

Baltic drive for freedom faces new Moscow hard line

by Our Special Correspondents

The situation in the three Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—seeking independence from the Soviet Union and restitution of their full national sovereignty, is presently heating up again in a dramatic fashion. In a situation of ever-worsening economic conditions, there is widespread fear, particularly in Lithuania, that Moscow might go back to a hard line vis-à-vis the state which had declared itself independent on March 11, 1990.

Lithuania's declaration of independence had been answered by Moscow with the imposition of an economic blockade. Even though the blockade was later lifted, politicians as well as ordinary citizens often underline the fact there is still critical undersupply of goods in some areas, especially of medical supplies. Now, there is additional fear that a new economic blockade might be imposed as Moscow hardens its line, both in words and deeds. Gorbachov addressed Congress of the People's Deputies on Dec. 17, with a report demanding the "constitutional" ratification of presidential emergency powers and that all republics commit themselves to sign the new Union Treaty. Given the fact that all Baltic states just recently reiterated their "no" to the new Union Treaty, this will mean that by Jan. 1, 1991, the confrontation with the Baltic states will be on.

Furthermore, many politicians express deep worry that the conflict in the Persian Gulf may influence their situation. Especially the period around Jan. 15, 1991, the day the United Nations' ultimatum expires, is regarded as extremely critical. It is feared that Moscow might give Washington the green light to attack Iraq, if Washington refrains from any intervention in the event Moscow cracks down on the inde-

pendence movement in the Baltic states and in other republics. Already, Soviet troops have come to blows with the population in Vilnius, Lithuania, where in mid-November, Army forces used water cannons and fired into the air to disperse demonstrations against the Soviet military draft, according to Radio Vilnius.

When the news was published on Dec. 2 that Soviet Internal Affairs Minister Vadim Bakatin—who was considered rather liberal—had been fired and replaced by Boris Pugo, the former KGB head in Latvia and a Stalinist hardliner, who will serve with Col. Gen. Boris Gromov, former military commander in Afghanistan, this caused reactions of fear, if not shock. "This may mean that we will all have to go to prison," said a professor from Vilnius University, visibly moved also by the memory of Stalin's mass-deportations of Lithuanians to Siberia after World War II.

The appeal for mediators

The carefully worded resolutions passed by the Second Joint Session of the Supreme Councils of the Baltic States, which took place on Dec. 1, 1990 in the parliament in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital, prove the desire of the Baltic governments and parliaments for a peaceful solution of the crisis with Moscow. In a resolution addressed to the Fourth U.S.S.R. People's Congress of Deputies, the Baltic parliamentarians both refute all slanders put against them by Moscow, and offer future economic cooperation. A resolution addressed to the parliaments of the world calls for third states to act as mediators between the Baltic states and Moscow in negotiations for independence and withdrawal of all Soviet



Lithuania's President Vytautas Landsbergis (far right) at a recent commemoration in Hungary. Next to him, from right to left, are the daughter of the martyred Hungarian patriot Imre Nagy; the president of the Hungarian Political Prisoners' association, Jenö Fonay; and Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the German leader of the Schiller Institute.

troops from Baltic states territory.

There is widespread concern among all political circles, that the threat to the Baltic states, above all to Lithuania, might not be correctly evaluated by the West. Similarly, one generally senses the danger that the food aid which is presently being massively shipped into the Soviet Union by the West, may not reach those who most urgently need it, but that the food aid might be turned into a political weapon by the *nomenklatura*, especially against pro-democratic forces. This does not, of course, mean that one should be opposed to food aid in general, which is badly needed right now.

Traditionally, the food and also general goods supply has been better in the Baltic states than in other parts of the Soviet Union. However, walking through stores in the city of Vilnius these days gives an idea of the worsening general supply: While bread is still available in sufficient quantity and quality, there are constant shortages of goods like milk, vegetable oil, and many other basic food items. Securing an adequate food supply for one's family is becoming more and more difficult and time-consuming. And, in fact, as everyone will confirm, the food situation in Moscow now is even more catastrophic.

In light of the disastrous economic situation of the Soviet Union and the tension around the fight for independence, there is great interest among Lithuanian politicians and intellectuals (which often is one and the same in Lithuania today), in the economic program of the "Productive Triangle" conceptualized by Lyndon LaRouche. Generally, the Baltic states are considered as one economic unit, to be integrated into a larger economic zone reaching from the Baltic through Belorussia into Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. The need for infrastructure development is obvious, and underlined by dreadful daily experiences, in transportation and communications in particular. In the joint parliamentary debate, particular emphasis was put on the necessity to develop a "Baltic" infrastructure among the states.

Concerning the energy supply, there is great openness to develop nuclear energy, even though a nuclear plant operating in Lithuania, the Ignalina nuclear plant, is a source of great concern, as it is considered to be "at least as bad as the one in Chernobyl, if not worse." "During the time of the blockade, we understood that we do need an independent energy supply, because we were cut off from oil supplies from the Soviet Union. Again, there is general fear about a

cutoff from oil supplies, as no written contracts with the Soviet Union exist, and present deliveries could be stopped from one day to the other, causing industrial standstill as well as emergencies in heating during winter time," a professor of economics explained.

'Cautious optimism'

The openness and readiness to debate and consider political programs is stunning, but less surprising, if one considers the fact that many of the active politicians in Lithuania have no "professional" background in politics. Many of them are philosophers, scientists, and artists who, out of moral conviction, shouldered the burden of political responsibility in a very dangerous period. Unlike most Western intellectuals, these people know the works of the great classical European philosophers and artists very well. In Lithuania, a state with a long Catholic tradition, the writings of the great Cardinal Nicolaus of Cusa, the philosopher, scientist, churchman, and statesman, are definitely better known among politicians than among the politicians in his native land, Germany. (Whenever his name was mentioned in a political discussion, the reply was an immediate and spontaneous "Ah, Nicola Kusietes"—Cusa's name in Lithuanian.) For them, unity of politics and morals, as demanded so often by Lyndon LaRouche in his writings, is not exotic at all—contrary to almost all politicians and intellectuals in the West.

What will the future hold? There is, despite all the difficulties and dangers, at least a sense of "cautious optimism," both in leading political circles and in the Lithuanian population at large. Diplomatic negotiations between Lithuania and Moscow must be continued; however, the future of the Baltic republics now very much depends on what the West will do. If the West, particularly Western Europe, follows a policy combining offers of economic cooperation with Moscow with conditions that Moscow, in turn, allow these republics, which were incorporated into the Soviet Union in stark violation of all principles of international law, to regain their independence, then the fight can be won. This was the basic idea expressed by Lyndon LaRouche in his Kempinski Bristol Hotel speech in Berlin on Oct. 12, 1988, which focused on German reunification and Poland and proposed a Food for Peace program.

An exemplary move to support the Baltic republic has been made by the sister city of Vilnius: Duisburg, Germany. In early December, a convoy of five trucks full of medical supplies and food aid was leaving Duisburg, addressed to Vilnius, Lithuania, and not Soviet Union. The convoy is expected to arrive in Vilnius in mid-December. It will be most telling for Nobel Peace Prize-winner Mikhail Gorbachov's real intentions, whether or not these trucks will be allowed to cross the Polish-Lithuanian border. If not, then the West has all the more reason to support the cause of the Baltic states and demand from Moscow that it grant Lithuania's right for independence immediately.

Documentation

Baltic states appeal to world parliaments

Five resolutions were passed at the "Extraordinary joint session of the Baltic Supreme Councils" which took place in Vilnius, Lithuania, on Dec. 1, 1990. They were signed by the presiding chairmen of the joint session, the chairmen of the Supreme Councils of the three Baltic republics: A. Ruutel (Estonia), A. Gorbunovs (Latvia), and V. Landsbergis (Lithuania).

Appeal to the parliaments of the world

We, the deputies of the Supreme Councils of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania, meeting in a joint session in Vilnius, the capital of the Republic of Lithuania

Agreeing to the fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act reaffirmed in the Paris Charter for a New Europe;

Regretting that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania participated on an unequal basis at the Paris meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, as no other state possessed authorization to adopt decisions on behalf of the Baltic states;

Recalling that the Baltic nations, having led an armed resistance to occupation and annexation in the past, are now directing all their efforts to a peaceful and democratic restoration of their violated rights, but do not forget, however, their inalienable right to resist any aggression;

Stating that continuing threats by the Soviet Union to use force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania directly contradict the Soviet Union's renewed pledges outlined in the Paris Charter and Joint Declaration;

Testifying that the Soviet Union has persistently violated the right of all nations, emphasized in the Charter, to determine their own future in accordance with the principles of the United Nations;

Emphasizing the fact that the Soviet Union, by avoiding genuine inter-state negotiations, is escalating the risk of open conflict with the Baltic states in this region of Europe, which, up to now, has remained at peace; and,

Adhering to the pledges of the signatories of the Charter to call upon third nations for the peaceful regulation of conflict,

Call upon the parliaments of the CSCE member-states to