



BALTIC NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF HELP THE ESTONIAN, LATVIAN AND LITHUANIAN PEOPLES ASSOCIATION (HELLP)
POST OFFICE BOX 272, SANDY BAY, TASMANIA, 7005 (AUSTRALIA)
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September, 1987

Latvians Challenge Glasnost



● 46 years after the start of Soviet mass deportations, thousands of Latvians gathered in Riga "to remember the victims of June 14 (1941)." A banner with this message was displayed at the Monument of Freedom by human rights workers Rolands Silaraups (pictured, left) and Eva Bitenieks.

Six weeks later, on July 25, 1987, Silaraups was expelled. He is now living in West Germany.

In the meantime, Janis Barkans has taken over the leadership of the Latvian Helsinki 86 group.

Taking advantage of the current Soviet fad of *glasnost* (openness), about 5,000 Latvians marched to Latvia's Monument of Freedom in Riga on Sunday, June 14. The demonstrators, watched by huge crowds along Riga's streets, made speeches and laid flowers in memory of their countrymen deported by the Soviets in 1941, according to a report published in *The Christian Science Monitor*.

The demonstration in the Russian-occupied Baltic republic was the largest known peaceful, non-Communist political gathering in the history of the Soviet Union. It was called by the unofficial human rights group *Helsinki '86*, formed last year in the port city of Liepaja by a group of Latvian workers (see *Baltic News*, March 1987).

The march was led by Helsinki '86 representatives Rolands Silaraups (21) and Eva Bitenieks (19) who wore a Latvian national costume (pictured above).

Imprisoned

The principal organiser, Linards Grantins, was detained on June 8, six days before the demonstration. Grantins was charged under Article 194-1 of the Latvian Criminal Code, "Refusal of a person liable for military call-up to attend training sessions or check-ups or to register for military service".

He has since been sentenced to six months' ordinary regime camp. His wife Ida lives at the following address: LatvSSR, 229700 LIEPAJA, M. Bukas iela 47, kv.8/Grantina Ida, USSR.

Two other members of the Helsinki '86 group, Martins Bariss and Raimonds Bitenieks, and former prisoner of conscience J. Rozkalns have been called up for "further military training". Bitenieks is already serving a term of 55 days.

Grantins was exempted from military duties on medical grounds. In spite of that, he was arrested on the excuse that he did not register for army service.

The demonstration was advertised well in advance, mainly by word of mouth. The Soviet authorities responded by discrediting the Helsinki '86 group in the official mass media. Within 24 hours of Grantins' arrest, the authorities announced that a bicycle rally would be held from 2 to 4 pm on the same day (June 14), at the Monument of Freedom. This was the venue chosen by the demonstrators, and the flower laying ceremony was due to start at 3 pm.

● Continued on Page 3

STOP PRESS

Uniformed police and members of the KGB secret police beat up demonstrators in Riga on Sunday, August 23, according to the latest reports in the Australian press. More than 5,000 people had gathered in the Latvian capital, to mark the 48th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. This 1939 Nazi-Soviet agreement had secretly allotted the then independent Baltic States to Moscow's sphere of influence. The pact has not been revoked.

Similar demonstrations took place in the other Baltic States, too: in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia; and in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital city. Further details are not yet available.

According to reliable sources, the Lithuanian assembly was organised by Vytautas Bogušis, Antanas Terleckas, Petras Cidzikas and Nijolė Sadūnaitė.

The Riga gathering was organised by the Latvian "Helsinki '86" group.

Lithuanian Information Center.

EUROPE'S YOUNGEST CHRISTIANS:

600 — and Battling for Survival

This year, Lithuanians at home and abroad are celebrating the 600th anniversary of their conversion to Christianity. But the Roman Catholic Church — Lithuania's predominant religion — is on the brink of suffocation by the Soviet authorities.

Two main events took place on June 28. Pope John Paul II, barred by Soviet authorities from travelling to Lithuania, celebrated an anniversary Mass in Rome.

"With all the desire of my heart, I am with you", the Polish-born Pontiff told the Catholics of Lithuania. "It is a desire that I have carried in me for a very long time".

Beatification

During the Mass, the Pope beatified Archbishop George Matulaitis, former bishop of Vilnius, who died in 1927. Beatification is the last step before canonisation.

The solemn Mass in Rome was attended by Bishop Antanas Vaičius of Telšiai, eight other priests from Russian-occupied Lithuania, 2,500 Lithuanians living outside their homeland, all the cardinals in Rome, and the Vatican diplomatic corps. Lithuania's longest serving bishop, Bishop Steponavičius, was conspicuous by his absence: the Soviets have kept him in internal exile since January 1961.

On the same day (June 28), solemn Masses were held simultaneously in the church of St Peter and Paul and five other churches in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital.

Lithuania, the last European nation to accept Christianity, has remained strongly Catholic, despite four decades of religious repression under Soviet rule. Systematic discrimination by Soviet officials against believers has served only to unite the Catholic clergy and laity. They gather petitions of protest containing hundreds of thousands of signatures, document instances of religious persecution in underground journals and openly defy Soviet decrees that try to limit their religious rights.

Discrimination

Reports from Lithuania in this 600th anniversary year indicate no lessening of religious intolerance.

The number of churches in the city of Vilnius has been reduced from 39 to nine. Only one of the original four seminaries remains in Lithuania, thereby sharply reducing the number of priests.



● Bishop Vaičius of Telšiai/Lithuania (right), photographed with the Pope immediately after the solemnities in Rome. Bishop Steponavičius could not come: he was kept in exile.

Children are forbidden to attend church unless accompanied by an adult. No one under 18 is permitted to sing in the choir. Priests are not allowed to teach catechism to the young. At school, believers are taunted by classmates and teachers alike.

As a result, young Lithuanians have little grounding in the religion of their parents and grandparents. And yet there are signs that Catholicism is thriving among the young.

For adults who persist in practising their faith, the penalty can be loss of a job, a prison sentence or worse.

Kept Out

A delegation of two pilgrims from the province of Salzburg (Austria) was not allowed to join the anniversary celebrations in Lithuania. The Soviets rejected their visa applications, although the visitors were ready to cut back their stay to one single day.

The Soviet refusal is all the more remarkable because Salzburg and Lithuania have enjoyed a sister-region relationship since 1970. On January 28 this year, the president of the Austrian-Soviet friendship society, Hofrat Josef Lohinger, stated in public that the two countries had been brought together because of their common Catholic heritage.

Father Jakob Foerg of Christian Solidarity (Post Office Box 1, 5013 Salzburg, Austria) has written an Open Letter to the Consul-General of the USSR in Salzburg, protesting against the exclusion of the two "Salzburg partners" from the anniversary celebrations in Lithuania.

— Sources: T. J. Brazaitis/UPI/Lith Info Center/CSI.

● In HOBART, the 600th anniversary of Christianity in Lithuania will be celebrated on Sunday, October 18, at 11 am. — See Page 7 for further details.



● In Russian-occupied Lithuania, local people have erected this memorial cross outside St Peter and Paul's church, in the city of Siauliai. Marking the 600th anniversary of Christianity in Lithuania, the wood sculpture features Grand Duke Vytautas on the left and a pagan priest on the right. An inscription reads, "The pagan fire went out in the light of the cross."

SOME RELEASED, OTHERS JAILED

After many years of campaigning by HELLIP, Amnesty International, Friends of the Prisoners and many other associations, the Soviets have released a small batch of their prisoners of conscience.

Since January, 1986, 201 persons have been released before completion of their prison sentences. This number includes 31 Balts, some of whom had been held in psychiatric hospitals and special psychiatric prisons.

In our March issue, we published the names of 14 Balts who were freed in this wave of *glasnost* ("openness"). 13 other Balts were also released this year: Edita Abrutiene, Algimantas Andreika, Zaigis Balodis, Raimonds Bitenieks, Liudas Dambrauskas, Lidija Doronina-Lasmane, Linards Grantins, Gediminas Jakubcionis, Dainis Lismanis, Algirdas Patackas, Alexander Riga, Rolands Silaraups, Algirdas Statkevicius.

Last year, four Estonians were freed ahead of time: Tiit Madison, Harri Motsnik, Arvo Pesti and Jaanus Pihelgas.



● Two of the many who are still behind bars: Gunnars Astra (left) and Enn Tarto.

Latvian Demonstration

● From Page 1.

The demonstrators then moved to Bastion Hill, in a central Riga park, and started their meeting at 4 pm. After speeches by Edmunds Cirvilis, Heinis Lama and Juris Ziemelis, signatures were collected, seeking an immediate release of Gunars Astra, a Latvian prisoner of conscience.

Soviet Latvian police made no attempt to stop the demonstration. According to *Moscow News*, however, ten persons were arrested, Dzintars Fridmanis among them. Several other people were detained on the following day. According to unconfirmed reports, all have since been released; but, to quote *Moscow News*, they "will have to answer, of course, for their gross disruption of order in a public place".

Riga newspapers reported the demonstration, claiming that it ended in failure, and that the "instigators had not succeeded in disrupting the sports festival."

Several hundred Estonians and Lithuanians travelled to Riga to take part in this public commemoration of Soviet mass deportations.

On the day of the demonstration, 14 June, the establishment of a new unofficial group was

Still in Death Camp

However, none of the prisoners of conscience held in the notorious Perm Camp No 36-1 have been released. We know of at least 21 prisoners of 7 nationalities who are languishing in this special-regime camp, known as the "death camp". Amongst them are Gunnars Astra (Latvian), Balys Gajauskas, Viktoras Petkus (Lithuanians), Mart Niklus and Enn Tarto (Estonians).

At least five prisoners of conscience — Ukrainian Helsinki monitors Oleksa Tykhy, Vasyl Stus and Yuriy Lytvyn, Ukrainian journalist Valeriy Marchenko, and Russian human rights activist Anatoly Marchenko — have died in Camp No 36-1 because of the brutal conditions of their imprisonment.

New Arrests

While the prisoner releases are enjoying a lot of publicity on both sides of the Iron Curtain, new arrests are continuing in Russian-occupied Baltic States.

Teovils Kuma, 55-year-old Latvian Baptist, was arrested in January, 1987 and charged with "defamation of the Soviet state". Ruled non-accountable, he was sent to Oryol Special Psychiatric Hospital. His first arrest in 1980, on the same charges, resulted in his being pronounced mentally ill and confined to Leningrad SPH until 1985.

Four Baptists from Valga, Estonia, were sentenced on December 12, 1986 following an investigation which saw fifteen police searches in the community. **Pavel Minyakov**, 25, was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in labour camp; **Alexander Bogodimov**, 24, was sentenced to two years in camp; **Pavel Pchelnikov**, 21, received one year in camp, and **Vasily Ovchinnikov**, 32, was sentenced to one year of corrective labour without deprivation of liberty and a 25 per cent pay cut.

— Sources: USSR News Brief/Keston News Service/Smolensk/Lith. Info. Center.

announced in Riga. Named *Renaissance and Renewal*, the group was founded by 15 Lutheran ministers to protect the rights of Christians.

The group's first document, dated 14 June 1987, sharply criticises the Soviet laws governing religious associations. It calls for "restructuring (*perestroika*) and openness (*glasnost*) in the relations between the church and the state". The group's main aim is to struggle against "the atheistic state's interference in the development of Christian life in Latvia, including the publication of religious literature and the education of children in a Christian spirit."



Baltic Conscripts in Afghanistan

A new Estonian samizdat, *Isekiri*, (Our Newsletter) devoted its second issue to an interview with an unnamed Estonian soldier who had served with the Soviet forces in Afghanistan. What follows is a condensed paraphrase of a report of this interview that appeared in *Pasaule en Mes* (The World and Us), 1985.

Confusion, fear and despair were so widespread among Soviet troops, N. said, that brutality was commonplace. They had to carry out a ruthless scorched-earth policy that meant complete destruction of grain fields and settlements. Every foray was a punitive expedition.

"When we took a village, we shot anybody of whom we were the least bit suspicious — anybody who tried to hide or to run away. Sometimes we just shot everybody we could find," the soldier said.

Afghan villages are not like ours at home in Estonia, he explained. They are much more densely populated, and the houses are much closer together — so that they form a sort of clay labyrinth where strangers can easily get lost.

Always Fired First

"We never knew what might be around the next corner, so we always fired first, regardless of who might be about — even one of our own men. Before we turned into a street or a yard or a house, we sprayed the place with bullets.

"Sometimes, when we were surrounded, we just opened fire in all directions. To keep up our courage, we roared and screamed like animals caught in a trap. It was a kind of ecstasy. We were incapable of thinking, and simply kept on firing wildly, round after round after round. We had no idea whom we were shooting at, friend or enemy!"

N. said morale was extremely low among the Soviet troops. They had to be on the alert all the time against Mujahadin attacks. Food supplies were inadequate and uncertain. Many Russian officers were brutal even to the troops they commanded; a few were absolute sadists.

Drugs, Culture Gap

Drug use was common, and there was practically no provision for recreation. The troops had no friendly contact with civilians. A lack of common language and culture made trouble among men from different parts of the vast USSR.

Those from Central Asia, for example, despised Baltic conscripts as "ingrates who had been liberated by the Soviet Union and were now living on goods and services provided by the Kazakh, Turkomen and Uzbek republics." And sometimes these units would go berserk: it seemed to be the only way they could bring themselves to fight the Afghans, whom they regarded as brothers.

So erratic were food supplies that Soviet troops would even trade their weapons for fresh fruit and vegetables. Or they would arbitrarily impose a road toll: their protection to be bought for foodstuffs. Often enough, too, they would simply raid a village to take what they wanted. Naturally, the villagers soon learnt to hand food over without resisting in any way.

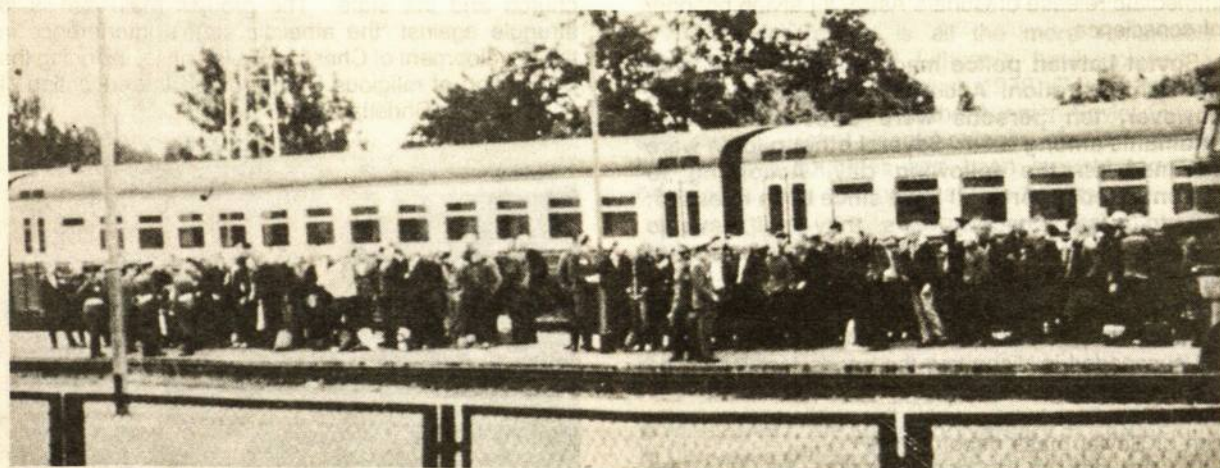
It was generally believed in the Army that the Soviets had about 150,000 troops in Afghanistan, among them a Bulgarian contingent. The Bulgarians had been brought in late in 1982 to keep open the road from Kabul to Ozhalabad.

The Army had little to do with the Kabul government, N. said. "We were a sort of protective shield for them, or rather a big stick that both threatened them and enabled them to threaten others. They could do nothing if we were not there."

Rebels' Arms

The arms used by the Mujahadin rebels were nearly all old and of poor quality, though they had a few Russian-made Kalashnikov assault rifles. There was talk about modern weapons from abroad; but N. had never seen any himself. He did know, though, of foreign ammunition.

Asked whether he had ever thought of deserting, N. said he had. But a surrender leaflet in Estonian had disturbed him quite a lot, "It was impossible to desert. Even if you did manage to get away from your unit, you were likely to be shot on sight. Besides, it was impossible to know whether an Afghan was a rebel or a government man. I did sometimes wonder what would happen if I was taken prisoner; but we all knew, the Mujahadin did not take prisoners . . ."



● Latvian conscripts at the Riga railway station in 1982. Many were on their way to Afghanistan.

Did N. ever think of his service in Afghanistan in terms of the Soviet occupation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania?

"The more I think about it now, since demobilisation," he said, "the more convinced I am that the Afghan campaign is an occupation. While I was there, we never thought of the Afghan rebels as freedom fighters, though I guess that deep down I did realise they were fighting for their independence as a nation. But with death and danger all around us, there was no way we could stop to think things out."

☆ ☆ ☆

So, what is going on in Afghanistan is what has happened to so many nations occupied by the USSR: wanton destruction of rare resources and vicious slaughter of innocent people.

—Condensed from *Pasaule en Mes*, and *Occupied Latvia today*.

** They did take some, who turned up in Swiss internment camps. After two years, they have the choice of returning to the USSR or seeking political asylum in the West.*

— Ed., *Pasaule en Mes*.



● Soviet troops and equipment on the outskirts of Kabul.

The Oath

by A. Fradis

The event that I am about to relate took place some ten years ago, at the very beginning of my military service in the Soviet army. We had been sent for training to the distant north, to a place that differed from a slave labour camp only in that it was called a military zone and was much larger.

We spent the first few days just trying to get used to our new military crew-cuts, striped shirts, stiff uniforms — and to our new name, the "training unit". The long, gray days seemed even longer because of interminable political lectures.

We had a Russian drill-sergeant (starshina), who was implacably hostile to Latvian recruits. He was an awkward, pompous, remote, ugly man with a chest plastered with service medals going back up to twenty years. That is why we called him "Barmalew" — the name of an evil giant in Russian folklore.

At the end of our preliminary training came the military oath. This was an occasion of high ceremonial, quite inspiring. Our highly decorated general presided.

The general was sitting at a small table in the center of the parade ground, watching us. He gave a command, and the trumpet sounded. One after another we stepped out of our lines and walked over to the table as our names were called. The procedure was not complicated. After strapping our machine guns to one shoulder, we held the corner of a silken flag with one hand and a tablet with the oath glued to it in the other. We read the oath aloud, signed our names and returned to our places.

Because we were being called out alphabetically and my name was toward the end, I was no longer paying close attention to what was going on. But then suddenly my attention was riveted as I heard, without realizing just what was happening, "Private Vuskans!"

From the tone of voice I realized that this was the second time his name was being called. Quickly glancing over the lines, I saw Janis my closest friend in the camp. After quite a long time, he finally stepped

forward according to regulations, but he did not walk over to the flag.

The major, a *zampolit* (the officer in charge of political matters), commanded, "Forward to the flag!" Janis straightened up but remained standing in place, "What's the matter, Private Vuskans?" asked the unit commander, interrupting the silence. Janis turned toward the general, and his loud reply was heard by everyone; "I refuse to take the oath!"

The line formations broke instantly, and a circle formed around the strange fellow who had uttered such unusual words. The *zampolit* took a few steps in Janis' direction; then he turned around and shouted, "Let's end this farce."

Janis returned to his place in the lines, but the oath-taking ceremony had been ruined. Later he was ordered to report to the garrison commander with his personal effects. I never saw him again.

★ ★ ★

Several years later, while seeing off a friend at a railway station, I noticed a familiar face. It was Barmalew. His appearance had changed very little. After giving me a flabby hand to shake, he stood there with his usual look of indifference. Somehow a conversation got started, and I found out that he had retired. We reminisced a bit about the service days and got around to the incident with Janis.

Barmalew gave me a gloomy look and suddenly said, "You, of course, did not know it, but the commander really let us have it because of him. There was a secret investigation during which Janis revealed that in 1940 a drunk Soviet officer had raped his mother. Because of that incident he refused to serve in the Soviet army. Because he had not taken the oath, he could not be placed in a punitive battalion. Instead, he was incarcerated for two years for refusing to serve."

Barmalew became silent, but then added, utterly without emotion, "I must not have squashed enough of those venomous snakes while combing the woods after the war. Otherwise there wouldn't be so many of them still around to cause this kind of trouble."

So, that was why he hated the Latvian recruits.

— Adapted from: *Occupied Latvia Today*.

Hawke: Non-recognition Reinforced

At the Federal election last July, Prime Minister Bob Hawke took the Australian Labor Party to its third successive victory.

Shortly before the election, Mr Hawke issued a statement confirming his party's stand in regard to the three Baltic States. He said, *inter alia*:

"Last year's resolution in the House of Representatives reinforced Australia's non-recognition *de jure* of the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union and stressed Australia's commitment to encouraging respect for and recognition of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

"The Government regards the continuing existence of the Latvian consulate in Melbourne as proof of this policy of non-recognition."



● The Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke.

Similar support was also expressed in a telex message Mr Hawke sent to Mr E. Voitkuns, President of the Latvian Federation of Australia and New Zealand, on June 15 this year.

Mr Hawke went on to say, "The instruction to the Australian Ambassador in Moscow not to visit the Soviet occupied Baltic States officially still stands.

"My government has raised the issue of human rights for the Baltic people at successive sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. I also took this matter up personally with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze when he visited Australia in 1987.

"You may rest assured that the above policies will be maintained by the Labor Party after the elections."

Expansion Abandoned

The Soviet Union intends to abandon extension work on the world's biggest nuclear power station in Ignalina, Lithuania, according to the Swedish newspaper, *Upsala Nya Tidning*. The Soviets claim that the Chernobyl nuclear accident did not affect the decision, although the Ignalina station has the same kind of graphite-moderated reactor. The decision means that the No 4 reactor will not be completed as planned.

Research institutes in Sweden have repeatedly recorded increased amounts of radioactive substances, probably emanating from a reactor.

— Sources: Stockholm and Helsinki Radio.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fair Trial Sought

Baltic News carries a tragic litany of human rights grievances. Emigres from many Communist countries complain, often poignantly and sometimes violently. But if you never report the other side, people may dismiss it all as ideological abuse.

Justice requires fair trial in an impartial forum accepted by both sides, ie, under the common law as declared in the United Nations. The USSR has ratified the **Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** — more fully than Australia has. When delegates are adequately briefed, the UN Human Rights Committee closely examines countries on their reports under article 40 of the Covenant.

I urge you to turn your most grievous current complaints into a justifiable issue to be tested before that Committee by cross-examination of Russia on its reports. The UN Human Rights Commission has condemned abuses in Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Chile, Guatemala and South Africa; and these judgements ultimately help to produce change. Is your evidence reliable?

Stanley W. JOHNSTON,
Reader in Criminology,
The University of Melbourne.

Human Rights

You are to be commended for your incessant documentation of human rights breaches in the three Baltic States.

Do you have any further information on Rev. Modris Plate (*Baltic News*, June 1987)?

Adelaide, SA.

A. STEWART.

EDITOR'S REPLY: In January 1987, official Soviet newspaper *Padomju Jaunatne* published strong accusations against Maris Ludvigs, a young Latvian Lutheran pastor. Rev. Plate and four other ministers then wrote a reply, refuting the charges. This was a sufficient excuse for the Soviets to axe Plate.



● Pastor Modris Plate.

Baltic News

I find *Baltic News* an indispensable source of information about the Baltic States and the Baltic community in Australia.

Please find a draft for \$20 herewith.
London (Britain). M. MANNING-LOBB.

I am writing on behalf of The Baltic Club at Monash University. I find the articles in *Baltic News* very interesting and informative.

Not many people are aware of the injustice which is taking place in the Baltic States. So, we believe, it is our duty to inform those people.

Please send our club copies of the *Baltic News* from 1982 onwards and keep us on your regular mailing list.
Blackburn South, Vic. Karlis GROSS.

Rationalization

I was very dismayed to read Kathy Grgic's letter (*Baltic News*, March 1987). To defray the cost of sending the *Baltic News* to Kelvin Grove for a year, please find my postal note for \$5.

We, the working proletariat, should help the starving academics.

Adelaide, SA.

N.O. BODY.

COMING EVENTS

Annual General Meeting

This year's annual general meeting of HELLP (Help the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian People's Association) will be held earlier than usual in Migrant Resource Centre, 222 Elizabeth St, Hobart, on Friday, September 18, 1987, at 8 pm.

All members are urged to attend and their attention is drawn to the following motion which will be put before the meeting:

'That, starting with December 1987 issue, the publication of "Baltic News" will be the responsibility of the Baltic News Committee of Baltic Research Foundation and not of the HELLP Association.'

Issues relevant to this motion will be explained at the meeting.

Members are reminded that written nominations for the next HELLP Executive Committee are to be sent to the Secretary of the Association, PO Box 272, Sandy Bay, Tas, 7005 and must be received before the start of the meeting. Nominations must be signed by two members of the Association and by the nominee.

Jubilee Mass

The Lithuanian Community of Hobart and friends are invited to the Jubilee Mass celebrating the 600th Anniversary of Christianity in Lithuania, at St Mary's Cathedral, Harrington St, Hobart, on **Sunday, October 18, 1987, at 11 am.**

His Grace the Archbishop of Hobart, Most Rev Sir Guilford Young, DD, will be the principal celebrant.

Coffee will be served after the Mass, in St Peter's School Library (next to St Mary's Cathedral).



Lithuanian Dinner

Form your party and book early for the event of the year: the Lithuanian Dinner in Polish Club, New Town, on **Thursday night, September 24.** Called *Vakarone* (a Lithuanian evening), it has been organised jointly by the Lithuanian Women's Committee of Hobart and the Tasmania University Union Lithuanian Studies Society.

There will be a three-course meal featuring Lithuanian cooking, and a full night's entertainment.

For bookings and further information, phone Mrs Paskevicius 72 2075, or Mrs Wilson 28 1797, or Mrs Kazokas 28 2139.

Balts to the Rescue



Once again, the Soviet selectors have used non-Russians to prop up the USSR's top basketball team.

As *The Australian's* Bret Harris has pointed out (Aug. 21), a third of the Soviet team touring Australia last month was made up of Balts.

Brilliant guards Raimondas Marčiulionis and Valdemaras Chomičius were from Lithuania. Gundars Vetra was Latvian and Tiij Sokk came from Estonia.

The spelling of the Lithuanian names was mutilated in Soviet press releases, because the Russians insisted on transcribing them into Cyrillic, then back into English script.

— The Australian

BALTIC NEWS

Dear Reader,

The survival of this newsletter is in your hands. For 12½ years now, we have depended on the generosity of our readers — and have managed to break even. However, we continue existing only "hand to mouth," ie, from issue to issue.

If you believe that *Baltic News* has a mission to fulfil and that it should go on informing the public about the Baltic States, please remember us with a donation.

This issue has cost \$3,700 to print and post. All other work was done by unpaid volunteers. We thank you all for the following donations, received since our June issue:

NSW: V. Kradzins, \$200; Daugavas Vanagi Sydney, Lithuanian Society for Human Rights, DM, \$50 each; J. Krastins, \$40; Fr B. Kennedy, J. & A. M., J. Ramanauskas, J. & B. Treimanis, S. Zablockiene, \$20 each; A. Balcas, Mrs O. Grosas, I. Jonaitis, R. Lapinskas, A. Meiliuniene, W. H. Moody, J. Muscinskiene, H. W. Randel, Mr & Mrs A. Silken, L. Stasiunaite, J. & V. Venclovas, Dr & Mrs J. Viliunas, \$10 each; V. Miezius, Mrs A. Savickas, \$5 each; J. Karpavicius, \$4; N. & N., \$3; M. Liepins, \$2.

Vic: Latvian Federation of Vic, \$150; Baltic Council of Victoria (March), \$100; LKVS Ramove, \$75; P. Morkunas, \$20; Z. Augaitis, \$10; H. Karsunova - Vanags, \$5; L. Nobelius, E. Dainutis, \$2 each.

Various: Baltic Women's Association of SA, \$100; B. Kiveris (NSW), \$50; E. Teal (Vic), E. Kuplis (Tas), \$20 each; E. Bernhards (Tas), \$15; J. Gully (Vic), H. Michelsons (Tas), \$10 each; R. Peedo (NSW), \$5; E. Madden (Tas), \$2.

Lithuanian Foundation Inc (USA), \$350.20 Aust; Anonymous (NSW), Melbourne Lithuanian Community, \$150 each; Canberra

Lithuanian Community, Paquoda Lithuanian Pensioners (ACT), St Columba's Parish Elwood, N. Feeny (Vic), \$100 each; Lithuanian Community Latrobe (Vic), \$80; A. Briedis (NSW), E. Hanhiniemi (Qld), \$50 each; A. Bimba (Vic), \$40; R. Dovydaitis (USA), \$30.82 Aust; Trustees De La Salle Bros (NSW), M. Bartkevicius (Tas), \$30 each; A. Zamoiskis (SA), Estonian Ex Servicemen Assoc (NSW), \$25 each; F. Wallace (USA), \$20 US; J. Girdauskas (Tas), Mrs Burneikis (WA), O. Liutikienė (WA), E. Laciš (Tas), M. Manning-Lobb (UK), J. Terry, A. Viknius (Tas), \$20 each; A. Williamson, J. P. Prendergast (Vic), \$15 each; R. Radvilas (WA), A. Snieckus (Canada), S. Markevics-Barrett, A. Cesnavicius (NSW), J. Gully, I. J. Mezaks, L. C. & D. E. Pupelis, J. Normantas (Vic), Latvian Ev Luth Church Melb, ODz (Qld), O. Miezius, Anonymous (Tas), \$10 each; M. Martin (SA), F. Duoba, C. Ford (NSW), J. & D. P. Sudmeyer (Tas), \$5 each.

To: Baltic News,
Post Office Box 272,
SANDY BAY, Tasmania, 7005 (Australia).

I do not recognise Russian sovereignty over the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania).

Please send me the *Baltic News* free of charge and without any obligation.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....POSTCODE.....

Optional:

I enclose my donation of \$.....Cash/Cheque/Money Order.

Nationalism in Latvia

by O. Kalnins

Item: In July, 1986, a group of Latvians, most under the age of 45, formed a new Helsinki monitoring group in the city of Liepaja, demanding that Mikhail Gorbachev allow Latvia to implement its constitutional right to secede from the Soviet Union. The group also sent letters to the United Nations and Pope John Paul II, asking that action be taken to halt the Russification of their once independent nation.

Item: In September, 1986, hundreds of Latvians, many of them young, braved a tight ring of KGB security agents to approach Americans participating in the Chautauqua Conference in Jurmala, Latvia. Some shouted, "We are slaves of the Russians." Others pleaded for help from the West saying, "We are waiting for freedom and you are our only hope."

Item: On December 27, 1986, over 300 Latvian youths returning from a rock concert, marched down the main street of Riga, the nation's capital, shouting, "Down with Soviet Russia! Freedom in a free Latvia." Tourists who witnessed the event reported that several Soviet militia cars were overturned. A similar demonstration occurred a week later.

Nothing New

Nationalism in Latvia, like that in neighbouring Estonia and Lithuania, is not new. Ever since the Soviets invaded and occupied the three Baltic countries in 1940, anti-Russian sentiment has understandably been strong. What is significant here, and seems reflected in other non-Russian Soviet-ruled republics such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Georgia, is that the common denominator in all these anti-Russian manifestations is youth. In all the above mentioned incidents, the key figures are Latvians born after Soviet rule was established.

You would think that after 46 years of rule in the Baltic States (and even longer in the other republics), a steady propaganda diet promoting "socialist internationalism" and the desirability of the "complete unity of nations" within the Soviet Union would have diminished the nationalist ardor of the Soviet-educated generations. Not so. To the contrary, it appears that in the



• Latvian youth.

non-Russian republics, youthful rebelliousness is expressing itself in decidedly nationalistic terms.

A Latvian-made documentary, "Is It Easy to be Young?" presently playing before packed houses in Moscow, shows Latvian "punks" and "heavy metal" kids decked out in chains, spiked bracelets and garish makeup, expressing open disenchantment with the Soviet Union. The opening of the film even documents a riot that occurred near Riga following a rock concert when over 100 youths demolished two rail cars.

The documentary does not reveal, however, that during the demolition of the rail cars, the Latvian youths were singing, "We will batter the red swan," a clearly anti-Russian verse from a song they had just heard at the concert. The severity of the Soviet punishment for one of the youths involved in the melee — three years in a strict regime prison — indicates that the authorities knew quite well that this wasn't just a case of adolescent hormones running amok.

Ironically, the fact that non-Russians are in fact "mastering the Russian language" could be the Kremlin's undoing. According to tourists returning from Latvia, the resurgence of nationalism among younger Latvians is accompanied by a growing curiosity about other Soviet minorities, i.e., fellow victims of Soviet Russian discrimination and repression. The deeply nationalistic Latvian rock song "Native Language" for example, was translated from a Moldavian poem.

Despite their ethnic and linguistic differences, the non-Russian minorities of the Soviet Union are discovering that they have something in common: a deep-seated resentment against the ethnic Russian majority. By learning the Russian language, however, they can communicate with each other more readily.

In the long run, the Soviet ideologists in the Kremlin may achieve their "unity of nations," but it may not be what they had in mind.

— Excerpts from *New York City Tribune*, February 23, 1987/LIB.



● **Russification:** On March 5, 1987, Moscow television covered the elections for a director's post in a Riga plant. As this TV picture shows, the ballot papers were printed in Russian, instead of Latvian. —

Photo: POC.

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