

# Bush gives Gorby free rein in Lithuania

by William Jones

When Eduard Shevardnadze arrived in Washington on April 3, a day earlier than planned, he was not deprived of seeing a strong manifestation of the anti-Russian feeling which has been awakened in the U.S. population in response to the Soviet step-by-step crackdown in Lithuania. Hundreds of Lithuanian-Americans and others demonstrated in front of the White House (one of the biggest demonstrations there in quite some time), while others gathered, in spite of inclement weather, outside the Capitol.

Later in the evening, they all gathered outside the Soviet Embassy in Washington, in a candlelight vigil, chanting "Nyet, Nyet, Soviet." On April 4, the House of Representatives passed a resolution calling on the Bush administration to recognize the new government of Lithuania as soon as possible. The resolution passed by an overwhelming 416-3 vote, indicating the groundswell of support for the Lithuanian government. On the following day, the LaRouche for Justice campaign committee took out a full-page ad in the daily *Washington Times*, condemning the appeasement policies of the Bush administration and calling for immediate recognition of the Landsbergis government. WTOP, the Washington all-news station, was airing forty 55-second played paid ads by LaRouche, a Democratic candidate for Congress from Virginia, condemning the Bush administration's policy.

The heat was definitely on Secretary of State James Baker III, one of the key authors of the new appeasement policy of the administration, who perhaps had an inkling of the backfire potential of those policies. The first day's meeting with Shevardnadze was billed as dealing with Lithuania. Baker and Shevardnadze held a short press conference after the first day, where Baker told the press that Shevardnadze had assured him that the Soviets would deal with the situation in Lithuania by dialogue rather than using force. Baker expressed his assurance that he took Shevardnadze at his word.

But while Baker was speaking, Gorbachov was warning the Estonian President that if the Estonians dared to stand by their declaration of intention with regard to independence, he would give them the "Lithuania treatment." At the same time, at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday morning (Washington time) April 5, some 50 armed Soviet soldiers, clad as militia, occupied the prosecutor's office in Vilnius, a further move in

Gorbachov's attempt to strangle the Lithuanian independence movement.

## Summit is the real issue for Bush

But the real issue for Baker and Bush, as for Gorbachov, was discussed on the second day of the Baker-Shevardnadze talks. Then it was announced that Bush and Gorbachov would hold a five-day summit in the United States starting May 30, almost one month earlier than was previously planned. Not only was the question of a possible summit not being used by the administration to gain concessions from the Soviets in Lithuania, but the summit date was moved forward.

Some Washington wags are mooted that the change of date is due to the fear in the administration that Gorbachov will crack down even harder in Lithuania as time goes on. Bush wants to seal a major new arms agreement and a trade deal with Gorbachov before Gorbachov exposes himself as the new Ivan the Terrible in his suppression of Russia's numerous Captive Nations.

The administration hopes that a new arms and trade agreement with the Soviets would help to prop up Gorbachov's somewhat shaky position back home. Giving the Soviets Most Favored Nation status would be a necessary consequence of such an agreement. Bush and Baker would like the "Lithuanian problem" to quickly disappear so as not to jeopardize the U.S.-U.S.S.R. condominium. A crackdown, perhaps, but it must be done quietly, with little drama so as not to upset the superpower applecart, they seem to reason. Gorbachov seems also to understand this. That's why the crackdown in Lithuania is done in a step-by-step, methodical fashion, rather than in one fell swoop, which would create a lot of unpleasant publicity.

There is a hitch, however, to these sinister calculations. Firstly, the hardened resistance of the Lithuanian people and the other Baltic peoples may not permit such a slow-motion crunch. Secondly, the U.S. electorate, having lost a good deal of their previous Gorbomania, has received some rather sobering reminders by the recent actions of the Russian troops in Lithuania. Underneath the media froth, there is a good deal of common-sense mistrust of the Russian motives.

This has also made itself felt in Congress. Support for House Concurrent Resolution 289 on Lithuania was carried by both conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats. A trade treaty or even a new arms under circumstances of Russian repression against the Lithuanian nation will not be as easy to ram through the Senate as the INF Treaty. "I don't know what kind of deal Bush has with Gorbachov," said Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.) at a press conference on Wednesday, April 4, "but it's got to stop." More of this kind of talk might be heard as Bush pushes further in his desperate attempt to save Gorbachov. The President would do well to remember that as Hitler fell from power, so grew the real scorn for Neville Chamberlain—the man who helped put him there.