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BALTIC NEWS

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

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September, 1990



Occupation Troops: Flexing Their Muscles

— Reports, Page 8

Baltic News to Cease Publication

It is with both sadness and a sense of "mission accomplished" that the Baltic Research Foundation announces that *Baltic News* will cease publication with the 1990 December issue.

Sixteen years ago, the Baltic people's vision of freedom, sustained by their courage and suffering, was dealt a mean blow in remote Australia. The Whitlam government granted *de jure* recognition to the illegal annexation of the republics by the USSR, an annexation based on the notorious Ribbentrop/Molotov Pact. *Baltic News* was founded to lobby against that recognition by bringing to English speaking people accurate and up-to-date information from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Today circumstances have changed and a culmination of events has seen the original objectives of the paper largely met.

The *de jure* recognition by Australia was withdrawn by the Fraser government and this position has been maintained by Mr Hawke. The momentous developments in the Baltic States during the last year have ensured regular and reasonably accurate reports in most national papers. Several high quality English-language newspapers have started appearing in the three Baltic States. The subscription rates are not high and recent news is thus accessible more promptly. Two other English-language Baltic periodicals are now published in Australia (see information on Page 7 in this issue).

As well, the private donors who have supported *Baltic News* over the past 16 years are now being called upon to donate to the Lithuanian Blockade Relief Fund and to similar causes in the other states. It is fair to say that this need will be seen as of greater importance than ours.



In reviewing the continued publication of *Baltic News*, these reasons appeared compelling enough for the Foundation to decide to stop.

We are overjoyed that the freedom of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia is recognised as the only just outcome by most of the world community. We feel that the day of independence is not too far off. Nevertheless, a feeling of sadness has also accompanied the

Foundation's decision in that a wonderful co-operative effort and sense of purpose in editing, producing and distributing each copy would end. After December no reader will have that great sense of anticipation when opening a new issue.

In accepting the resolution to close the paper, the Chairman of the Baltic Research Foundation, Mr John Watchorn, reminded us of a statement by Fr Greg Jordan, S.J., a faithful friend of *Baltic News*, that "little papers are the cornerstone of democracy". We would like to think that *Baltic News*, too, has made a contribution towards the anticipated restoration of democracy in the Baltic States.

Two other periodicals will continue to be published in Tasmania: *The DOVE (Friends of the Prisoners, PO Box 12, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005)*; and the annual *LITHUANIAN PAPERS (Tasmania University Union Lithuanian Studies Society, PO Box 777, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005)*.

Special Offer

Over the past 16 years, *Baltic News* has systematically documented Baltic history and current events in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It has reviewed many important English-language books on the Baltic States. It has published a wealth of general information on the Baltic countries and their people.

If you do not have a set of past *Baltic News*, send for them now. *Baltic News* will be a great source of information for you and your children in the years to come. All sets cover the last 5 years; a few complete sets are also available.

Please mail your request to the centre nearest you and enclose a donation to cover postage and packing: **BALTIC NEWS, PO Box 272, SANDY BAY Tasmania 7005, Australia;**

or **BALTIC NEWS, PO Box 118, CHELSEA, Victoria 3196, Australia.**

In Brief

● **RECORD BROKEN:** Since June 1, the Tradition, Family and Property Association (TFP) has collected 4,038,781 signatures in five continents in support of Lithuanian independence. This historic milestone breaks the world record of 3,107,080 in the Guinness Book of Records.

The address of the Australian TFP Bureau is GPO Box 3631, Sydney 2001. Telephone (02) 698 4931.

● **MOSCOW OUTPOST:** Father Pranas Račiūnas, 71, is the new parish priest of St Louis, Moscow's only functioning Roman Catholic Church. He has replaced Fr Stanislovas Maziška, 85, who had served his congregation of 10,000 for the past 22 years.

Father Račiūnas is a veteran of Siberian gulags: he was imprisoned in Vorkuta camps from 1949 to 1965.

● **INTEGRAL:** Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Lev Boronin has issued a decree uniting all Estonian-based but centrally-controlled enterprises into a new association called Integral.

Estonian Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar has protested against the creation of such a Moscow-controlled cartel. He described the move as "setting up alternative power structures and undermining Estonia's integrity".

● **SOVIET PRESENCE:** On July 16, the Estonian government delivered a note in Moscow to Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Valentin Nikiforov, calling for concrete agreements on the Soviet military presence in Estonia.

Cover Photo: With their truncheons at the ready, the Soviet occupation troops are making their presence felt in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital. It has been conservatively estimated that at least 500,000 Soviet servicemen and their families are now stationed in the three Baltic States.

Photo: Paulius Lileikis.

The Human Price of Soviet Blockade

When the Lithuanian people voted to restore their independence on March 11, Soviet President Gorbachev imposed a total blockade against this Baltic nation. The Soviets made sure that not only oil, raw materials and certain foodstuffs were cut off, but also lifesaving drugs and surgical supplies.

After 72 days of total isolation, the blockade is now being lifted gradually. However, the price of human suffering during that cruel period may never be assessed fully. The old and the sick had to go without penicillin, insulin, antibiotics, sterile dressings and other essential supplies. Those who survived are still suffering the consequences.

When the news of the Lithuanians' plight first filtered through, the Western governments talked, procrastinated and did nothing. Luckily, some of their citizens refused to remain indifferent and organised private help.

A convoy of three trucks carrying 60,000 kg of medicines from France, Belgium and West Germany reached Lithuania on June 16, after lengthy delays by Soviet border guards. It appears the Soviets relented when they discovered that the mercy trucks were accompanied by TV cameramen and by Mr J. I. Marchuron, President of the "Pharmacists without Borders" Society (one of the sponsors of this action).

The convoy was met in Lithuania by the Minister of Health, Mr J. Olekas. He announced that the distribution of this consignment, and all future donations, would be supervised by the representatives of Red Cross, Caritas charitable organisation, the Lithuanian Medical Board, Pharmacy Guild and Ministry of Health. The transportation costs of over \$27,000 were met by Australian donors.

Further West European relief shipments were sent late in June and in July. Rev Antanas Gražulis took seven cases of medicines with him when he travelled



● Victim of Gorbachev's blockade: Three-year-old Lithuanian epileptic Saulutė Šaltenytė (pictured) missed out on essential drugs and suitable food, during the 72-day Soviet blockade of Lithuania. Her health is in a critical state now; her mother is also ill. (Mother's address: Elena Šaltenytė, IGNALINA, Vilniaus gatvė 32-1, 234740, Lithuania/Europe).

from the US to Lithuania on July 1. He was detained at Moscow airport and was body-searched twice. After long wrangles with Soviet officialdom, the medicines finally arrived in Lithuania.

Australian Assistance

As usual, the Australian public went all out to help the Lithuanians in their distress. The Lithuanian Relief Fund, advertised in the last *Baltic News*, has already attracted over \$70,000 in donations (PO Box 128, North Melbourne, Vic 3051). Local collections in other Australian cities have been strongly supported, too.

The Melbourne-based Relief Fund despatched 110 kg of expensive medicines by air cargo to Vilnius. Some of these medicines had been donated by Australian companies, including Glaxo, Commonwealth Serum Laboratories and Nicholas Australia. Arrangements were made at the time for an Australian visitor, Mrs Marytė Stačiūnas of Adelaide, to take delivery of the consignment in Vilnius and to supervise its distribution.

Mrs Stačiūnas waited and waited — but the gift parcels did not come. Finally, they were traced to Moscow where they had been stopped by Russian officials. Mrs Stačiūnas and two Lithuanian representatives flew to Moscow where, after many phone calls and arguments, the Australian consignment was handed over. Two suitcases had been slashed open: the cuts were large enough to put one's hand inside.

It has since been confirmed that the entire Australian consignment has safely reached Lithuania, and has been handed over to two hospitals in Kaunas: the Red Cross Hospital, and the children's infectious diseases hospital. All items were welcomed, but especially ventolin — badly needed relief for asthma sufferers.

Freedom Ahead

The three Baltic nations are inevitably edging toward complete independence and self-management.

On March 11 this year, the freely elected Lithuanian government re-established Lithuania's independence from the Soviet Union. This action was based on Lithuania's Act of Independence of February 16, 1918, and the May 15, 1920 Constituent Assembly Resolution on the restoration of a democratic Lithuanian state.

On March 30, the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR declared that Estonia "does not recognize the legality of state authority of the USSR on the territory of Estonia." The announcement added that "the restoration of the Republic of Estonia has begun", but prescribed an indefinite "period of transition" to full independence.

The Supreme Soviet of the Latvian SSR voted to reinstate the independent Republic of Latvia on May 4. The 1922 Constitution of the free Republic of Latvia was to be used as the basis. The vote was 138-0, with one abstention and 57 deputies not participating.

The declaration called for negotiations to be established between the USSR and Latvia, formal relations to be developed on the basis of the 1920 Peace Treaty between Latvia and Soviet Russia, which is still in force.

— ALA News.

Coping with Change in Latvia

by Ojars Kalnins*

Since the new Supreme Council of Latvia declared the restoration of an independent Republic of Latvia on May 4, all the top posts in the new government have been filled, largely by former leaders of the Popular Front of Latvia (LTF) and the National Independence Movement of Latvia (LNNK). However, internal problems and power struggles within the republic are by no means over.

While most of the top level of the bureaucracy has been changed, the bulk of the mid- and low level administrators, clerks, secretaries, etc — are hold-overs from the old regime. No percentages are available, but the bureaucracy can be broken down in the following way:

1. Retirees — who quit the moment the new regime came in.
2. Dead wood — remaining in place out of inertia and fear of unemployment, but not contributing to change. Simply filling chairs and waiting to be forced out.
3. Saboteurs — still loyal to the old regime and using their positions to sabotage the efforts of the new.
4. Careerists — without seeming ideological commitment to the past and seeking to make a transition from old to new regime. Trustworthy for the most part.
5. New blood — drawn from the ranks of the LTF and LNNK. Mostly young, inexperienced and enthusiastic. Extremely loyal to the new regime.

Deliberate Obstacles

Three separate branches of the KGB, plus the Soviet Army, seem to be operating in Latvia. Even the highest levels of the Latvian Government know little about the KGB activities or structure. Nevertheless, local experts conjecture this picture:

1. **Latvian Branch of the USSR KGB** — the weakest of the three. Some Latvian veterans of the old regime are still making trouble. At lower levels, some Latvians considered untrustworthy by Moscow are being fired or overruled by higher authorities. The Latvian head of KGB, Johansens, appears powerless.
2. **KGB Border Guards** — control customs, borders and are independent of local authorities. Clearly take orders from Moscow, although local KGB may have some influence, as in the case of Western Latvians who have been barred from entering the country.
3. **Baltic Military District KGB** — probably created during the emergence of independence movements two years ago, as a protective measure against changes in local KGB. Appears to be loyal to Moscow, although many believe that BMD has the potential to defy Moscow and take independent action.



● Anatolijs Gorbunovs, Chairman of the Latvian Supreme Council (pictured) is extremely popular amongst the populace as a whole, despite his previous affiliations with the old Communist regime. Gorbunovs is now a member of the splinter Independent Communist Party of Latvia, although he indicated in a recent interview that the Communist Party "has no future in Latvia" and that he would most likely leave the party altogether.

4. **Baltic Military District HQ** — many, including Prime Minister Godmanis, view the BMD HQ as the greatest threat to the Latvian government. Has already threatened the Prime Minister that it will seize power if local government tries to take over Communist Party property, namely, the Press Building.

Buying Time

According to Prime Minister Godmanis, Latvian government needs to buy time with Moscow and keep BMD at abeyance until the new government can be stabilised. Godmanis is presently caught between two opposing forces: Moscow/BMD hardliners trying to slow down the realisation of independence, and Latvian radicals (Citizens Congress) seeking to accelerate independence through direct confrontation with opposition.

In the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia, the Popular Front of Latvia (LTF) has a sizable majority. Although the minority "Equal Rights" opposition faction (Interfront, CPSU members, hardline ethnic Russians) seeks to derail or oppose most new legislation, LTF positions usually prevail.

Conclusion

The new Latvian Government faces an uphill fight on several fronts. It has inherited an inept, corrupt and labyrinthine bureaucracy which not only slows progress toward change but often thwarts it. While Moscow's economic and political stranglehold still

● Continued on Page 5



● A scene from this year's Latvian song and dance festival in Riga.

*Ojars Kalnins, Public Relations Director of the American Latvian Association, recently visited Riga, Latvia. During his three-week fact-finding trip, Mr Kalnins met with government leaders and democratic groups. This report is based on his interviews and first-hand observations.

● Continued from Page 4

presents the major obstacle, internal opposition, often independent of Moscow, appears to be the major daily challenge at the moment.

Most problems within the country are attributed to Moscow. Nevertheless, as the local government increasingly 'appears' to be in control, it also is coming under increasing criticism from the populace for its inability to deal with problems.

Despite all this, spirits remain high. Given all the problems they face, no-one I spoke to wanted to return to the past. Many are realising that for the first time in their lives, they have the opportunity and responsibility to make things better. Everyone complains, but with a smile.

Hospitals in Latvia

by Alvis Kucers*

Latvian doctors do not lack knowledge; but they are working under most appalling conditions. Many vital drugs are not available at times. Laboratory equipment is scarce and obsolete.

These are my observations, after visiting Riga, occupied Latvia's capital, in July 1989 and again this year.



● Public hospital in Ergli (occupied Latvia): It is worse inside.

On my first trip, I learned two things of great concern. In Riga, drinking water was contaminated by sewage, and this water transmitted diseases such as Hepatitis A and Salmonellosis. Secondly, it was common practice in Riga Hospitals to re-use plastic syringes (only changing the needle, but not the syringe), from patient to patient. All Latvian doctors were aware that such practice can transmit Hepatitis B and AIDS among hospital patients.

I returned to Riga again in July 1990, for two weeks. This time I visited two large general hospitals, Riga's Infectious



● In spite of continuing foreign occupation, the Latvians (pictured) and their Baltic neighbours are maintaining their distinct national traditions.

Diseases Hospital and a Tuberculosis hospital, and also a small hospital in a country town (Smiltene).

Most hospitals no longer used the same plastic syringes on a number of patients. For instance, in the Infectious Diseases Hospital they now had enough plastic syringes so that they could be used once only. By contrast, in the Tuberculosis Hospital they used the old style glass syringes, sterilising them in autoclaves after a single use on a patient.

Most patient rooms in the hospitals were crowded. What for us might have been a double room, housed five to six patients in narrow beds with relatively little space between them.

In the system which still prevails, a patient has to report to a polyclinic after discharge from hospital. The patient's progress cannot be completely checked there, because of the lack of investigative facilities. By contrast to our hospitals, there are no out-patient departments attached to large hospitals in Riga.

Latvian laboratories are definitely in need of better equipment. Many tests are done by hand, and autoanalysers are scarce. Some laboratory equipment is lying idle, often because it was purchased some years ago in Eastern Block countries and spare parts are now unobtainable.

Latvians are preparing for a possible AIDS epidemic. So far, there are only some ten AIDS-antibody positive patients in Riga amongst male homosexuals. There are no actual AIDS cases as yet. Compared to us, they are taking a much more aggressive infection control, and contact tracing line to control the epidemic, leaving civil rights issues aside. Each AIDS positive case has to declare the names and addresses of all of his sexual contacts and there is provision for eight years' jail if this direction is not complied with. Each of the contacts is then visited by health authorities and tested.

★ Dr Alvis Kucers is a medical practitioner in Melbourne, Australia.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Disgusting

It is disgusting that Western governments have been so weak in not strongly supporting Lithuania in its struggle against foreign occupation.

However, a positive attitude must encourage victory for the occupied Baltic States.

Balaclava, Vic (Miss) E. G. GORMAN

Unpaid Bills

After returning to the Baltic States in 1944, the Soviet forces became an occupation army that never paid rent legally owed for the real estate they occupied. Nor have the Soviets paid proper market prices for the subsidized food and free medical care their troops have received in the Baltic over the past 46 years.

Could someone please add up all these unpaid bills and publish the figure? It will be staggering, I am sure. Sydney, NSW John W. STEVENS

Subsidising Russia

Canadian paper *Speak Up* recently offered two reasons for the Western generosity to the Soviets. Firstly, they wrote, the Russians are like the Pentagon. They don't trade, they procure, and in huge amounts.

The second reason is that Western politicians mistakenly believe that credit generosity is a way of appeasing Soviet warlords. Will we ever learn?

Toronto (Canada) Keith M. REID

President's Words

US President Franklin D. Roosevelt told the Lithuanian American Council on October 15, 1940 that "Lithuania did not lose her independence — Lithuania's independence was only temporarily put aside. Time will come and Lithuania will be free again."

I wonder what Mr Roosevelt would say to us today?

Doncaster East, Vic N. ŠALKŪNAS

Baltic Gold



● Hon Robin Maxwell-Hyslop, MP.

As it happened, it was I who persuaded Edward Heath 21 years ago to divide the House against Harold Wilson's outrageous action in giving away to Russia the state gold deposits of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia (*Baltic News*, June 1990). I told Heath that I would do it on my own, if he did not do so as Leader of the Opposition.

I entered the House of Commons at the age of 29 in 1960. Alas, I have to retire from it at the end of this Parliament, five years earlier than I had intended, owing to the onset of asthma.

It is to me as great a happiness as it will be a satisfaction to see Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia recover their independence in the foreseeable future. Whereas so many in the West had assumed, faithlessly, that their forcible incorporation into Soviet Russia was historically irreversible.

Robin MAXWELL-HYSLOP, MP.
House of Commons, London (UK).



Many Thanks

This issue of *Baltic News* has been partly financed by the subscriptions and donations listed below. We thank our readers for their generous support:

NSW and ACT: Sydney Latvian Society Ltd, V. E. and A. M. Stasionis, \$50 each; M. Vaskeviciene, \$40; Rev Fr N. J. Hughes, Mrs C. Jurskis, Dr R. Kavaliauskaite, S. Piterans, J. B. Treimanis, \$20 each; D. A. Mardiste, \$15; S. Abromavicius, Mrs S. Edmonds, S. Norvilaitis, \$10 each; V. Miezius, \$2. **Sub-total \$237.**

Vic: Miss A. Czelnia, I. G. Leathbridge, \$50 each; J. Sala, Miss E. Gorman, \$20 each; Mr and Mrs V. Rekesius, \$10. **Sub-total \$150.**

Various: E. Hanhiniemi, L. Murphy (Qld), \$100 each; Canberra Lithuanian Pensioners' Group Paguoda, \$72; A. M. Jirgens, V. Lipping (NSW), \$50 each; N. J. Murray (SA), R. Samsonas (Vic), \$40 each; A. K. Serelis (Vic), \$33; Rev O. Dyson (Vic), M. Gavars (NZ), G. Tomkins (Qld), \$30 each; P. Atkinson (SA), A. Jaosoo (NSW), M. Kanas (SA), E. Petrukenas (WA), \$25 each; R. Balodis (NSW), L. B. Berzins (UK), J. Drengers (NSW), P. L. & P. J. Kazla (SA), P. Krauja

(Vic), E. Kulla (Tas), V. Pledzinskas (SA), E. & S. Purins (NSW), R. Purnalis (Vic), B. A. Sabeckis (SA), J. Zars (Vic), \$20 each; G. & B. Kymantas (Vic), \$15; L. Andrew (NSW), E. Fodor (NSW), D. Hogan (NZ), D. Kencis, B. M. Kenny (NSW), R. & M. Kuuse (SA), L. Latham (Tas), E. P. Leonard (NSW), Rev R. Poulsen (Vic), \$10; J. Barta (Tas), B. Dawe (Qld), E. & W. Lewinski (Tas), \$5 each.

Sub-total \$1,015.

TOTAL DONATIONS \$1,402.00.

Unfortunately, the above gifts can no longer keep pace with our rising costs. This is the fifth *Baltic News* in a row where the income has fallen short of expenses. And Australia Post has just added another blow by increasing Australian postage charges on standard-sized, pre-sorted registered publications to 32 cents per copy. Sea-mail postage to overseas countries has jumped to 95 cents a copy.

In spite of these hitches, we would like to produce one more issue in December, thus ending 16 years of continuous publication. Your final farewell donation will help a lot, and will be greatly appreciated.

To: BALTIC NEWS,
PO Box 272, SANDY BAY, Tasmania 7005 (Australia)

Please accept my donation of \$..... Cash/Cheque/
MO towards the final (December 1990) issue of *Baltic News*.

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English-Language Baltic Periodicals

High quality English-language newspapers have started appearing in the three Baltic States this year. They are available in Australia and in other Western countries, by subscription.

The Tallinn-based *Estonian Independent* is edited by Tarmu Tammerk and provides a weekly coverage of events in Estonia and in the wider Baltic area. One year's subscription (52 issues) is US\$35 or DM 59, payable to Stadsparkasse account No 111126710, Bank No BLZ 70150000 München, Federal Republic of Germany. New subscribers should also send their name and full postal address to: The Estonian Independent, PO Box 100, Pärnu Road 67a, Tallinn 200090, Estonia. Telephone (0142) 68 30 74 or 68 12 69. Telex 173193 ETA. Fax (0142) 68 22 01.

In Latvia, English-language news is carried by the monthly *Awakening*. It is the English version of the Latvian weekly *Atmoda*, edited by Elita Veidemane. The current annual subscription is US\$18. To subscribe, write, call or fax: *Atmoda*, Vecpilsetas 13/15, Riga, 226250, Latvia; Tel 213978 or 210452; Fax (013) 2-213978.

The *Lithuanian Review* managed to come out every month, during the recent Soviet blockade. The ultimate plan is to increase its frequency to fortnightly editions. Carla Gruodis is the *Lithuanian Review's* editor-in-chief.

One year's subscription to Australia is \$40 Aust. Cheques made out to *The Lithuanian Review* may be posted to the Australian representative, Mr A. Kramilius, 83 Queen Street, Canley Vale NSW, 2166.

The subscription from other countries is US\$29. Bank cheques, personal cheques or money orders from those countries should be sent to: The Lithuanian Review, c/o Gimtasis Kraštas, Tilto skg. 8-2, Vilnius 2326000, MTP-8, Lithuania. Alternatively, remittances can be forwarded to the newspaper's account with the Dresdner Bank account No 5080459, Ludwigsburg, BLZ 60480008, Federal Republic of Germany.

Baltic Media Association

Journalists from the English media in the Baltic States recently formed a Baltic English Media Association (BEMA). The Association's aim is to promote the spread of information about Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the West as well as exchange information among the English-language newspapers in the Baltic region.

More information about the BEMA is available from:

- **Estonia:** Tarmu Tammerk, c/o The Estonian Independent (see address above);
- **Latvia:** Inese Birzniece, c/- *Awakening* (address above);
- **Lithuania:** Mrs Ilona Rukienė, Kanarskio 49, Vilnius Radio, Lithuania. Telephone (0122) 66 05 26 (work), 63 37 77 (home).

Western Publications

A range of Baltic periodicals is published in the English-speaking countries, many of them in the United States of America. Limited space permits us to mention only a few.

Two long-established learned journals are *Lituanus* (6621 S. Troy St, Chicago, IL 60629-2913 USA; subscription US\$10 per year); and *Journal of Baltic Studies*, (366 — 86th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11209, USA; annual subscription US\$20). Both are published quarterly.

Baltic Forum is a comprehensive journal of news and opinion, seeking to disseminate information about the three Baltic peoples and to raise an awareness of issues of common interest. The *Forum* is published twice a year in English. It subsequently appears in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian translations. Dr Romuald J. Misiunas (USA) is the chairman of the editorial board. The price of an annual subscription is 20 Swiss francs, payable to account No 251/81548001J, Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft, Zürich-



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The Observer, published monthly at 4545 W 63rd St, Chicago, IL 60629, USA, concentrates on news from Lithuania. Subscription rates are: \$10 in the US, \$15 elsewhere.

Our namesake, *Baltic News*, is published every three months by the Baltic Council of Northern California (PO Box 1094, Berkeley, CA 94701, USA). This newsletter is free, but a donation of US\$8 per year is requested to help cover expenses. (The identical names are a pure coincidence: there is no connection between the Australian and Californian *Baltic News*).

In AUSTRALIA, the quarterly *Baltic Bulletin* has been published by the Baltic Council of Australia since 1985. It is edited by Mr L. Cox, and has a circulation of 900. Annual subscription is \$8, payable to PO Box 457, Strathfield, NSW 2135.

A four-page *Baltic Review* appears every month as a supplement to the Sydney Latvian Community's bulletin *Ritums*. The *Review* is edited by the NSW Vice-president of the Latvian Federation of Australia and New Zealand Inc, Mr Vidvuds Koškins. It is published by the Sydney Latvian Society, PO Box 457, Strathfield, NSW 2135.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

This Christmas, give presents that are different and educational — give books about the Baltic people:

- **LEAVE YOUR TEARS IN MOSCOW**, by Barbara Armonas, 222 pp. Friends of the Prisoners' Book of the Year. Limited stocks — \$6, plus \$3 postage and packing.
- **AN INFANT BORN IN BONDAGE**: 44 Lithuanian prisoners' meditations on liberty. Bi-lingual edition (English and Lithuanian), 99 pp, large format — \$7, plus \$3 postage and packing.
- **CATHOLICS IN SOVIET-OCCUPIED LITHUANIA** (Faith under persecution), 120 pp — \$3, plus \$2 postage and packing.
- **THE BALTIC DILEMMA**, Vols 1 and 2, by Edgars Dunsdorfs, \$12 plus \$5 postage (Vol 2 may be bought separately, at \$8 plus \$3 postage and packing).

If unavailable at your local booksellers, all these books may be ordered from: **BALTIC NEWS**, PO Box 272, Sandy Bay, Tas 7005 — Australia.

Send for our complete book list.

Lithuania's Unwanted "Guardians"

by Rimantas Šimkus*

They did not knock. They simply kicked the editor's door in with their hobnailed army boots. Then, they all burst in: a sample of Gorbachev's crack troops, sent to re-inforce the already massive Soviet occupation armies in Lithuania.

It was the lunch-break in the editorial office of our paper *Jaunimo gretos* (Youth ranks). There were only three of us on the premises: sub-editor Danutė Šepetytė, secretary Reda Šimkaitytė and I.

Staring wildly, the Soviet lieutenant-in-charge led his men and kept shouting in Russian, "Where is *Sajūdis* (Lithuania's popular independence movement)? We are here to capture them! And I will teach you a lesson in democracy". The soldiers ran amuck, tearing off locks, kicking our furniture and searching every nook and cranny. It was like a scene from a film about the Nazi era. Finally, they all left through an open window.

Looting

They came back on the following morning — this time, disguised in police uniforms. Stealing was first on their agenda. Being immune from prosecution, the Red Army personnel are notorious for looting.

They took away a dictaphone and a cassette from section leader Audronė Guigaitė. Liudas Vitkauskas lost his radio receiver and a couple of audio cassettes, plus a packet of cigarettes the second time round. An exposure meter was stolen from cameraman Kestas Vanagas' darkroom. Journalist Faustina Bružaitė lost



● Soviet occupation troops in the Baltic States sometimes pose as local militiamen (above). On such occasions they dress in genuine militia uniforms to make the delusion complete.

Photo: Paulius Lileikis.

ten audio cassettes during the first onslaught, and a ballpoint pen and hand creme later on.

The Soviet "visitors" robbed us of everything they could lay their hands on. But some of these hand-picked servicemen had rather strange inclinations. For example, they took perfume, lipstick and an amber ring from typist Audronė Aidukaitė.

Women Harassed

The Soviet soldiers are told by their superiors that their "sacred duty" is to protect Lithuania's population against *Sajūdis*. In actual fact, it is the occupation troops against whom the local people need protection.

Two Lithuanian women, Reda Šimkaitytė and Vilma Karvelienė, were accosted by a Soviet soldier in broad daylight while walking to their employers' cafeteria.

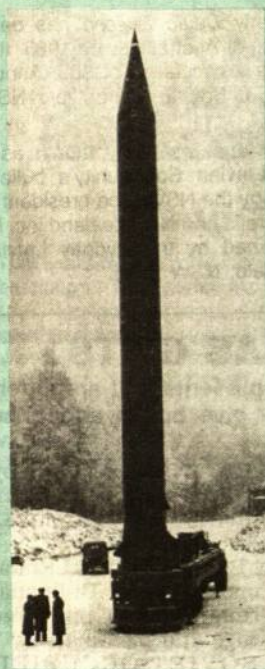
"He followed us all the way from the editorial office," Reda told me. "As we climbed up the steps, I felt someone grab my breasts. I looked around — **yes, it was he!** I went animal, I shouted and ranted until he disappeared."

"Vilma and I had our cup of coffee," Reda continued. "Then we saw him again, waiting downstairs. Fortunately, old buildings in our ancient city mostly have alternative exits. A waitress let us out, but the foreign soldier spotted us and gave chase. Frightened, we ran like the wind and made it to my flat. No sooner did we lock all doors than he arrived and started lashing my front door with his truncheon, but couldn't get in."

"These strangers think they are our masters," Reda added. "They think they own us, but they don't like being called by their true name: foreign occupiers."

* Rimantas Šimkus is a Lithuanian journalist working in Vilnius.

Arms Control? - You Must Be Joking



Left: A medium-range Soviet ballistic missile, ready to fire. This SS-4 type lethal weapon was photographed near Tauragė (Lithuania) in 1988.

As part of a US-Soviet arms reduction agreement, five SS-4s and two training missiles were later removed from the Taurage region.

Unbeknown to the West, however, the Soviets established new top-secret high-technology military bases in the Baltic States around the same time.

One of these bases was built in the village of Bajorai (Lithuania). It is believed to house the very latest rockets and missiles.

-Ack.: V. Čeplevičiūtė, Vyg. Brajas/Respublika, K. Driskius, O. Aleksa/Suityrys.

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