

# Baltic republics vow to fight, but need Western support to survive

by Hartmut Cramer

The Baltic republics have not been intimidated by the bloody show of force orchestrated by the KGB-military apparatus around Mikhail Gorbachov, and are doing their best to maintain their democratically elected sovereign governments in power. Instead of accepting Gorbachov's so-called All-Union Treaty, which would put Lithuania under Moscow's rule for at least the next five years, the government of Lithuania Jan. 19 called for a poll to be taken Feb. 9. Then, 3.5 million Lithuanians will be asked, "Do you agree that the following sentence is still part of our country's Constitution: '*Lithuania is an independent, democratic state*'?"

Lithuania stands united as never before behind President Vytautas Landsbergis since Soviet troops and tanks stormed the television station Jan. 8, killing 14 people, and there is little question the poll will show an overwhelming "yes" vote.

## Hope for the future

"Last night was the first relatively calm one in weeks," a Lithuanian parliamentary spokesman reported Jan. 23. "That doesn't mean the danger is over, but at least we see some hope now."

Gorbachov, he said, after having met Latvian President Gorbunovs in Moscow on Jan. 22, publicly claimed that there would be a political solution in the Baltics, that the military would stop its attacks on the people there, and that the military assaults in Vilnius and Riga would be investigated.

"We know Gorbachov," the Lithuanian continued, "and therefore we have no illusions about his declaration, but nevertheless, maybe there is some hope for us now." But he added, "Tanks are still rolling through the streets of Vilnius, troops are being moved all over Lithuania, and still there are Soviet troops arriving at our harbor of Klaipeda which are coming in from Germany. So you see, there is no reason to trust Gorbachov."

On Jan. 24, Lithuania held a national day of mourning during the funeral in Riga, Latvia, where on Jan. 20 members of the notorious Black Berets, who are directly under the command of Moscow's Minister of Internal Affairs Boris Pugo, stormed the Latvian Interior Ministry, killing five and

wounding 11. According to the Lithuanian spokesman, "A delegation of our parliament is visiting Riga in order to participate in the funeral." Pugo, a Latvian secret police thug, blamed the victims for getting in the way of the bullets. Gorbachov did not disavow the Riga action, any more than he had the Vilnius massacre earlier.

Baltic sources emphasize that it is the cross-border support from other republics under Moscow's thumb which has been critical in securing even the bare possibility of their survival, since the U.S. and Western European governments have done almost nothing.

Said one optimistic Lithuanian source, "There will be a treaty between Lithuania and Russia very soon" inasmuch as "our delegation just came back from Moscow meeting with representatives of the government of the Russian Republic to prepare this treaty." The most important part of this treaty will be the clause which stipulates that "both sides recognize each other as a sovereign republic," he said.

The spokesman praised Boris Yeltsin, the President of the Russian republic, for supporting Lithuania's stand.

"The huge demonstration of Yeltsin's movement on Saturday in Moscow on our behalf was the *first concrete support operation* we got so far. And that is the basis for our hope," he said. "Not only the Russian Republic, but also others like Ukraine have given us tremendous support; and it is growing by the day."

To explain the increasing cooperation between Lithuania and the democratic movements in the other republics, he said that "many Lithuanian delegates are presently touring Russia, Ukraine, and other republics and telling the parliaments there what happened during the massacre in Vilnius. People in the Soviet Union want to hear the truth."

The Lithuanian pointed out that this support for Lithuania in the Soviet Union and in other Eastern European countries like Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary is "markedly different from the lukewarm and merely verbal support we so far got from the governments of the Western countries."

## Waking up the West

"The West finally has to wake up to the fact that red fascists with nuclear weapons in their hands have taken pow-

er in Moscow," Lithuania's President Landsbergis declared on Jan. 18. The next day, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Algirdas Saudargas told a rally in Bonn, Germany, "You are not fighting for the freedom of the Baltic states, but for the freedom of your own country. If Lithuania's sovereignty is destroyed, so it will be everywhere."

The Lithuanian told Germans, whose Chancellor Helmut Kohl had patronizingly advised them on a "go slow" strategy for independence:

"Don't think that you have German unity all sewn up; Moscow still has 370,000 troops on German soil, and it can stage the same bloody massacres here as in our country, if the political and military leadership decides to do so."

Later, asked if he was going to form a government in exile in the West, Saudargas said: "It's true that our parliament gave me the mandate to do that if need be, but frankly, I really have other things to do right now, like saving my country. Now, concerning your question about forming an exile government in the West, I can just tell you, that I have my doubts whether this would be the right thing to do. Why not have it in Tiflis? Quite frankly, the Western governments didn't do anything for us."

This bluntness apparently had its impact on German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who had sent a representative to the rally. After some footdragging ("Minister Genscher is too busy with the Gulf war"), Genscher finally received Saudargas on Jan. 21, after which he was clearly disturbed. "The German government has to rethink its position on the Baltic situation," commented Genscher. Next day, Genscher and his French counterpart Roland Dumas issued a statement, saying that "Bonn and Paris will jointly intervene in Moscow and protest against the military action against the Baltic states."

But clearly the Baltic peoples no longer hope for much from Western governments. Commenting on support for the Baltic republics organized by the Schiller Institute in Western Europe, one Lithuanian parliamentarian said, "That strong language and that kind of support is exactly what we need." In Stockholm, Sweden, the Schiller Institute put out a leaflet blasting the Western governments for their disgusting behavior after Moscow's military occupation of Lithuania, and included a clip which every Swedish citizen was asked to sign and send to Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson. It contained only one sentence: "I demand that your government officially recognize the independence of Lithuania." The leaflet excited participants at a mass demonstration on the Baltics.

"Please keep doing these things," the parliamentarian told a representative of the Schiller Institute. "Diplomatic niceties don't get us anywhere. If you could initiate similar actions also in other countries we would be very thankful. We here in Vilnius have anyway the impression, that the international Schiller Institute is doing much more for us than entire governments in the West."

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## Interview: Rev. Raphael Bidawid

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# Without equity, no peace can occur

*The Reverend Raphael Bidawid, the Chaldean Patriarch, who lives in Baghdad, was received on the morning of Jan. 19 by Pope John Paul II at the Vatican in Rome. Bidawid is in Europe for a peace tour.*

*In a conversation with journalists, the Patriarch stated that there can be no stable peace, in the Gulf or in the world, if the principle of equity is not respected. This principle has been violated by all the belligerents on various occasions, and it is still being violated. The Patriarch referred to the rights of Lithuania, oppressed by the regime in Moscow; the rights of Lebanon, a nation invaded for years and today erased from the map; and the rights of the Palestinians. Replying to a journalist from Panorama magazine, Bidawid stated that no one should deny Israel its security and right to exist as a nation, but that the territories which were occupied after the 1967 war have to be freed. When the journalist said that these were "territories conquered after a war of aggression which Israel won," Bidawid answered that, "This is sophistry. Wars do not justify the conquest of territories in any case.*

*"If the government of the United States had wanted to think up a pretext to get its hands on the oil of the Middle East, it could not have found a better one than the present Gulf crisis. Surely, if Kuwait had had carrot fields instead of oil fields, very few would have moved."*

*The Iraqi primate said that the West cannot grasp the Arab mentality, and especially Saddam Hussein's. The Iraqi President, said the Patriarch, has to be treated in the right way, and he will even give you the shirt off his back. But in the case in question, Saddam Hussein was put up against a wall by the embargo and the United Nations ultimatum. Bidawid stated that there was no reason for imposing the ultimatum: "As a man, as a Christian, and as a pastor, I say that the life of one single man is worth five, ten years of negotiations. And today already too many human lives have been sacrificed." What follows is an exclusive interview he granted to EIR's Rome correspondent, Fiorella Operto.*

**EIR:** Can you tell us about the contents of your meeting with the Pope this morning?

**Bidawid:** The Holy Father is saddened by the war, he could not have imagined that it would happen. He spoke to us of all the efforts he had made to keep the specter of war away, without success. This is very painful for him. The Pope is