

FACT SHEET
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THE CASE OF GUNARS RODE, A BLATANT VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

1. In April of 1962, Gunars Rode, a political prisoner from Latvia, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for "nationalism and anti-Soviet agitation" and for his membership in the Baltic Federation--believed to be a student group concerned with the issue of Baltic self-determination.
2. In the summer of 1976, Rode finally received a copy of the court decision of 1962! This decision accuses Rode of "having poisoned drinking water, having gathered arms for an armed uprising, and of an intention to start a nuclear explosion or even war that would threaten all of East Europe". These fantastic charges have no known basis in fact.
3. The 15 year prison sentence of Gunars Rode, in Vladimir Prison near Moscow, expires on May 20, 1977.
4. According to Samizdat, the underground chronicle of current events, there is concern that the Soviet Authorities may sentence Rode to an additional prison term because of his "unrepentant view" on human rights and his desire for self-determination for the Baltic peoples.
5. According to Vladimir Bukovsky, the well-known Russian dissident, now living in the West, the Baltic Federation was nothing more than an informal student group that had discussed the problems of cultural autonomy and human rights for the Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians.

The Hon Leonid
Secy Brezhnev
Secy of C.P.S.U.
The Kremlin
Moscow, Russia-

6. Rode's prison ordeal has severely impaired his health. In November 1975, according to Samizdat, Rode became critically ill with twisted bowels, screaming continuously for two days without receiving any attention from the prison authorities. To help him, Vladimir Bukovsky and four fellow prisoners at Vladimir nearly broke down a cell door, thus, finally forcing prison officials to give Rode some medical attention.
7. In January of 1976, Rode, Gavriel Superfin, Solzhenitsyn's former research assistant, and others began a hunger strike to protest the inhumane treatment of Soviet political prisoners. This hunger strike was maintained for several months and reports of it appeared in the New York Times and newspapers in London. At the same time, a number of Rode's sympathizers in the U.S. appealed to their representatives in the U. S. Congress, asking them to write to Soviet officials inquiring about Rode's condition. About thirty U. S. congressmen and senators did so. This action is believed to have had some impact on the Soviet authorities.
8. Moscow Samizdat reports in issue 40, and Vladimir Bukovsky confirms the report, that in March 1976, Rode was permitted to leave Vladimir prison to visit the grave of his father and to tour Riga, the capital of Latvia.
9. For reasons not fully known or understood, Soviet authorities suggested in early 1976 that he file an appeal for clemency. Since Rode has claimed to be innocent of the charges against him, he refused to appeal as a matter of principle. Subsequently, he was returned to Vladimir prison on March 20, 1976.

10. Vladimir Bukovsky believes that Rode's health is poor and is getting worse and that an additional prison term may prove fatal to him.
11. For this reason, continued inquiries and publicity about Rode's plight are necessary, now, to protect him from the unjust and arbitrary actions of the Soviet authorities.

COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF GUNARS RODE
Baltic Prisoners of Conscience
Washington Area Chapter