

# The Latvians are Coming...



Photo by V. Gravitis



>> MARGERS ŠĒFERS <<

Osvalds Akmentins

THE LATVIANS ARE COMING . . . . .

(Dedicated to the Latvian Song-Festival in Boston)



By Niklavs Strunke

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Publication by author  
Dorchester, 1978



WELCOME TO THE LATVIAN SONG FESTIVAL

The Latvian community is not big in Boston, they are mostly scattered to the South and West of Boston (with 6,000 in all of Massachusetts). But, it will be quite different on the Fourth of July weekend this summer....."The Latvians are coming, The Latvians are coming." From coast to coast as well as from Canada, South America, Australia, West Germany, England, and the Scandinavian countries, they will be coming to Boston. For many people the Song Festival and folk dance festival will be a new experience.

The Song Festival is a tremendous magnet for the Latvians who today are living outside the Soviet empire. There are many questions: What is Latvian music? What are the Latvian songs and folk dances? In which way are they different from the Slavic, German and Scandinavian cultures? All these questions will be answered this summer.

Indeed it seems that nature itself has created conditions in Latvia which facilitate and encourage music and inspire musicians. Howling blizzards in the winter, the autumn winds sweeping through the mighty pine forests, gentle summer breezes making the aspen leaves whisper, numerous rushing brooks, the abundance of nightingales, finches, thrushes and other refined song birds, as well as cuckoos, whippoor-wills, peewits, etc. -- all these are bound to inspire and to produce musicians. Then again, there are everywhere in Latvia small willows along the creeks out of which primitive flutes are easily formed by boys. One end of the willow stick is

formed to the shape of a police whistle, then the bark is gently hammered with the handle of the pocket knife and the wooden core easily removed. Replacing part of the core at each end a flute is made in about five to ten minutes.

About 1 million Latvian folk songs have been recorded, although the number of Latvians are under 2,000,000. It is also not surprising that several European writers have named Latvians "The Italians of the North."

Today the Latvians are under foreign power. This Baltic nation, as well as their neighbors, lost freedom and independence during World War II. They are slaves in the Soviet empire. Today's songs are more sorrowful because people are oppressed. The poems are composed in music and dedicated to human rights, family, country, and the beautiful Baltic Sea.

It is not a pleasant task to mention painful things, but we could comment by W. B. Yeats: "Too long a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart."

These people are still singing in the homeland, in slavery, in exile and in freedom. These songs, like religion, unite a small scattered nation and give new hope for the future.

Observers should expect about 15,000 Latvians arriving in Boston (mostly in the Prudential area) and many will be here for the first time. Thirty years ago some of them arrived in America as delayed pilgrims with small fishing boats crossing the stormy Atlantic, others after World War II, spending four-five years in DP camps in West Germany. At that time they were poor, penniless refugees. But today, Latvians are no longer beggars, but independent people. After thirty years of struggling in factories

working hard in the various fields of technology, science, art, etc., they gained some level of prosperity.

Everybody knows that Boston owes its role as the nation's leader in many fields to the contributions made by the immigrants of all the continents. This summer Latvians decided to come to see the famous Hub. They are celebrating for two important anniversaries: 60 years have passed since the Latvian people established their own Republic on the Baltic Sea and 90 years since the first Latvians settled in Boston.

About our homeland, Latvia, we can say only sad things. Latvia is brutally subjugated by Soviet Russia who is denying all human freedom to these people who are still struggling to be free.

The culmination of the Song Festival manifests itself in the pageant of wonderful costumes worn by women, exhibitions, songs and dances which will take place at the Boston Garden, Symphony Hall, Hynes Auditorium and other cultural facilities from June 29 to July 4th, with as a finale celebrating America's 202 birthday.

Dressed in their wonderful native costumes which is their proud national heritage for centuries, they dazzle big auditoriums and thousands of spectators. Such a pageant has never before been seen in this city. More than a thousand young people will be dancing and young and old alike will be singing at the Boston Garden. That will be one enjoyable event. They will demonstrate creative spirit and the art of keeping the ideals and determination of having a free homeland, despite the cruel realities of the hardships their peers in Russia are enduring. However, they will show to other people their skills and achievements in the arts, music, fine craft art, and other fields.

The first Latvian ecumenial church service in America will be held at Trinity Church in Copley Square. These days that are all marked by the presence of Latvians in Boston will have its affect both culturally and spiritually.

Osvalds Akmentins  
Board Member of the Latvian Song  
Festival in Boston,  
P. O. Box 48  
Dorchester, MA 02122  
Telephone: (617) 825-6346  
or (617) 266-1919

#### THE MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

by  
Janis Rainis

*As years go bye, deep solitude will claim thee  
And one by one they friends will take their leave,  
A reciprocal soul perchance will greet thee  
And flower rare on barren cliff or eave.*

*Then vanish shall they, too. — On highest summit  
Thy soul in silent agony shall dwell:  
No sleep, no peace for thy thouself to commit.*

*Although thy heart in icy shroud will rest,  
Eternal longing will not leave thy breast.*

*Translated from Latvian by B.M. Caffrey*



# LATVIAN MUSIC

## SONGPOWER OF A SMALL NATION

### Notes on Latvian Music

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The era of romanticism of the last century has drawn the attention of Europe upon the art of many nations little known until then. In the midst of the older nations representing European culture have arisen new members from Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Scandinavia, and Hungary, each with their own special contribution in the fields of poetry, music, and art.

The fate of the Latvian people is similar to that of these other people, except that the Latvians were called on rather late to compete with other European nations for a place of honor in the realm of art among the greatest of European nations.

The distinctive literature and music of the Latvians was preceded for centuries by a very rich culture consisting of ancient poetry and folk music.

The gathering, researching and organizing of materials of the popular art have until the present time occupied the Latvian historians of literature, the musicians, and the scholars of folklore. They have already arranged and published in huge volumes close to one million Latvian folksongs ("The Dainas") and they have gathered together to write more than 10,000 Latvian folk-melodies as well.

The melodies of the Latvian folk-songs are very original, entirely different from the music of Latvia's neighbors, Germany and Russia. They are generally short melodies which are formed by a simple musical sentence (8 measures), but they possess a great freshness and emotional force. They are sometimes joyous, sometimes sad, and sometimes full of the melancholy of the North.

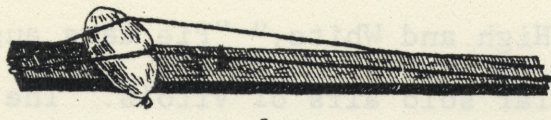
LATVIAN MUSIC

Especially characteristic and original are the melodies composed in asymmetric or mixed measures. Only the most recent Latvian folk-songs are composed in major and minor keys, but the most original and oldest melodies are based on the ancient Greek principle of tonality; that is to say, on the tonalities of church music.

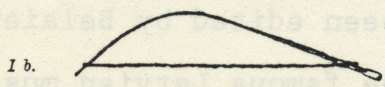
The influence of the folk-song has given birth to a great national movement in Latvian music. The "father" of this movement was Jurjanu Andrejs (1856-1922) who published five important textbooks of scientific material based on the Latvian folk-music and has theoretically formulated the fundamental principles of Latvian music (1896). Jurjanu Andrejs has harmonized the popular songs "Falcon, Where Dost Thou Fly?" ("Kur tu skriesi, vanadziņi?"), "Sleep, my Beloved" ("Čučī, mana līgaviņa") and "Blow Wind Blow" ("Pūt, vējiņi!")

The principal figure in the group of national musicians is Emilis Melngailis (he died in Latvia). He possessed one of the most original styles of the Latvian composers, including a powerful personality. He was an indefatigable collector of melodies who worked principally in the realm of Latvian musical folklore. He has published a large number of Latvian folk-songs arranged principally for choirs.

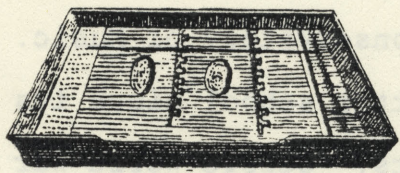
A most dominant and universal personality who is in the center of Latvian musical life is Professor Jāzeps Vītols (1863-1948). His works exemplify a whole era in the development of Latvian music. As a musical creator, Vītols has given to Latvian music innumerable musical masterpieces of nearly all types with the exception of opera. Several of his vocal and instrumental works have been classics; for example, the patriotic chorus "The Castle of Light" ("Gaismas Pils")



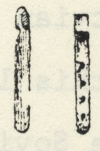
I a.



I b.



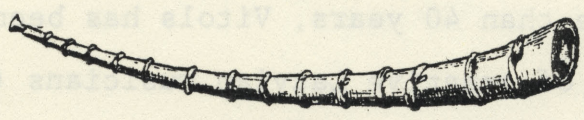
II.



V a. V b.



III a.



IV.



III b.



VI.

Duhdas (I a.) un duhdu lozinfch jeb fmuikulis (I b.). Zimbols (II.). Lau-  
 res: Labfim waj lubtu aptibta tofa taure (III a.); allfchma mijas taure  
 (III b.); lihla fashipota tofa taure (IV.). Stabulite jeb fwilpis (V a un  
 V b.). Speeganas (VI.).

These are old Latvian instruments

which symbolizes the national awakening of the Latvian people -- the rising of "The Castle of Light." The chorus "Līgai" is one of the most powerful in the musical literature of Latvian chorale. "By Thy Window, High and White," "Pie tava augstā, baltā loga" is one of the most popular solo airs of Vitols. The major part of the works of Vitols have been edited by Belaiev of Leipzig. Vitols is also the founder of the famous Latvian music schools: The National Opera and the Latvian Conservatory of Music. He was the organizer and director of this latter school since its foundation until Latvia's occupation by the Soviets. Before World War I, Vitols was for many years affiliated at the Conservatory of Music at St. Petersburg as a professor of composition. In the course of his scholarly activities of more than 40 years, Vitols has been the master of nearly two generations of creative Latvian musicians (Among his pupils there were also many well-known foreigners.)

In 1944 Prof. J. Vitols, together with Latvian patriots, escaped from Russian armies occupying Latvia and landed as a refugee in war torn Germany. He had no hope that he would be able to continue his work in his beloved field of music. He died in Lubeck, Germany in 1948, where a monument in his memory stands now which was erected by his fellow refugees.

A special place should be set aside for Alfred Kalnins (born in 1879). He was the most individual of Latvian composers in the national sense and the most celebrated Latvian organ virtuoso. After Latvia's independence he lived several years in New York City. He excels in vocal music, especially in solo music (more than 200 songs), which are outstanding for their rich melody and very elaborate piano accompaniment. Among his greatest compositions one must mention above all the two Latvian operas "Baņuta" and "The

Awakening of the Fatherland," which have had a great success at the National Opera.

The Latvian people are very fond of the songs by the composer Darzins, who was born in 1875 and died a tragic death in 1910. At the age of 34 he was run over by a train and was fatally wounded. Examples of his songs are as follows: "Close Thy Eyes and Smiles" ("Aizver aciņas un smaidi"), "Spanish Romance" ("Spāniešu romance"), "To Youth" ("Jaunībai"). He was also well-known for chorales like "Glitter Like the Star" ("Mirdzi kā zvaigzne"), and "In the Far-Away Dreamland," ("Sapņu talumā").

More than in the other Latvian composers, one finds in his music the love motif. That is why the music of Emil Darzins is especially cherished by youth. He has also written symphonic works which have already been rendered. But, in a moment of depression, the author destroyed scores and orchestral arrangements. He has left us only with the score of the "Valse Melancolique" ("Melancholiskais valsis"), an extremely popular work which has appeared in different arrangements. The manuscript of his opera "The Rosy Day" (Rožainās dienas") had been lost during the years of World War I when a large part of the Latvian people were forced to flee from the Fatherland. Unfortunately, the lost manuscript was never recovered.

#### Mediņš Musical Family

One of the most outstanding musical families to come out of the 1800s was the Mediņš family, consisting of three brothers, Jānis, Jāzeps and Jēkabs. Jānis, born in 1890, was one of the most productive musicians of his time. Their father was a musician and this perhaps had a great influence upon the lives of the three brothers. Jānis wrote his first compositions at the age of eleven.

The Medins name will surely be remembered in the annals of Latvian music. Jāzeps and Jēkabs were also composers and well-known music teachers. However, Jānis took the leading part in this "musical triumvirate."

Jānis had an enviable fertility of imagination, coupled with a truly Mozart-like facility of composing, which enabled him to work rapidly and easily. His works had included: three suites, the first one of a classical division (Prelude, Air, Gavotte); the second touched on a more subjective topic: Enthusiasm, Sorrow, Joy; the third extolled the four regions of Latvia: Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Zemgale, and Latgale. He also composed a Symphony and quite a few symphonic poems, concertos for piano, violin and violincello, chamber music; four operas and two ballets. The ballet "Love Triumphant," written for the Riga National Opera Ballet, was the first attempt towards an original Latvian choreographic work. In addition, he has wrote instrumental miniatures and more than 300 songs. His last compositions were the Latvian Dances and Latvian Rhapsody. Also, a new trio for violin, violincello and piano, and a "Sonatine for Flute."

Above all, Medins captivates one by his thorough knowledge of orchestral technique. His instrumentation is sonorous, brilliant and of a peculiar color, due to his specific harmony. He usually develops his melody in an extensive breath and cantilene. His elaborate compositions which are both dazzling and brilliant in workmanship also have considerable intrinsic value.

Jānis Medins was the First Conductor at the Riga Broadcasting Station and a Professor of Instrumentation at the Latvian State Conservatory. In 1944 when the Communists invaded Latvia, Medins left Latvia, lived in Germany for about five years, and later returned to Stockholm where he died.

MUSIC CRITIC ROBERT LINDSTROM CITED

MEDINS "Dainas"

from The Oregonian, Friday, December 16, 1977

"Canadian pianist Arthur Ozolins, also of Latvian descent, has recorded Medins' "Dainas," 24 preludes for piano (Kaibala 60F02), two records), and, if these marvelous pieces are representative of the rest of Medins' output, this highly lyrical composer may be due for a revival.

"These facile piano miniatures -- the longest piece is only slightly over three minutes -- reveal a composer of extraordinary melodic gifts whose colorful keyboard writing evokes a feeling of Eastern European Folk music.

"The idiom is a cross between Sibelius and Rachmanioff but transcends imitation to assume a dramatically lyrical musical individuality.

Ozolins brings his considerable piano technique to bear on these delightful compositions and generates performances brimming with musical polish and obvious affection."

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JANIS MEDINS MEETS JEAN SIBELIUS  
(Taken from a program note...)

"Jean Sibelius, the Finnish composer, who is called the 'Northern Giant,' met Janis Medins twenty-five years ago in Helsinki. Recalling the memories of his time Medins says 'In 1932, I made a concert tour to Finland conducting the works of Latvian composers Wihtols, Abele and myself (The Third Suite). After a concert, I was called to the telephone.

'This is Sibelius,' said a voice over the receiver. 'How is it possible,' he asked, 'practically no Latvian music existed thirty years ago, but now suddenly -- European music!'

'Sibelius had listened to the concert over the radio at his home. He invited me to lunch the following day and we spent the whole afternoon chatting together.'"

Jānis Kalnins (now living in Canada) and Volfgangs Darzins (who died in the United States) are the most brilliant representatives of the younger generation of Latvian musicians who use a modern musical technique in their orchestral and choral compositions. At the same time, however, they are very strongly influenced by the Latvian folk-song. Jānis Kalnins received acclaim for his opera "The Miraculous Bird of Lolita" while his contemporary Jānis Norvilis (1906) received recognition for the patriotic-romantic motives in his song already in the homeland.

[Kalnins' Fourth Symphony will be performed and conducted by the composer at Symphony Hall, Boston, during the Latvian Song Festival this year.]

Other names in Latvian music are: Bruno Skulte, Ādolfs Abele, Jānis Cirulis (1897-1962), Haralds Berino, Longins Apkalns, Talivaldis Kēnins, Alberts Jerums (1919-1978), Imants Sakss and Valdemars Ozoliņš. These names have all become a part of the history of Latvian music and these composers are all living or have lived in many foreign lands.

The Latvian people are especially fond of choral music. Since the last century, the National Song Festivals have become traditional. These great choral festivals joined together all the singers of Latvia. In the latter festivals which have taken place after the war, more than 30,000 singers have participated. These song festivals were extraordinary events.

Here is what one authority has to say about Latvian songs:

"...When you study it, you see these are the same as the poetic meters of classic Greek verse. To find things like this alive among the people is something absolutely fantastic. Or, take the Summer Solstice songs of the Latvians. This, too, is a curiously complex polyphony. Take any one part and you will hear a common central-European Slavic-type folk-song. But, when you



add the other voices and suddenly you ask, "what happened?" For the same reason, the whole song makes sense. The explanation is that each part perhaps represents what one group sings as different groups come together to go to church. It's like what Charles Ives got the credit for when he wrote down the sound of two different marching bands coming at each other from opposite directions."

The Boston Sunday Globe  
January 9, 1977

Professor Stephen Elderly, Chairman of the Music Department at MIT, put together the following background information on Latvia as a result of the many Bicentennial ethnic heritage programs held in Boston in 1976:

"After World War II, 120,000 Latvians came to the West and among them many of their leading musicals, including singers, ballet dancers and writers. They chose to live and to work in freedom despite the greatest of difficulties in building their existence and recognition. Now, the Latvians in exile can proudly present a new generation of composers who express the fate of their nation and earn the acclaim of their countrymen scattered all over the world.

"How Latvians value their traditional song and folk dance will be seen at the colorful Song Festival in Boston at the 4th of July weekend. From all continents Latvians will flock together singing and worshipping in one native tongue which holds people together in the hardest and longest exile in Latvian history and is a source of great strength and hope for the future. In one of the popular songs it is said that a Latvian is born singing, lived all his life singing, and departed from it singing.

"Latvians, as a people, suffered terribly during World War II. Heavy sacrifices were demanded by the Russian, German, and-again-Russian long-lived occupations. Countless men -- young and old -- were illegally drafted into the armed forces on one side or the other; many of them died in battle or were deported to death camps.

"Our people wished to remain neutral, to avoid any kind of conflict, but the Soviet Union, disrespectful of our small nation's rights, brutally destroyed them. Proportionately, the strength of Latvia compared to the Soviet Union was 1:100,000 -- all twenty years of independence were spent as if at the foot of a rumbling volcano. The people suffered terribly and continue to do so even today.

"Deportations, prisons, and forced labor camps are not considered crimes against humanity, according to Soviet philosophy. Never have these criminal organizers or administrators been called before a court of law, rather - and paradoxically - they are praised and considered great patriots.

"Latvians, who came to America after World War II seeking freedom, are rarely found in 'welfare' ranks. They work hard, and, if at all possible, try to save something for a rainy day. They engage in a variety of professions and occupations, ranging from cancer research, space technology, parapsychology, and architecture to farming and even deep-sea fishing.

"Since Latvian refugees were forced to flee their homeland because of a violent and illegal occupation, their only strength is spiritual and ethical. Latvia's occupational regime hinders, in every way possible, the Helsinki Agreement: visits to the homeland are restricted, families are kept apart, and

M335A2AM

the major one - the Soviet government obstructs the free flowing of information to and from the Soviet Union and her sister soviet republics.

"We hope, in the name of human rights, that America will do whatever possible (and she can accomplish much) to help lighten the people's burden in our still occupied homeland."

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The last Song Festival in free Latvia was held in June 1940 in the city of Daugavpils, near the border of Poland. 11,000 singers participated in the tense atmosphere. Poland lost her independence and later, on June 17, 1940, Soviet troops occupied Latvia. Songs of Freedom were replaced with prisons and deportations to Siberian slave labor camps. Dark clouds and many long night came over this small country on the Baltic Sea who were never able to know real freedom again.

We are sure that the Latvian Song-Festival in Boston will help to keep alive the burning desire for freedom in the hearts of the people of Latvia.



# \* MAZAJEEM \* LASITAJEEM \*



Trīs gani ganos, septiņi sviēni.  
Veens gans nomira, citi gani raudāja.  
Zīle nesa vāsti līdram, mātei.

Kaza kāpa debesis, Deevam sūdzet.  
Cūka raka kapu augstā kalnā.  
Dzenis kala krustu sausa priedē.

Žagata zvanija līkā bērzā.  
Visi mazi putniņi pātarus skaitīja:  
Vardiņi gudzežu smalkajos zariņos.

## An Old Folklore Illustration

### SHEPHERD'S FUNERAL (A Latvian Folk-Song)

Three shepherds were tending seven pigs

One shepherd died, the others cried.

The titmouth brought the message to father, mother

The goat climbed to heaven with a claim to God.

The pig dug a grave on a high hill.

The woodpecker hammered a cross from a dry pine tree.

The magpie rang a bell from a crooked birch tree

All the little birds said their prayers

All the words echoed in the fine little branches.

translated by Marija Lamberg

## SONG FESTIVALS IN HOMELAND

The Latvian nation is fond of singing. So it was in the grey past, and so it is today. All down the ages this people of singers has created tens of thousands of folk-songs, and their melodious treasure-trove is still constantly growing. A prominent place therein belongs to the typical folk-songs or „dainas“, as they are called in Latvian. The „dainas“ are folk-songs in verse and rhythm. Although the creation of individual authors, they reflect the life of the nation in its entirety, and handed down and spreading from generation to generation they have assumed a final aspect which most fully and comprehensively corresponds to and portrays the psyche, the soul of the people.

The Latvian „dainas“ are multiform and many-hued, and their subject is the life of the people in all its details of content and expression. They embrace the animate and the inanimate world alike, and man's spiritual and physical life from the cradle to the grave: from the mother's arms, through the years of childhood and adolescence, vigorous manhood and womanhood, to the eventide of life and the grave, leaving unobserved nothing that in the march of time fills human existence. — work, rest, joy, sorrow, all the small and great events that go to make up the life of the individual as well as the life of the nation.

The „dainas“ are further an inexhaustible source for exploring the past, the living conditions, the customs, the language and the mentality of the Latvians. Of great importance are the „dainas“ also as a uniting factor in social life, their plastic language and tuneful music having won them popularity in all parts of the country.

In order to preserve the great spiritual inheritance of the Latvian nation, some ardent patriots have devoted a lifetime to collecting and studying these „dainas“, and as a result of their untiring labours, practically all the „dainas“ and other spiritual property have been penned and made accessible to everybody. Although this great work is not yet completed, it is nevertheless a notable achievement that about 36,000 „dainas“ and a much larger number of their variants have been gathered and published in a collection which comprises several thick tomes.

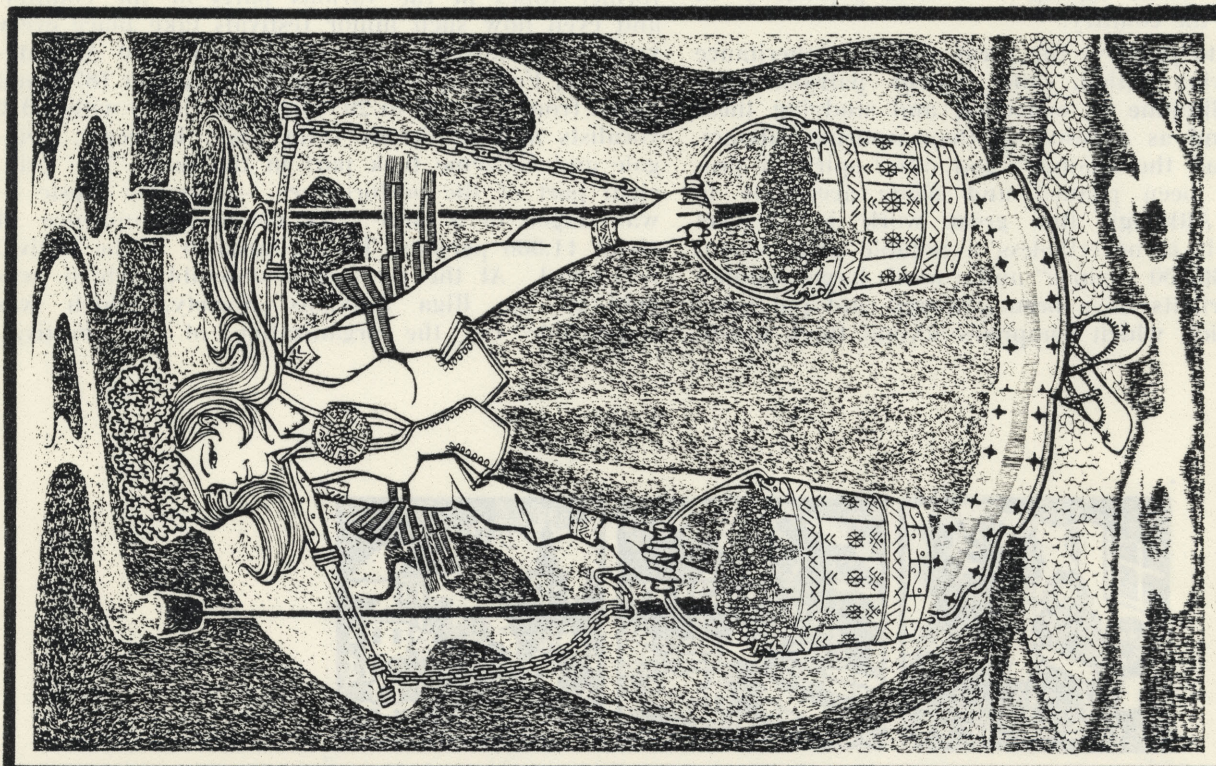
It is also noteworthy that despite their great antiquity the Latvian „dainas“ are not dead, not mere material for scientific research by those studying the history of culture, but they are alive among the Latvians and are recited and sung by the people on appropriate occasions with great reverence and much feeling. Particularly popular are the „Ligo“ songs, which are sung at the „Ligo“ festival on the night before Midsummer's Day, June 24, when the traditional solstitial fires blaze and glow throughout the country, and the young and old folks wander from farm to farm rejoicing and making merry.

The fondness of singing to which the „dainas“ owe their existence is also the source from which arose the tradition of the Latvian people to arrange song festivals from time to time. Songs and singing have always played a significant part in the life of the Latvian people. Songs and singing were instrumental in rallying the Latvian nation, in awakening and preserving their national consciousness. In their songs the Latvians have expressed their feelings. In their songs they have found comfort and consolation when times were bad. And from their songs they have drawn strength and energy to bear the brunt of life's battle. The power of song manifests itself with particular clarity in the song festivals, making them not only musical events of high order, with vast numbers of performers and enormous audiences, but turning them also into most impressive days of national jubilation, into convincing demonstrations of national unity and national initiative.

Local song festivals were already in vogue in former times in the various parts of the country, and even now such minor festivals take place every year in the different districts. But the first All-Latvian Song Festival was organized in Riga, in 1873, and lasted from June 26 to 29. Forty-five choirs with 1,019 vocalists and musicians from Riga, Kurzeme, Zemgale and Vidzeme took part in the same. The principal part of the performance, — secular music — was staged in a large park before an audience of about 11,000 persons. The enthusiasm at the festival was great. At the ceremonial assembly which was held at the Riga Latvians' Society, which was responsible for the organization of the Festival,



"The Way of Latvian Living" by Ansis Cīrulis



“JĀŅU VAKARĀ.”  
 Latvian Festival of Summer Solstice  
 From pen and ink drawing by Albert Vasilis

### Caur sidraba birzi gāju

Caur sid-ra-ba bir-zi gā-ju, Caur sid-ra-ba bir-zi gā-ju,  
  
 Ne za-ri-ņa ne-no-lau-zu, Ne za-ri-ņa ne-no-lau-z'.

2. Būr' zariņu nolauzusi,  
Tad staigātu sidrabota.
3. Jauna biju, diētin deju,  
Dziedādama vien staigāju.
4. Nebēdāju tās dienīpas,  
Kad staigāju raudādama.
5. Dievs man deva drošu prātu,  
Laima gudru padomiņu.

### Tautiešami roku devu

Tau-tie-ša-mi ro-ku de-vu, la-bo de-vu ne kre-i-so,  
  
 Ai-ja-ja, tra-la-la, la-bo de-vu ne kre-i-so.

2. Labo devu ne kreiso,  
Lai bij' laba dzīvošan!
3. Kad es gāju tautiņāsi,  
Dziesmas tīnu kamolā.
4. Ja būs laba dzīvošana,  
Pa vienai ristināš.
5. Ja būs sliktā dzīvošana,  
Lai satrūda kamolā.

### Romantic Folk-Song

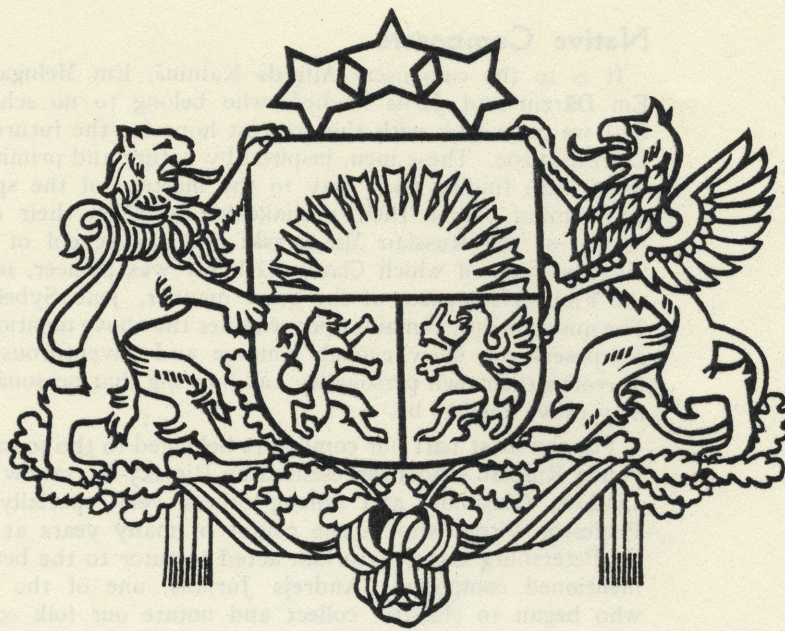
the anthem "God Bless Latvia", — now the official Latvian national anthem, was sung for the first time. On the same occasion a special banner the "Ligo Banner" as it was called, was solemnly presented to the Latvian nation as the Song Festival Banner, the express wish of the donors being that this banner should fill a prominent place whenever and wherever the Latvian people assembled for a song festival. This wish is strictly observed, and at every All-Latvian song festival, the banner occupies the place of honour as a mark of tradition and token of joyful solemnity. The banner is very beautiful and well preserved. The banner shows an ancient "vaidelotis" — a Latvian

bard, who in the sacred grove, standing before the altar of Ligo, holds high in his hand an oak branch, the symbol of joy and strength.

The First All-Latvian Song Festival was followed in subsequent years by others, — eight in all.

The I Song Festival in Riga, in 1873 with about				With daily attendance at secular concerts	
				1,000 performers	11,000
II	"	"	1880	2,000	10,000
III	"	"	1888	2,600	13,000
IV	"	" Jelgava	1895	5,000	25,000
V	"	" Riga	1910	2,300	10,000
VI	"	"	1926	6,500	25,000
VII	"	"	1931	13,000	35,000
VIII	"	"	1933	12,000	30,000
IX	"	"	1938	16,000	100,000

The Sixth All-Latvian Song Festival in 1926 was the first after Latvia had won her national independence. And naturally in the new national circumstances, the conditions were more favourable to the realisation of Latvian cultural aspirations than in former times when, under alien rule, national Latvian endeavours were regarded with lack of sympathy and even with malevolence. That is why all subsequent song festivals showed perceptible progress not only as regards the number of performers and spectators, the composition of programmes and their execution, but also from the point of view as manifestations of national unity. The song festivals thus became the sphere in which the Latvian people's love of songs and music developed into a genuine mass movement, as it were. Nowadays there is no town, no hamlet, no rural centre of any importance, not even a larger parish that does not boast of a choral society of its own, whose members look forward to the next All-



The Coat of Arms of Republic of Latvia

Latvian Song Festival as the great day of their lives.

Everything that pertains to the arranging of song festivals is now in the hands of a special permanent committee, under the chairmanship of the celebrated Latvian composer and Professor of Music J. Vitols. And all song festivals take place under the patronage of the *State President*. Song practice and rehearsing are supervised by a chief conductor, who controls the work of the local conductors and choral societies. The large audiences necessitate the holding of the song festivals in open spaces, which in their turn have to be enlarged and improved constantly in order to accommodate all desirous of attending the concerts, if not on the first, then at least on the second and third days. The programmes are also becoming more and more diversified and superior from a musical point of view, continuous encouragement being given in order to stimulate the production of new texts and new music. Increasing attention is paid to the instrumental accompaniment of songs. Also the standard of performance which choral societies must come up to is constantly raised. Along with the principal performances, competitions between choral societies are arranged at the time of the festival, and prizes are awarded to the best choirs. All this helps to awaken and revive the Latvian national spirit in all its ancient glory.

When the song festival takes place in Riga, the aspect and the rhythm of life in the metropolis are changed almost beyond recognition by the thousands of performers and visitors in national attire, for their enthusiasm infects also the permanent residents of the capital for the two or three days of the festival, making them accept these days as real holidays, though they figure in no calendar as red-letter days.

# Composers who Carry On National Traditions

## Native Composers

It is to the composers Alfreds Kalniņš, Em. Melngailis, Em. Dārziņš and Jānis Medīnš, who belong to no school, that we must look with the greatest hope for the future of Lettish music. These men, inspired by nature and primitive things, are finding their way to the mastery of the spirit and remind one in their unshakeable belief in their own nature of the Russian Mussorgski and the school of the impressionists of which Claude Debussy was pioneer, or of the Finnish composer of the great manner, Jean Sybelius. The question only remains open whether the above mentioned composers can shew enough courage and adventurousness to realise their own personality and how big that personality may prove itself to be.

For the most part our composers belonged to the so-called young Russian school represented by Rimsky-Korsakow also Ljadow, Glasunow and among others very specially by Professor Vitols who in the course of many years at the St. Petersburg Conservatorium acted as tutor to the before-mentioned composers. Andrejs Jurjans, one of the first who began to classify, collect and notate our folk songs, adhered to the methods of the French and Russian collectors of folk songs, Bourgault-Ducoudray and Faminzin; and harmonised them upon the pattern of the Russian "Kutschkisten." Before Andrejs Jurjans, Jānis Cimze had already been collecting and harmonising folk songs but he had adhered to no methods which could survive criticism and gave the Lettish folk song the form and harmonisation of the little German ballad beloved at that period, thus altogether obscuring the individuality of the Lettish folk song. The first really earnest work in ordering and harmonising our folk music must be attributed therefore to Andrejs Jurjans, who composed many songs for choir and solo, dances, cantatas, overtures and also compositions for horn, violin, and cello.

Among our oldest composers Ernst Viegner, the founder of the Phonological Institute, Jānis Straume (one of the first who busied himself in the field of musical history) and Karl Baumann, the originator of the Lettish hymn, may also be mentioned.

## The First Lettish Opera.

More fruitful and colourful is Alfreds Kalniņš who is a master of the language of the heart and of nature. His way lies clear before him. Equipped with this talent of interpretation he seeks to express the individuality of his people and the underlying sentiment of the nature which surrounds them. It was this which gave the first Lettish opera "Banuta" its special distinction.

Emil Dārziņš stands in much the same relation to the human soul which Kalniņš occupies in regard to nature. Like the composer of "Banuta" he writes in his heart's blood, but it has not been granted him in spite of many errors, doubts and wanderings to penetrate to his goal.

The music of Emil Dārziņš, filled now with unimaginable sadness now with joy, and trembling with spiritual sensitiveness, never reaches, however, the pinnacle of tragedy nor touches the calmness and clarity of the great thinkers. Yet

LETTISH: This is what the Latvian people were called before their independence.



undoubtedly the talent of Emil Dārziņš had put his feet upon that path when an early death cut him off. He was the first of our tone poets possessing a native grace. This filled his songs, his "valse mélancolique" and the project of his opera "Rozainas dienas" with charm.

Jānis Medinš has made the outward texture of the music of our time in a high degree his own. Especially is this so in his two-part opera "Uguns un Nakts" ("Fire and Night") and in his "Dievi un cilvēki" ("Gods and Men"). His music in this work is clad in the rich orchestration with which he interprets the spirit of the time. He always understands how to carry his leitmotiv sonorously through the orchestra. In two respects however his orchestration lacks something; it fails in poetry and clarity; he fails to bring his innermost feeling to expression. Jānis Medinš' musical fancies are inexhaustible. He passionately seizes an idea and develops it by an infinite variety of means. He is intimate with all his mediums, vocal and instrumental, understanding their every nuance — in this respect he is the born opera composer. But the greatest sort of creative talent, the comprehensiveness which we call in music idea, principle, breadth — fails Jānis Medinš. If however he has not succeeded in his orchestration in realising the individual expression of his innermost being, one must nevertheless admit that the jubilation of thought is so fascinatingly brought out that it is impossible to doubt that here is great talent and mastery of medium. The elder brother, Joseph Medinš, has given us during the last winter a symphony, a symphonic tone poem and a cello concerto; he is, however, less gifted than his younger brother.

Apart from these artistes stands the author of these lines Julijs Sprogis, who has produced two symphonies, a violin concerto, a sonata for violin and piano and several songs.

We possess two Operas, one in Rīga the other in Libau. The opera in Riga is the older and has the greater influence.

The repertoire of the opera, which includes to-day thirty works, consisted then of only four. The first pieces which were performed were: Verdi's "Traviata," Gounod's "Faust," Tschaikovsky's "Eugen Onegin" and Wagner's "Flying Dutchman." In the next year were added the "Pique-Dame" by Tschaikovsky, Verdi's "Rigoletto," Bizet's "Carmen," Wagner's "Tannhäuser" and the first Lettish opera, Alfred Kalniņš' "Banuta" which contains an episode out of Lithuanian history. The performance of this opera was attended by the greatest enthusiasm and we rejoiced to possess an opera of our own. The direction of our opera house has bitterly disappointed us for, instead of leaving the production of this work in the author's hands so that everything might be done in consonance with the special individuality of "Banuta," the production did not go beyond the ordinary technique of Wagnerian or Italian opera. As a result the opera "Banuta" disappeared only too quickly from the stage. Perhaps one day it will be more lovingly and understandingly revived.

Later on another Lettish opera appeared, viz. "Uguns un Nakts" ("Fire and Night"). Parts I and II were by J. Medinš. This opera achieved a popular success though it tired by its length. It follows the drama of the Lettish poet Rainis which bears the same name but has not been "adapted" indeed not the smallest word of the original was omitted. Latterly this opera has appeared in an abbreviated form.

## Latvian Cultural Contribution

"It is like music where harmonies and melodies come together in a cluster of chords in a composition, organized in every detail." This is how Dr. William Kintner, Professor of English literature, describes Latvian folk art and design.

The choice of colors and design of Latvian ornaments are marked by a great sensitivity. A subdued color scheme in textiles is achieved by the use of natural dyes, such as the bark and leaves of trees, roots, or grass. Sometimes, however, the design bursts out in strong and contrasting hues. The same is true of the ornamental patterns in wood, metal, leather, etc.

Still very much alive and vigorous today, the Latvian folk art and design look back at a millennial tradition. Archeological samples of bronze and silver jewelry from the 4th, 11th and 16th centuries, exhibit an amazing continuity of style. The well-known archeologist Lamsters has compared the various layers in the development of Latvian folk art with a cross section of the geological strata, reflecting different stages of former development within an indivisible whole.

Latvian art crafts are characterized by simplified forms and geometric patterns with a tendency toward linearity and plane. Abstraction and stylization of rhythmically organized shapes are the dominant features of design. The

ancient Latvian ornaments had some symbolic, mythological meanings, most of which have been forgotten, though the ornamental patterns remain.

The 11th and 13th centuries are considered as the flowering of the ancient Latvian culture. Archeological discoveries in some regions of the Latgale province, for example, reveal an amazingly high cultural level. Bronze jewelry and woolen shawls have been relatively well preserved, the latter dyed to achieve an indigo shade and ornamented with small bronze rings. One shawl among many from Stameriene has 38 prehistoric swastika ornaments in 20 variations, with insertions of 7820 separate bronze rings. An exact reproduction of that shawl and a full dress can be seen in the collection of the Reading Public Museum and Art Gallery, Reading, Pa.

The Latvian folk costume, like that of other nations, has been mainly determined by the climate of the country, the available materials and the artistical tastes of the people.

Since ancient times Latvians have grown flax and raised sheep. Until as late as the second half of the past century, home-made linen and home-spun woolen remained the basic materials for Latvian clothes, folk costumes included.

A sense of beauty was ingrained in Latvian life, and the esthetic element was pronounc-

ed in the ancient Latvian religion. Folk costumes were colorful and richly embroidered with geometric ornamentation, mostly of symbolic origin. White was the basic color, both as an expression of beauty and of ethical purity. Tradition also required that the deceased be buried in their very best clothes, often in dresses ornamented with bronze. Thus archeologists were able to restore and reconstruct folk costumes from as far in the past as the 11th and 12th centuries.

Although in later centuries the Latvians became divided, they remained so conservative within their regions in regard to clothing that throughout the various parts of Latvia the basic elements and the ornamentation of folk costumes remained almost unchanged. Even fashion items of later times, adopted from other European nations, such as hats, jackets and bodices, were changed and ornamented according to ancient Latvian patterns.

Latvian folk costumes have retained their amazing variety to this very day. While there are twelve basic types of regional costumes, numerous variations exist in the smallest communities. In addition, each girl tries to add her own individual touches to these variations.

The costume which perhaps best typifies the Latvian spirit is that of an unmarried girl. (See picture on cover.) Her headdress, the ancient

symbol of chastity, is in the shape of a crown of beads; married women wear kerchiefs or hats. She wears a full-sleeved shirt of bleached linen, its collar, cuffs and shoulders decorated with red, black or dark blue designs. The motifs of fullness and color are continued in her long and wide skirt; sometimes two or three vividly colored skirts are worn one over the other. Her shoulders are covered with a square woolen shawl, embroidered with needlework and held by an ornamental brooch. On her shoulders she also pins one or two large silver brooches, sometimes encrusted with amber. „Thus," in the poet's words, „she walks like a queen of gay design, attracting many an eye".

When Latvia became an independent state, handicraft and design were included in the curricula of elementary and high schools. The government established several craft and design schools to prepare professional artisans. Under foreign occupation in the homeland or scattered as refugees all over the world, the Latvian artisans go on creating and adding new forms for new uses. They are thus preserving their traditional heritage of thousands of years.

# Latvian Art

## Past Achievements:

LATVIAN culture, including the pictorial arts, had reached a comparatively high standard when it was shattered in the 13th century by foreign invasion. To the reality of this culture certain rare relics of the past bear witness and it would have been strange indeed, having regard to the geographical position of Lettland, if things had been otherwise. The territories which the Lettish people occupied were the highway between East and West and played an important role in the exchange of creative works of art as well as of goods and materials. The ancient Lettish runic writing and the rich ornament of clothes and weapons are but examples of the inherent creative spirit of the people. Not until the turning point of Lettish history in the middle of the last century was the genius of the people free to reassert itself. With the new period in Lettish art which began about 1860, one associates the name of the historical painter, Karlis Huns. Inheriting the traditions of the St. Petersburg academy he so completely mastered the methods of his time that in spite of his Lettish nationality he became official painter at the Court of the Czar. His travels abroad brought him into touch with the old Flemish and Dutch masters with the result that he devoted himself ardently to the problems of chiaroscuro and achieved, for his time, remarkable success. In spite of the court circle in which he moved and the foreign influences to which he was subject, the Lettish peasant blood which coursed in Karlis Huns' veins surged too strongly to be altogether denied: now and then there shows itself a certain undaunted individuality, a sense of compulsion towards frankness and primitiveness, a simplicity and clarity of form quite unusual at his period. Particularly may the strong nature of the Lettish peasant be seen breaking out in his "Fêtes galantes."

The pseudo-classicism of the St. Petersburg Academy held in its thrall the really highly-talented Arturs Baunans. But in a few sketches which he did direct from nature one finds a surprising sensitiveness of drawing and an unexpected feeling for line and form.

The second period of the artistic evolution of Lettland begins with the founder of Lettish landscape-painting, Julijs Feders. He saw indeed with the eyes of a Russian or a German but he painted the scenes of his native land with a delicacy and exquisiteness of colour which pulsates with love of home.

The first conscious herald of the national renaissance is Adams Alksnis. The bounds of his artistic knowledge were not wide enough to enable him to realise his national and artistic aims but the infectious enthusiasm of his personality set a wider development in movement.

Alksnis' contemporary, Richards Zarrins, evoked the most lively interest with a set of drawings representing Lettish saga and fairy-tales.

Richards Zarrins was the first to introduce a definite German influence into Lettish art and the tendency has been a continuing though a decreasing one.

Jans Rozentals tried in the course of his short life to realise the ideal of a national renaissance which Adams Alksnis had begun. He began with vigorously conceived, freshly-painted genre subjects from the life of the people; really representing in a fine style the genuine Lettish art. Gradually the artist turned more and more to impressionism and achieved a resonance and gaiety of colour mellowed by a tender dreaminess which was felt by his contemporaries to be the expression of the national individuality. For a time Rozentals came under the Scandinavian influence in art which had its origin in the dramatic work of Henrik Ibsen.

The only positive result of this period in the artist's career was a set of symbolical compositions based on the Lettish saga. Later Rozentals turned again to impressionism and was greatly loved as a portraitist on account of the elegance of his execution, his feeling for colour and an individuality of charm. About this time he was also executing national altar pieces in a manner which was in close sympathy with his earliest creative work and fully in accord with the native poetry of his people.

Teodors Udris confined himself to a much narrower field than the more talented, many-sided and brilliant Rozentals but within that field he achieved a more powerful and active realisation of his personality. The charcoal drawings of this artist approach the dynamic power of a Goya.

Side by side with this second tendency in Lettish art another development was taking place. This movement was freeing itself from Russian influence and putting itself into direct contact with the tendencies of western Europe. The artists of this school insist upon no special national aims but are purely individualist and objective.

The leadership in this movement belongs undisputedly to the landscape painter Vilhelms Purvits who was one of the first to fertilise with contemporary west European tendencies not only the Lettish but the whole of east European art. Originally an enthusiastic disciple of the Russian lyrical

landscape painter Ivan Levitan, Purvits came into close contact with French impressionism during a period of travel and study abroad which was granted him by the Petersburg Academy. His development did not stop there and contact with international art movements enabled him to vary and complete his means of expression. In Russia he was the pioneer of pure impressionist painting but he gradually developed from this towards a stylistic expression of landscape systematic linear construction and conscious composition. With broad technical and artistic equipment, and amazing fertility he realised his native landscape in countless moods and variations. Vilhelms Purvits is the most significant figure of all in the two generations of Lettish artists.

Purvits left behind him a school of Baltic landscape artists to which a whole list of Lettish painters belong. Among these must be mentioned Peters Kalve and Janis Jaunsudrabins and, to some extent, the very gifted artist, a follower of van Gogh — Zeltins, who died an early and tragic death. A rare dualism governed the work of another young artist who met an early death, Rudolfs Perle; when he was not painting fragrant flower studies in water-colours he was creating fear-provoking phantasies. Others of this school and



Toward  
the brighter  
days.

influence included Janis Kuga who whilst serving the Lettish theatre as a scenic artist, was occupied with success in landscape painting.

In the footsteps of this generation of artists followed the Independents. The most distinctive personalities of this society are the dry but correct draughtsman Alfreds Plite-Pleite and the robust Karlis Miesnieks the representative of the so-called "Jugend" style.

This artistic revolution reached its climax in the year 1910 in the finely nervous and sensitive work of several highly advanced intellectuals from among whom must be mentioned Valdemars Matvejs, who wrote a pioneer work on the phenomenon of negro art which has been so much discussed later. As a creative artist Matvejs is to be admired

for the courage and directness of his colour and his mastery of form.

The war which placed before the Lettish people the question whether they were to exist as a nation or no, released energies too strong in their artistic expression to be enclosed within the frame of the old aestheticism of the new impressionism. The artist to whom it was to fall to bring the new invading spirit of the time to utterance was Jaseps Grosvalds. A disciple of French art who came back to Lettland equipped with a highly cultivated knowledge of the latest French schools, Grosvalds made the destiny of his people his own as man and



Latvian girl in native costume.

as artist. He joined a Lettish regiment of storm-troops and on the disappearance of a national front he joined the English army, dying in Paris in January 1920 on his way back to his liberated native land without seeing the achievements of the fight to which he had consecrated his young life and art. He left behind him a rich legacy. His pictures, above all his warriors and fugitives, succeeded in bringing to the most suggestive artistic expression the heroic struggle and super-human sufferings of his people. These pictures, so broad and simple in their treatment and vibrating with a people's cry, could not be produced without an echo. Grosvalds' influence determined naturally the development of the artists of his generation who, for the most part, have emerged from the same struggle. Closely related to Grosvalds' art was that of J. Kazaks who died in the same year. The movement was carried further through the scholarship and controversial and polemical skill of Romans Sutta. As a creative artist he fixed the stages of modern art development through which the outstanding characteristic to be expressed is rather what Henri Bergson has described as "élan vital." Sutta's "60 Years of Lettish Art" should here be mentioned as the most important critical essay on the subject.

# KRIŠJĀNIS BARONS

(1835 - 1923):

## ONE OF THE GREATEST FOLK-SONG COLLECTORS

When Hamann revived the ancient conception of poetry as the mother-language of mankind, his imagination had been newly stimulated by the Latvian folk-songs that he had heard in Kurland and that he called gems of pre-Homeric creativity. When Herder compiled his famous *Stimmen der Völker*, one of his first-hand contacts with folk-ways had been in the Latvian-speaking region around Riga. But when Barons decided to make his collection of what he called the golden treasure of the people, he went beyond the romantic curiosity and the occasional sampling of the 18th century thinkers: he devoted 35 years of painstaking research to the monumental six volumes of *Latvju Dainas*, which were published between 1900 and 1915 by the Russian Royal Academy of Sciences.

Born as the eighth child of a small farmer, Barons excelled in attaining to a university education, and yet his schooling had done little to prepare him for his life-work. Since all of his education was in German, the language of the large land-owners, and the subject-matter of his early education was Russian, enforced by government inspectors, he had to study his native language and literature on his own. At the University of Tartu, the oldest and best university in the Baltic area, he studied mathematics and astronomy, but he gave up these fields to become editor of a nationalistic Latvian newspaper in St. Petersburg. When the paper was suppressed and Barons was in danger of being arrested, he found refuge as a teacher in the Stankewic family, whose large estate near Moscow was not only immune to persecution but also important as a meeting place of a Russian literary group. It was here that he began to work on folk-songs.

In 1878, the "Young Latvians" of Moscow handed over to Barons the beginnings of a collection that one of them had gathered in the previous summer. Barons took charge of the matter by writing to all Latvian school-teachers and asking them to send in the songs of their region. After two years, these songs had arrived in such numbers that for their filing he had a special cabinet made (with 70 drawers, 20 compartments each, each compartment large enough to hold 200 slips of paper). Having reached the oral tradition by a method that is still considered the best, except that it then lacked tape-recording, Barons faced a much harder task in separating the wheat from the chaff. Through his familiarity with the cultural content of the dainas and by a poetic ingenuity in recognizing their standard form, he was able to discard most artificial imitation. His next task was to order as many as twenty variants for some of the songs. It seems that he chose standard versions on the basis of frequency of appearance, poetic beauty, and universality: he seems to have discarded localizations, but not samples of an interesting local dialect. Finally, he faced the task of arrangement. He had the happy idea of ordering his collection according to the span of human life itself. Some of his subdivisions contain songs about birth, about moral relationships between parents and children, about love and courtship, and so on. Yet this arrangement was not merely a matter of content. If a song could appear under several headings, Barons tried to determine its function; thus, some of the songs with religious content that could come under ritual, he classified under working-songs, because they were sung precisely at the time of doing some particular work.

Barons began to publish in 1894, but because of the bankruptcy of his first publisher, all the issues of volume I had appeared only by 1898. Although he received no royalties for the 1023 pages of work, the Russian Royal Academy of Sciences gave him a prize of 1000 rubles. But what is more, the Academy reprinted his first volume and published the whole collection of 6263 pages: 217,996 folk-songs.

The significance of Barons' work has been enormous. A smaller anthology of his *Dainas* accompanied Latvian soldiers in their war of independence. The wealth of imagery and the finished 4-line form of these little poems became the foundation of a whole new body of literature. For the world, the dainas could reveal an old, self-contained culture which has remained unique in spite of the surrounding pressure of Slavic, Germanic, Christian, and Graeco-Roman influences.

APPENDIX: SAMPLES WITH TRANSLATIONS

Kas to teica, tas meloja,  
Ka saulīte nakri gul;  
Vai saulīte tur uzlēca,  
Kur vakars norietēja?

He who said it, is a liar,  
That the sun would sleep at night;  
Did the sun arise this morning  
Where he set the night before?

Dziedot dzimu, dziedot augu,  
Dziedot mūžu nodzīvoju;  
Dziedot iet dvēselīte  
Dieva dēlu dārziņā.

Singing came I, singing grew I,  
Singing did I live my life-time;  
Singing will my soul soon go to  
Gardens of the sons of God.

Ja, Dieviņ, mantu dodī,  
Dodi gudru padomiņu;  
Manta vien maz der lieti,  
Ja nav gudra padomiņa.

If, dear God, you give me riches,  
Give me also much of wisdom;  
Riches one can use but little  
If one has but little wisdom.

(Tr. by Paulis Birznieks)

The bird is singing, brother sweet!  
He has been singing, loud and long.  
Go listen, sister, and repeat  
To me the story of his song.

I saw my brother in the fight.  
I saw him battling with his lord.  
With five bright bands his hat was dight,  
A sixth was waving from his sword!

The field was strewed with men at rest,  
Hewn down like oaks. I saw the spear,  
The murderous spear in many a breast,  
And all was horrid silence there.

(Tr. by Sir Walter Scott from German translations,  
Foreign Quarterly Review, 1831)

Saulīt' tecēj', tecēdama,  
Es paliku pavēnī,  
Nava savas māmuliņas,  
Kas iecēla saulītē.

Down the sun was running, running;  
I was left within the shade;  
I have lost my dearest mother  
Taking me out in the sun.

Tec, saulīte, pagaid' mani,  
Ko es tevīm pasacīs':  
Aiznes manai māmuliņai  
Simtu labu vakariņ'.

Speed, dear sun, but wait a minute  
For I have a word to say:  
Go and take to my dear mother  
Many, many sweet good nights.

Jau saulīte zemu, zemu,  
Māmuliņa tālu, tāl'.  
Teku, tekū, nepanāku -  
Saucu, saucu - nesasauc'.

Down the sun sinks lower, lower,  
My dear mother's far away.  
Running fast I cannot reach her,  
Calling out - she does not hear.

(Tr. by Konstance Bergrs)

There was a voice from the other side of the stream, -  
Was it my mother's voice?  
A high wind carried the sounds away,  
I could not hear for weeping.

Dear God! Ah, dear, dear God!  
Wake my father and mother!  
Weeping did I complain  
Of what the strange mother did to me:  
She struck me with her feet beneath the stool,  
She struck me with her fists ere I went to bed,  
And she tore my hair when I rose.

There was a voice from the other side of the stream, -  
Was it my mother's voice?  
A high wind carried the sounds away,  
I could not hear for weeping.

\* \* \*

I should like to know some secrets:  
We have clever lads, -  
Without a shilling  
They shine in dollars!

Fresh; fresh is the morning breeze -  
Red' red is the burning sun -  
Like these is the burning kiss  
From the lips of the lovely one.

(Tr. by Prof. Janis Ozolins-Burtnieks  
American Echo, 1921.)

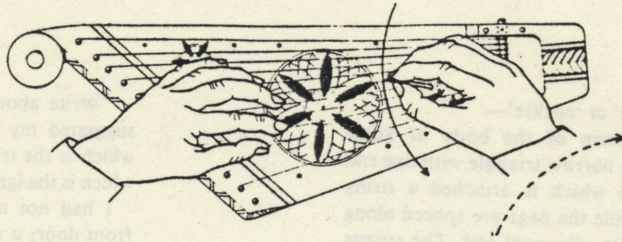
The Latvian language finds its most lyrical and expressive use in the Latvian folk-songs Dainas.

The Dainas are beautiful and sensitive verses written over many centuries, rich in experience, feeling and folk wisdom. It is, however, impossible to translate them.

Songs have always been an essential part of Latvian life. They are sung at home, in the fields, on the sea, and at war. Latvia's wealth of folk music is unique.



# Little Lost Word



by Valentina Lamberg

There it was! Printed clearly on the label of a just-purchased typewriter paper box — the word 'kokle'. Next to it — 'finish'. In my mind I echoed the same word but of different meaning: Kokle—the best known, ancient Latvian musical folk instrument. Aware of the amusing fact that many words of world language are written alike yet describe different items or actions, I wondered what the English explanation of 'kokle' was.

Intrigued, I gathered all the dictionaries in the house: first, a very recent superheavy encyclopedic dictionary. Although its title included 'new' and 'international,' the word of my interest was not included. Next, another 'new' dictionary, but of lesser weight: also not recorded. Then I leafed through the pages of a well known encyclopedia also bearing the word 'new' in its title: nothing. Not the Latvian 'kokle,' Finnish 'kantele,' Estonian 'kannel' nor Lithuanian 'kankles' — all folk instruments of similar type. Sadly I mentioned my findings to my husband. "Perhaps these books are too 'new' to include such ancient items?" he quipped.

But I thought of American, Canadian and English youngsters of Latvian, Finnish, Estonian and Lithuanian descent who, searching for their ethnic identity, have revived the ancient art of playing folk instruments of their forefathers. I considered, too, their desire and courage in today's environment to blow off dust and wipe away cobwebs off these old instruments which were silently becoming museum pieces. Instead of being glued to TV, or 'educated' by physically and spiritually bared movies or throwing their lives away on drugs, these youngsters by the hundreds attend classes in folk instrument playing. United in groups, they perform not only for their respective ethnic audiences, but present excellent concerts in colleges, universities and to the general public in the countries in which they live. Thus, they give to the world knowledge of the priceless folkloristic riches of their centuries-old cultures while greatly contributing to the culture of the lands where they were born.

They themselves plan and produce folk instrument festivals annually. Between school responsibilities, attending rehearsals, developing their artistry to make their instruments 'sing,' they do odd jobs earning travel money to be able to participate in these festivals. They come from all lands in the Free World to perform, listen, learn and enrich themselves. The instruments these young artists of Baltic descent treasure so far have been ignored by scores of scholars, writers, especially—professors of music, editors and

others responsible for information contained in these English language dictionaries and encyclopedias—why, yes! there was one more source, and without the 'new'—a 'great encyclopedic dictionary'! 'Ko-kan-ee'—sockeye, a salmon; 'Ko-ko-mo'—a city in Indiana . . . In between—no 'kokle.' Other dictionaries and encyclopedias in public libraries? The result will, probably, be the same . . .

"Forget the young and devoted, forget the instruments! Whoever plays them or who has heard their unforgettable sound, seen their shape, become familiar with their characteristics and beauty of design and ornamentation, will know them!" my mind was reasoning; "That's enough!" But my heart said: "No, don't forget! A nation's culture is too valuable to simply disregard treasures that make it great. No, it's not enough! What about future generations who will search in vain for a description of the ancient Baltic cultures' musical instruments, their use, sound and specially written compositions which are contributing right now to the enrichment of American, Canadian, English and other nations' cultures?!"

"The kokle in the course of years has become a symbol of Latvian music and song in general. The oldest known specimens date back to the 17th century, although chronicles indicate their existence long before. Unsupported by bridges or frets, the strings of kokle stretch from pegs on one end of the instrument to a string holder (a steel bar) on the other. As a result, the sound of kokle is soft, long lasting and its timbre rich in overtones..."

stated a green thrice-folded pamphlet slightly trembling in my hands.

"While on instruments such as guitar and/or harp, a number of pitches can be produced on each string, each of kokle's strings emits only one pitch. The number of strings determines the number of pitches. There is no standard of strings on a kokle. As almost all Latvian folk melodies can be played on 13 strings, this number is rarely exceeded."

All this I knew. What I did *not* know was—what exactly 'kokle finish' means in the paper industry!

"This word, ma'am, describes the wrinkled surface of the paper," explained the salesman at the stationery store. Few manufacturers print it 'c-o-c-k-l-e'; it means the same 'finish.' "Thank you, sir, but I shall disregard looking up 'cockle' in the wisdom books: it will be there in its correct place, I'm sure!"

'Kokle' or 'cockle'—

The form of the body of kokle is that of a narrow triangle with one end cut off to which is attached a string holder, while the pegs are spaced along the opposite, diagonal end. The strings are closer together at one end than at the other. The diagonal end allows a different length for each string, partly eliminating the necessity for varying the thickness and tension from one string to the next. Like a boat, the body of kokle is carved from a single piece of wood; is covered with a separate deck or sounding board. The size, proportions, ornamentations, choice of materials and the number of strings differ from instrument to instrument,

giving each one its own individual appearance and sound, and the ..."

A loud "hi, friend!" interrupted my reading. My neighbour! In a few seconds her brand new, foreign-made car was driving us homeward.

"Incredible!" I exclaimed, buckling the safety belt. "What?" she asked. "The English language!" . . . and I spewed out every-thing that had happened today, my feelings, my points of view, my concern, all.

"... and the conical wooden pegs run through the body of the kokle. Each string, wound around the smaller end of the peg, is tuned by turning the flattened, thicker end.

Kokle is played by drawing a plectrum held in the right hand across the strings at the narrow end, while the fingers of the left hand form harmonies by dampening specific strings."

"There, that is a kokle! And—the "o" is pronounced as "o" in song and "e" as "e" in bed.

"Dear friend, I care to see further than just the tip of my nose, so—I already know the instrument! Its name missing in all those books—that's news! Sad, at best."

"Write about this to a good publication," suggested my neighbor, "and then we'll see which is the truly concerned about our youth, which is the ignorant!"

I had not noticed the car stopping at our front door; it waited for my exit. I rushed into the house, wrote a letter to the paper manufacturer explaining the double meaning of the word 'kokle' and inquiring as to its origin in the industry.

On the third day I received this answer: "*The word kokle . . . was adopted by the paper industry in the very beginning from the sound of the word and has been used ever since.*"

Imagine that! Ladies and gentlemen of the learned minds, why has this English word fallen into disgrace with you? Only a five-letter word adopted 'in the very beginning' of an entire industry supplies you with a tremendously valuable material on which you write your ideas, thoughts, lectures, music, even—your memoirs for posterity! Should the spelling that formed "from the sound of the word" irritate you, why not make an appropriate note next to it with a reference to the correct one?

Now it is up to you to reinstate this little word to its rightful place in your dictionaries and encyclopedias. I have found it. And I am proud to know also its look-alike word—a word of great meaning to the youth of our time: kokle. It too deserves your attention.

As buds on a new branch spring forth from the food supplied to them by the tree's roots, so do Americans, Canadians, English and others of Baltic descent gather their strength from the roots of their ancient culture. But while the tree's new growths only feel the existence of the roots doing nature's work, the young minds go beyond simply accepting what is there! They want to know what kind of roots there are, how deep they can stretch into the future, how healthy and beautiful a tree will they continue to produce.

The ancient tree these young men and women are part of is sturdy, undisturbed by countless tempestuous storms. It is their centuries old heritage upon which they now build strong personalities and which they willingly share with others.

But while the tree's new growths only feel the existence of the roots doing nature's work, the young minds go beyond simply accepting what is there! They want to know what kind of roots there are, how deep they reach into the past, how strong their endurance of time, how far they can reach into the future, how health and beautiful a tree will they continue to produce.

*Titles of dictionaries and encyclopedias mentioned in the article in order of appearance.*

1. Webster's New Encyclopedic International Dictionary of the English Language, *The Publishers Guild, Inc., New York, 1975.*
2. The New Century Dictionary of the

- English Language, *Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1952.*
3. The New Funk & Wagnalls Encyclopedia, *Unicorn Publishers, Inc. 1950-51.*
4. The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1966-1968.
5. *Pamphlet describing the "kokle" published by The American Latvian Association in the U.S.A., Inc., 1974-75.*

# Latvians IN AMERICA

When writing about my countrymen, the Latvians, I reminisce about the joys we shared, as well as the miseries we suffered during the hard times of escape from the Russians, the nostalgic period spent in the so-called Displaced Persons' camps in Germany, and the final settlement in Boston and other areas of this Land of the Free.

On the anniversary day of the independence of Latvia, November 18, 1955, John F. Kennedy said to the commemorating audience gathered in the Boys Latin School of Boston:

"I would like to compare the Latvians with evergreens—hardy and full of life. They will always reach upward, because they believe in freedom."

A humble plant burgeons along the back wall of the administration building of Boston's famous Arnold Arboretum; it seemingly has no pretense of being noticed amid the sumptuous conglomerations of trees, shrubs and flowers. This plant is the Baltic ivy, and its place of origin is Latvia. It is neither luxuriant, nor poisonous. Unnoticed, it continues to survive. I like to believe that this same principle applies to the hardiness of the Latvian people. They live and survive without ostentation, as they are seldom found among the limelight crowds of glittering society. The mere two million or so Latvians on this globe can find no strength in numbers; and they are often confused with the somewhat more numerous Lithuanians, the only other people which still speak the ancient language of the old Balts that once occupied a vast area between the Black and Baltic seas, sporting a unique culture the elements of which still survive, often ignored by modern historians and ethnographers. For some unexplained or political reasons, the Baltic languages have been ascribed to some kind of Slavic branch, and most dictionaries list a 'Balto-Slavic' group as a suitable concoction to serve present-day political purposes. The simple truth, if ever investigated, would easily show that the Balts are not Slavs in any sense of the word, and even more less in a linguistic sense, as the Baltic languages stand much closer to the Romance group than they could be lined-up to suit an affinity with Slavonics, the latter case of affinity being simply assumed because it may ease some consciences that lately have been bent upon putting the Balts under the Russian yoke.

In general, the Latvians (and Lithuanians, incidentally) still live as the underdogs, i.e., among the recognition—wise neglected ethnic groups in the American social history. For this reason, I allow myself to hope that this book will provide some spark toward an incentive that would motivate a factual and unadulterated research in this area.

The literature touching on the subject of Latvians in America is rather scarce, and I have no knowledge of anybody having written about Latvians in the Bay State. The sources I could exploit were very limited, yet I hope that this effort will provide a general overview regarding Latvians on these shores counting the year 1888 as a plausible beginning of Latvian immigration.

The generation of Latvians that arrived here before 1880's and earlier left very little for historical or sociological studies, as materials generally were not preserved. The left wing of these immigrants dutifully sent all protocol and procedure books to the communist "brethren" in Latvia, while the majority of settlers that grouped around the church parishes retained very little written material. No wonder then, that the Latvians always remained an obscure group. The approximately ten thousand Latvians among 5.5 million inhabitants of Massachusetts thus formed one of the smallest ethnic groups until the aftermath of World War II brought New Latvian immigrants from the refugee camps of Germany. The new arrivals kindled new national flames, having escaped from vicious reprisals and persecution by both Germans and Russians, as well as often having been victims of allied officialdom and discrimination during the post-war era. There is no way to avoid the fact that a vast majority of the newcomers were college graduates, as during the prolonged stay in the refugee camps in Germany, the Baltic (Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian) intelligentsia had established a Baltic University at Pinneberg, Germany, where Baltic professors taught Baltic students that otherwise would have remained without access to academic education. Thus the newcomers comprised an overgrown core of academically educated specialists bent upon re-establishing themselves once more to decent standards of living and endeavor.

To preserve Latvian ethnic identity and unity within modern American pluralism is one of the aims of the American Latvian Association. The primary objective of its publishing house is to publish textbooks for Latvian ethnic schools. It sponsors three Latvian-language summer high schools to encourage bi-cultural studies. Its bureaus of education, culture, sports, information, and welfare initiate and coordinate activities in their particular areas. The Latvian Institute, planned as a research and learning institution and a depository, aims to foster the preservation and continuation of Latvian ethnic heritage in its myriad forms and to study its place in the larger society.

A 1974 survey of Latvians in the United States, conducted by the American Latvian Association, brought in over 31,000 replies. Among other data, this survey showed that over 70% of the Latvian-Americans are homeowners, 55% have either completed or have substantial college education (over 90% under age 35), and over 95% have participated in political elections.

Some 600 Latvian scientists and scholars teach at American universities, and about as many are practicing physicians and dentists. Other professions are equally well-represented.

Surprisingly large is the engineer count—820\* in all, comprising of not only the industrial and aviation fields, but also electrical, chemistry engineering and technical drawing. These newcomers have become factory builders, leaders in their professions, and inventors. They are working in the White House in Washington D.C., on NASA projects and on other research institutes where the atom bomb was developed and where preparations were made for the flight from Cape Canaveral to the Moon.

The multiplicity of talent among exiled Latvians is remarkable; so is their persistence in attaining set goals. About 700 Latvian exiles and their direct descendants have entered the Medical and Dental professions and, in the Bay State alone, there are twenty-five practicing Latvian physicians and dentists. Numerous newly built supermarkets, apartment buildings, Government buildings, schools, libraries, banks, and other types of construction reflect the work of 200 young Latvian architects.

Even those Latvians, who are engaged in manual labor, show great diligence, sense of responsibility, and thrift—true "Welfare cases" by 1960 were rare among the Latvian exiles.

A variety of talent is noticeable also in other pursuits than those of occupational choices: numerous musically talented Latvians are members of choirs and community ensembles; other creative people have become excellent craftsmen, bringing forth much acclaimed artifacts in ceramics, original jewelry, and woodcarving. A great number of younger Latvians are participating in folk dancing ensembles and their performances have been seen by large audiences and often televised.

This profound drive for achievement was already noticeable among the early immigrants, namely, among those Latvians who came to this country long before the great influx of post WW II immigration. One may recall August Krastins who, as early as 1896, invented a new model car and was building automobiles in Cleveland, placing himself among the top ten automakers in America. John D. Akerman, Professor at the University of Minnesota, was much acclaimed for his achievements in aeronautics while, during WW II Leon Jack Swirbul excelled in building airplanes at the Grunman airplane factory in New York. A reminder of the accomplishments of Latvian exiles is also the Coral Castle in Florida that was built by John Leedeskainins as a memorial to his lost sweetheart: the story of his unremitted love is reflected in structures that, similarly to the Great pyramids of Egypt, seem to have been erected without any mechanical means. Having made unparalleled discoveries in plant physiology, Oswald Tippo and Andrew Murneek have become leading scientists in American botany. A native of the Baltic area, Viktor Brenner, had given us the cent while Sascha Seemel, through his achievements as the world's most famous tiger hunter, became a much filmed celebrity. Latvians as settlers cultivated the virgin land in the county of Lincoln, Wisc., before 1900. One could also point out the skyscrapers built by Gunars Birkerts, structures designed by Visvaldis Paukulis, and the chairmanship of General Builders Company held by Janis Risbergs. In doing so, one would have to conclude that the Latvians are creators and builders.

However, the Latvian exiles are not without certain demands. Not unlike the early Dutch immigrants and also the recently arrived Cuban exiles, Latvians insist on maintaining their own traditions, language, and culture; a total assimilation is not their way of living. While willing to contribute to the welfare and continued development of this country, these peoples intend to keep their ethnic identities through elimination of "melting pot politics".

Over the years, such politics have done much damage to ethnic pride and ethnic identity. Ethnic strongholds, such as the Old Boston with its Scolley Square and the Haymarket are all but disappeared from the scene.

\* Ed. Dunsdorfs, Archivs, VII, XIII, XIV, XV. Melbourne, Australia.

Fortunately, the climate for one's maintaining his ethnic identity is improving. There is no doubt that the Civil Rights movement, originated and successively carried out by the Blacks, has contributed greatly to the awareness that this country is a multi-nation State where representatives of each nation are to be recognized and accepted on their own merits.

I recall an incident in the early 1950's that happened shortly after my arrival in Boston. I was walking with a friend and we were talking in Latvian. A lady approached us, shouting in anger: "Speak English!"

I do not believe that such incidents would take place today. One hears Spanish, Italian, and other languages and it seems as if the youth of today would proudly speak the language of their parents.

However, much work is still at hand. Until this country truly eradicates all racial and ethnic prejudices, the well intentioned notion of America as "the land of the free" will remain but an empty slogan.

I am not presenting this book to the reader in terms of boasting about accomplishments of my fellow Latvians; their accomplishments speak for themselves. I am presenting this book to the reader so that he might gain a better understanding about contributions that a small ethnic group can make to the civilization of this country.

America always has and, hopefully, always will keep its gates open to the oppressed and persecuted people of the world. These people will need shelter and jobs. But most of all, they will need understanding that, by breaking off ties with their native lands, they do not have to lose pride in their ethnic background.

Immigrants from the Netherlands, Scandinavian countries and Portugal may return to their native lands without losing benefits of their accumulated pensions. Knowing that their final resting place will be next to their ancestors, they may enjoy seeing their children and their friends again. One should not belittle the intentions of such people. After all—it is their own choice.

However, Latvians, as well as people from the other Baltic countries, do not have such a choice. Regarding pension benefits, there is no reciprocal agreement between the governments of the USA and the Soviet Union.

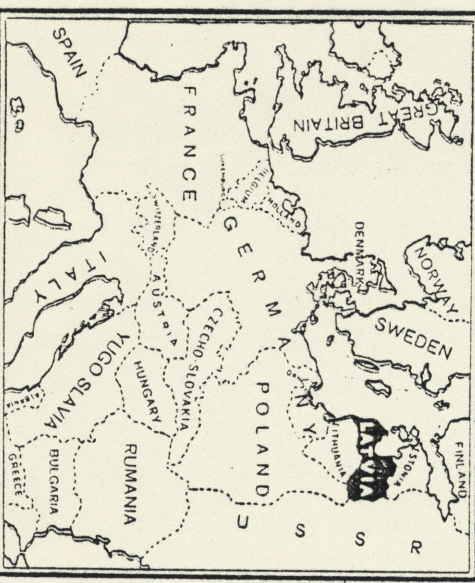
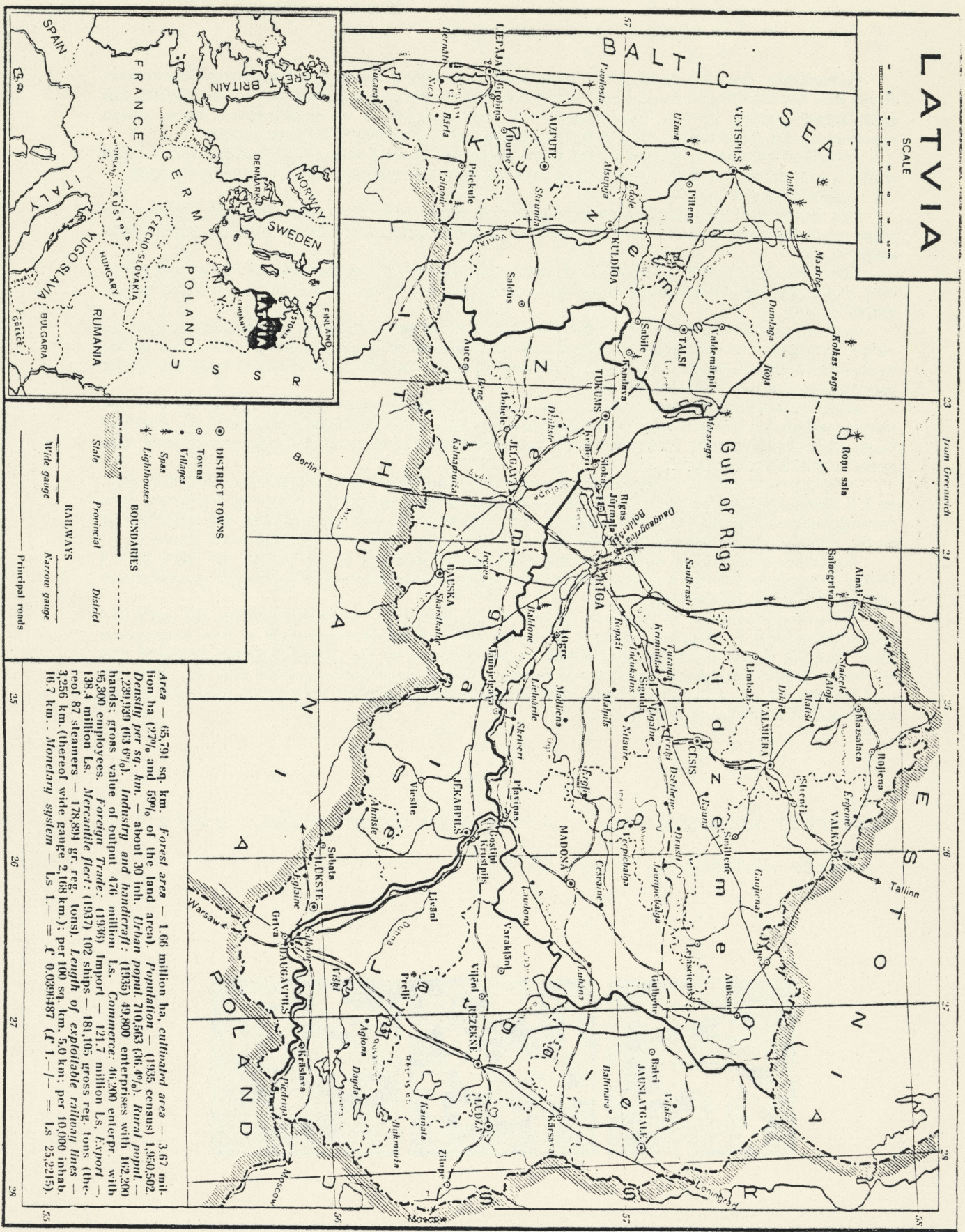
Presently, prospects of freedom in Latvia are very dim. In the meantime, Latvians are subjected to most outrageous customs' tariffs on gifts mailed to loved ones in their subjugated land. Tourists in Latvia are so depressed under the yoke of an overwhelming—physical and spiritual—Russian presence that there is hardly a joy of visiting their native country. And yet, notwithstanding an absence of more than 30 years, most Latvian immigrants still feel strong bonds with the land of their birth.

(Excerpts from the book "Latvians in Bicentennial America" by  
Osvalds Akmentins, Iowa, 1976.)



# LATVIA

SCALE



- DISTRICT TOWNS
  - TOWNS
  - Villages
  - ✦ Spas
  - ✧ Lighthouses
- BOUNDARIES
- State
  - Provincial
  - District
- RAILWAYS
- Wide gauge
  - Narrow gauge
- Principal roads

Area — 65,291 sq. km. Forest area — 1.66 million ha, cultivated area — 3.67 million ha (27% and 59% of the land area). Population — (1935 census) 1,950,592. Density per sq. km. — about 30 inh. Urban popnl 710,563 (36.4%). Rural popnl — 1,239,939 (63.6%). Industry and handicraft: (1935) 49,800 enterprises with 162,200 hands; gross value of output 476 million Ls. Commerce: 46,200 enterpr. with 95,300 employees. Foreign Trade: (1936) Import — 121.7 million Ls. Export — 138.4 million Ls. Mercantile fleet: (1937) 102 ships — 181,105 gross reg. tons (the- reef 87 steamers — 178,894 gr. reg. tons). Length of exploitable railway lines — 3,256 km. (thereof wide gauge 2,168 km.); per 100 sq. km. 5.0 km.; per 10,000 inhab. 16.7 km. Monetary system — Ls 1. — = £ 0.039487 (£ 1. — = Ls 25.2515).

## OUR HOLY-LAND, LATVIA

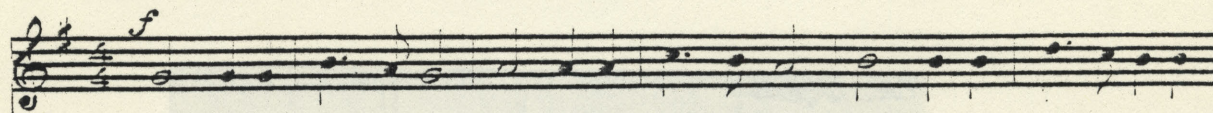
# Latvijas nacionalā himna.

## LETLÄNDISCHE STAATS-HYMNE LATVIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

Maestoso.

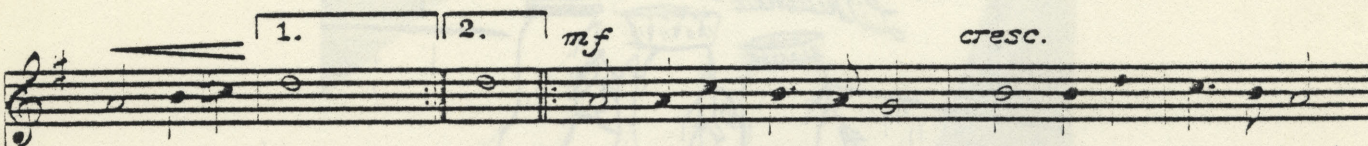
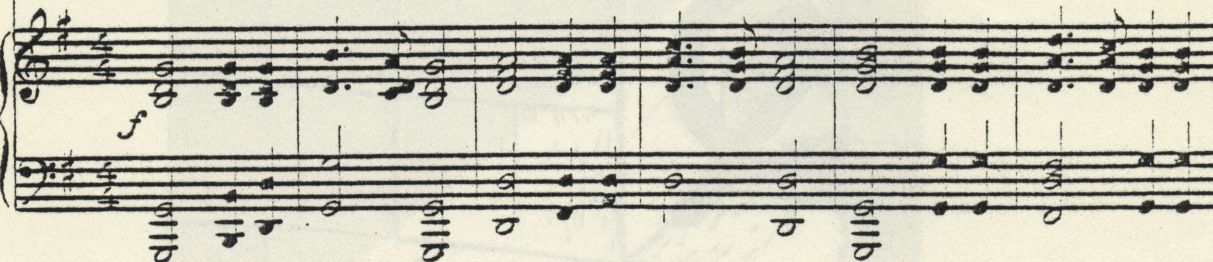
Kariis Baumanis.

CANTO

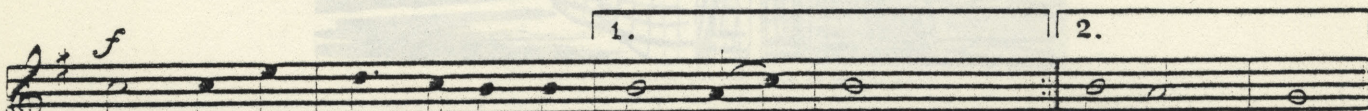


Dievs, svēti Lat-vi-ju, mūs' dārgo tē-vi-ju, svē-ti jel Lat-vi-ju, ak  
\*) Seg - ne dich Got - tes Hand, teu - e - res Va - ter - land, Lett - land du Hei - matland, er -  
\*\*) Bless Latvi - a, o God, Our verdant na - tive sod. Where Baltic he - roes trod,

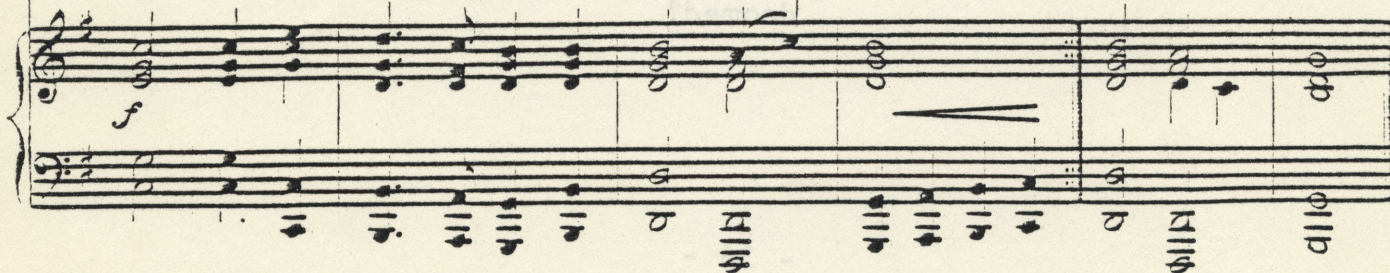
PIANO



svē-ti jel to! to! Kur lat-vju mei-tas zied, kur lat-vju dē-li dzied,  
blüh'und ge-deih! deih! Dir un-sre Söh-ne glühn, Dir un-sre Töch-ter blühn,  
Keep her from harm! harm! Our blooming daughters near, Our singing sons ap-pear,



laid mums tur lai - mē diet, mūs Lat - vi - jā. Lat - vi - jā  
Dir un - sres Giū - ckes Pfend, lieb Hei - mat - land. Hei - mat - land  
May For - tune smi - ling here Grace Lat - vi - a. Grace Latvi - a!



\*) Martha Grubbe.

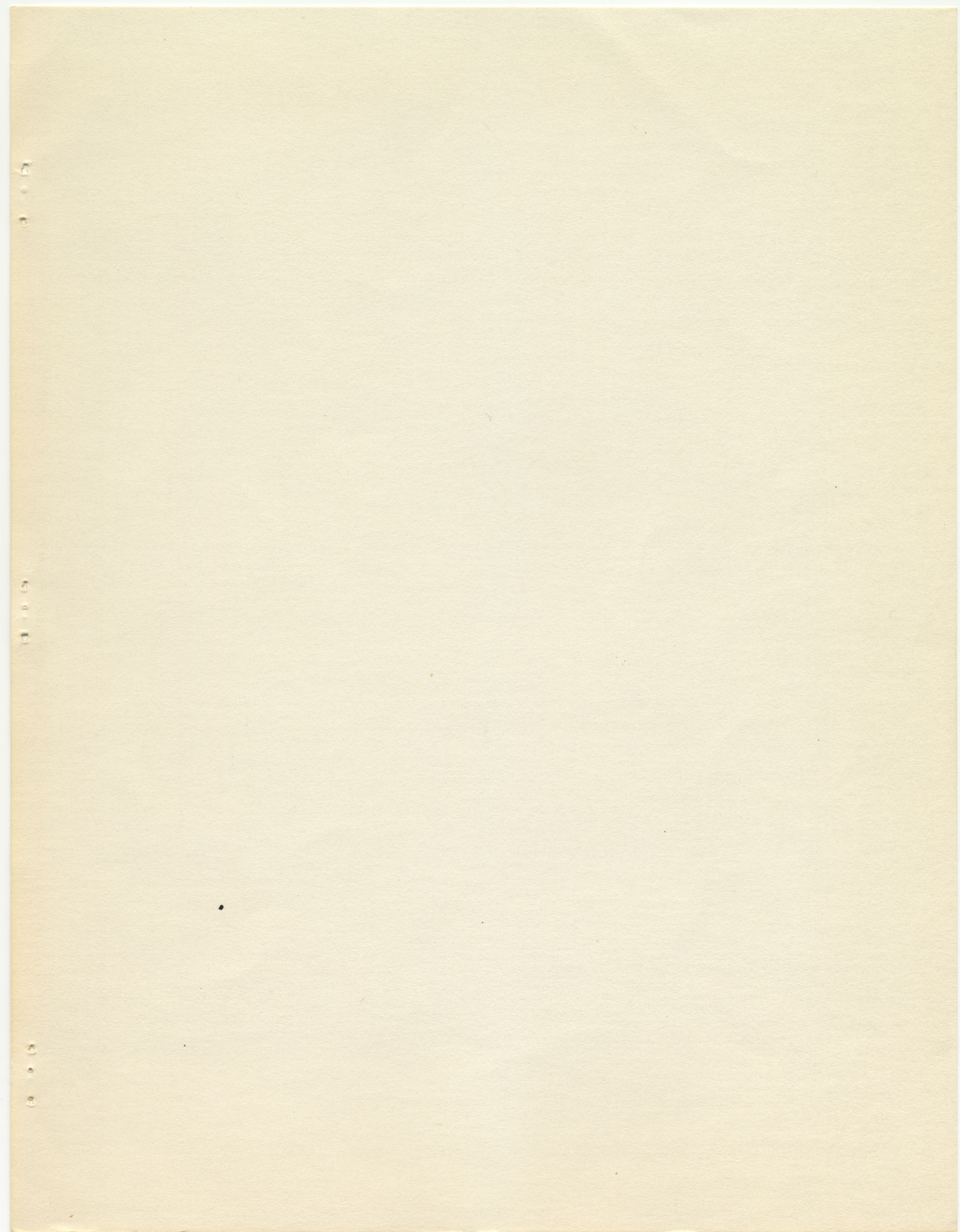
\*\*) Dr. Geo. A. Simons.



33 Years Under Soviet  
OCCUPATION

Why are these nations  
doomed?





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