

Soviet massacres from the Elbe to the Urals?

by Webster Tarpley

"Nowadays to exercise self-determination through secession is to upset the Union, to pit peoples against one another and to sow discord, bloodshed and death." This blood-curdling threat was issued by M.S. Gorbachov on Dec. 23, during a debate in the Congress of People's Deputies in the Kremlin on the validity of the Molotov-Ribbentrop [Hitler-Stalin] Pact of 1939, and of the territorial annexations carried out by the U.S.S.R. under that pact. Gorbachov's threat was directed against Lithuania and the other Baltic states.

On Dec. 20, the Lithuanian Communist Party had voted by a margin of 855 to 160, with 12 abstentions, in the capital of Vilnius to split from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The demand from Vilnius for an "independent Lithuanian Communist Party with its own statutes and program," disregarding earlier warnings from the Gorbachov leadership in Moscow, marked the first time since 1917 that a component part of the CPSU had attempted to assert its independence from the Moscow center. The move was doubly alarming to the Kremlin because of the pervasive nationalist ferment in the Baltic states, clearly foreshadowing a total break with the U.S.S.R. One day later, the trade unions of neighboring Estonia gathered in conference in Tallinn to cut their ties with the Soviet trade union federation. Earlier in December, the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet had eliminated the constitutional clause guaranteeing the primacy of the Communist Party in state and society. Similar steps are in the works in Latvia as well.

The conjuncture of the Romanian-centered Balkan crisis with the Lithuanian-centered Baltic crisis is propelling the Kremlin toward the use of military force in either or both of these theaters. These events, coming after the liquidation of perestroika in mid-December, have also produced a new phase in the personal psychological disintegration of Gorbachov:

The telegenic peace angel is long gone, supplanted by the bullying, hectoring, jumpy dictator. Gorbachov is attempting to pose as the master, rather than the servant, of the institutional evolution of the Soviet Union back toward totalitarian repression. But as his hysterical outbursts increasingly betray, Gorbachov's cosmopolitan Trust pedigree is a severe and ultimately insuperable impediment to acting out the role of the *vozhd* of the Third Rome. All these events furnish striking validation for the predictions ventured by political prisoner Lyndon LaRouche in November, when he predicted an anti-perestroika crackdown turn in the Soviet empire for the period between Dec. 15 and the frosts of Epiphany (Jan. 6).

Mid-December had seen a virtual coup d'état by the resurgent Soviet industrial-military complex, led by Supreme Defense Council technocrats Lev Zaikov and Yuri Maslyukov, and Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov. On Dec. 19, the parliament ended the six-day wake for the defunct perestroika program by approving the Ryzhkov "war communism" economic program, which stresses central planning and a command economy as matters of practical policy. Gorbachov was assigned the degrading role of bullying the deputies into repudiating the innovations that his own "new thinking" was supposed to represent. Gorbachov ruled any amendments to the package out of order: "Either you support the program or you amend it, which means you do not support it at all." The program passed, 1,532-419.

Upon hearing of the Lithuanian split, Gorbachov had telephoned Lithuanian communist leader Algirdas Brazauskas to express his "dismay." After an emergency Politburo meeting, Yegor Ligachov told reporters that the Lithuanian move represented "great trouble for the people and for Communists." The Lithuanians, said Ligachov, "just do not

realize yet what grief will descend.”

The Central Committee plenum was conducted on Dec. 25-26. On Christmas Day, Gorbachov led off with a philippic against the Lithuanians. He branded the decision to split from the CPSU as “illegal,” “illegitimate,” and “beyond the framework of Soviet laws.” According to Gorbachov, “public opinion was shaped in favor of secession” by the Brazauskas leadership tailing after the pro-independence Lithuanian popular front, the Sajudis, which he attacked for “acting subversively” with “nationalist terror” and with “provocative” attempts to “internationalize” the Baltic question through visits to the American Embassy in Moscow and the White House. “The present Communist Party and state leadership will not permit the breakup of the federal state,” said Gorbachov. “We have to clearly draw up limits beyond which one cannot go because going beyond them means, in advance . . . the destruction of perestroika in its entirety [and the] disintegration of the Soviet Union.”

“Harsh necessity requires actions to preserve the state and secure its unity. Here we should not have any illusions as far as the intentions or abilities of the central government are concerned,” Gorbachov stated. He appealed implicitly to his U.S. and British condominium partners by presenting “an integral, stable and powerful Soviet Union” as an “urgent need of the epoch and of the existing complex system of international security.” “Nobody can be interested in its destruction,” argued Gorbachov. He ridiculed the Lithuanians and the other Baltic peoples, ranting that their “hopes for some kind of ‘Western sugar daddy’ are rather naive.”

According to sources, Brazauskas argued that if the Lithuanian communists were to follow the Gorbachov line, the Lithuanian Communist Party could not survive for a week. Pointing to the elections for the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet to be held on March 18, Brazauskas asserted that the only chance to keep any Communist Party in existence in Lithuania would be by allowing it to split from Moscow. Mikhail A. Ulyanov, an actor by trade, intervened to propose that Gorbachov visit the troublesome Lithuanians personally. One wonders who provided Ulyanov with his script. According to an unnamed central committee member quoted by the *New York Times*, “Gorbachov seemed almost relieved to have this idea presented to him.”

If Gorbachov fails to repress Lithuania

In reality, Gorbachov will be as happy to court fiasco in Vilnius over the next few days as Heinrich Himmler was to assume command of the doomed Army Group Vistula in the last phases of World War II: Both are losing missions. Before accepting this thankless assignment, Gorbachov was subjected to one of the self-destructive public episodes that have dogged him, especially since he threatened to resign his posts on Dec. 9 in response to taunts that he was the darling of the Western capitalists and the Roman Pope. In a heated exchange with Ukrainian deputy Valentin Karasyov, whom

Gorbachov accused of representing the Inter-Regional faction to which the late Andrei Sakharov also belonged, Gorbachov delivered an outburst to the plenum: “There are attempts to make you believe I am working on behalf of someone, that I want to rip up the party and dissolve the Soviet federation. I reject that categorically. I am a Communist, a convinced Communist. For some, that may be a fantasy, but for me, it is my main goal.” At the conclusion of the session, Gorbachov retainer Vadim Medvedev told the press that Gorbachov does not intend, despite all the threats, “to use military means to resolve problems in the Soviet Union.”

“We stand for political solutions,” said Medvedev. But he also pointed out that although the present Soviet Constitution enshrines the right of republics to secede, there is a “big difference” between that clause and the “political realities.” Medvedev carefully noted that the Baltic is an internal matter of the U.S.S.R., where “efforts have to be made to prevent a chain reaction” of political rebellion.

According to senior European intelligence experts, a possible scenario would foresee an intervention by Red Army troops in Lithuania in the aftermath of a failed Gorbachov visit. This might be accompanied by Gorbachov’s ouster. The Kremlin’s problem is that the crushing of Catholic Lithuania by Soviet forces would be likely to detonate a larger rebellion in Catholic Poland, where the insane monetarist economic policies adopted by Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz on the advice of the neo-Schachtian Jeffrey Sachs, are imposing murderous austerity and raising social tensions to explosive levels. A revolt in Poland would mean in turn that communications with some 400,000 elite Soviet troops in East Germany would become tenuous. Poland might also detonate the Ukraine, where the Russian Orthodox Church has been demanding a crackdown by state authorities against the Vatican-linked Ukrainian Catholic Church, which has been reassuming control of churches occupied by Orthodox priests since Stalin’s time.

Thus, according to these experts, a bloody civil war could shortly engulf the immense land area between the Elbe and the Urals. According to these experts, the Romanian massacres are the signal that the peaceful and joyous toppling of communist dictators, as in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, has come to an end, and that the ugly and bloody revolutionary phase has begun.

If such a bloodbath comes, the craven Bush regime will bear a heavy responsibility. Secretary of State James Baker, in an act of unbelievable folly, appeared on television Dec. 24 to incite a Soviet military intervention into Romania by acknowledging that Stalin’s view of Yalta was the right one, and that the Russians have a free hand in their own sphere. After Romania could come Yugoslavia, which is also on the brink of civil war, and with that the achievement of the millennial goal of a warm water port, turning the NATO southern flank at the Adriatic, or south through Bulgaria to Tsargrad and the Bosphorus.