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## Interview: Msgr. Ladas Tulaba

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# Moscow sends agents to split Lithuania

*The cynicism shown by most Western governments in response to the Lithuanian people's demands for freedom, is fed by lack of understanding of the tumultuous changes under way in the Soviet empire. To help our readers to evaluate recent events, Maria Cristina Fiocchi of EIR's Rome bureau posed a few questions to Monsignor Ladas Tulaba. He is founder of Pontifical Lithuanian College in Rome, and for 40 years its rector, as well as a diplomat and in-depth expert on Eastern Europe.*

**EIR:** Are Western descriptions of the situation in your country really accurate?

**Tulaba:** I would not say so. There is a real disinformation campaign afoot about Lithuania, orchestrated by Moscow via its agents around the world. There is even talk of dissent and rivalries having broken out among the Lithuanian political forces; these are all falsehoods spread with the aim of dividing and thus weakening the independence front.

But that is not the most serious and troubling fact. We have received news of a massive deployment from Moscow of agents-provocateurs with the aim of causing clashes to explode during the peaceful demonstrations of our people. The Lithuanian leaders are very worried and have spread the watchword to neither respond to, nor accept, any provocation.

If you leave these aspects aside, the situation is tranquil. Our leaders are not showing themselves to be especially worried. On the contrary, they are calm and not giving any sign of weakness or capitulation.

**EIR:** Do you think the Lithuanians will succeed in getting all that they ask or that they will have to stoop to negotiating with Moscow?

**Tulaba:** As far as the independence of Lithuania is concerned, no one is willing to turn back—in no case, under no threat. The Declaration of Independence is legitimate and is the will of the entire people, the entire nation. The government is, however, willing to negotiate with the Soviet gov-

ernment, to seek an accord that will also satisfy Moscow. In particular, they want to maintain commercial interchange with Russia and those economic relations which existed already in the past.

Perhaps few people know that the two fertilizer plants which were forced to shut down production, because of the boycott of gas supplies from Moscow, are two of the biggest plants of this kind in all of Europe and that the fertilizer supplies for the Soviet Union depend on them. For this reason, too, when the Russians realized that economic boycott was hurting their own interests, they reopened the gas spigots for Ionava's factory.

**EIR:** Many maintain that Lithuania made a mistake in acting so rapidly and inflexibly. Do you believe these criticisms are right?

**Tulaba:** The Lithuanians had no choice. The reform proposal being readied in Moscow, to allow an eventual independence of the republics, has yet to be presented, discussed, and approved; it will take at least five years before any results are reached. Then too, everyone knows that it is a "swindle-law" whose true purpose is to hinder the secession from the U.S.S.R. of any republic. Moscow and Gorbachov himself, moreover, have denounced the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on the basis of which 50 years ago Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia were invaded and occupied by the Russians by military force. We have drawn the due consequences of this and have reaffirmed our independence. We do not want to be Moscow's enemies, nor its adversaries, but we wish to deal with them on a state-to-state basis.

**EIR:** In your view, might the Russians opt for a hard line and militarily invade Lithuania?

**Tulaba:** It is a very complex situation. Since communism has failed, Gorbachov is staking all his cards on "socialism with a human face," so as to build the European "common house" and to make the Soviet Union, in the eyes of the Europeans, a credible partner worthy of respect. The final objective, naturally, is that the Russians should become the masters of this "common house." To implement this project, Gorbachov cannot lose his credibility; a military invasion of Lithuania would represent the failure of his political strategy.

Yet, if the Soviet Union did not desperately need aid from the capitalist West, it would not have hesitated to enact a harsh repression; the military contingent of the Red Army in Lithuania has been doubled, the number of police tripled.

**EIR:** Here in the West there is much talk of a growing internal opposition to Gorbachov. What basis does this report have?

**Tulaba:** These are the fruits of the propaganda of Soviet agents abroad. They say that Gorbachov is in trouble, that he risks being overturned, that the military are organizing a coup against him and so forth, so as to push the Westerners

into supporting his policy and to prop him up. Everybody believed these mystifications, even U.S. President George Bush.

The truth is that the very system has collapsed, quite apart from Gorbachov. The only way out is a real change in the Soviet system; they have to get the economy relaunched, to increase agricultural and industrial production.

**EIR:** Are you confident?

**Tulaba:** I'm an optimist. The difficulties to be overcome are immense, but if the Westerners are not so naïve and don't let themselves be deceived by Gorbachov, the situation could evolve positively. Gorbachov is not the savior of the world, he is a man of the secret services, and that's how he should be treated.

**EIR:** What do you think the Russians think about German reunification?

**Tulaba:** The leaders of the Kremlin had already foreseen for four years the possibility of German reunification and they have studied what price they wanted Europe to pay to give their assent. The price is neutralization, of course.

**EIR:** What role is being played by the Holy See in the conflict between Moscow and Vilnius?

**Tulaba:** The Holy See is doing the impossible to help in finding a solution that will satisfy both Moscow and Lithuania, with respect to the independence and sovereignty of our nation. Personally the Holy Father is very close to the Lithuanian people. Even Poland is helping us. Solidarnosc representatives went to Vilnius to express their solidarity with our people's struggle.

**EIR:** What is your opinion on the synod of European bishops, recently convoked by John Paul II?

**Tulaba:** It is an idea that the Pope has been pursuing for many years, that of recreating a Catholic spiritual center in Europe. It will be a fruitful and useful encounter in every respect. The bishops of the West will be able to hear about the difficulties of the Eastern bishops, and vice versa. And who knows, maybe the Western bishops will have things to learn from the Eastern bishops who have endured the long night of communist oppression with heroism!

**EIR:** What is the situation of young people in the East?

**Tulaba:** There is a great desire for knowledge. The communist system made a *tabula rasa* of spiritual values. The youth are not educated. There is an enormous spiritual void, and that is dangerous. The young people admire the faith, but they do not know what it really is. Our task is to fill this void.

## Landsbergis assails Western 'pragmatism'

*On April 17, President Vytautas Landsbergis of Lithuania condemned the lack of morality underlying Western leaders' appeasement of Mikhail Gorbachov, as stemming from the moral affliction of pragmatism. He also ridiculed the myth of Gorbachov propagated by the West. On May 12, Landsbergis commented in an interview with Reuters, "Many foreign governments are looking on indifferently at the events in Lithuania. We cannot say the same of the Kremlin."*

*The following excerpts are from the broadcast of Landsbergis' April 17 speech on Radio Vilnius, monitored, transcribed, and translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service.*

World public opinion is yet another weapon that is also very important but which only partially depends on us. Here we encountered an extraordinary competition in people's minds, the press, and all the media that shape public

opinion. This competition was made by the myth of Mikhail Gorbachov in the world and the pragmatism and indifference which had taken root a long time ago in many Western countries. . . .

It looks as if a certain blackmail on an international scale, concerning the future of M. Gorbachov and the hopes of Western states which are linked with it, has also failed. They say: What should be sacrificed? Lithuania or Gorbachov? Or perestroika? As if Lithuania would mean a return to some sort of stagnation and not to a consistent continuation of perestroika itself! Certain threats that the issue of Lithuania may even threaten world peace look too paradoxical, because the whole world could see what these forces of peace were, and how these forces behaved in Lithuania.

There is a certain matter which Western politicians were made to believe: That one should not hurry with recognition of the Lithuanian government or direct diplomatic contacts because this could provoke the most conservative forces of the U.S.S.R. In other words, recognition would provoke madness, and therefore one should not hurry with this. Well, concerning this we can be patient. A month is a very short period of time, in comparison with the several years which Lithuania had to wait after the Declaration of Independence in 1918.