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FOREIGN DOCUMENTS DIVISION

TO LATVIANS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES -- FROM RIGA

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Conversation with the basketball player Juris KALNINS:

11.30. "Some of the questions made me wonder about the very poor, and sometimes even wrong information available to emigres about life in Latvia. That is probably the effect of false propoganda. It is quite noticeable that they themselves doubt the truth of their information. This appeared from their great interest in hearing as much as possible about their homeland."

- As we know, it is mostly the young people who are sports fans. Did you, as an outstanding basketball player, find yourself surrounded by young people in America ? -

"Oh yes, this happened almost in every city where we played, especially in Washington, Denver, New York, and others. As a very clear example, I remember a meeting in a Washington sports hall. Two young girls and three young men approached me and Gulbis; they were very much interested in hearing about the homeland which they had never seen, since they were only about 17-18 years old. Some of them had been very young when they were taken abroad, and some had been born abroad. They spoke Latvian, but several of them had difficulties in speaking it; one could notice an English accent and they had to try very hard to find the right words. They talked about their studies, which were very expensive, and they asked how this was in Latvia. When we told these young people that in our country the government assumed all the worries [i.e. expense] for being educated in schools and universities, they expressed regret that they did not have such possibilities. We had an interesting conversation

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about ways of spending leisure time. The young people said that they had seen the Moiseyev ensemble, and spoke of it with enthusiasm. In general, they expect much from Europe in the way of cultural entertainment. We told them how we spend our time at home, and we invited them to come for a visit and see for themselves how we live. They were very much interested and had even ~~suggested~~ expressed the desire to see Latvia before we suggested it; however, they mentioned the great expense of the trip, and also their fear that they might be detained here -- even though ^{this} seemed ridiculous to us. We had a good laugh about it. We also talked about sports; however, in this respect they did not have much to brag about."

- Comrade Kalnin, how do you evaluate the emigres' attitude toward yourself ? -

"Well, there were different attitudes; some tried to boast, but rather unsuccessfully. Others showed annoyance, and dislike for the Soviet government; and some even tried to make me ~~out~~ a traitor."

- Please, tell us about it.

" This happened in Denver, a city in the State of California [sic]. There I met a certain Mr. LAIPENIEKS. At first he made quite a pleasant impression; he met us at the airport, introduced himself as Laipnieks, and introduced his son and daughter-in-law. He said that he had moved several years ago from Chicago to Denver, where he was employed at the local college as an instructor of physical culture. He asserted quite definitely that he had not really met any Latvians since the time he met Maigonis VALDMANIS, Janis KRUMINS, and Valdis MUIZNIEKS in Chile; therefore, he was anxious to talk to us. Well ? Later on in Denver I saw some other Latvians. Apparently, LAPPNIEKS did not consider them as true Latvians. After the

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first game with the Americans, right there in the basketball court, Edgars LAIPNIEKS gave me a book about the life of students in America, as a souvenir. Of course, I thanked him for his kindness. In the hotel I leafed through the book and I liked it. I was sharing a room with an Estonian, Jak KLISTSON (?). After taking a bath and eating dinner, we went to bed and were already asleep, when the phone rang about 12:30 at night. It turned out to be LAIPNIEKS. He asked me if I had looked at the book. I said I had and I thanked him again. Then he asked if I had found the letter attached to the back cover. I said that I had not. He asked me to read it, as it was meant especially for me. I was surprised at this method and wondered why he had not told me its contents verbally, since we had just seen each other. I told LAIPNIEKS that my roommate was already asleep and I would not like to turn on the light, in order to read the letter, as this might disturb him. LAIPNIEKS promised to call again the next day.

In the morning I did find the letter, which I cannot call anything else but a very vile product. This is what it said:

"Dear fellow countryman ! Please forgive me for addressing you in a letter. You will understand that I had no other way than that of entrusting my proposal to a white sheet of paper. Many young men and girls from occupied Latvia are dreaming, like yourself, about their liberation from oppression and from the Communist yoke. I am firmly convinced that you are not a Communist. As a matter of fact, I would like to suggest that you remain in the US. Furthermore, the local Latvians would give you financial support to start a new life, i.e. \$2,000.00 in cash, a car, and free tuition in some college in the US. I am convinced that these conditions will be agreeable to you. If you agree, call me by phone and in the evening, after the game, a red car will be waiting for you, which

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will take you to a safe place. Do not believe that the Communists will use any reprisal measures against your relatives at home."

- Yes, that is truly despicable. Nothing is sacred for a man like LAIPENIEKS. That is proved by the letter he wrote.

LAIPENIEKS, formerly a well known sportsman during the German occupation period, achieved ill repute as a murderer of peaceful people. When our editors sought information about him in the state archives, it appeared that they had a lot of material showing him as a "butcher of people" and it seems that his fingers are still itching as he is serving his new masters.

"There is no doubt that he is being paid for his services by some espionage organization. When LAIPNIEKS called again, I told him quite clearly and distinctly not to bother me any more, as I had nothing to discuss with him. I would not become a traitor. In the evening, after the game, Laipnieks' son approached me and asked me quite bluntly: "Well, have you decided?" - Naturally, ~~xxx~~ only not the way you think, I replied. I am sorry I could not give a really effective answer, but after all, we were in a public place, in a sports hall, among people. So that is the end of my story. I can only add that during the night the red car was parked by the hotel and waited for me in vain, since these types of people cannot understand the psychology of us Soviet people. This was the experience I had of the special kind of Latvian emigre hospitality." - People like Laipnieks are not found everywhere....

(A stupid feuilleton about the end of Janis Lukstenis in an atomic war, and about his unwritten testament).

The broadcast ended with a folksong.

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