
Interview: Valdemaras Katkus and Juozas Tumelis

'We need direct economic ties to the European Community'

Lithuanian Deputy Foreign Minister Valdemaras Katkus and Prof. Juozas Tumelis, the president of Sajudis, the independence movement of Lithuania, were interviewed by Hartmut Cramer in the town of Hüttenfeld, Germany on Aug. 2, while attending a seminar for exiled Lithuanians. Their visit was part of a tour of Germany in late July and early August. The Lithuanian Information Bureau is located in Hüttenfeld.

EIR: In recent weeks Lithuania has experienced, first, a great success in foreign policy, and then, a catastrophe. The murders at the Lithuanian-Belorussian border station of Medininkai were, in fact, judging by the reports of the few surviving witnesses, executions. What does this mean? How do you judge the situation in your country?

Katkus: The events of this week reflect Lithuania's actual situation. On the one hand, a treaty was signed on July 29 between Russia and Lithuania which is, in our judgment, a genuine treaty on Yeltsin's part with Lithuania. On the other hand, on July 31, the murders in Medininkai were carried out. These two events mark the two poles between which Lithuania is moving. On the one hand, we cooperate with those who want this cooperation; on the other, there are those who want to destroy Lithuania.

The treaty with Russia is significant; it is very important for Russia and naturally also for Lithuania. In fact, on July 29, three documents were signed: The first is the treaty of state relations between Lithuania and Russia, which was signed by both Presidents, Boris Yeltsin and Vytautas Landsbergis. The second concerns the cultural and economic development of the Kaliningrad region. At the signing of this agreement by the prime ministers of both states, also present was the president of the Kaliningrad region, who had taken part in the preparations for this treaty. The third agreement concerns the opening of consulates in Russia and Lithuania; that is, a representative of Lithuania in Moscow, and a Russian representative in Vilnius. This document was signed by the two foreign ministers.

Further, it was decided to open a Lithuanian office in Kaliningrad that would deal primarily with solving economic problems and, beyond that, help to implement the agreements that were made.

EIR: Can you briefly identify the most important points of this treaty with Russia?

Katkus: There are two. First, Russia has recognized our independence, and also the documents of March 11 [Lithuania's declaration of independence of March 11, 1990]. And second, the agreement states that the annexation [of Lithuania by the Soviet Union] of 1940 was contrary to international law, and hence should be abrogated; and such an act naturally serves to improve the relations between the Lithuanian and Russian people. I should like to emphasize that this is, on Yeltsin's part, a genuine treaty. Yeltsin does not run away from problems, but rather is disposed to solve them jointly.

In this connection I should like to point to two other things: We began treaty negotiations with Russia at the end of July of last year. During this year we have had many discussions and have always found compromises, since we were striving for good relations. We began consultations with the leadership of the Kremlin in August of last year, yet until now there has been no progress with regard to negotiations. There are no negotiations. Instead, we are subjected to constant pressure, which has now turned into aggression. For that matter, we have felt these pressures since March 11, 1990, above all after the blockade was declared against us. Later, during the bloody events of Jan. 13, 1991, they went so far as to occupy more than 10 buildings, among them the television tower; and now we have lived through the events of July 31, which were also bloody.

EIR: How do you judge the reaction of the West to these massacres?

Katkus: The reaction of the West to Jan. 13 was quite strong; still, it did not provide a consistent policy vis-à-vis

the Baltic states. Gorbachov, on the other hand, has followed a consistent policy toward our countries, with the primary goal of using violence to oppress us. To the world, however, he declared that he is in genuine consultations or negotiations with us. After Jan. 13, the occupied buildings were not returned to us, and Western Europe did not take the Jan. 13 events as an occasion for helping us get back those buildings. And we think that precisely this position of Western Europe has fostered the most recent incident. Gorbachov and his people have come to the conclusion that should they in the future comport themselves as they did on Jan. 13, nobody in the West would do a thing.

After Jan. 13, the representatives of various parliaments of Europe came to us in Vilnius, and also six members of the European Parliament; that had a great political significance and gave Lithuania a certain international protection. But these initiatives took place a relatively long time ago; after that there arose an atmosphere in which the rulers of the Soviet Union could feel secure in taking further steps against us. The aim of the Jan. 13 events, and also those of July 31, was to balkanize the Baltic problem. In other words, the Soviet communists wish to provoke military resistance on our part. And they wish to terrorize us, to break the dignity of our people, to stop our economic reforms, as well as demoralize our border police and officials.

EIR: What do you expect from the West, especially from Western Europe and Germany?

Katkus: From Western Europe and the Federal Republic of Germany we expect a consistent policy. One can cite many examples to show that the methods of the communist government of the Soviet Union have not changed. In 1939-40, the Estonian ports were blockaded by the Soviet communists; they simply checked all the ships which traveled to and from Estonia. In 1940, a passenger flight from Tallinn to Helsinki was shot down; all the passengers lost their lives. In Latvia in May-June 1940, Latvian border police were killed, and the witnesses to these murders were dragged away to the Soviet Union. The only thing left to find were the empty cartridges of the Soviet machine guns.

In those years, Moscow accused the government of Lithuania of persecuting the communists, kidnaping Soviet soldiers, and doing everything to get the Soviet Union involved in a war, even though Lithuania at the time had no borders with the Soviet Union. I recount this as proof, that the methods of the communists of Soviet Russia vis-à-vis the Baltic states are the same, no matter who is in power, Stalin or Gorbachov: economic blockades, murder of border officials, and provocations; for example, by blowing up bombs which were laid by the Soviet forces themselves; these methods have not changed.

Everything at that time occurred in the shadow of the coming war; today, however, we have peace in Europe, and we still believe in the collective security of Estonia, Latvia,

and Lithuania. Western Europe must understand that the Baltics, as a part of Europe, can only be freed by the Europeans.

Tumelis: I should like to go over again the barbaric action of July 31. Especially astonishing in that regard are, for me, the following elements, above all in comparison to the events of Jan. 13. First, the complete anonymity. Whereas at that time we knew exactly who had done it, today we know neither who did it nor who was behind it. Secondly, the unusual cruelty of the action, which leads us to conclude that it was carefully planned. There is a surprising coincidence in the timing: the parliament in Lithuania on vacation, the signing of the treaty with Russia, and the visit of George Bush to Moscow.

This time the occupying forces went further than in January. It would be terrifying if they were to go on this way. Yet they can do so.

Who gave the command, and who carried it out concretely? It is very difficult to answer this question today. But everyone who knows the Soviet system, knows that such actions could not be carried out without the approval of the top echelons of power.

EIR: What conclusion does the Lithuanian government draw from this barbaric action?

Tumelis: We are forced to reaffirm our decisions. We shall become more united. The biggest problem we have now is with the activities of the communists loyal to Moscow in Lithuania. It is no secret that they want to overthrow our government, which they also sought to do around the events of Jan. 13. They are carrying out active propaganda against our government, and are seeking to shake the faith of the Lithuanian people in the parliament and the government.

Our future will also depend upon the reaction in the West. If the West is going to react to the events in Lithuania, in the same way that today people react to the Trojan War, or the Thirty Years' War, then naturally our prospects are much worse.

The war against Lithuania has been going on for 52 years already. Will it go on as long again? To this question, we do not have an answer today.

EIR: Earlier you mentioned the coincidence between the frightful massacre in Medininkai and the visit to Moscow of George Bush. The U.S. President has not protested against the massacre; instead, he went so far as to make Gorbachov's formulation his own, that "both sides" should avoid provocations. Does the Lithuanian government fear an agreement between the superpowers in relation to the Baltics, that is, the abandonment of the Baltic states?

Katkus: Our people, the citizens of Lithuania, have such fears. And they have historic grounds for this. After the Second World War the Americans assured support to our partisan troops which were actively fighting against Soviet

occupation, and announced that they were coming. The armed resistance of Lithuania lasted some 14 years. After that, people said, "America has betrayed us."

What happened on July 31 reminds people in our country of this post war period. And the concern that has arisen from that, has naturally also been noticed by the government of Lithuania. The question is the same: Is there some kind of superpower agreement?

Tumelis: It seems to me that various agreements have already been made, probably already in 1989 in Malta. Many of the Malta accords astonish me, especially when I compare them with subsequent events in central Europe. Very likely, Bush and Gorbachov at the time discussed a new division of spheres of influence. Gorbachov could no longer hold central Europe as he had formerly, and neither could he keep it as a *cordon sanitaire*. He gave up this region to the sphere of influence of Western Europe, and for that he probably obtained some promises; for example, that the borders of the Soviet Union would not be changed, i.e., that the Baltics would remain part of the Soviet Union.

EIR: What *concrete* help do you expect from the West, particularly Western Europe?

Katkus: Above all making clear a position that the creeping aggression must cease, that we must have returned to us all the occupied buildings, and that the aggressive troops of the Soviet Union must be pulled out of Lithuania. We demand the inauguration of an international commission to investigate the bloody events. Our problems should be discussed within the framework of the Helsinki process. In this regard, I am thinking about a special conference which would set itself the goal of solving the Baltic problem. That would also contribute to stabilizing the situation of this entire region.

Naturally we need good cooperation in the areas of the economy and trade, not *by way of* the Soviet Union, but rather in a *direct* manner. Otherwise, the Soviet Union should continue to possess the corollary means for keeping us in subjection. We are ready to undertake and implement concrete economic projects in cooperation with the European states, with the European Community, or on a bilateral basis. For it is through concrete economic cooperation that many of our problems might be solved.

Shaul Eisenberg at U.S.-Soviet summit

Senior Israeli businessman and intelligence operative Shaul Eisenberg was present in Moscow at the Bush-Gorbachov summit as a "surprise" participant, and played a special role in striking a Soviet-Israel-U.S. deal at the summit, *EIR* has learned.

What the Soviets indicated, in Eisenberg's presence, was that they were in desperate need of financial resources, and that "Jewish financial interests" could provide help in this direction, whereas the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is seen increasingly as a "nuisance" by the Soviets in any case, could not.

Soviet concessions

Eisenberg reportedly agreed to expedite significant funds for conversion of Soviet industries and for other projects, in exchange for two conditions on the Soviet side. One was continued Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel, and the other was that the Soviets would drop the PLO. Past days' Soviet statements attacking the PLO have codified the latter part of the deal. Further arrangements will be made during Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr

Bessmertnykh's upcoming trip to Israel.

Eisenberg's presence at, and participation in, the summit, has been totally blacked out of the international media.

Sources in Germany familiar with the goings-on at the summit and with the details of the Middle East negotiations, say that "big surprises should not be excluded" in the Middle East over the coming one to two months, which may involve Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir "popping up" in Damascus, or perhaps Syrian President Hafez al-Assad popping up in Israel.

One Israeli source told *EIR* that Eisenberg "is doing an enormous amount these days both in the Soviet Union and China, he's built up a very big thing. His direct contacts are enormous in both countries. In the Soviet Union, he can speak, when he wants to, to both Gorbachov and Yeltsin. In China, he's the first they call in, when special problems arise, whether it be agriculture, or other areas. He has a very fine sense of power. He's become very important for the Soviet Union. He's part of a whole galaxy of Israelis with special know-how, who are restoring vast tracks of agricultural land and are involved in other business, particularly in the Soviet Far East. As Israel aided Africa in the 1960s, so it is now doing in the Soviet Union. And Eisenberg's strength, is that he keeps politics out of it all, it's pure economics, except of course, there are political or diplomatic spin-offs, as we see in the Middle East right now."—*Mark Burdman*