

OP-ED

Commentary

Latvia: A nation in jeopardy

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The Chrysler Corporation is on the verge of getting involved in a bit of international genocide.

Please forgive me if the assumption is made that you know little about the Latvian nation.

Historically, Latvians have been unable to keep out of the affairs of their much larger neighbors.

Toward the end of the first World War, in order to free themselves from German Barons, many Latvians joined up with Lenin and his Bolsheviks. During the ensuing calamity they managed to make many Russians very, very unhappy.

During the second World War again Latvians got mixed up in the fight between the big boys and vigorously resisted the implementation of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, namely, the second coming of the Russians.

When things settled down after the second World War, the Russian occupation regime known

as the Soviets, decided that they had had enough of Latvian antics and decided on a program to destroy the Latvian Nation. This program of destruction, in addition to traditional methods such as execution and deportation, employs subtle, internationally less visible methods.

One such method is industrialization of the territory historically inhabited by the Latvians. Without any economic justification, huge industrial plants are imported from other parts of the Soviet Union. Raw materials to operate these plants are also imported from other parts of the Soviet Union. The products of these industries again disappear into the Soviet Union, without any benefit to the Latvians.

However, the most deadly aspect of the machination, as far as survival of the Latvian Nation is concerned, is the forced immigration of labor from other parts of the Soviet Union to man these plants.

At this time (1989), this program of genocide has created a

situation where Latvians now are a minority in their homeland.

It has been announced that the Chrysler Corporation plans to build a manufacturing plant in Latvia. Latvians see this as one more step in the program to destroy their nation.

Under no circumstances do we believe that the Chrysler Corporation knowingly participates in furthering genocide. Nevertheless, the Chrysler Corporation Project will promote the influx of some 50,000 additional workers, thus further weakening the ability of Latvians to survive. (Native Latvian population prior to World War I - 3,100,000 is down to 1,400,000 now).

Industrialization with subsequent migration of new workers into Latvia creates an unprecedented historical event, namely, the Latvian Nation will be democratically voted out of existence.

In addition, the post-war forced-industrialization has caused unbelievable contamination: all of

Latvia's lakes and rivers have been declared unfit for swimming. Birth defects among migrants and Latvians is a disaster. The most polluted area is Ventspils where Mr. Hammers' Occidental Petroleum built huge chemical plants.

Latvians are not asking for special privileges. We would be grateful to receive just half of the rights accorded to the smallest and weakest member of the United Nations.

Please help us stop Chrysler.

Editor's note: The above opinion does not necessarily represent the opinion of the Capital Times or its publisher, the student body of Penn State Harrisburg. The Capital Times will gladly give space to anyone wishing to express an opposing point of view, and as always, we welcome letters to the editor.

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Students speak out: What do you think?

photos by Denina C. Benson

Students were asked the following questions relating to East Germany: Do you feel Communist countries are a threat to U.S. security? How do you feel about East Germans demanding reforms and breaking down the wall? How do you feel about a united Germany?

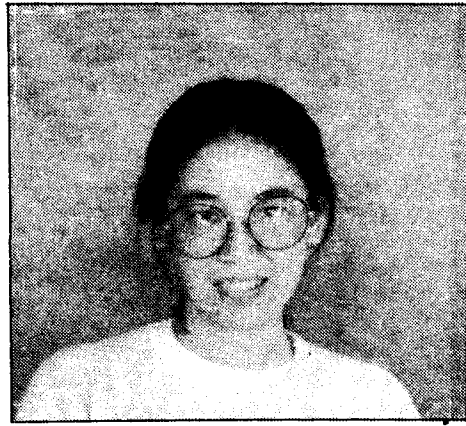


Karla Carter, 24, General Humanities

Communism: Communism will be a threat to weak countries, just as the U.S. can influence countries less powerful.

The Wall: I feel the breaking down of the wall will release some tension within East Germany. The breaking down of the wall is the breaking down of a barrier.

United: They still have a lot of work. A lot of people fear a united Germany because of history.



Xiau-Qing Zhu, 26, American Studies

Communism: Communism is an ideal goal for human beings, still it has not been proven to work. This is a very sad thing.

The Wall: From the economic standpoint East and West Germany is very different. Economic pursuits are very understandable, so it is understandable for East Germans to immigrate to the West.

United: I think it will be very hard after the historical aftermath of World War II. The people are the same but the governments are different.

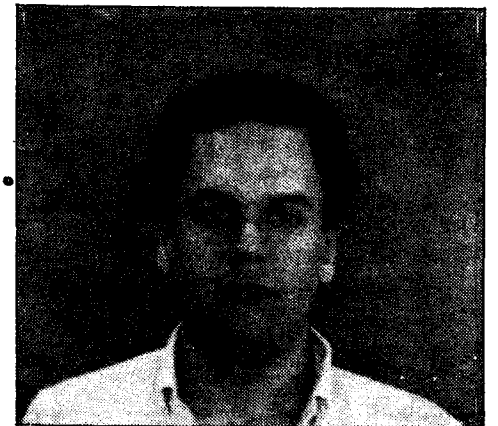


Sam Kapiye, 30, Public Policy

Communism: The U.S. might be afraid that [Communism] will affect neighboring countries.

The Wall: Their movement is a clear demonstration that they are demanding reforms. They are moving along with the winds of change.

United: There is a need to unite the two Germanys



Scott Alper, 22, General Humanities

Communism: I think we're big enough to protect ourselves.

The Wall: East German economy is being hurt because the steel workers are leaving. West German economy is being hurt because there is too much unemployment already.

United: I think they should [unite]. The economy will be better for both countries. I can't worry about what happened with the holocaust.