



BALTIC NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF HELP THE ESTONIAN, LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION (HELLP)
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March, 1987

Journeys to the "Other World"

Thousands of Russian holiday makers flock each year to their "little America" — the Baltic States. This nickname was probably given by the ordinary Soviet people who are not allowed to visit the West. Starved of foreign travel, they take trips to Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania, as their closest substitute for Uncle Sam's world.

The three Baltic countries are unmistakably Western. They have the oldest universities in the USSR (Tartu and Vilnius), with traditions dating back 400 years. Cities abound in ancient gothic, baroque and other Western-style buildings. The native people speak in tongues entirely different from Russian. And women are so elegant — even if they have to queue endlessly for every scrap of dress material.

Modern Art

"I come here every couple of years, to look at modern art," a Moscow doctor told me in the foyer of the Tallinn art gallery. "By government order, all Soviet art must be realistic, it must serve the communist aims. The only way you can view modern art in Moscow, is in the private collections of Aleksandr Gleizer or George Costakis. The Baltic galleries, by contrast, have works from all major schools on public display. They are the mirrors of Western avant-garde."

The Paris of the USSR is Riga, the capital of Russian-occupied Latvia. Regular fashion parades are held here, exhibiting the latest Latvian creations. The shows are sold out weeks in advance. They are attended not only by the tourists and locals, but also by the professionals; designers, garment manufacturers and traders from all parts of the USSR.

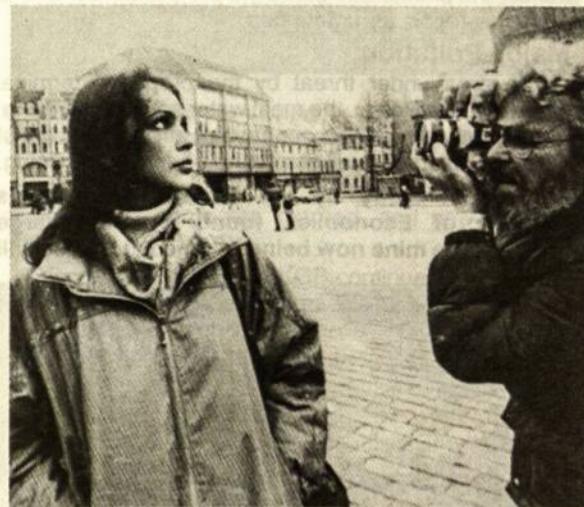
Once the Riga season is over, the fashion chasers move on to Tallinn in Estonia and to Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital. More mannequin parades follow there, featuring the latest from the local couturiers.

Reflecting the West

The Balts are always the first to reflect other Western influences, too. Discotheques, long hair, T-shirts and pop music have all entered the USSR via the Amber Coast. So, the tourists are constantly on the lookout for the newest fads. A visit to a Baltic beauty parlour is a must. So is a peep at the nudist beach outside Palanga (for women only).

But some visitors from the East come to this "little America" in search of God. Disenchanted by the empty promises of Communism, they discover the Christian alternative in the privacy and tranquil anonymity of Baltic cloisters, hundreds of kilometres away from the watchful eye of their hometown KGB. Although tightly controlled by the Soviet state, Baltic churches are still very much alive. And they offer converts a choice of several denominations: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Pentecostal, Baptist.

— Report by Sarah WALKER.



● A touch of the West: Visiting photographer Ulvis Alberts takes a snapshot of Regina, the best-known fashion model in Riga. — Photo: Janis Kreicbergs/Latvija Sodien.

New Group in Danger

Encouraged by Gorbachev's promises of "openness", a human rights watch committee was formed in the Latvian port of Liepaja, last July. Calling itself the *Helsinki 86* group, the committee issued several written appeals.

They asked Mr Gorbachev to hold a referendum on Latvian self-determination. In another letter, the Central committees of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Latvian Communist Party were urged to tackle the problem caused by the Russification of Latvia. The *Helsinki 86* group also directed an appeal to the citizens of other countries.

The documents were signed by: Linards Grantiš (36), metal and amber craftsman, address: LatvSSR, 229700 Liepaja, M.Bukas iela 47-8; Raimonds Bitenieks (42), driver, LatvSSR, 229700 Liepaja, Grizupes iela 102-46; and Martins Barriss (39), worker.

Between August 18 and 30, 1986, a number of houses were searched in Liepaja, and Grantiš and Bitenieks were arrested. Both were due to be tried on January 19, but were released on January 22. They are now confined to their home town. — WFFL/USSR News Brief/ELTA/Aust. Latvietis/EM.

Estonian Protest

A group of Estonian scientists, including members of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, has written an open letter to the West, calling for protests against Soviet plans to build a large oil terminal at Muuga near Tallinn.

The terminal, which will be adjacent to the controversial grain harbour, will, the scientists say, be a major source of pollution to north Estonia and to the whole Baltic area. The oil terminal, although necessary to the All-Union plans, is not necessary to the economy of the Estonian republic.

Since the plans for the terminal have not been officially announced (the scientists describe their source as a reliable leak from civil servants), they clearly hope that international criticism might induce the central planners to scrap the project quietly, and to deny the report as unfounded.

Major Pollution

The area under threat by the proposed terminal includes Lake Peipsi, the main water source for Tallinn. It is the only area of the country not already a victim of major pollution from oil-shale and phosphorite mining.

A recent study by the Estonian Academy's Institute of Economics found that the large phosphorite mine now being planned at Toolse will

cause extensive seepage of pollution through the ground-water.

A particularly worrying aspect of the problem is that, since January 1986, censorship control has become so strict that it is now virtually impossible to inform the general public about environmental hazards.

Russification

The scientists, however, are concerned not only with the pollution threat posed by the oil-terminal, grave though that is.

All major construction and engineering projects in Estonia are accompanied by a major influx of Russian labour, which, in its turn, means the gradual linguistic and cultural Russification of the area.

If this policy continues, the scientists say, by the end of the century, a broad zone of north-eastern Estonia, comprising about 60 per cent of the population of the republic, will be effectively Russified. — **Vera RICH.**

Reprinted from *Nature*.



● Lake Peipsi: endangered.

Anniversary Celebrations

The 600th anniversary of Lithuanian Christianity is being celebrated all over the world this year.

The principal ceremonies in Russian-occupied Lithuania are scheduled to be held on June 28.

The celebrations in Rome, originally planned for mid-June, have been postponed to June 28, 1987, and will now coincide with festivities in Lithuania.

The change of date was made after the Vatican learned that Soviet authorities will not allow any Lithuanians, even priests and bishops, from occupied Lithuania to travel to Rome for the Christianity jubilee.

It has also been announced by the Vatican that, on June 28, Lithuanian Archbishop Jurgis Matulaitis will be beatified.

In HOBART, the anniversary will be celebrated later in the year, probably in September. Arrangements are being made jointly by the tiny Lithuanian community in Tasmania and the Lithuanian Studies Society at the University of Tasmania.

Drilling Halted

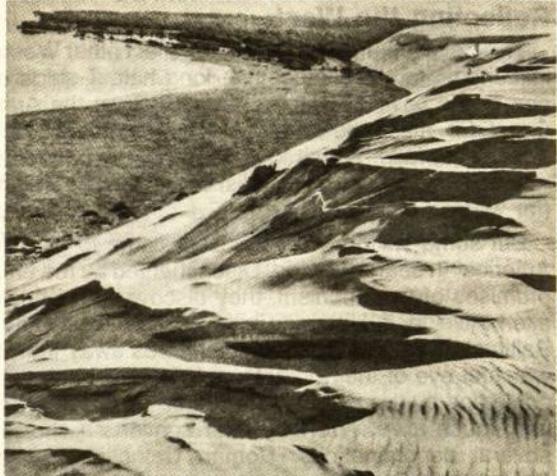
The Soviet Government has ordered a halt in drilling for oil in the Baltic Sea off Lithuania after conservationist protests.

In announcing the order on the drilling project off the Kurish Sandspit, a thin finger of sandy beach separating the Kurish Lagoon from the Baltic Sea, the Tass press agency described the areas as "a unique part of nature" and said it contained rare flora and fauna.

In November, in an article in the weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 18 intellectuals, including Andrei Voznesensky, the poet, warned that oil spills could turn the region into a dead zone. The article was one of several in recent months in which writers have taken up environmental protection issues.

At this stage, the suspension of drilling is only temporary, while the Soviet authorities are checking out the alternative actions open to them.

— ELTA/Reuters/NY Times



● The Kurish Sandspit: Reprieved at the last minute.

Soviet War Criminal Named

A Soviet war criminal now has a responsible government post in Russian-occupied Lithuania, according to reliable underground sources. He is Colonel Petras Raslanas, one of the organisers of the infamous 1941 Rainiai Forest massacre.

Raslanas has been named by Liudvikas Simutis, whose testimony appeared in the Lithuanian underground journal *Aušra* last year.

Raslanas now lives in Vilnius and works for the Soviet Ministry for Religious Affairs. The Ministry determines who is permitted to enter the Kaunas seminary, appoints priests to parishes and monitors sermons for anti-Soviet content.

The massacre of Rainiai took place in a small forest near the town of Telšiai (Lithuania) on June 24-25, 1941. Throughout that night Soviet troops tortured and killed 73 Lithuanian "political" prisoners, many teenagers and boy scouts among them. Their bodies were mutilated so badly that when they were exhumed three days later, only 27 victims could be identified.

The brutal perpetrators of this foul crime against humanity have not yet been brought to trial.

Simutis recalls the aftermath of this massacre:

"I was just five when I saw my father's dead body. Half his face was covered with blood, the other half was bloated and blue. Both eyes had been punctured and his tongue pulled out. His flesh had started to rot and was peeling off his body. His sex organs had been crushed.

"His was only one among a mass of bodies. The relatives were crying, the women were fainting. Everyone was cursing the Bolsheviks."

Liudvikas Simutis was a Lithuanian freedom fighter until his arrest in 1955. He was imprisoned in Siberia for 22 years, then returned to Lithuania in 1977. He



● Some of the Soviet victims in the forest of Rainiai. When will the persons responsible be brought to account?

worked as a carpenter, married, and now has four children.

According to *Aušra*, the KGB continued to persecute Simutis and suspected him of aiding the underground *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*.

The KGB tried to get folk-art woodcarver Romas Smalys to inform on Simutis. Smalys refused and met an untimely death under the wheels of a police car.

On March 29, 1986, the KGB raided Simutis' flat and arrested him. His present fate is unknown, and his name does not appear on the lists of the recently amnestied Soviet prisoners.—Sources: *Aušra/The Observer*.

Chernobyl Aftermath



● Five months after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, foodstuffs were still being checked for radioactivity in the Russian-occupied Baltic States. In this photograph, experts L. Petrašiūnienė and K. Razanauskienė are shown testing the autumn harvest of mushrooms from southern Lithuania.

Canberra's Latest

Last month, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Bill Hayden, MP, wrote to all members of Parliament. In his letter, Mr Hayden set out the Government's latest policy "concerning official Australian contacts with representatives of foreign states, political entities or organisations which raise sensitivities of one sort or another and which may require special handling."

Concerning the Russian-occupied Baltic States, Mr Hayden's letter states:

“USSR Baltic States

Australia does not recognise *de jure* the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union, but we do not question that the Soviet Union is in effective control of the Baltic territories and we do not recognise the existence of Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia as states.

"Accordingly, contacts with individuals purporting to represent the governments of Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia should be confined to routine courtesies at social functions held by third parties and there should be no acknowledgement of their claimed status."

"Invitations to official social functions hosted by such persons should be declined and, if written correspondence cannot be avoided, it should be addressed to such persons in their private capacity only."

"Australian diplomatic missions are instructed strictly to confine their contacts with Soviet officials purporting to represent the interests of the Baltic States to matters of a consular or humanitarian nature."

46th Commemoration

of mass deportations from the Baltic States:

Friday, June 12, 7.30 pm

St Joseph's Church, Hobart

Please keep this date free . . . More details in the next issue

ALCOHOLISM:

Soviets' Silent Enemy

The Soviet Union today is not afraid of any foreign power. The Soviets have 3.6 million men constantly under arms, backed by the latest technology and a huge nuclear arsenal. The size of the Soviet active force can be easily doubled, even trebled, because all Soviet males have reserve service obligations until the age of 50.

But an internal enemy is stealthily gnawing away at the very foundations of the Soviet state. It's alcoholism.

Heavy drinking has been a common phenomenon in Russia and its colonies for many centuries. The Tsars and their successors, the Soviet rulers, found this vice quite profitable: the sales tax on alcoholic beverages has been a major source of revenue for the Russian State budget (estimated at 2,000 million roubles per annum in 1979).

While Soviet governments have been reluctant to publish detailed statistics on alcoholism, information leaked by other sources paints an alarming picture.

Accidents, Crime

In 1976, Hedrick Smith reported (in his book, *The Russians*,) that intoxication was the major factor in Soviet crimes (90% of murders). It accounted for more than half of all traffic accidents, was a major cause in 40% of divorce cases and figured in 63% of accidental drownings and one-third of all ambulance calls in Moscow.

Excessive drinking has been the prime cause of absenteeism, which plays havoc with the Soviet economy. Monday is a particularly bad day in factories and other work places. The reason: Up to one third of the employees are likely to be either still drunk or hung-over from the weekend.

Production losses due to drunkenness on the job are estimated by Soviet experts to range between 35 and 40 billion dollars a year. That's more than the Kremlin collects from liquor taxes.

In 1983, a member of the Siberian Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences prepared a briefing paper for Kremlin legislators. His findings were purportedly circulated as samizdat material, too.

A Country Destroying Itself

Here are a few excerpts from this report:

"We have researched the data on alcohol consumption per capita, from 1900 to 1980. All calculations are expressed in pure alcohol equivalents. Thus, 1 litre of pure alcohol equals about 2.5 litres of vodka.

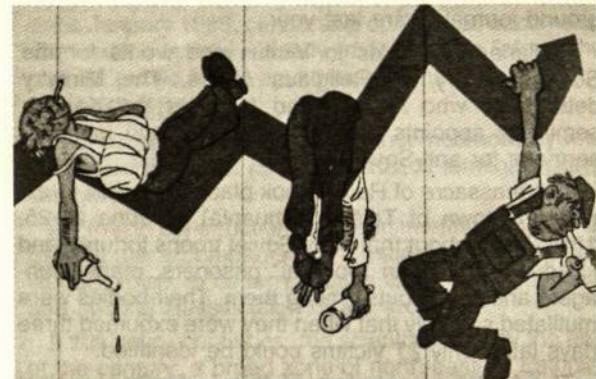
"In 1905, during the Tsar's reign, alcohol consumption was 3.5 litres per person. In 1910, it was 3.6 litres, and in 1914 it rose to 4.7 litres despite the prohibition then in force.

"The prohibition was repealed in 1924, after Lenin's death. Per capita consumption was 0.8 litres in 1925, and 1.9 litres in 1940. During World War II, most factories and distilleries were closed, and accurate statistics are not available for this period. However, alcohol production and consumption presumably decreased.

"In 1952, consumption was 1.9 litres. The amounts consumed since 1960 have become almost incredible. By 1980, consumption rose to 10.8 litres per capita, per annum.

"If this trend continues, by the year 2000 the per capita consumption will exceed 20 litres a year!

"Pershings and IBM's may remain only idle threats. You don't have to fight a country that will destroy itself within 12-15 years."



● An official Soviet cartoon, showing the adverse effect of alcoholism on work. The caption reads: A Graph of the Fulfillment of the Production Plan at Shop No 13.

— Krokodil (Moscow)/PC.

Baltic States, Too

The three Baltic States have not avoided the plague of alcoholism, either. Until 1985, no official data were published on this topic. However, a confidential booklet, *Alkoholismivastastest kasvatustõõst kaasajal*, throws some light on drinking in Russian-occupied Estonia. The restricted-circulation booklet was published by the Soviet Estonian Ministry of Justice for official use only, but a copy was smuggled out to the West two years ago.

According to this source, 1.5 million litres of alcohol were produced (and presumably consumed) in Estonia, in 1945. In 1960, the volume rose to 5.6 million litres; and it reached 18.7 million litres in 1980.

From 1960-80, the population of Estonia rose by only 21%, the adult population by 26%. The production of alcohol in 1980 was 11.8 times what it had been in 1945 (at the end of the war) — 1180%! The population grew only 127% in that period.

Estonian court statistics are similar to the Russian. Alcoholics figure prominently in all kinds of crimes, ranging from assault to failure to pay alimony (75.9 % in 1976-80). 4,470 Estonians lost their driver's licences in 1984 because of drunken driving.

Until 1985, Soviet authorities in the Baltic region paid lip service to the dangers of alcoholism, but did little about it. Alcoholics Anonymous and church-based temperance societies were banned. Grassroots initiatives were either ignored, or squashed.

Sobriety

The first official conference of temperance activists in Russian-occupied Lithuania took place in Vilnius on September 8, 1979. The main purpose was to launch a massive campaign against alcoholism. The list of speakers included many noted professors, journalists and writers. But the conference encountered all kinds of blocks from the Soviet officialdom.

● Continued on the next Page

● From Page 4

On September 4, Communist party officials urged one of the organisers to cancel the whole conference. On the following day, the Vilnius secretary of the Party changed his mind: the conference would go ahead, because so many distinguished persons had been invited.

On September 6, the Party ruled that the reports to be presented by teachers Siliene and Mikulevicius were "undesirable". On the next day, Party secretary Golovkin refused to take part in the conference. He also directed that only four reports would be allowed, instead of the thirteen scheduled previously. Would-be participants received phone calls and telegrams from a non-existing "organising committee", telling them that the temperance conference was being cancelled. Many people were "recommended" not to go. Scare stories were spread.

In spite of all this, the conference was held. Speakers claimed that some 300,000 people in Lithuania were alcoholics; that each adult was consuming the equivalent of 26 litres of pure alcohol per annum; and that alcoholism was rapidly increasing among juveniles.

In the late 1970s, the Catholic Committee for the Defence of Believers' Rights, based in Lithuania, kept urging that 1980 be proclaimed the Year of Sobriety. The Committee's plea was totally ignored by Soviet authorities.

Gorbachev's Moves

On April 5, 1985, *Pravda* announced that the Politburo had discussed means of "combating drunkenness and alcoholism". A Central Committee resolution and a Council of Ministers decree followed in mid-May, introducing a set of restrictive measures.

Alcohol sales were barred to persons under 21. There were to be no sales of wine and vodka before 2 pm on workdays. The overall number of liquor outlets was to be reduced.

In contrast to the past, the Gorbachev regime is intent on enforcing the new drink laws. A committee to combat drunkenness was formed in Russian-occupied Lithuania in July 1985. It is chaired by Professor P. Kuris, Minister of Justice of LSSR. Similar committees have been convened in the other Baltic States and throughout the USSR.

But can you cure alcoholism with legal measures alone? This question will be discussed, in the light of the latest reports, in our next issue.

— Sources: Samizdat (Tokyo)/LIS/ELTA/Newsletter from behind the Iron Curtain/Problems of Communism/Hedrick Smith, *The Russians*. Translations by OB.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Psychiatric Abuse

The Soviets recently released a handful of best known prisoners of conscience: Sakharov, Shcharanski, Orlov, Ratushinskaya. Countless other prisoners remain behind bars unnoticed. Let us make them better known, too.

As Australians, we should start speaking out for the 60-year-old Ivan Steba. Twenty years ago, Ivan expressed his wish to migrate to Australia; he also criticised the living conditions in the USSR. For this, Ivan was arrested in 1967 and condemned under Article

70; he has been in psychiatric prisons ever since. He was last heard of, in the special psychiatric prison of Dnyepropetrovsk. His address there was: CCCP, Ukraine, 320006, Dnyepropetrovsk, ul. Chicherina 101, ucr. JaE-308/PB, Steba, Ivan, USSR. The doctor in charge is Mrs Roventina Chernova, telephone 42 37 77.

Dozens of Baltic prisoners of conscience are still locked up in Russian psychiatric prisons: Maigonis Ravins, Gederts Melngailis, Alexander Riga, Ivo Varav, Jaanus Pihelgas, Alar Kume, Jonas Bagdonas, Dr Algirdas Statkevicius, Peteris Lasda, Petras Lukoševicius, David Sevelev, Yevgenii Bragunex, Arvydas Čekanavičius, Voldemaras Karaliūnas, Teofils Kuma, and Vytautas Lašinskas among them.

This is only the start. Friends of the Prisoners (PO Box 12, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7005 — Australia) have hundreds of other prisoners waiting to be "adopted." Will you take one under your wing?

P. M. MURRAY.

Hobart, Tas.

Peacetime Killings

I have been doing some research on people killed in wars and revolutions and by their own governments.

In the twentieth century, casualties in wars and revolutions total 37 million. The number of people who have died at the hands of their own governments totals 119 million, mostly under totalitarian regimes.

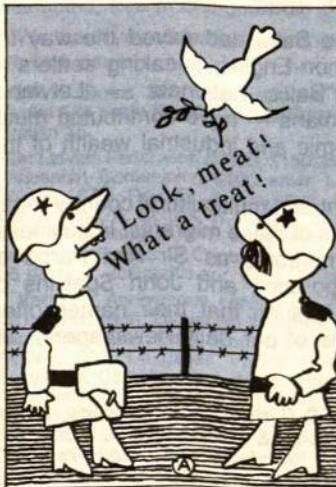
Of those, 95 million suffered death at the hands of communist governments. This has happened not only in the Soviet Union, but also in Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, North Korea, Cuba and marxist states in Africa.

It is doubtful whether the full horror will ever be fully documented, nor will the suffering of the peoples of the Baltic States, Ukraine and Byelorussia; nor of the Crimean Tartars, Chechens and Meskhetians.

Similarly, the suffering of the peoples of all nations overrun and held captive by the Soviet Union will never be properly understood by those far from the scene and who simply do not want to listen.

Senator Don S. JESSOP. Adelaide, S.A.

● *The Editor welcomes letters, especially brief ones, at PO Box 272, Sandy Bay, Tas. 7005. He reserves the right to condense or edit them.*



Rationalization

Please remove the Kelvin Grove Campus from your mailing list for *Baltic News*.

It is no longer required due to our recent collection rationalization.

Kathy GRGIC (Ms), Serials Librarian, Kelvin Grove Campus, Brisbane College of Advanced Education.

Children Will Suffer Forever

The Soviets have released two Baltic prisoners of conscience, after their plight was reported in *Baltic News* and in other Western media. Religion teacher Jadvyga Bieliauskienė is back in her native Lithuania and anti-nuclear activist Ints Calitis has been re-united with his family in Riga, Latvia.



● INTS CALITIS (56), electrician — jeweller and a great Latvian patriot. He was imprisoned twice before, for peacefully seeking freedom for his country: 1947-55 and 1958-64.

During Calitis's latest captivity, the KGB allowed his wife to remain in her flat, but changed its address. Mail and parcels from Australia (and from other free countries) were then returned to senders, as "not known" at the original Calitis address.

Ints Calitis's father, Maksis, spent 25 years in Soviet concentration camps.

But the Soviet injustice has left its lasting mark on the Calitis children. Inara Serdane, the wife of Ints Calitis, wrote recently to a friend in New Zealand:

"We have three children. My financial circumstances are such that there is no hope of our children going on to further education.

"The eldest daughter, Zane, is 16. She is learning to be a dressmaker. Our son Madars is 15 and will also stop his education when he completes grade 8 this year. We may be able to steer him towards a career as a radio technician.

"Last spring, Madars finished a course in percussion instruments, at the Jazeps Medins children's music school.

"The youngest daughter, Dace, is 11. She is attending a special foreign languages school where she is learning French.

"My husband, Calitis Ints, was released from imprisonment on 1st July, 1986. That happened as a consequence of a decision taken by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Latvia on 20th May.

"I went to the far Urals to take him some fresh clothes and to help with the travel. We had to travel about 5,000 kilometres, and his health is not very good. He is working again, but requires constant medical attention.

"At last they have admitted that Ints had been unjustly convicted, but it has cost us dearly, especially in our children's education."

— Source: Friends of the Prisoners, PO Box 12, Sandy Bay, Tas., 7005. Translation by E.M. The letter has been condensed.

STOP PRESS: Keston College and USSR News Brief report that, on 2 February, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR decided to release some further prisoners of conscience. The lucky pardoned people include at least six Balts: Heiki Ahonen, Janis Barkans, Gunars Freimanis, Boriss Grezins, Jaan Korb, Janis Rozkalns and Alfreds Tauberts.

According to the Bukovski Foundation, two Lithuanians, Antanas Terleckas (59) and Vladas Lapenės (81), have been freed.

Lithuanians Henrikas Jaskunas and Vytautas Skuodis; and Estonian Lagle Parek have also been pardoned.

Meanwhile, other Balts are being arrested and jailed. Latvian Romans Silaraups, held in custody since March 19, 1986, was tried last October and sentenced to 5 years in strict-regime camp plus 2 years' exile.

Silaraups had asked that the notorious 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact be rescinded. Under this pact, Nazi Germany "allowed" Russia to invade the three Baltic States in 1940.



Lagle Parek:
Free at last.

NEW BOOKS

Soviet Jokes



A chambermaid in a Moscow hotel came upon a tourist watering flowers in his hotel room.

"Please don't water the flowers," she implored, "the microphones will rust."

This is just one sample from a new compendium of contemporary Soviet humour, published in the United States recently:

IS THAT YOU LAUGHING, COMRADE? The World's Best Russian (Underground) Jokes, By Algim Ruksenas. Drawings by G. Kocar. Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1986. \$US5.95 plus postage.

Baltic Peoples

The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Chris Hurford, paid tribute to Baltic migrants to Australia when he launched a new book, *The Baltic Peoples in Australia*, at a civic reception in Wodonga (Vic) on November 21, 1986.

Mr Hurford said the Balts had paved the way for more than 4 million non-English speaking settlers in post-war Australia. "Baltic nationals — Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians — have contributed much to the cultural, economic and industrial wealth of the nation," he said.

"Australia is a vibrant and multicultural country today because of the success of these migrants. In business, the record of such notables as Sir Arvi Parbo of Western Mining Corporation and John Spalvins of Adelaide Steamship is such that their names often appear in the columns of our daily newspapers," Mr Hurford said.

THE BALTIC PEOPLES [Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians] IN AUSTRALIA, by B. & A. Birskys, A. Putnins, I. Salasoo. Published by Australian Ethnic Press, 74 Railway Road, Blackburn, Vic. 3130 (PO Box 186). \$14.95.

World-wide Support for Balts

During the last 12 months, a number of countries in the free world have again expressed their solidarity with the Russian-occupied Baltic States. These gestures of support reached a climax on January 28, 1987, when the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe unanimously passed a 14-point resolution on the Baltic States.

The resolution appeals to the government of the Soviet Union "to respect the right to self-determination and the human rights in the Baltic States."

It also invites the Council's member states to raise the Baltic question at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), now being held in Vienna. The attention of participating states should be drawn to the serious violations of human rights and the right of self-determination in the three Baltic States, the resolution urges.

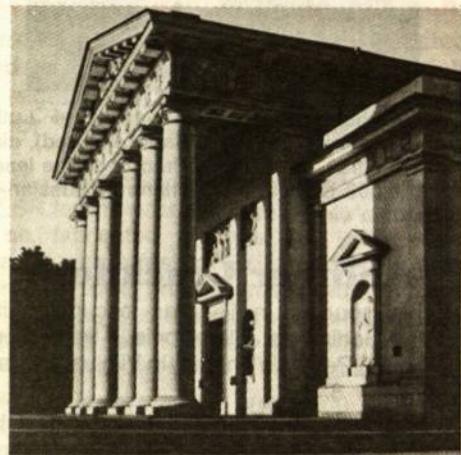
Pressure to Assimilate

The Council of Europe resolution recalls the earlier resolution adopted by the European Parliament on January 13, 1983, concerning the conditions in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (see *Baltic News*, March 1983, p.1).

It deplores the fact that "as a result of forced immigration into their area, the Baltic peoples are brought under pressure to assimilate, and that the lack of possibilities for education and cultural expression of their own is leading towards the loss of national identity."

- In VIENNA, the United States delegation at the CSCE Conference has repeatedly taken a strong position on Baltic self-determination.
- In VENEZUELA, the Central Committee of the Christian Democratic Party has proposed to its government that the Baltic question be submitted to the United Nations' sub-committee on decolonisation. On

the 45th anniversary of the Baltic mass deportations, the CD Party — one of Venezuela's major political parties — also condemned the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and recognised the Baltic nations' right to freedom.



● The National Conference of US bishops recently called upon the Soviets to return three confiscated churches in Russian-occupied Lithuania. The churches are the Cathedral of Vilnius (pictured) which is now used as an exhibition hall; the Church of St Casimir, converted into a museum of atheism; and the Church of Our Lady Queen of Peace in Klaipeda.

How to Win Friends . . .

Next time you fly overseas or travel within Australia, talk to your fellow passengers. The chances are you will win new friends for the Baltic cause.

This was certainly what Mr Jonas Normantas of Bell Park (Vic) experienced last year. On a flight to Manila, he engaged in conversation a Japanese lady seated next to him. She became interested in the Baltic States, subscribed to *Baltic News*, and on Christmas Eve sent us a donation of 10,000 yen (about \$A100).

It is only thanks to such readers' unceasing support that 9,000 copies of *Baltic News* continue to be printed and are distributed, free of charge, in 24 countries.

We thank you all for the following donations received since the last issue:

NSW: G. Bracs, \$25; S. Zablockiene, Mr and Mrs J. Dirgincius, A. Rudka \$20 each; Rev Grattan Rutledge, B. F. Higgins, \$10 each; R. Dreslin \$5.

Vic: Latvian Federation (Melb), \$150; Baltic Council of Victoria, Sale Lithuanian Community, \$100 each; Lithuanian Community, Melbourne, \$75; Rev Dr P. Daukyns, V. Grigoris, \$50 each; B. Berzanskas, A. Bogins, H. Kalade, E. Sidauskas, A. Eskirtas, \$20 each; V. Bieliauskas, \$15; K. Lynikas, B. Purmalis, A. Vilkiene, \$10 each; V. Aglinskas, O. Grinbergs, V. Sivickas, F. Sodaitis, V. Ziegas, \$5 each; Z. Jokubaitis snr, \$4; L. Nobelius, \$2.

Various: Anonymous Latvian (NSW), Daugavas Vanagi, Adelaide, \$200 each; Lithuanian Veterans "Ramove," Adelaide, \$178; A Japanese reader, Baltic Women's Assn (SA), \$100 each; P. Nagys (NSW), \$60; Daugavas Vanagi (Qld), Lettgaliai Convent (SA), Lithuanian Catholic Assn, Melbourne, V. & D. Fidleris (Can), V. Grigoris (Vic), E. G. Roland (NSW), \$50 each; P. Jermaks, Dr J. Repecka (USA), \$40 each; J. Normantas (Vic), A. G. Skuja (Tas), \$30 each; S. J. Scott (Vic), T. Hoile (SA), Anonymous (NSW), Estonian RSL, Sydney, M. Gavars (NZ), \$25 each; P. G. Scales (SA), \$24; M. Birss, A. Purvitis, B. Metsar, A. A. Grikelis, P.

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NEWS FROM BALTIC STATES

Church Leader Dies



● The Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran church in Estonia, Dr Edgar Hark (pictured), died on October 3, 1986, aged 77. He had been the leader of about 250,000 Lutheran Christians in Russian-occupied Estonia since 1978.

— G2W.

Another Crackdown

Reliable sources in Russian occupied Lithuania report that Gediminas Jakubčionis, a lighting engineer for the Young People's Theatre in Vilnius, was arrested on December 8.

Jakubčionis was interrogated for a few days by KGB Colonel Česnavičius, a regular investigator of political, or dissident, cases. The exact charges brought against Jakubčionis were unknown. A KGB agent told a family friend that they were out to "destroy this den of vipers."

On December 9, the day after Jakubčionis' arrest, the home of Vinclova, another Young People's Theatre employee, was searched. About 80 books were confiscated. Vinclova, a student, works as a freelance technician with the theatrical company, which in recent years has received international acclaim for its innovative productions. During an East-West writers' meeting in Vilnius earlier last year, writer Arthur Miller called it "some of the best theatre I've seen anywhere."

— LIC.

Echoes of Meeting

The latest feedback from Russian-occupied Latvia indicates that last year's Jurmala conference has succeeded in giving Latvian people new hope for freedom and ultimate independence.

The privately sponsored five-day conference was held last September in the Latvian Baltic resort town of Jurmala. It was organised by the Chautauqua Institute of New York, an independent research organisation devoted to promoting international understanding, along with the Eisenhower Institute and the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

The focal point of the conference was the US Ambassador J. Matlock's clear and unequivocal statement that the US did not recognise the illegal occupation and incorporation of the Baltic States by the USSR.

— LIB/the truth.

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A Daring Escape

Two Estonian conscripts fled to West Germany last December, in a rare escape from the Red Army units stationed in East Germany.

The two men, both 19, fled on foot across the heavily guarded border to the northern city of Wolfenbüttel, according to reports by Associated Press. The runaways told West German officials they wanted to join their Estonian relatives in the US.

The escape follows recent reports in an Estonian youth newspaper of protests among Estonians drafted for decontamination work at the Soviet nuclear reactor at Chernobyl.

While escapes of East German citizens have been increasing, it is very rare for Soviet soldiers to dash across the border and defect. The last such escape was in 1984.

Since the West German border police started counting in 1969, only six other Soviet soldiers have escaped from East Germany.

Conscripts in Afghanistan

Hundreds of Lithuanian conscripts are fighting for the USSR in Afghanistan, according to A. Greshnov, an official Soviet journalist.

In a TASS newsagency despatch from Kabul, Greshnov describes the Lithuanian recruits who are "fulfilling their international duty against the Afghan bandits". He names two young Lithuanians, sergeants Juozas Kurelaitis and Kęstutis Orentas. Having survived the battles of Chagcharan and Kandahar, they are now hoping for an early discharge, he says.

— Europos Lietuvos.



● Independent Lithuania and Afghanistan concluded a non-aggression pact on December 9, 1930, agreeing not to invade each other's territories. This historic photograph shows Lithuania's Minister of Foreign Affairs, D. Zaurius (centre) signing the agreement. To the left stands Afghanistan's ambassador, the Hon. Sardai Mohammed Aziz Khan.

Ironically, young Lithuanian conscripts are today forced to serve in the Soviet Army, and must fight against the Afghans.