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# BALTIC NEWS

QUARTERLY NEWS REPORT FROM ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA (THE BALTIC STATES)

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## EDITORIAL

For the first time in 45 years, Lithuanians will not have to go to work on Christmas Day this year. The Soviets are likely to extend a similar concession to the Latvians and Estonians, too.

But Christmas brings back so many sad memories for the oppressed Baltic people. Like the mass rape and murder of innocent Lithuanian peasants south of Merkinė, on Christmas Eve 1945 — long after the end of World War II.

Or the tragic fate of 13-year-old Alenskis who froze to death in the prison compound of the Isle of Stolb, on Christmas Day 1942, while fossicking for food scraps in the Russian guards' garbage pile.

Fourteen-year-old schoolgirl Janina Alytaitė was openly ridiculed by her teachers, then lost her part-time job as a cleaner in a restaurant in Lukšiai, because she went to church on Christmas Day 1971.

And so on — the list is endless.

It is true, of course, that some repressions have been eased in the occupied Baltic countries, during the past few years. However, the road to freedom remains long and thorny.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are still Russia's colonies. The Red Army — the watchdog and enforcer of the Kremlin's will — is stationed in large numbers all over Baltic territory.

And the Communist Party, the same party that presided over the persecution and mass murder of the Baltic people, continues to hold power.

"We Balts are patient people," a reader wrote to us from occupied Latvia recently, "We can wait". And, while they wait, their wishes are reflected in Phillips Brooks' carol:

*Yet in the dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.*



# Baltic States at the Crossroads

It now seems inevitable that the occupied Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will regain their independence. The question remains: when and how?

This prediction emerged, and was repeatedly reinforced, as thirteen speakers from both sides of the Iron Curtain presented their papers at the Baltic Symposium on November 25-26. Organised by the Baltic Council of Australia and held at the University of Sydney, the Symposium attracted an audience of nearly 200, from most States of Australia and from Papua New Guinea.



● This panel of invited speakers discussed "The Future for the Baltic States", at the concluding session of the two-day Baltic Symposium. From left: Mr Ivans, Prof Chipman, Messrs Čekuolis, Voikuns, Sen Short, Mr Kelam. Absent from photo: Chairperson Tiia Raudma (BCA).

For the first time ever, a panel of distinguished Australian speakers appeared on the same platform with six political activists from the occupied Baltic States. There was general agreement that the huge Soviet empire was disintegrating, without any obvious signs that the Kremlin intends to intervene and reverse the trend.

Estonian visitor Tunne Kelam told the assembly that the much publicised economic self-management programme was not succeeding in the occupied Baltic States. Mr Gorbachev had planned to use Estonia and the other Baltic countries as the model testing sites for his *perestroika* (restructuring scheme), but the plan simply did not work. The economic situation in Estonia, as in the rest of the USSR, is now fast deteriorating, Mr Kelam said.

Better management skills are needed, if the Baltic economy is to flourish once again. Lithuanian speaker Professor Antanavičius appealed to Australia and other Western nations to share this expertise with the Balts.

## Roads to Independence

The participants proposed different ways for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to regain their independence.

A member of the Lithuanian Communist Party, Mr Čekuolis, stated that his party must break away from Moscow, as a preliminary step to independence.

This view was not shared by Mr Kelam who believes that the Communist Party cannot transform itself into a social and democratic party — whether Moscow-controlled, or not.

Melbourne solicitor Mr Garsa suggested a step-by-step approach towards total freedom: (1) Soviet admission of illegal incorporation; (2) a Treaty ensuring maximum autonomy for the Baltic States; (3) Deferment of secession discussion for, say, 10 years. The advantage of this approach is that independence would be a small step to be taken at a future date, if the economic and political conditions were ripe.

## Immediate Outlook

All three Baltic States have recently proposed some major changes. One of these envisages the restoration of their pre-war currencies, in late 1990. The rouble is useless as an international medium of exchange, and its purchasing power in the USSR is poor. The Balts need a currency free of Soviet control, so as to facilitate international trade, raise their standard of living and rebuild their economies.

If this can be achieved, the Baltic States could well become Europe's Hong Kong — that is, Russia's commercial window to the West.

## Time Bomb

It was pointed out at the Symposium that, if the proportion of the indigenous Balts continues to decline, independence will be more difficult to achieve. Estonia with 60% Estonians and Latvia with 52% Latvians are in danger of national extinction. Lithuania has 80% Lithuanians — better off by comparison, but discomforting nonetheless. Several speakers, including Mr Dainis Ivans, agreed that the Balts are sitting on a time-bomb which directly threatens the survival of their national identities — the first prerequisite for independence.

We congratulate the Baltic Council of Australia, chaired by Mr Aivars Mednis, on arranging this high-calibre Symposium. It was balanced, well run and informative. Let's hope, there will be more to come, soon.

## Baltic Symposium Participants

**Algimantas Čekuolis**, Lithuanian journalist and writer, member of the Lithuanian Communist Party.

**Aleksandrs Garsa**, Melbourne solicitor and political scientist.

**Prof David Flint**, Professor of Law at the University of Technology, Sydney.

**Dr A. P. Kaballa**, formerly Professor of Engineering, University of New South Wales.

**Prof Eugene Kamenka**, History of Ideas Unit, The Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra.

**Dr Peter King**, President, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney.

**Aivars Mednis**, Chairman, Baltic Council of Australia, and Sydney solicitor.

**Olav Pihlak**, President, Council of Estonian Societies in Australia, and Sydney accountant.

**Yvonne Preston**, Senior Journalist, *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

**Elmars Vebers**, Chairman of the Department of Nationalism and International Relations, Latvian Academy of Sciences; member of Latvian Popular Front.

**Eduards Voikuns**, Director, Australian Latvian Information Centre.

● Further participants, Page 3.

● Cover photo: Thousands of Lithuanians at the hoisting of their national flag in Kaunas, occupied Lithuania's second-largest city.



# What They Said at the Symposium

Many stimulating ideas were presented at the Baltic Symposium in Sydney, on November 25-26. Here are a few samples (for more details, see Page 2):



**Prof Kazimieras ANTANAVIČIUS**, director of Engineering Systems Laboratory, Vilnius; one of Sąjūdis leaders; deputy to the Supreme Soviet of USSR; and convener of the Social Democratic Party in Lithuania: "The era of Communism has come to an end. Historic changes are sweeping across our countries, and Eastern Europe will be quite different by the start of the 21st century — of this there is no doubt.

"In spite of all obstacles, we, the Baltic people, are determined to follow the path to democracy and freedom. They may kill us physically; but nothing will stop our determination."



**Tunne KELAM**, historian and founding leader of the Estonian National Independence Party (ERSP): "The Baltic people have reached a point of conflicting tendencies. On one hand, the Kremlin's colonial politics have developed a direct threat to their future existence. On the other hand, people have an opportunity to start realizing their basic aspirations associated with the restoration of their independence.

"But the road to independence starts with each individual. A person seeking freedom must firstly rid himself of the vices spread by the foreign colonial power."



**Dainis IVANS**, journalist and Chairman of the Latvian Popular Front: "Because of the intensive policy of Russification during the last 50 years, there are only 52% of Latvians left in the total population of Latvia.

"The only way to secure the survival of Latvians as a nation with its own national identity, is to grant complete independence to the Latvian state. Only then, the Latvians will be able to stop the influx of foreigners who bring with them the threat of Russification and a threat to our survival. The restoration of natural justice to the Baltic States is one of the ways to achieve a more just world."

...



**Prof Lauchlan CHIPMAN**, philosopher and Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wollongong: "There can be no such thing as 'relaxed' communist rule, or 'communism with a human face'. Being based on a philosophical tradition which is fundamentally and irreparably flawed — the tradition of Marx-Leninism — a genuine communist society must rely essentially, and not merely pragmatically, on terror. The arrival of freedom in eastern Europe requires the total abandonment of all forms of Marxism as the philosophical or ideological principle of political and social organisation."



**Peter JULL**, consultant on self-government and research fellow with the Australian National University: "Precedents teach what works and what does not work. There are 3 significant sources of precedent for the Baltic States: (1) The success of the small but prosperous Nordic countries — Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland. (2) The victories won by the Indians, Inuit, Lapps, Faroese and other national groups in Western countries. (3) The wealth of knowledge and practical experience accumulated in the West since 1945, in relation to the practical side of politics."

## Nominations Invited

In our next issue, we are planning to publish our first "Baltic Honours List" — a list of Australians and Australian residents who have made a major contribution to the cause of Baltic freedom. The list will include politicians, journalists, churchmen, writers — in fact, people from most walks of life.

YOU are invited to nominate any candidate for Honours who, in your opinion, has helped the Baltic cause in a significant way. Please use a separate sheet of paper for each nominee, giving his/her full personal particulars and describing why that person stands out as a major worker for the occupied Baltic nations. Send your nominations to BALTIC NEWS, PO Box 272, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005, together with newspaper clippings and any supporting evidence.

Persons of Baltic origin are not eligible for inclusion in this Honours List.



## Some Recent Baltic Events

Throughout the year, the political euphorium has remained high in the occupied Baltic States, even if the people's heightened expectations cannot always be met.

Shortages of consumer goods are continuing. Sugar, soap and washing powders are rationed. Many other everyday necessities are available in the shops only intermittently. They are called "deficit goods" and include meat, smallgoods, oil, cheese, yeast, tea, coffee, linen, pantyhose, carpets, stainless steel cutlery, TV sets, radios, and hundreds of other lines.

The situation is aggravated by large-scale purchases made by visitors from Poland, Byelorussia and other neighbouring territories. They come in special "tourist buses" and clean out the local stores of their entire stocks. The authorities are now experimenting with schemes that would give preference to the local buyers.

Armed criminal elements (known as Mafia, but seemingly not linked with their namesakes abroad) have appeared on the Baltic scene during the past couple of years.

**June 9:** Grade 10 high-school student Jankauskas was killed in an explosion at the Red Army camp in Pabradė, occupied Lithuania. Four others were injured: a physical education student from Kaunas and three schoolboys.

The youths were sent to Pabradė from a special boarding school in Vilnius, in spite of written warnings by platoon commander Shchyokin that the Pabradė site was unsafe.

**June 28:** US Vice-President Dan Quayle presented the 1989 Puebla First Freedom Award to Rev Alfonsas Svarinskas. The Lithuanian priest was a founding member of the Catholic Committee for the Defence of the Believers' Rights, and spent 21 years in Soviet prisons.

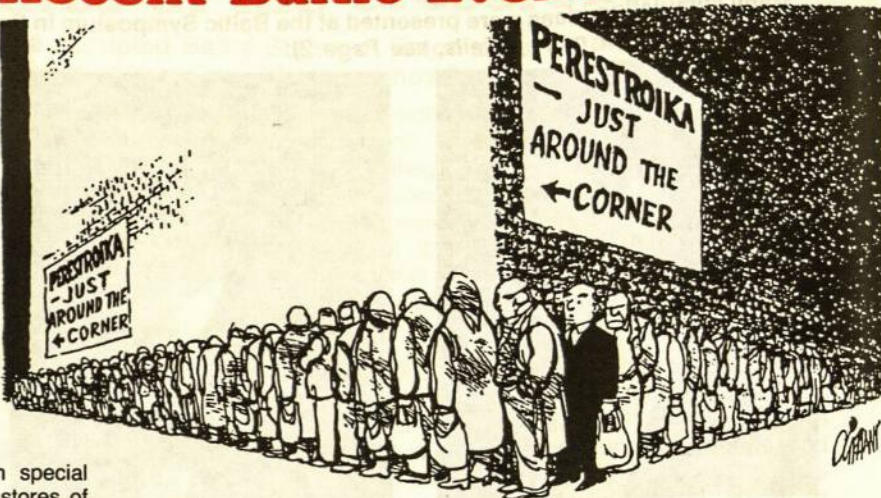
**July 29:** The remains of the first 128 deportees were brought back by air from Igarka (Siberia) to Kėdainiai (occupied Lithuania). The corpses of some others who died in the 1940s and 50s followed throughout the summer.

**August 16:** The Australian Senate passed a resolution calling on the USSR to renounce publicly the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, restore the Baltic peoples' fundamental rights and accede to the Baltic peoples' wishes for justice, independence and self-determination. The resolution was moved by Senator Peter Baume.

A similar resolution was also passed by the Australian House of Representatives on August 31, on the motion of Mr Neil Brown, QC (Lib, Vic) and seconded by Mrs Elizabeth Harvey (ALP, SA).

**August 23:** Huge crowds, variously estimated at one to two million people, linked hands across the three Baltic States (see map). The human chain was formed in protest against celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact that extinguished the Baltic nations' independence.

The Estonian and Latvian popular fronts and the Lithuanian Sąjūdis movement issued a joint statement entitled the BALTIC WAY. It appealed to the world community to support the Baltic peoples' aspirations: the immediate repeal of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its secret clauses; and a peaceful restoration of the Baltic nations' statehood.



**August 26:** The Soviet Communist Party Central Committee in Moscow warned of the "abyss" that threatened the Baltic States if they did not "cleanse" the perestroika process of "separatists and extremists".

The Baltic popular fronts responded by appealing to the United Nations Organisation for protection against this "threat of genocide emanating from the Kremlin." The UN General Secretary, Mr Perez de Cuellar, was asked to make an on-the-spot human rights investigation in the occupied Baltic territories.

**End of August:** After five decades of unsuccessful collective farming, the Soviets are experimenting with privatisation. 500 private farms have been registered in Estonia so far, with another 500-plus applications still pending.

A major agrarian reform is planned by the Estonian SSR State Planning Committee for 1990-91.

**September 5:** After a ban of 43 years, the Catholic seminary of Telsiai was re-opened in occupied Lithuania. Mgr Kazimieras Gaščiūnas is the new rector. 23 first-year seminarians have started their studies this year.

The Soviet authorities are keeping two other seminaries (Vilnius and Kaišiadorys) closed, although there is no shortage of vocations.

**September 8:** The Baltic Council, a consultative body of the three Baltic Popular Fronts, met in Panevėžys (occupied Lithuania), to establish closer economic ties. The aim is to have a Baltic Common Market functioning by 1993.

**October 8:** The Latvian Popular Front announced its aim of achieving full secession from the Soviet Union. The 1,200 delegates at the Front's annual conference in Riga also called for the removal of Soviet army units from Latvia and for closer economic ties with Estonia and Lithuania. The Latvian Popular Front has the backing of about 200,000 members.

**October 27:** During his State visit to Finland, Soviet President Gorbachev promised to work for a nuclear-free Baltic sea. He did not explain why his predecessors had persecuted the Baltic people for promoting exactly the same cause. For example: Estonians Lagle Parek, Heiki Ahonen and Arvo Pesti were imprisoned for lengthy terms in 1983 because they had signed the Open Letter on Nuclear-free Baltic on October 10, 1981.

**December 10:** Local elections in occupied Estonia. In its policy platform, the Popular Front of Estonia (formed last year) has pledged to work for Estonia's "gradual transition from the status of a sovereign republic of the Soviet Union to its independent allied state, with the further aim of becoming an independent state in the demilitarised neutral Balto-scandia".





# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Economic Survival

We keep hearing voices in the West that the three Baltic States will need Russia to survive economically — even after the Balts regain their political independence. What rot!

This brand of deliberate Soviet misinformation is at least 46 years old. In his book *The Baltic Riddle*\*, published in 1943, Soviet sympathiser Gregory Meiksins argued in the same vein. He wrote, "In an economic sense Russia is a natural outlet for the products of existing and potential Baltic industry, even for disposal of surplus Baltic farm products . . . Both economies are, as it were, made for the closest collaboration" (p222).

Facts prove Mr Meiksins wrong. For example: independent Lithuania's principal trading partners in 1938 were Great Britain (39.4% exports, 30.9% imports); and Germany (26.8% exports, 24.5% imports). The Soviet Union scored barely 5.7% exports and 6.7% imports, during the same year.

Geelong, Vic

P. MANGANA.

\* This book was reviewed in *Baltic News*, February-March 1980 issue.

## Change Challenged?

Once again, I was pleased to receive *Baltic News*, and I attach a cheque.

There is a tremendous feeling of optimism in the community at large that there is an improvement in the relationship of the Baltic States with USSR; but we cannot relax.

The Gorbachev era of change seems now to be challenged. I hope the Baltic situation will be rectified before he leaves the scene.

Brian R. ARCHER.  
Senator for Tasmania

## Nuclear Power

During my recent visit to Lithuania, I made formal representations in Moscow to the Committee for the Protection of the Environment, expressing the strong view that the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant should be closed.

I must say, I am not confident that my representations will bear fruit. I was told, however, that Stage 4 of the Plant will not proceed and that there has been an indefinite deferral placed on Stage 3. However, as we know only too well, that leaves the archaic Stages 1 and 2 still in place.

I also made similar representations to the President of the Lithuanian SSR and to Communist Party Chief Brazauskas.

Senator Jim SHORT,  
Liberal Senator for Victoria.

## Please Write Now!

I have been reading *Baltic News* for a few months now, and find it an excellent way of communicating accurately what is going on in the Baltic nations.

I am at present writing to the publishers of every major atlas in Australia to explain the situation to them, and encourage them to show the Baltic States as separate countries in their own right.

Perhaps if every reader of *Baltic News* were to do this, we may be able to get a response.

Pymble, NSW. Natalie J. COOPER.

## A Bouquet

Your publication is an example to others how to edit a serious and informative journal; and how to continue, by printed word and wide distribution, our struggle to achieve complete restoration of independence for the Baltic States.

A. ŽILINSKAS,  
Vice-Chairman,  
The Baltic Council of Victoria.

## NZ Recognition



● Sir Robert Muldoon

Sir Robert Muldoon, the former prime minister of New Zealand, is currently appearing on NZ television, dressed up as the vampire Count Robula.

However, Sir Robert's most Draconian act has been his refusal to revoke New Zealand's de jure recognition of Soviet occupation of the Baltic States.

Australia and New Zealand granted this recognition in 1974. Australia revoked it in December, 1975. But New Zealand's prime minister at the time, Mr Muldoon, failed to follow suit — and gave no good reason why he was sucking up to the world's last colonial power.

It's time to rectify this injustice now.  
Newcastle, NSW. L. SCOTT

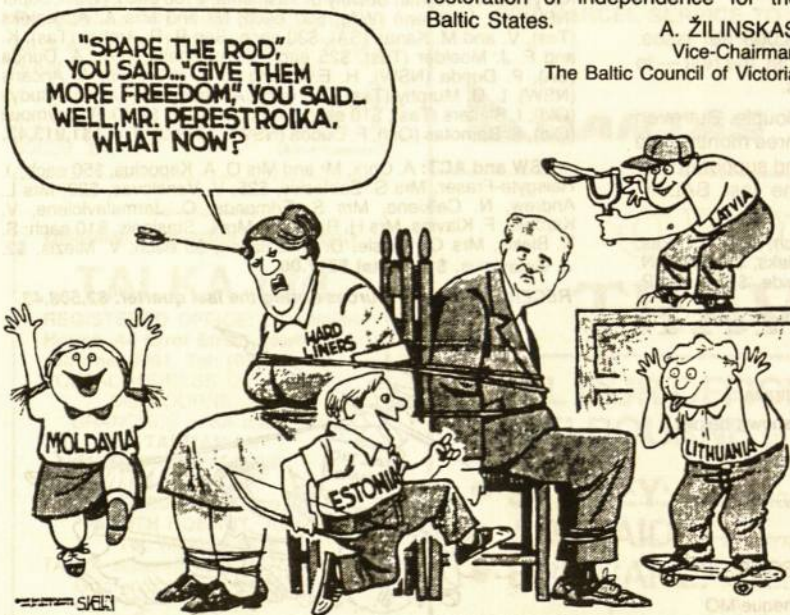
## Mass Deportations

In his book *Soviet Genocide in Lithuania*, Dr Joseph Jarvis gives some statistics of the human losses during both Soviet occupations up to the end of Stalin's terror. 600,000 people were deported and 60,000 guerillas were annihilated in Lithuania alone. A total of 1,200,000 persons were deported from the three Baltic States, according to Dr Jarvis.

The figure agrees with the Soviets' own official data which states that, at the time of Stalin's death, 1,200,000 inhabitants of the Baltic region "could not be accounted for." In the official parlance, these people "had vanished without trace."

Adelaide, SA.

A. POCIUS.



Reprinted from *Newsday*.

## Remember Us in Your Will

Please remember *Baltic News* in your will. Your bequest will extend the life of this newsletter, and the Baltic message will continue to be spread.

At present *Baltic News* has no financial reserves for its future. Will you please help, through your will?



# The Forgotten Rescuers of Jews

Jewish writer Icchokas Meras, 55, was born in Lithuania and now lives in Israel. He nearly lost his life during the Nazi occupation of the Baltic region during World War II.

He was saved by a Lithuanian family, raised among Lithuanians and writes his novels and short stories in Lithuanian.

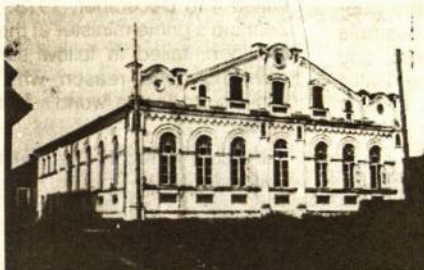
Mr Meras recalls, "On July 28, 1941, I was being taken to a ditch to be shot. Just by chance they decided to return some of the children. By another chance, I fell in with people who valued the life of a seven-year-old child.

"I repeat as a prayer the names of those (Lithuanian) people who during the Fascist occupation in and around the town of Kelmė hid and rescued several Jewish children, of whom I was one. They are Bronė and Juozas Dainauskas, Michalina Legantienė, Adomas Urbelis, Petronėlė Urbelienė-Unikauskienė, Mr and Mrs Šal-kauskas, Stasė Damanskaitė, Stefa Kulevičiūtė, Elena Kausaitė and her sisters, Konstancija Norkaitė, couples Butkus, Urbelis, Žukauskas, Damanskas, Simulis, Aleksandra Grisaitė and many others whose names I do not know.

"I repeat as a prayer the names of those people, known and unknown, seen at some time or never seen, who in the whole of Lithuania, in the cities and towns, in the villages and hamlets, despite the cruel terror, rescued those condemned to death."

## Additional Names

Last year, *Komunisto žodis*, a local Soviet newspaper published in Kelmė, listed the names of some other



● The new synagogue of Kelmė.



Icchokas Meras

local Lithuanians who had risked their own lives to save the Jews in 1941. The paper mentions Dr P. Girbudas, farmers P. Klimas, V. Sleževičius, A. Songaila, M. Juškevičius, Father P. Macijauskas, the parish priest of Kolainiai, and others."

All these brave people seem to have been forgotten by now. They never rate a mention on TV — in the West or in the East. Mr Meras comments, "I know and firmly believe that in these contradictory times of ours when books are separated according to colour, when we often ponder and try to find and treasure the real human spiritual values, we must honour heroism."

— Sources: PRUNSKIS, Dr Juozas, *Lithuania's Jews and the Holocaust*, Chicago: Lith. American Council, 1979; and *Gintasis Krastas*, No 8/1989.

★ ★ ★

**KELMĖ** is a small town in Western Lithuania, population 5,140 (1959). Kelmė's origins date back to 1294 when the Teutonic Order destroyed its castle. During the years of independence, Kelmė was a model of multicultural tolerance. Two primary schools were fully funded by the Lithuanian government: a Lithuanian school and a Jewish one. A higher Jewish theological college was also located in Kelmė. The town was known internationally for its horse markets.

## Many Thanks for Your Support!

BALTIC NEWS has no paid employees. It is produced and distributed by some 50 volunteers in four centres: Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra.

This reduces our total expenditure to \$4,000 per issue. 60% of this amount is paid out to Australia Post; the rest — to printers, transport companies and suppliers.

Without voluntary help, our costs would double. But even \$4,000 is a sizeable amount to raise every three months. We are therefore most grateful to our readers and supporters for the following donations received since the last BALTIC NEWS:

**Vic.:** N. Feeney, Q. King, A. Reinfelds, \$50 each; M. & K. Lukas, \$30; A. Miglis, \$25; Z. Galitis, O. Silina, A. Zvejnieks, \$20 each; N. Tsernjavski, \$15; J. Mezaks, S. Sikorskis, D. Veide, \$10 each; P. Mazyliis, \$5; L. Nobelius, \$3. **Total \$318.00.**

**Various:** Anonymous, \$641.33; Australian Lithuanian Foundation (Vic), \$500; Council of Estonian Societies in Australia, \$200; S. Kairys (ACT), Latvian Society of Tasmania, \$100 each; N. J. Cooper (NSW), O. Liutikienė (WA), \$50 each; Mr and Mrs A. Apsenieks (Tas), V. and M. Kanas (SA), \$30 each; Sen B. R. Archer (Tas), K. and F. J. Moelder (Tas), \$25 each; J. Austinaitis (WA), A. Dunda (SA), P. Dunda (NSW), H. E. Zelling (SA), \$20 each; A. Ancans (NSW), L. D. Murphy (Tas), \$15 each; Anonymous (Tas), M. Rudys (Qld), I. Sleiters (Tas), \$10 each; D. Hogan (NZ), \$7.10; Anonymous (Qld), S. Bernotas (Qld), F. Duoba (NSW), \$5 each. **Total \$1,913.43.**

**NSW and ACT:** A. Cork, Mr and Mrs O. A. Kapocius, \$50 each; J. Reigsgyte-Fraser, Mrs S. Zablockis, \$25; V. Venclovas, \$20; Mrs L. Andrew, N. Celkiene, Mrs S. Edmonds, O. Jarmalaviciene, V. Kardelis, F. Klavins, Mrs H. Raulickis, Mrs L. Stasionis, \$10 each; S. K. Blekis, Mrs C. Prinsle, Dr H. Salasoo, \$5 each; V. Mieziis, \$2. J. Gatavicius, \$10. **Total \$277.00.**

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## RIGA TO NEW YORK:

## Direct Flights in 1990?

The idea for the creation of a direct air link between Riga and some overseas centres recently came a step closer to realisation with the formation of an airline company named "Baltia Air Lines Inc" (BAL) in New York.

A proposal by the president of the new company, Igors Dmitrovskis, to the Aviation Society of Latvia involved the leasing of a Boeing 767 passenger aircraft to establish scheduled flights between Riga and New York. Dmitrovskis estimates that a starting capital of



\$10 to \$15 million would be necessary, which he proposes to obtain from the usual financial sources.

The first step in this process is to obtain the approval of the US Department of Transport, which regulates the safety aspects as well as the viability of any new international carrier. Once the approval of the DOT has been obtained, lending institutions normally have no objections to advancing the necessary capital.

Riga airport has just been upgraded to international standard. The Scandinavian airline SAS will start flying between Riga and Stockholm three

times a week from next year. A direct link is also planned between Riga and Helsinki.

BAL intends to serve all three Baltic States through Riga and will carry the national colours of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on its fuselage.

Igors Dmitrovskis hopes to have the inaugural flight take place in the summer of 1990, to carry the many visitors and participants who are planning to attend the first Global Latvian Song Festival in Riga.

Valdemars Uplejs, the chairman of the Aviation Society of Latvia, commented favourably on the proposal.

From "Padomju Jaunatne" (Soviet Youth) No 184

## Australian Support

Victor Perton, MP (pictured), a member for Doncaster in the Parliament of Victoria, visited the occupied Baltic States and other parts of the USSR in June.



Mr Perton, who is believed to be the first person of Baltic heritage to enter an Australian parliament, said on his return, "My time in the Soviet Union has left me with the unquenchable desire to help. Our fight for the rights of the individual to control his or her own life must continue until the Baltic people are free".

## A Great Gift Idea

Lithuania has a new newspaper: **Respublika**. It is published in Vilnius by Lithuania's popular front, *Sajudis*. **Respublika** appears only in the Lithuanian language at present.

**Respublika's** objective is to provide balanced reports of events in Lithuania.

A one year's air-mail subscription to **Respublika** (which will be published six days a week in 1990) is \$US85. What a great gift for family and friends!

For more details, contact Sajudzio Info, 7159 S. Whipple, Chicago, IL 60629, USA.

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## AIDS behind the Iron Curtain

Officially, there is no prostitution in the Soviet Union. Or AIDS. However, the Soviets are finding it increasingly hard to keep up the pretence. The problems of the West also exist in the East.

A laboratory for the diagnosis of AIDS was established at the blood transfusion clinic of Tallinn (in occupied Estonia), in mid-1987. Using equipment imported from Finland, the pilot laboratory has set the pattern for further AIDS centres to be opened in Tartu and other cities.

Dr R. Kolle, head physician at the Tallinn Clinic, told *Rahva Hää*, a local Estonian newspaper, that certain groups of people must undergo tests for AIDS. They include blood donors, all foreigners who stay in the USSR for more than three months, and any Soviet citizens who return from an extensive visit abroad.

### Foreign Sailors Blamed

A provincial paper published in Klaipėda, occupied Lithuania's largest port, disclosed last year that several AIDS suspects had been admitted to the local hospital. Blood samples had to be sent to Moscow, the newspaper said, because the Klaipėda hospital had no testing facilities for AIDS.

"In any case," the report concluded, "It's the foreign sailors who are responsible for bringing the dreaded disease."

In occupied Latvia, the chief of Riga's vice and drug squad, Lieut-Col Dubovicki, has been waging a little-publicised war against prostitution and drug abuse since 1987. His efforts are hampered by the lack of laws or regulations in this complicated area. In theory, there is no prostitution or drug problem in the Soviet Union. Consequently, the authorities have ignored them, leaving the law enforcement agencies without guidelines for their control.

As part of his drive against prostitution, Dubovicki has enlisted the help of the medical profession in the detection and treatment of venereal disease.

However, the real reason for this police activity



• The City of Riga after dark: officially, there is no vice.



• A plain clothes officer arresting two Riga women.

is an immense fear of AIDS. Despite official denials, people know that AIDS has arrived and is widespread among prostitutes as well as in the general population.

At a recent meeting with his staff, medical personnel and the press, Dubovicki spoke out against the cruel anti-prostitution laws of some countries. He claimed that some country sheriffs in the US would round up harlots and cart them off in buses to be dumped in the middle of open country, hundreds of miles from the nearest habitation. This would never be tolerated in the Soviet Union, he said.

Sergei Vetrov, one of those present at the meeting, reminded Dubovicki that this was exactly the fate of many "suspicious" Soviet girls before the Moscow Olympic Games. Alexander Galin even wrote a song entitled "Stars Under the Morning Sky" about those unfortunate women.

The police make raids and round up the prostitutes who are then classified into four categories:

- Young, disease-free girls, plying their trade among the international tourist clientele who are staying at Hotel Riga or are dining at the Lacitis Restaurant.
- Young women, with some incidence of VD, who walk the streets and highways.
- Middle-aged, diseased women, already in a pitiful state of degradation.
- Old alcoholics, beyond redemption.

AIDS obviously knows no physical or ideological boundaries. Its control will require prompt international co-operation of the same scale and urgency as the control of nuclear weapons and pollution.

— Sources: Sergei Vetrov in *Smena* '88/ Newsletter from behind the Iron Curtain/ Europos Lietuvis/A.H., JA, eom.

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