one person's slight shift created a wave of motion.

Men and women of all ages were singing, reciting the rosary. After Mass trumpets blared.

"This is a persecuted church, yet people are openly joyful," I kept thinking. "They believe in the life that emerges through suffering."

Young Believers

Later Petras led me silently up three flights of stairs to an apartment of friends. Seated at a table enjoying biscuits and instant coffee were university students and young professionals — Catholics, secretly living their faith.

They closed the windows so we could talk freely about their efforts to study Scripture, to introduce Vatican-II renewal, to organise young-adult groups.

They were surprised to learn of the laity's role in Western churches and shook their heads in frustration when I told of programmes of sacramental preparation.

"The government would never permit that here," they said sadly. "Some parents send children to 'secret' nuns for religious education but it is dangerous."

I realised I was amidst a 20th century catacomb church quietly keeping the gospel story alive and courageously passing on faith.

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