



BALTIC NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF HELP THE ESTONIAN, LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION (HELLP)
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Balts Call for Nuclear Ban

Eight prominent citizens in Soviet-occupied Estonia and Latvia have again called for total elimination of nuclear arms. In an Open Letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Balts plead that the nuclear ban be accompanied by an all-round withdrawal of foreign troops, and by a genuine restoration of human rights.

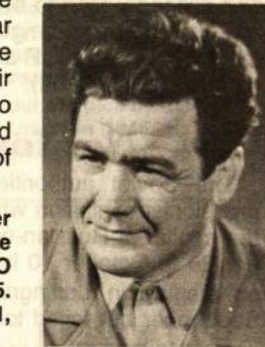
This Open Letter was originally written on Christmas Eve, 1984. However, Soviet authorities did not allow it to be published. Eleven months later, the letter was smuggled out to Sweden and has since been released by the Relief Centre for Estonian Prisoners of Conscience in the USSR (Box 34018, 100 26 Stockholm).

The letter is signed by Ināra Serdāne, Latvian wife of the imprisoned anti-nuclear activist Ints Calitis; 33-year-old Estonian architect Viktor Niitsoo (released from previous jailing on June 1, 1984); and six other Estonians (see pictures below).

Soviet Fortress

This appeal reflects the Baltic people's fears that the Soviets are turning their countries into a huge nuclear fortress. There are now at least 83 military bases in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. They are dominated by 54 airfields and missile sites. Two full Soviet airborne divisions are stationed in the Baltic area, under the direct command of Moscow.

Ten Baltic naval bases shelter at least 30 Soviet submarines; eleven are armed with nuclear weapons. They are backed by 40 large and at least 300 smaller Soviet surface warships, nineteen of which are armed with tactical nuclear weapons. The Soviets also have 50 amphibian units in the Baltic, 19 larger support ships and 120 Navy bombers.



● Six of the Estonians who have signed the latest plea for nuclear disarmament: (from top left): Eve Pärnaste, 34, psychologist; Endel Ratas, 47, marine engineer; Ule Einasto, 38, architect; Urmas Inno, 36, foreman; his wife Karin Inno, 46; and Erik Udam, 47, civil engineer. Are they risking imprisonment, too?

Land-based SS-20 missiles with nuclear warheads are stationed near Tapa (Estonia) and Kõppu (Estonia). Other nuclear missiles are scattered all over the three Baltic States, on 27 sites ranging from Baldone in Latvia to Šiauliai in Lithuania.

Accidents

Nuclear accidents do happen in the Baltic region, but they are carefully hushed up by Soviet authorities and media (see reports in *Baltic News*, September 1982 and on Page 2 in this issue).

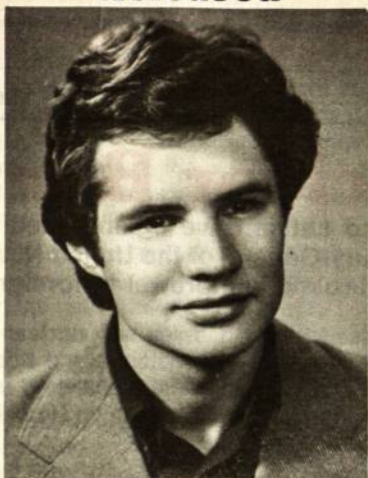
This is not the first time Baltic people have pleaded for universal nuclear disarmament. On October 10, 1981, thirty-eight Balts signed an appeal for a nuclear-free Baltic. The Soviets reacted by jailing four of the signatories — Heiki Ahonen, Arvo Pesti, Lagle Parek and Ints Calitis. Several others were questioned, searched and harassed by the KGB.

The Balts stress that it is not enough to liquidate all nuclear weapons. If peace is to be attained, foreign troops must leave the countries they occupy now. Political prisoners are to be amnestied. Former nuclear powers must guarantee democratic freedom for their own citizens. Barriers are to be lifted between East and West — with free flow of people, goods and ideas.

● Copies of the Open Letter (in English translation) are available from *Baltic News*, PO Box 272, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005. Please send a stamped, addressed envelope.

NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

Released



Estonian Tiit Pädam, 28 (pictured) has been released from prison.

Pädam, a student in the architecture department of Tallinn Art Institute, was expelled from the Institute five years ago because of his participation in the European Lutheran Congress in Tallinn on September 13-17, 1980.

Before his arrest, Pädam worked as a clerk at the Consistory of the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tallinn. He also edited the Consistory's newsletter.

Pädam was arrested in August 1985 and was charged under Article 86 of the Criminal Code of the Estonian SSR for "violating currency regulations". He had allegedly tried to buy a tape-recorder in a tourist shop reserved for foreign currency transactions. (Local residents in the USSR are not allowed to have foreign currency of any kind).

— EVVA.

Not for Latvians

The Soviet authorities cancelled a German impressionist exhibition which was to be shown in Riga, the capital of Russian-occupied Latvia, from September 28 to October 10 last year. The collection was on display in Leningrad from mid-August to mid-September but failed to arrive in Riga.

According to Mr Cassens, the Niedersachsen Minister of Science, the Soviets blamed "transportation problems" for this cancellation. The semi-trailer trucks booked for the art collection were said to have been taken over by the Soviet Army.

Frankf. Allgem.

25 Years in Exile

January 24, 1986 marked the 25th anniversary since Lithuanian Catholic Bishop Julijonas Steponavičius (pictured) was exiled by the Soviets to a remote town outside his archdiocese of Vilnius.

— Genya Intrator (IRTF)/The Sunday-Sun.



Nuclear Waste

A Soviet nuclear waste dump is leaking radiation that has killed at least one worker, Swedish radio reported. A Soviet engineer who recently defected to Sweden was quoted as saying that spent fuel from nuclear submarines is handled and stored carelessly at a site near the Estonian capital, Tallinn.

The defector said waste was brought to the site in an ordinary minibus and that at least one driver had died of radiation exposure during the last decade. "Nobody in the West can imagine the carelessness with which they handle radioactive waste," the engineer said.

— Baltic Bulletin (US).

Rights Defender Dies



Father Juozas Zdebskis, 56 (pictured) was killed in a car accident on February 6, 1986. Well-known throughout Russian-occupied Lithuania, he had been one of the founding members of the Catholic Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights in 1978. The Committee was forced underground with the 1983 arrest of two charter members and increasing threats by Soviet authorities.

The first clash with the KGB was in 1964, when Fr Zdebskis was given a year in jail for teaching children religion. This sentence was quashed; but on December 9, 1971, the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR sentenced him to twelve months' jail for catechising 300 children.

When Fr Zdebskis was released, the government Council of Religious Affairs forced him to work as a parking attendant, and assigned him to a parish only after many appeals by the people.

Persecution continued, though — threats, beatings, interrogations, detentions.

On March 10, 1976, Fr Zdebskis was charged with drunken driving and taken to a psychiatric hospital.

Driving again in October, 1980, and under KGB surveillance, Fr Zdebskis received severe chemical burns. Doctors treating him refused KGB orders to diagnose his condition as venereal disease. Friends feared for his life and ultimately took him into private care.

In 1984, KGB agents raided his home, looking for 'stolen goods'. They seized Catholic Committee documents, the UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights, tapes of Vatican Radio broadcasts, typewriters and two locked safes. — Lithuanian Info Service.

Precious Independence Recalled

With the close television coverage of the recent events in the Philippines, Australian viewers were given glimpses of the joy of the Philippines people after the overthrow of President Marcos. Imagine how much more elated were the people of the Baltic in 1918 when they gained their independence from a foreign tyranny: Tsarist Russia that had lasted over one hundred years!

Despite a later occupation by Soviet forces, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians all over the world still celebrate the achievement of independence: Estonia on February 24, Latvia on November 18, and Lithuania on February 16. Ironically, the latter is the day that the Soviet cruise ship sank off New Zealand this year.

The Balts remember with pride the achievements of their countries during the short years of independence, between the two world wars.

Land reform was one of the most tangible achievements by the independent Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In Estonia, for example, three million acres of land, mainly expropriated from large estates, were distributed to people willing to work the land. This laid the basis of a healthy and ever expanding economy.

Minorities were protected, and their activities were encouraged. Swedes, Jews and Russians all had their own schools in Estonia, supported by the government as well as their representatives in the Estonian Parliament. Minorities were similarly protected in the Lithuanian Constitution.

The use of Baltic languages were actively discouraged by Tsarist and other occupiers, cultural heritage survived mainly through folklore. Folk songs and folklore began to be recorded during the "national awakening" before 1918, and continued during independence. By now, each nation has recorded over half a million traditional songs, dances, proverbs etc.

Closely linked with folklore heritage is the tradition of song festivals. Started modestly in 1869, by 1938 they were attracting 20,000 performers and 100,000 spectators in Estonia alone, out of a total population of only 1,200,000. Despite politicization by the Soviets, these festivals continue today, a sign of continuing Baltic patriotism.

Once again this year, the Estonians and Lithuanians throughout the world remembered their Independence

Days. In the free world, their celebrations were open, though tinged with sadness. Back home, they had to be cautious and keep their feelings to themselves — lest any outward sign might land them in Siberia.

Two Birthdays — 1



● Konstantin Päts (pictured), the Head of State of free Estonia from 1921 to 1924 and the President in 1934-1940, was born on the same day (February 23) as Rotary International — the worldwide voluntary service organisation. Päts was a foundation member and later life member of the Rotary Club of Tallinn.

All Rotary clubs in the Baltic States were disbanded when the Soviet Union forcibly annexed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 1940. Rotary has remained on the Soviets' banned list to the present day.

President Päts was forced out of office by the Soviets and deported to the Soviet Union in 1940. He died in 1956, but Soviet authorities refuse to say where he died or where he was buried.



Two Birthdays — 2

Celebration of Lithuanian Independence Day on February 16 is forbidden by the Soviets. However, these enterprising Lithuanians found a way of overcoming the ban. In 1980, they laid a wreath in Rasos Cemetery, Vilnius, at the tomb of literary giant Jonas Basanavičius who happened to die on Independence Day, 1927. For their troubles, most of the people pictured are now in prison.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Comments on Baltic News

I have always felt Australia does not take enough interest in the affairs of the Baltic countries. I am enclosing \$100 to help pay for your journal, which is very interesting.

W. Geoff. GARARD, CMG.
Medindie, SA.

Please accept my donation. And thank you for a most interesting news-letter.

Windsor, Vic. M. O'LEARY.

Baltic News is an excellent publication bringing news that escapes the notice (to put it mildly) of the daily and weekly press.

Subiaco, WA. (Dr) A. DOMAHIDY.

I was delighted to see your *Baltic News*. Congratulations.

I enclose a donation in support of your paper.

Newport, NSW. W. C. WENTWORTH.



I am English and suggest that, like me, you settle down and become Australians because you cannot change anything. If you think that we are going to go to war with Russia, to get your provinces back, you must think again.

Settle down, forget the old ways and concentrate on making something of yourselves in the country which has given you a new start in life.

Frankston, Vic. H. DEYKIN.

Keep up the informative and good publication.

Ascot Park, SA. V. & M. KANAS.

I was much touched at receiving *Baltic News*. The suppression of the once-free nations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania has always horrified me.

Blackburn, Vic. D. G. MISSO.

Nazi — Russian Pact

Thank you for reminding us of the infamous 1939 Molotov — Ribbentrop Pact (*Baltic News*, Dec '85) which led to the takeovers of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and other free countries.

This secret pact remains a constant source of embarrassment to Moscow, along with other unpalatable issues. For example: Stalin's purges (divulged by Khrushchev), the Katyn Wood murders, or the systematic attempts to Russify the Baltic States.

Adelaide, SA. R. PEARCE.

I have enclosed a money order, to cover your expenses.

Once again, I congratulate you on your excellent work in producing the much needed *Baltic News*.

Wahroonga, NSW. G. Garda.

Women's Plight

I read with abhorrence, in the December issue of *Baltic News*, of the plight of Baltic people, and in particular Lithuanian women.

If the maternal role and the passing on of religious, traditional and cultural values are frustrated, what prospects are there for the next generation and future families of the Baltic States?

The Soviet shadow must be lifted not only in the name of freedom, but for the future of Baltic society — the family.

Hobart Carmel M. Holmes.

At the time of writing this letter, Mrs Holmes was a Member for Denison in the Parliament of Tasmania.

European Parliament

Sincere thanks for the *Baltic News*, which I have just received via Senator Harradine.

I would like to assure you that the action we have initiated in the European Parliament will continue. We won't let up. It may be a long road ahead; but, with our determination to pursue it, success will come eventually. And, once again, the Baltic nations will attain their freedom and independence in the European community.

I wish you much success and God's blessings in your work for the Baltic cause, in faraway Australia.

Pocking. Otto von HABSBURG
Member of the European Parliament.

• **The Editor welcomes letters, especially brief ones, at PO Box 272, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005; and reserves the right to condense.**



Balts and the ABC

Most people of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian origin in Australia were brought here as indentured labourers between 1947 and 1950. By the early fifties most had worked off their indenture and had applied for, and were granted, Australian citizenship.

The history of people of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian origin as Australian citizens and taxpayers is as old as television transmission from the ABC which started on November 5, 1956.

After three and a half decades of citizenship and paying tax, these people of Baltic origin should have earned at least one feature programme on ABC television, showing their point of view.

Curtin, ACT. (Dr) K. KEMEZYS.

Cheap Loans

The mortgage interest on my humble family home is 15%, and rising. Bank-card people are charging me 21% interest. Yet the Soviet Union has been borrowing large lumps of cash in the West, at 9%. Why this difference?

According to the Bank of International Settlements, total recorded Soviet borrowing on 30/6/85 was \$19 billion. Most of this money was channelled into Soviet military operations.

So, you can get cheap loans if you're busy killing innocent Afghans. But I have to pay through my nose because I'm trying to rear a family of law-abiding Australians.

Sydney, NSW. B. UNDERWOOD.



"Heck, with enemies like these, who needs friends?"

The Spy Who Came in from the UN

Imants Lesinskis died in Washington, DC, on December 23. This Latvian had worked for the KGB for more than 20 years. Then, in 1978, he left his post as a senior Soviet official at the United Nations and defected to the West. He was later interviewed by Richard Dowden of the *Times*.

How long had he planned the defection?

"Let us say about two decades," he said with a rare laugh.

How did he get involved? "It was blackmail. I applied for a job and they discovered I had concealed something in my background . . . after that, my work was spying. My work was to spy on western friendship delegations. The Friendship Society is a branch of the Latvian KGB: it is supervised by them on a day to day basis. One of my contacts with them was the KGB chairman, Major General Longins Avdjukevics."

Trained in Moscow

"Then I went to Moscow for a year of intense training. They were preparing me for infiltration into West Germany as an illegal immigrant. There was training in techniques such as passing information, meeting people and avoiding surveillance, putting down coded messages."

Had he been trained in other things. Combat?

"OK er ya, I had weapons training. I learnt how to use Kalashnikov and hand weapons. My instructors told me how they had just stolen people, kidnapped them in West Germany or Austria and brought them over and how they had cracked safes. I was not involved in this but I would have done the preparation."

But Lesinskis never went. For the next few years he worked as a journalist, becoming editor of *Dzimtenes Balss* (voice of the Fatherland), a Latvian weekly sent abroad. In 1970 he became chairman of the Committee for Relations with Latvians Abroad.

Infiltration

"It was another KGB front organisation. Its aim was to make cultural ties with Latvians abroad and develop friendships and then infiltrate them and subvert the exiled communities in Europe and America. Also we tried to get KGB espionage experts invited over to Europe by individuals and groups."

Brothels? "The KGB didn't run such establishments but in Riga there are a large number of prostitutes. Usually they are afraid of plainclothes men and the militia and they stay down by the harbour for western sailors but they suddenly appeared in the vicinity of the tourist hotel. In many cases Latvian youths from abroad were called in their rooms and propositioned by girls. Some of those young men got into big trouble. It was clear, it was directed activity."

"Is the KGB efficient?" I asked. Another half smile and a dismissive wave of his hand. "I don't think so", said Lesinskis. "Their field officers around the world supply vast amounts of trash. But there is a fair amount of success. They have succeeded in making contacts with those who left Latvia because they hated the Soviet Regime and now some of those people are



● Flashback: Imants Lesinskis during a visit to Münster/West Germany in 1984.

inviting KGB people to their countries and giving them assistance or contacts. They have infiltrated other groups in the same way: Estonians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Armenians."

Is the KGB Vulnerable?

"Was there any chance of subverting the KGB from the inside?" I asked. A wave of his hand. No answer.

At the United Nations, Lesinskis was a senior conference organiser. "My contact was with Enger (Valdik Enger, a political affairs officer at the UN, was arrested and convicted of spying for the Soviet Union in 1978)".

"Did his arrest have anything to do with your defection?"

"You can say maybe. But at the UN we were just waiting, writing up the usual stuff about foreign colleagues, their personalities and weaknesses. The idea was to implant me into the public affairs office. From there I would have travelled widely and dealt with the press."

His chance came in 1978. His 20 year old daughter came to join him and his second wife in New York for the summer holidays, and they applied for political asylum.

New Identity

Now he has a new identity. He did not tell me his new name. The Americans, he says, have been very generous but he does not work for them. He is now an academic. "If I saw one of my old colleagues anywhere, I would tell the FBI".

"I still have to be cautious. There are many unpleasant happenings. The Bulgarian umbrella story is not very encouraging."

He was going to talk to Latvian exiles in London that evening. Would the KGB be there? Another laugh, and a wave of his hand. "Probably there will be eyes, but I don't think there will be any umbrellas."

— Richard DOWDEN in The (London) Times.

LEAVE YOUR TEARS IN MOSCOW, Barbara Armonas's book on her years in Siberia, is available at the special price of \$5 plus \$2 postage and packing. Order from: *Friends of the Prisoners*, PO Box 12, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005.

BOOK REVIEW by Elizabeth GERTSAKIS*

Čiurlionis and His Art

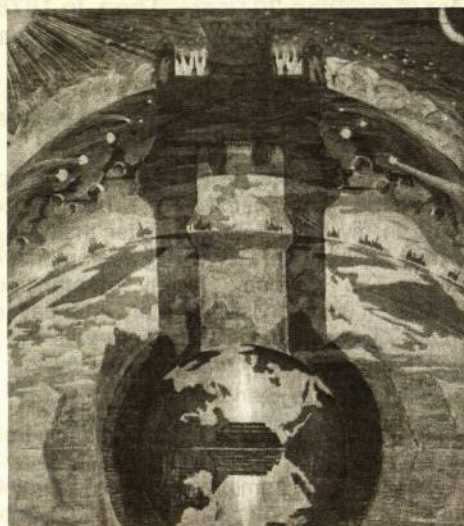
Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis — Lithuanian Visionary Painter, by Aleksis Rannit. Published by Lithuanian Library Press, Chicago, Ill, 1984.

This is a physically beautiful publication consisting of four essays, a 'Comparative Calendarium', 32 colour plates and 63 black and white reproductions. The author, Aleksis Rannit, seeks to present Čiurlionis as a paradigm of unique personal creativity that at its deepest levels draws on the 'cosmic memory of Lithuanians' as a people with a particular spiritual and intellectual historical tradition.

Rannit emphasises both Čiurlionis' poetic visionary sensibility and that of the Lithuanian culture as being based on the harmonies and rhythms of nature which just as naturally lead to the transcendental, the abstract, the infinite. Rannit explains Čiurlionis' complex visual cosmologies and spatial constructions as being new conceptual forms within the traditions of western painting — traditional perspective with its static view of reality being supplanted by a perspective that proposed a different metaphysical reality. Further, that Čiurlionis was able to make an imaginative translation of musical form.

Aleksis Rannit belonged to the early twentieth century school of art history and the style and concerns of his study reflect this. The book is redolent with a Romanticism appropriate to its subject and is nostalgic and mistily respectful of the great movements and individuals of late 19thC and early 20thC art and culture.

My criticisms of the book are perhaps more of a reflection of the changes in art history and the differences between his generation and my own. The book is called *Čiurlionis, Lithuanian Visionary Painter* and it is singularly to his visions and conceptual abstractions that we are directed. Čiurlionis as a product of a certain social world and social reality is missing. We are given only suggestions of those



● M. K. Čiurlionis, *Rex*.

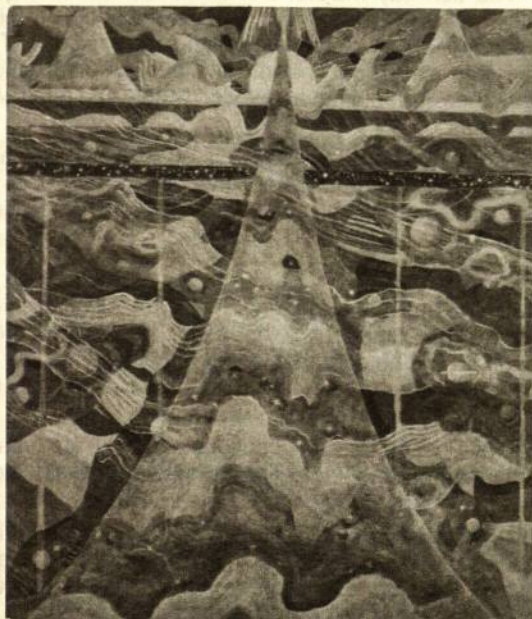
aspects of his life which in a fuller analysis of Čiurlionis, even as a 'visionary artist', need to be examined in order to produce a text that in a wider epistemological sense would be acceptable as more than an affirmative eulogy.

The other aspect decidedly lacking is a more full-blooded formal analysis and criticism of the works — their appearance, their formal qualities, colours, construction — and an appreciation of them as paintings.

Rannit also gives the important 'musical' structural meaning scant attention — he is so moved by Čiurlionis that he prefers to allow the observer to be just as moved — but we do not all look at art for contemplation and sublimation. I am prepared to argue that it is possible to sensitively present an artist and an art form that is essentially about religious aspiration without seeking conversions.

Rannit expresses his concern in the last essay, *Touching upon the Currents of Modernist Movements*, that Čiurlionis might remain 'a mere legend on the fringes of art history'. My own view about the historical selection of knowledge (inclusive of art) and whether it is retained as important or shifted to the sides is bound up with its usage. Rannit is simply embroidering the 'legend', using a saintly subjectivism for a 'real' time in history and art. If Čiurlionis is restricted to those transparent areas in the way he is studied, then he will unfortunately remain a shadowy and therefore minor figure (Rannit himself illustrates the problem when he writes that in 1970 a Lithuanian bibliography on Čiurlionis listed some 4,000 entries of which only a few are works of serious criticism).

In another sense it is probably fair to describe its achievement as a recognition of Rannit as an eminent embodiment of the continuation of Lithuanian culture as much as it is of Čiurlionis the painter.



● M. K. Čiurlionis, *Sonata of the Stars: Allegro*.

*Elizabeth GERTSAKIS, BA (Melb.), Dip Ed (Lat.), is Lecturer in Art History and Theory at the School of Art, University of Tasmania.

Baltic Resolution Deferred

On February 20, 1986, Australia's Federal House of Representatives discussed the present situation in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The matter arose through a motion, generally known as the Baltic Resolution, moved in the House by Dr Klugman (ALP).

The essential parts of the motion asked the House to note the situation in the Baltic States, and to call on the Government of the USSR to end the repression against the Baltic peoples.

Dr Klugman pointed out the Australian Government's intention to raise the Baltic question again in the Human Rights Commission of the UN. He proposed that Australian delegates to other international bodies should also continuously raise this matter. Dr Klugman commended the action of Baltic organisations for organizing the Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise in July last year and the Baltic tribunal in Copenhagen.

Russification

An amendment, moved by Mr Ruddock (Liberal), sought to widen the motion by making it similar to that which the Australian Senate accepted in February 1985. Mr Ruddock particularly emphasised the need to

point out that an intensive process of "Russification" in the Baltic countries is aimed at eliminating the indigenous languages and culture.

After 30 minutes discussion, the time allotted for General Business expired and the debate was adjourned until the next sitting of Parliament.

Although no decision was reached this time, it was gratifying to see the plight of the Baltic peoples fully discussed in the Australian Parliament. "The Baltic Council of Australia and its members must be congratulated for persistently making representations to members of both the Government and the Opposition over the last two years, and for generally promoting the Baltic cause among Australian politicians," a spokesman for HELLP Association said in Hobart this week.

● A full transcript of the motion, amendment and speeches has been published in the DAILY HANSARD of February 20, 1986, pages 941-946.



● During the Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting last November, this group of Balts and their friends staged a peaceful demonstration in Geneva.

Sudden Loss

Julijs Kadelis, 52, the head of the Latvian Information Bureau in Münster/West Germany, was found dead in his flat on January 23.

A high competent journalist, Kadelis had worked hard for the Baltic cause. He was one of the organisers of the 1985 Baltic Tribunal in Copenhagen.

Julijs Kadelis had also been a valued contributor to *Baltic News* since this newsletter's inception eleven years ago.

Thank You!

This issue of BALTIC NEWS was financed by the following donations:

NSW: Lithuanian National Foundation (Tautos Fondas), \$1,000; Lithuanian Society for Human Rights Sydney, \$160; Sydney Lithuanian Women's Association, \$150; A. & H. Meiliunas, \$50; Dr. R. Cavallouski, \$25; J. & V. Ramanauskas, A. Jakstas, Fr G. R. Beltrame, A. Wiedebaum, Juozas Ramanauskas, \$20 each; A. Laukaitis, J. Gulbis, V. & R. Matulaitis, \$10 each; Alfa Savickiene, N. B. Balton, \$5 each.

Vic.: Latvian Federation, Melbourne, Melbourne Lithuanian Club, \$150 each; Sale Lithuanian Community, \$106; E. Klavins, Baltic Council of Victoria, \$100 each; L.K.V.S. Ramove (Melbourne), Tautos Fondas (Melbourne), Melbourne Dainos Samburis, \$75 each; R. & A. Vysniauskas, \$20; V. & A. Bieliauskas, \$15; H. A. Johansons, Anonymous, K. J. Lynikas, J. Pranskunas, Rev Dr P. Daukny, J. Keblys, V. Zernaitis, Z. Augaitis, V. Pleskunas, J. Kivietaitis, \$10 each; E. Blokmanis, Fr Ambrose Ryan, F. Shiller, J. Bruozis, V. Cizauskas, K. Zdanis, A. Bajoras, S. Ramanauskas, A. Barila, H. Juknevičius, V. Matulaitis, Br Sadauskas, V. Stagis, J. Mikstas, P. Binkus, F. Sukys, J. Jurgelaitis, A. Galiauskienė, V. Sidabra, \$5 each; L. Padgurskis, \$4; J. Zoniis, \$3; V. Kilciauskas, L. Cekas, J. Baumil, Klukas, P. Mazylis, P. Dargis, \$2 each.

SA: LKVS "Ramove" Adelaide, \$66; J. Cibulskis, J. Ivoska, \$50 each; P. Smolskis, \$23; I. Taunys, B. Prasmutaitė, V. Vosylius, \$20 each; A. Maciukienė, D. Kutkaitė, Grijauskas, B. Launikaitienė, Alb Pocius, S. Baltrunas, K. Alseika, J. Kutkienė, K. Pocius, J. Bociulis, K. Kaminskis, Rev Fr J. Petraitis MIC, A. & B. Budrys, P. Duoba, \$10 each; B. Balsevicius, J. Staciunas, V. Neverauskas, L. Gerulaitis, E. & S. Dainys, F. Adomonis, J. Poskus, A. Didiuniene, J. Brazauskas, A. Bauziene, M. Reinke, B. Masionis, A. Dancavicius, L. Slauskas, A. Jucius, O. & A. Stimburys, V. Patasius, V. Vokietaitis, A. Maineliene, A. Stakaitis, B. Straukas, J. Lapsys, T. Ziukeliene, P. Grebliunas, S. Guscia, J. Stepanas, J. Langevicius, M. Martisiene, F. Katauskienė, T. Kasauskas, K. Cieminis, J. Aleksandraviciene, J. N. Vitkunai, E. Puodzius, V. Vitkuniene, K. Vanagiene, K. Puidokas, \$5 each; P. Simkus, \$4; J. Paskauskas, J. Sabeckis, B. Kryznanuskas, R. Sidabras, F. Kazlauskienė, V. Burniene, J. Lapsys, A. Zakareviciene, A. Gučiuvienė, T. Vasiliauskienė, V. Baltutis, \$2 each.

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To H.E.L.L.P. (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples Association),
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I do not recognise the Russian sovereignty of the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania).

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Family Re-union Blocked

After five years of fruitless efforts, an elderly South Australian invalid is still waiting to be re-united with his daughter. Former Latvian migrant Peter Lacis, 65, now a paraplegic, has been trying to bring out his daughter Benita from Russian-occupied Latvia since 1980. However, all his attempts have been dashed by the Soviets.

Australian migration authorities gave the re-union their blessing five years ago, and Mr Lacis was overjoyed when his daughter was finally issued a passport by the Soviets in 1982.

But at the last minute the USSR refused Benita an exit visa, saying the family tie between her and Mr Lacis was "purely nominal" and did not justify a change of country.

Peter Lacis is a former BHP crane driver living alone in a Housing Trust home in McBryde Tce, Whyalla. He had two leg operations and is now confined to a wheelchair.

In spite of this, Mr Lacis is independent, cares for himself and is a keen gardener. He installed an underground watering system for 17 rose trees by crawling around on his knees.

Peter Lacis left Latvia in 1943. Benita was then only eight months old. It was not until 1957 that Peter could trace his daughter's whereabouts, through the Swiss Red Cross.

He wanted to bring his son and Benita to Australia then, but was told they were too young to travel alone.



● A long wait in the wheelchair: Peter Lacis (left) and his daughter, Benita (with young Lolita).

In 1979, Peter tried again by sending a postcard to people he knew in Latvia, in the hope they would contact his daughter. Benita did reply, and twelve months later she asked Peter to bring her to Australia.

Arrangements were made to sponsor her out as a migrant. Peter lodged Benita's fare and an Australian visa early in 1981, but she has been unable to get a Soviet exit permit to the present day. The Soviet authorities told Benita that immigration to Australia was "unsuitable and inadvisable".

Benita has a daughter, Lolita, 6, and is divorced.

Australian Support

Mr Lacis's plight was brought to public attention in 1983 when the Federal Member for Whyalla, Mr O'Neil, took up his cause. Since then, Australia's Foreign Minister, Mr Bill Hayden, has repeatedly raised the matter with Soviet authorities, but to no avail.

Mr O'Neil has publicly criticized the USSR for its lack of humanity, in depriving an elderly man the pleasure of seeing his daughter in his declining years.

Meanwhile, time is ticking on. Will father and daughter ever meet again?

● The International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) would like to hear from all separated Baltic families. Please write to: ISHR, Postfach 2965, Kaiserstr. 72, 6000 FRANKFURT/Main 1, West Germany.

— Based on reports by Maruta Zvalgzne (ALIC) and Guy Ker & Harry Nicholson in *The News*.

Kept Apart, Too



Inside the Soviet-controlled Baltic States, some families are deliberately kept apart.

When Lithuanian Vytautas Abrutis (pictured with his son Aidas) asked for permission to migrate to the West, he was arrested and held in a labour camp. Two weeks after Vytautas' release in December 1982, his wife Edita Abrutiene was seized and sent to a special concentration camp for women, in the depths of Russia. She is still there.

COMING EVENT

● JUNE 13 (Friday)
45th ANNIVERSARY

of First Mass Deportations from the Baltic States

Please keep this night free —

More details in the next issue of BALTIC NEWS

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