

## LATVIA

For thousands of years Latvians have inhabited the eastern shore of the Baltic sea. Deeply rooted in their traditions and customs, the Latvian people have strongly maintained their European heritage; indeed their language is one of the most ancient in Europe. They treasure their land and their culture and have struggled and fought for their freedom throughout the centuries of their history.

Independent Latvia was finally established in 1918. An agricultural country as large as Denmark, she achieved remarkable economical, social and cultural progress. The Baltic republics — Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, had the highest standard of living in Eastern Europe, and they shared the first place in Europe for the highest percentage of academically educated people.

In 1939, after the notorious Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, the two dictators — Hitler and Stalin divided Eastern Europe. The occupation of Latvia and the two other Baltic states followed in June, 1940. During the first year of the Soviet occupation 33,000 of Latvian people perished in prisons and slave labour camps, and later the same fate befell 15% of the entire Latvian population. At the end of the war 100,000 Latvians fled into exile.

Today, 36 years after the beginning of the Second World War, Latvia is still an occupied country without independence and freedom. The Soviet regime has destroyed the Latvian peasantry by deportation and is inflating the country with enormous masses of Russian workers.

Of the Latvians in the free world, approximately 10,000 live in Gt. Britain, contributing to the economy and culture of this country. They are living examples of the never ending struggle for individual freedom and the democratic rights of national self-determination.



## THE FESTIVAL CALENDAR

### Friday, 1st August

- 15.30 LATVIAN ARTS and CRAFTS exhibition; opening. Leicester University, Percy Gee Building.
- 16.00 THEATRE. 'Zalā krūze', a play by M. Zīverts. University, Percy Gee Building, Queen's Hall.  
Tickets at £2, £1.50 (75p), £1 (50p).
- 20.00 LATVIAN POPULAR MUSIC concert. University, Queen's Hall.  
Tickets at £1.50, £1.20, £1, 60p.

### Saturday, 2nd August

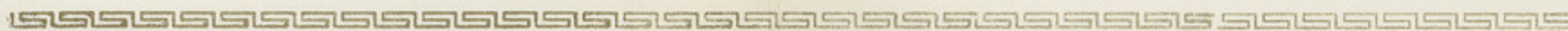
- 10.30 LATVIAN FOLK DANCES and SONGS featuring young Latvian dancers and singers. De Montfort Hall.  
Tickets at £1. Children under 16 — free.
- 16.30 LATVIAN MUSIC CONCERT. De Montfort Hall.  
Tickets at £2, £1.50 (75p), £1 (50p).
- 20.00 SONG FESTIVAL BALL. De Montfort Hall.  
Tickets at £1.50.

### Sunday, 3rd August

- 10.30 POETRY READING. University, Queen's Hall.  
Tickets at 75p.
- 14.00 CHURCH SERVICE. St. James the Greater.
- 16.00 THE GRAND CONCERT. Massed choirs. De Montfort Hall.  
Tickets: £3, £2 (£1), £1.50 (75p), £1 (50p)

Price in brackets indicates reduction for 'under 16' and senior citizens.

Advance booking (including payment and self-addressed stamped envelope) from the Honorary Treasurer Mrs. Z. Grike, 19 Kenrick Road, Mapperley, Nottingham, England.





An important part of the Latvian cultural heritage is the Latvian folksong (957.000) with its melody (20.000). The figures surpass those of many larger nations. Folksongs and folk dances in national costumes integrate every Latvian gathering of festive occasion, so strengthening the historical continuity of an old European nation. This can be seen, more than anywhere else in a Latvian Song Festival.

These festivals in Latvia were always colourful and expressive cultural conventions on a wide national scale. The first Latvian Song Festival was celebrated in 1873. Many more festivals of the same kind were to follow. The last one in independent Latvia was held in Riga in 1938 with 16.000 singers before an audience of 100.000 for 3 days.

The tradition of a Song Festival has strong roots in the mind of every Latvian. Festivals are held in USA, Canada, Australia, Europe. In Great Britain alone there have been 8 festivals:— London, (The Royal Albert Hall), Leicester, Leeds, Manchester, Bradford. The 9th Latvian Song Festival in Great Britain will take place in Leicester at the De Montfort Hall from 1st — 3rd August, 1975. Among the participants in the massed choirs will also be Latvian guest choirs from Sweden and W. Germany.

The display of Latvian songs, dances, arts and crafts will give a fair insight into the cultural heritage of the people of Latvia — a country on the amber shore of the Baltic sea. Once more the Latvians will have been united in the fervent prayer of their National Anthem:—

GOD, BLESS LATVIA!