



# BALTIC NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF HELP THE ESTONIAN, LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION (HELLP)  
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## Balts Not Warned of N-Danger

Soviet authorities did not warn the people in Russian-occupied Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that a dangerously radioactive cloud was moving across their countries, towards Sweden and Finland, on April 26-27. A large area in Northern Europe became contaminated (see map below) when a reactor malfunctioned and caught fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, in Soviet-controlled Ukraine, that weekend.

At first, Soviet media kept quiet; then they played down the extent of the accident. Baltic residents first heard of the disaster and its consequences on BBC and Radio Free Europe broadcasts, some three days after the event. By then, it was too late to take precautions.

Because of tight censorship, the latest reports from the three Baltic States are still sketchy. It is clear, however, that Balts are alarmed and angry. Alarmed, because exposure to radiation can lead to death or illness after weeks or even years. And Balts are furious that, by choosing not to warn them, the Kremlin wrote them off as "dispensable chattels".

### Effect on Baby

A young woman in the seventh month of her pregnancy telephoned her aunt in Tasmania from Riga (Russian-occupied Latvia) on May 2. Speaking in an agitated voice, she sought advice and preventative treatment for possible nuclear radiation after-effects. She had learned of the Chernobyl catastrophe from a BBC news broadcast.

"Outwardly, I'm OK now," the expectant mother said, "but I lie awake at night worrying about the future: will the effects of the nuclear fall-out hit me next week, or next month perhaps? And what about my baby? ...My baby?" The phone went dead at this point.



● Baltic people went about their daily business, unaware of the radiation cloud overhead. Their Russian masters knew, but would not tell.



### EDITORIAL:

## People or Things?

**Past and present Soviet leaders have one trait in common: a total disregard for human life and dignity.**

During the 1940s, Stalin deported one tenth of the entire population of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. At least 655,000 men, women and children from the Baltic States were scattered over the depths of Russia, in Siberia and beyond the Arctic Circle.

They were left there to labour, to struggle against incredible odds . . . and to die. People had become things, not persons — mere chattels of the Soviets.

A few weeks ago, Mr Gorbachev showed similar callousness. As the world's biggest nuclear plant accident sent a cloud of radioactive particles across the Baltic States, Mr Gorbachev and his retinue remained silent. No warnings to the non-Russians in the cloud's path. No hints not to drink milk or rainwater. No directives to children not to play in sandboxes.

We Australians find it very hard to understand callous indifference of this kind. We prize and respect human life and human values. Why don't the Soviets?

On June 13, the people of Hobart will commemorate the Baltic deportations. Similar services will be held throughout Australia and overseas.

These meetings will have a deeper meaning than a mere remembrance of the Baltic victims who died long ago. They will also protest against the Soviet tyranny that is continuing NOW; and against the brutal insensitivity of the Soviet leaders.



# NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

## National Demonstration



● In Russian-occupied Lithuania, participants at church processions wear Lithuanian national costumes, as a public affirmation of their affinity.

This photograph was taken on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul in June 1983, in Antakalnis (a suburb of Vilnius).

## Released

Harri Mõtsnik, the Estonian Lutheran pastor who was sentenced to five years in labour camps last year for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda," was unexpectedly released on March 28, Good Friday, this year.

Mõtsnik's release follows his public "renunciation" of his "subversive views" in Kodumaa, Soviet newspaper for Estonians living abroad, on November 13, 1985 and on television on January 4, 1986. As part of his recantation Mõtsnik asked the Supreme Soviet for pardon and expressed the hope that what he said would be "taken into account."

— Keston News Service.

## Entrepreneurs Squashed

Five men have been sentenced to terms ranging from one to three years for running an underground printing press, according to the official Soviet magazine, *Sovietskaya Kultura*.

The printing press allegedly operated for seven years in the town of Gargždai, in the region of Klaipėda, northwestern Lithuania. It produced Christmas, Easter and holy cards; as well as calendars and prayer books.

Stanislovas Murauskas, identified as the director of the illegal printshop, was sentenced to three years by the Supreme Court of the Lithuanian SSR. His partner, Donatas Jonutis, received a two year sentence. Zigmantas Murauskas and Alfonsas Vaičekas, received two year suspended sentences, whereas a one year suspended sentence was passed on Stasys Mitkus.

Zigmantas Murauskas, by profession an excavator, and Vaičekas, a photographer, had outstanding work records, as did Mitkus, a recipient of numerous professional and honorary awards in his capacity as a power station inspector. Stanislovas Murauskas and Jonutis are artists.

## Still Going Strong

Lithuania's oldest woman, Miss Barbora Jasaite, recently celebrated her 130th birthday. She remains active and in reasonable health. Barbora saw a doctor for the first time in her life two years ago.

She grew up in a family of eleven children. One of her sisters, Cecilija, also reached 100.

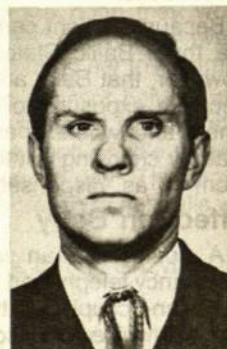
Barbora has worked hard all her life. At the age of 99, she was still employed at the *Pergale* collective farm near Rietavas — and she has the papers to prove it.

Altogether, 450 centenarians are living in Lithuania now, 342 women and 108 men. Only 14 of them are over 110: 13 women and 1 man (Kostas Kupciunas).

The district of Raseiniai is the most famous for longevity: it has 32 centenarians. — *Laiskai Lietuviams*.

## Cālis Moved to Perm

● Latvian prisoner of conscience Ints Cālis (pictured) has been moved to a new place of imprisonment — camp No 35 in Perm region.



Cālis, a 56-year-old jeweller and electrician, was jailed in 1983 for six years. He had campaigned for a nuclear-free Baltic. He had also joined 44 other Balts in signing the 1979 Memorandum against the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact that led to the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States (see *Baltic News*, December 1983).

Until last year, Cālis was held at the infamous Chistopol prison. Non-Russians were repressed especially harshly there. Prison authorities often used the new amendment to paragraph 188 in the RSFSR Criminal Code which stated that a prisoner's term could be extended by up to 5 years for breaking prison rules or for "misconduct".

Ints Cālis's wife, Ināra Serdāne, is in poor health and is frequently harassed by the KGB.

Her new address is: CCCP / Latvia / 226010 RĪGA / Rūpniecības ielā 13, dz 16 / SERDĀNE Ināra / USSR.

## One of the Betrayed

Dr Vincas Zenkevičius died recently in Druskininkai (Lithuania), at the age of 78. Zenkevičius was one of the last living witnesses of the "great Swedish betrayal."

As the Soviet armies were approaching Lithuania in 1945, Zenkevičius and several friends fled in a small boat across the Baltic Sea to Sweden. The Swedish authorities interned them, then handed them back to the Soviets.

At first, Dr Zenkevičius was allowed to remain in Lithuania and worked in Telšiai. In 1949, however, he was deported to Siberia and remained there until 1956.

On his return to Lithuania, Dr Zenkevičius worked in the sanatorium of Druskininkai until his retirement a few years ago.

— *Europos Lietuvis*.



## Modern-day Decimation

Plans for mass deportations of the Baltic people were made eight months BEFORE the Soviet armies seized the three Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. On October 11, 1939, the Deputy Commissar of State Security of the USSR, General Serov, signed Order No 001223. The order listed 23 categories of Baltic "enemies of the people" and called for their immediate registration, to be followed by surveillance and ultimate "disposal".

General Serov issued his notorious order on the same night as a Lithuanian delegation was given an official banquet at the Kremlin, to mark the signing of the Lithuanian-Soviet mutual assistance pact. During this dinner Stalin, Molotov and other high Soviet officials solemnly promised to guard the sovereignty of Lithuania. As they spoke, the blueprints for deportation were being prepared in a back room!

In World War II, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania chose to remain neutral. However, this did not deter the Soviet Union. By secret agreement with Hitler's Germany, Soviet tanks rolled into the neutral Baltic States on June 15 and 16, 1940. The home governments were eliminated, and ruthless Soviet terror swept across the once-free countries.

**Mass deportations, master-minded by General Serov, started on the night of June 13-14, 1941. One of the few survivors, Mrs Maria Skipitytė-Garbačiauskienė, testified:**

"They came in a truck at 5 am: four or five armed Russians and one Lithuanian. They told us to get ready and take food for 5 days and 50 kg personal belongings.

"They took us to Sidarai railway station, and packed us into a freight wagon. Inside, there were double bunks at both ends, and a hole in the floor — our "toilet". Windows were tiny and barred.

"At first, we had 26 persons in our wagon: 8 men, 11 women and 7 children. Before long, they separated three men — Petras Bagdonas, Adolfas Petrauskas, Liudas Kudulis — from their families and took them away.

"During our long journey to the Unknown, we received hot water; but food was issued only once.

"A woman in our wagon went into labour. We called for a doctor, or for any help — but the wagon doors remained locked. The mother died before our eyes, and so did her newborn baby.

"I'll never forget Bui station. Old Mrs Kudulienė collapsed on the "toilet" and died, shortly before our arrival at Bui. Soldiers dragged her body out, in a most disrespectful manner.

"Ust-Lokhchim was my destination, just west of the Ural mountains. For the first three winters, I and other women had to work as loggers, from 6 am to 4 pm seven days a week. We walked to work and back home again, outside those hours.

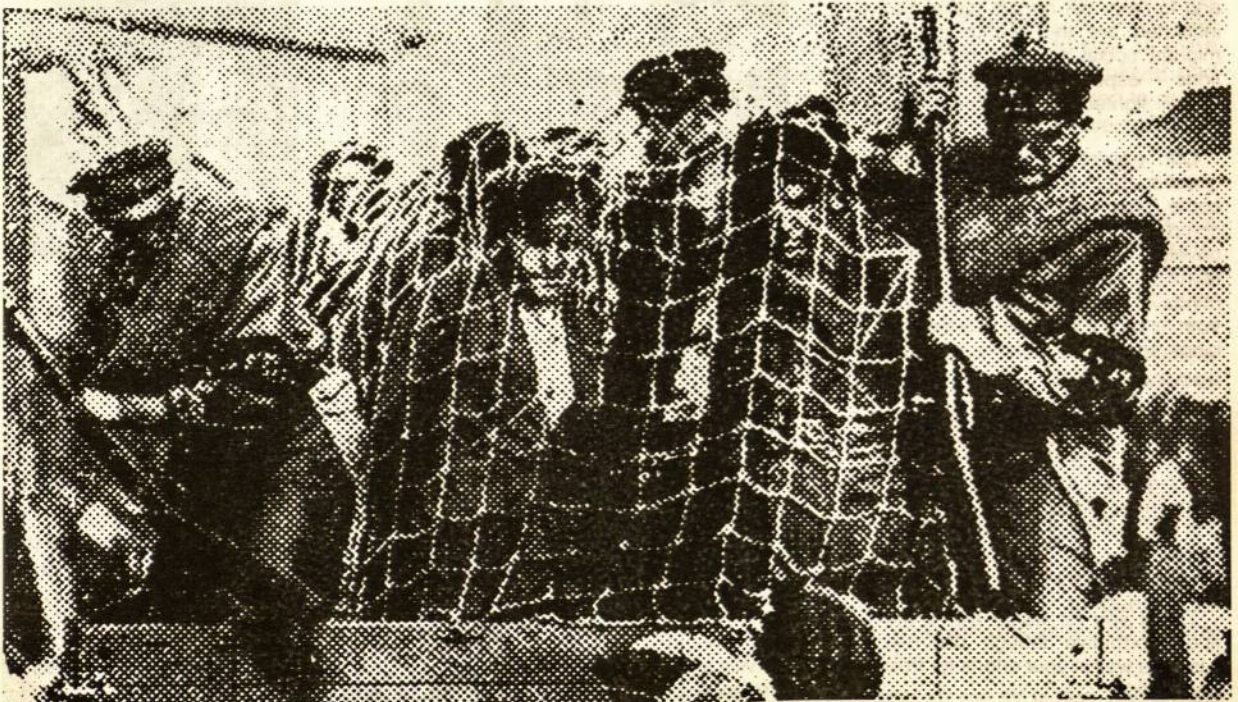
### Death and Despair

"Malaria, other diseases, and starvation took their toll. My baby daughter Danutė died on April 22, 1943. I dug her grave myself, helped by another woman, Odilija Butkevičiūtė. My mother died six weeks later. I buried her, too, assisted by a Jew, Mr Perlovas, and a woman friend, Vanda Jucevičiūtė. Soon, we could no longer bury our dead individually, and had to resort to mass graves.

"Out of 170 Lithuanian deportees in Ust-Lokhchim, only 30 or so had survived by 1945. Lithuanian Jews were among the victims, including most members of the Zivas and Perlovas families."

What crimes had these deportees committed? None. They merely happened to be living in countries wanted by the Russian colonial empire-builders.

**By 1952, at least 665,000 Baltic people had been deported or killed by the Soviets. That is 10% of the entire population of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Modern-day DECIMATION — in the true sense of the word.**





# Women Prisoners Demand Their Rights



● **LIDIJA DORONINA-LASMANE** (60) is a Latvian Baptist who worked as a nurse in the Latvian capital Riga. She has been sentenced three times during the post-Stalin period.

In Barashevo camp, Lidiya has taken part in hunger strikes protesting against the harsh treatment of other prisoners and commemorating Human Rights Day.

Four Baltic women prisoners in Soviet camp ZhCh 385/3-4 are demanding "prisoner-of-war" status, in the hope of improving their situation. The women base their claim on the United Nations resolution 3103(28) dated December 12, 1973, which was published in an official Soviet newspaper, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, on June 6, 1984.

The UN resolution states that, if a country is deprived of its freedom by a foreign power, a person struggling against such occupation is entitled to the prisoner-of-war status.

The four women are all prisoners of conscience: Lagle Parek (Estonian), Lidiya Doronina-Lasmane (Latvian), Edita Abrutienė and Jadvyga Bieliauskienė (both Lithuanians).

Lagle Parek, a 44-year-old architect, was sentenced in 1983 to nine years' imprisonment and exile, for signing several appeals. One of these had asked that Northern Europe, including the three Baltic States, be declared a nuclear-free zone.

Jadvyga Bieliauskienė has been deprived of freedom for 4 years, to be

followed by another 3 years in exile, for teaching children religion.

## Mother, Son Separated

Edita Abrutienė (35) was arrested in 1982, shortly after her husband Vytautas was released from prison (see *Baltic News*, March '86, p8.).

Edita's son, who was just getting used to having two parents, was again left with only one. The boy is rarely able to visit his mother, because the camp authorities regularly deprive her of the right to see him, as a punitive measure.

The four Baltic women believe that even as POWs they would be better off. Conditions in their prison camp, near Barashevo in the Mordovian "Autonomous" Republic, are unbearable.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Infiltration

In the last issue of *Baltic News*, I read that a KGB member, the late Mr Lesinskis, had defected to the West. Why?

We all know that it is an impossibility to leave the KGB. Yet lately, the Communists have been using "defectors" to infiltrate national organisations and to carry out certain tasks. Heavily infiltrated are the church and some migrant social and national organisations — especially the organisations of former fighters against the Communists.

Our papers treat the communist question from the point of view held some 50 years ago. They overlook completely the fact that the KGB has developed a new approach and new techniques, to reach into the hearts and minds of migrants. Great help comes from some people who visit their homelands and take orders from the KGB.

North Essendon, Vic. (Dr) E. KOCINS.

### Baltic News

I always look forward to my copy of *Baltic News*. I am becoming more and more interested as time goes on, as one is learning and understanding more.

Bardon, Qld.

D. LORD.

Thank you for *Baltic News* which I find informative though disturbing. I wish you well in your efforts for freedom and justice.

Pearce, WA.

(Rev) G. BEARD.



● Villa Rose: The Soviets have paid no rent since 1940.

### Soviet Squatters

Regrettably, our mass media misled the Australian public last November. Reporting on the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Geneva, the ABC TV and radio and several papers said that some of the talks were held in a "Soviet villa" known as Villa Rose.

This is not true! According to the Geneva Real Estate Register, the Villa Rose — located at 5 Rue de la Paix — is owned by the "Latvian Government" which bought it before World War II. The villa served as the headquarters of Independent Latvia's legation to the now defunct League of Nations. (The

Soviet Union, by the way, was expelled from the League of Nations in 1939 for attacking Finland).

Since the invasion of Latvia, the Soviets have been squatting in Villa Rose. However, the Latvian people remain the rightful owners of this ornate 19th century property.

The Swiss Foreign Ministry stated recently that the Soviets had sought in 1984 to change the Geneva Register entry, but were rebuffed because "Switzerland never recognized the annexation of the three Baltic States by the Soviet Union".

Perth, WA.

B. YOUNG.



## A Look at Estonian Trade Unions

Later this month, a delegation of West Australian trade union officials will visit Russian-occupied Estonia. This will give the Australian workers' representatives a glimpse of a trade union system that is entirely different.

In the days of independence, Estonian trade unions were structured and functioned similarly to Australia's unions. After the Soviet invasion in June 1940, however, all free unions were dismantled and were replaced by a new-look Soviet system.

The trade unions in Estonia are now fewer in number and are industries-based. According to Soviet ideologists, the unions have no battles to fight. The fundamental cause for the employee-employer confrontations has been eliminated, they say; for the Soviet State is now the sole legitimate employer, and the workers are the State. So, they cannot fight themselves!

Guided by this philosophy, Soviet Estonian trade unions are expected to "help" the State "in boosting production, increasing its efficiency, and managing the national economy."

In Russian-occupied Estonia, trade unions also administer most aspects of social insurance. They control maternity grants, pensions, temporary unemployment benefits, recreational facilities, holiday travel, allocation of holiday homes, and special diets.

Part of Estonian trade unions' duties is to supervise sanitary standards, workers' protection and safety engineering. Trade unions employ technical inspectors who are aided by voluntary labour-protection activists.

### Work Without Pay

Soviet Estonian unions have endorsed the Kremlin's policy of occasional Saturday's or Sunday's work without pay. On Lenin's birthday and on other special occasions decreed by the Party, all employees are expected to complete a day's "voluntary work without pay for the good of the society."

★ ★ ★

Before the Soviet forced takeover in 1940, independent Estonia had one of the most advanced industrial relations systems in the world. The rights and privileges of workers were regulated by Parliament, through two Acts which became law on July 10, 1931.

The first of these Acts fixed the working day at 8 hours and prescribed a compulsory meal break. The working of overtime was also detailed.



● HOBART WILL PRAY for deported Balts, in St Joseph's, on Friday, June 13, at 7.30 pm — See Page 7 for more details.



● In Russian-occupied Estonia, workers donate a day's work without pay "to the Soviet society". This practice is fully backed by their trade unions.

### Workers' Councils

The second Act regulated the election and powers of Workers' Councils, representatives and general assemblies.

Enterprises with more than 100 workers had to have an elected council of 3 or more members, according to the size of the workforce. In enterprises with 25-100 workers, the role of the Council was carried out by a single elected workers' representative. In addition, certain matters had to be agreed to by a general assembly of all workers. Such an assembly also operated in enterprises with less than 25 workers.

Under the Act, the employer was obliged to provide facilities for elections and meetings, to cover the administrative costs of elections, and to pay an extra allowance to all elected members. The employer had no right to dismiss them. He was also obliged to report at least once a year on the financial and developmental state of his enterprise.

### Resolution of Disputes

All changes to working conditions had to be negotiated with the workers' council or workers' representative. If a dispute arose that could not be solved, the matter was reported to the local Inspector of Industries, who then set up a committee of arbitration. The five-person committee consisted of two workers' representatives, two employers' nominees and an independent member agreed to by both parties.

If either side was dissatisfied with the outcome, there was a right of appeal to the appropriate ministry. These workers' representative bodies were very successful in solving disputes as well as in achieving better working conditions.

The Estonian model of workers' co-determination, established 9 years before the Soviet conquest, was later followed in post-war West Germany and several other European countries.

— REFERENCE: Articles 487 and 488 in *Riigi Teataja* 1931, pp.879-887.



# A City Built on Graves

by Viktors Kalnins

The city of Norilsk, located in the far north of the Soviet Union, on the Taimyr peninsula, has observed its 50th anniversary. Today, the city has 265 thousand inhabitants: but it has been built over the bones of slaves.

In the twenties, copper ore, cobalt and coal were discovered here. Geological explorers are now referred to as the city's founders. Actually, the city was built by hundreds of thousands of slave labourers. Sent down stream on the Yenisey river and wearing cotton quilts with numbers on their backs, they were confined behind barbed wire fences, and driven in 50 degrees below zero to work constructing buildings, excavating mines, extracting ore and coal.

At first, there were 6 so-called "camp sites" in Norilsk. Later, in the postwar years there were at least 35 or 40, with several thousand slave labourers in each. The camps were located on the bare tundra, where the subsoil is permanently frozen. With only shovels and picks the inmates built the city, dug foundations, constructed brick buildings for Gorky's needs, developed Norilsk into a heavy industry centre in Russia's northern region.

Above Norilsk rises Mount Smits, named after the well-known Soviet polar explorer, Otto Smits — who is Latvian! The mountain is a silent witness to the cruelty and violence of the Soviets: at its foot are thousands of graves of Norilsk's builders from the special camp known as Gorlag.

## Baltic Victims

The first slave labourers from the Baltic arrived at Norilsk in 1941. They were Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian army officers.

The Balts were mainly concentrated in camps 4 and 5. Then there was the infamous Medvezhaya camp as well as a penal camp in Norilsk where the inmates were kept in chains even at work.

The well-known jurist and historian, Adolfs Silde, in



● Today, Norilsk is a large industrial centre. But, wherever you set foot in this city, you are treading on some unknown slave's grave.

his research regarding Latvians in Soviet prisons, camps and deportation sites, named Norilsk the "Baltic Katyn" (Katyn is a place in the Smolensk region where the Soviets killed imprisoned Polish officers). Almost all the Baltic officers who ended up at Norilsk either starved to death as slave labourers or were executed. Josif Berger, who regained his freedom and is now a citizen of Israel, testified that in the autumn of 1941 about a thousand Baltic officers were murdered in Norilsk.

During my years of imprisonment, I had the opportunity to meet many long-term inmates, still from Stalin's time. They had served sentences in various places, including Kolyma and Vorkuta. A few people remained alive after Norilsk (only those who were sent there after the war).

## Norilsk Uprising

Latvians were active participants in the 1953 unrest at Norilsk. The uprising started on May 24 and continued for three or four weeks. During this time Latvian and Estonian women stood out for their bravery. Many of the participants were killed. However, the revolt in Norilsk was very significant in the chain of events that shook the entire Gulag system during 1953 and 1954.

As a result of the uprising, the regime became less severe: identification numbers were removed from the clothes; workers were paid; restrictions on correspondence were lifted; sentences could be reduced for workers doing hard labour. In the following years, all these improvements were gradually withdrawn. Today, political prisoners must again wear tags on their clothes bearing their last names instead of numbers.

The few surviving Norilsk prisoners, when they read about the city's anniversary will surely remember their fellows who remained behind in the tundra "in the vast and wide land with an abundance of prisons and camps," as the prisoners used to sing.

— Adapted from *Latvija Amerika*, Toronto; and *Latvian Information Bulletin* (US).



● Prisoner Kuusk was shot dead by Soviet camp guards when he tried to escape from the Novo-Nasselniky concentration camp. His body was left hanging on the barbed wire for eight months, as a warning to other prisoners. (From Joann Saarniit's *Behind the Iron Curtain*. This artist is a former Soviet prisoner. He now lives in Canada.)



## COMING EVENT:

**"Come and Pray with Us"**

Tasmanians of all denominations have been invited to join in the ecumenical service in St Joseph's Church (corner Macquarie and Harrington Streets, Hobart), on Friday night, June 13, at 7.30 pm.

The service has been organised by Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Peoples' Association (HELLP). It will commemorate the mass deportations from the Baltic States which started in June 1941 and continued in 1944-48.

"As in previous years, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, Sir Guilford Young, and senior representatives of other churches have agreed to take part," the Chairman of HELLP (Mr Ray Tarvydas) has told *Baltic News*. "We are now asking the people of Hobart to come and join us in prayer for the victims of these deportations."

**Candlelight Vigil**

For three hours before the ecumenical service, from 4.30 pm to 7.30 pm, there will be a peaceful vigil outside St Joseph's Church. Candles will be lit, representing individual deportees and their families.

Non-members of HELLP are asked to join in this gesture, too, and bring a candle or two. Please place your candles in glass jars or similar wind-proof containers.



● On Friday 13th, let's light a candle outside St Joseph's — in memory of at least 655,000 Baltic deportees.

Photo by courtesy of *The Mercury*.

**Anniversary Preparations**

● Later this year, Latvia's first Cardinal, 90-year-old Julians Vaivods (pictured), will lead the celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the Christianisation of his people. Similar festivities will also be held in Australia, Rome and in other centres in the West.

**Informative and Up-to-date**

The Department of Political Science at Dundee University (Scotland) offers a course on *USSR: Politics and Society*. Its 1984-85 Selective Bibliography runs to 10 pages and lists 227 titles in English, exclusive of periodical articles.

A similar 1985-86 list for the Course on *European Communism* sets down 279 titles.

Few of these books were published before 1970.

Each of the bibliographies is accompanied by a Required Reading pamphlet indicating articles in English-language periodicals as well as particular chapters or sections from works listed in the bibliographies.

Further information is available from: Mr A. L. Reid, Dept of Political Science, University of Dundee, Dundee, Scotland DD1 4HN. J.W.D.

**Sincere Thanks**

BALTIC NEWS is a vital supplement to our mass media. Since Australian radio, TV and daily papers rarely report from the Russian-occupied Baltic States, BALTIC NEWS aims to fill this gap.

A lot of work is done by unpaid volunteers. Nevertheless, unavoidable costs — such as printing and postage to 8,000 readers — amount to almost \$3,000 per issue now.

BALTIC NEWS has no independent income. All its money comes from readers and supporters — people who believe that BALTIC NEWS is worth publishing.

We are grateful for the following donations, received since the last issue of BALTIC NEWS:

R. Venclovas, L. Simanaukas (NSW), \$20 each. N. Celkiene, Rev E. T. Leonard, B. Stasionis (NSW), \$10 each. A. Zilys, \$5.

Vic: Latvian Community in Melbourne, \$150; P. Bimba, \$50; V.A., \$40; R. J. Rozentals, \$30; H. Kalade, E. Vines, \$20 each; Z. Galitis, P. Jokubaitis, \$10 each; P. Ryan, \$5; L. Nobelius, \$2.

NSW: Estonian Society in Sydney, \$200; E. G. Rowland, \$60; V. R., \$22; Sydney Estonian Society's Library, St Mary Shanahan, Iz Jonaitis, V. Raulickis, \$20 each; A. Vinevicius, S. Satkauskas, Jablanskis family, F. Bulger, \$10 each; V. Miezius, \$5.

Various: Baltic Council of Australia (Sydney), \$200; S. Paukstis, Lithuanian Library Sydney, \$50 each; Latvian Youth Festival Committee (Vic), \$30; A. Briedis (NSW), O. Skirka (Vic), I. Augstkalns (SA), \$25 each; A. Paliulis (USA), J. Normantas, P. Kviecinskis, V. Savickas (Vic), Bishop Peter De Campo, J. Doniela (SA), \$20 each; G. D. Phillips (ACT), \$15; V. Navickas (Tas), Orthodox Monastery New Zealand, B. Lazauskas (USA), C. Ford (NSW), K. J. Stoll, Dr E. Kocins, A. Parratt (Vic), \$10 each; A. Clancy, A. J. Van den Hoek, G. A. Utley (Vic), J. Barta, E. Dawson, I. Fromiene, Anonymous (Tas), S. V. Gross, D. Lord, C. Duffy (Qld), C. Viknius (SA), Sr M. Alphonso (Tas), S. Gailliunas, J. Matheson (NSW), \$5 each; F. Taimre (SA), I. Andrikoniene, Anonymous (Tas), \$2 each; A Tasmanian, \$1.

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 recognise the Russian sovereignty of 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.



## Deportee Saved by Arthur Calwell

A Melbourne woman owes her life to a former Labor Minister for Immigration, Mr Arthur Calwell. Back in 1962, Mr Calwell arranged for Mrs Angelė Tamošiūnienė, then 67, to leave Russian-occupied Lithuania and settle in Australia. This was the only way she could escape harassment and discrimination by the Soviets.

Having survived the Baltic mass deportations and 8 years in Siberia, Angelė was treated as a second-class citizen when she returned to her own country, in 1956. She lost her possessions, and was not allowed to live in her old family home.

After arrival in Australia, Angelė joined her son Jonas who had migrated to Melbourne 12 years earlier. Now a great-grandmother, Angelė will be celebrating her 91st birthday next month. Her gruelling past has taken its toll, but she has recorded some of her experiences in a manuscript.

Angelė and her 75-year-old farmer husband, Ignas, were deported to Siberia in May, 1948. They had committed no crime. No charges were laid against them. It was just that the Kremlin had decided to merge all privately-owned Lithuanian farms into State-controlled "collective farms"; people owning a plot of land were in the way and had to be "disposed of".

### Eight Weeks' Nightmare

Armed soldiers arrested Angelė and Ignas on their family farm at Žiobiškiai, and took them to a nearby railway station in an American Lend-lease truck. Driven at gunpoint, people were jam-packed into 60 cattle wagons.

"As the train crossed the Lithuanian border, the whole trainload of deportees broke out into a loud, spontaneous prayer", Angelė recalls. "The Russians told us to shut up, or else we'd get no food. Indeed, no food was issued until we reached Moscow, days later.

"Once past Moscow, we started receiving a quarter of a loaf of army bread and a bucket full of hot water. Occasionally, this was supplemented by a foul-smelling fish. Lice got the better of us and mercilessly tortured us.

"We were unloaded at Yenisey station and had to wait in the cold and rain for 24 hours. Then they transferred us to a large steamer and took us to our final destination — a big Siberian forest, in the middle of nowhere. That was the end of our journey, which lasted nearly two months.

### Beating Starvation

"I soon learned how to survive without normal food. Potato leaves, mushrooms and edible grasses became my staple diet. A forest plant called *sharamshat* was our principal food. I had to walk 5 km into the woods to find it; but cut finely, mixed with lily roots and cooked gently, *sharamshat* sustained us for days.

"Lithuanian deportees soon distinguished themselves by their hard work and inventiveness. After the day's work in the forest or on neighbouring collective farms, they started building log cabins and making



● Bought with three families' savings, the Siberian cow became a vital lifeline for Lithuanian deportees.

furniture. Vegetable gardens sprang up everywhere. Finally, we managed to beat hunger and winter cold!

"After a couple of years, we joined two other families, pooled all our savings and bought a cow. At last, we had milk.

### Once a Prisoner, Always a Prisoner

"For years, we kept writing to Moscow; we called on officials in Yenisey, Kazakhin and Krasnoyarsk, and showered them with bribes. Bed sheets, down pillows, leather boots, vodka, any valuables we had brought with us from Lithuania — we used them all to grease our Siberian masters' palms.

"Then, in October 1956, they issued us with internal passports and released us. The return journey took some six or seven weeks, by slow passenger trains.

"Early in December, we reached Kaunas (Lithuania). My husband stepped off the train, knelt on the ground and kissed the soil of his homeland. We all cried — not just my family, but also other passengers and bystanders on the platform.

"But before long, we discovered something that really hurt. We were outcasts in our own, Russian-occupied country. They wouldn't let us return to our village of Žiobiškiai, and they wouldn't let us live in our old home. I realised that, in the Soviets' eyes, I was a marked person, 'Once a prisoner, always a prisoner'. And this was to haunt us for the rest of our days."

● HOBART WILL PRAY for deported Balts, in St Joseph's, on Friday, June 13, at 7.30 pm — See Page 7 for more details.

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