

ELTA¹ INFORMATION BULLETIN

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offering information and
documentation on current
events and problems con-
cerning Lithuania.

LITHUANIA

ELTA INFORMATION BULLETIN
(English)
1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 2
Washington, D.C. 20009, USA

is situated at the southern end of the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea, right at the European continent's geographic center. It emerged as a unified state in the early decades of the 13th century and became internationally recognized as the Kingdom of Lithuania in 1251 A.D.

ELTA BULLETIN LITHUANIEN
(French)
17, avenue de la Tourelle
94100 Parc St. Maur, FRANCE

After centuries of vast expansion eastward and southward, in 1569 Lithuania became a partner in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which lasted till 1795 when it was partitioned between Austria, Prussia and Russia. Lithuania fell under the Russian rule.

ELTA-PRESS (Italian)
Via Casalmonteferrato 33
00182 Roma, ITALY

Lithuania succeeded in re-establishing its independence in 1918, at the end of World War I, but was occupied again in 1940 by the armed forces of Russia, now known as the Soviet Union. It has been held in Soviet bondage since then.

**NOTICIERO DE LOS
PAISES BALTICOS (Spanish)**
Calle Falcon S-27
Prados del Este
Caracas, Venezuela

Population

as provisionally estimated for January 1,
1979

3,399,000

as estimated in the same area on January 1,
1939

3,215,000

ELTOS INFORMACIJOS
(Lithuanian)
1611 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 2,
Washington, D.C. 20009, USA

ELTA-PRESSEDIENTST
(German)
Franconvillestr. 16 (Apt. 48)
6806 Viernheim
West Germany

MEMORANDUM ON LITHUANIA TO OTTAWA HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

A Memorandum on the situation in Lithuania was delivered to 27 delegations at the CSCE Meeting of Experts on Human Rights in Ottawa, Canada, which opened on May 7 and is expected to last for six weeks. Drafted by the Supreme Committee for the Liberation of Lithuania, the Memorandum describes the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Soviet-occupied country. The fate of the members of the Lithuanian Helsinki Monitoring Group and of the Catholic Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Believers, the harsh treatment of political prisoners and "prisoners of conscience," and the promulgation of new repressive laws are discussed in detail. Attached to the Memorandum were a list of 207 Lithuanian political prisoners and "prisoners of conscience" and a list of names and biographical information on priests arrested, imprisoned and murdered during the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. (The list, taken from the Lithuanian underground journal The Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, No. 65, 1985, is limited to the Diocese of Panevėžys, one of six in Lithuania).

OFFICIAL STATEMENTS AT HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada,

May 7, 1985:

"... Issues of central importance such as human rights cannot and must not be avoided just because they are sensitive and can sometimes give rise to disagreement between governments. Both the Helsinki Final Act and the Madrid Concluding Document point out that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential factor in the search for the peace, justice and well-being necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and cooperation among us. The same recognition is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. These assertions reflect the fact that a world that is not increasingly humane is unlikely to be increasingly safe, or even, in the long run, more prosperous. This is why human rights are, and will stay, on the international agenda...

"But these differences do not absolve us of the commitment we each made in Helsinki and Madrid. Nor can they deter us from our task of seeking over time to ensure that progress on respect for human rights-- whether civil, political, cultural, economic or social-- is made in all our countries. I am convinced that national boundaries can never and should never insulate any of us from the natural concern of human being for human being. This is especially so among a group of countries whose destinies have been so closely interlinked, and whose populations have so many ethnic, cultural, religious and intellectual traditions in common."

Michael Armacost, U.S. Undersecretary of State, May 7, 1985:

"In the East Bloc countries, the so-called Helsinki Monitors have been persecuted, jailed and murdered," Mr. Armacost told the convention delegates. "Their suffering and their sacrifices haunt this meeting," he said. He criticized some countries for refusing to agree to a full discussion on human rights and for refusing to open the meetings to the international press covering the convention. "Rights cannot survive through the power of words on parchment unless one believes in the magical power of incantation."

("We expect to name names and review cases. That's what this meeting is all about," Armacost said in a press conference after his speech. His presence in the Canadian capitol, he said illustrates the importance the Reagan administration places on the first human rights meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.)

Vsevolod Sofinsky, Soviet chief delegate, May 8, 1985:

"We should concentrate our attention on that which unites us." He claimed the Soviet Union guarantees human rights in its constitution even though there are limitations against propaganda.

Per M. Olberg, Norwegian Ambassador, May 8, 1985:

Human rights are "consistently and systematically violated by a number of nations that signed the Helsinki Accords 10 years ago. Attacking practices in Soviet-bloc countries, he condemned restrictions on religious freedom, the ethnic and cultural persecution of minorities, the abuse of psychiatric hospitals to imprison dissidents and the silencing of Helsinki monitors. "Violations like those involve human suffering on a massive scale. In the face of these, we cannot remain silent," Olberg said.

A. H. Croin, Dutch Ambassador, May 8, 1985:

Mr. Croin appealed to action, saying that people are tired of unfulfilled promises. "People in our countries," he said, "say why don't you do something to improve the position and the role of the individual, as was promised almost ten years ago... Why don't you see to it that some real progress is made with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms... Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief... are not words one uses lightly. What is at stake here in Ottawa is the credibility of the Helsinki Accords."

Alfonse D'Amato, U.S. Senator, May 10, 1985:

(Mr. D'Amato was co-chairman of the seven-member bipartisan Congressional delegation, which brought to Ottawa a U.S. message linking Soviet progress on human rights to success in future bilateral talks. The delegation held a closed-door meeting on May 10 with the Soviet representatives to the human rights conference.)

"I think the delegation gave a strong, concerted message that mutual security will be guided by the undertakings the Soviets make on human rights... It was quite an experience for me to sit down with the Soviets. I never realized people could have the effrontery, the unmitigated gall to bring up diversionary tactics that added not one iota of progress on human rights."

Richard Schifter, Head of U.S. Delegation, May 15, 1985:

"... We believe that performance in the field of human rights is inextricably linked to all aspects of improved bilateral relations. If we failed to make

that point clear at a meeting of this kind, we would be sending a false signal."

Having referred to 41 imprisoned members of the Helsinki Monitoring Groups, including Lithuanians, Schifter said: "They did not even engage in what we would consider normal political activity in the West, that is, organize to make changes in the Government by peaceful means. They did nothing other than 'receive an impart information,' a right explicitly guaranteed through the Final Act."

PRESS COMMENTS ON THE OTTAWA CONFERENCE

"... Canadians assume, without thinking, that they have the right to speak freely, practice their religion and go where they like, unwatched and unhampered. Often it takes a wrenching experience such as (Montreal MP's Sheila) Finestone's visit to the Soviet Union to open Western eyes. 'It was like medieval times' she says. 'It is astounding that this could happen in a modern society.' "

("Breakthroughs Unlikely In Ottawa," Toronto Star, May 7, 1985)

"An international human rights conference finally got down to business Wednesday, but was soon under attack by a Tory MP for excluding the media and the public from its proceedings. Reg Stackhouse told ne (Canadian) Commons the closed-door policy was a denial of the right to know what is happening in 'oppressive' countries, and called on the government to push for greater accessibility so the 'truth can come out to the world.' "

("Rights Conference Media Ban Rapped," The Citizen, Ottawa, May 9, 1985)

"... The Western democracies have the opportunity to hold the feet of Soviet bloc envoys to the fire of international accountability as the signatories to the 1975 Helsinki Accords meet to review how faithfully they have lived up to their commitments to respect human rights... For the West to turn the Ottawa conference into a strident anti-Communist forum would be counter-productive... Yet the Western democracies... have a duty to shine an intense spotlight on Helsinki lapses... In the Soviet Union, despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion, the Uniate Church... and the Jehovah's Witnesses have been banned and churches such as the unregistered wing of the Baptists, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists and Lithuanian Catholics have suffered official persecution..."

("In the Helsinki Spirit," The Globe and Mail, Toronto, May 8, 1985)

POPE STRESSES THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

On May 13, in The Hague, Pope John Paul II described a bill of human rights, which he said "a system of international law must satisfy." These rights, he said, included the right to life, the right to a decent existence worthy of human beings and the right to protection by law; recognition of the right of peoples to self-determination and independence and their right to a fair share of the world's economic wealth."

"... The cries continue to ring out in many parts of the world of the imprisoned and the oppressed, the cries of people who are being exterminated, the cries of people whose cultural and spiritual freedom is being shackled, whose personal liberty is being denied."

(The New York Times, May 14, 1985)

GERMAN POLICY TOWARD THE BALTIC STATES

Non-Recognition of Annexation, Goal of Self-Determination

On February 25, several German human rights organizations had sent a proclamation to the leading political and religious personalities of the Federal Republic of Germany, asking them for more active support of the Baltic freedom cause. The International Viktoras Petkus Committee, and the International Society for Human Rights, and the International Nijolė Sadūnaitė Committee specifically asked the West German Government and Parliament to declare the 1939 Stalin-Hitler Pact as null and void.

On March 6, Klaus Hermann, a representative of the CDU/CSU fraction of the West German Bundestag, sent a letter to Erich Weiss, chairman of the Petkus Committee, outlining what appears to be the policy of the Kohl Administration towards the Baltic States. Excerpts from the letter follows:

"As much as we understand your initiative - especially now that 45 years have passed since the annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union - we can do little in support of your request for a unilateral null-and-void declaration, because of considerations of legal and fundamental nature. It was for identical reasons that, during the negotiations of the 1973 treaty between Germany and Czechoslovakia, the SPD/DP Government and the CDU/CSU as opposition, had rejected such request of the East vis-a-vis the Munich Agreement of 1938.

"Furthermore, what matters for the CDU/CSU is that the Federal Republic of Germany as well as most of the Western countries do not recognize the annexation of the Baltic States. In this respect, all the federal Governments have been so far conscious of their historic responsibility. Because, after all, it was the Hitler-Stalin Pact and, especially, the secret agreements of August 23 and September 28, 1939 that have first opened the possibility for the annexation of the Baltic States, because the National Socialist Regime had declared to the Soviet Union that it was disinterested in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. However, the secret agreements do not mean any a priori recognition of the annexation. And even the closing of the Baltic embassies and consulates in the fall of 1940 cannot be interpreted as a de jure recognition of the annexation.

"The moral impact of this historic phase remains, of course, independent of the specific impact on international law. Therefore, it is even more urgent today to hold on to the existing legal interpretation of the non-recognition of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States, and at the same time to openly address and to represent the subject politically, but with a particular attention to the human rights in connection with the destiny of the Baltic States.

"The CDU/CSU fraction will deal with this subject in the future as it has already done in the past. Because our constant endeavor remains to make the partition of Germany and of Europe more bearable for the people and ultimately to overcome it entirely. This, however, can be achieved only by focusing on the goal of a free right to self-determination for all the nations of Europe - which means also the Baltic nations - and in a peaceful European arrangement."

U.S. SENATE PASSES RESOLUTION ON BALTIC FREEDOM DAY

A joint Resolution (S.J. Res. 66) designating June 14, 1985, as "Baltic Freedom Day" was passed in the U.S. Senate on May 3, 1985. The Resolution emphasizes the distinct national and cultural character of the Baltic republics, describes their illegal occupation and forcible incorporation into the USSR, and scores Soviet oppressive policies, including the conscription of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians into Soviet armed forces. The Resolution concludes as follows:

RESOLVED by the State and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress of the United States recognizes the continuing desire and the right of the people of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia for freedom and independence from the domination of the U.S.S.R. and deplores the refusal of the U.S.S.R. to recognize the sovereignty of the Baltic Republics and to yield to their rightful demands for independence from foreign domination and oppression and that the fourteenth day of June 1985, the anniversary of the mass deportation of Baltic peoples from their homelands in 1941, be designated "Baltic Freedom Day" as a symbol of the solidarity of the American people with the aspirations of the enslaved Baltic people and that the President of the United States be authorized and requested to issue a proclamation for the observance of Baltic Freedom Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In his remarks about the Resolution, Senator Simon said that the "forcible incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia clearly violates the 1941 Atlantic Charter." He referred to the statement of the deputy chairman of the U.S. delegation to the 1980 Review Conference of the Helsinki Act - "No occupation or acquisition of territory in contravention of international law will be recognized as legal" - and emphasized that this provision applies directly to the Baltic States. (Congressional Record, Senate, May 3, 1985).

SOVIETS ATTACK PLANNED BALTIC "FREEDOM CRUISE"

The Baltic Peace and Freedom Cruise, scheduled for July 25-31, 1985, has come under fire by the Soviet propaganda batteries. The cruise is designated to focus international attention on the questions of peace and freedom in the Baltic States as well as in Europe. A Baltic Tribunal, organized by the Baltic World Conference, will be held on July 25-26 in Copenhagen; it will put the Soviet Union on trial for a 45-year record of crimes committed against the Baltic people.

Cruise Denounced as "Provocation"

The first official Soviet reaction to the cruise took the form of an article in the Lithuanian CP daily Tiesa (April 1, 1985). Entitled "The Ship of Spooks," the article mixes satire, venom and threats, making it clear that Moscow is thoroughly displeased with the planned Baltic event. According to Tiesa, "the Lithuanian bourgeois nationalist press published abroad and the diversionary radio stations recently have been busy advertising the provocative excursion by boat on the Baltic Sea. Their purpose is clear - to slander Soviet Lithuania and to do their work for the special funds allotted by imperialism's special services."

The article ends with this warning: "Don't foul the Baltic Sea for us, gentlemen. The international inspections of cleanliness hand out very tough penalties for that."

Moscow and Stockholm Disagree About Baltic Territorial Waters

The Soviet bluster should also be seen in the context of the disagreement about the dividing line in the Baltic between Sweden and the USSR. In an article on "Swedish Concern About Soviet Boarding of Fishing Vessels in Disputed Baltic Waters" in Radio Liberty Research Bulletin (April 20, 1985), Peter Collins writes that Moscow insists that it should be halfway between the coasts of Latvia and Lithuania on the one hand and the Swedish mainland on the other. However, Stockholm takes the view that it should be determined in relation to the island of Gotland, an integral part of Sweden whose eastern tip lies about 150 kilometers east of the Swedish mainland. "The upshot," Collins says, "is the existence of a 'white zone' almost 250 kilometers long and averaging fifty kilometers in width to which, in Sweden's view at least, vessels of all nations should have access. The Soviet Union views it, however, as a 'gray zone' in which only their own and Swedish craft should have the right to cast their nets."

Unprovoked Soviet Inspections in Baltic Denounced

According to Collins, "Sweden and the other non-Communist states around the Baltic fear Soviet expansion by stealth in this strategically sensitive area." On April 16, Soviet inspection vessels boarded at least five Danish, two West German, and three Swedish fishing boats operating in the "white zone." The Swedes reacted angrily, because the series of unprovoked inspections "prompts analogies with incursions by Soviet submarines and aircraft into Swedish water and air space." The Swedish government has asked the Soviet authorities for a full explanation.

SOVIETS CONTINUE VIOLATING HELSINKI ACCORDS - SENATOR DOLE

"... As the former cochairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I am very familiar with many Soviet infractions of the Helsinki Final Act. The Soviet Union continues to violate the accords by its ruthless actions in Afghanistan, and by its relentless abuse of those who attempt to seek human rights within its own boundaries. Members of the Moscow, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Armenian and Georgian Helsinki Monitoring Group, for instance, are still subjected to mistreatment. And the emigration of Soviet Jews is still severely restricted."

(Congressional Record, May 7, 1985)

"PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE"

(Excerpts from a letter of Julius Sasnauskas, dated January 3, 1985, to a young American-Lithuanian. Sasnauskas was sentenced on Sept. 21, 1980 to 18 months of labor camps and five years of internal exile. He was co-signor of the Baltic 45 Appeal demanding self-determination for the Baltic States.)

"I sincerely thank you for your Christmas letter, which I received yesterday... Every time I read your letters, I am overjoyed about your youthful enthusiasm, broad horizons, and especially the beautiful, lively Lithuanian spirit. The danger of alienation and indifference exists even for those who live in Lithuania, but even more so in a foreign country.

"I had earlier mailed three letters to you, but I have realized now that none of them had reached you. Perhaps, I will succeed in 'squeezing' this one through. During the (past) three years, only one of my letters has reached the United States, while the rest (about ten of them) have perished in the Atlantic. That's the sad picture of postal communication, although I have managed to send several letters to Brazil and Canada. I would like very much for the two of us to be able to have a regular, unobstructed correspondence..., but, alas, this possibility does not yet exist.

"... In December, I 'celebrated' the fifth anniversary of my wanderings... since I was taken away from home. One and a half years later, I hope to walk the streets of Vilnius again..."

FORMER MANAGER DESCRIBES POLITICAL PRISONERS FUND

Valeriy Smolkin Praises Lithuanian Courage

One of the key witnesses at the Fifth Sakharov Hearing on April 10-11, in London, was Valeriy Smolkin, a former resident of Vilnius, Lithuania, who was forced to leave for Israel two years ago. A chemical engineer, Smolkin was arrested with a group of friends in 1965 for publishing an underground periodical, The Bell. After serving his term in Mordovia, Smolkin took up residence in Vilnius and devoted all his time for the welfare of Lithuanian political prisoners and their families. He became the manager of the unofficial Lithuanian fund for political prisoners.

Support of Prisoners - Strikes Against Apathy Endemic to Totalitarian State

On his way back to Israel, Smolkin gave an interview to a correspondent of Radio Free Europe's Lithuanian Desk. He warmly remembered his "unarmed friends," the Lithuanians, at whose side he waged the long, uneven struggle for humanity. Addressing the Sakharov Hearing in London, Smolkin emphasized that the Fund for Political Prisoners was only a part of activity in support of the GULAG prisoners and their families. A spontaneous effort to collect funds for the victims of the GULAG in the Soviet Union began in the early 1950's, long before the establishment of the Solzhenytsin Fund. In Lithuania, Smolkin related, where the words "Lithuanian" and "Catholic" are almost synonymous, a large part of the funds in support of prisoners came from the Catholics. Private contributions constituted about 20 percent of the prisoners' fund. According to Smolkin, this was of essential significance, because in addition to material support, individuals who have been forced out of society need more - it is important to create an atmosphere of goodness, trust and support around them, because such an atmosphere is the only way to resist apathy that thrives in the totalitarian Soviet system.

Eight Years' Caring for Lithuanian Political Prisoners

This welfare activity, Smolkin said, always had its base among the modest, unknown volunteers and to them I want to give my special thanks. According to the

RFE correspondent, this is how the historians of the future will remember Smolkin himself who has shunned all publicity. For eight years he traversed Lithuania, visiting the families of political prisoners, collecting a few rubles here or there to enable an old mother to take a trip to Mordovia to visit her son in a labor camp, to finance a parcel or drugs for a sick prisoner. Smolkin's visit in a family of a "prisoner of conscience" often was in itself the best medicine for the suffering people.

"Opposition of Conscience" vs. Hatred

Speaking about his activity, Smolkin emphasized its non-political humanitarian character. "Throughout the entire so-called dissident period, there were no enemies of the regime in the real sense of the word, just as there was no program of political struggle. Yet the struggle and the resistance continue. It is the OPPOSITION OF CONSCIENCE, A STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN DIGNITY, THE RIGHT TO LIVE ACCORDING TO ONE'S CONVICTIONS AND CONSCIENCE, Smolkin said. There is nothing that endangers the Soviet regime more than the people's striving to live independently, especially if such a striving manifests itself openly. Therefore, the henchmen of the regime are filled with such hatred for people who are trying to help those who are unjustly persecuted.

The Incessantly Changing "Army of Volunteers"

The chief characteristic of these dedicated people, Smolkin said, is the lack of structure in their activity. In Lithuania he was helped by many selfless people who collected and guarded the modest funds, because Smolkin himself was unable to do it - he was followed by KGB agents day and night. Unfortunately, these volunteers are constantly changing - they are persecuted, tried, exiled, but their place is taken by new soldiers of mercy and the noble activity goes on.

Balys Gajauskas - Duty in Face of Suffering

One of such faithful, selfless and self-sacrificing fellow-fighters of Smolkin was Balys Gajauskas, who worked for the Fund from 1974 to April 20, 1977, or the entire time between his 25-year and 15-year terms of imprisonment and exile. This is how Gajauskas understood his duty while at liberty: "I know many Lithuanian political prisoners, whom I have met in the camps during those 25 years. I am very much aware of their suffering and my duty to help them."

Lithuanian Women Defy KGB Threats

For this and other patriotic activity Balys Gajauskas again found himself in the GULAG camps. Meanwhile, the manager of the Fund, Smolkin, was forced to go abroad. During a routine search of the apartment of Sergei Chodorovich, the manager of the Moscow Fund for Political Prisoners, the KGB found Smolkin's financial statement and began to harass him quite seriously. Although Smolkin has a wife and two children, he never took fright. His only concern was for the 16 Lithuanian families which were listed in the statement. These mothers, sisters and daughters of political prisoners found themselves subjected to all kinds of KGB threats - from prison to deprivation of the right to visit their near ones. Yet even under interrogation these Lithuanian women withstood the most cruel trials and did not give away anything, although they were requested to reveal only one thing: how and in which manner they received the financial support, - Valeriy Smolkin proudly commented about the Lithuanian women.

IEŠMANTAS - POETRY WRITTEN IN "BLOOD"

Lithuanian "Prisoner of Conscience" Defies

Prohibition to Write

Gintautas Iešmantas, a Lithuanian poet, patriot and a "prisoner of conscience" is the chief figure in a moving article on imprisoned writers, "With Blood and Indelible Ink," by Boria Sax, in the May 17, 1985 issue of Commonweal. The author of the article is a poet, scholar, and human rights activist. Excerpts from the article, dealing with the "liberation of poetic power," follow:

"Sentenced on December 15, 1980 to six years in a labor camp plus five years of internal exile for "anti-Soviet slander" because of his poems and essays, the Lithuanian author Gintas Iešmantas continues to write poetry in prison. By doing this - as well as by continuing to protest his detention - he risks a possible prolongation of his sentence. Iešmantas has been forbidden to practice his art and new legislation enacted in 1983 makes it possible for prison authorities to extend by up to five years the sentences of inmates whom they consider uncooperative.

"Accustomed as we are to an extremely trivialized view of the arts, people in the West will respond to such defiance with a mixture of awe and bewilderment. It is a reproach to us, a reminder of how insignificant we have allowed poetry to become in our society. In the United States today widespread fear has been expressed that the very existence of the arts in our society could be threatened by a few paltry cutbacks in federal aid. At the same time, the gesture of Iešmantas reassures us by affirming the worth and durability of the poetic vocation. It is even uplifting to note that people can still feel threatened by poetry enough to jail others for producing it.

"And is Iešmantas a great poet? The intensity of such a commitment suggests that perhaps he could be. We can't know. As of yet, none of his literary work has reached the West. A few moving letters from him have been published as samizdat. Writing of the camp, he says: 'The windows are half covered with snow. You look outside and remember a snowy, windblown childhood. We are surrounded by forests; they say there are many raspberries. Of course, not for us.'

"One way or another, there is a good chance that some poems of Iešmantas will eventually find their way to the West. Then, despite being written in a comparatively obscure language, they will receive attention from the exile community and, most probably, the literary public at large. But there are others in comparable circumstances who have taken similar risks without even the hope of such remote and questionable rewards...

"... It might seem simple enough for Iešmantas to comply with Soviet authorities - just for a while - to win his release. He could stop writing poetry and protesting his confinement. Call it foolish, stubborn, or heroic. Call it humanitarian or vain. But what drives him to such a refusal is the poetic impulse - something that serious authors will recognize. Even today, it can inspire loyalty and fear."

GERMAN "DAY OF PRAYER" FOCUSES ON BALTIC STATES

Bishops Choose Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as Focus

The German Bishops' Conference has chosen Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as the focus of its traditional annual Day of Prayer in 1985. On May 12, 1985, the Catholics in Germany were asked to pray for their oppressed and persecuted fellow Christians in the Baltic States.

European Parliament's Resolution on Baltic Recalled

According to the editors of the West German periodical Glaube in der 2 Welt (Faith in the 2nd World, No. 4, 1985), the German Bishops have now chosen three countries that have also lost their state sovereignty and have lived in colonial dependence ever since the Soviet occupation. The European Parliament in Strasbourg has also made the same point. In its resolution of January 13, 1983, the Parliament asked that the question of the Baltic States be submitted to the United Nations Subcommittee on Decolonization.

The Parliament believes that the conferences, whose job it is to review the fulfillment of the Helsinki Final Act, should deal with the heavy loss these nations have suffered, and that the foreign ministers should not be reluctant to speak up for the right of these nations to choose their own form of government. The Political Committee of the European Parliament says in its supporting statement, that "in the period of worldwide decolonization, the USSR is the last colonial great power in the world."

Outcry on Nicaragua, Silence on Baltic States

Some Central and Western Europeans, the editors of the German periodical say, are trying to dismiss these three countries as insignificant. However, these are not dwarf states as Liechtenstein or Andorra, but each state is in itself bigger than other European countries, such as Albania, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, or Switzerland, whose sovereignty is not being questioned by anybody; they are also bigger states than Israel, Haiti or the Dominican Republic. Lithuania and Latvia are bigger than Togo. The population of Lithuania is the same as Ireland's and bigger than Nicaragua's, which is today making headlines in the world press, while there is silence about the situation in the Baltic area - emphasizes Glaube in 2 Welt.

THREEFOLD SOLIDARITY WITH PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

"Our brothers and sisters in the countries under persecution should expect threefold Solidarity from us: Solidarity of prayer, information and help. Solidarity of the prayer. The German bishops are calling on us again to take part in a day of prayer for the Persecuted Church. The persecuted Christians have an urgent need of our prayers! Solidarity of information. We must not forget the persecuted Christians. Solidarity of help. There are ways to support the persecuted Christians."

(Werenfried van Straaten, O.Praem, Glaube in der 2 Welt, No. 4, 1985).

PRIEST PROTESTS KGB INTERFERENCE AND BLACKMAIL

Blatant KGB interference in the affairs of the Lithuanian Theological Seminary is charged by a Lithuanian priest. The Rev. Rokas Puzonas, rector of Kiaukliai, reveals in a statement, dated December 25, 1984, that security organs attempted to enlist him as an informer as soon as he had submitted an application to enroll in the seminary in 1977. His statement was addressed to the Chief of the LSSR Security Committee; the Bishops of Lithuania; the president of the Seminary, the Rev. Viktoras Butkus; and security agent Vincas Platinskas. The statement was recently received in the West.

Promise of "Good Life" In Return for Informing

The Rev. Puzonas writes that agent Platinskas urged him to sign a pledge of "cooperation". When the future priest balked, invoking the imperatives of conscience, the agent countered with the following argument:

" 'If you are going to keep following the voice of your conscience, you'll be a loser and you won't achieve anything in your life. Just take a better look at the life of the older priests and you will see how little attention they pay to conscience, they look out for their own interests. We will guarantee an excellent future for you - we will help you to rise to the hierarchy, you'll be able to work in a larger parish and to go abroad, if only you'll be sensible... Otherwise we'll have a lifelong feud. Also, give a thought to your parents, brothers and sisters; you may harm them!'

"Exhausted by a three-hour long brainwashing," Puzonas continues, "wanting to get rid of him, and in my fervent desire to become a priest, I acted unadvisedly and agreed to sign a pledge of loyalty and to promise to provide the state security organs with information about 'anti-Soviet excesses' in the seminary. I did not do this on my own will, but under moral coercion by the security agent Platinskas. And coercion makes any document invalid, because free choice is lacking."

Activist Priests Denounced as "Extremists"

When Puzonas wanted to take his promise back, he was accused of "betraying a secret" and threatened with prison. He again promised to write his autobiography, as he was asked, and to choose a pseudonym, but decided not to collaborate. During the conversations the security agent denounced the activist clergy as "extremists" and called the arrested priests, the Revs. Alfonas Svarinskas and Sigitas Tamkevičius as "slanderers of the Soviet system."

After four meetings with agent Platinskas, Puzonas made up his mind not to see him again. In August, 1977, he received a telegram, informing him that he was accepted to the Theological Seminary in Kaunas. "Neither the priests, nor my near ones had any inkling how difficult my 'entrance exam' had been and that I was forced to enter into a compromise with my conscience."

Another Interrogation - a List of "Crimes"

In May, 1980, Puzonas was summoned to see magistrate Balčiūnas as a witness. When he went to the security building, he was met there by agent Platinskas, who verbally abused him for failing to cooperate. He also charged him with specific crimes committed during his stay in the seminary: presenting oral reports on the Lithuanian underground press and writing letters to the Lithuanian "prisoners of conscience." "I realized," Puzonas writes, "that I was not the only one in my class enlisted by the security organs to inform on others." Magistrate Balčiūnas joined the conversation and began questioning Puzonas about the former "prisoner of conscience" Anastazas Janulis, whom he charged with supplying Puzonas with underground literature.

The interrogation lasted five hours. Puzonas was told to write an explanation about all the "crimes" he had committed during his three years at the seminary. When he categorically refused, he was told that he would have to leave the seminary.

Addressing the chief of the LSSR Security Committee and all the security agents, the Rev. Puzonas tells them that they have violated two articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted on December 10, 1948. Article 12 prohibits arbitrary interference into personal affairs, and Article 20 (part 2) declares that nobody can be forced to join any organization.

Priest Charges Violation of Rights, Demands End to Interference

The Rev. Puzonas concludes his statement with the following demands:

"1. Please consider my statement of June 1977, in which I pledged to cooperate with the security organs, as invalid, because moral coercion was used against me;

"2. Stop blackmailing young people, who desire to become priests, and forcing them to cooperate with the security organs;

"3. Allow Lithuania's bishops, administrators and the administration of the Seminary to decide for themselves independently of the Commissioner for Religious Affairs, if a candidate for priesthood is a suitable one;

"4. Give complete freedom to the bishops or administrators of each Diocese to freely appoint a priest to any parish or to transfer him.

"I address myself to you in accordance with Article 47 of the LSSR Constitution, which allows (citizens) to submit proposals to State organs."

POPE RECEIVES LITHUANIAN BISHOPS

On May 3, Pope John Paul II received two representatives of the Lithuanian Catholic Church in a special audience. They were Archbishop Liudvikas Povilonis, apostolic administrator of the Dioceses of Kaunas and Vilkauskis, and his auxiliary Jozas Preikšas. The Lithuanian bishops informed the Pope about the situation of the Church in Lithuania and discussed the important needs and problems of the Lithuanian Catholic community. The Pope asked the 75-year old Povilonis to continue in his duties, although the Archbishop had submitted a written request for retirement.

REAGAN DOCTRINE VS. BREZHNEV DOCTRINE?

"The Brezhnev Doctrine must be matched by the Reagan Doctrine. The Brezhnev Doctrine brazenly states that once a land has fallen under the darkness of communism then it must remain communist forever. The Reagan Doctrine states that recent revolutionary forces in the world are democratic and that the spread of communism is not inevitable and can be reversed. We must make the Reagan Doctrine come to life in thoughtful and honest policy."

(Senator Gordon J. Humphrey, R-N.H., News Release,
May 9, 1985)

CALL FOR REDUCTION OF NON-RUSSIAN LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

A new call was made for more education and for more publications and broadcasts in Russian for the non-Russian populations of the republics of the USSR. Writing in the February 26, 1985, issue of Sovetskaya Estoniya, Soviet official, Mikhail N. Guboglo, advocates a more aggressive language policy for non-Russians. His article is discussed in the Radio Liberty Research Bulletin (RL 121/85, April 17, 1985) by Ann Sheehy, who brushes off the web of "euphemism and circumlocution" and finds a demand for the reduction of native language education, media, and book publishing.

Similar demands have created concern and led to protest actions in the non-Russian republics. Charges of "russification" were repeatedly made in the Lithuanian underground press.

"FOUR NATIONS THAT CAN STRUGGLE AGAINST MOSCOW"

"... We Ukrainians cannot stand apart from the struggle of peoples for their liberation; this means that we should play a very active part in all (such) movements.

"There are only four nations in Europe that can, even on their own, wage an armed struggle against Moscow for an extended period of time. These nations are adjacent to one another and they have common interests. They are the Poles, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Slovaks. All nations have a common religion, they are Catholics. I purposely do not mention the Orthodox Ukrainians, since there is no such Church in Ukraine. Rather, there is the Muscovite so-called Russian Orthodox Church."

(Yosyp Terelya, in the 7th issue (1984) of The Catholic Church in Ukraine, an underground publication).

BRAVE SOVIET MILITIA UNMASKS SINISTER SHIRT FACTORY

"Montana" Firm Closed in the Town of Kuršėnai

Private initiative and the spirit of enterprise may be touted in today's China, but in the Soviet Union they remain cardinal sins. An article by Sigitas Blėda in the April 12 issue of the Lithuanian Communist Party daily Tiesa (" 'Montana' Has Moved to Kuršėnai") describes how such sinful activity was punished in a Lithuanian town.

One recent early morning, the article says, militiamen stopped a red "Zhigul" car speeding towards Riga. In the trunk they found 84 privately made shirts. A search of the cottage of the driver's brother unearthed an even larger cache - 284 illegal items.

The two brothers, Antanas and Julius Šimberevičius, had opened their little factory in the town of Kuršėnai. They employed their family members and had a big dog watching their "posh two-story house." It appears that they were quite familiar

with the capitalist merchandising tricks - "a colored label sown to the pocket of a simple shirt suddenly transformed them into a brand product and made them more expensive."

As the author of the article reveals, many Lithuanian consumers are very keen on brand names: "An item worth anything must have a label." According to the enterprising brothers Šimberevičius, some consumers insist on a foreign firm label. "Although sometimes one can clearly see that the jeans are made in Vilkaviškis, but if one attaches a 'Wrangler' label on their behind....., the firm-conscious buyer is ready to pay several times more for such jeans..."

The two entrepreneurs received monetary fines. There is still a shortage of jeans and shirts in Lithuania. The militia is still abundant and busy.

LITHUANIAN PLAY ON STALIN ERA OPENS IN NEW YORK

The Awakening, a play by Antanas Škėma, will be given its first U.S. production May 31 - June 23, Wed.-Sun. 7:30 P.M. at the Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove Street, New York. Produced by Arts Club Theatre, the play is directed by Linda Pakri.

Škėma was actor and director in independent Lithuania. The Soviet Union occupied his homeland in 1940 under an agreement with Nazi Germany, but then was driven out when Hitler turned against his former ally in 1941. When the German front collapsed and Lithuania was again to be occupied by the communists, Škėma, along with so many others, fled and ended up in Germany. In 1949 he came to the United States and took up residence in Brooklyn. The Awakening was written in 1950 and its first Lithuanian-language production, directed by the author, took place in Montreal in 1953. Škėma continued to write plays, stories and novels until his untimely death in a car accident in Pennsylvania in 1961.

According to the Art Club Theatre release,

"THE AWAKENING is a powerful play written by one of Eastern Europe's most gifted authors, and here in a brand new translation it comes to life on the American stage for the first time. It is the winter of 1946, and Stalin has begun to purge all of Eastern Europe, including newly-occupied Lithuania: tens of thousands are sent to Siberia every day, hundreds more are arrested each night. It is against this backdrop that three friends meet again the NKVD (now KGB) headquarters in Vilnius, capital of Lithuania, for the first time in over eight years. There is Kazys, a leader of the underground, arrested for gathering weapons; there's Elena, his wife, arrested as leverage against him; and there's Pijus, with whom they both went to school, who loved and still loves Elena, and who always lost to Kazys. But now times have changed and Pijus, having joined the Communist Party, is to be their interrogator. The drama that ensues is an electric battle between conscience and ideology in a system where there are no winners. And it is one of the most chilling visions of Soviet-occupied Europe ever brought to the stage."